

Accipies virginem cum timore Domini (Tob 6:22 Vg)

Jerome's Translation Technique and Ascetic Ideals
in the Vulgate of Tobit¹

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ABSTRACT • The Vulgate of Tobit constitutes a singular version of the Tobit story. In it, we find special material (*Sondergute*) whose ideas reveal notable Christian colorfulness. Among them stands out the so called “Tobiah’s Nights” (Tob 6:16-22 Vg), pericope that concludes in the Vg Tob 6 and in which the angel offers peculiar instructions to Tobiah about how to vanquish the demon. The present study focuses on Tob 6:22 Vg, verse that concludes the “Tobiah’s Nights,” and that appears exemplary of Jerome’s ascetic ideals expressed elsewhere in his writings, particularly in his letters.

KEYWORDS • Tobit – Tobiah’s Nights – Ascetic Ideals – Christianization – Vg Narrator – Virginity – Fear of God – Marriage

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG • Die Vulgata von Tobit ist eine einzigartige Version der Tobit-Geschichte. Darin finden wir besondere Stoffe (Sondergute), deren Ideen eine bemerkenswerte christliche Farbigkeit aufweisen. Unter ihnen sticht die sogenannte „Tobias Nächte“ (Tob 6:16-22 Vg) hervor, eine Perikope, die in der Vulgata Tob 6 endet und in der der Engel Tobiah besondere Anweisungen gibt, wie er den Dämon besiegen kann. Die vorliegende Studie konzentriert sich auf Tob 6,22 Vg, den Vers, der die „Tobias Nächte“ beschließt und der exemplarisch für Hieronymus’ asketische Ideale erscheint, die anderswo in seinen Schriften zum Ausdruck kommen, insbesondere in seinen Briefen.

SCHLAGWORTE • Tobit – Tobias’ Nächte – Asketische Ideale – Christianisierung – Vg Erzähler – Jungfräulichkeit – Gottesfurcht – Ehe

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Introduction

Jerome's *Tobias*² or the Vulgate version of the book of Tobit constitutes a singular version of the Tobit story. Composed most likely towards the end of Jerome's translating activity (around 404 CE), Tobit-Vulgate exhibits notable Christian features, particularly in its *Sondergute*. The most famous of them constitutes the so called "Tobiah's Nights" (Tob 6:16-22 Vg). In this *Sondergut* the angel Raphael, trying to solve Tobiah's fear of marriage to Sarah (6:14-15 Vg), gives the youth peculiar instructions of how to win over the demon. In the following we offer a brief commentary on Tob 6:22 Vg, verse that concludes the "Tobiah's Nights" section and that appears particularly emblematic of Jerome's ascetic ideals. To contextualize both Jerome's Tobit and Tob 6:22 Vg within it, we prelude to our commentary some considerations on Jerome's translating technique of the book and its collocation within Tobit's textual tradition.

Jerome's Tobit Translation "Technique"

According to his very words in the preface to Tobit, Jerome's new Latin translation of the book is said to have been worked from an Aramaic *Vorlage* (*chaldeo sermone conscriptum*). To render it in Latin, Jerome has his *Vorlage* translated out loud to him into Hebrew by a "highly skilled person in both languages" (*utriusque linguae peritissimum loquacem*)³ and that which the translator rendered to him in Hebrew, Jerome "expressed in Latin" to an "engaged secretary" (*ego accito notario, sermonibus latinis exposui*). Jerome's use of verb *expono* instead of *transfero* (used for instance in *Ep.* 18A,1) to refer his Latin rendering of Tobit is already significant, considering the idea of "explaining, interpreting" that that verb conveys.⁴ Jerome's own description of his new Latin version of Tobit, then, seems to suggest that more than a translation *simpliciter*, his *Tobias* is to be received as an "explanation" or perhaps an "interpretation" of his Aramaic text. In any case, resulting from such translating a procedure, the Vulgate of Tobit emerges notably

² In the Vulgate of Tobit uniquely, the names of both father and son are spelled the same way as "Tobias" (whereas in the Greek and Old Latin versions, the father is called Tobi(t) and the son Tobiah).

³ In his *Apology Against Rufinus*, Jerome speaks of himself in these terms: "*Ego philosophus, rhetor, grammaticus, dialecticus, Hebraeus, Graecus, Latinus, trilinguis*" [I am, according to you, a philosopher and an orator, grammarian, dialectician, one who knows Hebrew, Greek and Latin, a 'trilingual' man.] (III,6). Contrary to what is often concluded, in his Preface to Tobit Jerome says nothing explicitly regarding his knowledge of Aramaic. That Jerome had some knowledge of both Eastern and Western Aramaic, appears clear from his writings. We may recall in that regard, Letter 7 (376), where Jerome affirms to have learned the hermits' Syriac dialect in the desert (*Hic enim aut barbarus semi-sermo discendus est aut tacendum est*. See Hieronymus, *Ep.* 7,2.), his opponents' statement of his fluency in Greek and Syriac in Letter 17 (377), his translation of Daniel Aramaic sections in 390 to which we may add Jerome's translation of Judith (also said to have been from a "Chaldaic" text and regarding which nothing is mentioned of a translator's help). It has been shown that Jerome was also familiar with Targumic traditions in some form. See for instance, R. Hayard, "Saint Jerome and the Aramaic Targumim", *JSS* 22/1 (1987) 105-123. See also on the argument, D. King, "Vir Quadrilinguis? Syriac in Jerome and Jerome in Syriac", in A. Cain – J. Lössl (eds.), *Jerome of Stridon. His Life, Writings and Legacy* (Farnham UK 2009) 209-223. Jerome's chosen translative procedure for his Aramaic Tobit may have other explanations. See for instance, E. L. Gallagher, "Why Did Jerome Translate Tobit and Judith?", *HTR* 108/3 (2015) 356-367.

⁴ See *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, 652.

paraphrastic. In his letter to Pammachium on the art of translating, Jerome explains such term as a rendering *non verbum [expressit] e verbo, sed [παραφραστικῶς] eundem sensum aliis sermonibus*.⁵ This same principle, with only slightly different wording (*magis sensu e sensu quam ex verbum verbo*), Jerome restates regarding his new translation of Judith.⁶ Although not explicitly said, it seems clear that Jerome has followed such principle also regarding Tobit.⁷ The Vg of Tobit also distinguishes itself for its third person narration throughout (not having the I-Section of Tob 1:3 – 3:6 found in the Greek/Old Latin), mode of telling that allows the narrator to address the reader directly once and again. Tob-Vg in fact, emerges notably a reader-oriented translation as well.

Jerome's Tobit within Tobit's Textual Tradition

The issue of Jerome's "Chaldean," i.e., Aramaic *Vorlage* continues to be a matter of controversy. Tobit's Aramaic tradition has an old and productive history, with Aramaic being perhaps even Tobit's original language.⁸ We may recall in that regard that at Qumran, fragments of four different Aramaic MSS of Tobit were found, witnessing to the vitality of this textual tradition. To it, it may be added the book's Eastern Aramaic (i.e., Syriac) versions,⁹ and in general terms, also the Medieval Aramaic one (although as it appears it is a translation from a Greek *Vorlage*). With respect to such rich textual tradition and evidence, it remains striking and puzzling that of Jerome's Aramaic text not a direct piece of evidence can be found. Frank Zimmermann is one of the few or perhaps the sole to have recognized some Aramaisms in the Vulgate of Tobit, affirming even an Aramaic word play while retranslating a Latin phrase.¹⁰

Since the first critical studies of Tobit in the nineteen hundreds,¹¹ it has been pointed out that Jerome's Tobit is *also* a revision of some Old Latin translation of the book. Not surprising,

⁵ See Hieronymus, *Ep. 57,9 Ad Pammachium De optimo Genere Interpretandi* (from 396).

⁶ See Hieronymus, *Prol. Iud.* line 8.

⁷ Jerome's Judith seems to have been composed in the same epoch of Tobit. The phrase *acquievi postulationi vestrae* ("I acquiesced to your request") in *Prol. Iud.* line 6 remains meaningless except when read in connection to Jerome's addressees in the beginning of his Tobit Preface. The striking parallelism between the two prefaces already at a linguistic level, strengthens the argument of Jerome's Tobit being a "paraphrasis." See in that regard J.L. Brum Teixeira, "Magis sensu e sensu quam ex verbo verbum (Hier. In Prol. Iud.): Jerome's Translation Art in the Vulgate of Tobit", *Revista de Cultura Teologica* 97 (2020) 22-35.

⁸ See in that regard, G. Toloni, *L'originale del Libro di Tobia*. Studio filologico-linguistico (TECC 71; Madrid 2004).

⁹ With respect to the Syriac tradition of Tobit we have Syro-Hexaplaric and non-Hexaplaric portions of the story (1:1–7:11a only in the former; 7:11b–14:15, in the former and the latter); the Peshitta has been lost.

¹⁰ See F. Zimmermann, *The Book of Tobit*. An English Translation with Introduction and Commentary (Jewish Apocryphal Literature; New York 1958) 130-131; J. A. Fitzmyer, *Tobit* (CEJL; Berlin – New York 2003) 11-13.

¹¹ See for instance K. D. Ilgen, *Die Geschichte Tobis nach drey verschiedenen Originalen, dem griechischen, dem lateinischen des Hieronymus und einem Syrischen* (Jena 1800) CLVIII ff.; O. F. Fritzsche, *Libri apocryphi Veteris Testamenti graece* (Leipzig 1871) 108-65. For a more recent study on the argument, see V. T. M. Skemp, *The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses* (SBLDS 180; Atlanta GA 2000).

considering the genesis of Jerome's translating activity¹² and that some Vulgate OT books as it is known (like the Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, or the Books of Maccabees) are not new Latin translations but transmit almost unrevised OL versions of them. Considering the Tobit-Vg dependance on the OL, in a recent study, J.-M. Auwers stated that, "In truth, it has been shown that Jerome did nothing more than rewrite an ancient Latin version according to his tastes and ideas."¹³ We hold a more nuanced view, in line with what Beate Ego writes in her recent Tobit commentary: "Wenn die Vulgata aber oft eine große Nähe zu der Vetus Latina zeigt, so wird deutlich, dass sich Hieronymus bei seiner Arbeit auch dieser als Vorlage bediente."¹⁴ If in several points, on the one hand, Vg shows remarkable dependence on the OL, in several others the Vg also presents, even *extra* its *Sondergute*, proper features. Furthermore, evidence suggests that Jerome had also at his disposal some Greek version or versions of Tobit, most likely related to the short tradition or Gl.¹⁵

Tob 6:22 Vg¹⁶

The pericope of the "Tobiah's Nights" (Tob 6:16-22 Vg) concludes in the Vg Tobit 6 (Tobiah's travel with the angel in strict sense).¹⁷ In the main versions (Greek/OL) the chapter's conclusion constitutes the angel's artful and successful appeal to Tobiah to freely accept a marriage to Sarah (essential part of the angel's mission; see 6:10-18; recall 3:17). In the Vg, on the contrary, the focus of the angel's instruction finally is on the proper use of sexuality. The final section of Tob 6 in the Vg, in fact, relates to that of the main versions merely by its mention of the use of the fish's liver (for the apotropaic ritual; 6:19 Vg; 6:16 Greek/OL) and the general theme of offspring (6:22 Vg; 6:18 Greek/OL). Particularly regarding that theme, the Vulgate presents unique developments.

¹² We may recall in that regard that Jerome's Bible translation enterprise begins precisely as a review of the variegated Old Latin versions of the Gospels, at request of Pope Damasus I. See in that regard for instance C. B. Tkacz, "Labor Tam Utilis: The Creation of the Vulgate", *Vigiliae Christianae* 50/1 (1996) 42-72. In his preface to Judith, neatly connected to Tobit's as stated before, Jerome speaks explicitly of his revisionary work. See *Prolog. Iud.* lines 8-10.

¹³ See J.-M. Auwers, "The Intermediate Version of the Book of Tobit in its Greek Dress," in A. Aejmelaeus – D. Longacre – N. Mirotadze (eds.), *From Scribal Error to Rewriting: How Ancient Text Could and Could not Be Changed* (De Septuaginta Investigationes 12; Göttingen 2020) 271-287, 273.

¹⁴ B. Ego, *Tobit* (IEKAT; Stuttgart 2022), 8.

¹⁵ Clear evidence in this regard is found in Jerome's verbatim Latin rendering of Tob 14:3-4 in his preface to Jonah, according to Gl's unique reading of it (mentioning Jonah instead of Nahum). See Hieronymus, *In Ion. prol.* 11. 52-7 D [396]). In general terms, Tobit-Vg has been considered closer to Gl than to the long Greek tradition or GII. However, the argument is complex. For a discussion in that regard see for instance Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 6.

¹⁶ *Transacta autem tertia nocte accipies virginem cum timore Domini, amore filiorum magis quam libidini ductus, ut in semine Abrahae benedictionem in filiis consequaris.*

¹⁷ On the significance of this chapter for the book of Tobit, see our study J. L. Brum Teixeira, *Poetics and Narrative Function of Tob 6* (DCLS 41; Berlin – Boston 2019) particularly chapter 2, pp. 45-68.

In effect, we find a first novelty in the Vg in the angel's introductory statements to the "Tobiah's Nights," in which he explains Tobiah what category of persons the demon has power over: those who let themselves to be overcome by the libido and behave, in their use of sexuality, like irrational animals (see 6:16-17 Vg). The "angel's" evaluation of the libido here, therefore, emerges as rather negative and polemical.¹⁸ Moreover, the "angel's" words pass a moral judgement on Sarah's previous suitors, whom the demon overcame: they had approached Sarah driven by libido, mindless of God. The pericope's center, then, constitutes the angel's directions regarding the first three marital nights (vv.18-21 Vg)¹⁹ which Tobiah and Sarah are to spend in prayer and continence and through it get prepared to vanquish the demon. For a Christian reader, such angelic instruction could but remind Paul's in 1 Cor 7,²⁰ regarding which the "Tobiah's Nights" relate, so to speak, as some sort of "Aggadah." Moreover, in such Vg instruction we may hear an echo of the teaching transmitted for instance by the *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua* of the so-called Council of Carthage of 398,²¹ that the spouses should remain the first night after the marriage blessing in continence out of reverence for that blessing. It has also been sustained that mediating Jerome's *Tobias*, a tradition develops of two or three nights of continence for good offspring, as witnessed for instance in the *Capitularia Collectio* (§463).²² The pericope of Tobiah's nights, then, closes with a formal instruction specifically regarding the "correct" use of sexuality in the form of a general moral exhortative principle (Tob 6:22 Vg). Tob 6:22 Vg has its "bary-center" precisely in that general principle stated by the angel (v.22c). We may notice that such principle emerges in notable syntony with established early Christian views on marriage and sexuality, also shared by Jerome.

As an introduction to such principle, the angel states Tobiah (6:22b Vg) to "receive the virgin with the fear of the Lord" (*accipies virginem cum timore Domini*). The angel's reference to Sarah here as "virgin," unique to the Vg, is already significant. While enacting the angel's instruction in Tob 8, Vg narrator refers Tobiah's wife likewise (see 8:4). That virginity was one of the early Church Fathers cherished ascetic ideals after Paul's reflection in 1 Corinthians 7:25ff, is widely known. Like other Latin Fathers before him (like Tertullian and Cyprian) and contemporary to him (like Ambrose of Milan, for instance, who wrote four different treatises on virginity) also Jerome appraised repeatedly this theme in his writings, Jerome's Letter XXII to Eustochium from

¹⁸ Noteworthy, the theme of "libido" in a polemical-moralizing manner also occurs in this *Sondergut* of the Vulgate of Judith (10:3 Vg): *Cui etiam Dominus contulit splendorem: quoniam omnis ista compositio non ex libidine, sed ex virtute pendebat: et ideo Dominus hanc in illam pulchritudinem ampliavit, ut incomparabili decore omnium oculis appareret.*

¹⁹ Noteworthy, the Vulgate of Tobit has some preference for the number three, which also occurs uniquely in it in 3:10 Vg (Sarah's three days and three nights of prayer and fasting) and in 12:22 Vg (which recounts Tobit and Tobiah's three hours worshipping God after the angel's self-revelation).

²⁰ 1Cor. 7:(1-7) ⁵ *Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

²¹ See *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua*, Decree 13. See the in that regard, the lengthy but interesting discussion of E. Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage* (London 1921) II, 547-595 (references to Tobit on pp. 558-561).

²² *Et biduo vel triduo orationibus vacent et castitatem custodiant, ut bonae soboles generentur et Domino suis in actibus placeant. Taliter enim et Domino placebunt et filios non spurios, sed legitimos atque hereditabiles generabunt* (PL 97. 859). The quotation is from Fitzmyer, *Tobit*, 220.

384, being perhaps the most representative. Emblematic from that writing regarding Jerome's high esteem for virginity emerges this statement of his: *laudo nuptias, laudo coniugium, sed quia virgines generant* (XXII, 20).

Furthermore, with respect to the accompanying idea of the "fear of God" in Tob 6:22b, we may notice that "fear of God" is another of Tobit Vg's unique emphases.²³ According to the angel's instruction, therefore, through his manner of receiving the virgin Sarah to consummate his marriage, Tobiah is to manifest reverence for God (in other words, "fear of God" is to be Tobiah's driving force in the use of sexuality). Such idea Tobiah echoes in his invitation to Sarah in Tob 8:5 Vg, which Sarah, without his acquaintance, had already referred in her prayer in 3:18 Vg (another *Sondergut* of the Vg). Thus, stated as Tobiah's main educational principle in 1:10 Vg, the "fear of God" is likewise to be grasped in the Vg as Sarah's. Interestingly, Jerome refers the "fear of God" as a fundamental principle in the education of Christian girls in his *Ep.* 106 to Laeta.²⁴ In that he is mirroring a teaching found already in the Early Church Fathers.²⁵ The "fear of God" also occurs in Judith *Sondergut* for 8:24 Vg.

The nucleus of the moral principle of 6:22 Vg (22c), then, is procreation affirmed as the main motivation for sexual intercourse within marriage more than libido. Emphasis on offspring was already alluded previously by the angel in his instruction regarding the third of "Tobiah's nights" (see Tob 6:21 Vg). Moreover, Tobiah in his prayer with Sarah in the (first) "nuptial night" (8:9 Vg) affirms before God his adherence to the angel's principle. Thus, having prepared themselves through prayer and continence, the spouses would finally be ready to bring about their marital union in a manner that is pleasing to God, i.e., keeping offspring as its focal point. Noteworthy, the same principle stated by the angel in 6:22c Vg, with only slightly different wording, is found also in Jerome's Letter XXII, while the Stridon tries to find some legitimation for the immoral incestuous act of Lot's daughters according to the account of Gen 19:30-38.²⁶ Moreover, procreation as primary purpose of marriage is also found in Christian authors before Jerome²⁷ and

²³ The theme of the "fear of God" occurs in the Vg of Tobit fifteen times: 1:10; 2:2.9.13-14; 3:18; 4:23; 6:22; 7:12; 9:9.12; 13:6; 14:4.7.16 (in GII/OL only twice).

²⁴ *Nihil aliud discat audire, nihil loqui, nisi quod ad timorem Dei pertinent.* See Hieronymus, *Ep.* 107 *Ad Laetam, De Institutione filiae* (from 400-402 CE) 4.

²⁵ See for instance 1 Clem. 21,6.8; Did. 4,9; Barn. 19,5e; Pol. *Philip.* 4,2.

²⁶ *Loth, amicus dei, in monte saluatus et de tot milibus populis solus iustus inuentus inebriatur a filiabus suis; et licet putarent genus hominum defecisse et hoc facerent liberorum magis desiderio quam libidinis, tamen uirum iustum sciebant hoc nisi ebrium non esse facturum (...).* See Hieronymus, *Ep.* XXII, 8. Adkin has argued that Jerome's statement in *Ep.* XXII, is an implicit quotation of Tobit 6:22 Vg. See N. Adkin, "Tobit and Jerome", *Helmántica* 46 (1995) 109-114, 111ff. However, we find difficult to reconcile such position with the fact that Jerome's Letter XXII is from 384 (date accepted also by Adkin. See N. Adkin, "Some Features of Jerome's Compositional Technique in the *Libellus de Virginitate Servanta (Epist. 22)*", *Philologus* 136/2 (1992) 234-255,234) and Jerome's Tobit from at least after 388 CE considering that it was done at request of his friends Chromatius of Aquilea and Heliodorus of Altinum, who became bishops only in that year (in his preface to Tobit Jerome refers them already as bishops).

²⁷ See for instance, Justin Martyr, *Apology* I, 29, 1; Athenagoras, *Supplicatio pro christianis* 33; Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, II, 83, 1; II, 95,3 [Τὸ δὲ μὴ εἰς παιδῶν γόνῃν συνιέναι ἐνυβρίζειν ἐστὶ τῆ φύσει (...) γάμος δὲ ἡ παιδοποιία; ὀρεξίς]; Strom. II, 137, 1.

contemporary to him, having its roots already in Roman Law.²⁸ Particularly interesting in this regard appears this reflection of Lactantius, author with whose writings Jerome was clearly familiar with²⁹ and quoted from:

Oportet ergo sibi quemque proponere duorum sexuum coniunctionem generandi causa datam esse uiuentibus eamque legem his affectibus positam, ut successionem parent. (...) Sicut autem dedit nobis oculos deus non ut spectemus uoluptatemque capiamus, (...) ita genitalem corporis partem, quod nomen ipsum docet, nulla alia causa nisi efficiendae subolis accepimus.³⁰

Lastly, the mention of Abraham in connection to offspring in the verse's final phrase (6:22d Vg), appears also significant. The patriarchs were already recalled in the angel's instruction for the second night (see 6:20Vg). By consummating his marriage according to the angel's instructions, Tobiah is assured that he will participate in Abraham's blessing regarding offspring, a major theme from the Patriarch's cycle in Genesis (recall Gen 15:5; 26:4). Noteworthy, the angel's moral principle of Tob 6:22c, is also found in Ambrose's *De Abraham* (from 380 CE), which Ambrose evokes while trying to justify the Patriarch's adulterous involvement with the slave (Gen 16). Considering the dates of both works, it seems plausible that it is Jerome who restates Ambrose's argumentation in his Letter XXII applying it to Lot.³¹ While restating the angel's principle in his prayer to the Lord in the first "marital" night, Tobiah asks for a posterity among which God's name be blessed forever (Tob 8:9 Vg).

Conclusion

The Vulgate of Tobit appears exemplary of Jerome's paraphrastic translation technique. Moreover, in its special material or *Sondergute* particularly, it displays recognizable Christian features in view of Jerome's thought, for its turn in debt with the tradition preceding it. Whether such material was already present in Jerome's Aramaic *Vorlage*, for lack of evidence it is impossible to ascertain. Our close reading of Tob 6:22 Vg accumulates evidence for the source of such Christian material to be Jerome's pen. Also becoming part in time of the *Vulgata Latina*, Jerome's Tobit, perhaps precisely for its special tuning with the Christian values had such an impact in Western Christianity (emblematic being the tradition of marriage continence for two or three nights after the "Tobiah's Nights"). Jerome's Tobit, finally, transmits fundamentally the Tobit story (and in

²⁸ Aulus Gellius (ca.125-after180 CE), the Roman Grammarian quoted by Lactantius, Augustine, et alii., echoes a phrase (*Noctes Atticae* IV, 3, 1) also found in the Roman Law that states with some variations basically this: *liberorum quaerendorum causa uxorem ducere*.

²⁹ See in that regard for instance N. Adkin, "The Preamble to Book V of Lactantius' 'Divinae institutiones' and Jerome", *Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa* 39 (2003) 101-108.

³⁰ See Lactantius, *Divinae Institutiones*, VI,17-18.

³¹ *Abraham ab adulterii crimine ob susceptum ex ancilla filium defenditur: nempe quod ab humana fragilitate non esset immunis, et tunc Chaldaeorum superstitiones vix reliquisset: deinde quod in legem ut pote necdum latam non peccaverit: postea quod non libidine, sed amore prolis inductus sit; ubi multa contra adulterium disputantur: defenditur ultimo quod illud ipsum mysterium non peccatum fuerit. Ad extremum quaeritur an decuerit circumcisionem institui postea revocandam, et minimum in se perfectionis continentem.* See Ambrosius, *De Abraham*, Caput IV, 21.

that Tobit's "canonical text"). Nevertheless, its potentialities seem to have been explored by the Stridon as a source of *exempla* for the Christian readers (*exemplum* being another known pursued feature of Jerome's translating work). In that, most significant, Jerome's editorial work in the Vg of Tobit witnesses to the dynamic and fruitful reception of the Jewish tradition in late antique Christianity, and that requires his work to be assessed in its own value and right.