

JEROME, *EPISTLE* 106  
(*ON THE PSALMS*)

SBL Press

# WRITINGS FROM THE GRECO-ROMAN WORLD

## *General Editors*

John T. Fitzgerald and Clare K. Rothschild

## *Editorial Board*

Theodore de Bruyn

Andrew Cain

Margaret M. Mitchell

Teresa Morgan

David T. Runia

Karin Schlapbach

Number 47

Volume Editor

Andrew Cain

SBL Press

JEROME, *EPISTLE* 106  
(*ON THE PSALMS*)

*Introduction, translation, and commentary by*

Michael Graves

SBL Press

Copyright © 2022 by SBL Press

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by means of any information storage or retrieval system, except as may be expressly permitted by the 1976 Copyright Act or in writing from the publisher. Requests for permission should be addressed in writing to the Rights and Permissions Office, SBL Press, 825 Houston Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 USA.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2022936956

SBL Press

Dedicated to  
The Pines School of Graduate Studies,  
Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion

SBL Press

SBL Press

## Contents

Abbreviations .....	ix
Introduction .....	1
1. Jerome's Life and Writings .....	2
2. Jerome's Three Translations of the Psalms .....	7
3. Jerome's <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	12
4. The Text of the Psalms in Jerome's Time .....	17
5. Textual Agreement Trends in <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	31
6. The Authenticity and Date of <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	41
7. Principles of Translation in <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	55
8. Textual Criticism in <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	65
9. Interpreting the Psalms in <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	72
Text, Translation, and Notes .....	77
Commentary .....	147
Bibliography .....	315
Editions and Translations of <i>Epistle</i> 106 .....	315
Biblical Texts .....	315
Patristic Works .....	317
Other Resources and Studies .....	322
Ancient Sources Index .....	333
Modern Authors Index .....	353
Subject Index .....	357

SBL Press



## Abbreviations

### Primary Sources

2 Amm.	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>Epistula ad Ammaeum ii</i> (Letters to Ammaeus)
2 Regn.	Dio Chrysostom, <i>De regno ii</i> (Kingship 2)
A.J.	Josephus, <i>Antiquitates judaicae</i> (Antiquities of the Jews)
Ad.	Terence, <i>Adelphi</i> (Brothers)
Ann.	Tacitus, <i>Annales</i> (Annals)
Ars	Horace, <i>Ars poetica</i> (Art of Poetry)
Att.	Cicero, <i>Epistulae ad Atticum</i> (Letters to Atticus)
Civ.	Augustine, <i>De civitate Dei</i> (City of God)
Comm. Agg.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Aggaeum liber</i> (Commentary on Haggai)
Comm. Am.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Amos libri III</i> (Commentary on Amos)
Comm. Dan.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Daniele libri III</i> (Commentary on Daniel)
Comm. Eccl.	Jerome, <i>Commentarii in Ecclesiasten</i> (Commentary on Ecclesiastes)
Comm. Eph.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Epistulam ad Ephesios libri III</i> (Commentary on Ephesians)
Comm. Ezech.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Ezechielem libri XVI</i> (Commentary on Ezekiel)
Comm. Gal.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Epistulam ad Galatas libri III</i> (Commentary on Galatians)
Comm. Hab.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Habacuc libri II</i> (Commentary on Habakkuk)
Comm. Jer.	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Jeremiam libri VI</i> (Commentary on Jeremiah)

<i>Comm. Mal.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Malachiam liber</i> (Commentary on Malachi)
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri IV</i> (Commentary on Matthew)
<i>Comm. Mich.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Michaeum libri II</i> (Commentary on Micah)
<i>Comm. not.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De communibus notitiis contra stoicos</i> (On Common Notions against the Stoics)
<i>Comm. Os.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Osee libri III</i> (Commentary on Hosea)
<i>Comm. Phlm.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Philemonem liber</i> (Commentary on Philemon)
<i>Comm. Ps.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentarioli in Psalmos</i> (Commentaries on the Psalms)
<i>Comm. Soph.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Sophoniam libri III</i> (Commentary on Zephaniah)
<i>Comm. Tit.</i>	Jerome, <i>Commentariorum in Epistolam ad Titum liber</i> (Commentary on Titus)
<i>Comp.</i>	Dionysius of Halicarnassus, <i>De compositione verborum</i> (On Literary Composition)
<i>De or.</i>	Cicero, <i>De oratore</i> (On Oratory)
<i>Diatr.</i>	Epictetus, <i>Diatribai</i> (Discourses)
<i>Doctr. chr.</i>	Augustine, <i>De doctrina christiana</i> (Christian Instruction)
<i>Enarrat. Ps.</i>	Augustine, <i>Enarrationes in Psalmos</i> (Enarrations on the Psalms)
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i> (Epistles)
<i>Exod. Rab.</i>	Exodus Rabbah
<i>Exp.</i>	Cassiodorus, <i>Expositio Psalmorum</i> (Explanation of the Psalms)
<i>Exp. Luc.</i>	Ambrose, <i>Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam</i> (Commentary on Luke)
<i>Fab.</i>	Babrius, <i>Fabulae</i> (Fables)
<i>Fin.</i>	Cicero, <i>De finibus</i> (On Ends)
<i>Frat. amor.</i>	Plutarch, <i>De fraterno amore</i> (On Brotherly Love)
<i>Fug.</i>	Ambrose, <i>De fuga saeculi</i> (Flight from the World)
<i>GPsal</i>	Jerome, Gallican Psalter
<i>Haer.</i>	Irenaeus, <i>Adversus haereses</i> (Against Heresies)
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Historia ecclesiastica</i> (Ecclesiastical History)
<i>Hom. Num.</i>	Origen, <i>Homiliae in Numeros</i> (Homilies on Numbers)

<i>Inst.</i>	Quintilian, <i>Institutio oratoria</i> ( <i>Institutes of Oratory</i> )
<i>Instr.</i>	Commodian, <i>Instructiones</i> ( <i>Instructions</i> )
<i>Jov.</i>	Jerome, <i>Adversus Jovinianum libri II</i> ( <i>Against Jovinianus</i> )
<i>Let. Aris.</i>	Letter of Aristeas
<i>Laps. virg.</i>	Pseudo-Ambrose, <i>De lapsu virginis consecratae</i> ( <i>On Lapsed Virgins</i> )
<i>Ling.</i>	Varro, <i>De lingua latina</i> ( <i>On the Latin Language</i> )
<i>Locut. Hept.</i>	Augustine, <i>Locutionum in Heptateuchum libri septem</i> ( <i>Expressions in the Heptateuch</i> )
<i>Marc.</i>	Tertullian, <i>Adversus Marcionem</i> ( <i>Against Marcion</i> )
<i>Mos.</i>	Philo, <i>De vita Mosis</i> ( <i>On the Life of Moses</i> )
<i>Myst.</i>	Iamblichus, <i>De mysteriis</i> ( <i>On the Mysteries</i> )
<i>Nat. d.</i>	Cicero, <i>De natura deorum</i> ( <i>On the Nature of the Gods</i> )
<i>Nom. hebr.</i>	Jerome, <i>De nominibus hebraicis</i> ( <i>On Hebrew Names</i> )
<i>Non parc.</i>	Lucifer of Cagliari, <i>De non parcendo in Deum delinquentibus</i> ( <i>On Not Sparing Those Who Commit Offenses against God</i> )
<i>Off.</i>	Cicero, <i>De officiis</i> ( <i>On Duties</i> )
<i>Opt. gen.</i>	Cicero, <i>De optimo genere oratorum</i> ( <i>On the Best Kind of Orator</i> )
<i>P.Bod.</i>	Papyrus Bodmer
<i>P.Oxy.</i>	Oxyrynchus Papyrus
<i>P.Ryl.</i>	Rylands Papyrus
<i>Pon.</i>	Ovid, <i>Epistulae ex Ponto</i> ( <i>Letters from the Black Sea</i> )
<i>Praep. ev.</i>	Eusebius, <i>Praeparatio evangelica</i> ( <i>Preparation for the Gospel</i> )
<i>Pref. Chron.</i>	Preface to Jerome's translation of Eusebius's <i>Chronicon</i>
<i>Pref. Ezra</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Ezra</i>
<i>Pref. Gos.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to the Gospels</i>
<i>Pref. GPsal.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to the Gallican Psalter</i>
<i>Pref. IH Chron.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Chronicles iuxta Hebraicum</i>
<i>Pref. IH Job</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Job iuxta Hebraicum</i>
<i>Pref. IH Ps.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Psalms iuxta Hebraicum</i>
<i>Pref. Isa.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Isaiah</i>
<i>Pref. Josh.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Joshua</i>
<i>Pref. Kings</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to Kings</i>
<i>Pref. Pent.</i>	Jerome, <i>Preface to the Pentateuch</i>
<i>Pun.</i>	Appian, <i>Punica</i> ( <i>Punic Wars</i> )
<i>Pyrrh.</i>	Plutarch, <i>Pyrrhus</i>

<i>Qu. hebr. Gen.</i>	Jerome, <i>Quaestionum hebraicarum liber in Genesim</i> ( <i>Hebrew Questions on Genesis</i> )
<i>Quaes.</i>	Ambrosiaster, <i>Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti</i> ( <i>Questions on the Old Testament and New Testament</i> )
<i>Ruf.</i>	Jerome, <i>Adversus Rufinum libri III</i> ( <i>Against Rufinus</i> )
<i>Somn.</i>	Philo, <i>De somniis</i> ( <i>On Dreams</i> )
<i>Test.</i>	Cyprian, <i>Ad Quirinum testimonia adversus Judaeos</i> ( <i>To Quirinus: Testimonies against the Jews</i> )
<i>Tg. Ps.-J.</i>	Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
<i>Tract. Marc.</i>	Jerome, <i>Tractatus in Evangelium Marci</i> ( <i>Treatise on the Gospel of Mark/Homilies on Mark</i> )
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	Jerome (with additions by Gennadius), <i>De viris illustribus</i> ( <i>Concerning Illustrious Men</i> )
<i>Vit.</i>	Diogenes Laertius, <i>Vitae philosophorum</i> ( <i>Lives of Eminent Philosophers</i> )
<i>Vit. Hil.</i>	Jerome, <i>Vita S. Hilarionis eremitae</i> ( <i>Life of Hilarion</i> )
<i>Vit. poes. Hom.</i>	Pseudo-Plutarch, <i>De vita et poesi Homeri</i> ( <i>The Life and Poetry of Homer</i> )

### Secondary Sources

Amelli	Amelli, Ambrogio M., ed. <i>Liber Psalmorum iuxta antiquissimam latinam versionem nunc primum ex Casinensi Cod. 557. Collectanea Biblica Latina 1</i> . Rome: Pustet, 1912.
<i>Aug</i>	<i>Augustinianum</i>
<i>BASP</i>	<i>Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists</i>
<i>BDAG</i>	Danker, Frederick W., Walter Bauer, William F. Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
<i>BHS</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
<i>Bib</i>	<i>Biblica</i>
<i>BWANT</i>	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
Caloz	Caloz, Masséo. <i>Étude sur la LXX origénienne du Psautier</i> . OBO 19. Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978.
CC	Corpus Christianorum

- CC 2      Reifferscheid, August, and Georg Wissowa, eds. *Quinti Septimi Florentis Tertuliani Opera, Pars II: Opera Montanistica. De Ieiunio Adversus Psychicos*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954.
- CC 3      Weber, Robert, ed. *Sancti Cypriani Episcopi Opera: Ad Quirinum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1972.
- CC 8      Diercks, G. F., ed. *De non parcendo in deum delinquentibus*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1978.
- CC 9A      Étaix, Raymond, and Joseph Lemarié, eds. *Chromatii Aquileiensis Opera*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1974.
- CC 14      Adriaen, Marcus, ed. *Sancti Ambrosii Mediolanensis Opera, Pars IV. Expositio Evangelii Secundum Lucam. Fragmenta in Esaïam*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1957.
- CC 33      Fraipont, Jean, ed. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini. Locutiones in Heptateuchum Libri VII*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1958 .
- CC 38      Dekkers, Eligius, and Jean Fraipont, eds. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars 10, 1. Enarrationes in Psalmos I–L*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1956.
- CC 39      Dekkers, Eligius, and Jean Fraipont, eds. *Sancti Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars 10, 2. Enarrationes in Psalmos LI–C*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1956.
- CC 48      Dombart, Bernhard, and Alphonse Kalb, eds. *Aurelii Augustini Opera, Pars 14, 2: De Civitate Dei Libri XI–XXII*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1955.
- CC 61      Doignon, Jean, ed. *Sancti Hilarii Pictaviensis Episcopi Opera, Pars 1, 1. Tractatus Super Psalmos, Instructio Psalmorum in Psalmos I–XCI*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1997.
- CC 61A      Doignon, Jean, ed. *Sancti Hilarii Pictaviensis Episcopi Opera, Pars 1, 2. Tractatus Super Psalmos, In Psalmum CXVIII*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2002.
- CC 61B      Doignon, Jean, ed. *Sancti Hilarii Pictaviensis Episcopi Opera, Pars 1, 3. Tractatus Super Psalmos, In Psalmos CXIX–CL*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2009.
- CC 68A      Callens, P. ed. *Prosperi Aquitani Opera, Pars 2. Expositio Psalmorum. Liber Sententiarum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1972.
- CC 69      Günther, Otto, ed. *Gregorius. Iliberritanus. Faustinus Luciferianus: Marcellinus et Faustinus Presbyteri, De Confessione Verae Fidei*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1967.

- CC 72 Lagarde, Paul de, and Germain morin, eds. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars I: Opera Exegetica I. Liber Interpretationis Hebraicorum Nominum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1959.
- CC 73 Adriaen, Marcus, ed. *Commentariorum in Esaïam libri I–XI*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1963.
- CC 75 Glorie, Franciscus., ed. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars I: Opera Exegetica IV. Commentariorum in Hiezechielem Libri XIV*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1964.
- CC 76 Adriaen, Marcus, ed. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars I: Opera Exegetica VI. Commentarii in Prophetas Minores*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969.
- CC 77 Hurst, David, and Marcus Adriaen, eds. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars I: Opera Exegetica VII. Commentariorum in Matheum Libri IV*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1969.
- CC 77A Raspanti, Giacomo, ed. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars 1. Opera Exegetica 6. Commentarii in Epistulam Pauli Apostoli ad Galatas*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2006.
- CC 78 Morin, Germain, ed. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars 2. Opera Homiletica*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1958.
- CC 79 Lardet, Pierre, ed. *S. Hieronymi Presbyteri Opera, Pars III: Opera Polemica I. Contra Rufinum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1982.
- CC 97 Adriaen, Marcus, ed. *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Opera, Pars 2, 1. Expositio Psalmorum I–XX*. Turhout: Brepols, 1958.
- CC 98 Adriaen, Marcus, ed. *Magni Aurelii Cassiodori Senatoris Opera, Pars 2, 2. Expositio Psalmorum LXXI–CL*. Turhout: Brepols, 1958.
- CC 128 Martin, Joseph, ed. *Commodianus. Claudius Marius Victorius. Commodiani Instructionum*. Turnhout: Brepols, 1960.
- CH Colomo, Daniela, and W. B. Henry. “Septuagint (5101).” Pages 1–11 in vol. 77 of *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri*. Edited with Translation and Notes by Amin Benaissa. Graeco-Roman Memoirs 98. London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2011.
- CRAI *Comptes rendus de l’Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*
- CSEL *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*

- CSEL 32 Schenkl, Karl, ed. *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Altera*. Vienna: Tempsky, 1897.
- CSEL 50 Souter, Alexander, ed. *Pseudo-Augustini: Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti CXXVII*. Vienna: Tempsky, 1908.
- CSEL 54 Hilberg, Isidorus, ed. *Epistulae I–LXX*. Vol. 1 of *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.
- CSEL 55 Hilberg, Isidorus. *Epistulae LXXI–CXX*. Vol. 2 of *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*. Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.
- CSEL 56.1 Hilberg, Isidorus. *Epistulae CXXI–CLIV*. Vol. 3 of *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*. CSEL 56.1. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.
- CSEL 78 Faller, Otto, ed. *Sancti Ambrosii Opera, Pars Octava. De Fide [Ad Gratianum Augustum]*. Vienna: Hölder-Pichler-Tempsky, 1962.
- CSEL 94.1 Müller, Hildegund, ed. *Sancti Augustini Opera. Enarrationes in Psalmos 51–100, Pars 1: Enarrationes in Psalmos*. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004.
- CSEL 95.1 Gori, Franco, and Claudio Pierantoni, eds. *Sancti Augustini Opera. Enarrationes in Psalmos 101–150, Pars 1: Enarrationes in Psalmos 101–109*. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011.
- CSEL 95.2 Gori, Franco, ed. *Augustinus. Enarrationes in Psalmos 101–150, Pars 2: Enarrationes in Psalmos 110–118*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015.
- CSEL 95.4 Gori, Franco, and Francisca Recanatini, eds. *Sancti Augustini Opera. Enarrationes in Psalmos 101–150, Pars 4: Enarrationes in Psalmos 134–140*. CSEL 95.4. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2002.
- DCH Clines, David J. A., ed. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 9 vols. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 1993–2014.
- De-Rossi Vol. 4 of Giovanni Bernardo De-Rossi, *Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti*. 5 vols. Parma: Ex Regio Typographeo, 1784–1798.
- ECF Early Church Fathers

Field	Field, Frederick. <i>Origenis Hexaplorum Quae Supersunt: Sive Veterum Interpretum Graecorum in Totum Vetus Testamentum Fragmenta</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1875.
Gasquet	Gasquet, Francis A., et al. <i>Liber Psalmorum ex recensione sancti Hieronymi cum praefationibus et Epistula ad Sunniam et Fretelam</i> . Vol. 10 of <i>Biblia Sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem</i> . Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1953.
GCS	Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller
GELS	Muraoka, Takamitsu. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint</i> . Leuven: Peeters, 2009.
GKC	Kautzsch, Emil, ed. <i>Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar</i> . Translated by Arther E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
GL	Gildersleeve, Basil L., and Gonzalez Lodge. <i>Gildersleeve's Latin Grammar</i> . 3rd ed. New York: University Publishing, 1900.
GPsal	Gallican Psalter
HALOT	Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. <i>The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament</i> . Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999.
Heb	Hebrew
Hilberg	Hilberg, Isidorus, ed. <i>Epistulae LXXI–CXX</i> . Vol. 2 of <i>Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae</i> : CSEL 55. Vienna: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996.
Hill	Hill, Robert C., trans. <i>Theodore of Mopsuestia: Commentary on Psalms 1-81</i> . WGRW 5. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.
HRCS	Hatch, Edwin, and Henry A. Redpath. <i>Concordance to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1897.
HSCP	<i>Harvard Studies in Classical Philology</i>
IH	Jerome's <i>iuxta Hebraicum</i> translation
Jastrow	Jastrow, Marcus. <i>A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushlami, and the Midrashic Literature</i> . 2 vols. London: Luzac, 1903.
JSCS	<i>Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i>



JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
Kennicott	Kennicott, Benjamin. <i>Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum, cum Variis Lectionibus</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1776–1780.
KT	Kasser, Rodolphe, and Michel Testuz, eds. <i>Papyrus Bodmer XXIV: Psaumes XVII–CXVIII</i> . Cologny-Geneva: Bodmer Library, 1967.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LD	Lewis, Charles T., and Charles Short. <i>A Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Clarendon, 1879.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
LXX	Septuagint
MS(S)	manuscript(s)
MT	Masoretic Text
NA <sup>28</sup>	<i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> , Nestle-Aland, 28th ed.
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OCM	Oxford Classical Monographs
OECS	Oxford Early Christian Studies
OL	Old Latin
OrChrAn	Orientalia Christiana Analecta
P.BYU	The Brigham Young University Papyri
Pesh	Peshiṭta Institute, Leiden. <i>The Book of Psalms</i> . Part 2, fascicle 3 of <i>The Old Testament in Syriac according to the Peshiṭta Version</i> . Leiden: Brill, 1980.
PG	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. <i>Patrologia Graeca</i> [= <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Graeca</i> ]. 162 vols. Paris: Migne, 1857–1886.
PL	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. <i>Patrologia Latina</i> [= <i>Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Series Latina</i> ]. 217 vols. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864.
PTS	Patristische Texte und Studien
Rahlfs	Rahlfs, Alfred. <i>Psalmi cum Odis</i> . SVTG 10. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979.
RBén	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
REAug	<i>Revue des études augustinienes</i>
RH	Vol. 2 of Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart. <i>Septuaginta, Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes</i> .

- Editio altera*. 2 vols. in 1. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006.
- RTL *Revue théologique de Louvain*
- Sabatier Vol. 2. of Pierre Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae Versiones Antiquae, seu Vetus Italica*. Paris: Apud Franciscum Didot, 1751.
- SC Sources chrétiennes
- SC 100 Rousseau, A., B. Hemmerdinger, C. Mercier, and L. Doutre-leau, eds. *Irénée de Lyon: Contre les hérésies, Livre IV*. 2 vols. Lyon: Vitte; Paris: Cerf, 1965.
- SC 412 Labrousse, Mireille, ed. *Traité contre les Donatistes, Livres I et II*. Paris: Cerf, 1995.
- SC 592 Canellis, Aline, ed. *Jérôme: Préfaces aux livres de la Bible*. Paris: Cerf, 2017.
- SCS Septuagint and Cognate Studies
- StPatr Studia Patristica
- StT Studi e Testi, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana
- SVTG Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum
- Thibaut Thibaut, André, ed. *Le Psautier latin du Sinaï*. Vetus Latina: Die Reste der Altlateinischen Bibel 39. Freiburg: Herder, 2010.
- TZ *Theologische Zeitschrift*
- Ulrich Vol. 3 of Eugene Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2013
- Van Ess Part 2 of Leander van Ess, *Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis iuxta Exemplar ex Typographia Apostolica Vaticana, Romae 1592*. 3 parts in 1 vol. Tübingen: Fues, 1824.
- VC *Vigiliae Christianae*
- VCSup Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae*
- VLR *Vetus Latina, die Reste der Altlateinischen Bibel*
- Weber Weber, Robert. *Le Psautier Romain et les autres anciens psautiers latins*. Collectanea Biblica Latina 10. Rome: Abbaye Saint-Jérôme, 1953.
- WG Weber, Robert, and Roger Gryson, eds. *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*. 5th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007.
- WGRW Writings from the Greco-Roman World

White	White, Emanuel. "A Critical Edition of the Targum of Psalms: A Computer Generated Text of Books I and II." PhD diss., McGill University, 1988. <a href="https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress1656a1">https://tinyurl.com/SBLPress1656a1</a> .
YCS	Yale Classical Studies
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der Älteren Kirche</i>

SBL Press

SBL Press

## INTRODUCTION

Jerome of Stridon (ca. 347–ca. 419 CE), author of many commentaries on Scripture, student of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, and translator of the Latin Vulgate, was the most learned biblical scholar of the early church. Through his exegetical works, translations, and reference books (such as his *Book of Hebrew Names*), Jerome established a paradigm for biblical scholarship that inspired imitators throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance.<sup>1</sup> In the Roman Catholic Church, Jerome is honored on his feast day (June 30) as *Doctor in exponendis sacris scripturis maximus*, “the greatest teacher of the church in expounding the Sacred Scriptures.”<sup>2</sup> Jerome’s work is of interest not only to students of Christianity and culture in late antiquity but also to those engaged in biblical criticism, translation, and exegesis.

The book of Psalms played a central role in early Christian worship.<sup>3</sup> The Greek and Latin texts of the Psalter were regularly recited, widely copied, and in the early centuries often revised by Christians in different regions. Jerome’s work on the Psalter includes a short treatise on linguistic

---

1. See Eugene F. Rice Jr., *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 31–35, 84–136.

2. For example, the encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, given by Pope Pius XII in order to promote biblical studies, was delivered on June 30, 1943, in recognition of Jerome’s contribution to Christian biblical scholarship.

3. Communal recitation of Psalms was probably adopted by early Christians from Jewish practice. By the fourth century, the role of Psalms in Christian worship expanded and became more fixed as a result of the extensive use of the Psalter in Christian monastic communities; see Andrew B. McGowan, *Ancient Christian Worship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 204–10; and Robert F. Taft, *The Liturgy of the Hours in East and West* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1986), 33–56, 141–63. The Psalms are the most frequently cited Old Testament book among the *Sayings of the Desert Fathers*; see Douglas Burton-Christie, *The Word in the Desert: Scripture and the Quest for Holiness in Early Christian Monasticism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 97, 111–13, 117–18, 126–27.

difficulties in the Psalms (the *Commentarioli in Psalmos*), numerous homilies on the Psalms (*Tractatus sive Homiliae in Psalmos*), three translations of the Psalter into Latin, and many discussions of specific passages from the Psalms in exegetical letters. One special “letter” that deals with the Psalms is Jerome’s *Ep. 106*, which is not a letter in the conventional sense but a long treatise on the text and interpretation of the Psalms. *Epistle 106* was written as a defense of Jerome’s Gallican Psalter, a Latin version of Origen’s Greek text based on the Hexapla. It is this Gallican Psalter that later became the official Psalter of the Latin Vulgate. In *Ep. 106*, Jerome discusses different textual and exegetical options according to various Greek and Latin copies of the Psalms with input from the Hebrew. *Epistle 106* provides insightful commentary on the Gallican Psalter, offers a unique window into the complex textual state of the Psalter in the late fourth century, and serves as an outstanding example of ancient philological scholarship on the Bible. The present volume offers the first accessible English translation and the first commentary on this important work of biblical interpretation.

## 1. Jerome’s Life and Writings

### 1.1. Early Life

Jerome was born around 347 CE and spent his early life in Stridon, a small town in the Roman province of Dalmatia.<sup>4</sup> He received his primary education in his hometown under the supervision of his Christian parents, who were wealthy enough to employ teachers for Jerome and his brother. His parents sent Jerome to Rome at the age of eleven or twelve in order to study literature and rhetoric. Among Jerome’s teachers was the prominent scholar Aelius Donatus, who composed widely read commentaries on classical authors and a popular Latin grammatical textbook.<sup>5</sup> Later, Jerome also studied rhetoric and had some exposure to philosophical writers as part of his formal education. Jerome’s parents were obviously intent on preparing their son for life in the church and in Roman public service. As he later recollected, “From my cradle, I have been nourished on Catholic milk” (*Ep. 82.2.2*), and also, “Almost from the cradle, my life has been spent

4. On the date of Jerome’s birth, see Michael Graves, *Jerome’s Hebrew Philology*, VCSup 90 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 13 n. 3.

5. On Jerome, Donatus, and the study of γραμματική in antiquity, see Graves, *Jerome’s Hebrew Philology*, 13–75.

in the company of grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers” (*Pref. IH Job 4*).<sup>6</sup>

## 1.2. Travels in the East

In the late 360s, Jerome traveled to the city of Trier in Gaul, the residence of the emperor Valentinian. But instead of pursuing his career in civil service, Jerome decided to give up his plans for secular advancement and devote his life to Christian ideals. In around 372, Jerome went east to Antioch, and from there in 375 he ventured into the desert of Chalcis in Syria in order to try out the monastic life of withdrawal from society; but Jerome never took to this lifestyle, and within a year or two he returned to Antioch. While in Antioch, Jerome heard lectures by Apollinaris of Laodicea, whom he later claimed proudly as a teacher in scriptural interpretation even though he rejected Apollinaris’s teaching on the person of Christ (*Ep.* 84.3.1). To this period belong Jerome’s earliest literary productions, including many letters, a lost allegorical commentary on Obadiah, and his *Life of Paul the First Hermit*, an inventive narrative about the supposed monastic predecessor of St. Anthony (ca. 251–356 CE).

Jerome eventually journeyed to Constantinople in order to attend the church council of 381. In Constantinople, Jerome deepened his understanding of Greek theology and cultivated his early admiration for Origen through interactions with Gregory of Nazianzus. While in the East, Jerome significantly improved his command of Greek, picked up some Syriac, and began his study of Hebrew under the tutelage of a Jewish convert to Christianity. During this period, Jerome composed an exegetical letter on Isa 6, a Latin translation and update of Eusebius of Caesarea’s *Chronicon*, and translations into Latin of Origen’s homilies on Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

---

6. For a more detailed treatment of Jerome’s life and works along the lines given here, see Michael Graves, trans., *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, Ancient Christian Texts (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2011), xxiv–xlvi. An excellent introduction to Jerome’s life can be found in Stefan Rebenich, *Jerome*, ECF (New York: Routledge, 2002), 3–59. The most thorough study of Jerome’s life is still Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: Sa vie et son œuvre*, 2 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1922). For an extremely useful catalog of Jerome’s works with bibliography, see Alfons Fürst, *Hieronymus: Askese und Wissenschaft in der Spätantike* (Freiberg: Herder, 2003), 283–304. The best biography of Jerome in English remains J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975).

### 1.3. Career in Rome

In 382, Jerome returned to Rome. With his knowledge of Greek language and theology, Eastern monastic experience, and basic Hebrew competence he quickly found favor with Pope Damasus, whom he served as a secretary. While in Rome, Jerome continued his Hebrew studies by reading with Jews and by studying the Hebrew text of the Bible alongside the Greek hexaplaric versions. With encouragement from the Roman bishop, Jerome translated Origen's homilies on the Song of Songs, and he also produced lightly revised versions of the Latin Psalms and Gospels based on the best Greek texts he could obtain in Rome. This first Latin Psalter (ca. 384) is not extant, but it probably bears some close relationship to the Roman Psalter (see introduction, §2.1). Jerome also showed enthusiasm for rigorous ascetic ideals, promoting poverty, fasting, self-denial, and virginity. Unfortunately for Jerome, some important members of the Christian community in Rome rejected his rigorous ascetic teaching and even criticized his biblical scholarship, complaining, for example, that his revision of the Latin Gospels changed too much of the traditional Latin wording. After Damasus' death, Jerome was forced to leave Rome in 385.<sup>7</sup>

### 1.4. Residence in Bethlehem

Following his stay in Rome, Jerome decided to return to the East. For a time, he resided in Egypt, where he listened to the teaching of Didymus of Alexandria and visited monks in the Egyptian desert. Finally, in 386 Jerome returned to Bethlehem together with his wealthy friend Paula, who

---

7. Jerome's extreme views on Christian self-denial came under sharp scrutiny after a young woman died in 384 as a result of the harsh regimen of fasting that she practiced at Jerome's direction. Jerome not only promoted severe forms of piety but also wrote sarcastically about the majority of Christians in Rome, who failed to live up to the standards he prescribed. Moreover, Jerome cultivated friendships with several wealthy widows in Rome who were instrumental in financing his scholarly projects. This led to suspicions of legacy hunting, or perhaps even relational misconduct with a wealthy widow, Paula, who eventually traveled with him to the East. After Damasus died, formal ecclesiastical charges were brought against Jerome. The details of these proceedings are not fully clear, but it appears that Jerome was given no choice but to leave Rome. See Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity*, OECs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 99–128; and Kelly, *Jerome*, 104–15.



had accompanied him from Rome on his eastern trek. Through Paula's resources they established a pair of monasteries, one for men supervised by Jerome and the other for women overseen by Paula. These monasteries served as centers of refuge for the poor and for pilgrims from the West, where aid was given to those in need and Jerome was afforded the time he needed to write.

Jerome lived in Bethlehem for the rest of his life, and his arrival in 386 marked the beginning of a productive time for him as an author. Early in his residence in Bethlehem, Jerome produced commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians, Titus, and Philemon, and also rendered into Latin Didymus' treatise *On the Holy Spirit*. In the late 380s, Jerome translated several biblical books into Latin based on Origen's hexaplaric Septuagint text, including Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and 1–2 Chronicles. Because Origen's text was a version of the LXX that included adaptations to the Hebrew, it represented a middle path between popular LXX texts on the one hand and a fresh translation from the Hebrew on the other. This second translation of the Psalms is known today as the Gallican Psalter because of its reception in Gaul, and it became the official Psalter of the Latin Vulgate (see introduction, §2.2). The late 380s and early 390s also saw Jerome write several works intended to promote the value of Hebrew scholarship, such as his *Book of Hebrew Names*, *Book of Hebrew Place Names*, and *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*. Jerome also wrote exegetical works on Ecclesiastes (late 380s) and the Psalms (*Commentarioli*, early 390s), which reflected his ever-increasing interest in Hebrew and Jewish traditions. The monastic life continued to hold Jerome's attention, as he wrote two more lives of idealized ascetic characters, *The Life of Hilarion*, and *The Life of Malchus the Captive Monk*. Jerome likewise continued his work as a translator, rendering into Latin Origen's homilies on Luke. Throughout all his years in Bethlehem, Jerome stayed in constant contact with friends in Rome through letters. Most of his works were written with this audience in mind.

### 1.5. IH Edition, Hebrew Scholarship, and Controversies

A new phase of Jerome's scholarship began in 391 with the start of his translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Latin.<sup>8</sup> Partly because

---

8. In the early years of his translation project based on the original Hebrew, Jerome

of the newness of translating directly from the Hebrew, and partly because of his reliance on Jewish sources, Jerome was sharply criticized for making this translation. One of his prominent critics was Augustine, who only later in life came to recognize the value of Jerome's version.<sup>9</sup> Jerome completed his translation *iuxta Hebraicum* (IH) in 405, and for each biblical book he included a preface where he explained his work and defended himself against detractors. The book of Psalms was one of the first books Jerome translated from the Hebrew. This third of Jerome's Latin Psalters was completed by 393. Although it did not ultimately win a place in the medieval Vulgate Bible, the IH Psalter continued to be copied and studied as a scholarly resource (see introduction, §2.3).

Jerome engaged in many theological controversies in his career. His harshest and most personal controversy erupted in 393, when Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis came to Palestine in order to secure signatures on a document condemning Origen for some of his speculative theological ideas. In spite of Jerome's former praise of Origen and his earlier enthusiasm for translating Origen's exegetical writings, Jerome agreed to sign the condemnation.<sup>10</sup> But Rufinus, Jerome's former friend who also translated Origen's works and who now lived in Jerusalem, refused to condemn Origen. This

---

stated, "Therefore, with full knowledge and recognition (of the difficulties and potential criticisms), I send forth my hand into the flame" (*Pref. Isa.* 3).

9. Augustine first criticized Jerome for his Hebrew translation project in *Ep.* 28 (written in 394 or 395), in which he wonders how Jerome could possibly improve on the Septuagint. Augustine spelled out his belief in the authority of the Septuagint in *Doctr. chr.* 2.15 (written in 396). Later, in *Ep.* 71 (written in 403), Augustine expressed concern that Jerome's Hebrew-based translation could cause a rift between East and West, and he also raised the problem of how Jerome's work could be checked for accuracy, since no other Christian knew Hebrew. Augustine also recounted the story of a bishop in the town of Oea who introduced Jerome's translation of Jonah into his congregation and almost lost control of his church because of the strife that resulted. Jerome answered Augustine point by point in his *Ep.* 112 in 404, defending his translation of the plant in Jonah 4:6 as "ivy" rather than the traditional Septuagint (and Old Latin) translation, "gourd." Augustine showed only slight concessions to Jerome's position in his *Ep.* 82 (written in 405), yet in *Civ.* 18.42–44 (written sometime after 420), Augustine allows for both the Septuagint and the Hebrew text to be inspired, and he refers to Jerome as "a most learned man, skilled in all three languages" (i.e., Hebrew, Greek and Latin). Moreover, in *Doctr. chr.* 4.7.15 (composed in the late 420s), Augustine quotes Amos in Jerome's IH version rather than the Septuagint.

10. E.g., Jerome's earlier comment that Origen was "the greatest teacher of the churches after the apostles" (*Nom. hebr.*, *Pref.*).

caused a public feud between Jerome and Rufinus, which involved not only the Eastern bishops Epiphanius (against Origen) and John of Jerusalem (in favor of Origen) but also significant members of the church in Rome and their networks in the Latin-speaking world.<sup>11</sup> After a brief reconciliation in 397, arguments and allegations erupted again in 398, culminating in 401 with Rufinus's *Apology against Jerome* and Jerome's *Apology against Rufinus* (401–402), in which both men attacked each other, Jerome being particularly virulent in assailing his opponent's integrity and orthodoxy. Jerome became more and more outspoken against Origen's doctrinal errors from this time forward, even though he continued to consult Origen's exegetical works and profit from them. Furthermore, Jerome continued to attack Rufinus for following the heresies of Origen, even after Rufinus's death. Despite such turmoil, however, this period was not lacking in biblical scholarship. In addition to the IH translations he was producing, Jerome also completed a commentary on Matthew in 397–398, and sometime in the mid-390s he began his series of commentaries on the Minor Prophets.

Jerome's last years kept him busy with controversy and scholarship. Examples of Jerome's engagement in theological controversy include his *Against Vigilantius* (406) and *Dialogue against the Pelagians* (415). Remarkably, such conflicts did not prevent Jerome from continuing to write biblical commentaries, although these later commentaries show clear indications of the Pelagian debate while still keeping the errors of Origen in view. The final fifteen years of Jerome's life saw him reach his full measure of competence as a Hebraist and interpreter of the Old Testament. Jerome completed his commentary on the Minor Prophets in 401, wrote an abbreviated commentary on Daniel in 407, and then followed up with commentaries on Isaiah (408–410), Ezekiel (410–414), and Jeremiah. Jerome began his commentary on Jeremiah in 414, and reached the end of chapter thirty-two by the time of his death in 419 (or 420).

## 2. Jerome's Three Translations of the Psalms

As noted in the previous section, Jerome produced three different Latin translations of the Psalter. It will be useful here to list these three Latin Psalters together and highlight their differences.

---

11. E.g., in his *Ep.* 73.6 Augustine reports that the conflict between Jerome and Rufinus was widely known, even in North Africa.

## 2.1. The Roman Psalter

In the preface to his Gallican Psalter, Jerome states: “A short time ago when I was at Rome, I emended the Psalter; I corrected it, although hastily, for the most part based on the Seventy translators.”<sup>12</sup> Jerome proceeds to justify the need for his Gallican Psalter by explaining that this first revision had already suffered corruption at the hands of copyists. This first Psalter was thus produced in Rome around 384, and Jerome seems to have completely ignored it once he composed the Gallican Psalter. In fact, it is unclear whether any trace of this first Latin Psalter survives. There is a tradition going back centuries that identifies Jerome’s Roman Psalter with the traditional Roman Psalter still used liturgically in St. Peter’s Basilica in Rome. Although some still defend this identification, the most common view is that the preserved Roman Psalter is not the same as Jerome’s Roman Psalter, which is essentially lost.<sup>13</sup> J. N. D. Kelly suggested that the preserved Roman Psalter might represent the text that Jerome revised in producing his own (now lost) Roman Psalter.<sup>14</sup>

## 2.2. The Gallican Psalter

Between around 386 and around 392, Jerome translated several books into Latin based on Origen’s hexaplaric recension of the Septuagint. The books for which we have evidence are Psalms, Job, and the Song of Songs (all extant), and also Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and 1–2 Chronicles (known from the surviving prefaces). It is unclear whether Jerome completed the rest of the Old Testament from the Hexapla or whether he abandoned this project when he started his IH edition.<sup>15</sup> The hexaplaric LXX Psalter came to

---

12. *Psalterium Romae dudum positus emendaram et iuxta Septuaginta interpretes, licet cursim, magna illud ex parte correxeram* (Pref. GPsal 1). See also **12.2.10**.

13. See Aline Canellis, ed., *Jérôme: Préfaces aux livres de la Bible*, SC 592 (Paris: Cerf, 2017), 406–7; and Colette Estin, *Les Psautiers de Jérôme à la lumière des traductions juives antérieures*, Collectanea Biblica Latina 15 (Rome: San Girolamo, 1984), 25–28.

14. Kelly, *Jerome*, 89.

15. On the one hand, Jerome sometimes wrote as if he had revised the entire Old Testament according to the hexaplaric text (e.g., *Ruf.* 2.24, 3.25; *Ep.* 71.5; *Ep.* 106.2.2; *Ep.* 134.2), and Cassiodorus (d. 583) claimed to have used Jerome’s hexaplaric translation in the production of a large one-volume Bible. Furthermore, Jerome’s LXX translation in his *Commentary on Isaiah* looks like a Latin version of the hexaplaric

be known as the Gallican Psalter due to its popular reception in Gaul. In his own original edition of the Gallican Psalter, Jerome employed asterisks to mark additions from the hexaplaric versions (typically Theodotion) to match the Hebrew, and obeli to mark passages that were absent from the Hebrew (see introduction, §8.2; and 7.2.5–12). Jerome essentially copied these signs from the hexaplaric LXX, although it is possible that he occasionally used these critical signs creatively to mark his own observations based on the Hebrew, without direct warrant in the hexaplaric edition (see 55.2.21–22). Unfortunately, soon after its initial publication, the Gallican Psalter came to be copied without the critical signs; as a result, most preserved copies of the Gallican Psalter lack these signs altogether.<sup>16</sup>

Although the famous Codex Amiatinus produced in Northumbria around 700 used Jerome's IH Psalter, the Bible published by Alcuin in the early ninth century combined Jerome's IH translation for most books (except for the Psalms) with the Gallican Psalter. It was Alcuin's configuration with the Gallican Psalter that became the standard Latin Bible of the Middle Ages. Given the familiarity most Christians had with the wording of the Psalms according to some version of the *Vetus Latina*, it was natural that the Gallican Psalter would gain general acceptance rather than the IH Psalter, even as Jerome's IH translations became standard for other books. By the early Renaissance period, the standard medieval Bible (including the Gallican Psalter) was known as the *editio vulgata*, the "common edi-

---

Isaiah text. This could be taken as evidence that Jerome finished the hexaplaric translation project. See Gryson, VLR 12, 18–19; and Gryson, ed., *Commentaire de Jérôme sur le Prophète Isaïe, Livres I–IV* (Freiburg: Herder, 1993), 52. On the other hand, Jerome never mentions any other hexaplaric revisions beyond Psalms, Job, Song of Songs, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and 1–2 Chronicles, not even in the prefaces to IH books; and Jerome makes no mention of the hexaplaric revision in *On Illustrious Men* (see Kelly, *Jerome*, 159). The apparently "hexaplaric" translation in a work such as the *Commentary on Isaiah* might simply show that Jerome was translating directly from the hexaplaric LXX when he wrote the commentary; see Pierre Jay, *L'exégèse de saint Jérôme d'après son "Commentaire sur Isaïe"* (Paris: Études Augustiniennes, 1985), 118, 125. Jerome's statements that suggest he revised the entire Old Testament according to the LXX might be nothing more than exaggeration. These statements might have misled Cassiodorus into thinking that texts he had at hand were Jerome's complete hexaplaric edition.

16. Two copies of the Gallican Psalter that preserve critical signs are the Cathach Psalter of St. Columba (seventh century) and Vatican, Reg. lat. 11 (eighth century). See introduction, §4.3.

tion” or “Vulgate.”<sup>17</sup> The following fact should be noted, however: when Jerome uses the term *editio vulgata*, he is referring to the popular edition of his day, either the common Septuagint text or the common Vetus Latina version.

### 2.3. The IH Psalter

Jerome referred to this translation as his version *iuxta Hebraicum* (“according to the Hebrew”), or as the rendering *apud Hebraeos* (“among the Hebrews”), or else as *mea interpretatio* (“my translation”) or *editio nostra* (“our edition”).<sup>18</sup> Jerome probably began translating the IH edition in 391. As *Ep.* 48.4 (394) indicates, the sixteen prophetic books (including Daniel) were already circulating at Rome in 394, Samuel–Kings had been available for some time, and Job had recently been completed. Although *Ep.* 48.4 does not mention the Psalms, Jerome’s *On Illustrious Men* 134 (393) shows that the Prophets and the IH Psalter were already complete. Thus, we know that IH Psalms, the Prophets, and Samuel–Kings were finished by at least 393, and Job was just completed in 394. Some consider Samuel–Kings to be the first translation because the extended preface to these books, the *Prologus Galeatus* or “Helmeted Preface,” could have served as an introduction to the whole project.<sup>19</sup> Others argue that the Prophets preceded Samuel–Kings, since the preface to IH Isaiah introduces the presentation of the text *per cola et commata*, “by clauses and phrases,” as if perhaps introducing it for the whole series of translations. If the Prophets indeed came before Samuel–Kings, the discussion of canon in the preface to Daniel may have inspired Jerome to begin his next translation (i.e., Samuel–Kings) with a preface dealing with the canon, namely, the *Prologus Galeatus*.<sup>20</sup> It is unclear how IH Psalms fits in chronologically with these other early translations. On the basis of *On Illustrious Men*, one might conclude that IH Psalms along with IH Prophets were the first IH translations. The lack of reference to IH Psalms in *Ep.* 48.4 could be explained by supposing that Jerome had

17. See Edmund F. Sutcliffe, “The Name ‘Vulgate,’” *Bib* 29 (1948): 345–52.

18. E.g., see *Comm. Jer.* Pref.; 31:21–22; 31:37; *Pref. IH Job*; *Pref. Ezra*; *Pref. IH Ps.*; *Ep.* 78:20.

19. See Kelly, *Jerome*, 161; and H. F. D. Sparks, “The Latin Bible,” in *The Bible in its Ancient and English Versions*, ed. Henry W. Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1940), 112.

20. See Pierre Jay, “La datation des premières traductions de l’Ancien Testament sur l’hébreu par saint Jérôme,” *REAug* 28 (1982): 208–12.

published this edition early (391 or 392) and that his substantial changes to the traditional wording received an unfavorable reception.<sup>21</sup> The fact that the prologue to IH Psalms does not appear to have been written to serve as an introduction to the IH edition as a whole could be taken to mean that it was translated second after the Prophets, but it could also be explained by supposing that Jerome translated IH Psalms first and published it before he was ready to announce his intentions for the project as a whole. I will return to the question of the date and context of Jerome's translation of IH Psalms in the introduction, §6.2.

In the preface to his IH Psalter, Jerome defends his decision to translate from the Hebrew by claiming that the work's primary purpose is to assist Christians in debating with Jews and that he does not necessarily expect the work to be read in churches. Whether or not this argument represents Jerome's genuine sentiment in light of his commitment to the Hebrew text as the standard of truth (the *hebraica veritas*), it certainly accords with his customary respect for the traditional wording of the Latin Bible (see introduction, §7.2.2), especially where singing the Psalms is concerned (see 46.5.1–4). Jerome also announces in the preface to IH Psalms that, following in the wake of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, he will render the Hebrew Psalter into Latin as a *novam editionem* ("new edition"). In reality, Jerome relies heavily on the hexaplaric versions in translating the IH Psalter, although he does not follow the interpretation of any one consistently, and sometimes he is independent of all three, thus showing that the Hebrew as he understands it is the final authority. Still, at this early stage of his production of the IH edition, Jerome is more dependent on the hexaplaric versions for his understanding of the Hebrew than he will be in later years.<sup>22</sup> Obviously, Jerome's competence in Hebrew in the early 390s at the start of his IH project was not as strong as it became by the end of this project in 405.

---

21. In his preface to IH Psalms, Jerome devotes considerable space (even for him) to denouncing those who criticize his learned work, probably because he received negative feedback from those who had heard about his IH Psalter and perhaps had even seen early excerpts.

22. Justin Rogers summarizes: "Although in translating PsH, Jerome did not have the benefit of the Hebraic learning he would acquire over the next several decades, the translation is generally faithful to the Hebrew"; see "Psalms: 10.3.7 Vulgate," in *Writings*, vol. 1C of *Textual History of the Bible: The Hebrew Bible*, ed. Armin Lange (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 106.



As noted in the previous section on the Gallican Psalter, the IH Psalter did not become the standard version of the Psalms for the medieval Latin Bible. Over time, it was the Gallican Psalter, not the IH Psalter, that displaced the *Vetus Latina* version. Still, Jerome's IH Psalter was copied throughout the Middle Ages, often being employed as a scholarly tool.<sup>23</sup> In the early ninth century, for example, Theodulf of Orléans supervised the production of scholarly Latin Bibles that employed Jerome's IH Psalter. Later, Remigius of Auxerre (d. 908) in his commentary on the Gallican Psalter used the IH Psalter as a source of information about the Hebrew text. In the twelfth century, Herbert of Bosham (ca. 1120–ca. 1195) composed a commentary on IH Psalms in which he demonstrated his own functional knowledge of Hebrew. The IH Psalter never fell out of usage, even if it did not typically serve as the primary Psalter for liturgical purposes. The relationship between the IH Psalter and *Ep. 106* is addressed below (introduction, §§5.3 and 6.2).

### 3. Jerome's *Epistle 106*

#### 3.1. Content and Type of Letter

Jerome's letters have long been noted for the extensive amount of biblical exegesis and criticism they contain. In 1904, when Eugène Tisserant (later Cardinal Tisserant) arrived at the Biblical School of the Dominican Fathers in Jerusalem, he asked archaeologist Fr. Louis-Hughes Vincent what he should read in order to prepare for serious study of the Old Testament. The corpus of Jerome's letters was one of the three works recommended to him.<sup>24</sup> As it turns out, the substantial biblical content of Jerome's letters, along with their frequent emphasis on ascetic themes, makes perfect sense once it is realized that most of these letters are not simply personal com-

---

23. See Michael Graves, "Glimpses into the History of the Hebrew Bible through the Vulgate Tradition, with Special Reference to Vulgate MS 0<sup>G</sup>," in *The Text of the Hebrew Bible and Its Editions*, ed. Andrés P. Otero and Pablo T. Morales (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 217–54.

24. Eugène Cardinal Tisserant, foreword to *A Monument to St. Jerome*, ed. Francis X. Murphy (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952), ix. The three works recommended were Jerome's letters, Emil Schürer's *History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, and a French translation of the *Zend-Avesta*. According to Tisserant, he read the first two of these works.



munications between friends but stylized compositions intended to promote Jerome's status as an expert in biblical scholarship and ascetic practice.<sup>25</sup> When we read Jerome's letters, on the whole, we are not peering into the inner workings of his relationships; instead, we are reading carefully crafted short notes and treatises that champion Jerome's viewpoints on select topics and Jerome himself as the expert on these topics. In this light, *Ep.* 106 is best understood as a scholarly treatise on the Gallican Psalter.

In terms of epistolary type, Andrew Cain rightly classifies *Ep.* 106 as "Apologetic" (ἀπολογητικός).<sup>26</sup> This treatise offers a sustained response to criticisms leveled against Jerome's Gallican Psalter. Jerome's treatment of every biblical passage, whether it deals with the form of the text or its meaning, is intended to show that the rendering Jerome gave in the Gallican Psalter is correct or at least defensible as an informed option.

### 3.2. Structure and Rhetoric of *Epistle* 106

The structure of *Ep.* 106 is simple and its style highly formulaic. The treatise begins with a paragraph in which Jerome praises Sunnia and Fretela, using scriptural imagery for their interest in the "Hebrew truth" (*hebraica veritas*). Next, Jerome explains his preference for the hexaplaric Septuagint over the popular or Lucianic Septuagint on the grounds that the hexaplaric text agrees more with the Hebrew. It was this hexaplaric edition of the Septuagint that served as the basis for Jerome's Gallican Psalter. After this follows the body of *Ep.* 106, which consists of textual examinations of 177 select passages from the Psalms. In each case, the discourse unit begins with a quotation from the Gallican Psalter about which Sunnia and Fretela had asked a question (*Prima ... quaestio*; 3.1). Jerome then reports the content of the challenge that the two Gothic clergymen raised, typically using language such as "in place of this, in Greek it has" (*pro quo habetur in Graeco*), "you say that you have found" (*invenisse vos dicitis*), or "you say that you have read" (*legisse vos dicitis*). In other words, as the letter presents itself, Sunnia and Fretela wrote to Jerome and asked him to explain for each of these 177 passages why he translated as he did in the Gallican Psalter given that the Greek text has a different reading or requires a different translation. Jerome's explanations for some passages are more than a page

---

25. See Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*.

26. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 209–10.

in length, and in other cases Jerome dismisses the objection in a sentence. This central section, with 177 sections comprising (1) a quotation from Jerome's version, (2) the proposed alternative based on the Greek, and (3) Jerome's justification for his translation choice, takes up roughly forty out of forty-three total pages in the CSEL edition. *Epistle* 106 concludes with Jerome's explanations of six Greek words: νεομηνία, ἔρημος, θρόνος, νυκτικώραξ, κυνόμυια, and λαξευτήριον, the meanings of which Jerome says were requested by Sunnia and Fretela and also by a certain Avitus, who is similarly mentioned at the start of *Ep.* 106 (see 2.2.25). The authenticity of *Ep.* 106 as a letter is addressed below (introduction, §6.1).

The first passage discussed is from Ps 5:6 (Heb 5:5b), and the final passage is from Ps 146:10 (Heb 147:10). Generally, Jerome works through the Psalter in order, from earlier chapters and verses to later ones, the only exceptions occurring at 63.1 (Ps 101:8) and 63.2 (Ps 101:7), and 65.3 (Ps 103:25) and 65.4 (Ps 103:14), where in each case Jerome takes a verse out of order. See table 1 below for a list of passages discussed; the references given are according to the Gallican Psalter, followed by Hebrew versification in parentheses.

In the vast majority of cases the text that begins the discussion, which presumably was cited back to Jerome together with an objection, is Jerome's Gallican Psalter translation. A select number of passages present complications or exceptions. In several instances, the text quoted back to Jerome as his own reflects a miscopying of the Gallican Psalter, and Jerome points out that the supposed objection is actually based on his interlocutors' faulty text (see 12.1; 29.3; 30.3; 33.4; 41.1; 41.2; 46.3; 52.1; 57.3; 69.1). In other instances, the text quoted as Jerome's translation differs from the Gallican Psalter in some small way that is not relevant to the question, and it is unclear whether the difference represents a transmission error in *Ep.* 106 or the Gallican Psalter (manuscript evidence is often conflicted), or whether Sunnia and Fretela misquoted the text and Jerome failed to notice (see 14.1; 23.2; 33.3; 35.2; 36.1; 64.1; 67.4).<sup>27</sup> Otherwise, in one passage Jerome begins not with his own rendering but with the text suggested by Sunnia and Fretela (15.1); in one passage Jerome intentionally gives the Greek form of a loanword (63.2); and in another passage the difference is simply one of spelling: *herodii* versus *erodii* (65.5). An

27. In three cases where manuscript evidence for *Ep.* 106 and the Gallican Psalter is complex (37.1; 75.2; 75.4), I argue in the commentary that in their original forms they matched.

intriguing complication occurs at **71.1**, which involves not only a mis-copying of the Gallican Psalter text by Sunnia and Fretela but also a quiet correction of the Gallican Psalter by Jerome. Apart from these complications and exceptions, the standard pattern of *Ep.* 106 is that Jerome's Gallican Psalter is quoted back to him, an objection is stated, and then he answers the objection. The consistent rhetorical thrust of *Ep.* 106 is the justification of the Gallican Psalter.

Table 1: Psalms Passages Discussed in *Epistle* 106 (177 total)

5:6 (5:5b)	30:23 (31:23)	55:3–4 (56:3–4)
5:9 (5:9)	31:2 (32:2)	55:8 (56:8)
6:11 (6:11)	31:4 (32:4)	58:10 (59:10)
7:9 (7:9)	34:10 (35:10)	58:11 (59:11)
8:4 (8:4)	36:23 (37:23)	58:12a (59:11b)
16:2 (17:2)	38:12 (39:11)	58:12 (59:12)
16:8 (17:8)	39:9 (40:9)	58:14 (59:14)
16:13 (17:13)	39:14 (40:14)	59:11 (60:11)
17:14 (18:14)	40:7 (41:7)	60:6 (61:6)
17:34 (18:34)	41:6–7 (42:6–7)	60:9 (61:9)
17:36 (18:36)	41:11 (42:11)	61:9 (62:9)
17:40 (18:40)	41:12 (42:12)	62:2 (63:2)
17:47 (18:47)	43:10 (44:10)	63:8 (64:8)
17:48 (18:49)	43:15 (44:15)	64:8 (65:8)
18:6 (19:6)	43:26 (44:27)	64:10 (65:10)
19:5 (20:5)	44:6 (45:6)	65:15 (66:15)
19:10 (20:10)	47:5 (48:5)	65:19 (66:19)
21:20 (22:20)	47:9 (48:9)	67:5 (68:5)
21:24 (22:24)	47:10 (48:10)	67:19 (68:19)
22:5 (23:5)	48:15 (49:15)	67:19–20 (68:19–20)
24:4a (25:3b)	48:16 (49:16)	67:25a (68:25a)
24:21 (25:21)	48:21 (49:21)	67:25b (68:25b)
26:6 (27:6)	49:20 (50:20)	67:33 (68:33)
26:8 (27:8)	49:22 (50:22)	68:31 (69:31)
27:2 (28:2)	49:23 (50:23)	70:12 (71:12)
28:9 (29:9)	54:9a (55:9a)	70:17 (71:17)
28:10 (29:10)	54:9b (55:9b)	70:18 (71:18)
30:5 (31:5)	54:13 (55:13)	71:11 (72:11)

71:18 (72:18)	84:2 (85:2)	105:44 (106:44)
71:19 (72:19)	84:11a (85:11a)	106:29 (107:29)
72:7 (73:7)	85:14 (86:14)	106:30 (107:30)
72:11 (73:11)	85:15 (86:15)	107:3 (108:3)
72:17 (73:17)	88:8 (89:8)	107:10 (108:10)
72:26 (73:26)	88:20 (89:20)	109:2a (110:2a)
72:28 (73:28)	88:39 (89:39)	109:2b (110:2b)
73:1 (74:1)	89:2 (90:2)	110:1 (111:1)
73:3 (74:3)	89:10 (90:10)	113:11 (115:3)
73:8 (74:8)	90:2 (91:2)	114:2 (116:2)
73:13–14 (74:13–14)	93:12 (94:12)	114:9 (116:9)
73:23 (74:23)	93:23 (94:23)	117:10 (118:10)
74:2 (75:2)	97:3 (98:3)	118:47 (119:47)
75:6 (76:6)	100:6 (101:6)	118:48 (119:48)
75:12–13 (76:12–13)	101:7 (102:7)	118:59a (119:59a)
76:7 (77:7)	101:8 (102:8)	118:59b (119:59b)
76:9 (77:9)	101:11 (102:11)	118:69 (119:69)
77:6 (78:6)	101:15 (102:15)	118:109 (119:109)
77:31 (78:31)	102:9 (103:9)	118:136 (119:136)
77:36 (78:36)	103:4 (104:4)	118:172 (119:172)
77:38 (78:38)	103:7 (104:7)	119:2 (120:2)
77:54 (78:54)	103:25 (104:25)	126:5 (127:5)
77:57 (78:57)	103:14 (104:14)	129:4 (130:4–5)
77:69b (78:69b)	103:17 (104:17)	131:2 (132:2)
77:72 (78:72)	103:18 (104:18)	135:7 (136:7)
78:1 (79:1)	104:30 (105:30)	137:2 (138:2)
79:10 (80:10)	104:33 (105:33)	138:4 (139:4)
82:13 (83:13)	104:42 (105:42)	139:6 (140:6)
83:3 (84:3)	105:1 (106:1)	139:14 (140:14)
83:6 (84:6)	105:7a (106:7a)	140:7 (141:7)
83:7 (84:9)	105:7b (106:7b)	146:10 (147:10)

#### 4. The Text of the Psalms in Jerome's Time

Because the primary topic of *Ep.* 106 is the text of the Psalter, it will be useful to set forth some basic information about the textual evidence for the book of Psalms in order to comprehend Jerome's arguments and fit them into their broader framework. Throughout *Ep.* 106, Jerome discusses possible Latin translations of the Greek Psalter, with constant reference to different Greek readings and regular appeals to the Hebrew. Below are brief summaries of the current state of research on the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin texts of the Psalms along with explanations of the manuscript witnesses for these texts that are cited in my commentary to illuminate Jerome's discussions.

##### 4.1. The Hebrew Text of the Psalms

The base text for research on the Hebrew Bible, including the Hebrew Psalter, is the medieval Masoretic Text (MT). This is typically represented by the Leningrad Codex (1009 CE) as given in *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (eds. Elliger and Rudolph, 1977). In a few difficult passages, the text was confirmed in *The Leningrad Codex: A Facsimile Edition* (eds. Freedman, Beck, and Sanders, 1998). Another important witness to the MT is the Aleppo Codex (ca. 925 CE), which I checked for each contested Hebrew passage in *Jerusalem Crown*.<sup>28</sup> In addition, I occasionally report readings from the apparatus of Benjamin Kennicott's *Vetus Testamentum cum Variis Lectionibus* (1780) and from Giovanni de-Rossi's *Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti* (1788), both of which list variants taken from mostly late masoretic manuscripts. These two substantial eighteenth-century collections of Hebrew readings were assembled in the hope that different recensions of biblical books might be discovered through the collation of all preserved Hebrew manuscripts. This hope did not materialize, since all the manuscripts discovered represent the MT type, and the vast majority of variant readings are secondary vis-à-vis earlier MT witnesses such as the Leningrad and Aleppo codices.<sup>29</sup> Overall, the text-critical value of these late manuscripts is

---

28. See Yosef Ofer and Mordechai Glatzer, eds, *Jerusalem Crown: The Bible of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem: N. Ben-Zvi, 2004).

29. See Moshe H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts: Their History and Their Place in the HUBP Edition," *Bib* 48 (1967): 243–90. Goshen-Gottstein

not great.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, this does not mean that early readings are totally lacking in these texts. For example, Jerome sometimes presupposes or even spells out a Hebrew word that matches a reading from Kennicott rather than the Leningrad Codex.<sup>31</sup> Such agreements are also found in Hebrew-based glosses registered in the margins of ninth-century Theodulfian Latin Bibles.<sup>32</sup> Therefore, I cite medieval Hebrew variants from Kennicott and De-Rossi wherever they lend meaningful support to earlier readings or else illuminate the text's history in relation to notable errors or corrections.

The discovery of the Qumran scrolls has provided fresh insight into the early text of the Hebrew Psalter, yet the Qumran evidence has generated different interpretations. On the one hand, deviations from the MT in Qumran fragments, especially when interpreted next to specific textual variants in the Septuagint, suggest that the proto-MT was not the only textual tradition for the Psalms in the first century BCE.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, the proto-MT is clearly represented at Qumran, and overall the Hebrew consonantal text presumed by the Septuagint is close to the proto-MT. Scholars debate how diverse the text of the book of Psalms was in the first century BCE.<sup>34</sup> By the second century CE, however, the proto-MT was established, and the consonantal Hebrew text of Jerome's time was definitely of the proto-MT type. Major deviations from MT do not factor into our analysis of the Hebrew text underlying Jerome's Latin translation. Still, in numerous passages the evidence for the Greek Psalter raises

---

correctly recognized the limited value of these late masoretic manuscripts, but his *tout court* dismissal of this body of readings is probably too extreme.

30. For a cautious assessment of the value of the readings listed in Kennicott and De-Rossi, see Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 3rd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 36–39.

31. E.g., see מַחֲסִיָּה at *Comm. Jer.* 32:12 (Jerome and Kennicott: מַעֲשִׂיָּה), and אָנֹשׁ at *Comm. Jer.* 17:9 (Jerome and Kennicott: אָנוֹשׁ); see Graves, *Jerome: Commentary on Jeremiah*, 208, 107; and Kennicott 2:137, 115.

32. E.g., see לִבִּיתוֹ at 1 Sam 23:18 (θ<sup>G</sup> gloss and Kennicott: לִדְרֵכּוֹ), and at 1 Sam 25:17 the omission of כָּל in θ<sup>G</sup> (gloss) and Kennicott; see Graves, "Glimpses into the History," 238–41; and Kennicott 1:550, 553.

33. In particular, the Qumran scrolls offer some variations in the order of Psalms within collections and the inclusion or exclusion of certain Psalms. It is not clear, however, that all of these texts are meant to be copies of the book of Psalms, rather than liturgical texts.

34. See Brent A. Strawn, "10.1 Textual History of the Psalms," in Lange, *Writings*, 5–23; Armin Lange and Brent A. Strawn, "Psalms 10.2 Ancient Hebrew Texts," in Lange, *Writings*, 24–81.

questions about the Hebrew text, and even some Latin texts presuppose a vocalization that differs from MT. Where Hebrew evidence from Qumran is relevant, the scrolls are cited according to *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (ed. Ulrich, 2013).

In addition to MT and Qumran Hebrew readings, other witnesses to the Hebrew include Cairo Genizah manuscripts (cited from BHS), the Arabic version (cited from BHS), the Syriac Peshitta (cited from the Leiden Peshitta Institute edition, 1980), and the Aramaic Targums (cited from the edition of White, 1988).

#### 4.2. The Greek Text of the Psalms

Various Greek readings are discussed in *Ep.* 106. Typically, Jerome reports the Greek text as quoted by Sunnia and Fretela, who appealed to the Greek as the basis for their criticism of the Gallican Psalter. Jerome either accepts the Greek as given and defends his version based on translation principles, or else he rejects their “popular” Greek text in favor of the “hexaplaric” Greek text that underlies the Gallican Psalter. In order to set Jerome’s comments in their context and clarify the logic of his arguments, I identify (as much as possible) the Greek readings cited in *Ep.* 106 with reference to major witnesses to the Septuagint. Generally speaking, I do not attempt to reconstruct the Old Greek reading, although I sometimes need to distinguish between the prerevised Greek text and the corrected form. Moreover, my analysis of Greek witnesses is not systematic enough to allow for any conclusions about the affiliations between witnesses, although I hope that my analysis will make it easier for Septuagint scholars to integrate *Ep.* 106 into the history of the Greek Psalter. Below (introduction, §5.1) I present what conclusions I can based on my comparison of *Ep.* 106 with the Greek evidence. It should be clear from the commentary that the readings presented by Jerome in this treatise map directly to the actual state of the Greek text of the book of Psalms in Jerome’s time.

The Greek Psalter is attested by more manuscripts than any other book of the Greek Bible.<sup>35</sup> Most scholars place the translation of the Greek Psalter in the second century BCE, although some favor the first century BCE.

---

35. On the current state of scholarship on the Greek Psalter, see James K. Aitkin, “Psalms,” in *The T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint*, ed. James K. Aitkin (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 320–34; Jannes Smith, “Psalms: 10.3.1 Septuagint,” in Lange, *Writings*, 82–88; and Eberhard Bons and Ralph Brucker, “*Psalmoi*/The Book



The translator of Greek Psalms apparently made use of the Greek Pentateuch and therefore came later than the Greek Pentateuch. Translation technique studies support the conclusion that one translator is responsible for the entire Greek Psalter. Most scholars view Egypt as the likely place of origin, but others have suggested that the translation was made in Palestine.<sup>36</sup> Overall, the Greek book of Psalms is a relatively literal representation of its Hebrew *Vorlage* (e.g., word order, lexical correspondence), which is close to the MT. Certain Hebraizing features of the Greek Psalms resemble translation techniques associated with the so-called kaige movement, although the Greek Psalter appears to be an independent work that predates the activity of kaige revision.<sup>37</sup> The general closeness of the Greek

---

of Psalms,” in *Introduction to the Septuagint*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, trans. David A. Brenner and Peter Altmann (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2019), 297–316.

36. One piece of evidence cited in favor of Palestine as the place where the Greek Psalter was produced is Jerome’s comment in *Ep.* 65.14.7 that there is a word *βάρης* (often “boat”) used “up to today” in Palestine for buildings that are enclosed all around and fortified with walls and towers. Jerome does not say anything about how the word is used elsewhere, but if one takes the meaning “boat” to reflect Egyptian usage (see LSJ, s.v. “*βάρης*”: “flat-bottomed boat, used in Egypt”) and Jerome’s “fortified building” to reflect Palestinian usage, then, because this word appears in the Greek Psalter with the meaning “palace, fortress” (LXX Ps 44:9; 47:4, 14), one might conclude that the Greek Psalter was translated in Palestine. Jerome’s comment, however, should not be pressed too far. It would hardly be surprising if a “Palestinian” word usage was employed by Jewish biblical translators in Egypt (or elsewhere). Furthermore, even if Jerome’s knowledge of linguistic usage is relatively accurate (Jerome lived for a brief time in Egypt and was fluent in Greek), one can hardly expect him to possess exhaustive information about how a given word was used in all other regions and in previous centuries. In reality, Jerome’s comment in *Ep.* 65.14.7 suggests nothing more than that there was a word *βάρης* used in Palestine with the meaning “fortified building.” One cannot conclude from this that *βάρης* was not used in this sense elsewhere.

37. See Peter J. Gentry, “The Greek Psalter and the *καίγε* Tradition: Methodological Questions,” in *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honor of Albert Pietersma*, ed. Robert J. V. Hiebert, Claude E. Cox, and Peter J. Gentry (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001), 74–97. It should be noted that Eugene Ulrich explains the overall closeness of Greek Psalms witnesses to the proto-MT by positing that the Old Greek (now mostly lost) has secondarily been brought into conformity with the Hebrew; see Eugene Ulrich, “The Dead Sea Scrolls and Their Implications for an Edition of the Septuagint Psalter,” in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Udo Quast (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 323–36. Of course, adjustments of the Old Greek toward the Hebrew are at least part of the broader transmission picture for the Greek Psalter.



Psalter to the MT does not preclude the existence of numerous differences in individual passages between the Greek and Hebrew witnesses due to factors such as translation mistakes, interpretive renderings, scribal errors in transmission, editorial activity (e.g., hexaplaric insertions), and differences in the underlying Hebrew. Most Septuagint scholars operate as if the Old Greek translation can be reconstructed from the surviving evidence. On the positive side, there are a great many witnesses. On the negative side, the manuscripts offer a plethora of different readings.

The primary resource for information about the text of the Greek Psalter is Rahlfs's Göttingen edition, *Psalmi cum Odis* (1931, 3rd ed. 1979). I supplemented Rahlfs's apparatus with the following resources: (1) P.Bod 24 (third century CE), edited by Kasser and Testuz; (2) P.Oxy. 5101 (first–second century CE), edited by Colomo and Henry; (3) Origen's new homilies on the Psalms, edited by Perrone; (4) new fragments preserved for Didymus of Alexandria's commentary on the Psalms; (5) more extensive interaction with sources representing the Vetus Latina (see introduction, §4.3); and (6) wider engagement with Greek exegetical sources, especially through modern editions of Catenae.<sup>38</sup>

The theoretical framework that Rahlfs employed to organize his textual witnesses has received considerable attention. Many of his basic insights remain starting points for discussion. Rahlfs grouped his witnesses into six categories. On one side are three groups of early witnesses, and on the other side are two groups of later witnesses. Outside of this continuum is a group of purportedly mixed texts.<sup>39</sup>

---

38. The most important catena source for the Psalms is the Palestinian Catena (sixth century), which preserves exegetical extracts for Eusebius of Caesarea, Didymus of Alexandria, Theodoret, Origen, John Chrysostom, Apollinaris of Laodicea, and some others. Difficulties in relying on this material include the ancient compiler's practice of abridging sources and mistakes in the manuscripts regarding attributions. Attributions confirmed in modern editions (e.g., Curti, Mühlenberg) are more reliable than attributions based on older collections (e.g., Eusebius in PG 23). On the sources consulted for this commentary, see the bibliography. On the Psalms Catenae, see Carmelo Curti and Maria A. Barbàra, "Greek Exegetical Catenae," in *Patrology: The Eastern Fathers from the Council of Chalcedon (451) to John of Damascus (†750)*, ed. Angelo Di Berardino, trans. Adrian Walford. (Cambridge: James Clarke, 2006), 605–26; and Natalio F. Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible*, trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 287–301.

39. See Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Psalmi cum Odis*, 3rd ed., SVTG 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 21–71.