

NOTES AND STUDIES

THE RECOVERY OF THE 'SEPTUAGINT'.

A very important step towards the recovery of the earliest form of the Old Testament in Greek was made when Dr Swete produced his accurate edition of the Text of the Codex Vaticanus (B). No other single authority contains so much of the original 'Septuagint' (as we may for convenience call the Greek Bible) as this fine fourth-century MS. Dr Swete's text is retained by Brooke and McLean as the basis of the larger Cambridge Septuagint. The work of these two Editors has been to present a well-chosen and sufficiently full collection of textual material to make possible a future construction of a scientific text.

In the meantime Germany has been working on the Septuagint, and Dr Alfred Rahlfs may be said to have devoted his life to the study of it and to the collection of textual material. With less reserve than the Cambridge scholars he has begun to construct a text out of existing materials.

In 1926 appeared his edition of Genesis. Here in addition to the materials used by Dr Swete he had at his disposal not only a number of good cursives, but also a fragmentary Vienna codex of the fifth/sixth century which he cites as L, a Paris codex of the seventh century (M), and specially a Berlin papyrus 'of the end of the iii century' (911). As a specimen of Rahlfs's editing may be cited Gen. xviii 6-22, where he departs in ten instances from the text which Swete edits from B.

In ver. 15 Rahlfs reads, 'The God (δ θεός) before whom my fathers walked . . . the God (δ θεός) who hath fed me. . . .' But B has δ κύριος in the second place against M.T.; and this reading may be defended by Rahlfs's own dictum, 'Der Uebersetzer der Gen. hatte eine grosse Vorliebe für Abwechslung.'

In 1931 appeared a further part of Rahlfs's work, that containing the Psalms together with the Odes. Here his Apparatus is enriched by a diligent use of the Versions. He finds three ancient types of text. First to be mentioned is that of Lower Egypt, which is represented by B, the Sinaiticus (A), and by the Bohairic Version.

The second type is that of Upper Egypt. The chief authority is the Sahidic version which was found complete in a papyrus volume in the ruins of a monastery in Upper Egypt. The text was published by Wallis Budge in 1897. Fortunately the Upper Egyptian text has also Greek representatives, such as the fragments of U which Swete cites for

Pss. x (xi) 2-xviii (xix) 6 incl. and xx (xxi) 14 b-xxxiv (xxxv) 6. This recension has been described as offering the unrevised text of the Greek popular Bible (Henrici *apud* Rahlfs, S. 29).

The third ancient type of text according to Rahlfs is the Western. As its first representative Rahlfs takes the Verona Psalter (R), which appears in Swete's apparatus. In R the Greek text is transcribed in Latin letters. So κύριος becomes *quiritios*, and ἐλέησον appears as *eleison*. Besides the Greek text thus mishandled the MS gives a Latin text which has many agreements with St Augustine, and may be pronounced 'African'. This Latin text with the support of St Augustine agrees 'in seiner Grundlage' with the Old African text (Tertullian: Cyprian), but the differences are sufficient to compel us to talk of African texts in the plural, an earlier and a later.—

On a study of these three ancient types of text Rahlfs has endeavoured to construct for the Psalter a text which is nearer to the original than the text of B. His rules in fixing his text are as follows:—

(1) When the three ancient forms of text, Lower Egyptian, Upper Egyptian, and Western, agree, their reading is to be followed. One exception however is to be allowed. There are according to Rahlfs a few readings thus supported which are manifestly errors, and moreover may be explained as due to corruption within the Greek text. These Rahlfs corrects, appealing to the example of J. E. Grabe, by conforming them to the M.T.

The three instances of error quoted by Rahlfs are not conclusive. The first is in Ps. xxxviii (xxxix) 6, 'Behold, thou hast made my days *handbreadths*' (so M.T.). Rahlfs rejects Dr Swete's reading, *παλαιὰς ἔθου τὰς ἡμέρας*, though it has the support of the three ancient groups, Lower Egyptian (B^N and the Bohairic), Upper Egyptian (cod. 2013, Greek), and Western (R, the St Germain MS of the Old Latin, and St Augustine). Further, the rendering, 'Thou didst make my days old' or 'Thou didst wear out my days', gives good sense in exchange for the enigmatic expression of the M.T., 'Thou hast made my days *handbreadths*'. Moreover it is noteworthy that the cognate verb *παλαιῶν* is used five times in the Psalter of the LXX, and *παλαιότη* never, except in some inferior authorities in this passage. Yet Rahlfs accepts *παλαιστὰς ἔθου τὰς ἡμέρας μου* as agreeing with the M.T. though all the authorities quoted for it are open to the suspicion of being under Hexaplaric influence, i.e. B^ab^Nc^a [AT], Gallican Psalter, the Lucianic recension, and Theodoret.

A second of Rahlfs's instances is found in the heading to Ps. lxii (lxiii), 'Of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah' (M.T.). Here Rahlfs rejects the reading *ἐν τῷ εἶναι αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ τῆς Ἰδομαίας*, 'in the wilderness of Edom', though it has the support of the Lower

Egyptian group (B and the Bohairic), the Upper Egyptian (the Sahidic), and the Western (R, and the Vulgate). *Ιδουμιας* is, he supposes, an inner Greek corruption for *Ιουδαιας*, which agrees with M.T. So he accepts the latter reading though the textual support for it is very weak (NT, the Gallican Psalter, and some Lucianic MSS).

But the strength of the external evidence for *Ιδουμιας* compels us to ask, Is there not a better explanation of it than that it is a corruption of *Ιουδαιας*? Surely there is. The wilderness of Judah merges itself in the wilderness of Edom. There is no fixed boundary between. The wilderness is terrible to the Psalmist, pathless and waterless (*ἀβάτῳ καὶ ἀνύδρῳ*): is it far fetched to suppose that the translator would prefer to call it 'the wilderness of Edom'? He may even have remembered the description of the distress to which an Israelite army was once reduced in that waterless region (2 K. iii 8, 9). 'Edom' stands in the Old Testament and in later Jewish literature as the chief representative of the enemies of Israel.

A third instance cited by Rahlfs is in Ps. cxxxi (cxxxii) 15, 'I will surely bless her provision' (הַיְיָ M.T.) spoken of Zion. This is an interesting passage. Zion by reason of her situation on a rocky summit was naturally a dry and hungry city. Food had to be specially provided for her, and the word 'provision' is a happy rendering. The Hebrew יַיִץ is used in Gen. xxvii 3, 7 of food taken in hunting, 'venison' (EV), and the cognate word הַיְיָ is used in Jud. xx 10 of victual provided for soldiers on an expedition. *ΙΗΣΟΥΑΗ*'S promise is that he will bless the work of provisioning Zion.

This sense has been caught in the reading which Rahlfs accepts in his edition, *τὴν θήραν αὐτῆς εὐλογῶν εὐλογίῃσω*, 'I will surely bless her hunting', or 'her prey taken in hunting', and it is of course possible (though not probable) that the reading *χήραν* printed by Dr Swete was derived corruptly from *θήραν*. But if we follow the generally sound principle that a more accurate rendering belongs more naturally to a reviser than to the original translator, *χήραν* demands from us further consideration. We have in fact a good explanation of *χήραν* if we accept a probable misreading of the Hebrew הַיִץ as הַיִץ (אִיץ), 'desolate one'. The transition from 'desolate one' to 'widow' is easy.

Rahlfs's statement of the textual evidence condemns the reading *θήραν* decisively. The three ancient types, Lower Egyptian (N: B *hiat.*), Upper Egyptian (the Sahidic and cod. 2017, Greek), and Western (R and its allies) support *χήραν*: so also codex Alexandrinus (A). For *θήραν* Rahlfs cites the Lucianic text together with the wavering of the Bohairic between the two readings. Thus though הַיְיָ stands as the reading of the Hebrew, *χήραν* should be accepted for the Septuagint.

(2) Rahlfs's second rule also makes appeal to the Masoretic text.

He writes, 'Since the ancient witnesses very often agree with the M.T. against the younger, I have as a rule, in cases in which they differ, preferred the reading which agrees with the M.T.' He takes an instance from lxi (lxii) 5, 'They delight in lies' (= M.T. ירצו כזב). It is not an easy case. For the verb the reading of the LXX is fixed, ἔδραμον (ירצו read as ירצו), but the form of the verb is ambiguous. The two Egyptian versions and the Syro-Hexapla take it as 3 plu., *cucurrerunt* (*concurrerunt*); the Vulgate and the Old Latin as 1 sing., *cucurri*. Of the substantive which follows two renderings are given in two variant readings. (1) ἔδραμον ἐν ψεύδει, 'They ran (*or* hastened) with falsehood'. So the Upper Egyptian (the Sahidic) and the Syro-Hexapla. This reading is accepted by Rahlfs because ἐν ψεύδει agrees with the כזב of the M.T. (2) ἔδραμον ἐν δίψει. The support for this (rejected) reading is according to Rahlfs as follows: the Lower Egyptian group (ⲚⲐ and the Bohairic); the Western (R and its allies); and in addition the Gallican Psalter and the Washington MS (fifth century).

The Gallican Psalter (= Vulgate) renders *cucurri in siti*, 'I ran athirst'. This can hardly have been meant by the Greek translator with ירצו כזב (or the like) before him.

It should be noted that ἐν ψεύδει and ἐν δίψει are equally suited to carry on the sense of ἔδραμον. If the enemies ran (*or* hastened) 'with falsehood', it is a description of their sinful course; if again they ran 'athirst', it is just another way of saying that the way of transgressors is hard. It is true that a reference to punishment breaks the order of the sense, but the Greek translator often worked from hand to mouth, and it is not surprising that with the root כזב before him he should think of the failing of waters, and so of thirst. In Isa. lviii 11, כזב (Pi'el) is used of waters failing, and in Jer. xv 18 אכזב is used of a spring which 'lies', i.e. does not give its expected water. The textual evidence for ἐν δίψει is overwhelming, and the sense 'they ran athirst'—hastening to find water—may be justified from Amos viii 11-13. For the Hebrew we may be satisfied with the M.T., but for the earliest Greek text the reading ἐν δίψει has overwhelming support.

Note that Rahlfs has found no variant in the *Venite*, Ps. xciv (xcv) 6b, for the striking Greek reading κλαύσωμεν, though it departs widely from the נכרבה, 'Let us kneel', of the M.T. The LXX suggests a Hebrew variant נכבה, 'Let us weep'. Before deciding to reject either the M.T. or the Septuagintal reading, let us look to the context.

The key-word of the Psalm is surely the באו 'come in, enter' of ver. 6, which offers a contrast to the simple 'come', לבו, δεύτε of ver. 1. It marks a fresh stage in the action. The first five vv. are sung in the approach to the Temple area, as the singers climb the Temple hill. Deep valley and mountain height are before their eyes, and they

remember that behind the western hills is the Great Sea. They acknowledge *JEHOVAH* as the Creator of all and they make to Him a joyful noise of thanksgiving.

The Psalmist makes a fresh start with ver. 6, as the worshippers reach the gates of the Temple court, and a fresh challenge rings out, 'Come in (Enter), let us prostrate ourselves and bow down'. Once within the Temple gates they no longer move onward with a joyful noise: they lie on their faces, and . . . ? Is it only that they feel a general sense of awe because they are now within the House of God, or is some special cause at work?

Ver. 7 with its emphatic words (*To-day*, הַיּוֹם, *sήμερον*, *Oh that ye would hear His voice*) suggests that the occasion is indeed a special one. The following vv. point to the unfaithfulness of their fathers, and warn the sons against a similar fall into unfaithfulness.

It is a Day of Crisis, and the Psalmist (if we may follow the Greek text) calls on the worshippers to do what Israel was accustomed to do on such a day when there was a special cause for remembering past sins. Then they wept before the Lord as recorded in Deut. i 45 (the disobedience at Hormah); Jud. xx 23, 26 (the double defeat of Israel by the Benjamites); cf. Zech. vii 3; Ezra x 1. So we read in the Greek Psalter 'Let us weep before the Lord'—*κλαύσωμεν*. Such is the reading of the LXX attested by *NB* [*A κλαύσωμεν*] *RT*; Gallican Psalter (= Vulgate), *ploremus*. The rival reading, that of the M.T., is an anticlimax, 'Let us kneel before the Lord' coming after 'Let us prostrate ourselves'. The Peshitta though it reads נִכְרַח has escaped the touch of bathos by rendering 'Let us *bless* the Lord', taking the unpointed Hebrew as euphemistic. Let us bless (in the presence of) the LORD.

Looking at the textual facts, at the marked variation between the M.T. and the LXX, we ask, Were there two recensions of this Psalm in existence in ancient times, one reading נִכְרַח (= *κλαύσωμεν*) for use on a Day of Penitence and Humiliation, and another reading נִכְרַח ('Let us kneel') with the M.T. for use on ordinary occasions?

(3) Rahlfs's third rule is as follows: When the ancient forms of text differ from M.T., but the younger ones (Origen, Lucian, and cod. *N*, which is often influenced by the Hexapla) agree with M.T., the older witnesses are to be followed, since Origen and Lucian have certainly corrected their text from the Masoretic. An obvious principle.

(4) His fourth rule is to make B the stand-by, but if B be unsupported to be guided by the other authorities. Too mechanical!

In estimating readings on internal grounds, one consideration must especially be kept in mind, which Rahlfs himself brings forward in the Prolegomena to his edition of Genesis. There he writes 'Die Septuaginta war ein jüdisches Werk und hat bei den Juden anfangs in hohem

Ansehen gestanden', *The LXX was a Jewish work and at first it was held in high esteem among the Jews* (S. 7).

This high esteem was surely not undeserved, if we judge (as the Jews themselves would judge), chiefly by the rendering of the *Torah*. Here we have on the whole a faithful literal rendering, with a number of happy paraphrases interspersed where they are needed: e. g.

(a) Gen. vi 9 τῷ θεῷ εὐηρέστησεν Νῶε, M.T., נח האלהים התהלך את נח.

(b) Gen. xlv 21, 'Bring [your brother] down unto me, that I may set mine eye (עֵינִי) upon him' = LXX καὶ ἐπιμελοῦμαι αὐτοῦ.

(c) Gen. xl 8, 'Do not interpretations belong to God?', οὐχὶ διὰ τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ διασάφησις, הלוא לאלהים פתרנים.

But there are also phenomena of a different kind in the LXX, which commended it to Jews. The work is marked with the signs of Jewish reverence and contains instances of Jewish exegesis, and of Jewish Haggadic comment.

First of the marks of Jewish reverence is the use of Κύριος as a cover for the sacred name. Had an Egyptian librarian translated for Ptolemy we should expect to find at least sometimes the use of the Greek form ΙΑΩ. Even in our AV the Tetragrammaton is represented a few times by the form יהוה (Exod. vi 3: Ps. lxxxiii 18: Isa. xii 2 (Ia πῖπι Q^{ms}), xxvi 4: *not* in Ex. xxxiv 6), but in no passage does the LXX attempt to indicate a pronunciation.

Another indication of Jewish reverence is the use of ἄσος 'grove' in place of the proper name of the goddess of good luck, *Asherah*. The translator took to heart the pronouncement of Hosea ii 17 (19), 'I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and they shall no more be remembered by their name'.

A similar instance no doubt is the rendering in 1 K. xviii 19 of אֱלֹהֵי הַבַּעַל by τοὺς προφῆτας τῆς αἰσχύνης, and by the use of Βααλ transliterated with the feminine article prefixed to indicate that the word pronounced was to be some form of (ἡ) αἰσχύνη: Hos. ii 8 (10): Zeph. i 4: Jer. ii 8.

Perhaps too the general use of νόμος, 'law', as a rendering of the Hebrew word *torah* may be reckoned as another sign of the hand of the Jewish translators. In any case in the English version of the Prophets the unsatisfactory term 'law' is no doubt due to the influence of the LXX. The RV has ventured on a different rendering in the margin only as in Isa. i 10, 'Hear the word (דבר) of the LORD, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law (תורת) of our God, ye people of Gomorrah'. Here instead of 'law' the margin gives 'teaching'; in Isa. ii 7 the margin has 'instruction'.

No doubt the careful literalism of much of the LXX would commend itself to Jewish piety, so also would the use of the Haggadah.

In the Greek Genesis there are several Haggadic touches, though only a few can be mentioned here.

In Gen. ii 2 according to M.T. God finished the work of Creation 'on the seventh day', but the statement seemed to the Rabbith to demand explanation. Rashi (*in loco*) quotes R. Simeon as saying, *The Holy One* (Blessed be He) *who knoweth His times and His moments entered upon the Sabbath punctually to a hair's breadth*, and he appeared as if he finished on the Sabbath itself. But in a translation meant for non-Jews it seemed better to remove the difficulty by a rendering which amounts to a correction of the text, so the LXX gives, *συνετέλεσεν ὁ θεὸς ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑκτῇ τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ* (so A | Vet Lat | Pesh.).

This instance is especially interesting, because the Heb.-Sam. Penta-teuch also gives 'sixth day': the Jewish doubt about 'the seventh day' extended itself even to the reading of the Heb. text.

Another interesting rendering which is probably Haggadic is found in Gen. xv 11. There Abram appeals to JΕHOVAH concerning the future of his descendants and receives the assurance that his seed shall inherit Canaan. But Abram asks for a sign that this shall indeed be the event. JΕHOVAH then instructs the patriarch to prepare a special sacrifice, of every clean beast | ONE! Abram obeys, and then the fowls of the air come down upon the sacrifice. What follows? According to M.T., 'then Abram drove them off', a very natural result, but not very significant—*וַיִּדְרֹשׁ אַבְרָם בְּעֵינָיו*. But the LXX gives a quite different sequel, *καὶ συνεκάθισεν αὐτοῖς Ἀβράμ* (AD^{sil} and Chester-Beatty papyrus 961), i.e. 'and A. sat down with them' (i.e. with the carcasses threatened by the fowls). (Note that Swete's reading which is also that of Rahlfs remains unchallenged, and has recently been confirmed by the Chester-Beatty papyrus no. 961.) Abram as the intercessor for his people sits down beside his sacrificial offering on their behalf. He has just before had righteousness reckoned to him for his faith: now his merits (*מוֹצֵא*) are to avail for his people.

In Gen. xxi 9 the story is told of the outburst of Sarah against Ishmael. According to M.T. she saw Ishmael at the feast of Isaac's weaning *וַיִּשְׂמַח*, 'mocking' according to AV, but 'playing' according to RV marg. A Rabbinic comment explains that Ishmael was *playing* with Isaac, and so the LXX gives *παίζοντα μετὰ Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ υἱοῦ ἐαυτῆς* (cod. A = [D and 961]).

Where a doublet occurs as in Gen. xxii 13 the preservation of the original word transliterated (in addition to the translation of it) *ἐν φυτῷ σαβέκ* (cod. A) or *ἐκ φυτοῦ σαβέκ* (C-B pap. 961) is probably due to a Hebraic reverence for the letter of the Bible. So Swete, *Introduction*, p. 324.

Some interesting examples of Haggadic colouring are to be found also in the Psalter. Take e.g. Ps. ii 6,

ἐγὼ δὲ κατεστάθην ὑπ' αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ Σειὼν ὄρος τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῦ,
 as edited by Swete from B > NAR which add βασιλεύς after κατεστάθην in agreement with M.T. מלכי. Here the Greek translator noticing that the enemy is twice referred to as βασιλεύς (vv. 2, 10) takes Israel herself (not her king) as the hero of the Psalm, and writes, 'I (Israel) was established by Him upon His holy hill'. The verb יָסַדְנִי was read יִתְּבַנֵּנִי as in Pro. viii 23 'I was set up from everlasting', where the speaker is (not a king, but) Wisdom personified. Rahlfs has not sufficiently weighed the consideration that a king on Mount Sion would not suit the Ptolemies.

In the Prophets three passages stand out in the LXX as instances of a Jewish reserve in communicating the true (or the full) sense of a passage to Gentile eyes. The first is the well-known instance of the fourfold name of the Prince of Peace in Isa. ix 6. Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος κτλ. is an insufficient and paraphrastic rendering. Neither the 'Wonderful Counsellor' nor the 'Prince of Peace' appears. If there be no reserve here, the explanation would be the incompetence of the translator.

But there is another passage in Isaiah which raises the suggestion of reserve. In lii 15 AV and RV marg. give, 'so shall he (i.e. My servant) sprinkle many nations'. The objection to this rendering is the omission of the preposition *by* before the remoter object. Has *by* fallen out (or possibly) been removed? In any case the Peshitta supports the M.T. to the extent of suggesting by its rendering that the Servant is conferring a great benefit on the 'nations'. 'He' ('this one'), says the Syriac, 'is about to cleanse many nations'.

What then do we find in the LXX? A loose and commonplace rendering, οὕτω θαυμάσσονται ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐπ' αὐτῷ, a poor *non sequitur* making no true advance on the preceding ver. 14, ὃν τρόπον ἐκοτήσονται ἐπὶ σὲ πολλοί. Surely the *וְ* of M.T., the οὕτω of the LXX, should introduce some more important conclusion than such a repetition.

Once more we have (I believe) another instance of reserve in Amos vi 5, where according to the M.T. and our English Versions (both AV and RV text) we have the name of David introduced into an unseemly context. The passage describes the selfish feasting of men who trust in the strength of the fortress of Samaria and put from themselves the thought of the evil day and are not grieved at the calamities which their brethren undergo. In the midst of the description comes in the clause, 'That devise for themselves instruments of music, like David'. We can explain the introduction of the name of Israel's champion in war by Amos by the likely supposition that the revellers themselves dared to name David at their feasts, while the Greek translators felt the shame

of using this name in such a context. So the translators slurred or paraphrased the passage, 'Who make a noise . . . as though they reckoned their present condition as stable, and not fugitive'. It is needless to suppose that they had a different Heb. reading.

We look forward to the Septuagintal text of the future, which shall approach nearer to the original Septuagint than the text of codex B. No finality of text is intended in the larger Cambridge Septuagint, but there is a great gain through it in knowledge of documents. In any reconstruction we must of course start from all that we know of the history of the Version. It was made in Egypt by Jews for Jews. It passed at a very early stage through Christian hands so that even in the earliest MSS we may expect to find some Christian modifications of the text, intentional or accidental. The origin of the version in Egypt warns us to attach much weight to early Egyptian papyri, which may be untouched by Syrian corruptions. In weighing readings we must use all the knowledge we can gain of Jewish exegesis and of Haggadic (or Halachic) comment. Some readings which sound strange to Gentile ears will prove to be right: while some readings will have to be rejected as too definitely Christian.

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PS.—The new part of the larger Cambridge 'Septuagint' (Brooke and McLean) contains the interesting book of 1 Esdras. A first glance at it suggests how often A (with or without the support of N) contains a better reading than B. Yet in ix 40 are the editors right in substituting the ἐκόμισεν of A for the ἐδοκίμασεν of B? The latter gives excellent sense. Ezra on his authority as ὁ ἀρχιερεὺς approved (sanctioned) for all the people a certain book which had been long lost sight of as the Law of Moses. An Haggadic touch, and suitable in this context!

W. E. B.

TWO SAMARITAN MSS IN THE LIBRARY OF QUEENS' COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.¹

IN the winter of 1933 two MSS in Samaritan characters were generously presented to Queens' College by Mr. A. Alexander, M.A., St. John's College, as a token of respect to the late Professor Kennett, in whose memory an Oriental library was being arranged. They had been purchased from a dealer in Nablus and arrived in a tin cylinder, which had been badly damaged in transit. The MSS were very carefully straightened out, mounted on leather (after it had been ascertained that there was no

¹ I have to thank the President of Queens' and the Librarian for their kind permission to publish the following account of the MSS which was read in part to the Society for O. T. Study a Jan. 1935.