roll of the law. They were honourably received at the court of Alexandria and conducted to the island (Pharos), that they might work undisturbed and isolated. When they had come to an agreement upon a section Demetrius wrote down their version; the whole translation was finished in seventy-two days. The Jewish community of Alexandria was allowed to have a copy, and accepted the version officially; indeed a curse was laid upon the introduction of any changes in it.

There is no question that this *Letter* (which is condensed in Josephus, *Ant.* xii. 2) is spurious.@@1 Aristeas, an official at Ptolemy’s court, is represented as a heathen, but the real writer must have been a Jew and no heathen. Aristeas is represented as himself a member of the embassy to Eleazar; but the author of the *Letter* cannot have been a contemporary of the events he records, else he would have known that Demetrius fell out of favour at the very beginning of the reign of Philadelphus, on a charge of intriguing against his succession to the throne.@@2 Nor could a genuine honest witness have fallen into the absurd mistake of making delegates from Jerusalem the authors of the Alexandrian version. There are also one or two passages (§§ 28, 182) where the author seems to forget that he is playing the rôle of Aristeas. The forgery, however, seems to be an early one.@@3 “ There is not a court-title, an institution, a law, a magistracy, an office, a technical term, a formula, a peculiar phrase in this letter which is not found on papyri or inscriptions and confirmed by them.”@@4 That in itself would not necessarily imply a very early date for the piece; but what is decisive is that the author limits canonicity to the law and knows of no other holy book already translated into Greek. Nor does he claim any inspiration for the translators. Further, what he tells about Judaea and Jerusalem is throughout applicable to the period when the Ptolemies bore sway there and gives not the slightest suggestion of the immense changes that followed the conquest of Palestine by the Seleucids. It is probable that the Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, who lived under Ptolemy VI. Philometor (180-145 B∙C∙), derived his account of the origin of the LXX. from this *Letter,* with which it corresponds.@@5 There seems good ground for believing that the letter contains some elements derived from actual tradition as to the origin of the LXX. Ptolemy Philadelphus was a king of eclectic literary tastes, and the welcome he gave to a Buddhist mission from India might well have been extended to Jews from Palestine. The letter lays great stress on the point that the LXX. is the official and authoritative Bible of the Hellenistic Jews, having not only been formally accepted by the synagogue at Alexandria, but authorized by the authorities at Jerusalem. This, and the fact that the style of the version is not that of a book intended for literary use, points to the conclusion that the translation was made to satisfy the religious needs of the Jews in Alexandria, and possibly also in the hope of gaining proselytes. In view of the Jewish prejudice against *writing* Scripture in any but the old holy form (the Targum, for instance, was for centuries handed down orally), it is quite possible that some impulse to the Alexandrian version came from without. Philadelphus may have encouraged it both to satisfy his own curiosity and to promote the use of Greek among the large Jewish population of the city. That the work is purely Jewish in character is

only what was inevitable in any case. The translators were necessarily Jews, though Egyptian and not Palestinian Jews, and were necessarily and entirely guided by the living tradition which had its focus in the synagogal lessons.@@6 And hence it is easily understood that the version was ignored by the Greeks, who must have found it barbarous and largely unintelligible, but obtained speedy acceptance with the Jews, first in private use and at length also in the synagogue service.

The next direct evidence which we have as to the origin of the LXX. is the prologue to Ecclesiasticus, from which it appears that about 130 B.c. not only the law but “the prophets and the other books ” were extant in Greek.@@7 With this it agrees that the text of Ecclesiasticus and the other ancient relics of Jewish-Greek literature, preserved in the extracts made by Alexander Polyhistor (Eusebius, *Praep. Eυ.* ix.), all show acquaintance with the LXX.@@8 The experiment on the Pentateuch (of which alone *Aristeas* speaks) had evidently been extended to other rolls as they arrived from Jerusalem. These later translations were not made simply to meet the needs of the synagogue, but express a literary movement among the Hellenistic Jews, stimulated by the favourable reception given to the Greek Pentateuch, which enabled the translators to count on finding an interested public. If a translation was well received by reading circles among the Jews, it gradually acquired public acknowledgment and was finally used also in the synagogue, so far as lessons from other books than the Pentateuch were used at all. But originally the translations were mere private enterprises, as appears from the prologue to Ecclesiasticus and the colophon to Esther. It appears also that it was long before the whole Septuagint was finished and treated as a complete work. We may grant that the Pentateuch (and perhaps part of Joshua) was translated in the 3rd century b.c. The other books followed, generally speaking, in the order in which they occur in the Hebrew Canon. Isaiah perhaps dates from c. 1 80, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Twelve Prophets, as also 1 Kings ( = 1 Samuel), *c.* 150. Most of the “ Writings,” together with Judges and 2-4 Kings, were probably translated in the 1st century b.c., while Ecclesiastes and Daniel (the latter incorporated from Theodotion) date only from the 2nd century of the Christian era.

As the work of translation went on so gradually, and new books were always added to the collection, the compass of the Greek Bible came to be somewhat indefinite. The law always maintained its pre-eminence as the basis of the canon; but the prophetic collection changed its aspect by having various Hagiographa incorporated with it according to an arbitrary arrangement by subjects. The distinction made in Palestine between Hagiographa and Apocrypha was never properly established among the Hellenists. In some books the translators took the liberty of making considerable additions to the original, *e.g.* those to Daniel, and these additions became a part of the Septuagint. Nevertheless, learned Hellenists were quite well aware of the limits of the canon and respected them. Philo can be shown to have known the Apocrypha, but he never cites them, much less allegorizes them or uses them in proof of his tenets. And in some measure the widening of the Old Testament canon in the Septuagint must be laid to the account of Christians.

The vocabulary and accidence of the Greek of the Septuagint are substantially those of the κoo\*⅛ ÔtáXefíros or Hellenistic Greek spoken throughout the empire of Alexander. The language of the Pentateuch attains the higher level shown by the papyri of the early Ptolemaic age, that of the prophets reflects the less literary style of the papyri of *c.* 130-100 B.c. In the latest parts of the translation Mr St John Thackeray notes two opposing influences, (a) the growing reverence for the letter of Scripture, tending to a pedantic literalism, (*b*) the influence of the Atticistic school, strongest in free writings like 4 Maccabees but leaving its mark also on 4 Kings. But if in some respects the Septuagint is the great monument of the *κoudu* in

@@@1 Its claims were demolished by Humphry Hody, Regius Pro- fessor of Greek at Oxford, in 1684.

@@@2 Hermippus Callimachius, *ap.* Diog. Laërt. v. 78. Irenaeus indeed, evidently following some other account, fixes the translation in the time of Ptolemy 1.

@@@3 P. Wendland, however, puts it after the Maccabean age (say 96 **n.c.)** and before the Roman invasion of Palestine (63 **B.c.).**

@@@4 G. Lumbroso, Recherches sur l'écon. pol. de l'Égypte sous tes Lagides (Turin, 1870), p. xiii.

@@@5 Clem. Alex. *Strom.* i. p. 342, ed. Sylb.; Eusebius, *Praep. Εv.* ix. 6, p. 410 seq.; cf. Valckenaer, *Diatribe de Aristobulo* (Leiden, 1806), reprinted in Gaisford’s edition of the *Praep. Εv.* One must not over­look the possibility that Aristobulus’s *Interpretation of the Holy Laws* may itself be the pseudonymous work of some otherwise unknown Jewish author. It and the *Letter of Aristeas* seem to be of the same date, if not even by the same hand. And Philo (*Vita* *Mosis,* ii § 7, fi. 141) describes an annual festival held at Pharos in honour of the origin of the Greek Bible.

@@@6 It is quite likely that they worked on rolls newly brought from Jerusalem. There was no desire to found an Alexandrian canon or type of text.

@@@7 This does not necessarily mean that the whole of the section of the Hebrew Old Testament known as “ The Writings ” was translated by that date.

@@@8 Philo seems to have known the Greek version of most of the Old Testament except Esther, Ecclesiastes, Canticles and Daniel.