

**THE MASSORETIC TEXT  
AND THE  
ANCIENT VERSIONS  
OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649319558

The Massoretic text and the ancient versions of the Book of Micah by John Taylor

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**JOHN TAYLOR**

**THE MASSORETIC TEXT  
AND THE  
ANCIENT VERSIONS  
OF THE BOOK OF MICAH**



THE  
MASSORETIC TEXT  
AND THE  
ANCIENT VERSIONS  
OF  
THE BOOK OF MICAH.

BY  
JOHN TAYLOR, M.A. (LOND.).

*Καὶ εἰ μὲν καλῶς καὶ εὐθιῶτως τῆ συντάξει ταῦτα καὶ αὐτὸς ἤθελεν· εἰ δὲ  
εὐτελῶς καὶ μετρίως ταῦτα ἐφικτὸν ἦν μοι.—2 MACC. xv. 39.*

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE,  
14, HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, LONDON;  
AND 20, SOUTH FREDERICK STREET, EDINBURGH.

1890

## PREFACE.

---

IN the writer of an essay on the text of Micah it would be mere affectation to profess that he has attacked the subject without knowing, and to some extent being affected by, the views of others. He would at the outset lie open to the pertinent inquiry into the reason for his selecting this particular portion of the Old Testament. The present writer was fully aware of the existence of two directly opposed opinions, one of which holds the Massoretic Text to be in an extremely unsatisfactory state, whilst the other maintains that it has undergone but little corruption. But it seemed to him quite feasible to work out his own conclusions by careful observation of the phenomena presented by the current Hebrew Text and the Ancient Versions, and then to reconsider those conclusions in the light of the various results which his

predecessors have obtained. In this way a substantial independence would be secured whilst the unpardonable presumption would be avoided of leaving unnoticed the work already done. The consequence of this reference to the criticisms of others has in some cases been the alteration or modification of the views adopted and in others the retention and defence of them. Ryssel's "*Untersuchungen über die Textgestalt und die Echtheit des Buches Micha*" calls for special mention in this connection. Much of the matter found in these notes is also to be found in Ryssel. But it is believed that the difference between the modes in which this common matter is handled in the two essays respectively will sufficiently prove that the remarks common to both have not been borrowed. No two men can traverse the same ground on the same quest without being struck by the same prominent features, and it would have been an unworthy yielding to the fear of being accused of plagiarism to delete what had been written on finding that it had been in greater or less part anticipated.

The result of the inquiry into the character of the Massoretic Text needs hardly any other setting forth than that which is supplied by the lists of proposed emendations which are printed at the close. They indicate the belief

that this text is in many passages corrupt, that the ancient Versions supply a considerable amount of help in restoring the original, and that where these fail conjectural emendations are open to us. To this, however, it must be added that in more than one instance it is impossible to arrive at anything like assured conviction.

The course of the inquiry brings out the fact that the LXX ought not to be credited with so overwhelming an influence over the other Versions as is frequently ascribed to it. To mention first the Peshiṭta. The late lamented Dr. Hatch, in his "Essays in Biblical Greek," p. 133, says: "The Latin and Eastern Versions of the Old Testament were made not from the Hebrew original but from the LXX Version," and on the same page includes the Syriac amongst these Eastern Versions. This is a mere *obiter dictum*, but unless corrected it may prove misleading. Leaving aside all consideration of the other books of Scripture it would be quite enough to read together the Peshiṭta and the Arabic of this book of Micah—the latter being confessedly a translation of the LXX—to compel the conclusion that the former, though greatly influenced by the highly esteemed Greek Version, is none the less a translation from the Hebrew. But it is necessary to go further. More than once Ryssel uses



such language as that on p. 100: "die Pesch. wie sonst abhängig von LXX sein könnte." That "wie sonst" is not justified by the facts. It might almost be laid down as a rule that where there is a real difficulty in the text the LXX and the Peshiṭta each pursue their own way. Geiger's characterization of the Version as a whole, "zum überwiegenden Theile nach dem Urtexte abgefasst", if qualified by the remark he elsewhere makes, "Der Syrer folgt hier, wie häufig in den Proph., den 70," is not far from the truth. Sebök, also, "Die syrische Uebersetzung der zwölf Kleinen Propheten," is undoubtedly justified when, in the Introduction, he lays stress on "die Zahlreichen und starken Berührungen mit dem gewöhnlichen jüdischen Targum." No account of the Peshiṭta would be correct which left this unmentioned.

With some modification a similar  *caveat*  might be entered against the terms in which the connection between the Vulgate and the LXX has been spoken of. Hatch's words, quoted above, do not draw the needful distinction between the Old Latin, which was made from the LXX, and the Vulgate. And Ryssel says, on vi. 7, "die Vulgata wie sonst von den LXX abhängig ist." No doubt the influence of the LXX on the Vulg. is deep and pervasive. But the best corrective of unduly strong

language on the subject is supplied by Jerome's Commentaries, where the Vulg. is printed along with his translation of the LXX, and the many discrepancies between the two are patent; where also, as well in his treatment of important Hebrew words as in the general course of his task, the great father is seen to be striving after results which shall be "juxta Hebraicam veritatem."

As a rule this essay has taken no account of the Arabic save when that translation forsakes the guidance of the LXX for that of the Peshitta, or when its renderings have some bearing on the various readings of the Greek Codices. Observations on the latter point confirm the already well-established fact that the type of text usually followed by the Arabic translator is that represented in the Codex Alexandrinus, and this the more markedly when the divergences of this codex from the Vatican MS. proceed from design and not from mere clerical errors. Most of the questions arising out of these divergences must be decided in favour of the Vatican.

From the textual critic's point of view the Targum is singularly disappointing. Much might have been expected from the linguistic tact of native paraphrasts writing in a cognate dialect. But there is scarcely a

difficulty which the Targumists have not evaded, and the points at which one is most anxious to be sure what their text was are the ones where we are reduced to utter uncertainty. On the other hand the so-called Targum of Jonathan can never fail to be interesting as one landmark on the line of Jewish thought, or, perhaps, it would be more correct to speak of it as exhibiting many successive landmarks; for there are in it elements belonging to many ages. An early writer would not have dared explicitly to name Rome as it is named in the Codex Renschlinianus at chap. vii. 10.

In a considerable number of instances it has seemed desirable to point out mistakes in the Latin translations which are given in the London Polyglot. No attempt has been made to enumerate all that occur. But the true sense of the Versions is so frequently obscured in the Latin renderings that it behoves everyone who notes this to do his part in indicating the danger of an implicit reliance on the translations.

Working for the most part at a distance from the great libraries involves the disadvantage of having few books available. For the Hebrew text Baer and Delitzsch's Edition has been consulted, as well as the London Polyglot and Athias: for the LXX the Polyglot, and Tischen-