

THE DIVINE NAMES IN GENESIS.

IV. THE HEBREW TEXT (*continued*).

2. THE SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH.

THE Samaritan Pentateuch is a recension in Hebrew of the books of Moses, as used by the schismatic community whose religious centre was and still is the temple on Mount Gerizim at Shechem. Its MSS. are written in the Samaritan script—a degraded form of the original Hebrew alphabet; but otherwise they are simply a special group of Hebrew codices, and are in fact often treated as such by writers on the Old Testament text. The characteristic features of the recension appear in a series of intentional alterations of the parent text, due to editorial motives and tendencies. The most striking of these are, of course, the few changes introduced in defence of the legitimacy of the Samaritan temple and worship, such as the command to build an altar on Mount Gerizim after Exodus xx. 17, Deuteronomy v. 18, and the substitution (or retention) of Gerizim for Ebal in Deuteronomy xxvii. 4.¹ Many alterations spring from the desire to produce a smoother, more intelligible and more consistent text: archaic or abnormal grammatical forms are eliminated, discords of gender and number are avoided, exegetical difficulties are removed by glosses and emendations, and inconsistencies are reconciled by corrections or short interpolations from other contexts. Besides these there are a number of lengthy insertions

¹ It is immaterial to the present discussion whether the Jews or the Samaritans have here kept the original text.

from parallel passages, which form one of the outstanding peculiarities of the Samaritan text. Some of these alterations are clearly of Samaritan origin; but in other cases it must remain uncertain whether they are the work of Samaritan editors or were found in the Jewish MSS. on which the Samaritan Pentateuch is based. Taken together, however, they impart a distinctive complexion to the Samaritan text, which is recognisable as far back as we can trace its history.

If now we set aside these characteristic differences, we find in Samaritan MSS. a consonantal text which very closely resembles the MT. The variants are for the most part of the same kind and the same order of magnitude as those found in extant Hebrew MSS., and the majority of them scarcely exceed in importance those which seem to have existed in Jewish MSS. of the Talmudic age. The interesting and perplexing fact is that where the Sam. does vary from the MT it often agrees with the LXX. The LXX never supports the Sam. in its polemical variations in defence of the Samaritan cult; nor does it reproduce the long harmonising supplements referred to above. But in minor interpolations, in glosses and emendations, as well as in many readings not due to any tendency, it often follows the Sam. The agreements are often in minutiae, and acquire importance from their very minuteness; but in certain cases the combined LXX and Sam. text is on internal grounds to be preferred to the MT as the superior and, therefore, the original reading.

These relations of the Sam. to the MT on the one hand and to the LXX on the other, constitute a textual problem of great intricacy, and have given rise to the most diverse theories of the probable connexion between the Samaritan and Greek recensions. Some scholars have gone so far as to maintain the opinion, now generally recognised as

untenable, that the LXX is a direct translation from the Sam. ; while others have been driven to the most complicated hypotheses of correction and revision of one text by the others in order to account for the phenomena which confront us here. To enter upon such questions is quite beyond the scope of this article. In what follows I will adopt the view which seems most plausible in itself, and at the same time is most favourable to those who would use the Samaritan Pentateuch as a witness along with the LXX against the MT : viz., the theory of Richard Simon and Gesenius,¹ that Sam. and LXX are both derived from a group of Hebrew MSS. containing a text which, while not quite homogeneous, differed as a whole (and occasionally for the better) from the official Jewish recension which is the parent of our Massoretic text.²

In the light of these facts, we proceed to consider the evidence of the Samaritan Pentateuch as bearing on the transmission of the divine names. We have already seen (p. 405, May) to how slight an extent it differs from the MT in this respect in the book of Genesis. There are only at most nine passages where it has a different reading, viz., vii. 1, 9, xiv. 22,

¹ A good account of Gesenius's essay and arguments may be read in the art. SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH, by Emmanuel Deutsch, in Smith's *Dict. of the Bible*, vol. iii.

² Before entering on the somewhat involved discussion that lies before us, it is right to point out that a critical edition of the Samaritan Pentateuch does not as yet exist. It is understood that two are in contemplation : one by the English Text and Translation Society, and the other in Germany under the editorship of von Gall. It may be expected that when such an edition appears, its prolegomena will shed new light on some of the problems which at present beset the path of the inquirer. It is not improbable that a critically revised text will remove some uncertainties which cannot now be cleared up ; and it is extremely probable that it will at least provide data for a more precise determination of the affinities between the LXX and the Sam. than we can yet formulate. We must therefore be prepared to find that the best solution of the problem that we can compass with our imperfect material may be upset or modified by the improved critical apparatus which will one day be at our disposal. But unfortunately we cannot wait for this. We must make the best of

xx. 18, xxviii. 4, xxxi. 7, 9, 16a, xxxv. 9b, the last being an Elohim supplied where MT has no name at all. We have also found that only three of these variants (vii. 1, 9, xxxi. 9) appear in Hebrew MSS., and we shall see later that only two (vii. 1, 9) find support in any of the younger versions (Pesh., Vulg.). How, then, does the case stand as between Sam. and LXX? In five out of its nine divergences from MT (xiv. 22, xxviii. 4, xxxi. 7, 9, 16a) the Sam. is unsupported by a single MS., citation, or daughter-version, of the LXX. In three (vii. 1, 9, xx. 18) it agrees with a slenderly represented Greek text.¹ Only in one passage is the Sam. backed against MT by the united authority of the LXX: viz. the addition of Elohim in xxxv. 9b; a difference by which the documentary analysis is in no way affected. Now it seems to me that in dealing with this matter our text-critical opponents show a singularly ill-balanced judgment. When they light upon a discrepancy between Sam. and MT they rejoice like men who find great spoil; but an agreement between these two appears to be in their eyes

an obscure situation, and be satisfied if we can exhaust all the reasonable probabilities that come within our view. The text that we have mainly to rely upon is that of Walton's Polyglot Bible, reprinted separately by Blayney in Hebrew square characters in 1790. This is anything but a critical edition. It is merely the text of the Paris Polyglot of 1646, freed from typographical errors; and that again was carelessly edited by Morinus from the first MS. of the Samaritan Pentateuch that came under the eyes of European scholars. Kennicott collated the text of the London Polyglot with 16 other MSS., whose readings of the divine names are identical with those of the printed edition, except in four places (ii. 5, iii. 14, xxvi. 24, xxxi. 16) where a Yahwe or Elohim is omitted by one or other of two MSS. (61 or 64). In 1868 Petermann published a list of variants from MT of the famous Torah-roll of the sanctuary at Nablus, in which one Sam. variant to a divine name (Gen. vii. 1) does not appear. These are our accessible sources of information as to the text, and it is evident that for the purpose in hand it is needless to go beyond the London Polyglot.

¹ The details, as given in the apparatus of the Cambridge LXX, are: vii. 1, Sam. supported by cw Arm.-codd.; vii. 9, by E; xx. 18 by bejw Boh., Phil.-Arm.

of no significance. Especially are they delighted when they discover a coincidence of the Sam. with something else against the MT. When Dahse can point to a solitary correspondence in a divine name between one of his Greek recensions (egj) and the Sam., it is an "auffallende Erscheinung" (p. 106); but the 310 (or so) correspondences of Sam. and MT are not deemed worthy of mention. I have explained in the last article why I refuse to consider an isolated agreement between a Hebrew MS. and some form of the LXX as in the least surprising; and the same argument holds good as applied to a casual agreement of the Sam. with some form of the LXX. On the other hand, the agreement of the Sam. with the MT in more than 300 cases *is* a remarkable phenomenon,—perhaps, all things considered, the most remarkable phenomenon in the history of the Hebrew text. We shall see presently what that means. In the meantime let us be clear on this point, that just so far as a discrepancy between Sam. and MT throws doubt on the correctness of the latter, precisely to that extent does a correspondence of the two guarantee the soundness of the MT. And since there are over 300 agreements in the divine names to 9 differences, it is surely well within the mark to say that the Samaritan recension as a whole is on the side of the MT and immensely strengthens its claim on our confidence.

It would really be difficult to exaggerate the importance of this fact. It means that through two independent lines of descent the divine names in Genesis have been transmitted with practically no variation. That, in the first place, is a very strong confirmation of the view several times expressed in the course of these articles, that Jews as well as Samaritans exercised the most scrupulous care in the transcription of the name of God. But it implies, further, that at the time when the two texts became inde-

pendent of one another, the distribution of the divine names represented in each was already established. We may not assume that other distributions were not in existence in MSS. of that period; but we are sure that at all events *this* distribution must have been represented in MSS. of sufficient authority to be accepted as the basis of the two most important recensions of the Hebrew Pentateuch. The question now is, how far back does the point of divergence lie? In other words, what is the age of the Samaritan Pentateuch as a separate Law-book, distinct from the Jewish Pentateuch from which our present Masoretic text has descended? Since this is a matter on which some difference of opinion obtains, it may be well to state pretty fully the grounds for determining this date.

Amongst modern critical historians the prevalent view has been, and probably still is, that the Samaritans received the Pentateuch from the Jews in the time of Nehemiah, about 430 B.C. It would be extremely convenient for my present argument to accept that date; for it would carry back the testimony of the Samaritan Pentateuch to within a short interval of time from the final redaction and promulgation of the Law by Ezra (at the earliest, c. 444 B.C.). But it seems to me that the evidence points to a date about a century later. The conclusion of the critical historians is reached by combining a brief enigmatic notice in the book of Nehemiah with a circumstantial narrative found in the eleventh book of the *Antiquities* of Josephus (§§ 302-324). In Nehemiah xiii. 28 we read of the expulsion from Jerusalem of a grandson of the High Priest Eliashib, because of his marriage with a daughter of Sanballat the Horonite. Josephus also tells us of a priest (named Manasse), who was a *great*-grandson of Eliashib, and who was excluded from the succession to the high-priesthood because he refused to be separated from his wife, a daughter of

Sanballat the governor of Samaria. Thus far it certainly looks as if we had here two versions of the same story. But Josephus goes on to relate how Manasse seceded from the Jews, on the promise of Sanballat that he should be High Priest of the Samaritans, and that a temple should be built for him on Mount Gerizim, as soon as the permission of Darius, the last Persian monarch, could be procured. He adds the important statement that many disaffected priests and Levites in Jerusalem joined Manasse in his secession. In the meantime the Persian Empire was overthrown by Alexander the Great ; and it was he who granted the firman under which the temple was erected on Gerizim, and Manasse was installed as High Priest (c. 330 B.C.). The common opinion, then, has been that the notice of Nehemiah xiii. 28 is to be supplemented by the account of Josephus ; so that the building of the schismatic temple, the definite organisation of the Samaritan sect, and the establishment of a regular priesthood and cultus at Shechem are to be assigned to about 430 B.C., instead of a century later, as Josephus states. But this is obviously a very unsafe combination. Whatever may have taken place under Nehemiah, the names of Darius and Alexander are too closely and explicitly associated by Josephus with the building of the temple to be set aside as unchronological. While there may have been some confusion in the mind of that writer with events of Nehemiah's time, we have no right to transfer his narrative bodily to a date 100 years earlier ; and it is reasonable to allow that he was probably well informed in assigning the building of the Samaritan temple to the early reign of Alexander. If so, we must infer that the final constitution of the Samaritan community on a religious basis, with priesthood and ritual, belongs to that time.

It will be observed that neither Nehemiah nor Josephus says anything about the adoption of the Pentateuch by

the Samaritans. We are thrown back, therefore, on general considerations to decide whether its introduction is more probable at the earlier or the later date. Such considerations seem to point clearly to the latter alternative. For one thing, a Law-book such as the Samaritan Pentateuch is would have been a useless and inconvenient possession to the Samaritans in the absence of a Levitical priesthood and a regular sanctuary, and the latter at least they had not secured before 330. Another consideration, which must weigh with those who hold the critical theory of the Pentateuch, is that the redaction of the Law-book cannot be put earlier than the year 444; and a much longer time than fourteen years must be allowed for the rise of such variations of text as appear in the Jewish and Samaritan recensions. The time of Alexander, on the other hand, is the latest period to which the adoption of the Pentateuch by the Samaritans can with any plausibility be assigned. For if a separate Mosaic Law-book would have been an encumbrance to the Samaritans before the building of their temple, it would have been impossible for them *after* that event to maintain their sectarian position without a Law-book adapted to their separatist pretensions. This view appears to be gaining ground amongst the most recent writers on the subject, and it would be easy to quote the opinion of several scholars in favour of it. We will therefore accept the year 330 B.C. as the proximate date when the Pentateuch passed into the possession of the Samaritan community.

If this conclusion be correct, the Samaritan Pentateuch is still the oldest external witness we have to the state of the early Hebrew text. It takes us back to a date within a century of the final redaction of the Law. There is no doubt whatever that even at that early period errors had crept into the Hebrew text. Where the Sam. and MT

agree (as they not infrequently do) in a reading which is manifestly corrupt, we are sure that that corruption had taken place before the two texts had parted company, i.e., by about the middle of the fourth century.¹ It is, therefore, conceivable that mistakes had occurred in the transmission of the divine names before that time. What we know for certain is that the common element of the two texts, which includes the divine names in Genesis, goes back to the fourth century, and that from that time the exact distribution of the names which then obtained has been preserved with all but complete fidelity in two independent series of MSS. down to the fifteenth Christian century or later. And this, I repeat, is amongst the oldest facts that textual criticism has established in the history of the text. The LXX, which is our next oldest witness, only furnishes evidence of the state of things about the middle of the third century, when the Greek translation of the Pentateuch was made. When we consider how, in regard to the names for God, the value of the LXX is depreciated by the notorious confusion of its MSS., and the consequent impossibility of ascertaining (in many cases) its original readings, we cannot hesitate to assign a decisive importance for our present inquiry to the critical fact presented by the agreement of the Samaritan Pentateuch with the Massoretic text.

Thus far, however, I have argued on certain current assumptions which until quite recently hardly any one has ever thought of calling in question. The argument assumes for one thing that the Jewish and Samaritan Pentateuchs have been uninfluenced by each other from the day when they first parted company. It assumes further that the

¹ For while such frequent causes of error as confusion of \daleth and \beth or \beth and \daleth might occasionally produce an identical corruption in two texts independently, accidental coincidences of this kind cannot be numerous; and there are cases of a more complex character where agreement in error cannot be ascribed to chance.

LXX, even in cases where its peculiar readings undoubtedly represent a Hebrew original, only yields information as to the text contemporary with the translation, i.e., for a text at least half a century younger than that which we reach by comparison of the Sam. and MT. It is necessary now, in view of some recent discussions, to test the validity of these and other assumptions. For it is not to be supposed that an experienced critic like Dahse has failed to consider the serious and indeed insurmountable objections which the ordinary view of the history of the text presents to his attitude towards the text in general, and in particular to several of his speculative constructions which have been dealt with in these articles; such as the elimination of *El Shaddai* in Exodus vi. 3 and elsewhere, the Sedarim-hypothesis in more than one aspect, and the theory of Hebrew recensions older than the MT. All these make shipwreck more or less completely on the fact of the Samaritan Pentateuch as usually understood. He must, therefore, have formed some conception of the relation of Sam. to MT which to his own mind justifies the very slight and unbalanced regard which he pays to its testimony. We may expect that in some future volume of his textual studies he will take his readers into his confidence, and tell them what he really thinks on this important matter. He has not done so as yet; and we are left to conjecture what his position is likely to be. So far as I can see there are just two courses open to him. He must either (1) believe that the *present* text of the Sam. has broken off from the Jewish stem at a much later point than the first adoption of a Law-book by the Samaritans, and later also than the LXX, or (2) accepting the common opinion as to the ages of the Sam. and the LXX, he must hold that the *Hebrew original* of the LXX is of greater antiquity than the Samaritan Pentateuch, although the translation into Greek was

not made till the time usually supposed. Both these theories have been actually put forward, and neither can be pronounced *prima facie* impossible. We must consider briefly how far they are defensible in themselves, and how far they affect the conclusions arrived at above.¹

1. The first view has been advanced in a very definite form by Professor Kennett in the *Cambridge Biblical Studies* (1909, p. 126). He thinks it probable that all copies of the Samaritan scriptures were destroyed by the Jews at the capture of Samaria and the destruction of the Gerizim temple under John Hyrcanus (c. 107 B.C.), and that the Samaritans restored their law on the basis of Jewish MSS. of contemporary age. Thus the witness of the Sam. to the text of the Old Testament, instead of going back to the fourth century, goes back at the earliest to the last quarter of the second century. There is no doubt that that theory would invalidate most of the conclusions which we have drawn from the existence of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Is it an admissible theory? It seems to me improbable in a very high degree. It is admitted that the Samaritans possessed a Pentateuch from the time of Nehemiah. Now the entire destruction of a sacred book is at all times a difficult operation. In the case supposed it is an unlikely result of the conquest, and the replacement of it by a new Jewish Law-book is in the circumstances more unlikely still. We can hardly think that at a time of such hatred and resentment the Samaritans would have easily reconciled themselves to the adoption of a new code from their conquerors. They would rather have fallen

¹ It will be said that there is a third possibility: viz., a progressive assimilation of the Sam. text to the later Jewish, due to the friendly relations subsisting between the heads of the two communities. Of that position I can only say that in the first place it is too nebulous to admit of discussion; and in the second place that it seems so improbable that it could only be accepted as a last resource to relieve a problem otherwise insoluble. Either of the alternatives mentioned above would be preferable.

back on the most imperfect copy of their own scriptures than have started afresh from ground common to themselves and their foes. Nor can we readily suppose that no such copy was to be found. We must bear in mind that long before then there was a numerous Samaritan diaspora in Egypt, if not in other lands ; and even if the Jews had succeeded in destroying all MSS. of the Pentateuch in Samaria itself, it must surely have been possible to procure one from the Egyptian colonists. These are only conjectures, but the theory itself is a conjecture ; and I cannot think that the balance of evidence is in its favour.

2. The second theory demands a somewhat fuller examination, because it is more plausible in itself, and because it opens up questions which go to the roots of the textual problem of the Old Testament. It is that while the Samaritan Pentateuch is older than the Greek translation of the Law, yet the Hebrew original of the LXX had broken away from the Jewish line of transmission at an earlier period than the Sam. To put it more definitely, the LXX was translated from the last of a line of Hebrew MSS. which had had an independent circulation in Palestine or Egypt from a time anterior to the separation of the Samaritan text from the Jewish. This view has been advocated with considerable ability and unusual moderation of statement by Wiener in the EXPOSITOR of September, 1911 ; and if it were necessary to try conclusions with that irascible controversialist, it would not be difficult to show that with all his logical acumen he has contributed nothing of value to the elucidation of the question he has raised.¹

¹ The article, it may be explained, is mainly devoted to a demonstration, on the narrow and inadequate basis of four short passages taken at random from the Pentateuch, that the Hebrew original of the LXX differed far more widely from MT and Sam. than these differ from one another. I cannot here discuss the variants *seriatim* ; but after careful examination it is clear to me that their significance is constantly misunderstood and greatly exaggerated. I have found very few which really point to a

But it is unnecessary to do that in detail. The whole argument moves within this syllogism: (a) The agreement of Sam. with MT is greater than that of LXX with either; now (b) the more divergent text is the more ancient; therefore (c) LXX represents an earlier phase of Hebrew text than Sam. or MT. The minor premiss (a) will, I believe, be generally conceded; but the major (b) only with the qualification that everything depends on the nature of the divergence; and hence the conclusion (c) remains in suspense.

It is necessary to look very carefully at the presuppositions of this argument, because there are several points at which error is apt to creep in through imperfect realisation of the facts of the case. It can be best stated by attending to examples of *corrupt text* in the various recensions. The MT contains a few undoubted corruptions which are not in

different Hebrew from MT. Apart from cases of inner-Greek corruption, the great bulk of the differences registered are clearly due to the freedom of translators, who did not render word for word (after the manner of Aquila), but often adjusted their rendering to Greek idiom, assimilated expressions and grammatical forms to the context, substituted synonyms, and made slight explanatory additions. Moreover, in the few cases where a divergent Hebrew may reasonably be suspected, there is hardly one in which that Hebrew commends itself as superior to the MT; while there are several where it is distinctly worse; and this is true alike as regards the consonantal text and the vocalisation. Wiener overlooks the crucial consideration that only where the Hebrew basis of the LXX is obviously better than the Hebraeo-Samaritan does it count as evidence that the former is nearer to the original text than the latter. For if the original of the LXX is obviously inferior to the Hebrew, then, while it is certain that the corruption is of more recent date than the separation of the LXX Hebrew from the parent stem, it must always remain doubtful in such cases whether that separation was earlier or later than the severance of Sam. from MT. Hence, on my reading of the facts, Wiener's very restricted argument has failed to establish the thesis that the LXX has a higher Hebrew ancestry than the Sam. Of course I am aware that if even a few superior readings in the LXX can be produced, they are sufficient to prove that it depends in part on an older Hebrew than Sam.; on the other hand the undoubted presence of inferior readings in its Hebrew basis means that we cannot predicate a higher antiquity of its text as a whole, or assume that in neutral readings (i.e., those to which no intrinsic test of value can be applied) the presumption of antiquity is in its favour.

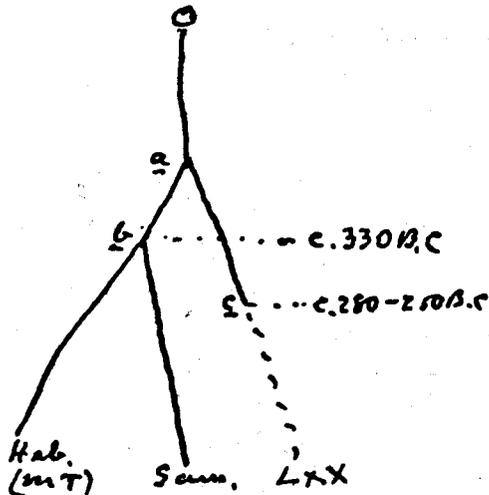
the Sam., and the Sam. contains a greater number from which MT is free. These must be assumed to have crept into either text *after* the time when they went their separate ways; and on the other hand corruptions which appear in both must have come in *before* that time. But in the same way, the joint MT and Sam. text has a few errors which the LXX does not share, just as the LXX contains a number of undoubted corruptions which are not found in the Heb.-Sam.; and again we infer that both these classes of errors are later than the divergence of the Hebrew basis of the LXX from the parent stock of the MT and Sam. But that obviously means that the Hebrew basis of the LXX has branched off from the common stem at a point nearer the origin than the bifurcation of Sam. and MT. The assumed situation, then, may be represented graphically by the accompanying diagram; where the continuous lines denote transmission in Hebrew MSS., and the dotted line the succession of Greek MSS. O stands for the common Hebrew original of all the texts, *a* for the problematical point of separation of the LXX from the Jewish texts; *b* for the separation of MT and Sam.; and *c* for the point at which the Greek translation was made.

Now, to the principle involved in this abstract reasoning it does not seem to me that any exception can be taken. But unless I am greatly mistaken, Wiener goes astray through over-simplification of the very complex phenomena we have to deal with. Divergences of the LXX from the joint Sam. and Jewish text may be of four kinds: (1) They may be readings of the original text which have been lost in the Heb.-Sam., but preserved by the LXX; i.e., they may go back to the line O—*a* in the diagram. Where the LXX has clearly the better text we must assume that its reading falls under this head. (2) They may have originated in Heb. MSS. before the Greek translation was made (in the line *a*—*c*).

(3) They may have come in in the translation itself (at the point *c*), through actual errors, misreading of the Hebrew, non-literal renderings, explanatory additions, and so on.

(4) In the subsequent history of the Greek text of the LXX (below *c*). I have pointed out in the last note that in my view Wiener makes no sufficient allowance for changes of the class (3). I have now to add that he does not seem to recognise at all the existence of class (2). He appears to fancy that, when he has proved that a reading of the LXX rests on a Hebrew variant, he has recovered a text which goes back to the point *a*, where the Hebrew of the LXX parted from the other line of descent; and thus identifies the text of a

Hebrew MS. of say 250 B.C. with the text common to all MSS. at the unknown period when the LXX is believed to have broken away from the joint transmission. Whereas it is only where the LXX has preserved the intrinsically



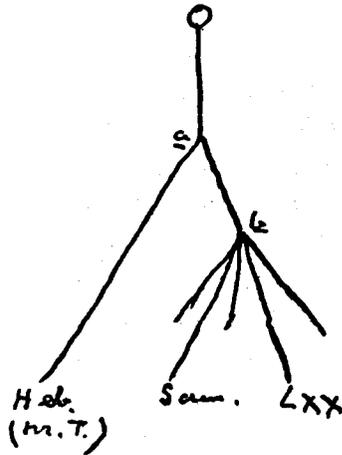
superior text that such inferences are legitimate. Perhaps the fallacy lies in thinking of the LXX as representing an *older text* than Sam., because its Hebrew basis started on its separate course at an earlier time. It is surely superfluous to remark that the Heb.-Sam. diverged from LXX just at the same time as LXX diverged from Heb.-Sam.; and that it is sheer inconsequence to think of the one text as

older than the other on this account. It would be nearer the purpose to consider that, properly speaking, all texts are of equal antiquity ; that is to say, if we have three contemporary MSS., a Greek, a Samaritan, and a Jewish, the presumption is that each will have been the result of as many successive copyings as the others, and that consequently all have been equally liable to the accidents of transcription. As all living men trace their ancestry to Adam, so all MSS. of the Pentateuch descend alike from the edition of the Law promulgated in the fifth century ; and the fact that the hypothetical original of the LXX dates from an earlier period than the original of the Sam. no more guarantees the superiority of the *actual* text of the LXX to the text of Sam. than a man's having an unknown ancestor in the time of the Conqueror would give him precedence over another man who had a known ancestor in the reign of Charles II. There is, in fact, no question of relative antiquity, but only of relative soundness, of text ; and that can only be determined by internal considerations. If it were true that the LXX is on the whole a better text than the Heb.-Sam., and that the latter differs from it mainly in the way of explicable corruption, then we should certainly conclude that the LXX's text stands nearer to the original than that of Sam. or MT. But since the case is notoriously otherwise—the readings peculiar to the LXX being in most cases inferior to those common to Sam. and MT, and therefore corruptions of a text faithfully preserved by them—the inference is irresistible that the text of the LXX, whatever the age of its archetype, has undergone degeneration, either in Hebrew or Greek MSS., since it parted from the common tradition.

With that explanation, I think that the theory under discussion has a claim to consideration as a feasible solution of an intricate problem ; though there are two reasons that

make one hesitate to accept it. One is that tradition and historical probability are against it. What history tells us is that the Samaritan Pentateuch is older than the Greek translation. If we dismiss the statements of the pseudo-Aristeas as unworthy of credence, there is still a probability that the Jews of Alexandria would not have been content with a version derived from any less authentic source than the official Palestinian text of the time. Still, if it should be found that the relations of the three recensions can only be explained by allowing a higher antiquity to the Hebrew archetype of the LXX, the historical presumption may be overridden by literary evidence, and the view we are considering may have to be adopted. But in the second place we may hesitate to decide that

this is the only or the best solution of the textual problem. We should have to inquire whether the resources of the theory of Gesenius (see p. 99 above), are not adequate to the situation with which we have to deal. In other words, whether the history of the text is not more truly exhibited by *this* diagram than by the one already given: Sam. and LXX being both derived



from an *unofficial* Hebrew recension (*a-b*), which had ramified into an indefinite variety of texts, of which the Sam. and the LXX are the only surviving representatives. The subject is too large to be investigated here; but it is not clear to me that the textual facts might not be explained by some such hypothesis as this; in which case the *common element* of the Sam. and LXX would take us back to a point consider-

ably nearer the original text than the actual adoption of the Pentateuch by the Samaritans. For the present, however, I will assume provisionally that the truth lies in the direction of the hypothesis we have been discussing. Let us see how this will affect the evidence drawn from the Samaritan Pentateuch for the original use of the divine names.

(1) It is obvious that the positive testimony of the combined Sam. and MT remains exactly as before. It remains certain that the names for God as they stand in MT (neglecting the nine variants of the Sam.) were found in authoritative Hebrew MSS. of the fourth century B.C. The only new element is the *assumed* existence of still earlier MSS. in which a different distribution of the names occurred.

(2) We have just seen that this assumption only suggests a bare *possibility* that the LXX has preserved the divine names in a more original form than the MT. Undeniably variations have occurred in one line of transmission or the other, but whether these be due to accident or caprice or deliberate tendency, there is no presumption whatever that they are on the side of the MT. (3) From the point of separation of Sam. and MT, Jewish and Samaritan scribes were exceedingly careful in transcribing the names of God, while we have no evidence that the same accuracy obtained in the Hebrew ancestry of the LXX, as it certainly did not obtain in Greek MSS. Are we to suppose that this fidelity of Jewish scribes to the text dates only from the time when the Pentateuch was taken over by the Samaritans? Is it not a reasonable assumption that great care had been exercised in this respect from the beginning by the central authorities in Jerusalem? (4) It is a legitimate supposition—conceded in fact by Wiener, although we can have no absolute certainty on the point—that the Samaritan Pentateuch was derived from the canonical text of Palestinian

Judaism. On Wiener's theory we are bound to suppose that the MS. used by the LXX translators was not an officially guaranteed MS., but a private codex, distant (it may be) by many removes from the central stream of tradition, though it happened to conserve some readings superior to the standard text. Now it is only the official guardians of a canonised text who are in a position to exercise an effective control over its transmission. We know that the Jewish authorities did not succeed perfectly—although they succeeded much better than the copyists of the LXX—in maintaining a pure text; but it does not follow that their efforts were wholly in vain, or that in what they regarded as an important feature of the text—the divine names—they have not preserved the original readings. (5) The LXX, even in cases where we can be sure that its readings rest on a Hebrew original, would only give us the text of a Hebrew MS. extant at the time of translation. We have no proof that it was then an ancient MS., or that in readings like the divine names, whose intrinsic value cannot be judged of, it did not deviate widely from its assumed ancestor. (6) Finally we have to remember that the LXX in its best established text agrees with the MT in about *five-sixths* of the divine names of Genesis, that the remaining sixth may well be due either to the translators not attaching importance to literal exactness in their work, or to inadvertent changes natural to Greek copyists, and that there is not one which might not have been altered in Greek more readily than in Hebrew; when we consider all this we shall not be disposed to rate very highly the pretensions of the LXX, whatever be the age of its archetype, to have preserved a more reliable recension of the divine names than the MT or the Samaritan.

It is right to say before passing from the subject that neither this theory nor that of Dr. Kennett has been before the minds of critics in investigating the structure of the

Pentateuch: their task has been performed under the influence of a conception of the text springing from the common opinion as to the dates of the LXX and the Sam. So far as I know these theories are both recent arrivals. Now that they have arrived it will be necessary to examine them on their merits, and in the light of all the circumstances of the case. Such an examination is perhaps at the present moment premature. We shall do well to await the publication of a critical edition of the Sam. before committing ourselves to a final judgment upon them. The general acceptance of either view would certainly destroy or weaken the confidence hitherto felt in the Sam. as the earliest witness to the Hebrew text, and would to that extent affect the textual argument for the documentary theory. Even in that event, however, it seems to me that the considerations advanced above are sufficient to dispel the notion that by following the track of the LXX we shall get nearer the original distribution of the divine names than if we trust the Massoretic text.

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