On the whole the Christians were disposed to charge the Jews with falsifying their Scriptures out of hatred to Christianity,—a charge which has left its echoes even in the Koran. But some less prejudiced scholars did not share this current view, and went so far in the other direction as simply to identify the Jewish text with the authentic original. Thus they fell into the mistake of holding that the later Jewish text was that from which the Septuagint translators worked, and by which their work was to be tested and measured. On these critical principles Origen prepared his famous *Hexapla,* in which he placed alongside of the Septuagint, in six parallel columns, the three younger versions and the Hebrew text in Hebrew and in Greek characters. The Septuagint text he corrected after the younger versions, marking the additions of the LXX. with a prefixed obelus ( —, ÷ ), as a sign that they should be deleted, and supplying omis­sions, generally from Theodotion, with a prefixed asterisk («). The end of the passage to which the obelus or asterisk applied was marked with a metobelus (∙<). The same signs were used for various readings, the read­ing of the LXX. being obelized, and the variant, from another version corresponding to the Hebrew text, follow­ing it with an asterisk. It was only in simpler cases, however, that this plan could be carried through without making the text quite unreadable ; the more complicated variations were either tacitly corrected or left untouched, the reader being left to judge of them by comparing the parallel columns. Origen made most change in the proper names, which he emended in conformity with the Jewish pronunciation of the period, and in the order of the text, which, to preserve the parallelism in the columns, he made to follow the Hebrew. @@1

Origen’s critical labours had a very great influence in shaping the text of the Septuagint, though in quite another direction than he designed. Even before his time the Septuagint was largely contaminated by admixture from the other versions, but such alterations now began to be made systematically. Thus he intensified a mischief which to be sure had begun before him, and even before the labours of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus. The most significant evidence of this contamination of the text lies in the conflate readings, where the same Hebrew words are translated twice, or sometimes even thrice, or where two Hebrew readings of the same passage are represented, sometimes by simple juxtaposition of renderings that differ but slightly, at other times by a complicating inter­lacing of very different forms of the Greek. These con­flate readings, however, in which the true reading survives along with the false, are the least fatal corruptions ; in many cases the genuine text has disappeared altogether before the correction, as can be seen by comparing different MSS. A faithful picture of the corruption of the text of the Septuagint as it has come down to us is given in the apparatus to the great Oxford edition of Holmes and Parsons (5 vols., Oxford, 1798-1827).

Not long after Origen there arose almost contemporane­ously three recensions of the Septuagint, which became established in three regions of the Greek Church. “ Alex­andria et Ægyptus in Septuaginta suis Hesychium laudat auctorem, Constantinopolis usque Antiochiam Luciani martyris exemplaria probat, mediæ inter has provinciae Palestinæ codices legunt, quos ab Origene elaboratos Eusebius et Pamphilus vulgaverunt; totusque orbis hac inter se trifaria varietate compugnat,” says Jerome in the *Præf. in Paralip. ad Chromatium.* According to this the text of Eusebius is that of Origen, *i.e.,* a separate edition of the fifth column of the Hexapla, which contained the

Septuagint with asterisks and obeli. The text of Hesychius has not yet been identified with certainty @@2; that of Lucian is, according to Field and Lagarde, most probably given in *Codd. Holmes.,* 19, 82, 93, 108, and another series of MSS. for the prophets. It is by no means the case, however, that all our MSS. can be arranged in three families; many belong to none of the three recensions, and among these are such important codices as the Alexandrian (A) and the Vatican (B).

The divergences of the LXX. from the Hebrew are particularly great in the books of Samuel and Kings, also in the prophets, especially in Ezekiel, and still more in Jeremiah, and finally also in Job and Proverbs. In Jeremiah the differences extend to the order of the chapters in the second half of the book, and therefore have always attracted special attention. In Proverbs too the individual proverbs are differently arranged in the LXX., and similar differences can be traced in the versions of Ecclesiasticus. In the Pentateuch there are considerable variations only in the last part of Exodus. The text of the genuine Septuagint is generally shorter than the Massoretic text.

The chief editions of the Septuagint are—(1) the Complutensis, 1514-17 ; (2) the Aldine, 1516 ; (3) the Sixtine, 1587 ; (4) the first Oxford edition by Grabe, 1707-20 ; (5) the second Oxford edition by Holmes and Parsons, 1798-1827 ; (6) Lagarde’s edition of Lucian, vol. i., Gottingen, 1883.

The LXX. is of great importance in more than one respect : it is probably the oldest translation of consider­able extent that ever was written, and at any rate it is the starting-point for the history of Jewish interpretation and the Jewish view of Scripture. And from this its im­portance as a document of exegetical tradition, especially in lexical matters, may be easily understood. It was in great part composed before the close of the canon—nay, before some of the Hagiographa were written—and in it alone are preserved a number of important ancient Jewish books that were not admitted into the canon. As the book which created or at least codified the dialect of Bib­lical Greek, it is also the key to the New Testament and all the literature connected with it. But its chief value lies in the fact that it is the only independent witness for the text of the Old Testament which we have to compare with the Massoretic text. Now it may seem that the critical value of the LXX. is greatly impaired, if not entirely cancelled, by the corrupt state of the text. If we have not the version itself in authentic form we cannot reconstruct with certainty the Hebrew text from which it was made, and so cannot get at various readings which can be confidently confronted with the Massoretic text ; and it may be a long time before we possess a satisfactory edition of the genuine Septuagint. But fortunately in this case sound results in detail must precede and not follow the establishment of a text sound throughout. The value of a Septuagint reading must be separately deter­mined in each particular case, and the proof that a read­ing is good is simply that it necessarily carries us back to a Hebrew variant, and cannot be explained by looseness of translation. It is therefore our business to collect as many Greek passages as possible which point to a various

@@@1 The best collection of the fragments of the Hexapla is that of Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quæ supersunt,* Oxford, 1875.

@@@2 See, however, Ceriani’s note on the recensions of LXX. in the *Rendiconti* of the R. Instituto Lombardo for 18th February 1886, where it is shown that the *Codex rescriptus Dublinensis,* Holmes, viii., edited at Dublin, 1880), and other MSS. written in Egypt, which Ceriani had already cited in his *Monumenta* (vol. iii. p. xx.) present many features of correspondence with the Coptic versions and with the readings of Cyril of Alexandria. “ All these documents at any rate present the character of the Hesychian recension, being all Egyp­tian testimonies contemporary with or little later than Jerome. ” Most of their characteristic readings appear also in MS. Holmes, 106, to which MSS. 26, 33, 86, 97, 198, 206 are also akin. For an attempt to determine the MSS. containing or akin to the Hesychian recension in Ezekiel, see Cornill, *Das Buch Ezechiel,* Leipsic, 1886, p. 66 *sq.*