**Vulgate**

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Jump to: [navigation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#mw-navigation), [search](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#p-search)

*This article is about the 4th-century translation of the Bible. For the Arthurian Vulgate Cycle, see* [*Lancelot-Grail Cycle*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lancelot-Grail_Cycle)*.*

The **Vulgate** is a late 4th-century [Latin translation of the Bible](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible_translations_into_Latin). It was largely the work of [St. Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St_Jerome), who was commissioned by [Pope Damasus I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pope_Damasus_I) in 382 to make a revision of the [Vetus Latina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina) (old Latin translations). Its widespread adoption eventually led to their eclipse. By the 13th century this revision had come to be called the *versio vulgata*, that is, the "commonly used translation".[[1]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-LewisShort-1) In the 16th century it became the definitive and officially promulgated Latin version of the Bible in the [Roman Catholic Church](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church).

The Vulgate has a compound text that is not entirely the work of Jerome.[[2]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-2) Its components include:*Jerome's independent translation from the* [*Hebrew*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh): the books of the Hebrew Bible, usually not including his [translation of the Psalms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Psalters#Versio_juxta_Hebraicum). This was completed in 405.

* *Translation from the Greek of* [*Theodotion*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodotion) by Jerome: The three additions to the [Book of Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel); [Song of the Three Children](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Prayer_of_Azariah_and_Song_of_the_Three_Holy_Children), [Story of Susanna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Susanna_(Book_of_Daniel)), and [The Idol Bel and the Dragon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bel_and_the_Dragon). The Song of the Three Children was retained within the narrative of Daniel, the other two additions Jerome moved to the end of the book.
* *Translation from the* [*Septuagint*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) by Jerome: the [Rest of Esther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther#Additions_to_Esther). Jerome gathered all these additions together at the end of the book of Esther.
* *Translation from the* [*Hexaplar Septuagint*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla) by Jerome: his [Gallican version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Psalters#Versio_Gallicana) of the Book of Psalms. Jerome's Hexaplaric revisions of other books of Old Testament continued to circulate in Italy for several centuries, but only Job and fragments of other books survive.
* *Free translation* by Jerome from a secondary [Aramaic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic) version: [Tobias](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit) and [Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judith).
* *Revision* by Jerome of the [Old Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina), corrected with reference to the oldest [Greek manuscripts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament_manuscript) available: the [Gospels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Gospels).
* *Old Latin*, more or less revised by a person or persons unknown: [Baruch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch), [Letter of Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_Jeremiah), [3 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Esdras),[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-3) [Acts](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Acts_of_the_Apostles), [Epistles](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistles#New_Testament_epistles), and the [Apocalypse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation).
* *Old Latin*, wholly unrevised: [Epistle to the Laodiceans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Laodiceans), [Prayer of Manasses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Manasses), [4 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Esdras), [Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom), [Ecclesiasticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecclesiasticus), and [1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Maccabees) and [2 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Maccabees).

**Translation[[edit source](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&action=edit&section=2" \o "Edit section: Translation) |** [**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&veaction=edit&section=2)**]**

[https://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.22wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Domenico_Ghirlandaio_-_St_Jerome_in_his_study.jpg)[Saint Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Jerome) in his Study, [Domenico Ghirlandaio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domenico_Ghirlandaio) Page1

Page 2

[https://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.22wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Domenico_Ghirlandaio_-_St_Jerome_in_his_study.jpg)Jerome did not embark on the work with the intention of creating a new version of the whole Bible, but the changing nature of his program can be tracked in his voluminous correspondence. He had been commissioned by [Damasus I](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damasus_I) in 382 to revise the Old Latin text of the [four Gospels](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Gospels) from the best Greek texts, and by the time of Damasus' death in 384 he had thoroughly completed this task, together with a more cursory revision from the Greek Septuagint of the Old Latin text of the Psalms in the Roman [Psalter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psalter) which is now lost. How much of the rest of the [New Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament) he then revised is difficult to judge today, but little of his work survived in the Vulgate text. In 385, Jerome was forced out of Rome, and eventually settled in [Bethlehem](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bethlehem), where he was able to use a surviving manuscript of the [Hexapla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla), likely from the nearby [Theological Library of Caesarea Maritima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theological_Library_of_Caesarea_Maritima), a columnar comparison of the variant versions of the Old Testament undertaken 150 years before by [Origen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Origen). Jerome first embarked on a revision of the Psalms, translated from the revised Septuagint Greek column of the [Hexapla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla), which later came to be called the Gallican version. He also appears to have undertaken further new translations into Latin from the Hexaplar Septuagint column for other books. But from 390 to 405, Jerome translated anew from the Hebrew all 39 books in the Hebrew Bible, including a further version of the Psalms. This new translation of the Psalms was labelled by him as "*iuxta Hebraeos*" (i.e. "close to the Hebrews", "immediately following the Hebrews"), and was commonly found in the Vulgate, until it was widely replaced by his Gallican psalms beginning in the 9th century.

The Vulgate is usually credited as being the first translation of the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) into Latin directly from the Hebrew [Tanakh](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh), rather than the Greek [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint). Jerome's extensive use of exegetical material written in Greek, on the other hand, as well as his use of the [Aquiline](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aquila_of_Sinope) and [Theodotiontic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodotion) columns of the [Hexapla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hexapla), along with the somewhat [paraphrastic style](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paraphrase) in which he translated makes it difficult to determine exactly how direct the conversion of Hebrew to Latin was.[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-4)[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-5)[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-6)

As Jerome completed his translations of each book of the Bible, he recorded his observations and comments in an extensive correspondence with other scholars; and these letters were subsequently collected and appended as prologues to the Vulgate text for those books where they survived. In these letters, Jerome described those books or portions of books in the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint) that were not found in the Hebrew as being non-[canonical](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_canon): he called them [*apocrypha*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_apocrypha).[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-7) Jerome's views did not, however, prevail; and all complete manuscripts and editions of the Vulgate include some or all these books. Of the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) texts not found in the Hebrew, Jerome translated [Tobit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Tobit) and [Judith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Judith) anew from the Aramaic; and from the Greek, the additions to [Esther](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Esther) from the Septuagint, and the additions to [Daniel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Daniel) from [Theodotion](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theodotion). Other books; [Baruch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Baruch), [Letter of Jeremiah](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Letter_of_Jeremiah), [Wisdom](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Wisdom), [Ecclesiasticus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Sirach), [1 and 2 Maccabees](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_of_the_Maccabees)[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-Stuttgart-8) are variously found in Vulgate manuscripts with texts derived from the Old Latin; sometimes together with Latin versions of other texts found neither in the Hebrew Bible, nor in the Septuagint, [4 Esdras](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2_Esdras), the [Prayer of Manasses](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prayer_of_Manasses) and [Laodiceans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laodiceans). Their style is still markedly distinguishable from Jerome's. In the Vulgate text, Jerome's translations from the Greek of the additions to Esther and Daniel are combined with his separate translations of these books from the Hebrew.In translating the 39 books of the Hebrew Bible, Jerome was relatively free in rendering their text into Latin, but it is possible to determine that the oldest surviving complete manuscripts of the [Masoretic Text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masoretic_Text), which date from nearly 600 years after Jerome, nevertheless transmit a consonantal Hebrew text very close to that used by Jerome.[[9]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-Kenyon81-9) Consequently, these books of the Vulgate – though of high

literary quality – have little independent interest in text critical debate.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] Jerome translated the books of Judith and Tobit under sufferance, engaging a Jewish intermediary to render the Aramaic into oral Hebrew, for him then to paraphrase into Latin. Their textual value is small.[[*citation needed*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)] The Vulgate Old Testament texts that were translated from the Greek – whether by Jerome himself, or preserving revised or unrevised Old Latin versions – are however early and important secondary witnesses to the Septuagint.

Damasus had instructed Jerome to be conservative in his revision of the Old Latin Gospels, and it is possible to see Jerome's obedience to this injunction in the preservation in the Vulgate of variant Latin vocabulary for the same Greek terms. Hence, "high priest" is rendered "princeps sacerdotum" in Vulgate Matthew; as "summus sacerdos" in Vulgate Mark; and as "pontifex" in Vulgate John. Comparison of Jerome's Gospel texts with those in Old Latin witnesses, suggests that his revision was substantially concerned with redacting the expanded phraseology characteristic of the [Western text-type](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Western_text-type), in accordance with [Alexandrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandrian_text-type), or possibly early [Byzantine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_text-type), witnesses. Given Jerome's conservative methods, and that manuscript evidence from outside Egypt at this early date is very rare; these Vulgate readings have considerable critical interest. More interesting still – because effectively untouched by Jerome – are the Vulgate books of the rest of the New Testament; which demonstrate rather more of supposed "Western" expansions, and otherwise transmit a very early Old Latin text. Most valuable of all from a text-critical perspective is the Vulgate text of the [Apocalypse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation), a book where there is no clear [majority text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majority_text) in the surviving Greek witnesses.

**Prologe** In addition to the [biblical text](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible) the Vulgate contains 17 prologues, 16 of which were written by [Jerome](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome). Jerome's prologues were written not so much as prologues than as cover letters to specific individuals to accompany copies of his translations. Because they were not intended for a general audience, some of his comments in them are quite cryptic. These prologues are to the Pentateuch,[[10]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate" \l "cite_note-10) to *Joshua*,[[11]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-11) and to *Kings*, which is also called the *Prologus Galeatus*.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-12) Following these are prologues to *Chronicles*,[[13]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-13) *Esdras*,[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-14) *Tobias*,[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-15) *Judith*,[[16]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-16) *Esther*,[[17]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-17) *Job*,[[18]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-18) *The Gallican Psalms*,[[19]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-19) *Solomon*,[[20]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-20) *Isaias*,[[21]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-21) *Jeremias*,[[22]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-22) *Ezechiel*,[[23]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-23) *Daniel*,[[24]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-24) *Minor prophets*,[[25]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-25) the *Gospels*,[[26]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-26) and the final prologue which is to the *Pauline Epistles* and is better known as *Primum quaeritur*.[[27]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-27) Related to these are Jerome's *Notes on the Rest of Esther*[[28]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate" \l "cite_note-28) and his *Prologue to the Hebrew Psalms*.[[29]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-29) In addition to the Jerome's prologue to the Gallican version of the Psalms, which is commonly found in Vulgate manuscripts, his prologues also survive for the translations from the Hexaplar Septuagint of the books of Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs and Chronicles.

A recurring theme of the [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) prologues is Jerome's preference for the [*Hebraica veritas*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh) (i.e., Hebrew truth) to the [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint), a preference which he defended from his detractors. He stated that the Hebrew text more clearly prefigures [Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jesus_Christ) than the Greek. Among the most remarkable of these prologues is the *Prologus Galeatus*, in which Jerome described an [Old Testament](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament) canon of 22 books, which he found represented in the 22-letter [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hebrew_Language) alphabet. Alternatively, he numbered the books as 24, which he described as the 24 elders in the [Book of Revelation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Revelation) casting their crowns before the [Lamb](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lamb_of_God).

Also of note is the *Primum quaeritur*, which defended the Pauline authorship of the [Epistle to the Hebrews](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Hebrews), and compared Paul's ten letters to the churches with the ten commandments. Page 3

The author of the *Primum quaeritur* is unknown. The editors of the Stuttgart Vulgate remark that this version of the epistles first became popular among the [Pelagians](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pelagians).

In addition to *Primum quaeritur*, many manuscripts contain brief notes to each of the epistles indicating where they were written, with notes about where the recipients dwelt. [Adolf von Harnack](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolf_von_Harnack),[[30]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate" \l "cite_note-30) citing De Bruyne, argued that these notes were written by [Marcion of Sinope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcion_of_Sinope) or one of his followers.[[31]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-31)

**Relation with the Old Latin Bible[[edit source](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Relation with the Old Latin Bible) |** [**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&veaction=edit&section=5)**]**

*Main article:* [*Vetus Latina*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina)

The Latin Biblical texts in use before the Latin Vulgate are usually referred to collectively as the [*Vetus Latina*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina), or "Old Latin Bible", or occasionally the "Old Latin Vulgate". (Here "Old Latin" means that they are older than the Vulgate and written in [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_Language), not that they are written in [Old Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Latin). Likewise the Latin Vulgate was so named because it was the [Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_Latin) counterpart to the [Greek Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Vulgate); it was not written in [Vulgar Latin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgar_Latin).) The translations in the Vetus Latina had accumulated piecemeal over a century or more; they were not translated by a single person or institution, nor uniformly edited. The individual books varied in quality of translation and style, and different manuscripts witness wide variations in readings. Jerome, in his preface to the Vulgate gospels, commented that there were "as many [translations] as there are manuscripts". The Old Testament books of the Vetus Latina were translated from the Greek [Septuagint](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint), not from the [Hebrew](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanakh).

Jerome's earliest efforts in translation, his revision of the four Gospels, was dedicated to Damasus; but his version had little or no official recognition. Jerome's translated texts had to make their way on their own merits. The Old Latin versions continued to be copied and used alongside the Vulgate versions. [Bede](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bede), writing in 8th century Northumbria, records Abbot [Ceolfrid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ceolfrid) quoting Genesis 1:16 according to both the Vulgate and the Old Latin text, as the new and former editions. Nevertheless, the superior quality of the Vulgate texts led to their increasingly superseding the Old Latin; although the loss of familiar phrases and expressions still aroused hostility in congregations; and, especially in North Africa and Spain, favourite Old Latin readings were often re-introduced by copyists, while individual books within Spanish Vulgate Bibles are sometimes found to retain the Old Latin text. Spanish biblical traditions, with many Old Latin borrowings, were influential in Ireland; while both Irish and Spanish influences are found in Vulgate texts in northern France. In Italy and southern France, by contrast, a much purer Vulgate text predominated; and this is the version of the Bible that became established in England following the mission of [Augustine of Canterbury](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Canterbury). As late as the 13th century, the [Codex Gigas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Gigas) retained an Old Latin text for the Apocalypse and the Acts of the Apostles.

Throughout [Late Antiquity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Late_Antiquity) and most of the [Middle Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages), the name *Vulgata* was applied to the [Greek Vulgate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_Vulgate) and the [Vetus Latina](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vetus_Latina),[[32]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-wescott-32) but as the acceptance of Jerome's version overtook that of the Vetus Latina in the Western church, it too began to be called an *editio vulgata*, a Latin analogue to the older Greek *editio vulgata*. The earliest known use of the term *Vulgata* to describe the new Latin translation was made by [Roger Bacon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Bacon) in the 13th century.[[33]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-ISBE-33) Page 4

Wordsworth and White suggested that Jerome used Old Latin text close to [Codex Brixianus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Brixianus)[[34]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate#cite_note-34) as the basis for his New Testament and corrected it with the Alexandrian manuscripts.

**Influence on Western culture[**[**edit source**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&action=edit&section=6)**|** [**edit**](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Vulgate&veaction=edit&section=6)**]**

[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CodxAmiatinusTextPage.jpg)

[https://bits.wikimedia.org/static-1.22wmf12/skins/common/images/magnify-clip.png](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:CodxAmiatinusTextPage.jpg)

[Codex Amiatinus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Codex_Amiatinus)

For over a thousand years (c. AD 400–1530), the Vulgate was the definitive edition of the most influential text in Western European society. Indeed, for most Western Christians, it was the only version of the Bible ever encountered. The Vulgate's influence throughout the [Middle Ages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) and the [Renaissance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Renaissance) into the [Early Modern Period](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Modern_Period) is even greater than that of the [King James Version](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_James_Version) in English; for Christians during these times the phraseology and wording of the Vulgate permeated all areas of the culture.

Page 5