

**THE WITNESS OF THE VULGATE,  
PESHITTA AND SEPTUAGINT TO THE  
TEXT OF ZEPHANIAH. CONTRIBUTIONS  
TO ORIENTAL HISTORY AND  
PHILOLOGY NO. IV. PP. 1-51**

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The Witness of the Vulgate, Peshitta and Septuagint to the Text of Zephaniah. Contributions to oriental history and philology No. IV. pp. 1-51 by Sidney Zandstra

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*Columbia University.*

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No. IV

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OF THE  
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TO THE  
TEXT OF ZEPHANIAH

BY  
SIDNEY ZANDSTRA

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY, IN THE FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY  
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NEW YORK  
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NOTE.

No complete examination of the relation of the chief Versions of the Old Testament to the original Hebrew has been made with especial reference to the Book of Zephaniah. Dr. Zandstra has in the following Essay supplied this want with much care and discretion.

RICHARD GOTTHEIL.

May 20th, 1909.

201580





## INTRODUCTION.

§ I. It is proposed in the following pages to study the text of Zephaniah in the light of the ancient primary versions. This study was undertaken largely to become familiar with Old Testament Criticism—a field of which it is peculiarly true that orientation is possible only at first hand. The choice of so short a text is vindicated by the almost unanimous verdict of scholars that the work of the translators of these versions is very uneven in quality. It is in fact still a moot question whether the Minor Prophets were translated into Greek by one individual or by many; and the arguments that have been advanced<sup>1</sup> to show that the Peshitta is not really a deliberate translation, but rather the final stereotyped form that traditional renderings of various origins assumed, have never been satisfactorily met. The reasons for the choice of this particular text are two. (a.) Though the Hebrew of Zephaniah presents many difficulties, no complete study of its text corresponding to such work as has been done on Micah by Ryssel<sup>2</sup> seems ever to have been made. (b.) In critical commentaries it always occupies a subordinate place among the Minor Prophets, and in textual studies it is entirely overshadowed by the more important books of the division of the Canon to which it belongs.<sup>3</sup> This neglect, whatever its explanation may be, makes Zephaniah a good choice for a textual study. As it would be fatal presumption for one to ignore the work of predecessors, whether it bore directly or indirectly on one's theme, it

<sup>1</sup> Perles, *Metalemata Peschittontana*, 1869, p. 48.

<sup>2</sup> Ryssel, *Untersuchungen über die Textgestalt und die Echtheit des Buches Micha*, 1867.

<sup>3</sup> Schwally's *Das Buch Zephania*, Z.A.T.W. (1885), pp. 183 ff., is the only separate commentary outside of the well-known English and German critical series accessible to the general student. Bachmann has written specifically about the text of Zephaniah in an article entitled *Zur Textkritik des Propheten Zephania*, S.K. (1894); his article is, however, but a statement of conclusions, and it is characterized by a most reckless spirit of conjecture. Here and there a brief note on some proposed emendation is to be found; cf. Z.A.T.W. (1885), pp. 183 ff. and Z.A.T.W. (1891), pp. 185 f., 280 ff.

goes almost without saying that all available sources of information have been carefully examined and freely laid under tribute. That which is presented, while based on original investigation, has thus also of necessity the virtue of being a more or less complete digest of the work of others.<sup>1</sup>

§ II. Because Old Testament Criticism is still for many reasons a wilderness through which each one must in large part blaze his own trail, it seems necessary to preface the statement of the method chosen in this examination by some more general remarks that shall not only explain it, but also justify its use.

(A.) The thesis that all extant Hebrew sources for the text of the Old Testament, both in manuscript and in print, go back to a first century archetype, was first advanced by Lagarde in 1863. The chief supports of this thesis are the remarkable uniformity that is found in the manuscripts on the one hand, and the supposedly large number of corruptions in the text on the other. These two phenomena are mutually exclusive in an ancient document that has been accurately transmitted from its autograph, and their conjunction in this case is said to demand a comparatively late date for the common source to which all manuscripts and printed editions converge. The date of this hypothetical archetype is fixed in the first century by certain external characteristics that the text presents and by known facts in Jewish History.<sup>2</sup> Strack, who about thirty years ago could pass over this view in silence,<sup>3</sup> states in his article on the *Text of the Old Testament* in

<sup>1</sup> A bibliography has not been prepared because complete lists of the literature that must be consulted abound. Berger (*Histoire de la Vulgate pendant les premiers siècles du moyen âge*), Swete (*The Old Testament in Greek*) and Nestle (*Urtext und Übersetzungen der Bibel*, reprinted in the *Real-Encyclopädie für protest. Theologie und Kirche*) are practically exhaustive as far as the general literature is concerned. To the commentaries mentioned in *Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* (article Zephaniah) those of Marti and Driver must be added; in the miscellaneous literature Ehrlich (*Mikrod Ki-Phechut*, III, pp. 456-468) may well be included. This last work is written in Hebrew, but a German translation of the passages discussed is given.

<sup>2</sup> In a few characteristic paragraphs (*Symnecia*, II, pp. 120, 121), intended primarily to show that this thesis was entirely original with himself, Lagarde incidentally gives a brief account of how it had been received by scholars up to 1860. It appears that Olshausen had independently reached a very similar view through a different process of reasoning. Cf. further Swete, *Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, pp. 313-320; W. R. Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 56; Driver, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of Samuel*, pp. xxxix ff.

<sup>3</sup> Lagarde, *Symnecia*, II, p. 120.

*Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible* that it is accepted by most moderns. He himself does not accept it, but holds that the custom of consigning manuscripts that had been damaged by the tooth of time, by fire, or by water, or that were found to contain more than a certain number of mistakes, to the so-called *genizah*, which was generally a room in the cellar of a synagogue, is sufficient to explain all the phenomena. This thesis, whether true or not, offers striking proof that the present Hebrew text gives but scant aid in tracing its own history beyond a certain point, or in fixing its earliest form. Moreover, there are but few manuscripts, of which none are very old, and textual types—the chief material for the criticism of texts—are thus not to be found.<sup>1</sup> But it is a cardinal principle of criticism that to recover the true text of an ancient document it is first necessary to know its history; and that manuscripts, although the text which they contain is undated and unlocalized, generally furnish the primary data for reconstructing this history with the help of versions, which serve in a secondary capacity to fix the time and place of origin of the different textual types that the manuscripts present. In the Old Testament, however, there are no types of text in regard to which versions can be made to indicate a choice, but they themselves become the principal data. Instead of being called on to show from which particular type of two or more existing types it was made, a version must surrender the text on which it was based, in order that it may then be decided whether that text agrees with or differs from the single Hebrew textual type. Because a version must thus itself yield the text from which it was made, Old Testament Criticism is complicated by all the variable factors necessarily connected with translation and translators.

(B.) Languages are for the most part so different in genius that translation from one into another is often impossible without theft

<sup>1</sup> Ginsburg's new *Edition of the Hebrew Bible according to the Massoretic Text of Jacob Ben Chayim* (British and Foreign Bible Society, August, 1908) contains the results of a collation of 71 manuscripts and 19 early printed editions. The editor has presumably used everything that seemed worth using in this latest edition and yet there are at most but 27 manuscripts and 9 early printed editions of the Prophets cited. The earliest of the manuscripts is dated 916 A. D. Although sixth century dates have been defended for certain manuscripts, that of the Pentateuch from circa 830-860 (Or, 4465) and the Karaitic synagogue manuscript of the Latter Prophets, 'written 827 years after the destruction of the Temple,' i. e., 856 A. D., are generally regarded as the oldest.