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THE SEPTUAGINT IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION AFTER THE PROMULGATION OF THE MOTU PROPRIO *SEDULA CURA*

Summary

This presentation focuses on the question: what meaning does the Pontifical Biblical Commission in its documents promulgated after *Sedula cura* give to the Septuagint in our times? It seems that the references to the LXX appear in the latest documents of the Commission in a rather humble way and frequently ambiguously. The Septuagint is basically perceived as the Jewish Greek Bible. Since it is also the Christian Old Testament, identified and recognised by the Church, the Pontifical Biblical Commission accepts this fact, but in its reflection it does not assign a significant and adequate place to the Septuagint.

Keywords: Pontifical Biblical Commission – documents, Bible, Septuagint, Judaism, Christianity, hermeneutics of the Bible

SEPTUAGINTA W DOKUMENTACH PAPIESKIEJ KOMISJI BIBLIJNEJ PO PROMULGACJI MOTU PROPRIO „SEDULA CURA”

Streszczenie

Problem prezentacji zawarty jest w pytaniu: jakie znaczenie współcześnie nadaje Septuagincie Papieska Komisja Biblijna w swoich dokumentach, wydanych po „*Sedula cura*”? Wydaje się, że referencje do LXX są w ostatnich dokumentach PKB dość skromne i często niejednoznaczne. W zasadzie jest ona postrzegana jako żydowska Biblia Grecka. Ponieważ jest także chrześcijańskim Starym Testamentem, rozpoznany i uznany przez Kościół, Papieska Komisja Biblijna uznaje ten fakt, niemniej jednak nie poświęca Septuagincie (LXX) znaczącego i adekwatnego miejsca w swojej refleksji.

Słowa kluczowe: Papieska Komisja Biblijna – dokumenty, Biblia, Septuaginta, judaizm, chrześcijaństwo, hermeneutyka Biblii

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INTRODUCTION

Since its foundation in 1902, the Pontifical Biblical Commission (*Pontificia Commissio Biblica*) has worked out and issued 34 documents. After the closing of Vatican Council II in 1965, the essential documents of the Commission seem to be those that directly refer to Scriptural topics concerning biblical hermeneutics. These texts are of a different character. Some are explanatory, some order approaches concerning the relationships between Christian doctrine and Sacred Scripture, while others aim to help exegetes and theologians in their critical perception of contemporary hermeneutical tendencies. From the time of the post-conciliar reform of the Pontifical Biblical Commission by Paul VI in his *motu proprio Sedula cura* issued in 1971, there is a noticeable change in reference to the structure of the Commission, the strategy of its works (through its inclusion to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith) and its role. The Commission was to reflect on various issues that were important to the life of the Church and to present the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith proposals of biblical scholars that would be used in theological research. These elaborations were not meant to be of a directive character but rather were reflections formulated as instructions or recommendations, “Commissionis Biblicae est studia perficere, nec non instructiones et decreta parare, quae a Sacra Congregatione pro Doctrina Fidei publici iuris fieri possunt, speciali mentione Commissionis Biblicae facta, approbante Summo Pontifice nisi aliter ipse Summus Pontifex in casibus particularibus statuerit” (Filippi and Lora 1993, 766; Tronina 2003, 324-325).

An interesting issue, especially in the documents worked out by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which was reorganised in 1971, seems to be the attitude towards the Septuagint, the Jewish Greek Bible, which at the beginnings of the proclamation of the message of Jesus and about Jesus Christ became the Old Testament accepted by Christians. It should be noted that this attitude reflects the role and significance of research concerning the Septuagint as ascribed by the Commission, which means that the Biblical Commission refers to the meaning of the LXX in contemporary discourse on the Christian Bible and depicts its value in the process of the Church's identification as a community rooted in the Word of God.

Cardinal J. Ratzinger, in the preface to the document *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* issued by the Pontifical Biblical Commission, wrote, “For the authors and founders of the New Testament, the Old Testament was simply “the Scriptures”: it was only later that the developing Church gradually formed a New Testament canon which was also Sacred Scripture, but in the sense that it still presupposed Israel's Bible to be such, the Bible read by the apostles and their disciples, and now called the Old Testament, which provided the interpretative key.” J. Ratzinger's general statement results from the assumed goals of the document, i.e. to describe the relationships between the Scriptures that were accepted or created by Christians and the Jewish Scriptures that the

Jewish community and its authorities recognised as sacred. How then does the Biblical Commission understand the concept Old Testament? In the context of the Septuagint which we are interested in: what is the identity of the Septuagint? The next question is dependent on the answer of the previous one: What meaning does the Pontifical Biblical Commission seem to ascribe to the Septuagint today?

In order to provide correct answers to these questions, which is here the main theme, one should begin with an outline – though very brief – of the topic of the Septuagint as the Jewish Greek Bible.

1. THE SEPTUAGINT – THE JEWISH GREEK BIBLE AND THE CHRISTIAN OLD TESTAMENT

Current hermeneutical challenges impel us to put forward the postulate of Christological and Christocentric interpretative convention in Christian hermeneutics. Referring to Origen and the desiderates of H. de Lubac, H. Crouzel and H. J. Sieben, J. Ratzinger writes about this need in *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible* (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2002, Preface). K. Stock writes plainly that "if we assume that the Bible is a whole and that the New Testament is the key to its reading, we can maintain our thesis: the aim of appropriate biblical exegesis is knowing the person of Jesus" (Stock 2005, 30; 2007, 219). This postulate in a natural way puts the Septuagint – with its Messianic subtleties – on the same level as the important sources of the ethos of the Church. Although, the problem of understanding and accepting its inspiration is still vivid, one certainly cannot ignore this Jewish Bible accepted by Christians (Chrostowski 2001, 89-110). This problem in reference to the Septuagint leads to the demand of its interpretation considering the need of contextual – from the perspective of the development of revelation – defining particular elements of the whole biblical story and as its consequence – biblical theology (Jeanrond 2005, 253). This problem, in reference to the Septuagint, makes us accept a clear, at least general, hermeneutical circle.

It seems, that for the Septuagint the first, historic circle, determining its creation, was the need of the Jewish people to identify themselves as Jews in the ethnic, cultural and religious melting pot of the Hellenistic world. The need to formulate some concept of Jewish identity seems to be a fundamental inspiration, though hidden in the pragmatic approach to daily life of the Jewish community in the Diaspora, especially in Egypt or, to be precise, in Alexandria. The hermeneutic circle of defining historical sources of its faith was then included in the process of making them more familiar, that is to translate the most needed sacred texts of Israel. Thus, the procured phenomenon of translating texts regarded by Israel as sacred into Greek and – many a time subtly reinterpreting those – was related to the natural process of their acceptance. Consequently, the collection of the writings referred to in the Letter of (Pseudo-) Aristeas as the Septuagint, was expanding which became an important phenomenon. It might be assumed that Jewish communities living

in the Diaspora expected to have a work that would bear cultural affinity, meet linguistic requirements and, at the same time, include conceptual capacity proper to the environment they lived in and the language they used.

This fertile capacity was later most fully used by the circles of the early Church, above all by the Jewish believers of Jesus living in the Diaspora. They were reached – or influenced in many diverse ways – by St Paul who initiated the creation of Christian communities or applicatively explicated the doctrine and pragmatics of the life of the already existing communities. One cannot ignore the obvious, attested by research, fact that the Septuagint was used by the Jewish circles in Jerusalem and in the groups of diversified Judaism of the late Second Temple period in the Diaspora. However, in those circles the Septuagint never acquired the same status as the collections of the Hebrew writings. Yet, it enjoyed great authority, which resulted among other things from the fact that it was used by Philo and Flavius Josephus (Popowski 2008, 190).

Naturally, the key to the apostolic success of the Apostle to the Nations was his personal testimony of faith that included quotations from the Greek text, which he used argumentatively and treated as a hermeneutic, verbalised circle of faith. Nevertheless, his testimony had to overcome certain tendencies: juridism and dogmatism. These tendencies, cultivated in Judaistic circles, especially the rabbinic ones, were consolidated to a certain extent and treated as norms of Jewish interpretative traditions. Separatist, and at the same time petrifying, tendencies occurring in the Jewish interpretation of the late Second Temple period seem to be confirmed by the later description of the reference point of self-identity, which was fundamental for the Jewish community that had survived the traumatic experiences of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 AD. This reference was the existing collection of the sacred and normative writings of Israel, written only in Hebrew. Thus, a fundamental – though certainly not the only one – criterion of the Jewish sacred writings was set, i.e. that of the acceptance of the exclusiveness of the Hebrew language. Together with the definitive utilisation of any real idea of statehood after the fall of the Bar Kochba (Kosiba) revolt in 135, this criterion – as it seems – assumed an extremely important meaning in defining the Jewish self-identity. This identity, rooted in the sacred biblical texts, already expressed itself in its own, though quite capacious, rabbinic method of midrash. We should also, in order to complete the picture of the Jewish hermeneutics of those times, mention the existence of a specific form of biblical explication which was the form of exegesis and application called *peshet* (Jędrzejewski 2007, 1-17).

The Jewish Greek Bible (Septuagint) was, however, the most important work of Hellenistic Judaism. In the Egyptian Diaspora, this translation was born as an answer to various challenges of the Jewish community co-existing with other nations, cultures and religions. Yet, is the Septuagint only a translation? Is it also an actualisation of the biblical message, using the Judaistic method of midrash? The Letter of Aristeas dedicated to Philocrates, created in ca. 170 BC, was to authorise

God's action in the act of the creation of the Septuagint. Today scholars treat the letter as a text that points to the authority of the Septuagint, which was so demanded in the Jewish Diaspora, rather than the way of its creation (Frankowski 1972, 14). M. Hengel speaks about "the legitimisation of a certain version of the LXX" (Hengel 2002, 25). Moreover, some scholars – in accordance with the first version of the Letter of Aristeas – propose referring the concept of the Septuagint exclusively to the oldest and fixed collection of biblical texts, i.e. the Pentateuch. They suggest calling the remaining books *Old Greek* (Mielcarek 2009, 29).

Searching for the earliest and fundamental inspirations behind the origin of the Septuagint, we can conclude that an important motivation to create the Greek Bible – within the framework of the obvious need to define one's self-identity – was the fact that the Jewish people in the Diaspora wanted to have their own collection of sacred writings including legal norms that would constitute a reference point for the realisation of their social desires. Such a work was to be compatible with the Ptolemaic legislation on the one hand and, on the other, was to maintain the Jewish endemic features. It was to normalize Jewish existence in the ethnic melting pot of Hellenism and make this nation acceptable for different parties (Jędrzejewski 2005, 245-262).

However, the texts of the Septuagint became – not only because of the Greek language – the Christian Old Testament as well. Difficulties concerning the unambiguous and, common for Christians, use of the concept of Old Testament are mainly connected with the range of the biblical texts, which as such are regarded and accepted in Christian Churches. For the Jewish circles, the concept of the Old Testament is not an important problem. They simply and most frequently do not use this concept since the sacred collection of Israel's writings, called the Hebrew Bible, won exclusivity (Tronina 2007, 9). In Christian circles instead, there appeared various proposals of names for the collection of the Old Testament, including those that do not accept the inspired character of all the books of the Septuagint (Söding 1995, 99-115).

2. THE SEPTUAGINT IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL COMMISSION

The documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, presented after its re-organisation in 1971, refer to the matters of the Septuagint – as it seems – on the margin of their fundamental problems. The constatation that in these documents, the Septuagint is perceived to a considerable extent as the Jewish Greek Bible, appears to be rather general and demands deeper justification. Can we then speak of the marginalisation of the Septuagint as the Christian Old Testament? Let us look closely at the documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, written after the publication of *Sedula cura* on 27 July 1971, which refer to the LXX in various ways.²

² The first document published in the discussed period was *De Sacra Scriptura et Christologia* written in 1984. Yet, references to the LXX are quite marginal (the LXX was used twice as sigla).

2.1. The Septuagint in the document *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

In the document of 1993 *Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* the Septuagint appears in the context of methods referring to Jewish traditions of interpretation. Thus, it was treated as a form of Jewish interpretation of the Scripture, “It is in this world that the interpretation of the Scripture had its beginning. One of the most ancient witnesses to the Jewish interpretation of the Bible is the Greek translation known as the Septuagint” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, chapter I). “This world” is – according to the document and the scholarly achievements – the Judaistic environment of the last centuries before the Christian era. Thus this document refers to the Jewish Bible and the Septuagint: the first part of the Christian Bible. In his commentary to this document W. Chrostowski calls the Septuagint “pre-Christian Bible of Greek-speaking Jews” (Chrostowski 1999, 140).

As the Commission rightly stresses, we can approach the Septuagint through recourse to ancient Jewish traditions of interpretation. Yet, one cannot avoid the impression that the relationship between the Septuagint and Christianity is treated with considerable discretion. Indeed, this relationship cannot be limited to the statement of the document that the Septuagint ‘became the first part of the Christian Bible for at least the four first centuries of the Church and has remained so in the East down to the present day’ (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, chapter I, C, 2). Thus, it is difficult to overestimate Chrostowski’s postulate that in contemporary studies of the Bible “stressing *veritas Hebraica* cannot be at the cost of the Septuagint...” since the Fathers of the Church – with their hermeneutic tradition and exegetical-theological reflection on the contents of the New Testament – usually referred to the Greek Bible (Chrostowski 1999, 140).

The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission seems to cognitively equate the Septuagint with the extracanonical Jewish literature (also called apocryphal or intertestamental) taking into account its value. Analysing point 2 of the document (*Approach Through Recourse to Jewish Traditions of Interpretation*) one can reach such a conclusion since the document shows that like the aforementioned Septuagint, the extracanonical literature is an important source for the interpretation of the New Testament. Moreover, the same fragment (*Approach Through Recourse to Jewish Traditions of Interpretation*) points to internal rereadings of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, it does not explain what the Old Testament is in this case. Is the OT the Septuagint or another collection of writings? The mention of “certain ways Paul goes about argument from Scripture” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, 2) may also suggest – as one of possible writings – the source text of the Septuagint.³

Consequently, I have omitted them in my presentation.

³ Scholars specialising in these topics show three types of Paul’s scriptural argument: prevailing text of the Septuagint, the Hebrew text that was later called TM and translations into Greek done by Paul himself. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between the Pauline theology and Petrine theology, based on the Septuagint (Vorlage, enlargements, recensions) used by Luke in the Acts see Steyn 1995. For the Christian recensions of the Septuagint (Hexapla, recensions of Origen, recensions of Lucian of Antioch, recensions of Hesychius,

Undoubtedly, the context of this fragment of the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission is extremely rich and capacious. Although placing the Septuagint alongside other elements of Jewish hermeneutics is justified, its unquestionable uniqueness is marked only through placing it firstly among factors essential to Christian hermeneutics. The very statement that the Septuagint became the first part of the Christian Bible does not seem to stress enough its unquestionable uniqueness, as a source text to proclaim the Gospel, as well as the creation and development of Christian theology. S. Jankowski is right writing that "the LXX served as a bridge between Judaism and Christianity. In further perspective, it prepared the ground for the proclamation of the Gospel. On the basis of comparative analyses of the LXX and the New Testament, proclaiming the Gospel without this Greek translation of the sacred writings of the Jewish people would have been extremely difficult" (Jankowski 2012, 205). The authors of the document themselves state that the Septuagint was the first part of the Christian Bible for the first four centuries of the Church. Did it stop being so in the fifth century? The collection of the sacred and inspired writings of the Catholic Church, which is called Old Testament – rightly or wrongly changed today into the First Testament or other names – is included exactly in the Septuagint, not in any other collection of the Jewish writings (Hebrew Bible, Aramaic Bible, Israel's Bible). This was expressed by the Council of Trent (Conc. Tridentinum, Decr. de Symbolo – de canonicis Sripturis, sessio IV: Recipiuntur libri sacri et traditiones Apostolorum) stating that "Sunt vero infra scripti Testamenti Veteris" and giving a list of the Old Testament books, including those from the Septuagint (Denzinger 1957, 279). One can have the impression that the document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission explains the meaning of the Septuagint for the Church and biblical research itself in a way that is too laconic. Its role and meaning for both biblical investigations and the ecclesiastical tradition of interpretation itself is difficult to overestimate. An excellent example here can be the great figures of the Fathers of the early Church that laid the foundation for a vibrant hermeneutics and Christian exegesis that were being formed at that time. This exegesis prevalingly used the Septuagint, which was also translated into Latin. The fact is that most citations of the OT sources in the New Testament, those *explicite* or *implicite*, are the texts taken from the Septuagint.

Of importance is the statement of the Commission that the Septuagint is still the first part of the Christian Bible in the East (i.e. the Churches of the Eastern tradition). It is an extremely important formulation although the document does not include any ascertainment that as a result of that statement the Septuagint is one of the important elements that can inspire biblical research conducted by theologians of the East and the West.

Another reference to the Septuagint in the document *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* can be found in the part mentioning "the fuller sense" in the Bible (B. *The Meaning of Inspired Scripture*. 3. *The Fuller Sense*). This fragment begins with an attempt to define what the fuller sense is: "a deeper meaning

of the text, intended by God but not clearly expressed by the human author.” An example of this is the hermeneutic context of Matthew 1:23 that gives a fuller sense to the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 in regard to *hā'alēmāh* (ἡ παρθένος). What is important is that the verse of Isaiah through the Greek translation is the source text for the Christological and Mariological message expressed in the New Testament. It shows that the very core of the Christian *credo* is located in the context of the Septuagint.

In the hermeneutical tradition forming fundamental truths of the Christian faith, the acceptance of the translation of Isaiah's text from the Septuagint (ἡ παρθένος) seems to point not only to the significance of this translation in Christian theology, but first of all to God's plan included in it. There were other Greek translations, for instance that of Aquila, one of *tres lopoi* (Fernández Marcos 2000, 123-126), who used the term *veāvīc*. As research shows there was also a translation of Theodotion, which was to be a Jewish response to the use of the Septuagint, and a translation of Symmachus, which might have been created in the Jewish-Christian environment (Hengel 2002, 41-43).

Undoubtedly, this fragment of the document worked out by the Pontifical Biblical Commission ascribes a high value to the Septuagint, although more explicit conclusions could have been expected. The document rightly shows a possible danger that – using the text of the Septuagint – may lead to a subjective interpretation. It is also possible to attribute to the biblical texts senses that are the fruit of the later development of the Tradition (*cf.* III. *Characteristics of Catholic Interpretation*). Therefore, scholars constantly need to apply the fundamental theological principles: *sensus Ecclesiae* and *analogia fidei*. Yet, this does not change the postulate for the necessity of a clear-cut attitude towards the Septuagint.

Furthermore, *The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church* seems to include indirect references towards the Septuagint. One of them is the statement included in the part describing the attitude of the Old Testament towards the New Testament. For example, we read that “intertextual relationships become extremely dense in the writings of the New Testament, thoroughly imbued as it is with the Old Testament through both multiple allusion and explicit citation” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 1994, chapter III, A, 2). The relational context of the Old and New Testament, although not referring directly to the Septuagint, may suggest its use in the apostles evangelization, especially that of St Paul. The Septuagint, because of its Greek, was a medium in which the dynamism of evangelization in the circles of the Jewish, Greek-speaking Diaspora and in the Hellenistic world was transmitted. If the document, invoking the words of 1 Cor. 15: 3-5, “Christ died for our sins *according to the Scriptures* and was buried; he was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures* and appeared,” states quite explicitly that it is the central element of the whole apostolic preaching; exactly through stressing: *according to the Scriptures* it seems to refer not only to the general accordance with the Scripture, but also to this specific one. It would be in compliance with the content of the Scriptures which listeners or addressees of the apostolic message knew.

It might have been the knowledge of the Hebrew text, but biblical research has shown that the apostolic message was presented to a considerable extent in Greek and was certainly transmitted in Greek. Therefore, we should take into account a real contribution of the Greek texts of the Septuagint to this proclamation.

The document concludes that the texts of the Bible “were recognized by the communities of the Former Covenant and by those of the apostolic age as the genuine expression of the common faith. It is in accordance with the interpretative work of these communities and together with it that the texts were accepted as sacred Scripture” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 1993, III, 3). This conclusion, and especially the confirmation of the interpretative work of the Christian communities, seems to include – although *implicite* – the fact of the recognition of all the Old Testament texts, also those that were not accepted by the communities of the Former Covenant after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the previous structures of the Jewish religion. Consequently, the texts would have embraced the texts of the Septuagint. The authority of this Greek translation, popular with Jewish synagogal communities in the Diaspora (and to a certain extent, with Palestinian Jews), was never equal to that of the Hebrew writings. However, for early Christianity the authority of the collection called the Septuagint cannot be questioned. With this in mind, we can also consider the hypothesis of the Proto-Septuagint which – as it seems – would be the one used in the evangelical and apostolic preaching (Mielcarek 2009, 30-31). The Septuagint should be rather understood as an important factor of the biblical self-identification of early Christianity.

2.2. The Septuagint in the document *The Jewish People and Their Sacred Scriptures in the Christian Bible*

This seminal document can provide a specific contemporary commentary of the Church on Christian-Jewish dialogue. The Septuagint, a Jewish creation that is also very important to Christians, gives premises and arguments for this commentary. The document does focus on the Septuagint.

The first reference to the LXX can be seen in chapter one, point three, confirming the fact that the New Testament recognises the authority of the Sacred Scriptures of the Jewish people. The Pontifical Biblical Commission concludes that the recognition of the divine authority of the Scriptures of the Jewish people manifests itself in different ways: implicitly and explicitly – to the exact. Referring to the former it says, “Beginning from the less explicit, which nevertheless is revealing, we notice that the same language is used. The Greek of the New Testament is closely dependent on the Greek of the Septuagint, in grammatical terms which were influenced by the Hebrew, or in vocabulary, of a religious nature in particular. Without knowledge of Septuagint Greek, it is impossible to ascertain the exact meaning of many important New Testament terms” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2002, 16). Therefore, for the Pontifical Biblical Commission the relational linguistic level, as well as the semantic one, is an important factor of the Christian affirmation of the Jewish Greek Bible.

The second reference to the Septuagint points to its proper name defining one of the two canons of the Jewish Writings. The Alexandrian canon in Greek was defined as “adopted (adottato) by Christians” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2002, 16). Depicting the situation of the early Church the document states that “Hellenistic Christians received their Scriptures from the Jews in the form of the Septuagint” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2002, 17), i.e. Sacred Scripture adopted from Hellenistic Judaism. However, footnote 34 is extremely interesting, “It was not the Alexandrian Jews who fixed the exclusive canon of Scripture, but the Church, beginning from the Septuagint” (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2002, 35). This sentence suggests a conclusion that there is a difference between the scope of the term Septuagint and the scope of the term canon of Scripture in Greek, established by the Church. It is true that we know the text of the Septuagint in its present form (and in the early forms) from Christian proclamations, and the hypothesis of the Proto-Septuagint and the existence of different collections pose constant research challenges. The translator of the Septuagint and author of its lexicon T. Popowski lists collections (which could have been incomplete) initialled by the names of Origen, Lucian or Pamphilus (Popowski 2008, 191).

2.3. The Septuagint in the document *Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture. The Word That Comes from God and Speaks of God for the Salvation of the World*

The document of the Pontifical Biblical Commission *Inspiration and Truth of Sacred Scripture* refers to issues concerning the current understanding of the Bible as the Word that comes from God and that shows the truth of his plan of salvation in the Christological perspective. The truth of the Bible has a theological character although it is determined by the cultural context of the times of its creation (Witczyk 2015, 101-124). The search for that truth is located in the space of the mission of the Church proclaiming that when the fullness of time came (Gal 4:4), God sent forth Christ – his final Word (Hebr 1:1-2) who is the truth (J 14: 6) setting us free (J 8: 32.36).

In this context, it is natural to refer to the writings of the Old Testament and their biblical story whose culmination is Jesus. Of importance is also the reference to the Septuagint as the Greek translation that was the main text known in the environment that created the gospels. Thus, the Pontifical Biblical Commission gives priority to the Septuagint and then points to the texts of the Old Testament in the Hebrew and Aramaic versions (point 23). Yet, it attributes the term “original” to the Hebrew one (The Pontifical Biblical Commission 2014, 23). This direct reference to the Septuagint is the last statement concerning the relationships with this translation, although it would be interesting to have the opinion of the Pontifical Biblical Commission on the question of its inspiration. The second part of the document *The Testimony of the Biblical Writings to Their Truth* contains one more reference to the Septuagint: the analysis of the Greek Book of Wisdom as an example of the wisdom literature (Majewski 2015, 256).

CONCLUSION

The Septuagint, the most important word of Hellenistic Judaism that became the Christian Old Testament, is still a serious research challenge that should be undertaken so that the Church would understand the Word of God better. Referring to the sources gives us a better possibility to define one's identity in an integral connection with the inspiration of the biblical writings and first of all, in our constant unveiling of the salvific truth expressed in Sacred Scripture.

The documents of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, issued after the publication of the motu proprio *Sedula cura*, seem to discuss the theme of the LXX, especially as the Christian Old Testament, in a rather humble way. One can think that the Commission presents the scholarly trends that are based on the linguistic *veritas hebraica*. The Commission tries to signal this limitation, and thus we can expect further investigations regarding this question. Some progress in referring to the LXX can be seen in the documents of the Biblical Commission. Discussions concerning the term Old Testament, which demands deepening and explaining its ambiguity, calls for further scholarly activities. Undoubtedly, research on the LXX and its wider presentation in the Church will be important for the identification of the Old Testament in its Greek translation, used in the apostolic kerygma of the Church.

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