CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

THE GROWTH OF THE BOOK OF JOSHUA IN LIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE OF THE SEPTUAGINT

The LXX of Joshua reflects many pluses, minuses, and differences which, when retroverted into Hebrew, present a book different from that contained in MT. The divergences are not as comprehensive as those in the book of Jeremiah (see Tov, "Jeremiah"\(^*\), but their content is often very important. Also 4QJosh\(^a\) differs considerably from MT (see n. 35).

The LXX of Joshua is important not only for the textual criticism of the Hebrew book, but also for its literary criticism. Many scholars have noticed the deviations of the LXX from MT, but most are not ready to recognize the contribution of the LXX to the literary criticism of Joshua. They continue to regard the LXX as a textual witness only. The approach of these scholars is eclectic: some deviations of the LXX are ascribed to the translator, while others are recognized as reflecting possible original readings, especially when they comply with the scholar's views on the original form of the book. Such was the approach of Dillmann, Noth,\(^1\) and Wright-Boling in their commentaries.\(^2\) Wright and Boling recognized the majority of the minuses of the LXX, but they did their best to ascribe as many as possible to the presumed inclination of the translator to haplography and homoio-teleuton.

This, however, is not the only approach to the LXX of Joshua. During the past seventy years several important studies have been written by scholars who recognized its significance for literary criticism. The first to do so was Holmes who in an eighty-page study displayed much understanding and intuition in textual matters.\(^3\) His monograph provides a valuable introduction to this topic as well as a running

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1 A. Dillmann, Numeri, Deuteronomium und Josua (2d ed.; Leipzig 1886); M. Noth, Das Buch Josua (3d ed.; HAT; Tübingen 1971).
2 R.G. Boling and G.E. Wright, Joshua (AB; Garden City, NY 1982).
commentary to the text. In the same breath we should mention Cooke,4 who applied Holmes' views in a running commentary to the Hebrew text.

The special contribution of the LXX was studied also by Orlinsky in a methodological study focusing on the minuses of the LXX.5 In a series of studies on the LXX, Auld6 usually accepted the evidence of the LXX as original, an opinion thus formulated in one of his articles: ‘And where MT and LXX differ in the book of Joshua, the latter is generally to be preferred.’7

Of two innovative studies by A. Rofé, the first one deals with the extensive Greek plus at the end of the book, after 24:33, long since recognized as reflecting a Hebrew addition,8 and whose text can be retroverted easily into Hebrew. Rofé described the ancient elements in this plus of the LXX, elements so unusual from a contextual point of view that they were rejected by the editor of MT. Indeed, this plus mentions, inter alia, the flint knives buried in Joshua's grave, a tradition which looks like the preserving of reliquiae, possibly rejected by a later generation. One also notes that the last words of this plus quote a phrase of Judg 3:12, viz., 'and God delivered them into the hands of Eglon, king of Moab and he ruled them eighteen years.' The plus in Joshua also contains other phrases from Judges, viz., from the ideological introduction to that book: 'and the Israelites worshipped the Ashtoret (and Ashtoreth) and the gods of the nations around them' (cf. 2:11,13). On the basis of these data, Rofé turned to the audacious view, which had been suggested earlier, that the plus in the LXX reflects an earlier and more original stage in the development of Joshua–Judges in which the two books were combined and in which the first chapters of Judges were lacking. The LXX thus reflects an ancient tradition, in which the end of Joshua was followed by Judges 3. It then

7 “Judges 1 and History: A Reconsideration,” VT 25 (1975) 264.