

## ARTICLE VI.

THE RECENSIONAL CRITICISM OF THE  
PENTATEUCH.

BY HAROLD M. WIENER, M.A., LL.B., OF LINCOLN'S INN,  
BARRISTER-AT-LAW.

It is unfortunately the case that the close relation which exists between the higher or documentary criticism and the lower or textual criticism is frequently ignored. Still more frequently it happens that it is admitted in words, but habitually overlooked in the work that is done. In these pages stress has often been laid on the importance of the relationship; and in the present article some of the wider bearings of textual criticism will be considered.

The object of the science is to recover the *ipsissima verba* of an author from the materials that have come down to us. These materials may be the ultimate product of many processes—accidental decay or damage to the texts, faults of transcription whether due to the eye or the ear, to copying or dictation, glossing, displacements caused by injury to a MS. In addition to these there may, however, be yet another disturbing cause—I mean intentional editing undertaken with some purpose or other. Such a recension may be undertaken because it is realized that the text is in a bad condition and it is desired to improve it. In such a case the recension tends towards standardizing a particular form of text; but that form will bear the imprint of the minds that were responsible for its production. It will stereotype cer-

tain ideas current at the time; and if those ideas were from our point of view erroneous, i.e. if they differed from those of the original author, they may do much for the deterioration, instead of the improvement, of the text. A recension, moreover, may not be dominated, either wholly or in part, by a desire to improve the text in the modern sense. It may seek to harmonize the text or to produce a text that will favor some particular religious or other theory. In a word, it may be what the Germans call "tendencious."

Now, since textual criticism aims at recovering the original documents in the form in which they left the author's hand, it must necessarily take account of all these corrupting processes and endeavor to reverse them. This is well understood in the case of the non-recensional causes of corruption; but it seems to be less generally apprehended of the recensional causes. Of course in Old Testament criticism some little use is made of the best known recensions of the LXX, and there is occasional talk of the genealogical principle; but there the matter ends. In practice little attention is given to the results of the principle, and none at all to the recensional principle. At present the study of the text of the Pentateuch is in so backward a condition that little can be done beyond suggesting lines of inquiry for further study; but even that is of use, and there are certain indications of recensional activity which are too clear to be ignored. A brief consideration of some of these may prove suggestive.

I begin by drawing attention to a passage that illustrates one form of recensional activity with particular clearness. It is well known that the Samaritans in taking over the Jewish Pentateuch made a number of changes and additions. One of these is of peculiar importance, not merely as illustrating their methods, but for the light it throws on the history of

a Septuagintal recension. In the Massoretic text, Deuteronomy x. 6, 7, read as follows:—

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Beeroth Bene-jaakan to Moserah: there Aaron died, and there he was buried; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest’s office in his stead. From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah; and from Gudgodah to Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water.”

This is in obvious conflict with Numbers xxxiii. 31 ff., which, according to the Massoretic text, runs thus:—

“And they journeyed from Moseroth, and pitched in Bene-jaakan. And they journeyed from Bene-jaakan, and pitched in Hor-haggidgad. And they journeyed from Hor-haggidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah. And they journeyed from Jotbathah, and pitched in Abronah. And they journeyed from Abronah, and pitched in Ezlon-geber. And they journeyed from Ezlon-geber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh). And they journeyed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom. And Aaron the priest went up (into mount Hor) at the commandment of God, and died there.”

The Samaritans saw the difficulty and substituted the following in Deuteronomy:—

“And the children of Israel journeyed from Moseroth and pitched in Bene-jaakan. From thence they journeyed and pitched unto Gudgodah; from thence they journeyed and pitched in Jotbathah, a land of brooks of water; from thence they journeyed and pitched in Abronah; from thence they journeyed and pitched in Ezlon-geber; from thence they journeyed and pitched in the wilderness of Zin (the same is Kadesh); from thence they journeyed and pitched in Mount Hor; and Aaron died there and was buried there; and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest’s office in his stead.”

This is a very telltale passage: it throws a flood of light on the methods of the Samaritans. The formula “from thence they journeyed,” etc., the phrases “*unto Gudgodah*” and “*a land of brooks of water,*” and the final clause “*and*

*Aaron . . . . in his stead*" show that the Samaritans found a text that agreed with our Massoretic Deuteronomy. They rewrote it to accord with Numbers, at the same time embodying the additional material of Deuteronomy in so far as this could be done without direct conflict with Numbers: and in doing so they paid more attention to accuracy than to grammar. It is a crucial passage for Samaritan methods, and it shows how much more scrupulous the Jews were in their guardianship of the Pentateuchal text.

The passage, moreover, has an important bearing on the history of one of the Septuagintal recensions. It is generally recognized that a group of Septuagintal MSS. represented in the larger Cambridge Septuagint by dpt contain a substantive recension. If now we turn to this passage in the Greek, we find some very interesting material. Excepting certain differences in the proper names, such as habitually occur between the Septuagint and the Massoretic text, the ordinary Septuagintal reading agrees with the Hebrew, but dpt show strong signs of Samaritan influences. Omitting minor differences between d and p, it may be said that they read as follows:—

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Makedoth and pitched unto Beroth in the sons of [Hebrew *Bene*] Jakelm to Melsadal [so the LXX for M.T. "*Moserah*"], and from thence they journeyed and pitched unto Ebron [= *Abronah*]; from thence they journeyed and pitched in Ezion-geber; from thence they journeyed and pitched in the wilderness of Zin (the same is *Kadesh*); and from thence they journeyed and pitched in Mount Hor; there Aaron died and was buried there, and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead."

As already stated, there are minor differences between the two MSS., the principal one being that d shows a strong tendency to abbreviate by twice substituting the single word "then" for the stereotyped "from thence they journeyed

and pitched." On the other hand, the reading of p (106) will also be the reading of 107, which is not quoted by Holmes, because its text is identical with that of 106.

The reading of t is somewhat different:—

"And the children of Israel journeyed from Makedoth and pitched unto Beroth in the sons of Jakeim to Meisadai. And from thence they journeyed to Gadgad and from Gadgad to Etabatha. a land of brooks of water: and from thence they journeyed and pitched unto Ebron; from thence they journeyed and pitched in Ezion-geber; from thence they journeyed and pitched in the wilderness of Zin (the same as Kadesh); from thence they journeyed and pitched in Mount Hor; thence [an obvious scribal error for "there," which is read by 74 and 76] Aaron died and was buried there and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead."

It is supported with minor variations by 74 and 76 of Holmes.

These phenomena are to be interpreted in the light of two other facts: (1) that dpt are undoubtedly MSS. of the LXX, not of a Greek translation of the Samaritan; and (2) that these three MSS. habitually present identical or similar readings, thus showing that they go back to some common archetype. It then becomes evident that the traces of the LXX in this text—"Beroth" (omitted by the Samaritan), "sons of Jakeim," "Meisadai"—are due to the fact that an archetype which presented the Septuagintal text was altered to accord either with the original Samaritan or else with the Greek version of the Samaritan Pentateuch which is known to have existed. In the process, "Makedoth" was not recognized as being at bottom identical with what was transliterated by "Meisadai" in the Septuagintal version, and "to Meisadai" was allowed to stand. The omission of Gadgad (Gudgodah) and Etabatha (Jotbathah) from d and p may be due (most probably) to a copyist's eye having slipped from the earliest occurrence of the phrase "and from thence they journeyed" to a subsequent repetition; or it may

be (less probably) that the later addition was written in the margin of the archetype and was erroneously taken by the copyists as cancelling the references to Gadgad and Etabatha.

From this it follows that, where dpt alone of Septuagintal MSS. present us with Samaritan readings, no importance is to be attached to their testimony, since their archetype had obviously undergone some correction (however spasmodic in character) from some Samaritan text: but where these MSS. differ alike from the Massoretic text and the Samaritan, their testimony will be free from this suspicion and may be of extreme importance — especially if it be supported by the Vulgate or if it points to glossing or recensional activity in the ordinary texts.

This leads to two reflections, viz. that insufficient study has as yet been devoted to the Septuagintal recensions, and practically none at all to the relationship of texts presented by the various groups of Greek MSS. with those of other ancient versions, especially the Vulgate. And yet in working at the Pentateuchal problem I have been forced to see that both these fields must prove extremely fertile. Any competent scholar who is prepared to devote himself to scientific textual criticism on these lines may be certain of reaping a rich harvest to the great advantage of all Biblical students. To show this I submit the following tables of the principal agreements that I have found in a few chapters that I have examined.<sup>1</sup> I omit cases where there is some support from a patristic authority who quotes differently on different occasions, cases where only a daughter version of the LXX and no extant MS. agrees with the Vulgate, and cases where some Septuagintal authorities misplace a word or phrase that

<sup>1</sup> These are Gen. xxii. and xxxvii.; Ex. xvi., xvii., and xxxii.-xxxiv.; Lev. xvi.

the Vulgate omits. I have, however, little doubt that importance should be attached to some of these, and have omitted them only to avoid raising unnecessary questions, and so obscuring my main contention.<sup>1</sup>

REFERENCE.	MASSORETIC TEXT.	THE VULGATE.	SEPTUAGINTAL AUTHORITIES AGREEING WITH VULGATE.
Gen. xxii. 2. Gen. xxii. 5. Gen. xxii. 6.	I will tell of. Abraham. Abraham. (in his) hand.	Monstravero. Omits. Omits. hands.	δελξω b g. f Sah Or-lat Chr omit. s omits. bw dpd <sub>2</sub> l n fi*r qu cmox Chr Or-lat "hands."
Gen. xxii. 7.	Abraham. And he said 2°.	Omits. Omits.	bw Sah omit. D dptd <sub>2</sub> n fia?r w egj qu y msxc <sub>2</sub> h l v (mg) Arm Boh Eth Or-lat Chr omit.
Gen. xxii. 8. Gen. xxii. 9. Gen. xxii. 14. Gen. xxii. 19. Gen. xxxvii. 6. Gen. xxxvii. 8. Gen. xxxvii. 15.	both of them. Abraham. Abraham. in Beersheba. this (dream). to him. saying.	Omits. Omits. Omits. θβ. my. Omits. Omits.	bw Eth omit. D omits. ac <sub>2</sub> omit. p <i>extose</i> f "my." l omits. bw c <sub>2</sub> Latin Philo omit.
Gen. xxxvii. 19. Gen. xxxvii. 20.	this. now therefore. him 2°.	Omits. Omits. Omits.	m Arm omit. s Arm Eth omit. 31 Arm omit.
Gen. xxxvii. 22.	(A n d) Reuben said unto them.	Omits.	d Eth Chr omit.
Gen. xxxvii. 23.	Joseph.	him.	n v (margin) Eth "him."
Gen. xxxvii. 23. Gen. xxxvii. 24. Gen. xxxvii. 28.	that was on him. and they took. Joseph 1°. Joseph 2°.	Omits. Omits. him. him.	f n Chr omit. e Boh l p omit. f Eth Chr "him." n p f Latv Chr "him."

<sup>1</sup> In these tables Sah, Arm, Boh, Eth, Lat, stand for the Sahidic Armenian, Bohairic, Ethiopic, and Latin versions of the LXX. The superlinear letters denote editions, etc., v, w, and z, in the case of the Latin, referring respectively to Vercellone's *Variae Lectiones*, Ranke's edition of the Würzburg palimpsest and the Munich palimpsest, while the addition of a superlinear f to the Ethiopic means Dillmann's codex F. Or-lat, Chr, Cyr, Phil-Arm, refer respectively to the Latin writings of Origen, Chrysostom, Cyril, and writings of Philo that are extant in Armenian.

REFERENCE.	MASSORETIC TEXT.	THE VULGATE.	SEPTUAGINTAL AUTHORITIES AGREEING WITH VULGATE.
Gen. xxxvii. 28.	Joseph 3°.	him.	h "him."
Ex. xvi. 3.	this 2°.	Omits.	f Arm Or-lat omit.
Ex. xvi. 20.	Moses 1°.	him.	p "him."
Ex. xvi. 25.	to-day 2°.	Omits.	bw n Or-gr omit.
Ex. xvii. 3.	the people 2°.	Omits.	n Eth Latz Or-lat Cyr-codd omit.
	𐤒 (unrepresented in EV).	Unrepresented in Vulg.	egj Arm Boh Eth omit.
Ex. xvii. 10.	to him.	Omits.	f n omit.
Ex. xxxii. 1.	the people 2°.	Omits.	d m omit.
Ex. xxxii. 12.	saying.	Omits.	f Eth Latz (apparently) omit.
Ex. xxxii. 15.	tables 2°.	Omits.	k omits.
Ex. xxxii. 28.	about three.	about twenty-three.	r Boh Latwz (apparently) "twenty-three" (due to taking 𐤒, "about," for "twenty," the number this letter represents. No critical value attaches to this reading, save that it is noticeable that r agrees with an Old Egyptian version. I have other reasons for thinking that fir may be Hesychian).
Ex. xxxiii. 7.	from the camp.	Omits.	f h p omit.
Ex. xxxiii. 12.	𐤒𐤒 1° and thou (emphatic).	and.	k m "and."
Ex. xxxiii. 15.	unto him.	Omits.	f Ethf omit.
Ex. xxxiv. 21.	thou shalt rest 2°.	Omits.	p Eth omit.
Ex. xxxiv. 22.	and 1°.	Omits.	n x Latin omit.
Ex. xxxiv. 29.	when he came down from the Mount and Moses.	Omits.	m omits.
Ex. xxxiv. 31.	unto him.	Omits.	f omits.
Lev. xvi. 14.	of the blood with his finger.	Omits.	m n omit.
Lev. xvi. 17.	(when) he (goeth in).	the priest.	a, "the priest."

The above are probably fairly representative of what may be expected. One of the most interesting features is the frequency with which a single MS. will detach itself from the bulk of the Septuagintal authorities and agree with the



Vulgate in some non-Massoretic reading. This appears to happen very frequently with *f*, but occasionally occurs with MSS. of each of the principal groups. Obviously it may happen to any group of MSS. that the original reading of its recension has been accommodated to the M.T. in all the extant MSS. that contain it, with one or more exceptions: and equally obviously such a MS. as *f* often stands alone in preserving the original reading of its recension. Probably not all the agreements rest on different Hebrew texts: some are doubtless due to chance coincidence, but as a whole they are too numerous to be explained by this cause. It must also be remembered that there is reason to believe that some of the Septuagintal recensions were made with reference to Hebrew texts current at the time, so that our Septuagintal authorities sometimes represent more than one Hebrew reading.

For the purposes of this article I have examined agreements of the Samaritan with isolated Septuagintal MSS. against the testimony of M.T. in the first thirty-nine chapters of Genesis, but without discovering anything very startling. Here are a few instances:—

REFERENCE.	MASSORETIC TEXT.	SAMARITAN.	DIVERGING SEPTUAGINTAL AUTHORITIES.
Gen. v. 32.	Noah 2°.	Omits.	qu Or-lat Cyr omit.
Gen. vii. 1.	LORD.	God.	c w Arm-codd "God."
Gen. vii. 9.	God.	LORD.	E "LORD"; M f k t Arm Boh "LORD God."
Gen. xx. 18.	LORD.	God.	bw ej Boh Phil-Arm "God."
Gen. xxix. 3.	the flocks. (העדרים)	the shepherds. (הרעים)	ir Boh Sah Eth Lat "the shepherds"; f bw t h k have both readings; other MSS. insert "the shep- herds" later.
Gen. xxxvi. 39	son of Achbor	Omits.	laʿr n p s Boh omit.

On the whole, however, the Samaritan is of slight importance for the study of the Septuagintal recensions.

When scholarship has recovered the main recensions that it may prove possible to detect in our present textual materials, it will be necessary to criticize each recension, tracing as far as may be the ideas that were operative in its formation. For instance, a recension that is known to be favorable to double renderings, like that of Lucian, will not provide good evidence when such occur of a fuller Hebrew text, and a recension that is influenced by a particular theological or other bias will need to have this discounted in any case where it may have influenced the readings. It may be possible in some cases to assign definite territorial spheres to the different recensions: but (once the influences I have mentioned have been duly eliminated) the more familiar grounds of palæographical probability and the general character of a particular recension as a textual witness will be of greater importance in weighing and deciding between the varieties of reading.

Thus far we have been dealing with the recensional use of the existing MSS. But what has been the story of the transmission of the text down to the last common ancestor of all our existing materials? And to what date should that ancestor be referred? What were the links between it and the autograph of the Pentateuch? And what were the possibilities of corruption? It is easier to multiply such questions than to give any answer. All that can be said is, that certain signposts exist which seem to point to the existence of some sort of a road. To what extent that road may prove to be practicable for the scholarship of the future no man can say.

In the first place, I think it may be said that all our exist-

ing materials go back, broadly speaking, to two types of text, and that the consideration of the differences between these two and their territorial spheres is of some assistance. Those two types are the Massoretico-Samaritan on the one hand, and the Septuagintal on the other. That the Samaritan and the Massoretic texts differ far less from each other than either of them does from the Septuagint was shown by me in an article entitled "Samaritan, Septuagint, Massoretic Text" that appeared in the *Expositor* for September, 1911. There are naturally very numerous instances in which M.T. has undergone some slight change in the centuries during which its transmission has been separate from those of the other two texts, and again the extant Septuagintal texts have often been copied from MSS. that had been influenced by the Massoretic text or one or other of the later Greek translations or the Samaritan Greek. But, on the whole, whether one looks to the number of differences or to their weight and character, there can be no doubt that the main division is into Septuagintal and Massoretico-Samaritan.

Now when the differences and the territorial distribution of these two types of text are considered, certain inferences may be drawn with reasonable certainty from the known facts. The home of the Septuagint was Egypt, so that, beyond all doubt, it represents the Egyptian form of text. It is equally certain that the mean of the Massoretic and Samaritan texts must represent Palestine and also Babylonia, since Ezra brought with him a scroll of the law from that country. When did these two lines of tradition diverge? In speaking of the text of Jeremiah, the late Dr. A. B. Davidson wrote: "The differences between the Hebrew and Greek might certainly be easier explained if we could suppose the MS. or

MSS. on which LXX is founded carried early to Egypt.”<sup>1</sup> Similarly Dr. Briggs writes: “The books of Samuel and Jeremiah differ in the Greek so very greatly from the Hebrew traditional text that we must conclude that they were translated from manuscripts which were at an early date independent of Palestinian Manuscripts.”<sup>2</sup> It is difficult to believe that the Jews to whom Jeremiah could say: “Because . . . ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies” (xliv. 23; cp. 10) could have been ignorant of the existence of a law or could have denied that it possessed some binding force. The appeal made is to something known and authoritative. If that is so how can we suppose that all the Jews of Egypt had no copy of the Law from those days onwards? To me it seems most probable that the original divergence of the two lines of tradition took place in the age of Jeremiah, that the LXX was translated from MSS. of the Egyptian line, and that that is the reason for the frequent superiority of its text to that of the Massoretico-Samaritan, which was possibly edited in Babylonia.

This does not quite exhaust the evidence that we have. The evidence of transpositions—particularly the arrangement of the last chapters of Numbers<sup>3</sup>—points clearly to an editorial effort to arrange the text of a damaged MS. As the arrangement is common to the LXX and the Massoretico-Samaritan line, the revision to which it is due must have taken place before the two diverged. The other apparent possibility—viz. that one of the two types of text should have been brought into accordance with the other at a later

<sup>1</sup> Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. II. p. 575.

<sup>2</sup> *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scriptures*, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup> See especially *Essays in Pentateuchal Criticism*, pp. 114-138. Vol. LXX. No. 278. 7

date — is ruled out by the fact that in the concluding chapters of Exodus and other places where the two diverge no serious attempt to harmonize them appears to have been made before Origen. Here then we have clear evidence of a recension from which all our existing copies are descended.

On the other hand, the narrative of 2 Kings xxii. suggests that the book of the Lord then found had been lost to sight for some generations. The copy then discovered was, therefore, already old, and may not have been removed from the autograph of Moses by many transcriptions. The divergence of the Egyptian and Massoretico-Samaritan types of text occurred so soon after that it is reasonable to suppose that careful study may enable scholarship to restore the text of whatever was included in that book with great fidelity.