

LATIN LISTS OF THE CANONICAL BOOKS. IV.

AN EARLY VERSION OF THE EIGHTY-FIFTH
APOSTOLIC CANON.FROM MS VERON. LI foll. 155*b*, 156*a*.

AT two points in the current volume of the JOURNAL, pp. 19 ff of the October number and p. 510 of the present number, a description has been given of the Verona MS from which the following list of the Canonical Books is derived. As I have already said on p. 508, the Latin fragment of the end of the eighth book of the *Apostolic Constitutions* is followed without break by the *Apostolic Canons*; and since Dionysius Exiguus, for what reason I know not, only translated the first fifty canons, our MS is the only early authority for the remaining thirty-five—and therewith for the last of all, containing the Biblical list. The *terminus a quo* for the date of the version contained in our MS is the date of the *Apostolic Constitutions* and *Canons* themselves, which may be put at about A.D. 400 or a little earlier; the *terminus ad quem* is the date of our Latin MS, and that can hardly be after A. D. 600. In my own opinion the version is probably nearer the earlier than the later of the two *termini*; but in any case both the version and the MS in which it is contained are probably older by some centuries than the oldest Greek MSS hitherto employed.

The differences between the Latin and the printed Greek texts are, as will be seen on comparison of the two columns of p. 513, sufficiently serious; they would have been considerably more serious if I had (as in the fragment of the *Constitutions*, pp. 492 sqq. supra) chosen the text of Lagarde for the Greek column. But the text of Turrianus is here so manifestly superior to that of Lagarde that the only reasonable course appeared to be to give it on this occasion the preference. Lagarde omits the book of Judith, the book of Job, the Psalms; reduces the books of Maccabees from three to one; conversely makes the Wisdom of Sirach into Wisdoms; and adopts a form of doxology with *ὁὐ* instead of *ἐὐ*. In these and other points Turrianus agrees with the Latin, and he would be a bold critic who ventured to maintain in any one of them the superiority of the reading of Lagarde.¹ Tobit is omitted in all the texts, Turrianus, Lagarde, and Latin alike.

More interest attaches to the divergences between the text of Turrianus

¹ On the doxology see above, p. 506.

and the Latin, because for the most part, the Latin being the only witness to them, they are now for the first time known. The books of the Pentateuch, the books of Solomon, and the Prophets are reckoned as one whole, and the items composing them are not separately enumerated—five books of Moses, five books of Solomon, sixteen prophets. Somewhat similarly we have the ‘codex of 150 psalms’ instead of the ‘150 psalms’. We shall probably follow the Latin in all these points except perhaps the ascription of five books instead of three to Solomon. If Wisdom and Ecclesiasticus had been already by implication accepted among the books of Solomon, it is not easy to see how it could be said that ‘beyond these [canonical] books’ the Wisdom of the learned Sirach should be used for the purpose of instructing the young.¹

But the *crux* of the situation lies in the New Testament list. All our authorities for the text of the canon reckon the Pauline Epistles at fourteen, and thereby canonize the Epistle to the Hebrews; but our MS allows only two Catholic Epistles, 1 Peter and 1 John. At a rather later date than the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the Peshitta still knows only of three Catholic Epistles, 1 Peter, 1 John, and James; and I do not doubt that more critical texts of our fourth-century authorities will tend to shew that the full canon of seven Catholic Epistles only attained recognition at a later date than has hitherto been supposed. The testimony of the Latin version is, in my own opinion, conclusive as to the original form in this respect of the eighty-fifth Apostolic Canon, ‘one epistle of Peter, one epistle of John, two epistles of Clement, and these present Constitutions, which are meant for bishops only and not for general publication, and the Acts of us the Apostles’.

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¹ Unless we have here an unintelligent combination of the thirty-ninth Festal Epistle of St Athanasius, which allots just this position to Sirach, with a tradition of five canonical books of Solomon.