

Tobit and Jerome¹

It was around 390 that Jerome embarked upon his translation of the bible from the Hebrew. This conversion to the *hebraica veritas* also entailed an acceptance of the Hebrew canon, which excluded the deuterocanonical works commonly read in the church. Henceforth Jerome makes a point of stressing the uncanonical nature of these books². In practice however he continues to quote them as if they were scripture. Texts are cited with particular frequency from Ecclesiasticus, Wisdom of Solomon and the deuterocanonical parts of Daniel³. On the other hand quotation from the Book of Tobit is rare. Only three passages have so far been identified: all of them belong to the later period of Jerome's life in which he expressed serious reservations about such uncanonical books. It is the purpose of the present article to add a further passage to the dossier of Jerome's quotations from Tobit. This one is significantly earlier than the other three.

The three passages which have hitherto been recognized are listed by Penna⁴. The earliest occurs in Jerome's commentary on Ecclesiastes, which was produced around 389. There he cites Tobit

1 Citation of Latin works follows the method of *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae: Index Librorum Scriptorum Inscriptionum*², Leipzig 1990. For Latin Fathers the editions used are those given in H. J. Frede, *Kirchenschriftsteller: Verzeichnis und Sigel*, Freiburg/B. 1981; *Vetus Latina* 1/1, and its *Aktualisierungshefte* (1984 and 1988). Greek patristic works are cited according to the conventions adopted in G. W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, Oxford 1961-8, pp. xi-xlv; the editions used are those given in M. Geerard and F. Glorie, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* 1-5, Turnhout 1974-87.

2 His pronouncements on the subject are assembled and discussed by G. M. Perrella, «S. Girolamo e i Deuterocanonici del V. T.», *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza), 47-49 (1944-46) 228-35.

3 Cf. A. Penna, *S. Gerolamo*, Turin-Rome 1949, 387-8.

4 *O.c.* (n. 3) 388.