

## THE GREEK TEXT

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On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January of 1514 the printing was finished in the press of Arnao Guillén de Brocar in Alcalá the Greek and Latin text of the Complutensian New Testament. So says the colophon<sup>1</sup>. In that same printing were probably the Greek-Latin dictionary of the New Testament, Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. And on the 10<sup>th</sup> of July of 1917<sup>2</sup> printing of all the Old Testament Greek of the Septuagint was completed. The delay in the putting in circulation of the work up to 1521/22 due to the delay of papal approbation does not prevent us from valuing deservedly the meaning of these events for the history of the Biblical philology. Indeed, the New Testament Complutensian edition was unprecedented. It was the first time the entire Greek New Testament was printed, two years before Erasmus. The Greek text of the Old Testament appeared like an *editio princeps*<sup>3</sup> of the Septuagint, one or two years before edition of Aldina was published in Venice (1518/19) -- previously only the book of Psalms had been printed three times (Milan 1481; Venice 1486 and 1498) --. And finally, the Greek-Latin dictionary was the first Greek lexicon of the New Testament and the Wisdom writings and inaugurated a lexicographical tradition that led over time to the modern dictionaries of the New Testament of Kittel and Bauer.

It was strange though that we had to wait more than half century since the invention of the printing press until the publication of the New Testament in Greek, especially when the Vulgate, the first printed book (Mainz 1450-1456), already had in the late XV<sup>th</sup> century over 100 editions. Along with the difficulty and costs involved in developing and casting Greek type, the main cause of the delay in the New Testament printing was certainly the prestige of the Vulgate and the possibility it afforded to scholars of the Greek original edition to criticize and use it to correct the Bible of the Church.

The Greek characters of extreme elegance fused by Brocar were, apparently, the first that were known in Spain and consequently the Complutensian New Testament represents also the beginning of the Greek typography in our mother country and, according to the historians of the press, is the only original contribution from Spain to the Greek typography (Scholder, *Greek Printing Types*, p 10). The Greek types used for the New Testament were modeled according to the writing style of the manuscripts of centuries XI-XII; they do not take breathing marks nor accents to maintain the majesty of the original and because the contemporaneous Greek authors of the New Testament did not place them either (cf. *Prólogo al Nuevo Testamento*<sup>4</sup>, col. 1). They use on the contrary an unusual system of accentuation that has proved difficult for a foreign

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<sup>1</sup> The translator struggled with this short sentence, and suspecting a misprint, conjectured a translation of *Thus affirms colophon 10*. The actual Spanish at this location is "Así lo afirma el colofón."

<sup>2</sup> This date seems to the translator to be a misprint. Possibly 1517 is meant.

<sup>3</sup> *editio princeps* is a technical term used by classics scholars that generally refers to the first printed edition of a work that previously had existed only in manuscripts, which could be circulated only after being copied by hand.

<sup>4</sup> *Prologue to the New Testament*

specialist, but that is not difficult for the Spanish reader to understand. It consists of the application to Greek of the tonic accent of our language: the monosyllables do not take an accent and in the polysyllabic the marked syllable gets marked by the tilde of our tonic accent as support for the reading and pronunciation of the text (“ne in prolatione modulatione ve dictionum aliquando labatur”<sup>5</sup>, *Prólogo al Nuevo Testamento*, col. 2). However the text of the Septuagint maintains the breathing marks and accents of the Greek writing and is printed with the cursive characters popularized by the printer and Venetian humanist Aldo Manucio (1449-1515). The clarity and elegance of the Greek mold of the New Testament continue arousing admiration among the modern printers.

But the Polyglot of Alcalá is not a memorial grove to the fruit of the typographical expertise of an extraordinary printer. Behind this is the Hellenistic philological work of Alcalá. For that reason we must continue investigating into the quality of the published Greek text: what manuscripts were used for production of this text? Which were the publishing criteria that presided over their work? What type of text would really be published of many that circulated in the old manuscripts?

As far as the Greek Old Testament Cardinal Cisneros notes in the *Prólogo al lector*<sup>6</sup>, col. 3/4 that the editors used ancient manuscripts of the Vatican Library that Pope Leo X had sent, and a copy of the codex Cardinal Bessarion had sent the Senate of Venice. He alludes furthermore to ‘other codices that I look for throughout without repairing in efforts and expenses’ (“magnis laboribus et expensis undique conquisivimus”<sup>7</sup>). In the *Prólogo al Nuevo Testamento*, col. 2 it also speaks of very old and corrected manuscripts that the same León X had sent him from the Vatican Library. Moreover, in the *Prólogo dedicado al Papa León X*<sup>8</sup>, col. 2 thanks to His Holiness is expressed by the Greeks who kindly had sent codices to the Vatican Library for both the Old and the New Testament (“tum Veteris tum Novi Testamenti”<sup>9</sup>) and served as a great help for its business.

I overlook that these statements may have of the exaggeration of the genre typical of Renaissance prologues that often emphasize the antiquity of the manuscripts used and their reliability (“illud lectorem non lateat: quaevis exemplaria impressioni huic archetypa fuisse: sed antiquissima emendatissimaque: ac tantae praeterea vetustatis: ut fidem eis abrogare nefas videatur”<sup>10</sup>, *Prólogo al Nuevo Testamento*, col. 2). Despite it has been possible to verify the veracity of the affirmation of Cardinal Cisneros regarding the manuscripts lent for the Old Testament. Indeed, in the last century Vercellone discovered in the Vatican Library and published (*Dissertazioni accademiche*<sup>11</sup>, p 409) the records of an inventory of the Library of Leo X made in 1518 in which two codices were described that were delivered to Spain for preparation of the Complutensian

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<sup>5</sup> Roughly, from the Latin: *not in the pronouncing of words inflection of tone nor at any time decline*

<sup>6</sup> *Preface to the Reader*

<sup>7</sup> Loose meaning of the Latin: *[with] great labors and expenses everywhere we have sought out.*

<sup>8</sup> *Foreword Dedicated to Pope Leo X*

<sup>9</sup> Loose meaning of the Latin: *Both the Old and New Testaments.*

<sup>10</sup> Roughly from the Latin: *It should not be hidden from the reader the influence of any of these original copies which are faultless: and besides, with such antiquity: it honestly seems wrong to abrogate them.*

<sup>11</sup> *Academic Dissertations* [Italian]

Polyglot and later given back to the Vatican Library: one is the *Vaticano griego*<sup>12</sup> 330 (= 108 of Rahlfs' catalogue) and *Vat. griego* 346 (=248 of Rahlfs). The first contains from Genesis to Tobit (this latter one incomplete) and the second the Wisdom books to Judith. To these two Roman manuscripts should be added two others that are now preserved in the Library of the University of Alcalá of Madrid from the old funds of the School of San Ildefonso of Alcalá founded by Cisneros: these are manuscripts 22 and 23 of the catalogue of Villa-Amil and Castro (442 and 1670 of Rahlfs). The first is a copy of a part of the unit of Cardinal Bessarion (Venice, *Bibliotheca Marciana Graecus*<sup>13</sup> 5=68 of Rahlfs) that extends from Judges to 3 Maccabees, and second contains the book of Psalms with the Odes.

By contrast, Vercellone did not find in the inventory of the Vatican any document proving the dispatch to Cardinal Cisneros of New Testament manuscripts. Moreover, Leo X began his pontificate 11 of March of 1513, less than a year from the printing of the Complutensian New Testament. How could he have sent manuscripts so that they were used in the edition that at time already was being printed? These points have led some writers to question the assertions of the Cardinal in the *Prólogo dedicado a León X* and in the *Prólogo al Nuevo Testamento*. However, this lack of information, given the ups and downs followed by some manuscripts do not have enough weight to cast doubt on the affirmation of Cisneros and seems more likely, as suggested J.L. Hug and F. Delitzsch, the shipment took place during the pontificate of Julius II and the intervention of Cardinal de Medici (later Leo X) that had a great influence on what would happen in Julio II's pontificate. In any case, if the shipment occurred, these manuscripts have been lost since a notable textual affinity is not appraised between the New Testament of Alcalá and the New Testament manuscripts that are preserved today in the Vatican (cf. Revilla, *La Poliglota de Alcalá*<sup>14</sup>, pgs. 115-16). According to the studies of Delitzsch (*Fortgesetzte Studien*<sup>15</sup>, pgs. 35-39) the manuscript *the Vaticanus Graecus*<sup>16</sup> 1158 and especially *Vaticanus Graecus* 366 are the two most likely to have been used by the Complutensian philologists, but data and weighty arguments are needed to be able to defend it reasonably. Furthermore, there are other manuscripts coming from European libraries that never were in the Vatican that are more compatible to the Complutensian text than those of this Roman Library.

To sum up, the problem of the manuscripts used by the Hellenists of Alcalá partly has been solved (mainly for the Old Testament) and partly continues being a challenge for scholars. The enigma of the manuscripts used for the New Testament, which still can not find a satisfactory solution, in my opinión deserves a systematic investigation that takes into account all of the handwritten documents that we have today. It is up to here that we know and it much that we still do not know about the Greek manuscripts used by the publishers of the Complutensian.

Another of the most debated issues remains the use made by Alcalá philologists of the handwritten documentation they had at their disposal. In other words, to what

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<sup>12</sup> *Vatican Greek*

<sup>13</sup> Loose meaning of the Latin: *The Library of Marcian Greek*.

<sup>14</sup> *The Polyglot of Alcalá (Complutensian Polyglot)*

<sup>15</sup> *Continuing Studies* [German]

<sup>16</sup> *Vatican Greek* [Latin]

extent did they respect the readings of the manuscripts or corrigieron<sup>17</sup>; or by what criteria did they select the printed reading when the manuscripts differed from each other. The core of the debate is to establish if they corrected on their own account the Greek text to accommodate it to the Hebrew or to the Latin of the Vulgate that was published in parallel columns. On this specific point the views of scholars have evolved from maximalist positions that assured that the Complutensian philologists had corrected the Greek manuscripts in countless passages to more balanced judgments that, while admitting some sporadic correction, have seen in most of the readings peculiar to the Bible of Alcalá variants of authentic manuscripts we do not retain today. Among the representatives of the first position may be mentioned A. Masius, B. Walton and R. Simon. Walton, for example, editor of the London Polyglot (1657), maintains that the Complutensian Greek text is far from the genuine Septuagint being a conglomerate of that version, Hexaplaric additions taken from other interpreters and even from Greek commentators for the purpose of adapting it to the Hebrew (cf. *Biblia Polyglotta, Prolegomena*<sup>18</sup>, p 64). As we will see this overly exaggerated affirmation extrapolates to the entire Complutensian text the results of a survey done on the first chapter of Job. However, among authors who have held the Complutensian Greek text in high regard are included F. Delitzsch, P. de Lagarde and J. Ziegler, the last two towering figures in Septuagintal investigation. Ziegler already noticed very old readings transmitted in the Twelve Prophets of the Complutensian that have disappeared from the manuscripts that we retain, and like many readings that were attributed before to the editors they have recently been supported by new documents (cf. *Zur griechischen Dodekapheton-Text*<sup>19</sup>, p 309).

In fact before making a generalization on the publishing procedure followed by Complutensian philologists book by book would have to be analyzed in detail. The study by the various editors of the Göttingen Septuagint has revealed, for example, that in the book of Complutensian Ecclesiasticus essentially the manuscript 248 is followed. However, sometimes it deviates from it with a number of peculiar readings that constitute an authentic recension, at times coinciding with the reading of some minuscule manuscripts and in some cases preserving the original readings that have disappeared even in the rest of the Greek witnesses. In the Complutensian Tobit manuscript 248 is followed almost exclusively although they also had the manuscript lent by Cardinal Bessarion and manuscript 108 for part of the book. The problem at the beginning of the book of Job that supported the judgment of Walton has been clarified in the critical edition of this book by J. Ziegler: The Complutensian followed manuscript 248 but especially in the first ten chapters incorporated readings from Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion who were on the margins of the manuscript readings that sometimes affect entire phrases, being more consistent with the original Hebrew (cf. Ziegler, *Septuaginta, XI, 4 Iob*, pgs. 56-58).

It also seems clear that in the books of Kings, the Complutensian, omitting the Septuagint additions that have no parallel in the Hebrew, created a new recension nearer

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<sup>17</sup> This appears to the translator to be a technical term derived from the Latin “corrigier” to correct / improve / restore.

<sup>18</sup> Loosely, *Polyglot Bible, Preliminary discussion* [Latin]

<sup>19</sup> Loosely, *For the Greek Text of the Twelve Prophets* [German]

the Hebrew text than even the Hexaplar recension (Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien*<sup>20</sup> 3, p 22). But even here assimilation to the Hebrew does not seem to have operated as the critical editorial approach excepting the most striking cases of mismatch between the two texts, or very particular names that probably underwent a process of unification to fit the index names already printed in the sixth tome<sup>21</sup> (Sáenz-Badillos, *La filología bíblica*<sup>22</sup>, p 30). In other passages such as the Song of Debora (Judges 5) or the Song of Habakkuk (Habakkuk 3), the editors did not simply follow one of the manuscripts that they had as a base but they developed with them a new non-tendentious critical recension that does not lack textual interest (Delitzsch, *Forgesetzte Studien*, p 17).

Delitzsch termed the text followed by the Complutensians in the books of the Prophets a pending problem (“the die noch unerledigte Frage<sup>23</sup>”, cf. *Forgesetzte Studien*, p 53), although he admitted that basically they had used the scrolls 23, 68 and 122 from Rahlfs' Catalogue, all from the Biblioteca Marciana in Venice. Ziegler, in a documented article on the variants of the Complutensian in the Twelve Prophets, published as a result of his critical edition of this book, reached results different from those from Delitzsch and much more precise (cf. Ziegler, *Zur griechischen Dodekapropheten-Text*). It verified how a good number of readings that were believed exclusive to the Complutensian were attested in the Washingtoniano Papyrus of the third century A.D. but discovered early in our century and first published in 1927. It also emphasized the coincidence with some marginal readings of manuscript 86, with the version capturing Achmimic<sup>24</sup> and especially the Vetus Latina<sup>25</sup>. But the text closest to the one of the Bible of Alcalá was certainly in two very small pieces, manuscripts 40 and 42 of the Holmes-Parsons edition that we only know through the critical apparatus of this edition, since the manuscripts themselves have disappeared (cf. Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis*<sup>26</sup>, p 330). Concerning the background of exclusive readings of the Complutensian that Ziegler considered retranslations of the Latin to the Greek on the part of the editors, Wevers contends that Ziegler's thesis does not seem a satisfactory resolution (cf. *Septuaginta-Forschungen*<sup>27</sup>, p 105). And in my own study (the *El texto griego de la Complutense en Doce Profetas*<sup>28</sup>) I could verify how in the exclusive readings of the Complutensian the readings contrary to the Hebrew text predominate on the adaptations to this text, so that one can argue that equivalency to the Hebrew has worked like an editorial criterion of the Hellenists of Alcalá. A few cases still remain in which the editors intervened, apparently in the Greek text to accommodate it to the Latin reading of the Vulgate. But these conclusions are far from the traditional scattered opinions on adaptation of the Greek text of the Complutensian to the Hebrew or the Latin. As we study specific books in depth the

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<sup>20</sup> *Septuagint Studies* [German]

<sup>21</sup> one of the books in a work of several volumes.

<sup>22</sup> *Biblical Philology*

<sup>23</sup> *The still unresolved question* [German]

<sup>24</sup> From a Wikipedia article: Akhmimic was the dialect of the area around the town of Akhmim, (Greek Panopolis), and flourished during the 4th and 5th centuries, after which no writings are attested. Akhmimic is phonologically the most archaic of the Coptic dialects.

<sup>25</sup> *Old Latin* [Latin]

<sup>26</sup> *Directory* [German]

<sup>27</sup> *Septuagintal Researches* [German]

<sup>28</sup> *The Complutensian Greek Text of the Twelve Prophets*

problem reveals itself as much more complex and we are still far from having cleared all the unknowns of the editorial work of the philology of Alcalá.

Reviewing the recent critical editions of the Septuagint of Göttingen yet another interesting finding can be made. In the Pentateuch, besides manuscript 108 lent by Leo X, it seems that the publishers have also followed other manuscripts: in Genesis 53, in Numbers 56 and 129, and in Deuteronomy 53 and 56 of the Catalogue of Rahlfs. Thus it seems to be deduced from the high number of readings that the Complutensian text shares with these manuscripts. This empirical verification would give the reason Cardinal Cisneros in the *Prólogo al lector*, above, alluded to other manuscripts obtained with efforts and great sums of money. For that reason the more surprising is the position of the great teacher Max L. Margolis, expressed in an unpublished study on the Complutensian text of Joshua that Greenspoon recently published (*Max L. Margolis on the Complutensian Text of Joshua*). Based upon the methodological principle that the Complutensian did not have access to an ample number of manuscripts in Joshua (Granted!, but who would argue that it was only two?), it still attributes the remainder of Complutensian readings that do not agree with the 108 or the 56 to retranslation by the editors into “Spanish Greek” from the Latin, even if these readings also are in some known Greek manuscript (*ibid.* p 45). If, as Margolis pretends, those coincidences are the fruit of chance, it should be recognized as unique in the Complutensian that when retranslating the Latin they have managed to reproduce readings that appear in the same Greek manuscripts. Or, is it that they circulated already?, as suggests Ziegler of the Greek manuscripts of the Twelve Prophets, regarding the Greek being influenced by the Latin prior to the Complutensian edition. ...

On the other hand, that the editors of Alcalá chose as the basis of their editing or reading the manuscript that is closest to the Hebrew text or from time to time, in cases of discrepancy, corrected according to the Hebrew text is not surprising given philological criteria in effect at the beginning of the sixteenth century. As Cisneros says in the *Prólogo dedicado a León X*. col. 1, recourse to the originals must be the criterion of authenticity in the biblical texts translated, “ita ut librorum Veteris Testamenti sinceritas ex Hebraica veritate: Novi autem ex Graecis exemplaribus examinetur”<sup>29</sup>. But we do not think that this recourse to the original was systematically used as the supreme criterion, but in rare cases according to the books and trying to extract from the Greek tradition itself -- even resorting to the margins of the manuscripts -- a reading that is most conformed to the original. Moreover, in books such as Jeremiah the Complutensians are aware of the differences between the Greek and Hebrew, maintaining the validity of the tradition of the Septuagint and warning in the prologue of this book how its text should be respected without trying to correct it from Hebrew: “Alia est Septuaginta interpretum ecclesiasticorum usitata ... Quod ideo praemonemus ne quisquam alteram ex altera velit emendare. Quod singulorum in suo genere veritas observando est”<sup>30</sup>. A Surprisingly modern conclusion when one talks about such discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek texts in the book of Jeremiah.

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<sup>29</sup> Roughly, from Latin: *Thus the books of the Old Testament Hebrew are genuine: I know, however, that the copies from the Greeks may be examined.*

<sup>30</sup> Roughly, from the Latin: *Another is the Septuagint, familiar to the Church's interpreters... With respect to which accordingly we forewarn not any out of it may wish to correct. That is, by observing the truth of every one in its own way.*

In summary, we cannot judge Complutensian philology by the criteria of the textual criticism of today. Their work was a titanic intellectual adventure that managed to revive in our country --by grabbing and fulfilling the dream of Cisneros-- Bible studies that were so far were half-dead (“hactenus intermortua”<sup>31</sup>).

The type of text published in the New Testament, in spite of the shadow that follows the manuscripts used by the Complutensian, is one of the best quality among all the editions of the centuries XVI and XVII. The controversy that arose in century XVIII with respect to the supposed corrections by publishers to conform it to the text of the Vulgate, thanks to the studies of M. Gotze has been solved mainly in favor of the rigor of the Complutensians: the adaptation to the Latin text of the Vulgate that they had alongside has not acted in them as an editing principle although in several occasions it has realized corrections, among them the one of the famous *Comma Johanneum*<sup>32</sup> (1 John 5:7) that is not found in any of the ancient Greek manuscripts (cf Revilla, the *Polyglot of Alcala*, pgs. 118-135). And authors such as J. Mills, F. Delitzsch, M. Goguel and more recently Bruce M. Metzger regret that the New Testament of Erasmus and not of the Complutense for a few different reasons -- indeed not scientific -- became the basis of texts republished many times as the *textus receptus* and thus influence the history of the New Testament text. It goes that the Dutch printed text -- printed as he himself confesses in excessive haste and with some interpolations of the Vulgate -- is, as both in substance and in form, of a critical value inferior to the Complutensian (cf. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament*, pgs. 99 and 103).

We have seen how the quality of the Greek text in the Old Testament varies from book to book. In the Pentateuch and historical books they followed preferably manuscript 108, and the Wisdom Writings 248. The choice of these manuscripts resulted in some books such as the Complutensian Samuel-Kings a printed text of unique value that only upon later study came to be recognized. Indeed the manuscript 108 and therefore the Complutensian belong to the group of manuscripts that Ceriani and Vercellone identified as Lucianic since the second half of century XIX. One group of manuscripts in which Wellhausen discovered readings of much textual value, compared even with the Hebrew, which he even proposed to separately publish his text in at least these books (*Der Text der Bücher Samuelis*<sup>33</sup>, p 223). And P. de Lagarde published this Lucianic text from Genesis to Esther in 1883 although in a provisional and hasty form (*Librorum Veteris Testamenti Canonorum*<sup>34</sup>) and extrapolating to the rest of books the results that were only valid for Samuel-Kings. The problem of the Lucianic recension of the Octateuch continued pending then of solution.

The team that works on Greek Bible investigation carried out within the the Superior Council of Scientific Researches (Madrid) in the program of the Polyglot Matritense want to be heirs and successors of the brilliant tradition of our Complutensian philologists. Indeed, more than ten years of investigation of this Lucianic text, first in the Octateuch and later in Kings-Chronicles, they have crystallized in critical editions of two

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<sup>31</sup> Loosely, *hitherto unconscious* [Latin]

<sup>32</sup> Loosely, *verse of John* [Latin]

<sup>33</sup> *The Text of the Books of Samuel* [German]

<sup>34</sup> *Books of the Old Testament Canons* [Latin]

Biblical works of Theodoret, the main witness of this recension by its geographic origin of the area of Antioch (cf. Fernandez Marcos - Busto Saíz, *Quaestiones in Reges et Paralipomena, Prólogo*<sup>35</sup>). After these preparatory studies our immediate project contemplates the edition of the Antiochian or Lucianic text of the Greek Bible starting with those books in which the text of the recension is more relevant, the books of Samuel-Kings. The interest that this text aroused in the investigators of the second half of century XIX, who already sensed their differences with the well-known Hebrew text and sometimes their textual priority, have new interest added today as a result of discoveries of Qumran. Then this text in its older strata, testified already in Josephus and the Vetus Latina<sup>36</sup>, is related to the Hebrew text discovered in Qumran Cave 4 (4 QSam<sup>ac</sup>). The findings of Qumran have made us realize something that neither Origen nor Jerome suspected in spite of mainly stating the great differences between the Septuagint and the Hebrew text in some books: the existence of a Hebrew textual pluralism around the years that saw the birth of Christianity; and the fact that the Septuagint is carrying real textual and literary variants in opposition to the Hebrew text transmitted by the Judaism. In this text the polymorphism of some books of the Septuagint and the coincidence of its text with the Hebrew of Qumran against the masoretic Hebrew have made us be still more cautious and respectful regarding a tradition that goes back to a very old original Hebrew sometimes different from the masoretic text. And it is that when the Septuagint was translated the process of the literary formation of some books of the Old Testament had not yet closed. In these cases the diverse traditions transmitted as much by the Septuagint as by the Hebrew must be respected because it is not always easy to prove the priority of one over the other, nor to distinguish between the literary evolution and textual evolution of the book in question. One of these traditions of respectable antiquity is the Antiochian text of Samuel-Kings that starts as an independent text with transmission separated from the rest of the Septuagint, probably in the first century AD. This text in some sections constitutes perhaps the stage most linguistically proximate to the original that can be achieved through the techniques of textual criticism, is more or less uniform, and maintains throughout Samuel-Kings textual and literary traits that make it a must for the restoration of the book of Kings (cf. Fernandez Marcos, *The Lucianic Text in the Books of Kingdoms*). I also think the project is justified not only in currents of biblical textual criticism; but it is becoming essential if we want to clarify the textual history and literary formation process of these books. And finally, our project does not interfere with any that are currently underway in other foreign centers in the area of the Greek Bible. It complements the company of Göttingen that is masterfully editing at a good pace the ancient Septuagint and would constitute the apportionment of the Spanish investigation in this great field, coordinated with the great German company. (cf. Fernandez Marcos, *On the Present State of Septuagint Research in Spain*). Their inclusion in the program of the Polyglot Bible Matritense is obvious inasmuch as I think that, unlike the past, our task today is to publish the diverse Biblical texts that have been transmitted to us in the different old languages (always with the support of a community) and that all of them constitute the Bible (τὰ βιβλία), in the fullest sense of the word. Of course a project like this requires us to reassess all the data from the past and more recent testimony to the techniques of textual criticism in force today, particularly the currently known block of

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<sup>35</sup> Roughly, *Questions in the Kings and the Chronicles, Prologue* [Latin]

<sup>36</sup> *Old Latin*



Lucianic manuscripts, the Vetus Latina with all its complexity as an exceptional witness to the text, the Armenian version and quotations from Flavius Josephus and the Antiochian Fathers. To all these motivations of a scientific character happily another particularly even more desired circumstance comes to add itself: the the one to publish a critically edited text with all the modern scientific exigencies; a text that is inserted into the tradition started with all the constraints and limitations of the time, by those great pioneers who were the Hellenists of Alcalá.

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