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Fig. 1. Dr. James Alan Montgomery, Professor Emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania, who in his commentaries on the books of Daniel and Kings (the latter shortly to be published) has set forth the correct manner of recovering the original LXX and of handling the LXX and other versions for textual criticism. Dr. Montgomery will celebrate his 80th birthday on June 13, 1946, and to him this number is affectionately and gratefully dedicated. He is not only a great scholar, but a fine Christian gentleman to whom "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."

**THE SEPTUAGINT — ITS USE IN TEXTUAL CRITICISM**

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Twenty-two centuries ago a large number of Jews were living in Egypt, especially in Alexandria, where the Greek language was in common use. For purposes of religious instruction it was decided to translate the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the first translation of that Bible which had ever been made. Our information about the matter comes mainly from a letter written by an Alexandrian who called himself Aristeas, addressed to his brother Philocrates. Some scholars have asserted that Aristeas was a Greek who was interested in the antiquities of the Jewish people and who was a courtier in the service of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt from 285 to 246 B. C. That he was a Greek, however, is completely a matter of conjecture; and while he may have been an important employee of the king, there is no direct evidence that this was the case. All that we know is that he had access to the court. In any event, the letter tells of an embassy of which he was an important member. At the suggestion of Demetrius, the head of the famous library in Alexandria, this delegation had been sent by the king to the high priest Eleazar in Jerusalem with the request that six elders be appointed from each of the twelve tribes for the purpose of translating the Torah or Pentateuch into Greek. The translation, when completed, was to be deposited in the library. Eleazar complied with the request and appointed seventy-two elders, who proceeded to Egypt with "the parchments on which was inscribed the Torah in gold in Jewish characters."<sup>1</sup> After a royal banquet which lasted seven days and a quiz program of seventy-two wise questions and answers, the elders departed for a building specially prepared for them on the island of Pharos. There in precisely seventy-two days they completed the Greek translation. Demetrius then "assembled the Jewish people on the spot where the translation had been made and read it through to the whole assembly in the presence of the translators, who received another great ovation from the people . . ." The work was then read to the king who "made obeisance and ordered that great care should be taken of the Books . . ."<sup>2</sup> Work on the remainder of the Hebrew Bible was completed at a somewhat later date.

For some reason this translation came to be called "Seventy" or Septuagint (*Latin Septuaginta*, often designated simply as LXX) rather than "Seventy-two" (*Septuaginta et duo*). Perhaps it was because of some popular association with the "seventy elders" of Exod. 24:1,9; or with the Sanhedrin of seventy; or with seventy apostles of Jesus (Lk. 10:1); or with some other such association.<sup>3</sup>

Here then is an authorized translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, the work of Jewish scholars. Furthermore, it was popular and widely used in Jewish circles until after the loss of the sovereign state in Palestine in

70-135 A. D. Then the unique translation into Greek by Aquila, in keeping with the exegesis current in the second century, replaced it among the Jews, until its use in the Synagogue was forbidden by the code of Justinian (555 A. D.).

Its preservation was due to its widespread use in Christian communities. By the end of the first century A. D. the Christian Church was largely composed of Gentiles, and a Greek translation of the Old Testament was imperative. Small wonder, then, that the Septuagint became the Bible of the Early Church, sometimes considered an even more inspired text than the original Hebrew! In the east it is still the official Bible of the Greek Orthodox Church, but among western Christians it was replaced after the fifth century by the Latin Vulgate of St. Jerome.

As Professor Gehman pointed out in the December, 1945 number of this journal, it is an interesting fact that the oldest manuscripts of the Old Testament now extant are not in Hebrew, but are copies of the Septuagint. The two best known are both from the fourth century A. D.: Codex Vaticanus preserved in the Vatican Library in Rome, and Codex Sinaiticus which was found by Tischendorf in a monastery of Mt. Sinai nearly a century ago, and which is now in the British Museum. Within the last decade scholars have been agreeably surprised no less than three times by the appearance of important collections of earlier Greek manuscripts. *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri* (ed. Kenyon) and *The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri. Ezek.* (ed. Johnson, Gehman and Kase), all from one codex, date from the second or third centuries A. D. *Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library, Manchester* (ed. Roberts) are from the second century B. C., and from about the same time is the Fouad papyrus.<sup>4</sup> This is important archaeological news, and one wonders what next will turn up!

Now what is the importance of these discoveries? Obviously, since the Septuagint manuscripts are so much older than those we have of the Hebrew text, they should be of great value in the determination of the original text of the Hebrew Bible. But how is the Septuagint to be used? The average Biblical commentary of three or four decades ago was filled with a wealth of changes of the Hebrew text which were believed to be indicated and even demanded by the Septuagint. Yet archaeology, as the reader of *The Biblical Archaeologist* has learned, has helped considerably in revolutionizing our attitude toward the Bible. We are now less inclined to be skeptical of something merely because extra-Biblical data supporting it

1. On the problem of the characters in gold, see Jacob Leveen, *The Hebrew Bible in Art*, The Schweich Lectures for 1939 (London 1944), pp. 2 ff. The entire volume, dealing with a neglected subject, is well worth reading.
2. This was the traditional Jewish procedure in announcing an official and authoritative document, or in renewing its authority. So, for example, Moses and the Law (Ex. 24:1-7), Joshua and the Law (Josh. 8:34-5), Josiah and the Law (2 Kgs. 22:10, 23:1-2), Ezra and the Law (Neh. 8). The same procedure is evident, for example, in Jer. 36, 51:60-64.
3. It is commonly asserted that **Septuaginta** is but a shorter form of **Septuaginta et duo**, the latter being too long an expression for popular oral usage. There are a number of reasons why it is difficult to accept this explanation. I have been unable to discover other instances, either in Hellenistic-Roman or Jewish circles, where such a number as seventy-two was shortened simply because of oral convenience. It should also be noted that there is no evidence that this change occurred prior to the 2nd-3rd centuries A. D. (when the "seventy" of the Sanhedrin and of the Apostles, etc., were well known and in common oral usage).
4. See *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1945, pp. 159 f. For other important, though less sensational LXX finds, see *Jewish Quarterly Review* 32 (1941-2), pp. 89-90.

are lacking. Until demonstrated otherwise, the benefit of the doubt must be given to the credit side of the Biblical ledger. The same attitude is now being taken toward the reliability of the text of the Hebrew Bible in relation to that of the Septuagint.

### THE SEPTUAGINT AS A JEWISH WORK

One difficulty in the past has been the failure to bear in mind the fact that the LXX is a Jewish work, with the result that an enormous amount of time and effort has been wasted in its unscientific use for the "elucidation" and "restoration" of the Hebrew text. We limit ourselves here to two examples:

1. The Hebrew Bible was read, studied and interpreted by the Jews during the Maccabean, Mishnic and Talmudic periods no less than it was before the second century B. C. and after the sixth century A. D. It is only reasonable to assume that where the LXX points, or appears to point, to a Hebrew reading which differs from that preserved in the Hebrew text currently in use, there may be involved, not *two* variants of which only one can be original, but *one* reading of which the LXX is simply an interpretation. And parallels to this interpretation should be sought in the vast literature which the Jews produced from the second century B. C. through the sixth century A. D., a literature which is a mine of information for the discerning scholar. It is the great contribution of Rabbi Zecharias Frankel of Dresden (1801-75) to one phase of correct LXX study that he collected and classified material of this kind, demonstrating the manner in which the LXX exhibits the kind of exegesis found in the Targumim, Mishnah, Tosefta, Midrashim, and Gemara. Had this important approach been kept in mind, many of the best known critics of the past generations would never have emended the preserved Hebrew text so recklessly and indiscriminately.

2. The Hebrew Bible was to the Jews a collection of sacred books. The Bible was translated into Greek precisely because the sacred Scriptures had to be made accessible to those Jews who no longer knew enough Hebrew to read the original. The Aramaic Targums, Saadia's Arabic translation, and the modern English version sponsored by the Jewish Publication Society were made for the same reasons. Is it reasonable to suppose that these same Jews willfully or negligently altered and corrupted their Hebrew Bible between the third century B. C. and the second century A. D. to the extent that the footnotes in the second and third editions of the most widely used critical edition today, Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*, would indicate?<sup>25</sup> Should not scholars first have made an independent and thorough study, not only of the preserved Hebrew text of whatever book in the Bible they were commenting on, but also of the LXX? Had they done so, they would not have abused the LXX so frequently and unjustifiably as to create from it a Hebrew text (*Vorlage*) which never existed outside their own imagination. There is surely something wrong with an approach to the LXX which has resulted in such far-reaching divergence between the preserved Hebrew text on the one hand and, on the other, the Hebrew text which is thought to be derived from the LXX.

### THE CORRECT USE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

The important question frequently heard is: But what is the correct way to handle the LXX in relation to the preserved Hebrew text? A brief answer will be attempted here, based upon the works of such important scholars as Lagarde, Rahlfs, Margolis, and Montgomery.<sup>6</sup>

There are available for study today hundreds of manuscripts of such relatively early translations as the Slavonic, Arabic, Armenian, Georgian, Ethiopic, Gothic, Greek, Latin, Bohairic, Sahidic, Syriac. From various sources we are well informed on the circumstances under which these translations came into being.<sup>7</sup> From the chart presented in Fig. 6 it will



Fig. 2. Paul de Lagarde (1827-1891), the first scholar to have presented (in 1880) a scientific analysis of the problems involved in the attempt to recover the original LXX translation of the Hebrew Bible.

be seen that some translations derive directly from the LXX while others, secondarily or directly, derive from a Hebrew text virtually identical with that preserved in hundreds of manuscripts of the Bible and in the printed editions in use the past four and one-half centuries. The Hebrew text

5. It is no exaggeration to assert that the critical apparatus in this edition of the Bible has become for some more sacred and authoritative than the Hebrew text itself. As S. R. Driver, the master textual critic, once wrote: "The best collection both of variants from the versions and conjectural emendations is that contained in Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*. But in the acceptance of both variants and emendations, considerable discrimination must be exercised." Though the third edition is generally less misleading than the second, the student cannot be warned too strongly against accepting at its face value any variant or emendation in the critical apparatus (cf. the remarks in *Jour. of Biblical Lit.* 63, 1944, p. 33 and the references listed in note 18).
6. For a detailed analysis with pertinent bibliography, see Orlinsky, *On the Present State of Proto-Septuagint Studies* (American Oriental Society Offprint Series, No. 13, New Haven 1941).
7. See Swete, *Intro. to the O. T. in Greek*, Part I; Driver, *Notes on Samuel* (2nd Ed.), Intro. sections 3-4; Montgomery, *Daniel*, Intro. section 111.

used by the LXX translators on the one hand, and the received or Masoretic Hebrew text on the other, are two recensions (critical revisions) of one original text tradition. The divergences between the two are in actuality comparatively few, and most of them are the obvious and usual kind of corruptions. For this reason it is impossible to assume that we are dealing with two independent Hebrew texts rather than with two offsprings of one parent text.

The problems facing the textual critic become apparent when he finds that for the LXX he possesses not one Greek manuscript, but scores of Greek manuscripts each of which differs from the others to a greater or lesser extent. He is thus confronted at once by the task of determining which manuscript, or group of manuscripts, has preserved the original.



Fig. 3. Max Leopold Margolis (1866-1932), one of the greatest Biblical philologists who ever lived. His great work, *The Book of Joshua in Greek*, is fundamental for all future studies of the LXX. Sketch by Richard C. Snyder, McCormick Seminary.

Only after this has been determined is he ready to reconstruct the Hebrew original from which the LXX was translated and to compare it with the received Masoretic text. Let me describe briefly the way in which Margolis went about this exceedingly complex task in his important and monumental *The Book of Joshua in Greek* (Paris 1931-).

1. First he obtained photostatic copies, wherever possible, of all manuscripts of all primary and secondary versions.<sup>8</sup>

2. He compared the secondary versions or translations of the LXX with the many Greek manuscripts representing the LXX. He compared the Greek manuscripts with each other and with the citations from these manuscripts in the writings of the Church Fathers. He chose Joshua of all the books in the Bible because it lent itself admirably to textual and

exegetical analysis and, what is of supreme importance, because it contained hundreds of proper names, the history of which in context could readily be traced.

3. Margolis described his method and results as follows:<sup>9</sup>

"The sum of the witnesses yield four principal recensions, *P C S E*, and in addition a number of MSS. variously mixed which I name *M*. At the outset it must be remarked that all of our witnesses are more or less mixed; the classification has in mind the basic character of a text, which alone is the determinant. *P* is the Palestinian recension spoken of by Jerome, that is the Eusebian edition of the Septuagint column in Origen's Hexapla-Tetrapla<sup>10</sup> . . . *C* is a recension which was at home in Constantinople and Asia Minor. We are helped in localizing the recension by the aid of the Armenian version . . . Whether the recension had any relationship



Fig. 4. Alfred Rahlfs (1865-1935), a scholar who advanced considerably the work of Lagarde, whom he succeeded at the University of Goettingen in Germany. His work on the recension of Lucian is unsurpassed. Sketch by Richard C. Snyder, McCormick Seminary.

to the fifty copies ordered by Constantine from Eusebius . . . must remain a matter of conjecture. Jerome says nothing of a

8. By this means he was able to correct a number of mistakes in the generally accurate Brooke-McLean, *Larger Cambridge Septuagint* on Joshua: see his article in *Jour. Biblical Lit.* 49 (1930), pp. 234-64.

9. *Jewish Studies in Memory of Israel Abrahams* (New York, 1927), pp. 307-23.

10. The Church Father Origen (185-254 A. D.), often called the first great scholar of the Early Church, undertook the task of recovering the original text of the LXX. He arranged the texts which he wished to compare in six (and sometimes more) parallel columns. Column 1 contained the unvocalized Hebrew. Column 2 contained the vocalization of the Hebrew text of Column 1 in Greek letters. Column 3 contained Aquila's new translation of the Hebrew into Greek. Aquila was a Jewish proselyte of Pontus in Asia Minor; his translation was almost slavishly literal. In the fourth Column was a new Greek translation made by Symmachus, who was a member of the Ebionite Christian sect. In the fifth was the text of the LXX as revised by Origen to conform to Column 2. The sixth contained the version of Theodotion, an earlier revision of the LXX rather than a new translation. On the proposition that Origen meant this many columned Bible to serve as a textbook wherewith to learn Hebrew, see Orlinsky, *Jewish Quart. Review* 27 (1936-37), pp. 137-49. It is my own considered opinion, based on the use of the terms involved in the early patristic literature and marginal notes in manuscripts, that the Tetrapla was not a separate four-column work but only another term for the many columned "Hexapla" in which the four Greek columns of Aquila, Symmachus, Origen's revision of the LXX, and Theodotion were the all-important ones.

fourth recension; but then he is by no means exact, or the recension was at his time just in the process of formation . . . *S* is the Syrian (Antiochan) recension . . . An outstanding characteristic of the *S* recension is the correction of the Greek style, as shown by the substitution of Attic grammatical forms for Hellenistic . . . The Egyptian recension, *E*, is preserved with relative purity in B [Codex Vaticanus] . . . The Coptic and Ethiopic versions unmistakably point to the Egyptian provenance of their text . . . There remain a number of MSS. which may be classed together as *M*, i.e. mixed texts. Mixture is the general characteristic, the elements coming from the four principal recensions in diverse processes of contamination . . . The road to the original text of G [the LXX] leads across the common, unrevised text. In order to get at the latter, we must abstract from the recensional manipulations . . . A study of the translator's mannerism of rendition becomes imperative . . .

The scope of my edition is to restore critically the original form of the version. I print the critically restored text at the top of the page. Below follow the forms assumed in four classes, *E*, *S*, *P*, *CM*. Omissions and contractions of the text, by which certain witnesses or groups of witnesses step out as silent on textual form, receive a rubric of their own. Then follow individual variations of class members, such as leave the characteristic class reading undisturbed in its main features. Lastly marginal readings in so far as they have not been embodied above . . . " <sup>11</sup>

4. The critically restored text, as it appears on the top of the page in Margolis' edition of the Greek Joshua, "is the nearest approach to the Greek original as it left the hands of the translator(s)," and it is the translation which the so-called Aristeas had in mind when he wrote his famous *Letter*.

But what, it may be asked, is the student of the Bible to do in the absence of such a monumental work as that of Margolis on Joshua for other books in the Bible? The procedure is not easy, but, summarily put, it is as follows:

1. When the student finds himself disturbed by something in the Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible, be it a problem in grammar or meaning or interpretation or word or sentence order, he turns to the LXX, the oldest primary version.

2. As matters stand today, the student turns to the LXX as it is published in the convenient editions of Swete and Rahlf's. This means that he is turning to Codex Vaticanus (B) with an "apparatus" at the bottom of the page consisting of a very few select variants culled from a few other uncial manuscripts (that is, written in capital letters). The latter are most usually Codex Sinaiticus (*S* or *Aleph*) and Codex Alexandrinus (*A*).

3. Between 1798 and 1827 the Oxford Press published for the scholarly world an edition of the Greek Bible with variant readings by Holmes and Parsons (*Vetus Testamentum Graecum cum Variis Lectionibus*). Generally speaking this is quite reliable and it is still the greatest collection of variant readings from no less than three hundred eleven manuscripts and, in



Latin dress, from some secondary versions, including Old Latin, Coptic (Memphitic and Sahidic), Arabic, Slavonic, Armenian, and Georgian. Since 1906 the Cambridge Press has been publishing *The Old Testament in Greek*, by Brooke-McLean (Thackeray). This is popularly known as The Larger Cambridge Septuagint so as to distinguish it from Swete's edition of Codex Vaticanus published by the same Press. This work has a more select and reliable collection of variants, but it does not supplant the older work of Holmes and Parsons. The latter contains considerable material which is not accessible elsewhere and which should be republished so as to make it available.

The student must examine carefully, not only Codex Vaticanus and the other main uncials, but also whatever variants there may be as recorded in the apparatus of Holmes-Parsons and Brooke-McLean, whether in the LXX manuscripts or in the daughter versions.<sup>12</sup>

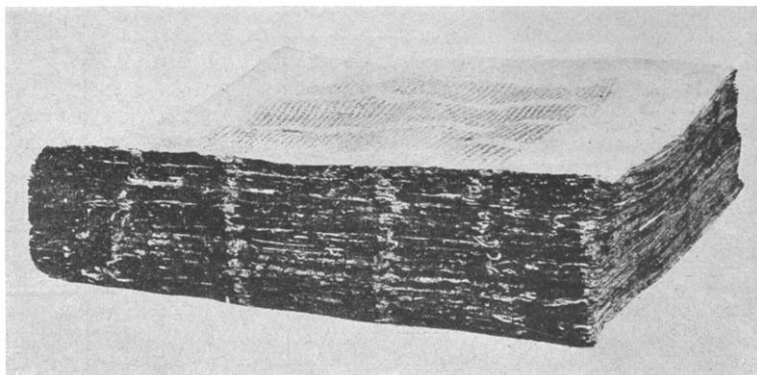


Fig. 5. Codex Sinaiticus before binding. This, one of our greatest uncial manuscripts, was found by Tischendorf in the monastery on Mt. Sinai in 1844 (the first leaves) and in 1859 (the remainder). It was a Bible used by Christians, as it contains both the Old and New Testaments. It is dated c. 350 B. C. (From Milne and Skeat, *Scribes and Correctors of the Codex Sinaiticus*, London, British Museum, 1938, Fig. 1 upper.)

4. Before it is possible to determine the original LXX reading, the student must make a careful analysis of the character of the LXX translation of the entire book of which his troublesome reading is a part. Only after he has learned to know and to "feel" the stylistic, lexical, exegetical,

11. It is of the greatest significance that Prof. Montgomery, working independently on the Book of Daniel, found that Margolis' conclusions regarding Joshua hold true for this book also. For the important work of Prof. Gehman in this field see reference listed in n. 6, p. 84 (n.9).

12. This is a very important matter, and no one has been emphasizing it more frequently and emphatically in recent years than Prof. Montgomery. In his *Daniel* (p. 40) he wrote: ". . . scholars have perpetrated the mistake of baldly citing B (Codex Vaticanus) as though it were ultimate, with no attempt to criticise it apart from its group and to recover the original text." He points to a number of manuscripts which aid in correcting Codex Vaticanus. See also *Jour. Bib. Lit.* 55 (1936), pp. 309 ff. and *Jour. Am. Or. Soc.* 59 (1939), pp. 262 ff. where he criticises Kenyon (editor of the Chester Beatty Papyri), Roberts (who edited the Rylands Papyri), and some of the editors of the Scheide Papyri, because they compared their newly discovered material with only two or three selected uncials. Prof. Gehman deserves our thanks for the basic work he has been doing in analyzing such daughter versions as the Arabic, Armenian and Ethiopic.

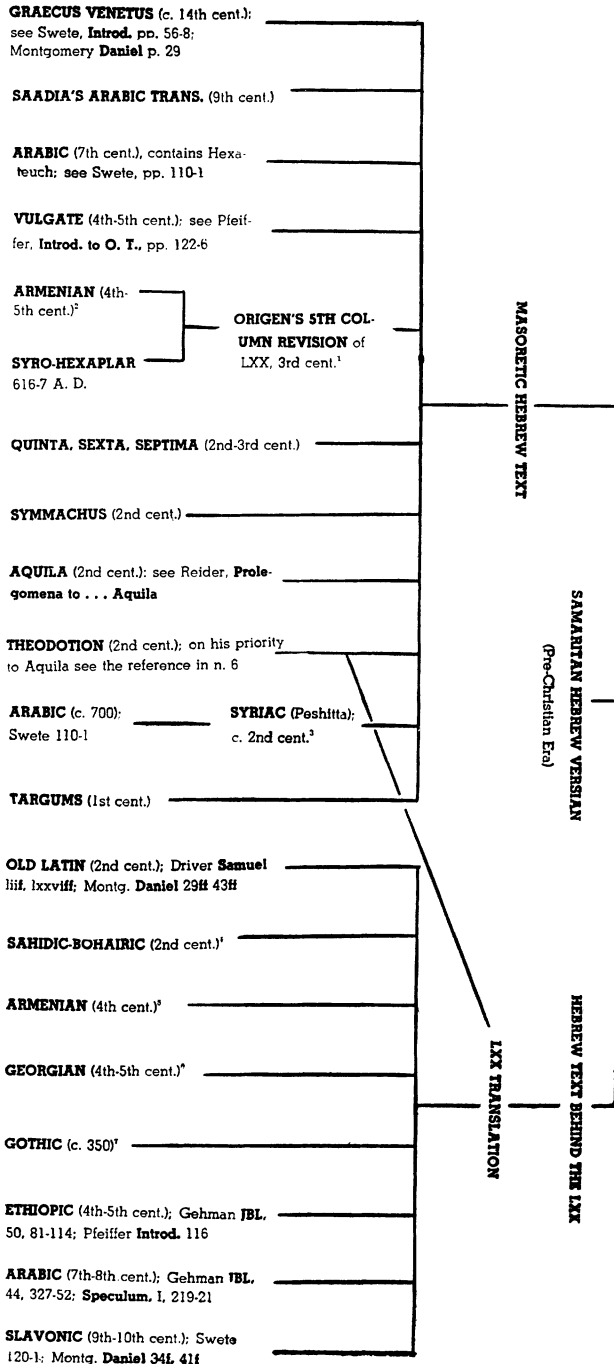


Fig. 6. A chart showing the relationship of the Hebrew and LXX texts and their daughter versions, with select bibliography. 1. For Origin's 5th col. revision of the LXX, see Rahlf's edition of LXX (1935), I, p. XXV/11, 2. For the Armenian, see Swete, *Introd.*, pp. 118-20, 3. For the Syriac, Pfeiffer, *Introd.*, pp. 120-2, 4. For the Sahidic-Bohairic, Gehman, *JBL* 46, pp. 279-330, 5. For the Armenian, Gehman, *Zeitschrift f. A. T.* 7, pp. 82-99 *JACS* 54, pp. 53-9, 6. For the Georgian, Swete, *Introd.*, p. 120; Pfeiffer, *Introd.*, pp. 118-9 and n. 34; Orłinsky, *JQR* 34, pp. 296-7 n. 14, 7. For the Gothic, Swete, *Introd.*, pp. 117-8; Streitberg, *Der gotische Text und seine griech. Vorlage* (2nd ed. 1919).

and theological characteristics of the LXX translator(s), is he ready to tackle the Greek-Hebrew aspect of his problem.

5. If the student finds it impossible to explain the LXX reading in the light of the reading preserved in the Hebrew text,<sup>13</sup> then he must try to find a solution which at one and the same time explains both the LXX reading and that preserved in the Hebrew text. Unless a proposed emendation satisfies these requirements, it may exhibit nothing more than the ingenuity of the critic.<sup>14</sup>

Incidentally, there is an importance in LXX study which has long been noted but which, for lack of proper method, has not yet been worked out satisfactorily in detail. That is the determination of the kind of alphabet in which the Hebrew manuscripts used by the various LXX translators were written. This is important, not only for textual criticism, but also for the history of the Hebrew alphabet.

There are two ways of attacking the problem, and they may be combined or also used separately as a check on one another. The first consists in a careful study of the scripts used in and around Palestine during, or not too far removed, from the time when the LXX translation was made. The second consists of a careful analysis of the LXX, especially of its points of disagreement with the Masoretic text, in order to determine from the character of the letters involved the kind of script which must have been employed. If this script resembles one which we know to have been in use between the fourth and first centuries B. C. in the region of Palestine-Egypt, then we are on fairly safe ground.

Both of these approaches have been attempted in the past, though rather sporadically. When the attempts ended with no positive results or with obviously incorrect conclusions, we may probably infer that the failures were occasioned (1) by an insufficient number of inscriptions which could be used as a basis of comparison, and (2) by an improper methodology which reconstructed a Hebrew alphabet behind the LXX composed of an absurd concoction of letters which never existed in one and the same period.

Today, with much more information available, there is good reason to believe that the alphabet of the Hebrew manuscripts used by the LXX translators was somewhere between that of the Lachish letters (written just before the fall of that city in 587 B. C.) and that of the Nash papyrus of the second or first century B. C.<sup>15</sup> My own studies have convinced me that while many of the letters in the alphabet of the Hebrew manuscripts behind the LXX have nothing in common in appearance, yet they could more easily be confused in the square script which came into use after the LXX translation had been made (virtually identical with the script now used in Hebrew Bibles). It need scarcely be pointed out that the

13. Or in the light of variant readings preserved in such great collections of variants in Hebrew manuscripts as those of Kennicott, *Vetus Testamentum Hebraicum cum Variis Lectionibus* (2 vols., Oxford 1776, 1780) and de Rossi, *Variae Lectiones Veteris Testamenti* (4 vols. and Supplement, Parma 1784-98).

14. Since this section is of necessity only general in character, its usefulness may perhaps be enhanced by referring directly to some articles where the method here described is applied to specific texts: *Jewish Quart. Review* 25 (1934-51), pp. 271-8; 28 (1937-8), pp. 57-68; 30 (1939-40), pp. 33-39; *Jour. Bib. Lit.* 58 (1939), pp. 255-61; 65 (Mar. 1946) on 2 Sam. 6:20).

15. See Albright, *Jour. Bib. Lit.* 56 (1937), pp. 145-76.

textual criticism of the Greek and Hebrew texts will become much more objective and reliable with the increased sober application of these data and principles.

As implied in what has already been written, even the most cursory reading of the LXX makes it evident that the different books were translated by different scholars or committees of scholars. Thus there are different styles, vocabularies, and degrees of literalness in the Greek version of the first five books, and between them and Job, for example. It needs to be emphasized, therefore, that these differences among the translators make it imperative for the textual critic to study the entire LXX book before he can use some one translation for the purpose of clarifying the Hebrew. Yet it must be admitted that this has not often been done. There are scarcely ten books which can be singled out as models of what LXX study ought to be. One thinks at once of the following: Wellhausen, *Der Text der Buecher Samuelis* (1871); Cornill, *Ezechiel* (1886; though his emendations are too often a bit arbitrary); S. R. Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Samuel* (2nd ed. 1913; a work which is unexcelled); Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien* (1904-11; studies in the Books of Kings and Psalms) and *Das Buch Ruth griechisch* (1922); Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job* (1926); J. A. Montgomery's model *Daniel* (1927) and his forthcoming *Kings* in the *International Critical Commentary*; Margolis, *The Book of Joshua in Greek* (1931-):

After listing the above, one begins to experience increasing difficulty in calling to mind others of comparable character. Too many commentators have arrived at inadequate textual and exegetical conclusions after a glance at Codex Vaticanus in the editions of Swete or Rahlfs.

#### OTHER PHASES OF SEPTUAGINT STUDY

Before closing this brief survey of the study of the LXX, one should call attention to a few other matters of concern to the Biblical scholar.

1. There are hundreds of instances in the Bible where God is described in anthropomorphic terms, as though he had a body with hands, nose, eyes, mouth, etc.; or in anthropopathic terms, as though he had human emotions, became angry, jealous, vengeful, etc.; or as though he were merciless, making man a target for his arrows, etc. (for example, in the Book of Job). The Israelites scarcely thought of their God as having human form or emotions, yet neither did they shrink from using the terminology ordinarily used for human beings to describe and make real the activity of God. Later in a more sophisticated and prudish society people began to avoid this type of language. For the "hand" of God they used the word "power;" for "in the eyes" of God, the phrase "in the presence" of God; for "the mouth" of God, "the word" of God or even "Word"; etc. This is true occasionally in the Hebrew Bible itself, but it is especially evident in the Targums, in early rabbinic literature, and in the writings of the Church Fathers.

It has long been assumed that the LXX too modified and even suppressed these anthropomorphisms, and special studies of this subject have been published. Yet my own work has led me to the conclusion that

the translators of the LXX did far less of this sort of thing than is commonly assumed. The translator of Job, for example, more than all the other LXX translators put together, has been accused of suppressing and skirting around those passages where God is described as though He were a human being, or where it is taken for granted (not argued!) that there is no afterlife for either the just or the wicked apart from the eternal and colorless existence in Sheol. Yet strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that no LXX translator was more careful and faithful in his attempt to reproduce in Greek these concepts of the Hebrew original. The situation is no different in the Pentateuch.<sup>16</sup> In other words, whatever theological beliefs the LXX translators of the Pentateuch and Job held, they did not resort to antianthropomorphic or euphemistic tricks, but reproduced their Hebrew manuscripts faithfully.

2. One of the great values of the LXX lies in the aid it furnishes the student of Hebrew grammar, though linguists have only begun to use it for this purpose. In the attempt to reconstruct the grammar of Biblical Hebrew numerous problems arise in phonology, morphology, and syntax. For the last two the LXX, properly used, may be of considerable value. The LXX is also important for the study of Hebrew semantics (the study of the meaning and development of words). Mention should also be made of the value of the second column of Origen's Hexapla (that is, the Hebrew text of the first column vocalized in Greek characters) for the phonology and morphology of Biblical Hebrew in the Intertestamental Period.

3. Of interest and value in the textual criticism of both the Hebrew and Greek texts is the width of the columns in the rolls and codices.<sup>17</sup> It is obvious that if we knew how many letters filled the average line we should be in a much better position to apply in our canons of textual criticism the principles of vertical dittography and haplography, which are concerned with words incorrectly introduced or omitted in a line or two above or below the proper line. Similarly, we could the better apply the principles of homoioarkton and homoioteleuton, which are concerned with lines which fall out when the line above or below begins (arkton) or ends (teleuton) with the same (homoio) letter or combination of letters. In the course of an article four years ago I attempted to deal with some textual corruptions which in turn pointed to lines of about 11-14 letters in length and to lines twice this length.<sup>18</sup> The general argument and conclusions were the same for both the Hebrew and for the earliest editions of the LXX. Until more work is done along these lines, however, and until earlier manuscripts are discovered, our conclusions can be regarded only as tentative.

16. For some details, see *Jewish Quart. Review* 28 (1937-8), pp. 63-4 and nn. 26-7; *Crozer Quarterly* 21 (1944), pp. 156-60.

17. See now the fascinating and instructive discussions by C. C. McCown on "Codex and Roll in the new Testament" (*Harvard Theological Rev.* 34, 1941, pp. 219-50) and "The Earliest Christian Books" (*B. A.* 6, 1943, pp. 21-31).

18. *Jour. Bib. Lit.* 61 (1942), pp. 88-9 and n. 3, 91, 95; on Num. 24:4 cf. Albright, *ibid.*, 63 (1944), p. 217 n. 59.

4. It was once thought that the Greek language of the LXX never really existed in the mouths of the people, but that it was essentially artificial in origin. We now know better, thanks to the discovery of a large and ever increasing mass of contemporary writings which was brought so vividly to the attention of the older generation of Biblical scholars by Deissman in his *Licht von Osten* (1908), translated into English with the title, *Light from the Ancient East*. Unfortunately, the Old Testament scholar has not followed his New Testament colleague in the study of the Greek material uncovered and published during the last few decades in so far as it bears on the LXX. What H. G. Meecham has done for the Greek of *The Letter of Aristeas* in a book published in 1935 remains to be done for the LXX, though Joseph Ziegler has made an excellent beginning in his study of the LXX of Isaiah. It is The Old Testament scholar who must do this, because the scholar who comes to the task from the field of classical studies lacks the specialized training which is necessary for the proper treatment of Biblical Hebrew and Greek. The treatment of the Chester Beatty and Rylands papyri by their Hellenistic editors is, unfortunately, somewhat misleading in places for this reason.

These remarks, it is hoped, may indicate something of the tremendous amount of significant and useful work yet to be done in the analysis of the most important translation of the Old Testament which has ever been made, the Septuagint, together with its daughter versions.

## THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE NEW TESTAMENT

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Why did the Jews make the Greek version of their Scriptures which we call the Septuagint (LXX)? The reason given by the Letter of Aristeas, that the king of Egypt and his official librarian wanted a complete collection in Greek of the books of all peoples, seems insufficient. Nor does cultural interest of Greek-speaking Jews explain the project. The language of the LXX does not have the literary quality to be expected in a version prompted by cultural interest.

Probably the basic reason was that Jews in Egypt (and elsewhere in the Dispersion) had come increasingly to use Greek in business and social contacts, and hence needed a translation of the Scriptures into the language they knew best. An added incentive may have been the desire to have an effective tool for mission work among Greek-speaking Gentiles.

### JUDAISM AND GREEK CULTURE

The LXX is one evidence of a rather long process in which Judaism was forced to consider what attitude to take towards the Hellenistic world. Excavations at a number of sites, including Samaria and Bethzur,<sup>1</sup> show that long before the time of Alexander the Great (336-23 B. C.) Palestine came under Greek commercial and cultural influence. Traders brought

Greek pottery into Palestine beginning not later than the seventh century B. C. Greek ports and trading centers appear in Palestinian excavations from the sixth century B. C.<sup>2</sup> Alexander's conquest of the entire Near East brought Palestine more strongly under the impact of Greek culture, and this influence continued through and beyond the New Testament period. The formation of the Decapolis, a league of ten Greek cities, nine of them east of the Jordan, probably dates from the first century B. C., and was well-known in New Testament times (Mk. 5:20; 7:31).

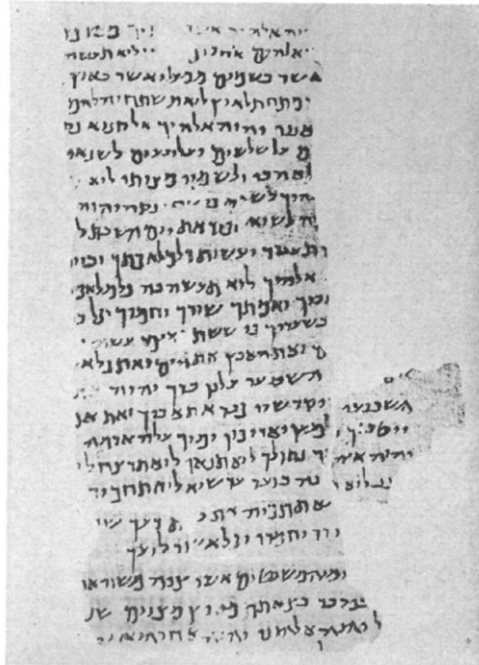


Fig. 7. The oldest Hebrew manuscript now extant, the Nash Papyrus, dating from the second century B. C. and containing the Ten Commandments with Deut. 6:4. (From *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 15, 1903, opp. p. 392.)

Thus the Jews of Palestine as well as the Dispersion had to face the question: What attitude are we to take towards Hellenistic culture? Two views appeared. From the days of Ezra and Nehemiah we note a strong trend towards isolation from Greek and all other Gentile ways of life. Other Jewish circles, moved by the spirit of Deutero-Isaiah (e.g., Is. 42:1, 4; 49:6) and the Book of Jonah, favored a ministry to the Gentile world, and undertook active efforts to win proselytes to the Jewish faith (Matt. 23:15; Acts 2:10; 6:5; 13:43).

1. See, e.g., Sellers, O. R., *The Citadel of Beth-zur*, Philadelphia, 1933, pp. 10, 41, 70.

2. Albright, W. F., *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Baltimore, 1940, p. 259.

The LXX reflected and furthered this contact of Jews with the Hellenistic world. Such contacts with Graeco-Roman life prepared the way for Christianity to enter Greek-speaking circles and advance westward. Official Judaism, however, after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. and the failure of the revolt of the Jews under Bar-Cochba c. 135 A. D., adopted a policy of political quietism and advocated cultural isolation. Writings in Greek by such noted Hellenistic Jews as Philo and Josephus fell into disrepute. The LXX, which had been taken over by Christians as their Scripture, was disowned, and for those Jews who still wanted a Greek version of their Scriptures, Aquila made a baldly literal version. Even this version was soon discarded. The preservation of these Jewish authors and Greek versions was the work of Christian scribes.

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE CHESTER BEATTY LXX MANUSCRIPTS

The linking of the LXX with Christian history is illustrated by the Chester Beatty Papyri. These papyri, bought by Mr. Beatty and edited for the British Museum by Frederic Kenyon, contain gratifyingly substantial portions of ten Biblical manuscripts.<sup>3</sup> Three are New Testament manuscripts: one of the Gospels and Acts; one of Paul's letters; and one of the Book of Revelation. Seven are LXX manuscripts: two contain Genesis; one Numbers and Deuteronomy; one Isaiah; one Jeremiah; one Ezekiel, Daniel, and Esther; and one Ecclesiasticus. Kenyon dates the various manuscripts from the first half of the second century A. D. to the fourth century A. D. They thus are early and valuable witnesses to the LXX text.

The two Genesis manuscripts are especially noteworthy, since the fourth century parchment manuscripts Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus have suffered the loss of most of this book. The manuscript which includes Daniel is unusually important because it gives the LXX text. Except for the (ninth century or later) Chigi manuscript, no other LXX manuscript of Daniel has been preserved; Theodotion's version of Daniel replaced the LXX text in all other Greek manuscripts.<sup>4</sup>

These LXX manuscripts were evidently found with manuscripts of the New Testament. All are of the codex or book form rather than the roll form. All were thus the possession of a Christian group in Egypt and probably were found in the ruins of some center of Christian worship.

This find throws light upon the date of origin of Egyptian Christianity. We do not know exactly when Christianity took root in Egypt. But two of the Beatty Papyri date from the first half or at the latest the middle of the second century A. D. From Egypt come two other witnesses which date from the first half of the same century: a fragment of a codex of the Gospel of John, and fragments of an "unknown gospel."<sup>5</sup> At that time, then, Egyptian Christianity must have been established, vigorous, and possessed of excellent manuscripts of the LXX and early Christian writings,

3. At first Kenyon thought (*Recent Developments in the Textual Criticism of the Greek Bible*, Oxford, 1933, p. 52f.) that there were eleven Biblical manuscripts in the collection. Later he found that the sheets containing part of Daniel were part of the same manuscript which contained Ezek. and Esther; see *The Text of the Greek Bible*, London, 1937, p. 45 f.

4. The LXX of Daniel also survives in a Syriac translation made in the early seventh century A. D.  
5. Roberts, C. H., *An Unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel in the John Rylands Library*, Manchester, 1935; Bell, H. I., and Skeat, T. C., *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri*, 1935.



not only in the delta region, but farther up the Nile Valley in the dry areas where papyrus could be preserved in the sands.

### CHARACTER OF THE LXX VERSION

To understand the version which Christians inherited, we need to study how the LXX was made and what it was like. The Pentateuch certainly, and the other books probably, were translated in Egypt. As the Letter of Aristeas indicates, the Pentateuch was translated about the middle of the third century B. C. Probably the Prophets came next; this

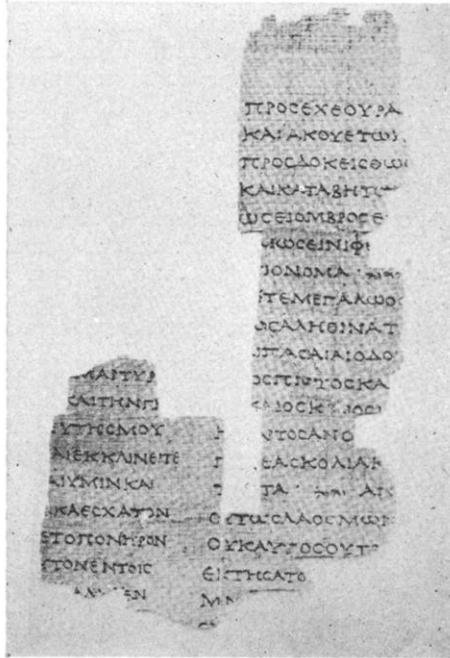


Fig. 8. Papyrus Fouad (Inv. No. 266), containing a portion of Deut. 31:28-32:7, and dating from about the second century B. C. This and a papyrus in the Rylands Library are the earliest fragments of the LXX yet found. (From *Journal of Theological Studies* 45, 1944, opp. p. 160.)

included the "former prophets" (Josh., Jdg., 1 and 2 Sam., 1 and 2 Kgs.) and the "latter prophets" (Is., Jer., Ezek., and the twelve so-called "minor" prophets). The "Writings" were the last to be put into Greek. This process must have been practically completed by about 132 B. C., when the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach, author of the Hebrew original of Ecclesiasticus, translated his grandfather's work into Greek. In his preface to the translation the grandson refers to the Writings rather vaguely as "the other books of our fathers" or "the rest of the books." This may indicate that the group was not yet complete and clearly defined.

In what respects did the LXX differ from the Hebrew original?

1. In names. Some books, which in Hebrew were designated by the first

word or two, are named in the LXX according to content. Thus for the Pentateuch the LXX gives us the names Genesis, or "origin"; Exodus, with reference to the departure from Egypt; Leviticus, since this book contains Levitical laws; Numbers, since this book relates the numbering of the Hebrews; and Deuteronomy, which is Greek for "second law" and refers to the fact that in this book Moses for the second time gives the law to Israel. The names Psalms and Ecclesiastes also come to us from the LXX through the Latin.

2. In order. No extant list of the Hebrew books goes back to Biblical times. The Talmud, which dates a few centuries later than the New Testament period, gives the oldest extant Jewish list; the earliest extensive Hebrew manuscript material comes from about the ninth century. But every extant Jewish list of the Hebrew canon has three distinct divisions: Law, Prophets, Writings. This division, as the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach attests, goes back at least to the second century B. C., and there is no good reason to doubt that this was the framework in which the Hebrew canon developed.

The LXX, as far back as our evidence goes, largely discards this threefold division. The Pentateuch, of course, stands first. But the Prophets and Writings are intermingled. The "former prophets" followed the Pentateuch. Certain poetical books—according to one clue or scheme these were Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes—preceded the "latter prophets." But into this framework the rest of the Writings were inserted according to literary character, contents, or supposed authorship. Ruth was put after Jdg.; both referred to the same period. 1 and 2 Chron. were largely parallel to the books of Sam. and Kgs.; so they followed 2 Kings. Ezra and Neh. naturally followed 2 Chron., and continued the history. Esther, concerned with the Persian period, finally was placed after Neh. The Song of Songs was grouped with Ecclesiastes; both were thought to be by Solomon. Lamentations, thought to be by Jeremiah, was put after Jer. Daniel was regarded as prophecy and put with the prophets, often after Ezek.

Some such mingling of Prophets and Writings is indicated by Josephus, in *Against Apion* (1:8). Though he has the threefold division, he numbers 22 books of Scripture: five in the Law, thirteen in the Prophets, and four books of hymns and ethical precepts. Evidently he grouped several of the Writings with the prophetic books.<sup>6</sup> Such mingling of Prophets and Writings is found in all Christian lists, beginning with Melito in the second century. It is seen in the third century Beatty Papyrus of Ezek., Dan., and Esther. This mingling goes back to LXX usage.

3. In extent and order of material. We find in the LXX words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and even paragraphs which are without parallel in the Hebrew. On the other hand, the Hebrew contains many such things not in the Greek. Sometimes the differences are extensive. An early form of Job was shorter than the Hebrew by perhaps 200 verses. Esther, however, is nearly twice as long in the Greek, and the Greek of Daniel has been greatly enlarged by the insertion of the Story of Susanna, the Song of the Three Youths, and the Story of Bel and the Dragon. Jeremiah illustrates variation in order. Two blocks of material, 25:15-45:5

and 46:1-51:64, appear in Greek in reverse order; moreover, the order of sections in 46:1-51:64 is different from that found in the Hebrew.

4. In number of books. The LXX contains complete books which were never a part of the Hebrew canon. Though its limits were never rigidly defined, the LXX in the New Testament period included almost all the added books we find in the Apocrypha. Besides the already mentioned additions to Esther and Dan., which Protestants print as part of the Apocrypha, but which in LXX manuscripts and Roman Catholic Bibles are printed as parts of the books involved, the Apocrypha include: 1 and 2 Esdras; Tobit; Judith; Wisdom of Solomon; Ecclesiasticus or Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach; Baruch, including the Epistle of Jeremiah; the Prayer of Manasseh; and 1 and 2 Maccabees.

The Roman Catholic Church, which confirmed earlier practice by official decree at the Council of Trent in 1546, regards as inspired and canonical Scripture all of these books except 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh; these two books, the former of which dates from the Christian era and the latter of which is found in but few LXX manuscripts, are relegated to the appendix of the official Vulgate. Steinmueller argues that the Jewish canon at first contained the larger number of books now found in the Vulgate Old Testament, and only later was shortened by the exclusion of what Protestants call the Apocrypha.<sup>7</sup> This involves the unlikely view that books originally written in Greek (as the Wisdom of Solomon and 2 Maccabees were and 1 Esdras probably was) were once accepted as canonical by Palestinian Jewish leaders and later rejected.

The Christian Church, as it moved out into the Greek-speaking world, used the LXX, and thus the Roman Catholic Church came to accept the full number of books it found in the established pre-Christian LXX. The Jews continued to use the shorter canon fixed in Palestine and Babylonia. The Protestants at the Reformation went back to this Hebrew canon, and relegated the additional books of the LXX to the inferior status of Apocrypha, which might profitably be read but should not be considered Scripture.

#### THE USE OF THE LXX IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Thus except for certain Aramaic-speaking groups, mostly in Palestine, the LXX must have been the Scripture of the ancient Christian Church from the outset. A scholar like Paul could use both the Hebrew and the Greek, but even he, with his knowledge of the Hebrew, evidently used the Greek most often, as indeed he was forced to do in his work with Hellenistic Jews and in his mission to the Gentiles. That an Alexandrian like Apollos regularly used the LXX is equally clear. Every Christian preacher in Gentile lands and some of those in Palestine used Greek in both oral address and Scriptural quotation.

6. Perhaps Josh.; Jdg.; Ruth; Sam.; Kings; Chron.; Ezra+Neh.; Esther; Job; Is.; Jer.+Lam.; Ezek.; Minor prophets; Dan. So Thackeray, H. St. J., in his note on *Against Apion*, Loeb Classical Library translation of Josephus, Vol. I, 1926, p. 179.

7. Steinmueller, J. E., *A Companion to Scripture Studies*, Vol. I, New York, 1941, p. 64 f.

This being true, it is not surprising to find the LXX used so much by the writers of the New Testament. In some 160 passages the Old Testament is directly quoted in the New.<sup>8</sup> In the heavy majority of these cases the quotation is obviously derived from the LXX. This does not mean that all such quotations are literally identical with what we read in the LXX, but that either exact reproduction or substantial likeness shows this to be the source of the quotation.

Of all the New Testament books which thus quote the LXX, the Gospel of Matthew shows the greatest independence. Its author evidently had ability to draw not only from the Greek but also directly from the original Hebrew.<sup>9</sup> No other New Testament writer shows such independence of the LXX and ability to consult the original. Quotations by the Apostle Paul on rare occasions suggest acquaintance with the Hebrew, and at times his citations are rather free, but he usually quotes the LXX. Familiarity with the LXX is equally clear and its use in citations is apparent in Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Hebrews, and the Catholic Epistles. The quotations in Acts are almost all found in the speeches.

It is clear from Dr. Orlinsky's careful statement of the textual problems of LXX study that we have not yet worked back to the original text of this Greek version. The immense task of determining as exactly as possible the original text of the various books of the LXX is in its early stages. In view of this fact, it is of interest to ask with what manuscript of the LXX the New Testament quotations most often agree. Swete concludes<sup>10</sup> that upon the whole, these quotations agree more with Codex Alexandrinus (A), a fifth century parchment manuscript probably written in Egypt, than with Codex Vaticanus (B). At times the New Testament quotations may have influenced the LXX text; this could happen since it was Christians who preserved and copied the LXX. One odd illustration of such an influence may exist in Ps. 14, where LXX manuscripts insert after v. 3 the chain of Old Testament passages which in Rom. 3:13-18 follows the quotation of Ps. 14:1-3.

Another noteworthy fact about the New Testament quotations from the Old Testament is that although the Greek version known as the LXX contained more books than the Hebrew canon, there is in the New Testament no explicit quotation from any of the added books. This may mean that in Palestinian Judaism and in the early Christian movement which spread from Palestine the attitude towards the added books was not so favorable as in Egypt. Indeed, within the range of the Hebrew canon there are few citations except from the Pentateuch, Isaiah, and the Psalms. Swete lists 51 citations from the Pentateuch; 61 from the prophetic books, of which 38 are from Isaiah; and 46 from the poetical books, of which 40 are from the Psalms.<sup>11</sup> Only 21 of the Old Testament books are cited; 18 are not.

The influence of the LXX upon the New Testament writers cannot be measured by the extent of direct quotation. A less prominent but even

8. Swete, H. B., *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, Cambridge, 1914, p. 386.

9. Johnson, S. E., "Biblical Quotations in Matthew," *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 36 (1943), pp. 135-153.

10. *Op. cit.*, pp. 395, 403.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 386.

more revealing evidence of influence is the less formal use of material, whether shown in characteristic vocabulary or by use of LXX material which is not formally quoted but rather woven into the sentence structure of the New Testament author. The very fact that the latter has the LXX language so easily at command shows extensive familiarity with and



Fig. 9. A leaf from the Scheide Papyri of Ezekiel (Chaps. 36:22-23, 38:1-10), dating from the late 2nd or early 3rd century A. D. The fragment shows that this papyrus codex omitted vv. 23b-38 of chap. 36, probably, as shown by Professor Filson, by homoioteleuton: that is, both vv. 23 and 38 end with the same words ("know that I am the Lord") and the scribe's eye evidently skipped the intervening words. (From Johnson, Gehman, Kase, *The John H. Scheide Biblical Papyri*, Princeton Un. Press, 1938, Pl. XXXVII.)

indebtedness to that version. In the Book of Revelation this debt is particularly large. The writer never quotes the Old Testament explicitly, but on every page LXX language is interwoven in his sentences. This fact should teach students of the Book of Revelation the folly of theories that the author used written sources in a mechanical way. His use of the

LXX shows that he put into his own language and sentence structure what he took from Scripture; he did not quote formally or at length from any source.

From all that has been said it follows that the thorough New Testament student needs to be a diligent student not only of the Hebrew Old Testament but also of the LXX version, which almost at once became the Scripture of the ancient Church. Translation involved putting Semitic thought into Greek forms, and the translators might all have used the appeal which the grandson of Jesus ben Sirach makes in the preface to his translation of Ecclesiasticus: "Ye are entreated therefore to make your perusal with favor and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have labored to interpret we may seem to fail in some of the phrases. For things originally spoken in Hebrew have not the same force in them when they are translated into another tongue; and not only these, but the Law itself, and the Prophecies, and the rest of the books, have no small difference, when they are spoken in their original language."

We cannot fully understand New Testament Greek by comparing it either with classical Greek or with the more relevant Hellenistic writers nearer New Testament times. Not even the papyri, which we find in such abundance in Egypt and which shed valuable light on the language and life of that period, are an adequate guide.<sup>12</sup> Most of the New Testament writers are so indebted to the LXX that we cannot fully understand their vocabulary and meaning without careful study of that version.

For example, while the Greek word *nomos* "in its widest sense means a principle of life or action," it is used in the LXX to translate the Hebrew Torah, which "in its widest sense means divine teaching or revelation" and frequently refers specifically to the laws of Moses as given by God. It is only by bearing in mind the LXX background and then asking how far the Greek sense enters into the picture that we can get at the New Testament usage. Again, the use of the Greek *hilasterion* to mean the "mercy-seat" in Heb. 9:5 goes back to the LXX, where this word is used of the lid of the ark on which blood was sprinkled on the Day of Atonement to make expiation.<sup>13</sup> We need to study how far Greek words were baptized with new shades of meaning to render Hebrew ideas strange to Greek ears, and how far the usage of the Greek words in the surrounding world then colored the sense which the translators were trying to express.



12. Such material is well presented and its significance brought out by Deissmann, A., **Light From the Ancient East**, third Eng. Ed., 1927.

13. For a discussion of these and other illustrations, see Dodd, C. H., **The Bible and the Greeks**, London, 1935, esp. chs. 2 and 5.

### NEW INFORMATION REGARDING THE SUPPOSED "CHRISTIAN" OSSUARIES

The last number of the *B. A.* contained the interesting article by Professor Carl Kraeling on the urns reported last October as being the earliest witness to the death of Jesus Christ. It adequately debunked the whole thing, and showed that what we have here is merely another discovery of some Jewish ossuaries. Professor Albright and Father Roger O'Callaghan, S. J., have called the Editor's attention to an article in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (Vol. XLVI, 6, March 1946, pp. 407-409) by Father James M. Voste, O. P., in which a letter from Father M. Abel, O. P., Professor of Greek Epigraphy and Archaeology in the Dominican Ecole Biblique in Jerusalem and Consultor of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, is presented. It seems that the whole issue has arisen from two inscriptions in Greek characters on two ossuaries: *Iesous Iou* and *Iesous Aloth*. Each of the four sides of one of the ossuaries has a cross, crudely traced in charcoal, in the form of an old Hebrew tau (a plus sign).

In the considered judgement of Father Abel there is no reason whatever to conclude that the words *Iou* and *Aloth* are to be interpreted as lamentations; instead they are surnames. Jesus (surnamed) Aloth is a name like Judas Iscarioth.

Jesus Iou is regularly translated as "Jesus (son) of Jehu," or, if some other traces of charcoal are taken into account, perhaps "Jesus (son) of Judas." With regard to the significance of the charcoal crosses, so many possibilities present themselves that they are indeterminant.

The documentation and parallels cited for Father Abel's conclusions, as well as the facts cited by Professor Kraeling, are quite adequate to allow us to dismiss this whole matter as nothing more than a discovery of some additional Jewish ossuaries. A certain Mohammedan paper in Palestine, of which Father Abel speaks, will have to look for other grounds on which to challenge the belief in the resurrection of Jesus!

G. E. W.

### AN IMPORTANT NEW BOOK

Princeton University Press has just published Jack Finegan's *Light From the Ancient Past: The Archaeological Background of the Hebrew-Christian Religion* (pp. xxxiv+500, 204 photographs, 10 maps and plans, \$5.00). It is a monumental work, encyclopedic in scope, and more than worth its cost. Parts I-IV, covering the first two hundred eight pages, deal with Mesopotamian Beginnings, The Panorama of Egypt, archaeological work in Palestine, and the Assyrian, Babylonian, and Persian empires. Parts V and VI, covering the next hundred pages, deal with archaeological information from the Palestine of Jesus' day and from the Gentile world traversed by the Apostle Paul. The remainder of the book, in many respects the most interesting, surveys the information now available about ancient manuscripts, catacombs, and churches.

The tremendous scope of the work is thus evident; but what is even more astonishing to this reviewer is the reliability of its factual data in the earlier as well in the later pages. The author is one of the ablest