The term *Vetus Latina* or ‘Old Latin’ (hereafter OL) is a term used to identify the Latin versions of the Bible, which were translated from the Greek and do not correspond to the Vulgate of Jerome. As Latin became ever more prominent as an imperial and commercial language in the Mediterranean world, the language of the early church became increasingly Latinate. The earliest evidence for a Latin version of the Bible appears in the second century CE and following. According to the *Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs*, a certain Speratus, who was beheaded in CE180, is said to have possessed “the books and letters of Paul, a just man” (*Libri et epistulae Pauli, viri iusti*). Further testimony from the second century for a Latin Bible is Tertullian (ca. CE130–220), who states that Latin was the exclusive language of the African church. Additionally, the quotations of scripture found within his works have led some to believe that Tertullian may have had access to two separate Latin versions. In the third century, for the first time, Cyprian provides lengthy citations of a Latin Bible.

The OL is well-known for its lack of textual uniformity. In his *Preface to the Four Gospels*, Jerome laments that there are as many forms (*exemplaria*) of the text as there are copies. This complaint is reiterated by Augustine...
who writes, “Those who have translated the scriptures from the Hebrew language into Greek can be numbered, but the Latin translators are in no way numerable. For in the early days of the faith, when a Greek book fell into someone’s hand and he believed himself to have some ability in both languages, he dared to translate.”

This testimony of textual diversity is supported by the manuscript evidence for the OL of Genesis. Considering the number of extant manuscripts and the scriptural citations of approximately fifty church fathers, the number of variant readings is consistently overwhelming. For the Book of Genesis, the number of extant manuscripts is relatively small. There are three Vulgate manuscripts which contain OL marginalia (91, 94 and 95), two palimpsests (101 and 103), and four OL manuscripts (100, 103, 105 and 111). All of these materials are fragmentary and range in date from the fifth century (e.g. 103, 105) to the sixteenth century (e.g. 94). There are nearly fifty church fathers frequently cited within Bonifatius Fischer’s edition of the OL of Genesis, which provide an enormous amount of textual evidence for the OL and the Vulgate. Such a large number of sources, many of which are considerably late, is due to the fact that the Vulgate did not effectively replace the OL until the seventh century. Based on these manuscripts, Fischer has suggested the following Latin text-types for the Book of Genesis:

- L: A general form of the OL
- K: An African text
- C: A revised African text
- E: A European text
- A: A revised text from Augustine
- M: A revised text from Ambrose
- O: A Hexaplaric text aligned with Jerome
- P: A text aligned with Quodvultdeus, deacon of Carthage
- X: Dubious texts
- H: The Vulgate of Jerome


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5 *Doctr. chr. 2.16; Qui enim scripturas ex Hebraea lingua in Graecam verterunt, numerari possunt, Latini autem interpretes nullo modo. Ut enim cuique primis fidei temporibus in manus venit codex Graecus, et aliquidum facultiis sibi utiusque linguae habere videbatur, ausus est interpretari.*
