CHAPTER TWO

THE DIVERSE TEXTS OF THE SEPTUAGINT AND THE PROBLEMS OF AN EDITION

The study of the early history of the Septuagint has been carried on during this century under the influence of a polemic: that between Lagarde (with his pupils and heirs in Göttingen and elsewhere) on the one side, and Kahle with his pupils on the other. It can be said that every new witness of the Proto-Septuagint discovered in this period has been interpreted against the background of these two theories\(^1\). The basic correctness of Lagarde's intuition has been confirmed in its main lines, as the new evidence, on which Kahle supported his position, has been duly stratified in the text history of each book of the Septuagint. Thus Fouad Pap. 266 (1\(^{st}\) century B.C.) and Rylands Pap. 458 (2\(^{nd}\) century B.C.) belong to specific groups of manuscripts in the text history of Deuteronomy, as Wevers' critical edition of this book has shown\(^2\). The Greek fragments of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy from the Cave 4 of Qumran, as well as the fragments of Exodus and the Epistle of Jeremiah from Cave 7, witness also to a revised Septuagint, but not to a different translation\(^3\). Concerning the fragments of Dodekaphrēton from Nahal Ḥever, on which Kahle relied with renewed emphasis\(^4\), Barthélemy's interpretation of them as a revision of the Old Septuagint according to the exegetical rules of the Palestinian Rabbinate has been generally admitted\(^5\). This perspective has not

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2 The first one, Fouad Pap. 266, is an important witness to the primitive text of Deuteronomy. Although fragmentary, it contains a substantial amount of text from Dt. 17,14-23-29, cf. John W. Wevers, *Text History of the Greek Deuteronomy*, Göttingen 1978, p. 64-86. Rylands Pap. 458 is very fragmentary but, it must be emphasized, it was copied only ca. 150 years after the time of the translation.
changed with the publication of the long awaited diplomatic edition and full study by Tov-Kraft-Parsons\textsuperscript{6}. As far as Proto-Lucian is concerned it should be stressed that some of the Pre-Lucianic witnesses mentioned by Metzger thirty years ago have been seriously questioned in recent publications\textsuperscript{7}. These conclusions are important because a Proto-Lucianic text counted as one of the various translations on which Kahle relied for his Targumic explanation of the origins of the Septuagint. As is well known, this presumed new version was supposed to have constituted the base for Lucian’s revision in the 4\textsuperscript{th} century A.D.\textsuperscript{8}.

Kahle proposed the existence of another Greek translation in Ephesus, relying on the evidence generally included under the sigla of Ur-Theodotion. This translation would have been the base for the revision of Theodotion in the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century A.D. But in the light of the new evidence, especially that of the fragments of Dodekaprophe-ton, and the accurate study of the Pre-Hexaplaric Septuagint, the hypothesis of various translations has been replaced by one of various early revisions, made according to the Hebrew texts (mainly the Pre-Masoretic one) and other stylistic criteria.

It must be said clearly that research in the last decades has advanced along the lines of Lagarde’s hypothesis. In other words, the new evidence fits better in such a framework, and is better explained

\textsuperscript{6} Cf. The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll From Nahal Hever (8 HevXIIgr) (The Seiyal Collection), by Emanuel Tov with the collaboration of R.A. Kraft and a contribution by P.J. Parsons, Oxford 1990. The date of the Scroll, preferably 1\textsuperscript{st} century B.C., adds a new difficulty to Barthélemy’s identification of the reviser with Jonathan ben Uzziel (ca. 30-50 A.D.), cf. D. Barthélemy, Les Devanciers d’Aquila, p. 149.


\textsuperscript{8} P. Kahle, Die Kairoer Geniza, 271: “Eine solche frühere griechische Übersetzung scheint der Bibeltext gewesen zu sein, der in Antiochien entstanden und weit-hin verbreitet war”.