SHORT NOTES

SOME TYPES OF ERRORS OF TRANSMISSION IN THE LXX

It seems that commentators have in many passages suggested emendations of the Masoretic Text on the basis of the LXX, and naturally there are instances where the reading of the Old Greek version is to be preferred. There are, however, also cases where the LXX has suffered contamination in the course of transmission, and a comparison with MT and a study of the context show that the Old Greek in those places probably agreed with the present Hebrew text. Itacism and similarity of spelling occasionally led a copyist astray, and it appears that such errors took place in pre-recensional times. A few examples which came under the writer’s observation in his readings of the LXX are presented for consideration.

Gen. xv 15, tiqabbër bôšèbâh tôbâh (thou shalt be buried in a good old age): τραφεῖς ἐν γυρεί καλῷ. It may be suggested that the translator by playing with the participles τραφεῖς and ταφεῖς wished to remove the idea of burial, but this seems rather farfetched. It is more probable that the Old Greek originally read ταφεῖς and that ἔτος was introduced through a scribal error. At any rate, what appears to have been the original Old Greek has not been transmitted by any of our manuscripts; Augustine and Ambrose both have nutritus.

J. E. Grabe (1707) emends to ταφεῖς, a reading also found in the Complutensian Polyglot.

Gen. xxxiii 14, wa’ānî ṣṭābâhîlāh (and I will proceed by stages): ἐγὼ δὲ ἐνιαύτῳ ἐν τῇ ὄδῷ. The Greek is also represented by the Old Latin, Codex Lugdunensis: in valescam in via. It may be that here the Old Greek originally had ἵγνεύω ἐν τῇ ὄδῷ.

Gen. xlvii 18. In the second year of the famine in Egypt, the Egyptians came to Joseph, saying: lo’ mrahahid mè̄dōmî (we will not hide from my lord): μὴ ποτὲ ἐκτριβῶμεν ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν. This is the only reading we have of the LXX, and that of Fο διαψεύθωμεν certainly is a revision made on the basis of the context.

In Ex. ix 15 the Niphal of this root (kâhad) occurs: wattikahéd min ha’âres (thou hast been effaced from the earth). The Hiphil of this
root is found in Ex. xxiii 23, *w-hikhadtiw* (and I will efface, annihilate him); the same usage is met in 2 Ch. xxxii 21, *wayyakhid ko2 gibbo2* (and he effaced, annihilated, every man of valor). In the light of these three examples we might assume that in Gen. xlvii 18 the LXX employs an extreme Hebraism, which requires ἔκτρωβω to be understood in the sense of ‘effacing information or knowledge’, whence the verb could derive the meaning ‘hide’.

It is probable, however, that we rather have in this word a palaeographical error. We may well assume that the Old Greek began with the verb ΕΦΚΡΩΒΩΜΕΝ, which by itacism became ΕΓΚΡΩΒΩΜΕΝ; then by metathesis of Ῥ and Κ and writing Τ for Ῥ there was formed the verb ἔκτριβωμεν.

Gen. xlix 9, *mittrep brni ʿalitā* (from the prey, my son, thou art gone up): ἐκ βλαστόου, ὑέ μου, ἄνεβης. In the context ‘from a shoot, offspring’ hardly makes sense, even though the Old Latin of Augustine reads: *ex germinatione*. We may, however, with good reason assume that the context demands something connected with prey, and by substituting ι for λ we have βιστόω, ‘compelled’, ‘forced’, which in the sense of ‘a thing forced’ could be understood as ‘prey’.

J. F. Schleusner (1820), however, says: *Quae conjectura mihi certe non placet*. The Greek text apparently is in error, and this may be an instance where βιστός disappeared from the vocabulary of the LXX.

2 Ch. xxxi 6 *ma2 tar qodāšim* (the tithe of hallowed things). The Greek reads ἐπιδέκατα αἰγῶν, where αἰγῶν plainly is an error for ἀγγών. In view of the two preceding nouns μόσχων and προβάτων in the same verse, it was very simple for a copyist to introduce another animal name in place of a noun that looked almost like it. Ms. 93 αἰγῶν alone represents the true reading, but whether this is due to revision cannot be determined.

Job xxiv 7, *w-rʾin kʾsrʾt baggārah* (and not is there a covering in the cold): ἀμφικόσιν δὲ ποιχὶς αὐτῶν ἀφείλεντο. The book of Job has many free translations, but ποιχὶς hardly makes sense in the context, which demands a covering or garment against the cold. Probably in the Old Greek there stood ψύχεος (ψύχους), which somewhere in the course of transmission was copied as ψοφὶς. It may be noted that Sabatier cites Old Latin tegumen in frigore.

Isaiah iii 26, *wʾrʾnu w-ʾbʾlijʾ ptʾabeʾa* (and her gates shall lament and mourn). The Greek has a rather free rendering: καὶ πενθήσουσιν αἱ θῆκαι, where θῆκαι apparently stands for ptʾabeʾa. Obviously this is not a translation, and it seems quite probable that θῆκαι is an error.