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Hebrew Bible

As compared with the Latin Vulgate , the Hebrew Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) includes the entire Old Testament (http://www.catholic.org/bible/old_testament.php) with the exception of the seven deuterocanonical books, Tobias, Judith, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I and II Machabees, and the deuterocanonical portions of Esther (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=19>) (x, 4 to end) and Daniel (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=34>) (iii, 24-90; xiii; xiv). So far as Jewish (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6511>) tradition testifies, these books end passages never belonged to the official Hebrew Bible, though Hebrew was the original language of Ecclesiasticus, most probably also of Baruch (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=32>) and I Machabees, and either Hebrew or the closely allied Aramaic, of Tobias, Judith, and the additions to Esther (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=19>) ; also, according to some, the additions to Daniel. Even if several of these books were written in Aramaic, that fact alone would not account for their exclusion from the Hebrew Bible, since lengthy passages of Daniel (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=34>) (ii, 4, to vii, 28) and of Esdras (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=4361>) (iv, 7, to vi, 18; vii, 12 to 26) are in that language. The Protestant versions adopt the contents of the Hebrew Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) only.

By its threefold division, which antedates the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, into the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings, or Hagiographa, the Hebrew Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) differs considerably from the arrangement and order of the Septuagint, which have been adopted by the Vulgate and the Protestant versions. The Law (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6916>) contained the five books of Moses (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8218>) in the unvarying order of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The Prophets comprised the four books of the Former Prophets, in the unvarying order of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings; and the four books of the Latter Prophets, Isaias, Jeremias, Ezechiel,

Minor (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8009>) Prophets (all twelve counted as forming one book). The Writings comprised the remaining eleven books, the poetical works, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, the five Megilloth, or Rolls (Canticle of Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=19>)), and finally Daniel, Esdras, Nehemias, Chronicles -- twenty-four books in all, though perhaps more frequently reckoned as twenty-two by counting Ruth (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=8>) with Judges, and Lamentations (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=31>) with Jeremias. The above order is that of the printed Bibles, which, in the case of the Latter Prophets and the Hagiographa, differs widely from that prescribed in the Babylonian Talmud, while no fixed order obtains in the manuscripts. In this arrangement the most noteworthy differences from the Vulgate are the classifying of the historical books as prophetic, the placing of the Latter Prophets before the Hagiographa, the ranking of Daniel (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=34>) not with the Prophets, but with the Hagiographa, and the grouping together of the five Rolls, which is a witness (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=12423>) to the special favour they enjoyed of being read publicly on certain feasts. The Hebrew names for the sacred books of the Pentateuch (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=9144>) differ from our own, which are derived from the Septuagint.

With the arrangement into books, the labours of the earliest editors seem to have ended; they made no further division into sections or chapters. The text at first was a close succession of consonantal letters without vowel-signs or spacing or punctuation to guide the reader; but Jewish (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6511>) scholars through many centuries of painstaking care have provided a most perfect system of helps to the intelligent reading of the Hebrew Bible. Words were separated at an early date, perhaps before Christ. This was imperative, as the letters were frequently combined in different ways. The Septuagint translation bears witness (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=12423>) not seldom to a combination different from the Massoretic. Verse divisions, too, were made by the early scribes, who found this necessary not only to aid the reading, but to guard against the intrusion (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6155>) of new verses. Uniformity did not obtain, however, as the Palestinian Jews, we are told, had shorter verses than the Babylonian. The present system is that of neither, but was partly a new arrangement elaborated by the Massorettes. The care taken is shown by the fact that every verse, in fact every letter, was counted by the scribes. Our chapter (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=2804>) divisions were unknown to early Jewish (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6511>) scholars, who had their own divisions, according to sense, into the open and closed sections. A change in subject

was marked by the open section, so called because of the vacant space (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=10976>) showing its close, which was either the remainder of an unfilled line or a blank line succeeding a full line. The closed section began a minor (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=8009>) break in thought, indicated only by a short interval of space, the new section recommencing on the same line, or after a brief interval at the beginning of the next line. In late manuscripts (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=7495>) and in printed Bibles, the open section[↑] is indicated by the letter Pe in the vacant space (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=10976>) preceding it, the closed section by the letter Samech .

The Christian (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=2927>) division into chapters, invented by Archbishop (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=1015>) Stephen Langton about the beginning of the thirteenth century, has gained an entrance into the Hebrew Bible. The beginning was made by Rabbi Solomon (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=10937>) ben Ismael (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6208>) who first (c. A D. 1330) placed the numerals of these chapters in the margin of the Hebrew text. In printed Bibles this system made its first appearance in the first two Bomberg editions of 1518. Arias Montanus , in his Antwerp (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=902>) Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) of 1571, "broke up the Hebrew text itself into chapters and introduced the Hebrew numerals into the body of the text itself" (Ginsburg). This, though contrary to the Massoretic directions, is still followed in nearly all printed Bibles on account of its great usefulness. In most instances (617 out of 779) the chapter (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=2804>) coincides with one or other of the Massoretic sections. In Bomberg's great Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) of 1547-8, Hebrew numerals were affixed to every fifth verse. It was in the above mentioned Antwerp (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=902>) Bible (<http://www.catholic.org/bible>) that the Arabic numerals for all the verses were first placed against them in the margin, though this had been done on a more limited scale in the "Basle Psalter " of 1563. A further division of the text was for liturgical purposes. It was the custom in Palestine to complete the Pentateuch (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=9144>) in Sabbath (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=10265>) readings every three years; the various sections into which the text was thus divided were called sedarim . The same name was applied to the sections from the Prophets and the Hagiographa appointed to be read at the same service. The length of a sedar may be judged approximately from the fact that the fifty chapters of Genesis (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=1>) are counted as forty-five sedarim, the forty chapters

of Exodus (<http://www.catholic.org/bible/book.php?id=2>) as thirty-three sedarim. Instead of the triennial cycle, the Babylonian Jews (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6511>) had an annual cycle, and the Talmud (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=11271>) divides the Law (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=6916>) into fifty-four sections called Parashiyoth, one for each Sabbath (<http://www.catholic.org/encyclopedia/view.php?id=10265>) of the intercalary year. The corresponding readings from the Prophets were called Haphtaroth, or dismissals, because they were read before the close of the service (see BIBLE; CANON OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES; CRITICISM, BIBLICAL; MANUSCRIPTS OF THE BIBLE; EDITIONS OF THE BIBLE; MASSORAH; VERSIONS OF THE BIBLE).