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# Aids to Bible Study

## The Septuagint—Its History

By FREDERICK W. DANKER

“GENTLEMEN, have you a Septuagint?” Ferdinand Hitzig, eminent Biblical critic and Hebraist, used to say to his class. “If not, sell all you have, and buy a Septuagint.” Current Biblical studies reflect the accuracy of his judgment. This and the next installment are therefore dedicated to the task of helping the Septuagint come alive for Biblical students who may be neglecting its contributions to the total theological picture, for clergymen who have forgotten its interpretive possibilities, and for all who have just begun to see how new things can be brought out of old.

### THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS

The Letter of Aristeas, written to one Philocrates, presents the oldest, as well as most romantic, account of the origin of the Septuagint.<sup>1</sup> According to the letter, Aristeas is a person of considerable station in the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285—247 B. C.). Ptolemy was sympathetic to the Jews. One day he asked his librarian Demetrius (in the presence of Aristeas, of course) about the progress of the royal library. Demetrius assured the king that more than 200,000 volumes had been catalogued and that he soon hoped to have a half million. He pointed out that there was a gaping lacuna in the legal section and that a copy of the Jewish law would be a welcome addition. But since Hebrew letters were as difficult to read as hieroglyphics, a translation was a desideratum.

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<sup>1</sup> The letter is printed, together with a detailed introduction, in the Appendix to H. B. Swete's *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (Cambridge, 1914, and various editions). Paulus Wendland's edition in the Teubner series (Leipzig, 1900) provides *Testimonia* and detailed indexes. Henry G. Meecham's *The Letter of Aristeas* (Manchester, 1935) employs Swete's text. His copious annotations and study of the vocabulary and grammar are very helpful. The letter has frequently been translated. Among others see H. T. Andrews' translation in R. H. Charles' *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* (Oxford, 1913), II, 83—122.



The king determined to write at once to the high priest in Jerusalem. At this point Aristeas (after first buttering up the royal bodyguard) suggested that it might be in somewhat poor taste to approach the high priest on this matter when so many of his countrymen were slaves in Egypt. With a silent prayer that Ptolemy might see the light he waited for the king's reply. Ptolemy's social consciousness cast the deciding vote, and at a considerable depletion of the royal treasury, plus a bonus to his bodyguard for seconding such a sensible proposal (the text is somewhat obscure at this point), he ordered the emancipation of more than 100,000 slaves.

Demetrius suggested that the king write to the high priest and ask him to send six elders from each of the twelve tribes in Israel. In this way the translation would represent the consensus of all Israel and be completely authoritative. The king accompanied his request with lavish presents for the temple. The embassy arrived in due time, with Aristeas in convenient attendance. After a long discourse on Jewish diet the high priest Eleazar bade farewell to the 72 men he had selected for the task. On their arrival the king could scarcely wait to see the sacred books, and when they were opened he did obeisance about seven times. For a solid week the king wined and dined his guests and interlarded the festivities with a game of 72 questions for 7 nights running. At this point Aristeas is suddenly appalled by the fact that Philocrates' historical credulity may have been subjected to considerable strain by the unusual character of the narrative, and so he is quick to reassure his friend of his delicate concern for historical data, despite the fact that some of his readers may ungraciously question the veracity of these marvelous accounts.

Having relieved himself of this touching testimony to his historical sensitivity, Aristeas proceeds to recount how the king, duly impressed with the intellectual qualifications of the translators, but somewhat disillusioned about the intelligence of his own courtiers, after a three-day interval dispatched the translators to the island of Pharos. There he lodged them in a building where they might enjoy peace and quiet. They set to their translation task, and after repeated comparison of notes and collation of their various renderings, within 72 days they presented the king with a version which



expressed their unanimous accord. Demetrius then summoned all the Jews to the island to hear the reading of the translation. The usual curse was pronounced on anyone who might display the temerity to tamper with the contents. The king in turn was impressed with the version, and the elders were sent on their ways with a caliph's ransom. In a final stab at historical rectitude, Aristaeas concludes: "And so, Philocrates, you have the account, exactly as I promised you. For it is my opinion that you enjoy such things as these much more than the books of the mythologists." With a promise of more of the same Aristaeas takes leave of his trusting reader.

Written about 125 B. C. the Letter of Aristaeas is useful despite its patent inventions. For one thing, it helps us trace the name traditionally ascribed to our Greek translation of the Old Testament. Just how the change from 72 to 70 came about is shrouded in mystery, but the Latin term, strictly speaking, is not accurate. Secondly, the letter advances no claims of inspiration for the version. As a corrective therefore of later romantic embellishments the letter is invaluable. Philo, for example, asserts that a comparison of the Greek version with the original will show that the former is of divine origin.<sup>2</sup> Justin Martyr (*Apology*, 31) does not augment particular confidence in his knowledge of Septuagintal origins by having Ptolemy send to King Herod for the translators. Irenaeus (*Eus. H. E. V 8*) says Ptolemy had the men isolated and each translated the whole, and when they came together all were in agreement. Evidently the venerable father also anticipated reader resistance and hastens to add that this should not be considered surprising, seeing that God inspired Ezra to rewrite the Scriptures after they had been lost during the Babylonian Captivity. Epiphanius, whose hobby was the collection of ancient heresies and sundry other ecclesiastical gossip, blandly assures us that the interpreters were shut up two by two and labored under lock and key. In the evening they were taken in 36 different boats to dine with Ptolemy.

<sup>2</sup> In his version of the translation undertaking he writes: Καθάτερον ἐνθουσιῶντες προεφήτευσον οὐκ ἄλλα ἄλλοι, τὰ δ' αὐτὰ πάντες ὀνόματα καὶ ῥήματα ὡσπερ ὑποβολέως ἐκάστοις ἀοράτως ἐνηχοῦντος. ". . . they became, as it were, possessed and, under inspiration, wrote, not each several scribe something different, but the same word for word, as though dictated to each by an invisible prompter." *De vita Mosis*, II, 7 (140) Loeb ed. The entire account is worth reading for purposes of comparison.



They slept in 36 different bedrooms. But when the 36 copies of each book of the Bible were examined, behold, they agreed perfectly. Even the lacunae and additions to the LXX are marvelously explained.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the Letter of Aristeas corrects any notion that in the third century B. C. or later a monumental concerted effort was put forth to produce a Greek version of the whole Old Testament. The letter specifically mentions the Law. A warning is in order, then, not to speak too glibly about *the* Septuagint.

### THE SEPTUAGINT AND OTHER GREEK VERSIONS

From the Prolog to Ecclesiasticus we can safely gather that a Greek version now termed the Septuagint was substantially complete by the end of the second century B. C. Scholars are generally agreed that the Pentateuch was completed in the first half of the third century B. C.; the "prophets," including the Latter and the Former Prophets, c. 200 B. C.; the Hagiographa, near the turn of the Christian era.<sup>4</sup>

At first the Septuagint was designed to aid the Jews in the Dispersion. Later on, when the Christians adopted the translation and used it with an apparent disregard for verbal correspondence with the Hebrew text, so that the variations in the text were in direct proportion to the number of copies in circulation, the Jews took measures to correct the Greek tradition and bring it more in line with their own established canon of the Scriptures.

The first of these "private" attempts was made by Aquila. Thanks to a Cairo Genizah, or rubbish room, we now can tell how Aquila approached Gen. 1:1—5:2; III Kingd. 21 (MT [Masoretic text] 20): 9-17; IV Kingd. 23:12-27; and some of the psalms.<sup>5</sup> According to Jerome (commentary on Is. 7:14), Aquila was the student of Aqiba. This Aqiba was vitally concerned about the minutiae of the Hebrew text and was able to transform the smallest prepositions into mountainous theological propositions. To aid in

<sup>3</sup> Migne, *PG*, 43, cols. 249—255.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Bleddyn J. Roberts, *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff, 1951), p. 116.

<sup>5</sup> See Grenfell-Hunt, *The Amberst Papyri* (London, 1900), i, cited in Roberts, p. 120.



the controversies with the Christians, Aquila published his extremely literal Greek version of the Hebrew Bible. His anti-Christian bias is apparent from such renderings as ἠλειμμένος instead of Χριστός in Dan. 9:26 and νεᾶνις for ἡ παρθένος in Is. 7:14.

### *Theodotion*

About 50 or 60 years after Aquila's translation, Theodotion undertook a revision of the Septuagint, based on manuscripts of the Hebrew Old Testament that seem to have been more closely allied to the MT than those employed by the translators of the Septuagint. For this reason Theodotion's Book of Job is one sixth longer than the Septuagint version, and his version of Daniel is preferred in many editions of the Septuagint. Theodotion's renderings are also preferred by the writer of the Apocalypse. Its absence in the Cairo Geniza as well as its popularity in Christian circles would suggest a Christian origin.

### *Symmachus*

Not much is known of Symmachus' version of the Old Testament in Greek. Only a few fragments have survived in Origen's fragmentary *Hexapla*. But we can gather that his version aimed at stylistic excellence and articulation of Jewish belief to Jews as well as non-Jews. As a result of his Rabbinic exegetical training we find Symmachus softening or even eliminating many of the anthropomorphisms of the Old Testament.

### *Origen's "Hexapla"*

The outstanding Septuagint scholar of antiquity is Origen, b. A. D. 185 or 186 in Alexandria. Origen found the textual tradition of the Greek text of the Old Testament a mass of confusion. Taking the standardized Hebrew Bible as his basis, he proceeded to attempt to bring the manuscript tradition into harmony. The result was his *Hexapla*, or Six-in-one. He began the work in A. D. 240 while heading the school of Caesarea. He lined up six texts in parallel columns. The first column contained the Hebrew text. It was the text accepted by the Jews themselves and is closely allied to that employed by the Masoretes. The second column contained a transcription of the Hebrew text in Greek characters. The chief value of the remains of this column is the contribution



it makes to study of the pronunciation in vogue at Origen's time as compared with the vocalization suggested by the Masoretes. The third and fourth columns included the versions authored by Aquila and Symmachus. In the fifth column Origen edited the Septuagint text. Forgetting that the Hebrew text behind the Septuagint was undoubtedly different from his contemporary Hebrew text, he set forth to bring the manuscript tradition in line with the standard Hebrew text. Divergent renderings were set aside; Hebrew texts not included in the Greek version were introduced, supplemented with Theodotion's renderings; and Greek texts without a corresponding Hebrew text were plainly marked. In editing the text he used the Aristarchian signs (so termed from Aristarchus, the editor of Homer, c. 200 B. C.). Additions to the Greek text were marked with an asterisk ( $\cdot\dot{X}\cdot$ ); desirable deletions from the Greek text—those which had no Hebrew counterpart—were marked with an obelisk ( $\text{—}$ ,  $\text{—}$ , or  $\text{—}$ ). Passages so marked with an  $\cdot\dot{X}\cdot$  or an  $\text{—}$  at the beginning were terminated with a metabolos ( $\text{/}$ ,  $\text{./}$ , or  $\text{X}$ ).<sup>6</sup> A sample of Origen's work may be seen in Job 32:11 ff. When the Greek text did not follow the Hebrew text, he rearranged the passages. In the Greek text of Proverbs he was content to note the dislocation with diacritical marks. Theodotion's version went into the sixth column. Other versions, called Quinta, Sexta, and Septima, have also been identified.

It was inevitable, perhaps, that the bulk of Origen's *Hexapla* should have been lost.<sup>7</sup> The most complete collection of the remains is still F. Field's two-volume work, *Origenis hexaplorum quae supersunt . . . fragmenta* (Oxford, 1875), but newly discovered fragments, such as that of Psalm 22 in all six columns, mentioned by Kenyon,<sup>8</sup> as well as other considerations, demand a revision of this valuable work. Thanks, however, to Pamphilus and Eusebius, who issued separately the fifth column containing the Septuagint text, Origen's labors filtered down to succeeding

<sup>6</sup> The signs are discussed at length in Swete's *Introduction*, pp. 69—72, and with less accuracy by Epiphanius, *De mens. et pond.*, Migne, PG, 43, cols. 237 ff.

<sup>7</sup> The general appearance of the *Hexapla* may be seen from Swete's treatment of a Milan fragment containing Ps. 45(46):1-3 (*Introduction*, pp. 62, 63).

<sup>8</sup> Sir Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (rev. ed. A. W. Adams; New York, 1958), p. 106.



generations. At first his diacritical marks were retained, but gradually they were sloughed off and together with them the portions of the Greek text that had no corresponding Hebrew.

#### *Other Recensions*

According to Jerome, there were other recensions. In addition to that of Origen and Pamphilus he mentions the recensions made by Hesychius and Lucian. The former cannot be clearly identified. It is possible that he may be the same Hesychius mentioned by Eusebius (H. E. viii 13). If so, he was a bishop in Egypt and died a martyr's death in 311. Whether the Hesychian text was an independent version, as A. Sperber suggests,<sup>9</sup> or a recension of existing texts, is shrouded in uncertainty. Quotations found in Egyptian Fathers, including Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444), may well represent an Hesychian tradition.

The recension made by Lucian of Samosata, a presbyter from Antioch who died a martyr's death in 311 or 312, is better known. Field from a study of the marginal notes in the hexaplaric version, and Lagarde by a comparison of manuscripts, independently established its existence. The recension appears to feature grammatical emphases and stylistic effect.

#### MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED EDITIONS OF THE SEPTUAGINT

From this survey of ancient Greek versions it should be apparent that the recovery of a pure Septuagint text is next to impossible. Jerome complained:

Alexandria and Egypt praise Hesychius as the author of their Septuagint. Constantinople as far as Antioch accepts that of Lucian the martyr. The provinces between these areas read the Palestinian codices edited by Origen and published by Eusebius and Pamphilus. The whole world is at odds with itself over this threefold tradition.<sup>10</sup>

Alexandria et Aegyptus in Septuaginta suis Hesychium laudat auctorem. Constantinopolis usque ad Antiochiam Luciani martyris exemplaria probat. Mediae inter has provinciae Palaestinos codices legunt, quos ab Origene elaboratos Eusebius et Pamphilus vulgaverunt: totusque orbis hac inter se trifaria varietate compugnat.

<sup>9</sup> "The Problems of the Septuagint Recensions," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 54 (1935), 73—92.

<sup>10</sup> *Contra Rufinum*, II, 522 (Migne, *PL*, 23, col. 471).



The texts we meet therefore are always, to some degree, mixed texts, and it is the self-imposed task of Septuagint scholars to isolate the regional texts with a view to breaking the barrier that separates a more fluid tradition from the later attempts to provide a more uniform or standard text.

The text of the Greek translation of the Old Testament ordinarily found in printed editions represents in the main the text of one or more of the three great uncials, Codex Sinaiticus (<sup>N</sup> or S), Codex Alexandrinus (A), and Codex Vaticanus (B). Codex S was discovered by Tischendorf in 1844 and includes Gen. 23 and 24; Num. 5—7; I Chron. 9:27—19:17; II Esdras (i. e., Ezra-Neh.) 9:9—23:31; Esther; Tobit; Judith; I Macc.; IV Macc.; Is.; Jer.; Lam. 1:1—2:20; Joel; Obadiah; Jonah; Nahum to Malachi; Psalms; Prov.; Eccl.; Song of Songs; Eccclus.; Job. The manuscript is usually dated in the fourth century and evidences either an Egyptian or Caesarean text.

Codex Alexandrinus was written in the first half of the fifth century after Christ. Except for a few lacunae, the majority of which are in the N. T., it contains the entire Bible, including the Apocrypha. In the Old Testament the following portions are missing: Gen. 14:14-17; 15:1-5, 16-19; 16:6-9; I Kingd. 12:18 to 14:9; Pss. 49(MT 50):20—79(80):11.

Both Codex S and Codex A are early witnesses to the Septuagint text, but the queen of the uncials is Codex Vaticanus (B), which in the main monitors the text of current editions of the Greek Old Testament. Coming from the fourth century, some time after A. D. 367, the manuscript includes all of the Bible, except Gen. 1:1 to 46:28; II Kingd. 2:5-7, 10-13; Ps. 105(106):27—137(138):6 and in the New Testament Heb. 9:14 to the end. The Prayer of Manasses and the Books of Maccabees were not included in this manuscript.

The frontiers of Septuagint tradition have been pushed still farther back by recent papyrus finds. The Chester Beatty Papyri discovered about 1930 contain portions of seven manuscripts of the Old Testament and represent, next to the Dead Sea Scrolls, the most spectacular find since Sinaiticus. These were edited by Sir Frederic Kenyon in *The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri*, Fasc.



1—7, 1933—37. Since Vaticanus and Sinaiticus lack all except a few verses of Genesis, the inclusion of Gen. 9:1—44:22 in these papyri is a most welcome resource.<sup>11</sup>

Unexplored territory is still represented by remains of a Greek text of the Minor Prophets written on leather, found in August 1952 by Bedouins south of Khirbet Qumran. The fragments cover portions of Micah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Zechariah. In the opinion of C. H. Roberts, which was rendered at the request of Paul Kahle, the scroll is to be dated between 50 B. C. and A. D. 50.<sup>12</sup> D. Barthelemy, the first to our knowledge to discuss the discovery in some detail, had proposed a date near the end of the first century. Barthelemy concludes that the version presented by these fragments is a recension rather than an independent text.<sup>13</sup>

The *Complutensian Polyglot*, edited and printed in Spain (1514 to 1517) under the auspices of Cardinal Archbishop Ximenes of Toledo, included the first printed text of the complete Greek Old Testament. The name of the polyglot is derived from the place where it appeared, Complutum (Latin for Alcalá). Owing perhaps to suspicions of the Inquisition, actual publication of the work was delayed until 1521/22. The edition includes three columns, the first containing the Hebrew text with Onkelos' Targum, the second the Vulgate, and the third column the LXX. Because of its variant text form, the Greek text of this edition is especially valued.<sup>14</sup>

Another notable edition is the *Sixtine*, published in Rome, 1587, under the direction of Pope Sixtus V. Though Codex B was used as the basis for this edition, the editors did not slavishly adhere to it. The lacunae of this codex were filled from other manuscripts. The reprint of this edition by the Clarendon Press in 1875 formed one of the texts on which Hatch and Redpath based their con-

<sup>11</sup> For details on these and other papyri see Kenyon-Adams (fn. 8 above), pp. 115 ff., and E. Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament* (New York, 1957), pp. 50 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Paul Kahle, "Der gegenwärtige Stand der Erforschung der in Palästina neugefundenen hebräischen Handschriften," *Theologische Literaturzeitung*, 79 (1954), cols. 81—94. Cf. Kenyon-Adams, op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> "Redécouverte d'un Chânon Manquant de L'histoire de La Septante," *Revue Biblique*, 60 (1953), 18—29.

<sup>14</sup> On the *Complutensian Polyglot* see R. V. G. Tasker, "The Complutensian Polyglot," *Church Quarterly Review*, 154 (1953), 197—210. On printed texts in general see Swete's *Introduction*, Chapter VI.



cordance. The Greek column in the Old Testament portion of the Stier-Theile *Polyglot* (6 vols., Bielefeld, 1846—55) is also derived from it.

We pay brief respects to the *Aldine* edition (Venice, 1518—19), which embraced far less significant manuscript data than the *Sixtine*, and pass on to John Ernest Grabe's four-volume work, known as the Oxford edition. Whereas the *Sixtine* made Codex Vaticanus its base of operations, Grabe reproduced substantially Codex Alexandrinus, carefully indicating any departures from its text with the signs employed by Origen in his *Hexapla*.

In 1859 the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge published F. Field's *Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (Oxford), which aimed at a reproduction of Grabe's text, but failed to include the critical devices by which the text of Alexandrinus could be extracted from Grabe's edition. The result is an arbitrary and mixed text. The relegation in Field's edition of the noncanonical books to a section known as ΑΠΟΚΡΥΦΑ finds no support in the MS. tradition.

### *Modern Critical Editions*

The first comprehensive effort to provide a really critical treatment of the entire Septuagint was undertaken by Robert Holmes, professor of poetry at Oxford and, from 1804, Dean of Winchester. He lived to complete only the first volume containing the Pentateuch, with a preface and appendix. James Parsons completed the work (*Vetus Testamentum Graecum cum variis lectionibus* [5 vols. Oxford, 1798—1827]), which saw the employment of 297 separate codices, of which 20 are uncial. The text is that of the *Sixtine*. In his *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford, 1889) Edwin Hatch takes the editors severely to task for entrusting "no small part of the task of collation to careless or incompetent hands" and making it necessary to collate the material afresh (pp. 131 f.), but as Swete more graciously notes (*Introduction*, p. 187), the "work is an almost unequalled monument of industry and learning, and will perhaps never be superseded as a storehouse of materials."

The mention of Swete suggests his more notable project, *The Old Testament in Greek*, first published at Cambridge in three



volumes, 1887—94. Swete reproduced the text of B and filled the lacunae from A and S. A companion to this popular edition is *The Old Testament in Greek According to the Text of Codex Vaticanus, Supplemented from Other Uncial Manuscripts, with a Critical Apparatus Containing the Variants of the Chief Ancient Authorities for the Text of the Septuagint*, edited by Brooke, McLean, and Thackeray (1906— ). As the prefatory note to Genesis in Vol. I, Pt. 1 states, no attempt has been made to "provide a reconstructed, or 'true,' text." The text of B is followed, with lacunae in B supplied from the Alexandrian and other uncials in the order of their relative value.

Not to be outdone, the Germans have underwritten a Septuagint monument parallel to the Cambridge Septuagint. The project, still in progress, goes back to the work of Paul de Lagarde.<sup>15</sup> In 1882 Lagarde announced his plans to produce a new edition of the Greek Old Testament. His design was to attempt a reconstruction of Lucian's recension, with a view to moving closer to a pre-hexaplaric Septuagint and ultimately to a pure Septuagint text. The attempt was doomed to failure, partially because of the limitation imposed by the Psalmist's threescore and ten years but mainly because of inherent impossibility.

Lagarde, however, was determined, and his productivity warrants somewhat the greatness with which he dreamed. On May 26, 1881, he concluded his collations in Rome. On August 9, 1883, he saw the publication of his book, *Librorum Veteris Testamenti canonicorum pars prior* (Göttingen), containing the Octateuch and the Historical Books as far as Esther, 560 pages in large octavo format. During this year and a half he kept up his lectures, served as dean of the Göttingen philosophical faculty, made trips to Turin and Florence to investigate the Latin and Coptic texts of the Old Testament Wisdom Books, published several articles, presented the first part of his Persian Studies to the Scientific Academy of Göttingen on May 5, 1883, and in his spare time published four books involving Latin, Coptic, Hebrew, Spanish, and Arabic.

Not all shared the larger dream, and in 1891 Paul Lagarde in the

<sup>15</sup> For details on Lagarde's work see A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta Studien* (Göttingen, 1911), III, 23—30.



introductory paragraphs of his *Septuaginta Studien*, Part I (Göttingen), wrote bitterly:

Disgust prevents me from explaining how and through whom I was prevented from carrying out my plan to arrange in parallel columns the three recensions of the Septuagint attested by Jerome and from a comparison thereof to draw further conclusions. I have not even been able to edit the first part of Lucian's recension in the way I was capable of doing had I only been granted at least as much freedom of movement as Mommsen enjoyed, especially since this was more vital to me than to most scholars.

I have reached the pass that I am reluctant to discuss in advance any of my plans, so as not to be made a fool any longer by vain promises.

Since my shamefully mistreated, betrayed, and homeless life is drawing to its close in grief and trouble, I want to do as quickly as possible that which I feel sure of accomplishment.<sup>16</sup>

The Göttingen Septuagint (*Septuaginta*, Stuttgart and Göttingen) continues along some of the paths paved by Lagarde. The first volume of a projected 16-volume work was Alfred Rahlfs' edition of Genesis (1926). A pilot volume on Ruth had appeared in 1922. After discovering that the recovery of a pure Septuagint text was a sheer impossibility the editors of the Göttingen Septuagint set themselves the task of classifying manuscripts into families and recensions. The Cambridge editors reproduce B with corrections of obvious errors and in the apparatus present selected manuscript data carefully grouped for purposes of comparison. The reader may decide for himself which reading in a given instance is to be preferred. The Göttingen editors also submit a text which is basically that of B, but it is the result of critical attempts to select "at each point the reading which appears the best in the light of the manuscript tradition as a whole, with due consideration of the Hebrew text."<sup>17</sup> Thus the text of the Göttingen Septuagint is an "eclectic," or mixed, text. The detailed apparatus, however, makes it possible for the reader to get behind the editorial decisions. Some appreciation of the scope of the work may be gained by noting the number of pages devoted to writings associated with

<sup>16</sup> See also *Paul de Lagarde, Erinnerungen aus seinem Leben*, compiled by Anna de Lagarde (Göttingen, 1894).

<sup>17</sup> Würthwein (fn. 11 above), p. 56.



the name of Jeremiah. Joseph Ziegler in Vol. XV (Göttingen, 1957) devotes 148 pages to introductory matters regarding the textual tradition in a book totaling 504 pages.

The publication of Alfred Rahlfs' two-volume student edition of the Septuagint (*Septuaginta, id est, Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX interpretes*) by the Stuttgart Bible Society in 1935 has once more made a critical edition available at a modest price. The popularity of the work is evident from the number of editions already printed. The text is eclectic (see, e. g., text and variant, Gen. 6:2), based in the main on the uncials B, A, and S, with a critical apparatus presenting variants from these and other manuscripts. The brief history of the Septuagint text in German, English, and Latin is a model summary, and I am indebted to it for much of the information included in these pages. Although the eclectic character of the text makes it questionable whether the title "Septuagint" is valid for Rahlfs' edition, the student may be sure that he has access in these two volumes to standard Septuagint readings. For one who lacks a critical edition of the Septuagint, this is easily the year's best buy.

#### OTHER SEPTUAGINTAL RESOURCES

Many of the resources for Septuagint study have already been cited. Hatch and Redpath's concordance should be underscored as the most efficient port of entry into the treasures of the Septuagint. Peter Katz and Joseph Ziegler are spearheading the task of indexing afresh the hexaplaric authors.<sup>18</sup> Swete's *Introduction* still remains the standard on introductory matters. R. R. Ottley's *A Handbook to the Septuagint* (London, 1920) includes a convenient glossary. John F. Schleusner's *Novus thesaurus philologico-criticus sive lexicon in LXX et reliquos interpretes Graecos ac scriptores apocryphos Veteris Testamenti* (Leipzig, 1820) has been reprinted photo-mechanically. But since his work is merely an amplification of J. Chr. Biel's *Novus thesaurus philologicus sive lexicon in LXX* (3 vols., Hague, 1779) and displays throughout the unlexical procedure of the latter, a replacement is badly needed. *Mirabile dictu*, no complete grammar of the Septuagint is yet available.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Katz and Joseph Ziegler, "Ein Aquila-Index in Vorbereitung," *Vetus Testamentum*, 8 (1958), 264—285.



This unconquered Everest has seen only a few attempt the climb, notably Henry St. John Thackeray (*A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint*, Vol. I [London, 1909]), and Robert Helbing in his *Grammatik der Septuaginta. Laut- und Wortlehre* (Göttingen, 1907) and *Die Kasusyntax der Verba bei den Septuaginta. Ein Beitrag zur Hebraismenfrage und zur Syntax der κοινή* (Göttingen, 1928). *Selections from the Septuagint*, by Conybeare and Stock (Boston, 1905), includes an introduction, a discussion of grammar, and selections of readings from the Septuagint for the beginner in Septuagint studies. Swete's Chapter V in his *Introduction*, on "The Septuagint as a Version," is also intended for the beginner. Lee-Brenton's *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament with an English Translation and with Various Readings and Critical Notes*, republished by Samuel Bagster and Sons (London and New York, n. d.), omits the deuterocanonical writings but provides a much more helpful translation than the overadvertised reissue of Charles Thomson's *The Septuagint Bible* (Falcon's Wing Press, Colorado, 1954). The strange claims of this latter version are devastatingly reviewed in *Biblica*, 37 (1957), 497 ff. Extensive bibliographies on the Septuagint may be found in B. V. Roberts' *The Old Testament Text and Versions* (Cardiff, 1951), pp. 299—307, and in John W. Wevers' "Septuaginta-Forschungen, I," *Theologische Rundschau*, NF 22 (1954), 85—91.