

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 homoioteleuton.

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

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).

³ S. Holmes, *The Hebrew and Greek Texts of Joshua* (Cambridge 1914).

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 Ashtarot (and Ashtoret) 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 becomes necessary to show, as

⁴ G.A. Cooke, *The Book of Joshua* (CB; Cambridge 1918). For fine insights on the contribution of the LXX to the literary criticism of Joshua, see also C. Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament* (Tübingen 1912) 276–287.

⁵ H.M. Orlinsky, "The Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint of the Book of Joshua," *VTSup* (1969) 187–195.

⁶ A.G. Auld, *Studies in Joshua, Text and Literary Relations* (unpubl. diss.; Univ. of Edinburgh, 1976); *Moses and the Land—Tetrateuch-Pentateuch-Hexateuch in a Generation since 1938* (Edinburgh 1980); "The Levitical Cities: Texts and History," *ZAW* 91 (1979) 194–206; "Cities of Refuge in Israelite Tradition," *JSOT* 10 (1978) 26–40; "Textual and Literary Studies in the Book of Joshua," *ZAW* 90 (1978) 412–417.

⁷ "Judges I and History: A Reconsideration," *VT* 25 (1975) 264.

⁸ "The End of the Book of Joshua according to the Septuagint," *Henoch* 4 (1982) 17–35 = *Shnaton* 2 (1977) 217–227 (Hebrew).

does Rofé, that the first two and a half chapters of Judges contain secondary material.⁹

A second article by Rofé deals with the cities of refuge in chapter 20.¹⁰ It was recognized long ago that the large minus of the LXX in 20:4–6 presents a special text. That chapter speaks about the cities of refuge, and it would be interesting to know on which of the Pentateuchal law codes the chapter is based. It so happens that the long text of MT reflects the terminology and quotations from both the Priestly Code in Num 35:9–34 and Deut 19:1–13. In the LXX, on the other hand, the quotation from Deuteronomy is lacking in 20:4–6. It was therefore suggested by Rofé, as well as by other scholars, that an earlier stage of Joshua, such as reflected in the LXX, referred only to the Priestly formulation of the law of the cities of refuge. According to these scholars, the later edition of the book, as reflected in MT, added the terminology of, and a quote from, Deuteronomy.

Several important pericopes in the book have been studied by L. Mazor, who depicted the literary development of Joshua on the basis of these newly gained insights.¹¹

When returning to the general questions relating to the LXX of Joshua, we note that the major feature characterizing the Greek translation is its many minuses, and secondly, its pluses. This situation reminds one of other books in the LXX, especially Jeremiah.

The minuses of the LXX of Joshua are not as numerous as those in 1 Samuel 17–18 (see Tov, “Samuel”) and in Jeremiah (see Tov, “Jeremiah”). In Joshua the LXX lacks not more than 4–5%, a proportion similar to that in Ezekiel (See Tov, “Ezekiel”). The elements lacking in the LXX are sometimes very significant. At the same time, the LXX contains important pluses, such as after 16:10; 19:47; 21:42; 24:30; 24:33.

⁹ 1:1–2:5 contain deviating traditions about the conquest, parallel to the book of Joshua and to Judges 17–18; Judg 2:6–3:6 are likewise secondary as they contain the ideological deuteronomistic introduction to the book, and 3:7–11 present a story about a ‘judge’ Othniel and an otherwise unknown and probably imaginary king Qushan Rish atayim (note the etymology of the name), about whom nothing tangible is said, a story which may very well have been introduced to exemplify the course of events in the book of Judges.

¹⁰ “Historico-Literary Criticism Illustrated by Joshua 20,” *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume* (eds. A. Rofé and Y. Zakovitch; Jerusalem 1983) 137–150 = “Joshua 20—Historico-Literary Criticism Illustrated,” in: Tigay, *Models*, 131–147.

¹¹ L. Mazor, *The Septuagint Translation of the Book of Joshua—Its Contribution to the Understanding of the Textual Transmission of the Book and Its Literary and Ideological Development*, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1994 (Heb. with Eng. summ.); id., “The Origin and Evolution of the Curse upon the Rebuilder of Jericho—A Contribution of Textual Criticism to Biblical Historiography,” *Textus* 14 (1988) 1–26.

These pluses are written in a manifestly Hebraistic diction and they are retroverted rather easily into Hebrew.

In addition to these pluses and minuses, the LXX reflects a major difference in the sequence of events. The section dealing with the erection of the altar in Shechem appears in the LXX not in 8:30–35 as in MT, but after 9:2 (see Tov, “Sequence”).

Since external evidence is lacking regarding the evaluation of the special features of the LXX of Joshua, we are left with internal evidence as our only guide. For this purpose the translator’s word-choices must be examined as well as the word order and his consistency in the translation. The problem of the evaluation of the LXX is thus reduced to that of its translation technique. A modest beginning has been made by Hollenberg and Mazor.¹² *Now also den Hertog.*

The translation character of the LXX cannot be determined through an analysis of the pluses and minuses, for these are problematic themselves. We thus turn to an overall analysis of the translation technique, especially to the choice of translation equivalents and their consistency. That translation technique is known to range from ‘relatively free’ to ‘relatively literal,’ yet remains sufficiently close to the Hebrew to establish the translator’s faithfulness to his source.¹³

It is further noteworthy that the pluses of the LXX are Hebraistic in diction (see Tov, *TCU*, 83–84), and they can be retroverted easily into Hebrew.¹⁴ Thus, according to the logic presented earlier, it is not feasible for one translator to have faithfully rendered the text and at the same time omit significant elements. Moreover, no principle can be recognized for a supposed shortening by the translator.

¹² J. Hollenberg, *Der Charakter der alexandrinischen Übersetzung des Buches Josua und ihr textkritischen Werth* (Berlin 1876); L. Mazor (see n. 11 above).

¹³ In the wake of Tov–Wright, “Literalness,”* the criteria described in the article were applied to Joshua as well. Thus it was found that in 58.4% of the instances, ׀ was rendered by ἐν, in 53.2% ׀ was rendered by ὅτι, and in 83.1% the pronominal suffixes of the third person were rendered by forms of αὐτός and ἐαυτός. These data should be compared with the data for the other books of the LXX. In addition to these absolute figures there is also comparative material with regard to the addition of prepositions in the LXX and the relation between καί and the post-position particles such as δέ and γάρ. On the basis of these data, Joshua should be ranked as relatively free to relatively literal. At the same time, the freedom of the translator is often predictable, so that the reconstruction of its Hebrew base text is often easier than shown by mere statistics. See further the conclusion of Sollamo, *Semiprepositions*, 285, who includes Joshua in the second of four groups (relatively free), together with Leviticus, Genesis, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Further arguments in favor of retroverting elements of the Hebrew parent text of the LXX are provided by L. Mazor’s dissertation mentioned in n. 11.

¹⁴ See, e.g., the retroversions in BHK, BHS, and in Rofé, “Historico-Literary Criticism” (see n. 10).

In the wake of the above considerations, we now phrase the following working hypothesis: the LXX of Joshua reflects a text which differed in several major details from MT, both in its minuses, pluses, and substitutions. This working hypothesis is strengthened by an internal analysis of the evidence itself.

The Hebrew base of the LXX is now compared with MT, using literary criteria. This study focuses on the minuses of the LXX which are much more frequent than its pluses. For the sake of convenience we speak of the 'short' text of the LXX, even though the LXX is not much shorter than MT. The working hypothesis suggested here is that a short text like the LXX was expanded to a long text like MT. The use of the word 'like' enables us to account also for pluses of the LXX.¹⁵

On the basis of these arguments it is suggested that the elements hitherto described as minuses of the LXX actually are pluses of MT. This is exemplified mainly from the first half of the book.

We first turn to a category of readings showing the secondary nature of the pluses of MT. All the pluses of MT (minuses of the LXX) are written in parenthesis.

1. *Additions of MT whose secondary nature is evident from the context*

4:10 The priests who bore the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until all the instructions that the Lord had ordered Joshua to convey to the people had been carried out (just as Moses had ordered Joshua).

According to the short formulation of the LXX, Joshua's actions closely followed the command of God, while the plus stresses that the command was by Moses. The juxtaposition of these two commands in MT is not impossible—after all, God commanded Moses to command Joshua (Deut 3:28)—but it is awkward. It is therefore likely that two different remarks have been combined in MT. Possibly the plus in MT derived from Deut 3:28 or from v. 12 in the context. The juxtaposition of two similar elements recurs in Josh 1:13–14 where, according to the short text of the LXX, God gave the land to the two-and-a-half tribes, while according to the long text of MT it was given by Moses.

5:11–12 They ate of the produce of the land (on the day after the Passover offering), מַצֹּת and parched grain, on that very day. ¹²The manna ceased (on the day after) when they ate of the produce of the land.

¹⁵ Also the 'short' text of Jeremiah is at times a little longer than the 'long' text of MT.

According to the previous verse (5:10), the Israelites ‘offered the Passover sacrifice on the fourteenth day of the month in the steppes of Jericho.’ That is, according to the common text of v. 10 and the short text of v. 11, the Israelites ate the Pesach on the fourteenth of Nissan in the evening, and on the same occasion they ate *מַצֹּת* and parched grain. On the other hand, according to the addition of MT in v. 11, the Israelites ate their *מַצֹּת* on the next day, the fifteenth of Nissan. The addition of MT apparently adapted the original text to the regulations of Lev 23:5 which prescribes the Pesach on the evening of the fourteenth and *מַצֹּת* on the next day. The present text of MT thus contains both elements, so that tension exists between the phrases ‘on that very day’ and the plus of MT ‘on the day after the Passover offering.’ The editor of MT paid no attention to this tension when adding the latter phrase.

8:11–13 All the warriors who were with him advanced near the city (and encamped to the north of Ai with a valley between them and Ai. ¹²And he took about five thousand men and he stationed them in an ambush between Bethel and Ai, west of the city. ¹³And the people set the whole camp north of the city) and its rear west of the city (and Joshua went that night into the middle of the valley).

The plus of MT speaks of an encampment to the north of Ai, but according to v. 9 the people are to the west of that city, between Bethel and Ai. Likewise, according to the plus in v. 12, ‘He (scil. Joshua) took about five thousand men and stationed them in an ambush between Bethel and Ai, west of the city (Q: Ai).’ MT thus contains at least two versions of the ambush. According to the version in vv. 3–9, common to the LXX and MT, the ambush occurred west of the city and some 30,000 men were involved. On the other hand, according to the plus of MT in vv. 11b, 12, 13a, the ambush took place north of the city and some 5,000 men participated in it. That second version, lacking in the LXX, was added in MT, and contradicts the first account.

2. Additions in MT whose secondary nature is evident from their formulation

Most of the examples refer to exegetical expansions of MT.

1:7... to observe faithfully (all the teaching) that (which) my ser-vant Moses enjoined upon you. Do not deviate from it to the right or to the left.

1:15 Then you may return to the land of your possession (and you may possess it) which Moses the servant of the Lord assigned to you.¹⁶

5:2 ... and circumcise the Israelites again (for the second time).

¹⁶ The relative ‘which’ returns immediately to its antecedent ‘possession.’ The intervening sentence has been added.

5:6 ... because they had not obeyed the Lord who had sworn (the Lord) them.

10:35 They captured it on the same day and put it to the sword and all the people that were in it he proscribed (on the same day).

10:39 ... just as they had done to Hebron, he did to Debir and its king (and as he had done to Libnah and its king)—an afterthought.

13:21 ... and the entire kingdom of Sihon, the king of the Amorites (who reigned in Heshbon), whom Moses defeated.¹⁷

The main section of examples, paragraphs 3–9, illustrate various types of exegesis.

3. *Small elucidations*

3:12 (Now) select twelve men ...

3:9–10 And Joshua said to the Israelites, 'Come closer and listen to the words of the Lord your God.' ¹⁰(And Joshua said) 'By this you shall know ...'.

5:1 ... and no spirit was (left) in them because of the Israelites.

7:2 And Joshua sent men ... east of Bethel (and he said to the Israelites) as follows ...

1:2 Prepare to cross <the> (this) Jordan : (הַיַּרְדֵּן) קוּם עָבַר אֶת הַיַּרְדֵּן

1:4 from the wilderness and <the> (this) Lebanon: (הַלְבָנוֹן) מִהַמִּדְבָּר וְהַלְבָנוֹן

10:23 ... <the> (these) five kings: (הַמְּלָכִים הָאֵלֶּה) אֵת חֲמִשָּׁת הַמְּלָכִים

1:2 ... into the land which I give to them (to the Israelites).

1:11 ... prepare (for yourself) provision.

4:2 ... select (for yourself) from among the people twelve men.

4. *Harmonizing additions*¹⁸

2:4 The woman took the (two) men—cf. v. 1.

2:5 The men left, and I don't know where <they> (the men) went—cf. v. 5a.

2:9 I know that the Lord has given the country to you, because dread of you has fallen upon us (and all the inhabitants of the land are quaking before you)—cf. v. 24: the Lord has delivered the whole land into our power; in fact, all the inhabitants of the land are quaking before us.

2:21 She said: 'Let it be as you say.' She sent them (and they left and she tied the crimson cord to the window)— cf. v. 18: you tie this length of crimson cord to the window

¹⁷ The first of the two relative clauses is secondary.

¹⁸ For a definition and analysis of this category, see E. Tov, "The Nature and Background of Harmonizations in Biblical MSS," *JSTOT* 31 (1985) 3–29.

6:17 Only Rahab the harlot is to be spared, and all who are with her in the house (for she hid the messengers we sent)—cf. v. 25: for she hid the messengers that Joshua sent to spy out Jericho.

7:18 and Achan son of Zerah son of Zabdi (of the tribe of Judah) was indicated—cf. v. 17.

5. Contextual additions

1:13–14 The Lord your God is granting you a haven; he is assigning this territory to you. ¹⁴Let your wives, children and livestock remain in the land which <he> assigned to you (Moses across the Jordan).

2:1 Joshua son of Nun (secretly) sent two spies...

2:15 She let them down (by a rope) through the window.

6:1 Now Jericho was shut up tight (because of the Israelites).

10:11 The Lord hurled huge stones on them from the sky, all the way to Azekah (and they perished); more perished from the hailstones than were killed by the Israelite weapons.

10:26 And Joshua smote them (afterwards and he killed them) and impaled them ...

6. Emphasis¹⁹

1:7 But you must be (very) strong and resolute.

2:5 Go after them (quickly), for you can overtake them.

2:17 We will be released from this oath (which you have made us take).

3:1 <they> (he and all the Israelites) came to the Jordan.

6:10 Do not let your voices be heard (and do not let a sound issue from your lips).

7. Substantial additions

2:4 And she said: 'It is true, the men came to me (but I did not know where they were from).'

According to the short text, Rahab affirms that people came to visit her; she did not ask the men any questions nor did she justify the fact of their visit. The addition of MT, however, gives Rahab an opportunity to justify her deeds.

2:15 She let them down (by a rope) through the window (for her house was at the outer side of the city wall and she lived in the actual wall [NJPSV]).

¹⁹ These examples have been singled out because of their implication for the analysis.

The second part of the verse explains a detail which is necessary in the context. The remark explains how the explorers left the city quietly without being noticed: Rahab's house was located in such a place that the explorers could easily leave the city.²⁰ As a consequence, v. 15b, which through the ages has inspired numerous exegetical conjectures, actually belongs to a secondary layer of the text, not found in the LXX.²¹

The same conclusion is reached through an internal analysis of MT of another chapter, viz., chapter 6. With the fall of the walls of Jericho Rahab's house also should have collapsed if indeed her house was joined to the walls. Nevertheless, the implication of 6:22 is that Rahab's house was still intact after the walls fell: 'To the two men who spied the land Joshua said: "Go into the house of the harlot and bring out from there the woman and all whom she has as you have sworn to her."' Consequently, it looks as if Rahab's house was still intact in chapter 6 and was therefore not joined to the wall as mentioned in the plus of MT in 2:15b.

10:13 And the sun stood still and the moon halted, while a nation wreaked judgment on its foes (as is written in the Book of Jashar). Thus the sun halted in mid heaven ...

The plus of MT ('as is written in the ספר הישר') disturbs the context, but this fact alone is insufficient proof of its late origin. The secondary nature of these elements is further indicated by their absence from the LXX. Also Solomon's benediction, spoken at the time of the dedication of the temple (1 Kgs 8:12–13, occurring in the LXX after v. 53), is reportedly contained in the ספר הישר, this time according to the LXX only (ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ψῆδης, reflecting בספר הישר deriving from ספר הישר). The absence of these words in MT underlines the textual instability of the ascription of biblical compositions to the ספר הישר. The only place in which the reference to the ספר הישר occurs in all of the textual sources is 2 Sam 1:18 (David's lament over Saul and Jonathan).

8. Theological corrections

Some additions present theological corrections.

4:5 Walk up to (the ark of) the Lord (your God).

6:7 ... and the vanguard marched in front of (the ark of) the Lord.

²⁰ The note itself is tautological.

²¹ The short text in 2:15 'She let them down through the window' implies that Rahab's house was near the wall, because otherwise it is unclear why she would have let the spies down from the window. The explanation for this short text reflected in the MT of v. 15b presents one possible view of the short text, but not the only one. Possibly Rahab's house was near the wall and when the two men were let down through the rear side of the house they could flee more easily than through the front door. Another possibility is that by letting the men leave by the window, possibly of a second floor, the people in the house would not know that they had left.

6:13 ... and the seven priests bearing the seven ram's horns marched in front of (the ark of) the Lord.

7:6 And he fell on his face to the ground in front of (the ark of) the Lord.

In several places the original (short) text mentioned actions happening 'in front of the Lord,' referring to the actual presence of the Lord with the ark of the covenant. The original idea, which implies direct contact with God, has been toned down in MT by the addition of the words 'the ark of.'

9. Influence of Deuteronomy

Some of the additions of MT reveal influence from Deuteronomy, both in direct quotes and in its characteristic deuteronomistic formulations. A direct quote is found in 20:4–6 (cf. Deut 19:4–6). Note also the following deuteronomistic formulations among the pluses of MT:

1:1 After the death of Moses (the servant of the Lord) ...

Cf. also 1:15; 12:6; 22:4 (cf. Driver, *Introduction*, 116).

1:7 to observe faithfully according to (all the teaching) which Moses my servant enjoined upon you. Cf. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy*, 336.

1:11 The land which the Lord your God gives to you (as a possession). Cf. *ibid.*, 314.

4:10 The priests who bore the ark remained standing in the middle of the Jordan until all the instructions that the Lord had ordered Joshua to convey to the people had been carried out (just as Moses had ordered Joshua).

24:17 For it was the Lord our God who brought us and our fathers up from the land of Egypt (the house of bondage, and who wrought those wondrous signs before our very eyes).²²

We now turn to an analysis of the overall nature of the LXX of Joshua. By way of a working hypothesis it was suggested to consider the elements lacking in the LXX as pluses in MT. The first two categories of examples showed that many of them are contextually secondary in MT. Furthermore, the other groups of examples reflect exegetical additions to the text. These, too, are by definition secondary.

The additions of MT have to be analyzed in light of other phenomena in the LXX. The LXX of Joshua also contains some added verses, which may have been omitted from MT, and furthermore it reflects inversions of some verses and also of one section, viz., at the end of chapter 8 of MT.

²² For אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ cf. *ibid.*, 326–327, and for אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, *ibid.*, 330.

The major pluses of the LXX are in 16:10 (cf. 1 Kgs 9:16 [5:14 LXX]); 19:47–48; 21:42 (cf. 19:49–50; 5:2–3); 24:30 (cf. 5:2–3); and 24:33 (cf. Judg 2:6, 11–14; 3:12). In one case the possible reason for the omission of these verses from MT may be indicated, viz., the mentioning of the flint knives in the pluses after 21:42 and 24:33.

The omissions and additions of the *Vorlage* of the LXX make the MT and LXX into two parallel editions differing with regard to their content. As a rule, the additions can easily be accounted for. Thus in the geographical lists, the LXX contains an added verse in 16:10 about the conquest of Gezer by Pharaoh—this verse is almost identical to 1 Kgs 9:16 (5:14 LXX). In Josh 19:47–48, elements have been added in the *Vorlage* of the LXX describing the migration of the Danites to the North. The added elements run parallel to Judg 1:34–35. In yet another section, the plus after 21:42 summarizes the division of the land described in the earlier chapters. The LXX thus contains two such summaries, for 19:49–50 contain the same summary. The following development may be reconstructed: the original summary is found in 19:49–50, both in the MT and LXX. When, at a later stage of the development of the book, chapters 20 and 21 were added, dealing with the cities of refuge (20) and the Levitical cities (21), an additional summary was appended at the end of chapter 21 in the Hebrew base of the LXX. This section more or less repeats 19:49–50, and it has not been added in the edition of MT.

The data adduced here lead to the view that the MT and LXX do not reflect textual differences, but rather two different editions of the book. The differences between the two editions are not great with regard to the book as a whole, but in individual contexts they are. An analysis of the minuses of the LXX leads to the conclusion that the edition of MT expanded the shorter one reflected in the LXX. According to this description, the two editions are related genetically. The pluses of the LXX do not contradict this assumption, but they show that the edition of MT expanded an earlier edition very similar to the *Vorlage* of the LXX.

Further research on the geographical details may bring us closer to a solution. The issue of the date of these editions should not be confused with that of their textual attestation, which is much later than the editions themselves. Thus the short edition of the LXX is first attested in the LXX translation prepared in the late third or early second century BCE, and that of MT is attested around the turn of the era.

Little can be said about the nature of the expansions of the edition of MT. Its main characteristic is the addition of exegetical remarks and traditions. Among these, a few deuteronomistic formulations stand out.

It is remarkable that as late as the third or second century BCE, when the LXX was produced, the short Hebrew edition was still available to the translators.²³ The only possible explanation for this situation is that even after the short edition was altered to the edition of MT, it was not destroyed, but continued to exist. In other words, when the short edition was expanded, more than one copy of that edition already existed. Not all of these were discarded, so that its impact continued to be felt afterwards.

It is probably no coincidence that the short text was preserved in Egypt, far away from Palestine. Even when a new edition was accepted, it did not oust the previous one in Egypt, where it remained in use for centuries. This description serves as a modest reformulation of the local texts theory, especially connected in recent years with the names of Albright and Cross.²⁴ Even if one does not accept the validity of that theory as a whole, at least the aspect described here is plausible.

²³ A third tradition in Joshua is reflected in 4QJosh^a, which has a shorter text than MT, similar to that of the LXX, in frgs. 9 ii and 13–16 (Josh 8:3–14, 18?). Furthermore, the section which in MT narrates the building of an altar after several actions connected with the conquest (8:30–35), is located at an earlier place in the story in 4QJosh^a, before 5:1, immediately after the crossing of the Jordan, and probably also in Josephus, *Antiquities*, V:16–19. According to Rofé and Ulrich this sequence of events in 4QJosh^a, which probably reflects the original story, shows that the Qumran text constituted a third independent text of Joshua, alongside MT and the LXX: A. Rofé, “The Editing of the Book of Joshua in the Light of 4QJosh^a,” in: Brooke–García Martínez, *New Qumran Texts*, 73–80; E. Ulrich, “4QJoshua^a and Joshua’s First Altar in the Promised Land,” *ibid.*, 89–104.

²⁴ W.F. Albright, “New Light on Early Recensions of the Hebrew Bible,” *BASOR* 140 (1955) 27–33; Cross, “Evolution” (earlier formulations by Cross are mentioned there).