Why did Jerome Translate Tobit and Judith?*

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Jerome translated the Hebrew Bible into Latin over a decade and a half beginning in about 390 C.E. With each translation he included a preface dedicating (in most cases) the translation to a friend or patron and defending his reliance on what he called the *hebraica veritas (Hebrew truth)* against his many detractors. This last feature of the prefaces proved necessary because by choosing the Hebrew text of the Old Testament as his base text, Jerome directly challenged the traditional position of the Septuagint within the church. The unpopularity of this move in some circles compelled Jerome repeatedly to justify his adherence to the Hebrew text.[1] Similarly, in his *Preface to Samuel and Kings* (the "Helmeted Preface" or *Prologus galeatus*) he famously advocated the Hebrew canon as the Christian Old Testament and relegated all other books to the apocrypha.[2] As part of this latter category, Jerome named six books outside the Jewish canon that were finding acceptance as fully canonical in some quarters and would much later receive the label "deuterocanonical," these books being Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon,

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[1] A fundamental study is Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the "Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim"* (Oxford Classical Monographs; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

[2] *Prol. gal.* 52–57. The line numbers of Jerome's Vulgate prefaces are cited according to *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem* (ed. Robert Weber and Roger Gryson; 5th ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007). On this passage in the *Prol. gal.*, see Edmon L. Gallagher, "The Old Testament 'Apocrypha' in Jerome's Canonical Theory," *JECS* 20 (2012) 213–33.

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Sirach, and 1 and 2 Maccabees.[3] In multiple ways Jerome sought to restore the Christian Old Testament to what he considered the original Hebrew text and canon.

Thus, it may cause some surprise to find among Jerome's translations one for Tobit and one for Judith. It is interesting both that he translated these two books despite his calling them at one time "apocryphal" and that he chose only these two deuterocanonical books as objects of translation. Jerome did actually translate other portions of the deuterocanon; he included the additions to Esther and Daniel in his translations of those books. However, in both of these instances, he explains that these additions do not share the value of the protocanonical portions of these books, and so he prefixed them with their "death-warrant," the obelus. Also, in reference to Daniel's additions, he claims that he feared that had he omitted these passages his detractors would accuse him of ignorance.[4] Such an explanation will hardly work for his translations of Tobit and Judith, and Jerome does not offer it. But his prefaces to these books do give an ambiguous representation of what Jerome was trying to accomplish with his translations. This paper will explore Jerome's attitude toward the books of Tobit and Judith and attempt to unravel how he characterizes the translations in his prefaces. An appendix includes a translation of both prefaces.

Introduction to Jerome's Translation of Tobit and Judith

Jerome cultivated a rather complex relationship toward the deuterocanonical books. On the one hand, as we have seen, he regarded the six Old Testament books listed in *Prologus galeatus* 52–57 as outside the biblical canon, and he apparently felt that he had to stress this on certain occasions, to the point of denigrating these works, such as calling them "apocryphal." On the other hand, he felt free on other occasions to offer a more positive assessment of their value. Throughout his career, Jerome cites from all of these books.[5] In his *Preface to the Books of Solomon*, he again lists the same six Old Testament books he earlier declared outside the canon

[3] On the collection of these six books, see Edmon L. Gallagher, "Jerome's *Prologus Galeatus* and the OT Canon of North Africa," in *Papers Presented at the Sixteenth International Conference on Patristic Studies Held in Oxford 2011* (ed. Markus Vinzent; StPatr 69; Louvain: Peeters, 2013) 99–106.

[4] *Praef. Dan.* 20–43; see also Jerome's colophon to the protocanonical portion of Esther, where he says that he has not found the additions in Hebrew, so he will provide them each with a prefixed obelus (*Biblia Sacra* [ed. Weber and Gryson], 724). And see Michael Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on his "Commentary on Jeremiah"* (VCSup 90; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 69–70; Edmon L. Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture in Patristic Biblical Theory: Canon, Language, Text* (VCSup 114; Leiden: Brill, 2012) 98–101. For the term "death-warrant" in relation to the obelus, see Patrick W. Skehan, "St. Jerome and the Canon of the Holy Scriptures," in *A Monument to St. Jerome: Essays on Some Aspects of His Life, Works, and Influence* (ed. Francis X. Murphy; New York: Sheed & Ward, 1952) 257–87, at 281.

[5] See the collection of citations in Ludwig Schade, *Die Inspirationslehre des heiligen Hieronymus. Eine biblisch-geschichtliche Studie* (Biblische Studien 15.4–5; Freiburg: Herder, 1910) 182–205. He lists, if I have counted correctly, eighty-four citations of Wisdom of Solomon, seventy of Sirach, four of Tobit (one is dubious: Tob 4:16 in *Comm. Matt.* 21:28–32), eight of Judith, sixteen of 1 Maccabees, three of 2 Maccabees, and an additional three of the Maccabean books in general.

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(*Prol. gal.* 52–57), but here he advises his readers that these books are read in the church for the edification of the people, even though they cannot establish dogma (*Praef. libr. Sal.* 19–21). This way of putting the matter sounds very much like the discourse of Rufinus, for whom the same six Old Testament books feature in a special collection of noncanonical literature useful to the church and used in the liturgy. Rufinus calls these books "ecclesiastical" and says that they are appointed for reading in churches but not for confirming articles of faith (*Symb.* 36). Jerome does not have a particular name for the category containing these books, but he clearly regards them as edifying religious literature despite their noncanonicity. And so, Jerome can speak both positively and negatively about these books, depending on the occasion. We will see both attitudes in the prefaces to Tobit and Judith.

Jerome dedicated the translations of Tobit and Judith to Chromatius and Heliodorus, bishops of Aquileia and Altinum, respectively. Or, at least, he dedicated the Tobit translation to these men. The Judith preface contains no dedication and no explicit note that it is to be linked to the Tobit translation. One might conceive that they were translated at different times for different people.[6] However, it is almost universally assumed that Jerome did work on Tobit and Judith at the same time, as companion translations for Chromatius and Heliodorus.[7] The prefaces especially give this impression. In both prefaces, Jerome describes the respective books as written in the Chaldean language (i.e., Aramaic), he says that the Jews classify them as *agiografa* (*Praef. Tob.* 5; *Praef. Jdt.* 1), he complains about the "demand" (exactio; *Praef. Tob.* 2; *Praef. Jdt.* 5) to translate the books, and he claims to have devoted exceedingly little time to the work (*Praef. Tob.* 10; *Praef. Jdt.* 6). There are some differences: the lack of a dedication in the Judith preface, and a description of the translation procedure in the Tobit preface (see below), also absent from the Judith preface. But several features of the Judith preface indicate that it probably accompanied Tobit. The lack of a dedication, while not unique, is peculiar and would make better sense if Tobit and Judith traveled together.[8] Moreover, Jerome's reference to "your (pl.) petition" (postulationi vestrae; *Praef. Jdt.* 5) has no antecedent in the Judith preface itself and so it seems to look back to the dedicatees of the Tobit preface.[9] Finally, Jean-Marie Auwers has recently suggested that the "men" whom Jerome imagines learning from Judith's example

[6] Migne (PL 29:40 note g) mentions some authors who thought that Judith was translated for Paula and Eustochium and thus did not accompany the translation of Tobit.

[7] See Carey A. Moore, *Tobit: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 40A; New York: Doubleday, 1996) 53; and Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, *Judith* (VL 7.2; Freiburg: Herder, 2001) 30, 32, who believes the one was translated immediately after the other. Görge K. Hasselhoff places the Judith translation some years after the Tobit translation but fails to argue for this position ("Revising the Vulgate: Jerome and his Jewish Interlocutors," *ZRGG* 64 [2012] 209–21, at 217).

[8] Other Vulgate prefaces without a dedication include *Praef. Jer.*, *Praef. Ezek.*, and *Praef. Job*. For a helpful chart of Jerome's translations (including non-scriptural translations) and the persons to whom they are dedicated, see Alfons Fürst, *Hieronymus. Askese und Wissenschaft in der Spätantike* (Freiburg: Herder, 2003) 86–87.

[9] Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 87 n. 139.

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(*Praef. Jdt.* 10) may well be Chromatius and Heliodorus.[10] These features of the Judith preface, along with the similarities between the two prefaces noted earlier, indicate that we have a single date and set of recipients for both translations.[11] This widely accepted position will serve as the basis for some of our comments in this paper.

Thus, Jerome probably sent these translations together to Chromatius and Heliodorus, just as these same bishops had also requested new translations of the Books of Solomon (*Praef. libr. Sal.* 1). As patrons of Jerome's scholarship (*Praef. libr. Sal.* 4–6), they could exert some influence on the direction of the latter's work.[12] In fact, Jerome implies that he would have translated neither Tobit nor Judith had these bishops not repeatedly demanded it. He performs his task only to please them and not with his own "enthusiasm" (*studium*; *Praef. Tob.* 6). He expresses surprise that his patrons should so insist upon Latin versions of books composed in Chaldean (*Praef. Tob.* 2–3; *Praef. Jdt.* 2–5), and he hurries through the work as quickly as possible (*Praef. Tob.* 10; *Praef. Jdt.* 6). In answer to the question posed in the title of this paper, Jerome says he was forced to translate Tobit and Judith by Chromatius and Heliodorus.

However, there are reasons to doubt that this provides the full answer to our question. First, the description of a literary work as satisfying a demand from the dedicatee(s) conforms to a topos common in prefaces of the period.[13] Most of the time such a statement seeks to explain why the author would undertake the daunting task requested, despite some deficiency in skill or knowledge.[14] Jerome, on the other hand, gives more stress in these prefaces to the deficiency of the requested task. Nevertheless, the characterization of these translations as complying with a command from Chromatius and Heliodorus should cause no surprise and cannot be understood as necessarily reflecting accurately Jerome's own attitude.

Second, a strictly negative interpretation of the prefaces renders them a curious introduction of a literary project to the world, as if Jerome did not desire for his

[10] Jean-Marie Auwers, "Chromace d'Aquilée et le texte biblique," in *Chromatius of Aquileia and His Age: Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Aquileia, 22–24 May 2008* (ed. Pier Franco Beatrice and Alessio Peršič; Instrumenta patristica et mediaevalia 57; Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2011) 343–59, at 344 n. 8. See Migne's note at PL 29:40 note g.

[11] For more on the similarities between the prefaces, see Bogaert, *Judith*, 30–32; J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975) 284 n. 9; and Christian J. Wagner, *Polyglotte Tobit-Synopse. Griechisch, Lateinisch, Syrisch, Hebräisch, Aramäisch, mit einem Index zu den Tobit-Fragmenten vom Toten Meer* (MSU 28; Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse 3/258; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003) xxviii n. 73.

[12] On Jerome's patrons generally, see Megan Hale Williams, *The Monk and the Book: Jerome and the Making of Christian Scholarship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) 233–60, though Chromatius and Heliodorus, as minor patrons, receive no attention in the chapter.

[13] Tore Janson, *Latin Prose Prefaces: Studies in Literary Conventions* (Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis: Studia latina Stockholmiensia 13; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1964) 117–20.

[14] Ibid., 120–41.

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version of Tobit and Judith to find an audience. But, alongside the admittedly negative statements about Tobit and Judith in the prefaces, more positive elements appear, as we will see in the final section of this paper. Recognizing the positive and negative elements in Jerome's prefaces helps us to appreciate the challenge before him of producing a version of these books considered by some to be canonical but by the translator to be noncanonical but useful.

Third, the versions themselves belie the conclusion that Jerome worked only out of obedience to the bishops. In truth, assessing Jerome's literary achievement in his work on Tobit and Judith proves exceedingly difficult due in part to the numerous complex problems presented by the textual histories of both books, to which Jerome's versions add yet more difficulties. A brief survey of the textual terrain may prove helpful: Tobit comes to us in five Qumran fragments (four in Aramaic, one in Hebrew), three different major Greek recensions—long, short, and intermediate—and an Old Latin tradition that, while originally unified, quickly developed into several distinct forms, not to mention the medieval Hebrew and Aramaic texts at hand.[15] Judith presents different problems: Qumran yielded no fragments; however, the Greek tradition is somewhat more unified than that of Tobit, and a good argument can be made that this was the original language for

[15] On the text of Tobit, see Robert Hanhart, *Text und Textgeschichte des Buches Tobit* (MSU 17; Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse 3/139; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1984); Michaela Hallermayer, *Text und Überlieferung des Buches Tobit* (Deuterocanonical and Cognate Literature Studies 3; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2008). Two synopses are available: Stuart D. Weeks, Simon Gathercole, and Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Tobit: Texts from the Principal Ancient and Medieval Traditions, with Synopsis, Concordances, and Annotated Texts in Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Syriac* (Fontes et subsidia ad Bibliam pertinentes 3; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); Wagner, *Polyglotte Tobit-Synopse*. On the VL of Tobit, see Jean-Marie Auwers, "La tradition vieille latine du livre de Tobie. Un état de la question," in *The Book of Tobit: Text, Tradition, Theology; Papers of the First International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Pápa, Hungary, 20–21 May, 2004* (ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; JSJSup 98; Leiden: Brill, 2005) 1–21. According to Auwers, despite the present textual confusion of the VL, "il y a lieu de poser une traduction unique, antérieure à Cyprien, qui la cite sous une forme déjà corrompue. Rien ne permet de mettre en doute l'origine africaine et chrétienne de cette traduction" (12); see also Simon Gathercole, "Tobit in Spain: Some Preliminary Comments on the Relations between the Old Latin Witnesses," in *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (ed. Mark Bredin; Library of Second Temple Studies 55; New York: T&T Clark, 2006) 5–11. On the six Hebrew and Aramaic versions of Tobit dating to medieval times, see Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Stuart D. Weeks, "The Medieval Hebrew and Aramaic Texts of Tobit," in *Intertextual Studies in Ben Sira and Tobit: Essays in Honor of Alexander A. Di Lella, O.F.M.* (ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp; CBQMS 38; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2005) 71–86.

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the book.[16] We also have later Jewish forms of the Judith story.[17] How much of this was familiar to Jerome we cannot say, but his versions do not line up precisely with any of the other available text forms. In particular, his translations for both books contain several distinctive pluses in comparison to the other extant forms of these books, whether the LXX, the VL, or other. Some of these Vulgate expansions give stress to pet topics of our ascetic monk, such as the statement that Tobias and Sarah spent three days in prayer after their nuptials before they consummated their marriage (Tob 8:4), or the emphasis in Jerome's Judith on her chastity (Jdt 15:11; 16:26) and devotion to prayer.[18] While the origins of these pluses are obscure, their occasional correspondence with Jerome's views indicates that they may, in part, be due to his own ingenuity.[19] If this is the case, then these translations of Tobit and Judith reveal Jerome's attempt to use them as a means to advance certain of his own views, and thus he obviously wanted people to read and profit from them. He did work from his own *studium*, after all.

Finally, Jerome's Vulgate prefaces in general—and certainly this applies to Tobit and Judith—do not necessarily provide straightforward representations of his working procedure.[20] For instance, Jerome claims to have accomplished his work on Tobit in a single day (*Praef. Tob.* 10), and in a single night for Judith (*Praef.*

[16] On the textual history of Judith, see Robert Hanhart, *Text und Textgeschichte des Buches Judith* (MSU 14; Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse 3/109; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979). It has usually been assumed that Judith was composed in Hebrew; see Carey A. Moore, *Judith: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 40B; New York: Doubleday, 1985) 66–67. For arguments that Greek may have been the original language of Judith, see Jan Joosten, "The Original Language and Historical Milieu of the Book of Judith," *Meghillot* 5–6 (2008) *159–*176; Jeremy Corley, "Septuagintalisms, Semitic Interference, and the Original Language of the Book of Judith," in *Studies in the Greek Bible: Essays in Honor of Francis T. Gignac, S.J.* (ed. Jeremy Corley and Vincent Skemp; CBQMS 44; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2008) 65–96; and the literature cited by Deborah Levine Gera, "The Jewish Textual Traditions," in *The Sword of Judith: Judith Studies across Disciplines* (ed. Kevin R. Brine, Elena Ciletti, and Henrike Lähnemann; Cambridge, U.K.: OpenBook, 2010) 23–39, at 25 n. 6.

[17] On these accounts, see Gera, "Jewish Textual Traditions," 29–36, who says that extant Jewish literature knows of Judith only from the tenth century, and this via the Vulgate.

[18] See Vincent T. M. Skemp, "Learning by Example: *Exempla* in Jerome's Translations and Revisions of Biblical Books," *VC* 65 (2011) 257–84, at 267–71 (Judith) and 272–74 (Tobit). On Tob 8:4, see idem, *The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses* (SBLDS 180; Atlanta: SBL, 2000) 267.

[19] On the Tobit expansions, see Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 463–66, who will only say that the additions are likely due to a Christian. Johann Gamberoni says that Jerome gave his translation "eine persönliche theologische, hauptsächlich moralische Ausrichtung" (*Die Auslegung des Buches Tobias. In der griechisch-lateinischen Kirche der Antike und der Christenheit des Westens bis um 1600* [SANT 21; Munich: Kösel, 1969] 97). On the other hand, Kelly warns that attributing "these expansions and re-writings" to Jerome "would be hazardous" (*Jerome*, 285). For a history of research on the Vulgate text of Tobit, see Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 6–14. Moore doubts that Jerome added to Judith because he did not add to other books of the Bible when translating (*Judith*, 99). At the same reference, see Moore's list of "more extended homiletical additions" in Jerome's Judith.

[20] On Tobit, see Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 15–16.

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Jdt. 6), but the translations demonstrate otherwise. Scholars have repeatedly shown that Jerome relied heavily on the VL for both of these books, as he himself almost admits in regard to Judith (*Praef. Jdt*. 7).[21] While such appropriation of a previously existing translation would have lightened the work, it also would have involved a process of cross-referencing that could not have been accomplished in the amount of time Jerome indicates. Moreover, as noted above, the Vulgate version of these books features certain expansions that probably derive in part from the translator himself, again indicating a longer period of activity than allowed for in the prefaces. Finally, his claim to have devoted extremely little time to the task is a literary topos that appears in the prefaces to several of his other works.[22] All of this suggests that we should accept with some caution Jerome's claim that the two bishops forced him to make these translations almost against his will. Jerome invested more of himself in these books than he was willing to reveal in the prefaces.

Tobit and Judith among the Deuterocanonicals

We have already seen that Jerome regarded six books as edifying literature suitable for the church but outside the canon. One side of our question, then, is why he translated only two of these books. This question will not receive a definitive answer.[23] In fact, Jerome cites Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach much more often than the other four deuterocanonical books, so that if one were to guess two noncanonical books to be candidates for translation by Jerome, it would certainly be these two. And yet, in his *Preface to the Books of Solomon*, also dedicated to Chromatius and Heliodorus, he describes them as edifying but not canonical, apparently as an explanation for why he will not translate these two other "Solomonic" books (*Praef. libr. Sal*. 13–21).[24] In this section we will look for reasons why Jerome chose to translate Tobit and Judith instead of any other deuterocanonical books. What aspects of these two books distinguished them from the others in Jerome's mind?

[21] See Bogaert, *Judith*, 32. Skemp notes that the Vulgate Tobit often reproduces the VL (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 455–57), as do some of Jerome's other translations (ibid., 24–25).

[22] Skehan, "Jerome and the Canon," 287 n. 26; Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 20–21. Nevertheless, C. J. Ball says that Jerome may have meant that he produced only the first draft in the specified amount of time ("Judith," in *The Holy Bible, according to the Authorized Version (A.D. 1611), with an Explanatory and Critical Commentary and a Revision of the Translation: Apocrypha* [ed. Henry Wace; 2 vols.; Speaker's Commentary; London: Murray, 1888] 1:243). Skehan points out that Jerome would not have been unfamiliar with the text of Tobit or Judith ("Jerome and the Canon," 287 n. 26).

[23] The fact that he translated only Tobit and Judith is enough to discredit the statement of Skemp: "Jerome was required to translate these books because his Church read them" (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 17 n. 82)—they also read the other four deuterocanonical books.

[24] Did Chromatius and Heliodorus request translations of Wisdom of Solomon and Sirach? These featured—along with Tobit and Judith and the books of Maccabees—in the liturgy, at least at Aquileia (the episcopal see of Chromatius), as attested by Rufinus (*Symb*. 36); see J. N. D. Kelly, *Rufinus: A Commentary on the Apostles' Creed* (ACW 20; New York: Newman, 1954) 21: Rufinus's views on the biblical canon likely "reflect the dogmatic position of the Aquileian church." The liturgical use of these books perhaps explains why Chromatius and Heliodorus requested versions of Tobit and Judith.

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Original Language of Tobit and Judith

One distinction Jerome does make in regard to these books is their language of composition. He says of both 1 Maccabees (*Prol. gal.* 55–56) and Sirach (*Praef. libr. Sal.* 14–17) that he has seen copies in Hebrew, which he no doubt regarded as the original language for these books. On the other hand, he judges on philological grounds that both 2 Maccabees (*Prol. gal.* 56–57) and Wisdom of Solomon (*Praef. libr. Sal.* 17–19) were originally composed in Greek. He seems to think that this provides an argument against their canonicity, which is not surprising in view of his unswerving allegiance to the *hebraica veritas*. As for Tobit and Judith, in his prefaces to these two books he mentions that he is working from a copy written in a language that he calls "Chaldean," that is, (some form of) Aramaic, and he apparently thinks that this is the original language for these books (*Praef. Tob.* 2–3; *Praef. Jdt.* 2–3).[25] This tells against their worthiness for translation, as he expresses surprise, or even disdain, that he would be asked to translate books written in this language.[26]

Whether we can trust Jerome about these Chaldean *Vorlagen* has been a debated issue in scholarship. Despite the cautions we have already expressed about taking Jerome's prefaces at face value, there is in fact little reason to doubt that a Jewish community in Jerome's day had in its possession a reworked Aramaic copy of Tobit and an Aramaic copy of Judith. Granted, the copy of Tobit serving as Jerome's *Vorlage* would have to have been quite different from the Qumran Aramaic copies.[27] But recent scholarship has emphasized repeatedly that ancient Jews regularly produced revised editions of their literature.[28] A Jewish community in Jerome's day possessing a revised Aramaic copy of Tobit does not seem at all unlikely. What about Judith? It was certainly written by a Jew, whatever the original language may have been. Even if it was composed in Greek, it is possible that Jerome had access

[25] On Jerome's use of the term "Chaldean" for biblical Aramaic, see Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 126 n. 72. According to Skemp: "It is clear from the letter to Bishops Chromatius and Heliodorus that Jerome considered Aramaic the original language of Tobit" (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 24).

[26] Contra Otto Wermelinger, "Le canon des Latins au temps de Jérôme et d'Augustin," in *Le Canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire* (ed. Jean-Daniel Kaestli and Otto Wermelinger; Le Monde de la Bible 10; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1984) 152–96, who says that Jerome translated Tobit and Judith (and the additions to Daniel!) because they partook of the *chaldaica veritas* (191 and n. 157). On the relationship in Jerome's mind between Tobit and Judith's language of composition and their canonicity, see Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 138–41.

[27] Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 466–67: "Jerome's Aramaic *Vorlage* differed considerably from the extant Qumran Aramaic fragments."

[28] One thinks especially of the category "rewritten scripture," on which see recently Molly M. Zahn, "Genre and Rewritten Scripture: A Reassessment," *JBL* 131 (2012) 271–88. On ancient Jewish revisions of literature, see also, e. g., David M. Carr, *The Formation of the Hebrew Bible: A New Reconstruction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Kristin De Troyer, *Rewriting the Sacred Text: What the Old Greek Texts Tell Us about the Literary Growth of the Greek Bible* (Text-Critical Studies 4; Atlanta: SBL, 2003).

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to a Syriac translation, which became the basis for his own work.[29] At least, this has been suggested in recent scholarship.[30] While Origen says that the Jews known to him did not possess Tobit or Judith even in the apocrypha in Hebrew (*Ep. Afr.* 19), Jerome's information that some Jewish communities did possess Aramaic forms of these works seems plausible. To what extent Jerome's translations are actually dependent on these Chaldean *Vorlagen* is a difficult issue.[31] For now we can note that Jerome does not represent the original language of Tobit and Judith to be a point in favor of translation.

Date of the Translations

It might help us if we knew the dates of these translations. Unfortunately, we have almost no information in this regard. Jerome never mentions these two translations in his other writings. The period in which he was involved in translating the Hebrew Bible stretched from about 390 to 406. He could have worked on Tobit and Judith at almost any point during this period. He could not have worked on them much earlier than 390 or later than 406, in view of the life events of the two bishops to whom he dedicated the books. Chromatius only became bishop of Aquileia in 388, and both he and Heliodorus died about 407.[32]

Some scholars date these translations very early in this period, before 390. If so, then perhaps Jerome at one time planned to produce Latin versions of each of the deuterocanonical books but abandoned the project when he determined to focus exclusively on the *hebraica veritas*. This line of reasoning makes a great deal of sense if one accepts the older view that Jerome recognized the importance and authority of the Hebrew text and canon only shortly before he started to translate the Hebrew Bible into Latin. Would he have worked on Tobit and Judith after that point?[33] Problems attend this view, because scholars now generally recognize that

[29] Jerome was able to recognize the original Greek composition of Wisdom of Solomon and 2 Maccabees based on the style. If Judith was written in Greek, the style conformed so well with Semitic style that it fooled Jerome, just as it has then fooled the majority of modern scholars, who have typically posited a Semitic original.

[30] Joosten, "Original Language," *167; Bogaert, *Judith*, 32, who reports that the Syriac closely resembles the VL; see also Hasselhoff, "Revising the Vulgate," 217. However, Edwin Edgar Voigt denies that Jerome's *Vorlage* was related to the Syriac (*The Latin Versions of Judith* [Leipzig: Drugulin, 1925] 8).

[31] Auwers is very skeptical in regard to Tobit ("Chromace d'Aquilée," 355). Skemp is more open to the possibility (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 20), as is Moore (*Tobit*, 62).

[32] For brief surveys on these two bishops, see Edmund Venables, "Chromatius," *DCB* 1:503–4; William Henry Fremantle, "Heliodorus," *DCB* 2:887–88; Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 164–65, 182–83; and the sources cited in Bogaert, *Judith*, 31 n. 1.

[33] This line of reasoning is implicit in Jay Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel: A Study of Comparative Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Hebrew Bible* (CBQMS 7; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1978) 44–45. On the other hand, some scholars do not believe that Jerome ever truly adhered to the narrow canon; see Maurice E. Schild, *Abendländische Bibelvorreden bis zur Lutherbibel* (Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 39;

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Jerome actually affirmed the authority of the *hebraica veritas* even before his move to Bethlehem in 386, as it is evident in letters dating from his second stay in Rome (382–385), when he was serving as secretary to Pope Damasus.[34] But it has also been suggested that these translations date to early in Jerome's habitation in Bethlehem because, so it is thought, the *Preface to Tobit* implies that Jerome was at the time incompetent at the Chaldean language, whereas he knew this language well enough in the early 390's to translate Daniel. Thus, in Jerome's Tobit and Judith we might be dealing with translations dating before he learned Chaldean.[35] Perhaps, then, we can still attribute his translations of Tobit and Judith to an early plan to translate each of the deuterocanonicals, a plan aborted upon the decision to focus on the Hebrew canon.

There are at least a couple of problems with the view that these translations preceded his study of Chaldean. First, in a letter dating to the 370's (*Ep*. 17.2) Jerome describes how he struggled to acquaint himself with Syriac in the desert of Chalcis.[36] Whatever relationship Jerome saw between the languages he dubbed Syriac and Chaldean, there can be no doubt that they are both types of Aramaic. So it is nearly impossible to date the Tobit and Judith translations to a period when Jerome had not familiarized himself with this language but had already learned Hebrew. Second, Jerome does not actually say in the *Preface to Tobit* that he is incompetent at Chaldean. Instead, Jerome describes a peculiar translation procedure whereby he secured the services of an expert in Semitics to render orally the Chaldean text of Tobit into Hebrew, so that he could then translate orally this Hebrew into Latin, which a scribe then wrote down. While one explanation for this procedure would be an inability on the part of Jerome to understand the Chaldean, other explanations

Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1970) 29–30; Josef Lössl, "A Shift in Patristic Exegesis: Hebrew Clarity and Historical Verity in Augustine, Jerome, Julian of Aeclanum and Theodore of Mopsuestia," *AugStud* 32 (2001) 157–75, at 163–66.

[34] Kamesar, *Jerome*, 49–58; Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 102–6; Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 60–62; and Andrew Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford Early Christian Studies; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009) 53–67, 78–86.

[35] L. H. Cottineau, "Chronologie des versions bibliques de Saint Jérôme," in *Miscellanea Geronimiana. Scritti varii pubblicati nel XV centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo* (Rome: Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1920) 43–68, at 62; Hasselhoff, "Revising the Vulgate," 216–17 (in regard to Tobit only).

[36] On Jerome's knowledge of Aramaic, see Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 76–77; Daniel King, "*Vir Quadrilinguis*? Syriac in Jerome and Jerome in Syriac," in *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings and Legacy* (ed. Andrew Cain and Josef Lössl; Farnham, U.K.: Ashgate, 2009) 209–23. Jerome's description of himself as "vir trilinguis"—focusing on Latin, Greek, and Hebrew—neglects to embrace Aramaic as one of the languages he has mastered. This is probably because Jerome did not see the advantage in advertising himself as skilled in Aramaic. On the other hand, knowledge of Hebrew was central to his authority; see Williams, *Monk and the Book*, 123–31. Jerome perhaps thought that his authoritative knowledge of Hebrew was highlighted better by a reference to three languages than four.

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are also possible.[37] It especially seems odd that Jerome in this preface would want to admit linguistic incompetence preventing him from translating directly from the original language, a hallmark of his scholarship. We will explore later other possible causes for Jerome's decision to describe such a translation procedure in this preface. For now, we simply acknowledge that it does not offer a strong argument for dating these translations early.

Most scholars instead prefer a somewhat later date.[38] Vincent Skemp argues from variations in Jerome's translation technique for assigning the translations to the period 396–407.[39] He relies on work done several decades ago by Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, who determined that Jerome's translation technique evolved from fairly literal in the early years to much more dynamic near the turn of the fifth century.[40] Since Tobit and Judith are decidedly dynamic translations, Skemp reasons that they properly belong in this later period.[41] But the argument appears flawed. Jerome famously declares in *Epistle* 57.5, dating to 395, that, although sense-for-sense translations are to be preferred almost always, in the case of Scripture word-for-word translations are best, because the very order of the words is a mystery. Jerome wrote *Epistle* 57 at a time, ironically, when he was becoming freer in his scriptural translations.[42] This suggests that even if Jerome did not follow his theory in practice, he still wanted to advertise his biblical translations as "literal."[43] For instance, Jerome translated Esther very late in his translation career (ca. 405), and he produced a paraphrastic translation in places, but he still asserts in the preface that it is a "word-for-word" translation (*verbum e verbo*; *Praef. Esth.* 2). And yet, in the Judith preface, Jerome readily admits that he translated the book "more sense for sense than word for word" (*Praef. Jdt.* 6–7). It seems that Jerome drew a theoretical distinction between Judith and other scriptural books in terms of the suitability of a sense-for-sense translation; presumably for Judith, and Tobit also,

[37] See Friedrich Stummer, *Einführung in die lateinische Bibel* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1928) 94; Gamberoni *Auslegung des Buches Tobias*, 74: "Jedoch können auch Bequemlichkeit, Eile, geringes Interesse an dieser aus Rücksicht auf Freunde unternommenen Arbeit sowie die oft beklagten Krankheiten und der Zustand seiner Augen ihn zu diesem Weg bewogen haben."

[38] Sometimes this view comes unaccompanied by argumentation; see, e.g., Ball, "Judith," 243; Moore, *Judith*, 96, both of whom give the date of 398. For some proposed dates (and reasons), see Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 16 n. 80.

[39] Vincent T. M. Skemp, "Jerome's Tobit: A Reluctant Contribution to the Genre Rewritten Bible," *RBén* 112 (2002) 5–35 at 8.

[40] Benjamin Kedar-Kopfstein, "The Vulgate as a Translation: Some Semantic and Syntactical Aspects of Jerome's Version of the Hebrew Bible" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1968) 284–85.

[41] Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 27–28.

[42] See again Kedar-Kopfstein, "Vulgate as a Translation," 284, and compare the chronology of the translations as listed on p. 55. See also Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 88–90. On Jerome's statements regarding translation of scripture in *Ep.* 57.5, see esp. G. J. M. Bartelink, *Hieronymus. Liber de optimo genere interpretandi (Epistula 57). Ein Kommentar* (Leiden: Brill, 1980) 44–47.

[43] For a partial exception, see *Praef. Job* 16, where Jerome says that his translation "nunc verba, nunc sensus, nunc simul utrumque resonabit."

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the very order of the words was not so mysterious. Since these books did not require a literal translation even theoretically, the paraphrastic version offered by Jerome could presumably fit at any point in his career, regardless of the translation style he happened to be employing for canonical books at the time. And so the argument for a later date based on a comparison of translation techniques with other Vulgate books may be illegitimate.

Johann Gamberoni supplies the best argument on behalf of a later date in Jerome's translating career. He interprets the tone and content of the prefaces as expressive of a time not when Jerome is engaged in translating the Septuagint (as he did in the late 380's and perhaps early 390's), but rather when the translations from the *hebraica veritas* had already become well known.[44] He suggests a date of about 405, and in this he is followed by Jerome's best-known biographer in English, J. N. D. Kelly.[45] The significance of this date for our immediate purposes is that of a negative conclusion: the reason Jerome translated Tobit and Judith and not the other deuterocanonical books was not because he abandoned a project of translating the deuterocanonical literature when he determined to work exclusively from the *hebraica veritas*. We will later see that this date can play a part in interpreting the translation procedure described by Jerome.

Tobit and Judith as Ancient Israelite Literature

An examination of Jerome's comments on Tobit and Judith may reveal his attitude toward these books and in turn shed light on his decision to translate them. Aside from the *Preface to Tobit* itself, Jerome mentions Tobit by name five times in his writings.[46] Two of these we have already had occasion to notice: Jerome declares Tobit to be among the apocrypha in the *Prologus galeatus*, but he allows for the church to read Tobit in the *Preface to the Books of Solomon*. Something very similar to what we read in the latter preface is contained in the prologue to Jerome's *Commentary on Jonah* (both were written in 396): he quotes the short Greek form of Tob 14:3–4, but precedes this with the comment: "although it is not in the canon, nevertheless it is used by ecclesiastical men." Earlier he had quoted Tob 12:7 in his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*. Finally, in 407, in his *Commentary on Daniel*, Jerome uses Tobit for information about angels. Here, he adds the line, "if it pleases

[44] Gamberoni, *Auslegung des Buches Tobias*, 74.

[45] Kelly, *Jerome*, 284; also Ferdinand Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme. Sa vie et son œuvre, première partie* (2 vols.; Spicilegium sacrum lovaniense 1–2; Paris: Champion, 1922) 1:291; Wagner, *Polyglotte Tobit-Synopse*, xxviii n. 71.

[46] *Comm. Eccl.* 8:2 (388/389 C.E.); *Prol. gal.* 52–57 (393 C.E.); *Praef. libr. Sal.* 19–21 (396 C.E.); *Comm. Jon.*, prol. (396 C.E.); and *Comm. Dan.* 8:16–17 (407 C.E.). Aside from these references, Schade also includes a quotation of Tob 4:16 in Jerome's *Comm. Matt.* 21:28–32 (398 C.E.) (*Inspirationslehre*, 193 [no. 157]). However, the alleged quotation is the negative of the Golden Rule ("quod tibi non vis fieri alteri non feceris"), which Jerome does not claim to be deriving from any particular source. Moreover, the correspondence with the Latin of Tob 4:16, whether of the VL or the Vulgate, is not very close.

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anyone to accept the Book of Tobit," but it seems clear that Jerome himself trusts the information he finds there.

As for Judith, aside from the preface to his translation, Jerome mentions her eight times in his writings.[47] Again, as with Tobit, these instances include the *Prologus galeatus* and the *Preface to the Books of Solomon*, discussed earlier. A couple of times Jerome declares Judith a type of the church in that she decapitates the enemies of the Lord (*Comm. Soph.*, prol.; *Ep.* 79.11). Elsewhere he holds her up as an example for widows, praises her chastity, and represents her as awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom (*Ep.* 54.16; *Ep.* 79.11).[48] There are also times when he offers a qualification as he does for Tobit (*Ep.* 54.16; *Comm. Agg.* 1:5).[49] But it never seems that Jerome doubts the information contained in the book. There are even a couple of times when he seems to imply that Judith herself wrote the book, as when he calls it "the book of a woman" (*Comm. Agg.* 1), or when he says that Judith gave her name to the book (*Ep.* 65.1).[50]

Apparently, Jerome regarded both Tobit and Judith as authentic ancient Israelite literature that gives an accurate account of the events it describes. This view of the books certainly commands a consensus in the patristic period. Apparently no father ever questioned the historical value of these books. Indeed, even Julius Africanus used Tobit as a historical source for the exile in his *Epistle to Origen* (§ 6), in which he argued against the authenticity of Susanna.[51] Now, Jerome never comments on what are commonly regarded as Judith's most egregious historical blunders, such as making Nebuchadnezzar the king of the Assyrians in the post-exilic period. Other fathers do mention these features and have ways of maintaining the historicity of

[47] *Ep.* 22.21 (384 C.E.); *Comm. Soph.*, prol. (393 C.E.); *Comm. Agg.* 1:5 (393 C.E.); *Prol. gal.* 52–57 (393 C.E.); *Ep.* 54.16 (394–95 C.E.); *Praef. libr. Sal.* 19–21 (396 C.E.); *Ep.* 65.1 (397 C.E.); and *Ep.* 79.11 (400 C.E.). I omit *Ruf.* 1.18, in which Jerome explicitly quotes Origen's *Miscellanies* (*Stromata*) in reference to Judith's example of telling lies.

[48] Other fathers also exalted Judith's example: see, e.g., Ambrose, *Virg.* 2.2.4; *Vid.* 7; and Paulinus of Nola, *Carmen* 26.159–165. On the Latin reception of Judith, especially by Prudentius, see Marc Mastrangelo, "Typology and Agency in Prudentius' Treatment of the Judith Story," in *Sword of Judith* (ed. Brine, Ciletti, and Lähnemann), 153–68.

[49] Oddly, Skemp interprets Jerome's phrase "si cui tamen placet uolumen recipere" (*Ep.* 54.16) as "an appeal for receiving the book [of Judith] as canonical" ("Learning by Example," 267). At *Comm. Agg.* 1:5, Jerome words the qualification this way: "si quis tamen uult librum recipere mulieris."

[50] W. P. Brown, "Judith, Book of," in *Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation* (ed. John H. Hayes; 2 vols.; Nashville: Abingdon, 1999) 1:647–50: "Indeed, Jerome's opinion was that the work was written by Judith herself" (647); see also Schade, *Inspirationslehre*, 182.

[51] See Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 31.

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Judith. For instance, Jerome's contemporary Sulpicius Severus explains the name "Nebuchadnezzar" as a nickname for a Persian king (*Chron*. 2.14).[52]

Thus, Jerome's view that Tobit and Judith contain accurate historical accounts from the biblical period was widely shared. This is certainly one way that Tobit and Judith distinguished themselves from the other deuterocanonical books, for it almost goes without saying that Jerome did not hold the same view with regard to the other four. It is not that he considered their content dubious, but rather that their date tells against them. Of course, he knew that 1 and 2 Maccabees could have been written no earlier than the Maccabean period, long after "biblical" history had come to a close.[53] Sirach also gives evidence of its late composition, whether in its Hebrew form (e.g., Sir 50:1, mentioning Simon son of Onias)—which Jerome claims to have seen (*Praef. libr. Sal*. 14–17)—or even more obviously in its Greek form with the famous prologue supplied by Sirach's grandson.[54] Finally, Jerome declares the Wisdom of Solomon to be a "pseudepigraphon" originally written in Greek and possibly authored by Philo (*Praef. libr. Sal*. 13, 17–19). Of the six deuterocanonical books that Jerome approves for Christian liturgy (*Praef. libr. Sal*. 19–21), to his mind only Tobit and Judith authentically represent ancient Israelite literature.

The Prefaces

Now we turn to the prefaces to see how Jerome characterizes these books and his translations of them. I have already noted that in both the Tobit preface and the Judith preface, Jerome expresses his displeasure at being forced (so he says) to translate a book written in the Chaldean language and not featuring in the Jewish biblical canon. He refuses to waste much time on the job, reserving only one day for Tobit and one night for Judith. In each preface, also, he offers some justification for following through with the request. For Tobit, he says that "it is better to displease the judgment of Pharisees and to be subject to the commands of bishops" (*Praef. Tob*. 7–8). For Judith, he says that "the Nicene Council is read [legitur] to have reckoned this book in the number of the sacred Scriptures" (*Praef. Jdt*. 3–4).

[52] On the assumed historical character of Judith, see also Sulpicius Severus, *Chron*. 2.12.1; 2.14; Augustine, *Civ*. 16.13; 18.26. Augustine places the events of Judith during the reign of Darius the Persian (*Civ*. 18.26), though he does not discuss the problem of the appearance of Nebuchadnezzar. Sulpicius thinks the king nicknamed Nebuchadnezzar was really Ochus, that is, Artaxerxes III (358–338 B.C.E.) (*Chron*. 2.14). See in general Anton Biolek, "Die Ansicht des christlichen Altertums über den literarischen Charakter des Buches Judith," *Weidenauer Studien* 4 (1911) 335–68.

[53] On the ancient conception of the age of prophecy, see, e.g., Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007) 252–64; Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 14–19.

[54] A few Greek minuscules lack this prologue; see Joseph Ziegler, *Sapientia Iesu Filii Sirach* (2nd ed.; Septuaginta 12.2; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1980) 123. Possibly the original Latin translation also lacked the prologue; see ibid., 14, 18–19; Donatien de Bruyne, "Le prologue, le titre et la finale de l'Ecclésiastique," *ZAW* 47 (1929) 257–63, esp. 259–60; cf., however, the cautions expressed by Walter Thiele, *Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)* (VL 11.2; Freiburg: Herder, 1987) 123.

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Actually, we have no record—other than this statement by Jerome—that the subject of the biblical canon was broached at Nicaea.[55] It would certainly be strange for the Nicene divines to have included Judith and not Tobit, if that is what we are to infer from Jerome's comments, and it would be stranger still for so many Greek and Latin fathers—including Athanasius (*Ep. fest.* 39), Gregory of Nazianzus (*Carmen* 1.12), Hilary of Poitiers (*Instr. Ps.* 15), all defenders of Nicaea—to have ignored completely the Nicene decision by continuing to exclude Judith from the canon, which they all did. Jerome himself is somewhat noncommittal on this point: he says that the Council "is read" to have taken this action. He may be referring to a statement made by Chromatius and Heliodorus themselves, or he may be referring to something like the *Apostolic Canons*, which does, in some manuscripts, contain Judith and not Tobit.[56] In any case, Jerome himself explicitly declares in his *Preface to the Books of Solomon* that the church has not received Judith as canonical.[57] But in the Judith preface, Jerome uses the vague reference to Nicaea to justify his work. That is, he uses what he must have regarded as dubious historical information to represent Judith in a positive light even as he professes himself annoyed by it.

Agiografa

A couple of other points in these prefaces also seem to cast favor upon Tobit and Judith and explain Jerome's translations of them. For instance, he says about both books that they are included by the Jews in a category called *agiografa* (*Praef. Tob.* 4–5: "quae agiografa memorant"; *Praef. Jdt.* 1: "apud Hebraeos"). This is a rare term in Latin; it does not occur before Jerome, and his usage clearly became the basis for the term's appearance in some later Fathers, including Cassiodorus (*Inst.* 1.3.4; 1.6.1; 1.12.1) and Isidore (*Etymolog.* 6.1.3; 6.1.7–8).[58] Jerome himself uses the word only seven times in his writings: in these two prefaces to Tobit and Judith, and then twice in the *Preface to Daniel* (46; 48) and three times in the *Prologus galeatus* (36, in Greek; 45, bis). In the *Preface to Daniel* and the *Prologus galeatus*—both written in the early 390's—the term refers to the third section of the Jewish canon, the Hagiographa (the first two being the Law and the Prophets). That cannot be what the term means in the prefaces to Tobit and Judith. Jerome says in the Tobit preface that the Jews have excluded Tobit "from the catalogue of

[55] A fact long noted; see Ball, "Judith," 243; Schade, *Inspirationslehre*, 172–73; and Ralph Hennings, *Der Briefwechsel zwischen Augustinus und Hieronymus und ihr Streit um den Kanon des Alten Testaments und die Auslegung von Gal. 2,11–14* (VCSup 21; Leiden: Brill, 1994) 195 n. 269.

[56] For the first suggestion, see Ball, "Judith," 243; for the second, see Bogaert, *Judith*, 31 and n. 2. On the textual variety of the *Apostolic Canons* at this point, see Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 26 and n. 47. The *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* also includes Judith in the canon and Tobit in the apocrypha.

[57] Pointed out by Braverman, *Jerome's Commentary on Daniel*, 45 n. 55.

[58] It appears that the use of the term in the *Praef. Tob.* and *Praef. Jdt.* had no effect on its later use, but rather it always subsequently referred to the third section of the Jewish canon, exclusive of Tobit and Judith.

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the divine Scriptures" and have placed it into this category of the *agiografa* (*Praef. Tob.* 4–5).[59] In the Judith preface, Jerome defines the *agiografa* as a category "whose authority is judged to be less suitable for determining those things that come into contention" (*Praef. Jdt.* 1–2), which resembles what he and others say about the noncanonical but useful books.[60]

It should be pointed out that Jerome does not say in these prefaces that the Jews include Tobit and Judith in the apocrypha, though this reading—*apocrypha* rather than *agiografa*—has been popularized through its inclusion in the text printed by Migne.[61] The textual evidence presented in the Roman edition of the Vulgate shows that almost all manuscripts contain the term *agiografa* in both prefaces.[62] The only reason to prefer the reading *apocrypha*, as Migne admits in his notes, is if it is thought that it alone makes sense in context.[63] Actually, it makes much less sense. Jerome would not have said that the Jewish *apocrypha* have less authority in deciding contentious matters; he would have said they have no authority. His definition of the term *apocrypha* was very similar to that of Athanasius (*Ep. fest.* 39.21–23) and Augustine (*Civ.* 15.23), who used the term to describe the dangerous books of the heretics.[64] On the other hand, the rarity of the term *agiografa* in Latin means that Jerome can define the word however he wants, and he does just that in the *Preface to Judith*. The reading *agiografa* is textually secure.

So, Jerome uses the term *agiografa* in two different ways in his writings.[65] In the *Preface to Daniel* and the *Prologus galeatus*, *agiografa* is the name for the third section of the Jewish canon. In the prefaces to Tobit and Judith, the *agiografa*

[59] Skemp points out that Jerome distinguishes the *agiografa* from the *divinae scripturae* (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 17).

[60] *Praef. libr. Sal.* 19–21; Rufinus, *Symb.* 36. Skemp (*Vulgate of Tobit*, 17) and Moore (*Tobit*, 62) think that *agiografa* here means "noncanonical"; see also Roger T. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1985) 392 and 428 n. 223 ("religious literature"). For a recent analysis of the function of this "third category" of religious literature (neither canonical nor apocryphal) in ancient Christianity, see François Bovon, "Beyond the Canonical and the Apocryphal Books, the Presence of a Third Category: The Books Useful for the Soul," *HTR* 105 (2012) 125–37.

[61] The reading is accepted in Cottineau, "Chronologie," 62; Gera, "Jewish Textual Traditions," 29 n. 20; and Elena Ciletti and Henrike Lähnemann, "Judith in the Christian Tradition," in *Sword of Judith* (ed. Brine, Ciletti, and Lähnemann) 41–65, at 43 and 44, who continue to rely on Migne's text. See Gallagher, "Old Testament 'Apocrypha,' " 226–27 n. 50.

[62] *Libri Ezrae Tobiae Iudith* (vol. 8 of *Biblia Sacra iuxta Latinam vulgatam versionem ad codicum fidem*; Rome: Tipografia poliglotta vaticana, 1950) 155 (Tob) and 213 (Jdt).

[63] See Migne's note at PL 29:23c–24a (quoting Jean Martianay) and 24b.

[64] See Gallagher, "Old Testament 'Apocrypha,' " 223–33. The paragraph numbers of Athanasius's *Ep. fest.* 39 follow those used in David Brakke, "A New Fragment of Athanasius's Thirty-Ninth *Festal Letter*: Heresy, Apocrypha, and the Canon," *HTR* 103 (2010) 47–66. On Augustine, see Finian D. Taylor, "Augustine of Hippo's Notion and Use of the Apocrypha" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 1978).

[65] If our dating of Jerome's Tobit and Judith translations is correct, these two uses are separated by about a decade.

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is a collection of noncanonical writings valued and read by Jews.[66] Jerome's employment of this term in reference to Tobit and Judith serves to increase the importance and relevance of his translations.

The Translation Procedure

Another interesting feature of Jerome's prefaces to these books is the way he describes his process of translation for Tobit, and presumably for Judith, also. At first Jerome seems to represent the Chaldean composition of Tobit as a negative point, somehow related to the Jewish exclusion of the book from the canon (*Praef. Tob.* 2–5). A few lines later in the preface, he reports that Chaldean and Hebrew are similar languages and that this has somehow allowed him to secure the services of someone competent in both languages, who translated into Hebrew so that Jerome could then translate into Latin (*Praef. Tob.* 8–11). Several features of this report are peculiar. First, Jerome's information that Chaldean and Hebrew are similar languages seems irrelevant to the point at hand. Second, the whole account sounds like an admission of incompetence on Jerome's part in regard to the Chaldean language.[67] We have already found reason to question this idea. Indeed, especially if the dating mentioned above is correct—sometime around the turn of the fifth century—then it is impossible to believe that Jerome would at this time have intended his readers to think that he could not read Chaldean. In his *Preface to Daniel* from the early 390's he describes the great difficulty he had in learning the Chaldean language in order to translate that book (*Praef. Dan.* 11–19). In 407, Jerome wrote a commentary on Daniel, in which he often mentions the Chaldean text and even refers to the *chaldaica veritas* (*Comm. Dan.* 5:11). In both of these instances, Jerome obviously intended his readers to understand that he was fully capable of reading the Chaldean language. If the translations of Tobit and Judith came sometime between Jerome's translation of Daniel and his commentary on Daniel (as is surely the case), then, no matter his actual abilities in Aramaic, he would not have wanted his readers to get the impression that he could not read the language.

A third peculiarity of Jerome's report of the translation procedure is that the linguistic assistant translated the text into Hebrew rather than into Greek. It could be that the purpose of this passage in the preface is to disparage the Book of Tobit: Jerome thought so little of the book that he did not even bother to read it in Chaldean.[68] But in that case, it should not really matter whether Jerome himself worked from Hebrew or Greek. So, why did the linguistic assistant translate into

[66] On the use of such literature among Jews, see Gilles Dorival, "Has the Category of 'Deuterocanonical Books' a Jewish Origin?," in *The Books of Maccabees: History, Ideology, Theology. Papers of the Second International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Pápa, Hungary, 9–11 June, 2005* (ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér; JSJSup 118; Leiden: Brill, 2007) 1–10.

[67] Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 19: "he was not proficient in Aramaic"; see also Moore, *Tobit*, 61.

[68] Skemp, *Vulgate of Tobit*, 19: "He did not exert a great deal of effort in translating Tobit."

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Hebrew and not Greek? Perhaps this helper did not know Greek, but that seems unlikely given his place of residence—Palestine at the turn of the fifth century.[69] Surely Hebrew could not have been an easier language for Jerome than Greek. Perhaps translation into Hebrew was a step of the process important to Jerome.

Given certain assumptions—Jerome could read Chaldean (or, at least, would not have wanted to let on that he could not); Jerome wanted Tobit translated into Hebrew (not Greek) before it came into Latin; and Jerome wanted to make clear that Hebrew and Chaldean are similar—we might be able to reconstruct the thoughts behind this report. I suggest that Jerome explained his translation procedure with the intent of casting a positive light on his work. Jerome wanted his readers to know that he himself actually translated from Hebrew so that they would have a more favorable impression of his Tobit translation, and his Judith translation, too, for that matter.[70] These books partook of something like the *hebraica veritas*.[71] In that case, the similarity of Chaldean and Hebrew, which Jerome also mentions, allows for the first translation by the skilled assistant—an "expert" at both languages (peritissimus; *Praef. Tob.* 9)—to proceed smoothly without the loss of significant meaning. On other occasions Jerome describes pejoratively a translation of a translation as akin to pouring something into the "third jar."[72] That apparently would not be a problem in this instance because of the similarity of Chaldean to Hebrew. In this interpretation, the hiring of the assistant stemmed not from incompetence in reading Chaldean on Jerome's part, but rather from his inability to produce Hebrew. This passive ability in Hebrew agrees with recent assessments in Jerome's Hebrew skills and is something that Jerome admits in relation to Chaldean (*Praef. Dan.* 18–19).[73]

The consequence of all this is that whereas the VL of Tobit and Judith was translated from Greek, Jerome advertised his version as a translation from the original Chaldean that actually passed through Hebrew on its way to Latin. Jerome typically justified his other Old Testament translations by claiming that they would improve upon available versions both in terms of the textual base (Hebrew, rather than Greek) and by rectifying the extreme diversity of the extant manuscripts.[74]

[69] Pieter W. van der Horst, "Greek in Jewish Palestine in Light of Jewish Epigraphy," in *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (ed. John J. Collins and Gregory E. Sterling; Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity 13; Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) 154–74; Willem Smelik, "The Languages of Roman Palestine," in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Daily Life in Roman Palestine* (ed. Catherine Hezser; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) 122–41.

[70] Jerome does not mention this process of translation in the Judith preface. Reading it by itself would leave the impression that Jerome personally worked from the Chaldean with no intermediate step. The suggestion made here would require that the Tobit and Judith translations appeared at the same time and that one preface may be read in light of the other, as argued earlier in this paper.

[71] Of course, this method of translation also displays Jerome's remarkable facility in the Hebrew language, always something Jerome enjoyed broadcasting.

[72] *Praef. libr. Sal.* 24–25; and see Kamesar, *Jerome*, 45–46.

[73] See Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology*; Hillel I. Newman, "How Should We Measure Jerome's Hebrew Competence?," in *Jerome of Stridon* (ed. Cain and Lössl), 131–40.

[74] See Fürst, *Hieronymus*, 102–16.

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His prefaces to Tobit and Judith imply that the same motivations were at play. On the one hand, he "eradicated the terrible variety of the many codices" (*Praef. Jdt.* 7). On the other hand, he based his versions of these books on the best available *Vorlage*: the original Chaldean text. Moreover, an excellent linguist put them in the nearly identical Hebrew language so that Jerome could then translate this into Latin. While it is certainly a more complicated procedure than that used for his other biblical translations, the former shares with the latter many of the same elements.

Conclusion

Why did Jerome translate Tobit and Judith? Our study has isolated several possible factors. First, he seems to have viewed these two books as authentic ancient Israelite literature, albeit written in Chaldean rather than Hebrew. He did not view the books of Maccabees, Wisdom of Solomon, or Sirach as ancient Israelite literature. Second, his classification of these books as *agiografa* increased their prestige, even though he uses the term to mean something different from his earlier use of it in the *Preface to Daniel* and the *Prologus galeatus*. Third, the peculiar translation process he describes in the *Preface to Tobit* allowed these Chaldean books to share—however tenuously—in the *hebraica veritas*, so that his translation would be truer and more correct than the VL. A first or second reading of these prefaces, especially the Tobit preface, may leave the impression that Jerome would rather not have translated these books at all—an impression created, I think, by Jerome's desire to stress their non-canonicity. Nevertheless, the translations themselves and certain elements of the prefaces reveal that Jerome did want these translations to find an audience that would profit from reading Tobit and Judith.

Appendix

Preface to Tobit[75]

Jerome to Chromatius and Heliodorus, bishops, greetings in the Lord.

I do not cease to marvel at the urgency of your demand. For you demand that I bring into Latin style a book composed in Chaldean speech, namely, the book of Tobit, which the Hebrews, excising [it] from the catalogue of divine Scriptures, transfer to those that they term *agiografa*. I have satisfied your desire, but not with

[75] Cromatio et Heliodoro episcopis Hieronymus in Domino salutem.

Mirari non desino exactionis vestrae instantiam. Exigitis enim, ut librum chaldeo sermone conscriptum ad latinum stilum traham, librum utique Tobiae, quem Hebraei de catalogo divinarum Scripturarum secantes, his quae Agiografa memorant manciparunt. Feci satis desiderio vestro, non tamen meo studio. Arguunt enim nos Hebraeorum studia et inputant nobis, contra suum canonem latinis auribus ista transferre. Sed melius esse iudicans Pharisaeorum displicere iudicio et episcoporum iussionibus deservire, institi ut potui, et quia vicina est Chaldeorum lingua sermoni hebraico, utriusque linguae peritissimum loquacem repperiens, unius diei laborem arripui et quicquid ille mihi hebraicis verbis expressit, haec ego accito notario, sermonibus latinis exposui.

Orationibus vestris mercedem huius operis conpensabo, cum gratum vobis didicero me quod iubere estis dignati conplesse.

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my own enthusiasm. For Hebrew studies accuse us and charge us with transferring them for Latin ears contrary to their own canon. But considering it better to displease the opinion of Pharisees and to be subject to the commands of bishops, I have done as well as I can, and because the language of the Chaldeans is close to Hebrew speech, finding a speaker expert in both languages, I set aside the labor of a single day and whatever he expressed to me in Hebrew words, these things I related in Latin speech to the scribe that I had summoned.

I will consider your prayers the wages for this work, when I will have learned that I have completed in a manner pleasing to you what you saw fit to command.

Preface to Judith[76]

Among the Hebrews the book of Judith is read among the *agiografa*; the authority of which is considered less suitable for the confirmation of those things that come into contention. Nevertheless, having been written in Chaldean speech, it is reckoned among the histories. But because the Nicene Synod is read to have reckoned this book in the number of holy Scriptures, I have assented to your request, nay, demand, and having set aside occupations by which I was being violently squeezed, I have given to this one a single night, translating sense for sense rather than word for word. I have eradicated the terrible variety of the many codices; only that which I could find in Chaldean words with complete comprehension did I express in Latin words.

Take up the widow Judith, an example of chastity, and with perpetual proclamations acclaim her in triumphal praise. For he has given her as a model not only to women, but also to men, and he, the rewarder of her chastity, has provided such power that she overcame the one not overcome by anyone, and conquered the unconquerable.

[76] Apud Hebraeos liber Iudith inter Agiografa legitur; cuius auctoritas ad roboranda illa quae in contentione veniunt, minus idonea iudicatur. Chaldeo tamen sermone conscriptus inter historias conputatur. Sed quia hunc librum sinodus nicena in numero Sanctarum Scripturarum legitur conputasse, adquievi postulationi vestrae, immo exactioni, et sepositis occupationibus quibus vehementer artabar, huic unam lucubratiunculam dedi, magis sensum e sensu quam ex verbo verbum transferens. Multorum codicum varietatem vitiosissimam amputavi; sola ea quae intellegentia integra in verbis chaldeis invenire potui, latinis expressi.

Accipite Iudith viduam, castitatis exemplum, et triumphali laude perpetuis eam praeconiis declarate. Hanc enim non solum feminis, sed et viris imitabilem dedit, qui, castitatis eius remunerator, virtutem talem tribuit, ut invictum omnibus hominibus vinceret, insuperabilem superaret.

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