

STUDIES IN  
THE SEPTUAGINT

*By*

JAMES JEFFREY, M.A., D.D.



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*THE POETICAL BOOKS*

BY

JAMES JEFFREY, M.A., D.D.

TRINITY UNITED FREE CHURCH, POLLOKSHIELDS

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## PREFACE

THE Septuagint is an invaluable commentary on the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In not a few instances it gives a more correct rendering of the Hebrew text than either the Authorized or the Revised Version of the English Bible.

The present writer has devoted much of his leisure time to the comparison of the Septuagint with the Hebrew Textus Receptus (T.R.), or Massoretic Text (M.T.), and as far as he has gone has carefully marked every passage in which the texts differ. These differences vary in the several books. In the Pentateuch the Septuagint follows very closely the M.T. In other books the Septuagint introduces texts wanting in the M.T., or omits texts found in the M.T., *e.g.* 1 Sam. (LXX. 1 Kings) xvii. 12-31. The arrangement in certain books differs very materially, *e.g.* Ex. xxxvi.-xl., and many of the prophecies of Jeremiah. Special attention has been given by the writer to the Poetical Books

of the Old Testament. The first of these papers, that on the Book of Job, appeared in *The Expository Times*, November 1925, and is reprinted by the kind permission of the Editors. Only a few of the more important variant readings are noticed in these papers, and may prove interesting to scholars of the Old Testament. The writer owes not a little to kind suggestions offered by Professor J. E. McFadyen of the Glasgow United Free Church College, and for his kindness in revising the proof sheets.

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# STUDIES IN THE SEPTUAGINT THE POETICAL BOOKS

## I

### THE BOOK OF JOB

THE oldest Hebrew MS. of the Old Testament dates from A.D. 916, and contains the so-called Massoretic (traditional) Text. This represents the standard text arrived at by the labours of Jewish scribes carried on for centuries, and it forms the basis of the Authorized and Revised Versions of our English Bible.

The oldest translation of the Hebrew text is the Septuagint, and it forms an invaluable aid to the study of the Hebrew text. Scholars are at variance as to the origin of this translation. In all probability it was made to meet the desire of the Jews, scattered over the whole world after the Exile, to possess their sacred books in a form intelligible to them. The conquest of the world by Alexander brought

it under Greek influence, and Greek became the universal language. Hence the Septuagint.

It is now pretty generally agreed that the translation was made at Alexandria, much frequented by Jews. It was the work of a number of translators, and was spread over many years, from the third to the first century B.C., and was in circulation in the time of our Lord and His Apostles.

The Septuagint follows the Hebrew much more closely in some books than in others. This is particularly the case with the Pentateuch, while various readings abound in the Septuagint translation of First Samuel, the Poetical Books, and Jeremiah. The more closely one examines the Septuagint, the more it becomes evident that the translators were following MSS. differing in many passages from the Massoretic Text, and that some of the translators possessed a more accurate knowledge of Hebrew than others.

We may, I think, assign most of the various readings in the Septuagint to one or other of the following headings :

*First.*—Additions to the Hebrew text, of which it may be sufficient to note Josh. xxiv. 33, 3 Kings xi. 22, xii. 24. In the Book of Esther, the Introduction, iii. 13, iv. 17, viii. 13, x. 3.

*Second.*—Passages in the Hebrew text omitted in the Septuagint. To mention only a few of the longest: the Septuagint omits 1 Sam. xvii. 14-32,

xviii. 2-6; 3 Kings iv. 17-26, ix. 15-26, xiv. 1-21.

*Third.*—The order of chapters and verses differs in the Septuagint from that of the M.T. A notable instance of this occurs in Ex. xxxvi.-xl. and in Jeremiah. The Septuagint places chs. xlvi.-li. between ch. xxv. 13 and ver. 15. This is noticeable in the arrangement of the Psalms. The Septuagint places x. 1-18 in Ps. ix. at the close, and inserts Ps. xi. as x., etc.

*Fourth.*—Differences due to mistaking letters of the Hebrew alphabet closely resembling each other, and owing to the absence of vowel points in the Hebrew. Besides the usual confusion of ד and ר, ז and ו, there are possibilities of confusion between ב and נ; ג and פ; ה, ח, and ט; ס and ש; ך and final ך; ן and ן. To take one or two examples. In Isa. ix. 8 the Hebrew reads "the Lord sent a word to Jacob," the Septuagint reads "the Lord sent death to Jacob," reading דָּבָר, "death," for דְּבָר, "word." In Ex. vi. 16 the Hebrew reads *Gershon*, and the Septuagint *Gedson*, mistaking the ר for ג.

*Fifth.*—Differences due to imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew on the part of the Greek translators. In Num. xxi. 1 the Hebrew reads *derech ha'atharim* (perhaps for *battarim*), "the way of the spies." The Septuagint, unable to translate the word for "spies," simply transcribes the Hebrew word in Greek char-

acters, *'Αθαρείν*. In Judg. i. 19, where the Hebrew has *rechebbh*, "chariots," the Septuagint reads *Rechab*, again transcribing the Hebrew word in Greek characters. A somewhat more striking example of this ignorance of Hebrew on the part of the translators occurs in 1 Chron. iv. 22, the last words rendered in Hebrew *haddevarim 'attikim*, "ancient things," appear in the Septuagint as *'Αβεδηρίν, 'Αθουκιύμ*.

*Sixth*.—Most of the differences between the two versions may be traced to the use of the MSS. used by the editors of the M.T. and the translators of the Septuagint. Abundant evidence of this will be found as we compare the M.T. of the Book of Job with the Septuagint.

#### VARIOUS READINGS IN THE BOOK OF JOB

Of these I have marked upwards of eleven hundred, not including changes in the moods and tenses of the verbs, and in confusion of the first and third personal pronouns. Many scholars regard the Septuagint as following a more correct text than the M.T., and furnishing interesting details of Job, his family and friends.

Following the classification of the various readings adopted in dealing with the Septuagint generally, I notice :

*First*.—Additions to the Hebrew text, of which I can only mark a few of the most striking. The

Septuagint adds in i. 5 the words, “a calf for the *sins of their souls*,” suggesting a somewhat late date for the Book itself. In ii. 9 there is a remarkable addition to the remonstrance of Job’s wife. She represents Job as having said, “I will endure a little longer, expecting the hope of deliverance,” for behold—she goes on—“thy remembrance is banished from the earth, the sons and daughters of the pains and labours of my womb, for whom I laboured in vain with sorrow. And thou thyself sittest down on corruption, spending nights in the open air, and I wandering with a servant from place to place, and from house to house, expecting when the sun sets that I may rest from my toils and pains which now beset me; but speak some word against the Lord and die.” In the appendix to the Book, Job himself is described as the ruler in Edom, testifying to the high place he held among his contemporaries. In xxx. 4 the Hebrew reads, “They pluck saltwort by the bushes, and the roots of the broom are their meat,” to which the Septuagint adds, “but men dishonourable and vile in want of every good thing, who gnawed the roots of the trees in their great hunger.” The Septuagint adds to xlii. 17, “and it is written that he will rise again with those whom the Lord doth raise,” followed by an appendix which some think of a later date: “This man is interpreted out of the Syriac book as living in the land of Ausis, on the

borders of Idumæa and Arabia, and his name before was Jobab, taking an Arabian wife, and begat a son whose name was Ennon. He himself was the son of Zare<sup>1</sup> the son of Esau and of his mother Bosorra, so that he was the fifth from Abraham. And those are the kings who reigned in Edom, of which country he himself was the ruler; first Balah the son of Beor, and the name of the city was Dennaba, and after Balah Jobab, who is called Job. And after him Asom, who was of the country of Thæman. And after him Adad the son of Barad, who destroyed Midian in the plains of Moab, and the name of his city was Gethaim, and the friends who came to him were Eliphaz of the sons of Esau, king of the Thæmanites, Baldod the king of the Sauchæans, Sophar the king of the Minæans.”

*Second.*—Passages in the M.T. omitted in the Septuagint. These are not very numerous, and do not affect the sense. To take one or two examples, in v. 23 the Septuagint omits “thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field.” In xii. 4 the Septuagint omits “a man that called upon God, and he answered him: the just, the perfect man is a laughing-stock.” In xii. 3 the Septuagint omits “I am not inferior to you: yea, who knoweth not such things as these?” In xvi. 4 it omits “I could join words together against you and shake

<sup>1</sup> See Gen. xxxvi. 33.

mine head at you." In xvii. 3 it omits "Give now a pledge, be surety with me and thyself." In xxiv. 1 it omits "and why do not they which know him see the days?" In xxx. 5 it omits "they are driven both from the midst of men, they cry after them as after a thief," and in xxxv. 3 it omits "that thou sayest, What advantage will it be unto thee, and what profit shall I have more than if I had sinned?"

*Third.*—Differences due to the re-arrangement of chapters and verses. This occurs in ch. xvi., where ver. 8 in the Septuagint is ver. 7 in the M.T., and so on to ver. 23. In ch. xxxv. after ver. 2 the Septuagint omits ver. 3 in the M.T., and ver. 4 in the M.T. became ver. 5 in the Septuagint, and so on to ver. 8; xxxix. 31-35 in the Septuagint is xl. 1-5 in the M.T., and further disarrangement occurs to the end of the chapter; xli. 18-35 in the M.T. altered to xli. 9-25.

*Fourth.*—Differences due to confusing letters of the Hebrew alphabet closely resembling each other, and to the absence of vowel points in the M.T. Thus in xxv. 2 the M.T. has "he maketh peace," and the Septuagint "he maketh all things"—the translators confusing *shalom*, "peace," with a similar word meaning "a full number." In xxviii. 18, the M.T. (R.V.) reads "No mention shall be made of coral"; the Septuagint reads "high things and crystal are not to be mentioned"—

translating *ramoth* by *μετέωρα*, the Hebrew word meaning both "heights" and "coral." In xxxiv. 31 the M.T. reads "I will not offend," and the Septuagint "I will not take a pledge"—*haval* in Hebrew having both meanings. In xxxvi. 14 the M.T. reads "their life perishes among the unclean" (marg. R.V. "or Sodomites"), the Septuagint reads "their life is wounded by messengers (or angels)." *Ḳadesh* means "Sodomite," *Ḳadosh* a holy person, such as an angel.

In xxxvii. 12 we have an instance of the difficulty felt by the Septuagint translators in understanding the Hebrew. The R.V. reads "and it is turned about by his guidance (so they translate the Hebrew *וּבְיָדָיו*), that they may do whatsoever He commandeth them upon the face of the habitable world." Unable to make sense of the Hebrew word "by his guidance," the Septuagint translators rendered in Greek characters, *θεεβουλαθώθ*. Swete in the Cambridge edition of the Septuagint offers several conjectures as to the meaning of the Greek. In xxxix. 13 the R.V. reads "the wing of the ostrich rejoiceth; but are her pinions and feathers kindly?" (in margin "or like the stork's?") The Septuagint translators, unable to make sense of the Hebrew, read *πτέρυξ τερπομένων νεέλασσαι, εὐαν συλλάβη ἀσίδα καὶ νέσσα*. In Job xxxvi. 30 the A.V. reads "Behold he spreadeth his light around him," the Septuagint translators, mistaking the Hebrew *oro*,

“light,” for *odo*, read “he spreadeth ἠδῶ upon it.” In iii. 18 the R.V. reads “taskmaster,” the Septuagint “tax-gatherer”—the Hebrew *noges* having both meanings. The Septuagint translators were apt to make the same kind of mistake in copying their own Greek MS. Thus in xiii. 11, where one MS. translated the Hebrew by *δείνα*, “excellency” (see Matt. xxvi. 18), another writer *δίνα*, “a whirlwind.” In xviii. 12 the R.V. reads “his strength shall be hunger-bitten,” and the Septuagint, mistaking *σθένω* for *στένω*, translates “let him groan for hunger.”

*Fifth.*—Differences due to the use of a different text from that adopted by the M.T. To that I think most of the various readings in the Septuagint may be traced, but it must be remembered that there is much difficulty in ascertaining the true text of the M.T. in the Book of Job, as is evident from the marginal notes of the R.V. and the conflicting views of scholars as to the true text. I can only call attention to a few instances in which the Septuagint differs from the M.T. In Job i. 6 and other passages where the R.V. has “sons of God,” the Septuagint reads “angels or messengers of God.” This lends some countenance to the view that in Gen. vi. 5 the sons of God were angels. It is also to be noticed that Satan is described as an angel or messenger—a view to which St. Paul seems to refer when in 2 Cor. xi. 14 he speaks of Satan as

“transformed into an angel of light.” In Job iv. 21 the M.T. reads “Is not their tent-cord plucked up?” or in the margin of R.V. “Is not their excellency which is in them removed?” In the Septuagint it reads “He blew upon them and they were withered.” In vi. 6 the R.V. reads “the white of an egg” (margin, or “juice of purslain”), the Septuagint reads “trifling or insipid words.” This, says Dr. A. B. Davidson, “is the traditional interpretation and is perhaps the most probable. Others think of some insipid herb and render: the slime or broth of purslain.” In xii. 6 the R.V. reads “the tents of robbers prosper, and they that provoke God are secure, into whose hand God bringeth abundantly,” the Septuagint reads “as many as provoke the Lord: as if there were no examination of them.” In xiii. 28 R.V. reads “like a rotten thing,” Septuagint, “like a wineskin.” In xv. 11 the R.V. reads “are the consolations of God too small for thee? and the word that dealeth gently with thee?” the Septuagint reads “thou hast been scourged for a few of thy sins, thou hast spoken with great arrogance.” In xv. 23 the R.V. reads “He wandereth around for bread, saying, Where is it?” the Septuagint reads “He has been appointed as a prey to the vulture, and he knows in himself that it waits for his corpse.” In xix. 17 R.V. reads “in my mother’s womb,” the Septuagint “concubine.” In xix. 25 f. the

R.V. reads "But I know that my redeemer (margin, 'or vindicator,' Hebrew *goel*) liveth, and that he shall stand up at the last day upon the earth, and after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God," the Septuagint reads "For I know that He is eternal who is about to deliver me, and to raise up on the earth my skin, having endured such things, for those things have been accomplished to me of the Lord." The M.T. suggests the appearance of God as the vindicator, by releasing him from his present affliction, but ver. 27 suggests the larger hope, that the complete vindication will take place after death in a future life. In xx. 17 the R.V. reads "Let him not look on the rivers," the Septuagint "Let him not see the milking of the nomad flocks." In xxii. 12 the R.V. reads "and behold the height of the stars how high they are," the Septuagint reads "and humbled those carried away by insolence." In xxiv. 11 the R.V. reads "they make oil within the walls of these men, they tread their wine-presses, and suffered thirst," the Septuagint reads "they have wickedly laid snares in a narrow place, they know not the righteous way." In xxxiii. 24 the Septuagint alters a well-known and much-quoted passage. The R.V. reads, "deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom," the Septuagint reads "He will hold him that he fall not unto death, he will revive his body as plaster

on the wall, and will fill his bones with marrow." In xxxviii. 36 the Septuagint inserts an interesting addition: the R.V. reads "who hath put wisdom in the inner parts," the Septuagint adds "wisdom in spinning to women, and knowledge of embroidery." Here is another very curious variant reading. In xli. 7 the M.T. as given in R.V. reads "Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons, or his head with fish spears?" the Septuagint reads "one part cleaves fast to another and the air cannot come between them." There is also a discrepancy between the two versions in the age of Job. The M.T. gives it as one hundred and forty years, after the restoration of his fortunes (xlii. 16), and the Septuagint one hundred and seventy years, and gives the full age as two hundred and forty years (xlii. 16).

Enough has been adduced to indicate how valuable a study of the Septuagint is to the student of the Old Testament.

## II

### THE BOOK OF PSALMS

IN an article in *The Expository Times* for November 1924, I called attention to the differences between the LXX translation and the M.T. of the Book of Job, and gave some reasons for the various readings. In this paper I propose to do the same with the Book of Psalms.

It needs only a cursory examination of the two texts to discover that the translators of the LXX were using a text almost identical with the M.T. Indeed, some of the Psalms in the LXX are literal translations of the M.T., with the alteration of scarcely a word, as LXX lxxxv. = M.T. lxxxvi., or LXX lxxxix. = M.T. xc., or LXX cii. = M.T. ciii., and others.

The arrangement of the Psalms differs in the Septuagint. It makes one Psalm of ix. and x. in the M.T., and the order after that is always one number behind that of the M.T. The following table shows the difference in the arrangement in the two versions :

SEPTUAGINT.	MASSORETIC TEXT.
Psalm ix. 22-29.	Psalm x. 1-8.
„ x.-cxii.	„ xi.-cxiii.
„ cxiii. 1-8.	„ cxiv. 1-8.
„ cxiii. 9-12.	„ cxiv. 1-4.
„ cxiv.	„ cxv.
„ cxv.	„ cxvi. 10-19.
„ cxvi.-cxlvi.	„ cxvii.-cxlvii. 11.
„ cxlvii. 1-9.	„ cxlvii. 12-20.

The Septuagint inserts an additional Psalm, No. cli., bearing the curious inscription: "This Psalm is written by David himself, and is outside the number, when he fought with Goliath." In the opinion of some scholars, it is a genuine Psalm of David, but, as the title implies, it was not among the Psalms admitted to the Canon.

In most of the Psalms a title is prefixed both in the LXX and in the M.T. In sixteen cases the title in LXX is not found in the M.T., namely, LXX xxxii. = M.T. xxxiii., LXX xlii. = M.T. xliii., LXX lxx. = M.T. lxxi., LXX xc. = M.T. xci., LXX xcii. = M.T. xciii., LXX xciv. = M.T. xcv., LXX xcv. = M.T. xcvi., LXX xcvi. = M.T. xcvii., LXX xcviii. = M.T. xcix., LXX ciii. = M.T. civ., LXX civ. = M.T. cv., LXX cxiv. = M.T. cxv., LXX cxvii. = M.T. cxviii., LXX cxviii. = M.T. cxix. LXX cxxxvi. = M.T. cxxxvii.

It is not easy to determine when and by whom these titles were first prefixed to the individual Psalms, and what importance is to be attached to

them. That they were, for the most part, in the text from which the compilers of the LXX translated appears from the fact that in both versions the titles agree in more than two-thirds of the Psalms, with only slight variations; the LXX endeavouring to express in Greek some technical musical direction: *e.g.* fifty-three Psalms in the Septuagint bear the inscription, εἰς τὸ τέλος, which may be translated "to the execution"; it is a musical direction, and is the rendering by the translators of a Hebrew word which signifies the Director of the Music, or, as R.V. renders it, "To the Chief Musician." That some of the titles give a fair indication of the authorship of the Psalm, especially those ascribing a Psalm to David, may be admitted; seventy-three of the Psalms are thus assigned to him, of which about fifty are regarded by more conservative scholars as Davidic. On this Professor Robertson Smith remarks that "the Septuagint has the words 'of' or 'to' David in a number of Psalms where the Hebrew has no author's name (Psalms x., xxxiii., xliii., lxvii., xci., xciii.-xcix., civ., cxxxvii.)." . . . At least in four cases our Hebrew Bibles have the name of David where it has no right to be, because that inscription is absent from the great majority of the LXX MSS., which would assuredly have repeated it from the Hebrew text they were translating had it been there. But that some of these

were pure guess-work appears from the title of Psalm cxxxvi. in LXX, ascribing it to David, though on the face of it it is post-exilic. The M.T. Psalm cxxxvii. is without any title. It is doubtful if the translators of the Septuagint were justified in entitling Psalms cxix.—cxxxiii. as Songs of Ascents, titles which are wanting in the M.T.

One difficulty which the Septuagint translators must have felt was that of rendering the musical directions and the names of instruments employed in a liturgical service, of which possibly they had little knowledge.

In comparing LXX with the M.T. in the case of the Psalms, one has not the same difficulty as with the Book of Job. It may be sufficient to call attention to the more marked differences in the readings.

In Ps. ii. 12, LXX translate the M.T. "kiss the son" by "receive instruction," reading *bor*, which means purity, for *bar* in the M.T., which means a son, and giving a different rendering of the Hebrew word "to kiss."

LXX Ps. ix. 23 reads: "For the sinner is approved in the desire of his soul and the unrighteous is blessed," the M.T. (x. 3), "The wicked boasteth of his heart's desire and the covetous renounceth, yea, contemneth the Lord." In xv. 4 the LXX read, "their weaknesses have been multiplied after that they hastened.

I will not assemble their assemblies from blood, nor will I mention their names with my lips," the M.T. reads (xvi. 4): "Their sorrows shall be multiplied who exchange the Lord for another God; their drink-offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take their names upon my lips." In xvii. 35 the LXX have "thy chastisement has thoroughly set me right," for the familiar rendering of the M.T. xviii. 35 "thy gentleness has made me great." The LXX xxxi. 4 have a curious reading, "I was turned into misery by the pricking of a thorn," for the M.T. xxxii. 4, "my moisture was changed as with the drought of summer." The LXX xxxiii. 10 must have been working on another text when they translated "the rich have been impoverished" for the M.T. "the young lions do lack and suffer hunger."<sup>1</sup> The LXX xxxviii. 11 read "spider" for the "moth" of M.T. xxxix. 11. The LXX in xxxix. 6 read "thou hast prepared a body for me," for the rendering of the M.T. xl. 6, "mine ear hast thou opened." Dr. Kennicott suggests that the M.T. originally stood as the LXX translates it, but by a slight alteration of the words became corrupted. In xliii. 19 the LXX, mistaking the M.T. rendering, "jackals," in xliv. 19, for one somewhat resembling it, translate "afflictions." The LXX xliv. 13

<sup>1</sup> This may be due to reading for *kephirim* in the M.T., which means young lions, *kabbirim*, meaning powerful men.

read "all the glory of the daughter of king Esebon is in golden tasselled (garments)," for "the king's daughter within the palace is all glorious."

The LXX xlix. 23 read "there the way in which I will show him the salvation of God" for the M.T. l. 23, "to him that ordereth his conversation aright." There is a poetic touch in the rendering of LXX liv. 14, "who together sweetened our meat," for the M.T. lv. 14, "we took sweet counsel together." In liv. 21, the LXX translator gives a very different reading from M.T. lv. 21. His version is, "they were scattered in his wrath from his presence, and his heart drew nigh," while M.T. has "his mouth was smooth as butter, but his heart was war." LXX lvii. 8 have "as melted wax they shall be destroyed, the fire fell, and they saw not the sun," the M.T. being (lviii. 8), "Let them be as a snail which melteth and passeth away, like the untimely birth of a woman that has not seen the sun." The LXX read in lxvii. 12, "the kings of the forces of the beloved, of one beloved, and to distribute spoils for the beauty of the house," for the M.T. lxviii. 12, "kings of armies, they flee, and she that tarried at home divided the spoil."

LXX lxxii. 7 have "their unrighteousness shall go forth as out of fatness, they have arrived at the disposition of their heart," instead of the M.T. lxxiii. 7, "thine eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart can wish."

In lxxiii. 8, where LXX have "let us make to cease the feasts of the Lord," the M.T. lxxiv. 8 has "they have burned up all the synagogues of the Lord in the land."

In lxxiii. 15 we have an instance of ignorance of the Hebrew on the part of the translator. The M.T. reads "haſt dried up the perennial ſtreams"; *ethan* is the Hebrew word used, but the translator, unable to make sense of it, contents himself with transcribing it in Greek characters—*ἠθάμ*.

In lxxviii. 1 the LXX read "they have made Jerusalem as a watch-lodge in a garden," for M.T. lxxix. 1, "they have laid Jerusalem in heaps." In lxxxiii. 11 LXX and most of the Greek versions translate "the Lord loveth mercy and truth," for M.T. lxxxiv. 11, "the Lord God is a sun and shield." Both the Authorized and the Revised versions gave a translation of lxxxiii. 7 which is not in accordance with the M.T. They read, "They go from strength to strength, every one of them appeareth in Zion before God." But the LXX give the correct reading of M.T., "They shall go from strength to strength, the God of Gods shall be seen in Zion." The verb "they go" is plural, "shall be seen" is singular, so the English translators make the nominative "every one," and ignore the case of "the God in Zion."

In lxxxvi. 7 the LXX read "the dwelling in thee is as of all who rejoice," while the M.T.

lxxxvii. 7 is "they that sing as well as they that dance shall say, All my fountains are in thee." In lxxxvii. 10, LXX have a curious misreading on the part of the translator of the Hebrew word *rephaim*. It is rendered in R.V. "they that are deceased"; mistaking the word as from *rapha*, "to heal," he rendered it in Greek by *ιατροί*. In lxxxix. 5 the LXX have "their years shall be in contempt, in the morning they shall pass away as grass," where M.T. xc. 5 has "thou carriest them away as with a flood, they are as a sleep."

Again, in lxxxix. 9, LXX and almost all the other versions read "our years pass away as those of a spider," for the M.T., "we spend our years as a sigh, or groan." In lxxxviii. 20 we have a curious example of the Greek copyist mistaking one Greek word for another; lxxxix. 20, M.T., reads "with my holy oil I have anointed him," the word for oil being *ἐλαίω*, but the LXX copyist read instead *ἐλέει*, and wrote "with holy mercy I have anointed thee." The LXX have a rather curious translation of xc. 6, reading "from the mischance and from the noonday demon," whereas M.T. has "the destruction that wasteth at noonday"—the allusion being to the belief entertained by some that there were demons who had the power to injure particularly at noonday. Dr. A. Clarke quotes one or two passages from Latin poets to that effect. LXX cix. 3 have "with thee is the dominion in the day

of thy power ; in the splendour of thy saints I have begotten thee from the belly before the dawn," where the M.T. reads (cx. 3), " thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning thou hast the dew of thy youth." The LXX in cxxxviii. 17 read, " thy friends, O God, have been much honoured by me, their powers have been much strengthened," for the M.T. reading (cix. 17), " how precious are thy thoughts unto me, how great is the sum of them."

These examples show how unimportant are the differences between the LXX and the M.T. While scholars are divided in opinion as to the relative importance of the two versions in other books—Sir George Adam Smith in his *Jeremiah*, for instance, often gives the preference to the LXX—I incline to give the preference to the M.T. of the Psalter, for the simple reason that the Greek translator in two or three of the variant passages has failed to understand the Hebrew text.

### III

#### THE BOOK OF PROVERBS

NEXT to the Book of Job, the text of the Book of Proverbs is very difficult to determine, as is evident from the difficulty scholars have felt in making sense out of the text as it stands, and the changes in the text suggested by them. This difficulty was felt by the translators of the Septuagint. "In a number of cases," says Professor Toy, "he offers good suggestions for the restoration of the original Hebrew." It is further revealed by the different arrangement of chs. xxiv., xxv., xxx.

Dr. Adam Clarke remarks, "The Septuagint takes greater liberty with the text than any other version." Several of the additions, as well as the most important changes, the reader will find noticed in the following pages, but to mark them all would require a translation of almost the whole Greek text. Arranging the M.T. in one column and the changes in the LXX, as I have done, one can see at a glance the difference of the readings.

It is somewhat difficult to follow the arrangement

of some of the chapters and verses in the LXX, or to understand on what principle these changes were made, *e.g.* ch. xx. 10-12 in the LXX is xx. 20-22 in M.T.; xx. 13-16 in LXX becomes xx. 10-13 in M.T.; xx. 17-24 in LXX is xx. 23-30 in M.T.; xxiv. 24-37 in LXX is xxx. 1-14 in M.T.; xxiv. 38-39 in LXX is xxx. 23-24 in M.T.; xxv. in the LXX is preceded by xxxi. 1-9 in M.T. One is led to suppose that the Greek translator was following a different text from that adopted by the Massoretic editor. The Greek text contains many additions to the M.T., which the Greek translator has either composed himself, or, as is more probable, has inserted from current collections of Proverbs. We learn from 1 Kings iv. 32 (A.V., = v. 12, M.T.) that Solomon spake three thousand proverbs, and the Greek translator may have drawn from them; and we must always keep in mind the possibility of his following a different MS. from that adopted in the M.T. I can only refer to one or two of these additions.

To M.T. iv. 27 the LXX adds this verse: "For God knows the ways on the right hand, but those on the left hand are crooked; and He will make thy paths straight and will guide thy steps in peace."

There is an interesting addition to vi. 8; the M.T. ends with "food in the harvest," to which the LXX adds, "or go to the bee and learn how

diligent she is, and how earnestly she is engaged in her work, all whose labours kings and private men use for health, and she is desired and respected by all, although weak in strength, she is advanced by honouring wisdom," on which Professor Toy remarks, "the addition comes from a Greek scribe (it is probably a gloss which has got into the text), who thought that the other industrious insect ought not to go unmentioned." Ingenious, indeed, but not convincing.

In 9-12 is another long addition: "If thou be wise for thyself, thou shalt be wise also for thy neighbour; but if thou prove evil, thou shalt bear the evil." The Greek adds other three couplets: "Who stays himself on lies, he feeds the wind, and he will follow after winged birds. The ways of his own vineyard he forsakes, and wanders from the paths of his own husbandry. He passes through a waterless waste, through a land given over to drought, and with his hands he gathers barrenness." On which Toy remarks: "The thought is vigorous, but the paragraph certainly does not belong in this place, nor did it form a part of the original Book of Proverbs, with whose literary style it does not agree."

The LXX in ix. 18 has this addition to the M.T.: "But hasten away, delay not in the place, neither fasten thine eye upon her, for so thou shalt pass through strange water, and do thou abstain from

strange water, and do not drink of another's fountain, that thou mayest live a long time and years of life may be added to thee."

In M.T. xii. 11 the LXX adds to the first clause: "He who indulges in banquets of wine will leave dishonour to his own strongholds."

In M.T. xiii. 13 the LXX adds: "A crafty son will have no good thing, and the affairs of a wise servant will be prosperous, and his path will be directed aright," probably taken from some collection of proverbs. The LXX adds an additional couplet to xiv. 22: "The doers of evil do not understand mercy and truth, but mercy and faith are with the doers of good."

There is a repetition of the same kind where in M.T. xv. 6 the LXX adds, in a slightly different form, another version of the first clause, "In the houses of the righteous is great strength, but the fruits of the ungodly shall perish."

In xv. 27 the LXX adds a verse that appears as xvi. 6 in the M.T.: "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged, and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil."

The LXX inserts an addition to xvii. 6, somewhat difficult to explain, perhaps taken, as we have seen with other verses, from a collection of common sayings: "To the faithful belongs the whole world of wealth, but to the faithless not even an obolus."

The LXX xviii. 22 adds a clause, intended, it has been suggested, to bring the thought of the couplet out more fully: "He who puts away a good wife puts away good, and he who retains an adulteress is both foolish and ungodly."

The LXX xxii. 8 has an addition: "The Lord blesseth a cheerful and bountiful man, and he shall accomplish the folly of his works."

Again in xxii. 9 the LXX has another verse added, "He that gives gifts secures victory and honour, but he takes away the life of them that possess them."

The LXX adds another couplet to M.T. xxii. 15: "Evil ways are before a man, and he does not like to turn away from them, but it is necessary to turn away from a crooked and bad way."

The omissions in the LXX are not so numerous as the additions, and are supposed by some to follow the original Hebrew text more closely. One or two of these are worth noting, *e.g.* M.T. i. 16 is entirely omitted in the LXX, and is regarded as the gloss of a scribe, who thought a reference to the blood-thirstiness of the robber band here appropriate (Toy).

It is difficult to account for the absence of iv. 7 in M.T. from the LXX as it sets forth a truth on which too much importance could not be laid. The R.V. renders it, "Wisdom is the principal

thing, therefore get wisdom, yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding." According to one scholar, it may have stood in the margin of some Hebrew MS., and was incorporated by the Greek translator.

It is not easy to explain unless, as some do, by referring it to scribal errors, why the Greek translator omitted M.T. viii. 29, "When he gave the sea its bounds that the water should not transgress his commandment, when he marked out the foundations of the earth"; or why, in M.T. xi. 4, he should have left out "Riches profit not in the day of wrath, and righteousness delivers from death."

The same reason may be assigned for the omission from the LXX of M.T. xiii. 6, "Righteousness preserves peace where conduct is perfect, but wickedness destroys the sinner." Nor is it easy to account for the omission of M.T. xviii. 24, "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." Ch. xxi. 5 of the M.T. is wanting in the LXX, "The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness, but of every one that is hasty only to want." In the same chapter, verse 18 is wanting in the LXX, "The wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the treacherous cometh in the stead of the upright."

Vv. 1-4 in ch. xvi. of M.T. are omitted in the LXX, which begins ch. xvi. as follows: "Let the heart of man think justly, and his steps may

be rightly directed by God. All the works of the humble man are manifest before God, but the ungodly shall perish in an evil day. Every one that is proud in heart is impure with God, and he that shakes hands with hand unjustly shall not be held innocent. The beginning of a good way is to do just things that are acceptable to God rather than to offer sacrifices. He that seeks the Lord shall find knowledge with righteousness, and they that seek Him rightly shall find peace. All the works of the Lord (are done) with righteousness, but the ungodly is kept for the evil day"; xxii. 6 in the M.T. is wanting in the LXX, and one wonders how such a counsel should have escaped the translator—"Train up a child in the way he is to go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" — or how the same should have happened to a verse like xxiii. 23, "Buy the truth and sell it not; (yea) wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."

#### VARIANT READINGS

It is not easy to account for the difference between the LXX and the M.T. These differences are more numerous than in almost any other book. I can only touch on one or two of the more pronounced variant readings.

In vi. 16 the LXX reads: "For he rejoices in

all that God hates, and is crushed by the impurity of the heart." The M.T. reads: "There be six things which the Lord hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination to him."

The LXX rendering of ix. 18 is, "But he knows that giants (or mighty men) are destroyed by her, and he meets a snare (or perch) of Hades," and has a long addition not found in the M.T., "But hasten away," etc.

In the LXX xi. 25 is rendered, "Every sincere soul is blessed, but a passionate man is not graceful." Evidently the translator was using a different MS. from the M.T., which reads, "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth others shall be watered also himself." There is some sense in the LXX reading of xiii. 23, "The righteous shall pass many years in wealth, but the unrighteous shall be destroyed suddenly"; but there appears little connection between the two clauses in the M.T., "Much food is the tillage of the poor, but there is that is destroyed by reason of injustice."

We miss in LXX xiv. 9 the rendering of the familiar words of the A.V., "Fools make a mock of sin." Instead, it reads, "The houses of the transgressor need cleaning, but the houses of the just are acceptable."

In xvi. 33 the LXX reads, "All things pass into the bosom of the unrighteous, but all righteous

things come from the Lord," instead of the M.T., "The lot is cast into the lap, but the disposing thereof is of the Lord." One can only explain the rendering of LXX xvii. 12, "Care may befall a thoughtful man, but fools will meditate evils," instead of M.T., "Let a bear robbed of her whelps meet a man rather than a fool in his folly," by supposing that the text followed by the one differed from that followed by the other.

The same may be said of the rendering of LXX xvii. 14, "The rule of righteousness giveth force to words, but sedition and strife precede poverty." In the M.T. the passage reads, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water, therefore leave off contention before there be quarrelling."

The M.T. xvii. 19 reads "He loveth transgression that loveth strife. He that raiseth high his gate seeketh destruction." The LXX reads "And the hard-hearted man does not meet with good men." We cannot suppose that the LXX in xviii. 8 had before them the same text as the M.T., "The words of a whisperer are as dainty morsels, they go down to the innermost part of the belly," when they wrote, "Fear casts down the slothful and the souls of the effeminate shall hunger."

As we have seen in page 23, the arrangement of the verses in the LXX ch. xx. differs from that of the

M.T., so that the text of *xx. 11* in the M.T. is somewhat uncertain. It reads "Even a child maketh himself known by his doings, whether his work is pure, or whether it be evil." In the LXX it reads, "A youth with a holy man will be entangled in his devices and his way will be straight."

In *xxiii. 2* the LXX renders "Put to thine hand, knowing that it becomes thee to prepare such things, but if thou be more insatiable," whereas the M.T. reads "Put a knife to thy throat if thou be a man given to appetite."

More marked is the different rendering by the LXX of *xxiii. 31*: "For if thou fix thine eyes on bowls and drinking vessels, then thou shalt afterwards walk more naked than a pestle." The M.T. has "Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it goeth down smoothly (or moves itself aright)."

The rendering of M.T. *xxiii. 27*, "A whore is a deep ditch; and a strange woman is a narrow pit," is in the LXX, "A strange house is like a pierced wine jar, and a strange well is narrow."

We are all familiar with the words of M.T. *xxv 11*: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver (or filigree work)," but we scarcely recognize them in the LXX as "A golden apple

in a sapphire necklet, so is it to speak a wise word." Many attempts have been made to give a better rendering to the M.T. version, but none is satisfactory, the Hebrew *tappuach* expressing a variety of fruits. The same difficulty is felt with the exact meaning of the words translated in the R.V. "baskets of silver (or of filigree work)."

Another difficult passage is found in M.T. xxvi. 8, "As a bag of gems in a heap of stones (or as one that bindeth fast a stone in a sling), so is he that gives honour to a fool." It is rendered in the LXX, "He that bindeth fast a stone in a sling is like one that gives glory to a fool."

Some think that the Vulgate comes nearer the writer's meaning, "He who gives honour to a fool is like one who throws a stone on Mercury's heap."

The M.T. rendering of xxvii. 27, "And there will be goat's milk enough for thy food and for the food of thy household, and maintenance for thy servants," becomes in the LXX, "My son, thou hast a helpful word from me, for thy life and the life of thy servants."

In xxviii. 2 the LXX rendering differs widely from the M.T., which reads, "For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof, but by men of understanding and knowledge the state shall be prolonged." The LXX rendering is, "Through the sin of the ungodly, disputes arise, but a clever man will quench them."

These examples reveal how far the LXX is from being a correct translation of the M.T. Still, it is believed that in some passages it gives a better expression to what was in the mind of the Massoretic scribe.

## IV

### THE BOOK OF ECCLESIASTES

THE Book of Ecclesiastes is regarded by most scholars as one of the most recent additions to the Old Testament Canon. The date generally assigned to it is between the second and first centuries B.C. Now the LXX, in part at least, is believed to date from about the same period, and that may account for the close adherence to the M.T.

The translator was evidently acquainted with the Hebrew, and adheres so closely to the original, especially in the order followed, that one scholar remarks, "This order is so strict that, with hardly an exception, it would be possible to print the Greek text as it stands in an interlinear translation."

There are few variant readings of any importance.

Of the additions in the LXX may be noticed: in ii. 16, "But the fool speaks of his abundance." In vii. 15 it adds "concerning speech."

The omissions are not numerous or of much importance.

In i. 1 the LXX omits "King of Israel," possibly

exercising the critical faculty in rejecting Solomon as the author of the Book.

The Septuagint translation of iii. 21 seems to give the true rendering of the Hebrew. The A.V. reads the Hebrew הָעֹלֶה, the feminine participle with the article; but the Septuagint renders the same text, with only a slight difference in the interrogative pointing. Instead of הָעֹלֶה it reads הֶעֱלֶה, with the participle ה before a guttural (Davidson, *Hebrew Grammar*, xlix. 2 (2)) and translates εἰ ἀναβαίνει, "whether it goes upward." The same change is noticeable in the following clause, where the A.V. reads the Hebrew הַיֵּרֶדֶת as the feminine participle with the participle of יָרַד, "the breath that goeth downward." The Septuagint, however, reads הֶיֵרֶדֶת (εἰ καταβαίνει), "whether it goeth down," and in this it is followed by the R.V.<sup>1</sup>

In ix. 9 the LXX omits "All the days of thy vanity," twice repeated in the M.T., it being easy in copying to remember the words used in the same connection.

There is little to be noted of the changes in the text.

In viii. 10 the slight difference is due to the arrangement of the words. The LXX reads "Then I saw the ungodly borne to the tomb from one holy place, and they departed and were praised in the city because they had acted thus." The

<sup>1</sup> For this I am indebted to Professor J. E. McFadyen.

R.V. reads "And withal I saw the wicked buried, and they came to the grave, and they that had done right went away from the holy place, and they were forgotten in the city."

In ii. 20 the LXX reads "And I turned to set my heart apart in all my labour where I laboured under the sun," while the M.T. reads "Therefore I turned about to cause my heart to despair concerning all the labour wherever I had laboured under the sun."

## NOTES ON THE LXX VERSION OF THE SONG

SCHOLARS are divided as to the date of its appearance—some are inclined to place it early, when Israel was still a separate kingdom, and others considerably later than the exile, because of the number of foreign words used by the writer. Whichever view is adopted does not affect the relation of the LXX to the M.T. Unlike the LXX version of Ecclesiastes, that of the Song differs in many respects from the M.T., and was evidently the work of a scribe with a somewhat imperfect knowledge of Hebrew. The M.T. contains many words only found in the Song or in one other book of the Canon. Persian and Indian words occur, adding to the difficulties of the Greek translator.

### VARIANT READINGS

In i. 18 the Hebrew word *Thur* means both a turtle dove and a string of pearls. The R.V. adopts the former, the LXX the latter, only rendering it “plaits of hair.”

In iv. 4, unable to translate the Hebrew *Thalpiyyoth*,

an armoury, the scribe contents himself with rendering it in Greek characters, *θαλπιώθ*.

In v. 14 the M.T. reads "His hands are rings of gold with beryl," Hebrew *battarshish*, and the translator contents himself with rendering it in Greek characters, *θαρσίς*.

In iv. 8 the LXX translates the Hebrew *amanah* as faithfulness, the R.V. as a river.

In vi. 3 M.T. vi. 4 the M.T. reads "Thou art beautiful as Tirzah." The LXX has "beautiful as pleasantness," the meaning of the Hebrew proper name.

In vii. 1 the M.T. reads "O prince's daughter," but the Greek translator, either not knowing the meaning of the word or mistaking it for a proper name, renders it *Ναδόβ*.

In v. 11 the LXX, unable apparently to translate the Hebrew word for pure gold (*paʒ*), rendered it in Greek characters, *κεφάζ*.

In v. 13 the LXX reads "His cheeks are as bowls of spice," and the M.T. reads as "banks of sweet herbs."

In i. 10 the LXX renders "Thy cheeks are beautiful as turtle doves," the M.T. as "plaits of hair," the Hebrew *thur* having both meanings.

These are but a few examples of the variant readings so numerous in the LXX, revealing the difficulty the translator had in rendering the Hebrew into Greek.



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