

CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

SOME SEQUENCE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MASORETIC TEXT AND THE SEPTUAGINT AND THEIR RAMIFICATIONS FOR LITERARY CRITICISM

The MT and LXX often differ regarding the sequence of one or more verses or chapters. In such instances, a unit of MT may appear in the LXX in a different place, either in the direct vicinity or in an adjacent chapter. The neutral term 'sequence difference' is used in this context, and not 'transpositions,' since the latter takes either MT or the LXX as point of departure. A partial list of these sequence differences has been provided by Swete, *Introduction*, 231–242. The full evidence is included in the CATSS database (see Tov, "Computerized Database"*).

The present study is concerned with the evaluation of some major sequence differences, with special attention to their importance for literary criticism. From the outset we would expect only the most free and paraphrastic translator to insert in the translation such drastic changes as major changes of sequence. However, even paraphrastic translators such as those of Isaiah, Daniel, and Esther did not change the sequence of the text. Consequently, sequence differences in other books should not be ascribed to the translators, as in the case of Numbers, Joshua, 1 Samuel, 1 Kings, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel to be discussed below. The examples adduced below are intended to establish a connection between some sequence differences and literary development. It is suggested that several sequence differences between the MT and LXX relate to late additions of sections whose position was not yet fixed when the archetypes of these texts were composed.

1. *Josh 8:30–35*

Josh 8:1–29 presents Joshua's battle at Ai. Next comes a short section (8:30–35) condensing into a few lines the of the building of an altar on Mt. Ebal in accordance with Deuteronomy 27. The next chapter, chapter 9, starts with a general description:

When all the kings who were beyond the Jordan in the hill country and in the lowland all along the coast of the Great Sea toward Lebanon, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, heard of this, ²they gathered together with one accord to fight Joshua and Israel (9:1–2).

This description is not connected with any particular section, neither in the preceding nor the following chapter. According to these verses, the kings of Palestine gathered in order to fight Joshua, but no details are specified. Possibly this remark contrasts the actions of the Gibeonites to be described in chapter 9 with those of the other kings of Palestine mentioned in 9:1–2. In that case the first verses of chapter 9 are indeed connected with the continuation of chapter 9 (the Gibeonites), as in MT. However, there is no follow-up on the remark that the kings gathered in order to fight Joshua and Israel. It is therefore also possible that the general statement ‘When all the kings ... heard of this’ is meant as a conclusion to the story of Ai in chapter 8.

The opening verses of chapter 9 refer to the content of chapter 8, that is, the story of Ai in vv. 1–29, *beyond* the story in vv. 30–35 about the erecting of the altar on Mt. Ebal. Thus, originally vv. 30–35 did not belong to the context, and that section must have been added at a later time. One further notes that this section is unmistakably phrased in deuteronomistic language,¹ and as it is based on Deuteronomy 27, it probably originated with the deuteronomistic redactor of Joshua who harmonistically portrayed Joshua’s accomplishing of the deuteronomistic law.²

Another argument for the lateness of the section is the lack of relevance to the context, which is enhanced by the opening word **ו**: ‘Then Joshua built an altar ...’ (8:30). This word creates an artificial connection with the context, just like the phrases ‘in his days’ or ‘at that time’ recognized universally as reflecting later editorial additions in the biblical text.³ This section must have been added at a place which would more or less fit the geographical and chronological framework of building the altar on Mt. Ebal, artificially connecting two passages. The geographical link is only roughly appropriate; Ai (8:1–29), Ebal (8:30–35), and Gibeon (chapter 9) are all situated north of Jerusalem. Ai and Gibeon

¹ See M. Noth, *Das Buch Josua* (HAT; 2d. ed.; Tübingen 1953) 9, 51–53.

² Deuteronomy 27 itself is a composite of different commands (the erection of an altar on Mt. Ebal in vv. 1–8 [two versions], a ceremony of blessings and curses in vv. 11–13 and a ceremony of curses in vv. 14–26) which has been combined harmonistically in Joshua 8.

³ For a similar use of **ו**, see Deut 4:41–43, and for ‘and it occurred in that time ...’, see Gen 38:1.

are close to each other, while Ebal is situated further to the North making its mention unusual. All this leads us to believe that 8:30–35 contains a relatively late addition to the text.

In the LXX the section about the building of the altar is found not before chapter 9, as in MT, but *after* those two verses:

1. The conquest of Ai (8:1–29).
2. A summarizing notice: ‘When all the kings ... heard’ (9:12)
3. The building of the altar (8:30–35).
4. The cunning of the Gibeonites (9:3 ff.).

Josh 8:30–35 has no connection with the context, and it also contains deuteronomistic phraseology. Both of these factors lead us to believe that this section is secondary. Furthermore, the different location of this section in the LXX implies that its placement had not yet been fixed. When this section was inserted into the text, it was added at the end of chapter 8 in the forerunner of MT, and after 9:2 in the forerunner of the LXX.

2. 1 Kgs 8:12–13

1 Kgs 8:12–13 contains Solomon’s benediction spoken at the time of the dedication of the temple: ‘Then Solomon said, “The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in forever.”’ The LXX and MT differ in several important details, and what counts more, after these verses the LXX adds: ‘Is this not written in the book of the Song?’ (οὐκ ἴδου ἀὕτη γέγραπται ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ψδῆς)—‘in the book of the Song’ (ἐν βιβλίῳ τῆς ψδῆς), or בספר השיר is probably a corruption of the ספר הישר mentioned in Josh 10:13 and 2 Sam 1:18.

Solomon’s benediction of vv. 12–13 occurs in the LXX toward the end of the chapter, after v. 53.

The sequence of events according to MT is thus as follows:

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|--------|--|
| 12–13 | Dedication of the temple by Solomon (in poetry). |
| 14–21 | Dedication of the temple by Solomon (in prose). |
| 22–53 | Solomon’s prayer. |
| 54 ff. | Blessing by Solomon. |

The juxtaposition in MT of two dedications, a prayer and a blessing, is contextually problematical. Even more difficult, the prose dedication in vv. 14–21 starts off as if the previous poetry dedication had not yet occurred in the immediately preceding verses. It is therefore noteworthy that in the LXX the poetry dedication occurs after v. 53. It seems that the combined evidence of the MT and LXX indicates that at one point the sequence of the dedications, the prayer, and the blessing had not yet been fixed. Furthermore, the juxtaposition of the two benedictions is

artificial and the prose dedication (vv. 14–21) as well as Solomon's prayer (vv. 22–53) are full of deuteronomistic elements, and hence late.⁴ It stands to reason that this prose dedication as well as the prayer are late additions inserted in the MT and LXX in different places, as was suggested already in 1900.⁵

These two examples suggest that in each case the difference has been caused by the insertion of new material in two different places in the textual witnesses. Probably the uncertainty about the placement of the added material caused this different sequence, but it is not impossible that there is more involved. It is no coincidence that in all cases the LXX represents a more original sequence than MT.

3. *Num 10:34–36*

In MT vv. 34–36 read as following:

34 And the cloud of the Lord was over them by day, whenever they set out from the camp.

35 And whenever the ark set out, Moses said: 'Arise, O Lord, and let thy enemies be scattered and let them that hate thee flee.'

36 And when it rested, he said, 'Return, O Lord, to the ten thousand thousands of Israel' (*RSV*).

Vv. 35–36 contain the song which was sung when the ark traveled in the wilderness. V. 34 appearing in MT just before this passage, occurs in the LXX *after* vv. 35–36 (the sequence of the LXX thus is 35, 36, 34). From the point of view of its content, v. 34 could indeed be placed either before or after the song, although one would probably prefer its location in the LXX, since the sequence 33, 35 is more natural. For v. 35 starts off with the words 'and whenever *the ark* set out ...' and *the ark*, הארון, is not mentioned in the previous sentence, while in Hebrew composition the definite article should refer to something mentioned in the immediate vicinity. Thus, the ark in v. 35 points back to v. 33 where 'the ark of the covenant of the Lord' is mentioned, while v. 34 of MT disturbs the logical sequence 33, 35.

The main issue is not to determine which sequence is preferable, but to understand the background of the different sequences. There is no reason to ascribe the different sequence to the translator of the otherwise rather faithful translation of Numbers. One notes that the different

⁴ Thus C.F. Burney, *The Book of Judges and Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings* (Oxford 1903, 1918; repr. New York 1970) 112 ff.; M. Noth, *Könige* (BK; Neukirchen/Vluyt 1968) 173–174.

⁵ R. Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige* (HKAT; Göttingen 1900) 73.

sequence actually involves a passage which is secondary within the context, viz., the Song of the ark in vv. 35–36. These verses, which stand out from their context because of their poetical nature, once constituted a small independent unit preserving an ancient song sung at the time of the leaving and returning of the ark. This unit was added to its present context during one of the compositional stages, and the artificial connection can still be recognized. The uncertainty with regard to the place of vv. 35–36 in the LXX and MT points to the stage when the exact location of the addition was not yet secure.

Ancient traditions further support the secondary nature of vv. 35–36. In MT they are denoted with ‘inverted *nuns*’ before v. 35 and after v. 36; these signs actually represent the *sigma* and *antisigma* of the Alexandrian scribal tradition, also used in the Qumran scrolls to indicate spurious elements.⁶ Similar evidence is included in the Talmud and Midrash.⁷

4. *Jer* 23:7–8

Therefore, behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when men shall no longer say: ‘As the Lord lives who brought up the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt,’ but ‘As the Lord lives who brought up and led the descendants of the house of Israel out of the north country and out of all the countries where he had driven them.’ Then they shall dwell in their own land.

This section (23:7–8 in MT) occurs in the LXX at the end of the chapter, after v. 40. Like in the previous examples, the section under review occurs just before or after a relatively large independent unit, viz., 23:9–40. These verses comprise a collection of oracles preceded by a heading, לַנְּבִיאִים, ‘concerning the prophets’ (23:9). This collection was probably added into the existing framework of Jeremianic oracles in its entirety either before or after the unit now known as 23:7–8.⁸

⁶ See E. Tov, “Scribal Markings in the Texts from the Judean Desert,” in D.W. Parry and S.D. Ricks (eds.), *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls—Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995* (STDJ XX; Leiden/New York/Köln 1996) 41–77.

⁷ According to *Sifre* 84 on Num 10:35, these verses were denoted with supralinear and infralinear dots. Indeed, according to Rabbi Yehuda ha-Nasi, these two verses contain a separate unit (ספר בעצמי), and according to Rabbi Simeon they do not belong in their present place. For similar statements, see *b. Shabbat* 115b–116a. *Masekhet Soferim* 6:1 continues this idea and actually indicates the place where the two verses ought to be included, viz., in the section of the ‘traveling of the military units.’

⁸ The verses themselves are more or less identical to another passage, viz., 16:14–15. Also elsewhere in Jeremiah (see Driver, *Introduction*, 272–273) groups of verses occur more than once, indicating the complicated growth of the book, especially as some of these repeated passages do not occur in the LXX.

5.1 *Sam 2:1–10*

The Song of Hannah in 1 Sam 2:1–10 is taken by most scholars as a late addition to the text. Indeed, the verse immediately preceding the hymn, 1:28, is continued in the first verse after the hymn, 2:11. Further-more, the content of the song is only loosely connected with the context. It stands to reason that an existing psalm has been inserted in the context just like the psalm in Jonah (Jon 2:3–10). The psalm itself contains a contextually appropriate hymn, a song of thanksgiving by a woman bearing a child after a long period of infertility. The key phrase is the second part of v. 5, ‘the barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn’ (RSV).

When this song was inserted in the original text, there was unclarity with regard to its exact place. This can still be seen from a few words which the LXX has in excess of MT just after the song: καὶ κατέλιπεν αὐτὸν ἐκεῖ ἐνώπιον κυρίου (and she left him there before the Lord). These words are more or less identical to the text of 4QSam^a just before the song, viz., וְיִשְׁתַּחֲוֶיִן לַיהוָה וְהַעֲזֹב[הוּ שָׁם (1:28), and which otherwise are quite similar to MT וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶיִן שָׁם לַיהוָה (1:28). The Song of Hannah was thus added in two slightly different places in the *Vorlage* of the LXX and 4QSam^a (similar to MT). The MT, the LXX, and 4QSam^a, also differ in other recensional details (see Tov, “Song of Hannah”), a fact which strengthens the independent history of this song.

6.1 *Kings 20–21*

The reversal of chapters 20 and 21 of 1 Kings in the LXX of 3 Reigns is also related to the addition of a section to the text. The contents of chapters 17–22 are as following in MT:

17–19	Elijah saga.
20	Ahab’s Syrian war.
21	Elijah saga continued: Naboth’s vineyard.
22	Ahab’s Syrian war continued.

A mere glance at this summary reveals the difficulties inherent in the sequence of MT. Chapter 19 is separated from chapter 21, and chapter 20 from chapter 22. The order of the LXX (21, 20) is more logical as it has the two parts of Ahab’s war as well as the Elijah story in one consecutive order. On the other hand, the story of Ahab’s death in chapter 22 of MT may be considered a fulfilment of Elijah’s threats in chapter 20, in which case MT is preferable. Preferring neither sequence, it may be suggested that chapter 21 probably was a late intrusion. Indeed, modern commentators have expressed their doubts about that chapter which differs in several ways from the surrounding ones. Among other things it

portrays Elijah differently from chapters 17–19, and Ahab differently from chapters 20 and 22.⁹

7. *Jeremiah 10*

In Jeremiah 10, the text of the LXX is shorter than that of MT and it also has a different sequence which may be recorded as 1–4, 5a, 9, 5b, 11. The same sequence is reconstructed for the fragmentary 4QJer^b in *DJD* XV. The fragment is small, but undoubtedly vv. 6–8 and 10 which are lacking in the LXX were also absent in the scroll. It is likely that vv. 5a, 9, 5b appeared in the scroll in that sequence, as in the LXX; the content of the scroll cannot be reconstructed in any other way.

The overall value of the LXX version of chapter 10 should be discussed within the framework of the evaluation of the book as a whole, but even if we concentrate on this chapter only, a few details are clear. The translation of this and the surrounding chapters is faithful enough in order to surmise that vv. 6–8 and 10 which are lacking in the LXX were not omitted by the translator, but were absent in his *Vorlage*. The content of these verses supports that conclusion. Chapter 10 presents a mockery on idols, reproaching their artificiality. Among other things the chapter stresses that the Israelites are not to behave like pagans in their attitude towards idols. The chapter also contains a few verses which extol the greatness of the Lord God of Israel, and precisely these verses, 6–8, and 10 are lacking in the LXX and 4QJer^b. As a result, we cannot escape the conclusion that these doxologies were added at a late stage in the development of the chapter, stressing the difference between the idols and the God of Israel.

This addition in MT to the original shorter text goes together with a change in the sequence of the verses. For even though the exact course of events can no longer be reconstructed, when vv. 6–8 and 10 were added in the edition of MT, they caused a change in the sequence of the verses.

8. *Jeremiah 46–51*

The differences between the LXX and MT regarding the location of the oracles against the nations in Jeremiah are greater in magnitude than the preceding examples. In MT these prophecies occur at the end of the book, out of context, while in the LXX they occur aptly after 25:13.¹⁰ The

⁹ See A. Rofé, "The Vineyard of Naboth—The Origin and Message of the Story", *VT* 38 (1988) 89–104. According to P.-M. Bogaert, "Le repentir d'Achab d'après la Bible Hébraïque (1 R 21) et d'après la Septante (3 Règnes 20)", in: *Élie le prophète—Bible, tradition, iconographie* (Leuven 1988) 39–57, the Greek sequence was based on a Hebrew text.

¹⁰ 'I will bring upon that land (scil. Babylon) all the words which I have uttered against it, everything written in this book (בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה), which Jeremiah prophesied against all the

LXX of Jeremiah which differs redactionally from MT also in other matters (cf. its short text as well as sequence differences in chapters 23 [mentioned above] and 31; see Tov, "Jeremiah"*) thus reflects an editorial difference in this matter as well. The very fact of the different location of the oracles against the nations in the MT and LXX reflects their secondary nature, although it remains difficult to decide which text reflects the original position. The location of the prophecies against the nations in the LXX is often taken as original, but A. Rofé and G. Fischer adduced strong arguments in favor of the secondary character of that location.¹¹

9. *Ezek 7:3–9*

Verses 3–4 and 8–9 of chapter 7 are almost identical, and there seems to be no literary reason for their repetition. The sequence of ideas in MT is difficult, and that of the LXX is equally problematic. For the LXX has the two identical sections next to each other; in fact, vv. 8–9 precede vv. 3–4 in the LXX. The two identical sections probably constitute a doublet, and one of the two parts was added in MT in one place and in the *Vorlage* of the LXX in another. Although this phenomenon presents a textual problem, the confusion must have arisen at the stage of the literary growth of the book. See in detail Tov, "Ezekiel."*

The analysis has attempted to establish a phenomenon in the literary development of the biblical books. Several sequence differences between the MT and the *Vorlage* of the LXX relate to late additions of sections whose position had still not been fixed when the archetypes of these two texts were composed.¹²

nations.' Since no such oracle against Babylon is found in the vicinity of chapter 25, and since the prophet probably had chapters 50–51 in mind, the words 'in this book' must have referred to the whole collection now found in chapters 46–51. In that case v. 13 must be understood as in the LXX, viz., with a full stop after the words *בספר הזה* and with the understanding that the next words are the heading of the collection of oracles against the nations: 'that which Jeremiah prophesied against all the nations' (*אשר נבא ירמיהו על כל* (הגוים).

¹¹ A. Rofé, "The Arrangement of the Book of Jeremiah," *ZAW* 101 (1989) 390–398; G. Fischer, "Jer 25 und die Fremdvölkerversprüche—Unterschiede zwischen hebräischem und griechischem Text," *Bib* 72 (1991) 474–499.

¹² Similar phenomena have been recognized in the text of the Talmud. See S. Friedman, "A Critical Study of *Yevamot* X with a Methodological Introduction," *מאסף למדעי היהדות*—*מחקרים ובקורות* (New York 1978) esp. 305–306.