Non-Septuagintal Influences on the Bucharest Bible of 1688

Alexandru MIHĂILĂ

Die vorliegende Arbeit versucht, die nicht-septuagintischen Einflüsse auf die Bibel von Bukarest (1688), die erste gesamte Übersetzung der Bibel ins Rumänische, zu studieren. Erstens kann man einen protestantischen Einfluss auf den Kanon wahrnehmen, der dadurch erklärt wird, dass die Herausgeber der Übersetzungsvorlage, die Frankfurter Bibel von 1597, Hugenotten waren. Zweitens, kann man auch einen katholischen Einfluss erkennen, weil der Text selbst, zumindest im Buch des Propheten Jeremia, das als Fallstudie herausgezogen war, nicht-septuagintische Ergänzungen aus der Complutensischen Polyglotte hat, wo der griechische Text nach der lateinischen Vulgata umgestaltet wurde.

Keywords: Bucharest Bible of 1688, *Frankfurt Bible of 1597*, *Complutensian Polyglot*, *Aldine Bible*, *Sixtine Bible*, Septuagint, *Romanian Orthodox Bible translations.*

In the preface of his Bible translation (2001), Bartolomeu Anania wrote: "As part of the Eastern Orthodox world, the Romanian people had its Bible translated after the Septuagint", the Bucharest Bible of 1688 being the first example from an array of translations that ended with the Synodal Bible of 1914. For Anania, starting from the Bible of 1936 a hiatus came in the Romanian biblical tradition because the Old Testament text reflected since then the intertwining of Hebrew and Greek versions. The idea that Septuagint should offer *the text* par excellence of the Old Testament in the Eastern Orthodox Church is sustained also by some eminent scholars, to give only a few names: Cristian Bădiliţă[1], Ioan Ică jr.[2] and recently a dissertation under the guidance of Ioan Ică sr. about the biblical text of

[1] In the introduction of Cristian Bădiliţă / Francisca Băltăceanu / Monica Broşteanu / Dan Sluşanschi (ed.), *Septuaginta*, vol. 1, Colegiul Noua Europă / Polirom, Iaşi, 2004, p. 15, he wrote that the Septuagint "became an 'official' Bible of the Church" (in Romanian). Cf. Cristian Bădiliţă, *Glafire: Nouă studii biblice şi patristice*, Polirom, Iaşi, 2008, p. 232: "probably 'the authoritative text of the Eastern Orthodoxy" (in Romanian).

[2] Ioan Ică jr., "Înapoi la Septuaginta", *TABOR* 1 (2008), no. 11, p. 5-25, reprinted in *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1, Deisis / Stavropoleos, Sibiu, 2008, pp. 142-177. The title of the article is suggestive: "back to the Septuagint!".

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

the Romanian Orthodox Church written by Anton Savelovici[3]. In the academic community abroad, this opinion is supported also by Mogens Müller[4].

This is the background on which I want to study the relation of the Romanian biblical translations with Septuagint. I limited myself to the relation of the first integral Romanian translation of the Bible, the Bucharest Bible of 1688, and its Greek prototype, the Frankfurt Bible of 1597 on the one hand, with the original Septuagint text[5] as reconstructed today in the Rahlfs-Hanhart edition[6] and the Göttingen edition[7] on the other hand. I focused as a case study on the book of prophet Jeremiah, which has massive differences between the Hebrew Masoretic and the Greek Septuagintal text.

It should be mentioned that from the strictly scientific perspective at the present it is argued that the Old Testament is based on more textual witnesses[8], of which the Masoretic Text and Septuagint (more precisely the original Hebrew text/s used for translating Septuagint) represent the most important.

The Bucharest Bible and its prototype, the Frankfurt Bible of 1597

As assumed in the foreword of the Bucharest Bible and of the 45 and 4389 manuscripts, the initial translator, Nicolae Milescu Spătarul (Chancellor) and the subsequent revisers used the Greek text of the Frankfurt Bible from 1597[9]. It should be stressed that it is not only a Septuagint edition, as might be understood from recent studies, but an entire Greek Bible (including the New Testament)[10]. The Frankfurt Bible of 1597 was prepared by the Frenchmen Jean Aubry († 1600/1) and Claude de Marne († 1610), the heirs since 1582 of the publishing house of Wechel family[11]. The Wechel family, with German descend, began in the 20's of the XVIth century a business in Paris in publishing humanistic books.

---

[3] Anton Savelovici, *Textul Sfintei Scripturi în Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Valahia University Press / Bibliotheca, Târgovişte, 2012.

[4] Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1996, JSOTSupp 206.

[5] The term "original" seems to be misleading and debatable, but I follow BHS siglum (G* = *Septuaginta originalis*).

[6] Alfred Rahlfs / Robert Hanhart (ed.), *Septuaginta. Editio altera*, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 2006.

[7] *Septuaginta*, vol. XV: *Jeremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Jeremiae*, ed. Joseph Ziegler, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, ^{3}2006 (^{1}1957).

[8] Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, second revised edition, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis / Van Gorcum, Assen, 2001, p. 18.

[9] Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008, p. 24-25, 252. The Frankfurt Bible appeared in 1597, not in 1587 (p. 24). Subsequently, the year is mentioned correctly as 1597.

[10] Cf. E. Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, p. 252, 440 ("*Septuaginta* tipărită la Frankfurt"), 483 ("Septuaginta tipărită la 1597"), 513. Only by consulting the final bibliography the reader could be edified that in fact there is no Septuagint edition, but an entire Bible (p. 530).

[11] Ian Maclean, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religon: The Learned Book in the Age of Confessions, 1560-1630*, Harvard University Press, 2012, p. 148.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

Chrétien Wechel († 1554) specialized in bilingual editions of Greek and Latin classic texts[12]. His son, André Wechel († 1581), inherited the publishing house after the death of his father, but in 1572 he fled in Frankfurt am Main due to the persecutions against the Huguenots, whose acme was the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre. In Frankfurt, André Wechel developed the publishing house, but died in 1581. Nevertheless, the business was taken over by the above mentioned heirs, which in 1597 edited a Greek Bible using an elegant font inspired from the medieval Byzantine manuscripts. It must be underline that the Wechel family, as well as the heirs from 1581, belonged to a Protestant milieu: they were Calvinist (Huguenots)[13].

In the Latin foreword of the Frankfurt Bible it says that the text followed the Basel edition published by Johann Herwagen (Hervagius) from Waderdingen (1497-1558)[14], issued in 1545, which, on its turn, coincides entirely (*prorsus congruit*) with the Aldine Bible (*Aldina*) published in Venice in 1518 in the press of Aldus Manutius[15]. In order to reach the "Hebrew truth" (*hebraica veritas*), editions of the Complutensian Polyglot (Alcalá de Henares, printed 1514-1517, but on the market only in 1522), the Antwerp Polyglot (1572), the Strasbourg Bible (1524-1526) and the Sixtine Bible/*Sixtina* (Rome, 1587) were consulted.

The Frankfurt Bible was used also for an unfinished revision of the Slavonic Bible from Moscow, 1663, by Epiphanius Slavinetsky, who translated the preface wrongly attributed by him to André Wechel, but that in reality belonged to the Frenchmen heirs[16].

The status of the Anaginoskomena books

A major Protestant influence could be observed in the status of the books that are missing from the Hebrew canon, the so-called *anaginoskomena* ("to be read" books). I want to avoid the terms "uncanonical" or "deuterocanonical". The first one is theologically inappropriate, because these books were never excluded from the canon in the Eastern Orthodox Church, except for the Russian Church

[12] About the Wechel family, cf. "Wechel family", in: Gordon Campbell, *The Oxford Dictionary of Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, 2003.

[13] Robert John Weston Evans, *The Wechel Presses: Humanism and Calvinism in Central Europe, 1572-1627*, Oxford, 1975, Past and Present Society 2.

[14] Peter G. Bietenholz, "Johann Herwagen of Waderdingen", in: Peter G. Bietenholz / Thomas Brian Deutscher (ed.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1995 (republished from 1985), p. 186-187.

[15] The Aldine Bible, published in Venice in 1518-1519 in the printing house of Aldus Manutius, contains the Septuagint and Erasmus' New Testament (1516). The text was established by Andreas Asolanus, using manuscripts from the collection of Cardinal Bessarion (Vissarion), a Greek humanist who adopted the uniatism of the Council of Ferrara-Florence.

[16] Francis J. Thomson, "The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament", in: Jože Krašovec (ed.), *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1998, p. 690-691.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

beginning with Tsar Peter the Great's period.[17] The second term is in fact of Catholic origin, designating the late inclusion into the canon of these particular books only during the XVI-th cent. at the Council of Trent[18].

Nevertheless in the Strasbourg Bible from 1526 (the Old Testament), the *anaginoskomena* books were grouped in a separate section, following Luther's canon[19]. The Frankfurt Bible included them similarly into a separate section, entitled Ἀπόκρυφοι. At page 760, the Frankfurt Bible has a note: Ἀπόκρυφοι αἳ παρ' ἑβραίοις ἐκ τοῦ τῶν ἀξιοπίστων ἀριθμοῦ συγκαθίστανται, meticulously translated by the Bucharest Bible: "Ascunsele ceale ce-s la jidovi. Den numărul celor vreadnice de credinţă să află" (The hidden books of the Jews that are beside the trustworthy ones). The Ben Sira prologue is presented at page 811 in the Frankfurt Bible and at page 663 in the Bucharest Bible with the following note: Πρόλογος παρείσακτος ἀδήλου, "Cuvînt înainte den afară băgat, nearătat de cine e făcut" (preface from the outside, whose author remains unknown), that also shows a Protestant and humanistic approach.

Case study: the book of prophet Jeremiah[20]

I picked up as a case study the book of prophet Jeremiah, focusing on the text missing from the Septuagint, as indicated in the apparatus of the critical edition of the Hebrew Bible (BHS)[21]. It should be taken into account that the Septuagintal book of Jeremiah is about 1/7 shorter (3097 words less) than in the Hebrew text[22].

---

[17] M. Jugie, "Le canon de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Église byzantine", *Échos d'Orient* 10 (1907), pp. 129-135; *Idem*, "Les deutérocanoniques de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Église orthodoxe aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles", *Échos d'Orient* 10 (1907), pp. 193-199; *Idem*, "Le canon de l'Ancien Testament dans l'Église russe depuis le XVIIIe siècle", *Échos d'Orient* 10 (1907), pp. 263-274; *Idem*, "Les deutérocanoniques dans l'Église grecque depuis le XVIIIe siècle", *Échos d'Orient* 10 (1907), p. 344-357.

[18] Petros Vassiliadis, "The Liturgical Use of the Bible in Greek Orthodoxy: An Orthodox Critical Approach in 12 Steps", paper delivered in an international conference on "The Present and the Future of Biblical Studies in the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches", held in Firenze, Italy (6-7 June, 2013) (http://auth.academia.edu/PetrosVassiliadis/Papers). Cf. also Eugen J. Pentiuc, *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford / New York, 2014, pp. 129-131, who states that the Eastern Orthodox Churches have an open canon.

[19] S. L. Greenslade (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004 (republished from 1963), p. 57.

[20] I thank my colleague, Emanuel Conţac, for sharing photocopies of the Venice, Sixtine and Frankfurt Bibles. The Venice Bible was photocopied by himself during an Oxford sojourn, while the Sixtine and Frankfurt Bibles are available online in Google Books (cf. http://books.google.ro/books?id=UMBIAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro#v=onepage&q&f=false, respectively http://books.google.ro/books?id=JaERSsuDyjMC&printsec=frontcover&hl=ro#v=onepage&q&f=false).

[21] K. Elliger / W. Rudolph (ed.), *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, corr. by A. Schenker, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, ^{5}1997.

[22] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, Yale University Press, New Haven / London, 1999, AB 21A, p. 57-58.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

I signaled the big differences by placing an exclamation mark flanked by square brackets before the paragraph describing them. All the verse numbers are referred according to BHS and I have deliberately avoided the difficult problem of different numbering in Frankfurt Bible, Bucharest Bible (Complutensian Polyglot, Aldina and Sixtina are printed continuously, without verse numbers).

Jer. 1:3 – תֹּם "the end"; omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 1:18 – וּלְעַמּוּד בַּרְזֶל "and as a pillar of iron"; omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

[!] Jer. 1:18 – לְכֹהֲנֶיהָ "for the priests"; is missing in Aldina and Sixtina, but is added (καὶ τοῖς ἱερεῦσιν αὐτοῦ) in Frankfurt.

Jer. 2:1-2 – וַיְהִי דְבַר־יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר הָלוֹךְ וְקָרָאתָ בְּאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלִַם "and the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem"; is absent from the Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 2:2 – בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה "in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown", omitted by all three versions.

Jer. 2:17 – בְּעֵת מוֹלִיכֵךְ בַּדָּרֶךְ "when he led you by the way", omitted by all three versions.

Jer. 2:22 – אֲדֹנָי "Lord", omitted by all three versions.

Jer. 3:9 – וַתְּחֱנַף אֶת־הָאָרֶץ "and she polluted the land", omitted by all three versions.

Jer. 3:17 – לְשֵׁם יהוה לִירוּשָׁלִַם "to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem"; omitted by all three versions.

Jer. 4:12 – מֵאֵלֶּה "from them", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 4:23 – תֹּהוּ "waste", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 4:30 – שָׁדוּד "spoiled", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 5:15 – גּוֹי אֵיתָן הוּא גּוֹי מֵעוֹלָם הוּא "it is an enduring nation, it is an ancient nations", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 5:16 – אַשְׁפָּתוֹ כְּקֶבֶר פָּתוּחַ "their quiver is like an open grave", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

[!] Jer. 5:28 – שָׁמְנוּ עָשְׁתוּ "they have become fat and sleek", omitted by Aldina and Sixtina, but Frankfurt Bible added only one verb, ἐπαχύνθησαν, according to Complutensian Polyglot.

Jer. 5:28 – דִּבְרֵי־רָע "deeds of wickedness", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 7:1-2 – a massive lack: הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־יִרְמְיָהוּ מֵאֵת יהוה לֵאמֹר: עֲמֹד בְּשַׁעַר בֵּית יהוה וְקָרָאתָ שָׁם אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְאָמַרְתָּ "the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying: Stand at the gate of the house of the Lord and there proclaim this word and say", and then after a few words: הַבָּאִים בַּשְּׁעָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְהִשְׁתַּחֲוֹת לַיהוה: "who enter these gates to worship the Lord", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 7:13 – נְאֻם־יהוה "oracle of the Lord" and הַשְׁכֵּם וְדַבֵּר "rising early and speaking", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

[!] Jer. 7:27-28 – a massive lack: אֶת־כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וְלֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אֵלֶיךָ וְקָרָאתָ אֲלֵיהֶם וְלֹא יַעֲנוּכָה: וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם "all these words, they will not listen to you; you shall call to them, but they will not answer you; you shall say to them". The passage is omitted by Aldina and Sixtina, but Frankfurt Bible added a part: καὶ οὐκ ἀκούσονταί σε· καὶ καλέσας αὐτοὺς καὶ οὐκ ἀποκρινοῦσί σοι. Καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς αὐτούς.

Jer. 8:3-4 – נְאֻם יהוה צְבָאוֹת: וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵיהֶם "oracle of the Lord of hosts; and you shall say to them", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 8:5 – יְרוּשָׁלַם "Jerusalem", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

[!] Jer. 8:10-12 – massive lack: כִּי מִקָּטֹן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל כֻּלֹּה בֹּצֵעַ בָּצַע מִנָּבִיא וְעַד־כֹּהֵן כֻּלֹּה עֹשֶׂה שָׁקֶר: וַיַּרְפּוּ אֶת־שֶׁבֶר בַּת־עַמִּי עַל־נָקְלָה לֵאמֹר שָׁלוֹם שָׁלוֹם וְאֵין שָׁלוֹם: הֹבִשׁוּ כִּי תוֹעֵבָה עָשׂוּ גַּם־בוֹשׁ לֹא־יֵבֹשׁוּ וְהִכָּלֵם לֹא יָדָעוּ לָכֵן יִפְּלוּ בַנֹּפְלִים בְּעֵת פָּקְדָתָם יִכָּשְׁלוּ אָמַר יְהוָה: "from the small to the great, all are greedy for gain, from the prophet to the priest, all act falsely. And they have healed the hurt of my people lightly, saying: Peace, peace!, when there is no peace. They have acted shamefully, because they have committed abomination, yet they are not ashamed, they do not know how to blush; therefore, they shall fall among those who fall, in the time of their punishment they shall stumble, said the Lord". The fragment is omitted by Aldina and Sixtina, but inserted by Frankfurt Bible following the Complutensian Polyglot: ὅτι ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου πάντες φιλαργυρίαν ἀποδιώκουσι· καὶ ἐκ προφήτου ἕως ἱερέως πάντες ποιοῦσι ψεῦδος. Καὶ ἰατρεύονται σύντριμμα τοῦ λαοῦ μου πρὸς ἀτιμίαν λέγοντες, εἰρήνη εἰρήνη· καὶ οὐκ ἦν εἰρήνη. Ἠσχύνθησαν, ὅτι βδέλυγμα ἐποίησαν· καὶ αἰσχύνη οὐκ ἠσχύνθησαν, καὶ αἰσχυνθῆναι οὐκ οἴδασι, διὰ τοῦτο πεσοῦνται ἀνὰ μέσον πέπτοντες, ἐν καιρῷ ἐπισκοπῆς αὐτῶν πεσοῦνται, λέγει κύριος.

Jer. 8:13 – וָאֶתֵּן לָהֶם יַעַבְרוּם "and I gave them that which they transgress", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 8:17 – נְאֻם־יהוה "oracle of the Lord", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 8:21 – הָשְׁבָּרְתִּי "I am broken", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 9:2 – נְאֻם־יהוה "oracle of the Lord"; φησὶ κύριος added by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 9:5 – נְאֻם־יהוה "oracle of the Lord"; φησὶ κύριος added by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 9:9 – וָנֶהִי "and wailing", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 9:14 – אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה "this people", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 9:21 – דַּבֵּר כֹּה נְאֻם־יהוה "speak: thus is the oracle of the Lord", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

[!] Jer. 10:6-8 – massive lack: מֵאֵין כָּמוֹךָ יְהוָה גָּדוֹל אַתָּה וְגָדוֹל שִׁמְךָ בִּגְבוּרָה: מִי לֹא יִרָאֲךָ מֶלֶךְ הַגּוֹיִם כִּי לְךָ יָאָתָה כִּי בְכָל־חַכְמֵי הַגּוֹיִם וּבְכָל־מַלְכוּתָם מֵאֵין כָּמוֹךָ: וּבְאַחַת יִבְעֲרוּ וְיִכָּסְלוּ מוּסַר הֲבָלִים עֵץ הוּא: "No one is like you, o Lord, you are great and your name is great in

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

power. Who would not fear you, o king of the nations, for that is your due. For among all the wise of the nations and among all their royalty no one is like you. But they are dull and foolish, instruction from vanities, only wood". The entire fragment is missing in Aldina and Sixtina, but Frankfurt Bible added after Complutensian Polyglot: Οὐκ ἔστιν ὅμοιος σοι κύριε, μέγας εἶ σὺ καὶ μέγα τὸ ὄνομά σου ἐν τῇ ἰσχύϊ. Τίς οὐ φοβηθήσεταί σε, βασιλεῦ ἐθνῶν; σοὶ γὰρ πρέπει, ὅτι ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς σοφοῖς τῶν ἐθνῶν, καὶ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις αὐτῶν οὐκ ἔστιν ὅμοιος σοι. Ἅμα ἄφρονες καὶ ἀνόητοί εἰσι, διδασκαλία ματαίων αὐτῶν ξύλον ἐστίν. This case is particularly instructive because an erroneous transposition in the Complutensian Polyglot is inherited in Frankfurt Bible (ἀργύριον τορευτόν ἐστιν οὐ πορεύσονται is transposed form v. 9 of the Hebrew Bible before v. 5, i.e. before αἰρόμενα ἀρθήσονται). Aldina and Sixtina have their own rendering, by transposing entirely v. 5 after v. 9 of the Hebrew Bible.

Jer. 10:10 – וַיהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֱמֶת הוּא־אֱלֹהִים חַיִּים וּמֶלֶךְ עוֹלָם מִקְּצָפוֹ תִּרְעַשׁ הָאָרֶץ וְלֹא־יָכְלוּ גוֹיִם זַעְמוֹ: "And the Lord is truly God, he is a living God and king of eternity; at his wrath the earth trembles, and the nations cannot endure his rage", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 10:13 – לְקוֹל תִּתּוֹ "when he gave the thunder", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

Jer. 10:16 – וְיִשְׂרָאֵל שֵׁבֶט "and Israel tribe", omitted by Aldina, Sixtina and Frankfurt Bible.

I limited the comparative study to the first 10 chapters of the book of Jeremiah, because the result is evident. In some cases, particularly where a big textual fragment is missing from the Greek version, the Frankfurt Bible editors followed the Complutensian Polyglot and not the Aldine or the Sixtine Bibles, which are closer to each other.

But the most important issue is the location of chap. 46-51 of the Hebrew text immediately after Jer. 25:13a in the Septuagint, in a different order (Elam, Egypt, Babylon, Philistia, Edom, Ammon, Kedar, Damascus and Moab). Here the Septuagintal edition seems to be earlier.[23] After Jer. 25:13a, Aldina and Sixtina followed the chapter order of the Septuagint, while Frankfurt Bible rearranged the order in accordance with the Hebrew text just as the Complutensian Polyglot.

Conclusions

It seems to me that the additions from the Hebrew text into the Greek one, attested in the Frankfurt Bible and the Bucharest Bible, the latter copying obediently the former, do not follow a particular criterion. The only criterion which might be perceived is to follow the Complutensian Polyglot, although not in each case, but especially when there was massive text missing from the Greek text.

[23] Jack R. Lundbom, *Jeremiah 1-20*, p. 59.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

At its turn, in regard of the Greek text, the Complutensian Polyglot was criticized for its poor quality: "When the editors were faced occasionally by passages present in the Vulgate but absent from the Greek they filled in these gaps by translation from the Latin. This led Bishop Walton, editor of the greatest of the Polyglot Bibles, that of London 1657, to describe the Complutensian edition of the Septuagint as 'consarcinata'"[24]. Séamus O'Connell studied the Greek text of the Complutensian Polyglot and reached similar conclusions: "The Greek column is an eclectic text constructed by a number of editors who worked semi-independently"[25], of which only one knew Hebrew. "The first and the most constant influence is that of Vg [Vulgata]. Compl [The Complutensian Polyglot] was edited using Vg as a key guide in establishing the text. It must be emphasized that this applies to the overall shape of the text. Vg does not always influence Compl but it is a constant factor in the editing. […] MT [The Masoretic Text] is a lesser influence"[26]. Unfortunately, O'Connell investigation on the 4th volume of the Complutensian Polyglot is very brief, being limited to the book of Ezekiel.

For the modern biblical scholar such edition might look barbarian, but for those times such an endeavor only applied the belief that the Latin version of Vulgate is authentic. Cardinal Primate of Spain Francisco Ximénez de Cisneros (1437-1517) who led the entire project of the Complutensian Polyglot wrote in the preface that the Latin text lies in center as Christ on the cross, while the Greek and Hebrew text flank it just as the two thieves.

Another contemporary, Erasmus of Rotterdam, assumed that at the unionist Council of Ferrara-Florence (1438-1445) it was officially decided that the Greek biblical manuscripts should be corrected according to the Latin version[27]. This assumption is certainly wrong[28], but there were indeed some cases of Greek manuscripts (as for example Codex Montfortianus from the XV-XVI cent.) adapted to the Vulgate.

Anyway, the general picture could be clear. The Bucharest Bible of 1688 is based indeed on the Septuagint, but on a stitched or patched Septuagint, if I am allowed to borrow Brian Walton's term, more incisive than O'Connell sympathetic view. Nevertheless, these additions do not affect the biblical text, do

[24] S.L. Greenslade (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3, p. 57.

[25] Séamus O'Connell, *From Most Ancient Sources: The Nature and Text-Critical Use of the Greek Old Testament Text of the Complutensian Polyglott Bible*, Academic Press / Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg / Göttingen, 2006, OBO 215, p. 166.

[26] S. O'Connell, *From Most Ancient Sources*, p. 168.

[27] Erasmus wrote in the preface *Contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos* of the 1527 edition of his New Testament: "It should be pointed out here in passing, that certain Greek manuscripts of the New Testament have been corrected in agreement with those of the Latin Christians. This was done at the time of the reunion of the Greeks and the Roman church. This union was confirmed in writing in the so-called Golden Bull. It was thought that this would contribute to the strengthening of unity." (transl. de Jonge, p. 387-388 cf. the following footnote).

[28] Henk Jan de Jonge, "Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980), no. 4, p. 381-389 (p. 388).

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

not alter the ideas nor change the content, but to the contrary enrich it through lections from the Hebrew text via the Vulgate.

This fact should worry us when someone claims that the unique text of the Romanian Orthodox Church must be the Septuagint and appeals to the tradition until 1914. The present study argues for a different approach: the Romanian biblical tradition starting with the Middle Ages up until now used a hybrid text. Descending from the Complutensian Polyglot, these Hebrew insertions under the influence of the Vulgate could be labeled *grosso modo* as Catholic influences. Unfortunately, I had no access to the Strasbourg and Basel Bibles, so in my study I am unable to clarify whether the Frankfurt Bible was the first that used the Complutensian Polyglot for non-Septuagintal additions or just followed previous editions that had already done it.

On the other hand, one can observe a strong Protestant influence regarding the canon, different from the pure Septuagint, probably because the editors of the Frankfurt Bible were Calvinist (more precisely Huguenots). The book of Odes is missing and the *anaginoskomena* books are grouped together at the end and entitled Apocrypha, in the Protestant manner. As a matter of fact, in the Romanian Church, the biblical canon of the Bucharest Bible was kept with only small changes up until now. In the present "Synodal" edition Ezra and Esther lost their initial verses (*catastihuri*), similarly Ben Sira lost its introductions. The book of Josephus, i. e. 4 Maccabees, was eliminated from the canon and King Manasseh's Prayer (chap. 12 of the book of Odes) was introduces at the end of the Old Testament. The Bucharest Bible was also responsible for the transposition of the first verse in Psalms as title, so that in time, through simplifications of these titles, the biblical texts from the beginning of the Psalms were removed, although they were well attested in both Hebrew and Greek textual tradition.

I might compare this canon with Protestant influence of the Bucharest Bible with another one from the Eastern Orthodox world, prior with almost a century: the canon of the Slavonic Ostrog Bible (1581), which could represent in some scholars' opinion, an intended compromise between the Catholic and Protestant biblical canons. Francis J. Thompson argues that "in fact it merely reflects the fact that there was no printed edition of the Greek Old Testament by an Orthodox publisher to which they could refer"[29]. But his explanation is not satisfactory. Even if there were no Eastern Orthodox examples for printed Bibles, the editors might have turned to manuscripts. Maybe the ultimate reason for the Eastern Orthodox looseness regarding the biblical canon is the separation of the Orthodox Church in the Middle Ages from the direct appeal to the Bible as it was during the golden Patristic era. In the medieval period, the Eastern Orthodox Church used lectionaries, i.e. Evangeliary, Apostolos and Prophetologion (Paremoimiarion), so

[29] Francis J. Thomson, "The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament", p. 684.

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

only a selection of the Old Testament texts[30]. Already since the Byzantine period (8th century AD) the Eastern Orthodox world was not acquainted any more with reading the entire Bible.

More than this, the translation of the Bible in vernacular languages in the Eastern Orthodox milieu was deemed as a progressive and humanistic enterprise, seen by some clerics as dangerous. That is why the translation into Neo-Greek of the New Testament proposed in 1638 by Maximus Kalliopolites was condemned at three synods, and another version was publicly burned in 1703[31]. The Bucharest Bible of 1688 represents a secular project, only with a formal blessing of the Church, having therefore a restrain circulation in the ecclesiastic world.[32] It is no coincidence that the project was primarily assumed by the Wallachian voivode.[33]

In conclusion, the hybrid translation is far from being an innovation of the 1936 Bible, as often claimed, but appeared from the beginning in the Romanian Orthodox biblical tradition.

Bibliography

Bădiliţă, Cristian / Francisca Băltăceanu / Monica Broşteanu / Dan Sluşanschi (ed.), *Septuaginta*, vol. 1, Colegiul Noua Europă / Polirom, Iaşi, 2004

Bădiliţă, Cristian, *Glafire: Nouă studii biblice şi patristice*, Polirom, Iaşi, 2008

Bietenholz, Peter G. / Thomas Brian Deutscher (ed.), *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 1995 (republished from 1985)

Campbell, Gordon, *The Oxford Dictionary of Renaissance*, Oxford University Press, 2003

Cândea, Virgil, "Les Bibles grecque et roumaine de 1687-1688 et les vises imperials de Şerban Cantacuzène", *Balkan Studies* 10 (1969), p. 351-376; in Romanian: "Semnificaţia politică a unui act de cultură feudală", *Revista de istorie* 16 (1963), no. 3, p. 651-671

[30] James Miller, "The Prophetologion: The Old Testament of Byzantine Christianity?" in: Paul Magdalino / Robert Nelson (ed.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, 2010, p. 55-76.

[31] Eugen Munteanu, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, p. 22, n. 15.

[32] Alexandru Gafton, "Biblia de la 1688. Aspecte ale traducerii", *Text şi discurs religios* 2 (2010), p. 49-72 (p. 52).

[33] Virgil Cândea argued for a political motivation of the Bucharest Bible, namely the imperial ambitions of the Wallachian voivode after the unsuccessful siege of Vienna (1683) and the decline of the Ottoman offensive, see Virgil Cândea, "Les Bibles grecque et roumaine de 1687-1688 et les vises imperials de Şerban Cantacuzène", *Balkan Studies* 10 (1969), p. 351-376; in Romanian: "Semnificaţia politică a unui act de cultură feudală", *Revista de istorie* 16 (1963), no. 3, p. 651-671. Cf. Emanuel Conţac, "Tradiţia biblică românească. O prezentare succintă din perspectiva principalelor versiuni româneşti ale Sfintelor Scripturi", *Studii Teologice* 7 N.S. (2011), no. 2, p. 159-245 (p. 177-178).

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza"
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

Conţac, Emanuel, “Tradiţia biblică românească. O prezentare succintă din perspectiva principalelor versiuni româneşti ale Sfintelor Scripturi”, *Studii Teologice* 7 N.S. (2011), no. 2, p. 159-245
Evans, Robert John Weston, *The Wechel Presses: Humanism and Calvinism in Central Europe, 1572-1627*, Oxford, 1975, Past and Present Society 2
Gafton, Alexandru, “Biblia de la 1688. Aspecte ale traducerii”, *Text şi discurs religios* 2 (2010), p. 49-72
Greenslade, S.L. (ed.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 3: *The West from the Reformation to the Present Day*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004 (republished from 1963)
Ică jr., Ioan, “Înapoi la Septuaginta”, *TABOR* 1 (2008), no. 11, p. 5-25
Ică jr., Ioan, *Canonul Ortodoxiei*, vol. 1, Deisis / Stavropoleos, Sibiu, 2008
de Jonge, Henk Jan, “Erasmus and the Comma Johanneum”, *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 56 (1980), no. 4, p. 381-389
Jugie, M., “Le canon de l’Ancien Testament dans l’Église byzantine”, *Échos d’Orient* 10 (1907), p. 129-135
Jugie, M., “Le canon de l’Ancien Testament dans l’Église russe depuis le XVIIIe siècle”, *Échos d’Orient* 10 (1907), p. 263-274
Jugie, M., “Les deutérocanoniques dans l’Église grecque depuis le XVIIIe siècle”, *Échos d’Orient* 10 (1907), p. 344-357
Jugie, M., “Les deutérocanoniques de l’Ancien Testament dans l’Église orthodoxe aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles”, *Échos d’Orient* 10 (1907), p. 193-199
Maclean, Ian, *Scholarship, Commerce, Religon: The Learned Book in the Age of Confessions, 1560-1630*, Harvard University Press, 2012
Miller, James, “The Prophetologion: The Old Testament of Byzantine Christianity?” in: Paul Magdalino / Robert Nelson (ed.), *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, Washington, 2010, p. 55-76
Müller, Mogens, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1996, JSOTSupp 206
Munteanu, Eugen, *Lexicologie biblică românească*, Humanitas, Bucureşti, 2008
O’Connell, Séamus, *From Most Ancient Sources: The Nature and Text-Critical Use of the Greek Old Testament Text of the Complutensian Polyglott Bible*, Academic Press / Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Fribourg / Göttingen, 2006, OBO 215
Pentiuc, Eugen J., *The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition*, Oxford University Press, Oxford / New York, 2014
Savelovici, Anton, *Textul Sfintei Scripturi în Biserica Ortodoxă Română*, Valahia University Press / Bibliotheca, Târgovişte, 2012
Thomson, Francis J., “The Slavonic Translation of the Old Testament”, in: Jože Krašovec (ed.), *The Interpretation of the Bible: The International Symposium in Slovenia*, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 1998
Tov, Emanuel, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, second revised edition, Augsburg Fortress, Minneapolis / Van Gorcum, Assen, 2001

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)

Vassiliadis, Petros, “The Liturgical Use of the Bible in Greek Orthodoxy: An Orthodox Critical Approach in 12 Steps”, paper delivered in an international conference on “The Present and the Future of Biblical Studies in the Orthodox and the Catholic Churches”, held in Firenze, Italy (6-7 June, 2013) http://auth.academia.edu/PetrosVassiliadis/Papers

BDD-A3918 © 2014 Editura Universităţii „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”
Provided by Diacronia.ro for IP 216.73.217.31 (2026-11-24 14:11:10 UTC)