

THE OLD TESTAMENT

A new, cutting-edge translation
of the Septuagint

VOLUME 2
THE HISTORICAL BOOKS

NICHOLAS KING

kevin
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For Jim and Heather, lovers and hearers of God's word

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Nicholas King is a Jesuit priest who, after many years in South Africa, now teaches New Testament at Oxford University. He is frequently in demand all over the world to lecture on biblical subjects.

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Many translations of the Bible opt for a uniform style; they iron out irregularities and try to amplify the text or produce easy-flowing reading or modern English. Nicholas King's fresh rendering of the Old Testament is not only innovative, but also illuminating; it will also strengthen the faith of readers. His translation is of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew text, because that was the Bible that the New Testament authors knew. His aim is to keep as close to the original Greek as possible, frequently incorporating idiomatic or grammatical peculiarities.

This results in a translation which is exceptionally stimulating, sometimes startling; readers will find that it shakes off the dust which often settles on passages that have become tired from overfamiliarity or frequent quotation. Nicholas King's translation is infused with raw power. Readers will gain new insights and find the Bible imbued with renewed meaning and vigour.

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Preface

Some people have asked me: Why translate the Old Testament from the Greek? Was it not originally written in Hebrew? Indeed it was, but the Greek text of the Old Testament is of interest to ordinary readers, for a number of reasons. In the first place, perhaps, one should mention that the Greek text (called the Septuagint, abbreviated to LXX, for reasons that we shall explain later) is the ‘bible’ of the New Testament authors. For the most part, this was the text that they knew, often by heart, and which they quote.

Secondly, the manuscripts of the Greek Old Testament are older than those of the Hebrew Bible, and often preserve an original reading, when the Hebrew Text (known as Masoretic Text, or MT) has forgotten it. We know from the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran, and elsewhere in the Judaean desert, that the community that hid those documents knew several different forms of what we call the ‘Old Testament’. There were at least three types of manuscript of Old Testament documents: those which resemble the text of our Hebrew Bible (‘proto-Masoretic’), those which resemble the Greek Bible (‘proto-Septuagint’), and those which resemble the Samaritan version of the first five books, or ‘Pentateuch’. So Jews of roughly the time when Jesus lived and taught, and when the New Testament was evolving, did not have a fixed form of their Scriptures; that was a later development. If you find that surprising, that is because you are used to the printed word, rather than manuscripts.

Thirdly, most Jews in the centuries on either side of the birth of Christ will have spoken not Hebrew or Aramaic, but Greek; so it is quite important for us to be able to see how they read their Old Testament texts. Different readings often arise in response to new needs; and, indeed, we can see something like this happening with regard to the Targumim, the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible, which often have new interpretations added, to deal with new situations that have arisen in the life of the believing community.

So it is my hope that in reading through this translation of the Greek Old Testament you will find something different and fresh in a text that is not ‘set in stone’, but alive and flexible, and prepared to address what is happening to God’s people today. That same word of God is alive and permanently new in our time also.

What is this ‘Septuagint’, and why do its friends call it LXX? ‘Septuaginta’ is the Latin for 70, and LXX (which you will frequently meet in the following pages) is the way the Romans wrote the number. There is a charming legend, preserved for us in various forms, that a committee of 72 (rather than 70) learned Jews miraculously produced an identical translation, in response to the request of King Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BC), who greatly admired the wisdom of his Jewish subjects. The earliest version of the story

in fact has the 70 scholars agreeing the translation verse by verse, which is perhaps more likely than the tale of simultaneous divine inspiration. Sometimes the telling of the story suggests that it was the entire Bible that was translated at that time, but it looks as though only the first five books of the Old Testament were translated into Greek, probably in the third century BC, and that the rest of the Bible followed later, in no particular order.

It is most likely that the initial translation was done in Alexandria, by Jews who were no longer at ease in Hebrew. So the translations (and one must speak in the plural, for there are clear signs that several different scholars were at work, probably in different centuries) were probably a response to the liturgical and educational needs of Greek-speaking Jews. This move away from Hebrew was a momentous shift, of course, and eventually led to all the rest of the Bible getting translated into Greek, a language that had much the same function in that world as English does today, a 'common language' that can be used all over the known world, and whose elegance and complexities are sacrificed in the process.

There was clearly a great explosion of Jewish writing in Greek in the three centuries before the birth of Jesus. Later on, Jewish thinkers started to reject the LXX. This was for various reasons: it was partly because the LXX became the 'Christian Bible'. But earlier than that, a trend had started of revising the LXX to bring it into line with the 'official' form of the Hebrew text. As early as the first century AD new Greek versions started to appear, and eventually the Hebrew Bible took on its present official status within Judaism. So for several centuries the Septuagint was the biblical text known to most Jews. We do not know who they were, these thinkers who first put the Bible into Greek; but they were clearly trying to produce a text that was both faithful to the original Hebrew and intelligible to their contemporaries, a gallant attempt which we must admire even while we try to do the same in our own day. It was also, of course, the version of the Bible known to the first Christians, although it is important to stress that we do not know precisely what text they used. The LXX is, it cannot be too strongly stressed, a more ancient witness to the text of the Old Testament than any surviving Hebrew manuscript; and we need to recall that both the Hebrew and the Greek tradition continued to undergo developments of various kinds. And we need to reflect on the implications of that fact.

Since this project began, another translation of the LXX has appeared in English; it is called '*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*' (known by the splendid acronym of NETS), and the reader may like to look at it, for purposes of comparison. The scholars who did this translation have taken a very different approach. It is very useful indeed, and I have found it helpful to see what they have done on occasional difficult passages. Their style has been different from mine, in that, for example, they have left Greek names in the Greek, whereas I have opted for the more familiar Hebrew forms of the names. There is something to be said for both these approaches.

My heartfelt thanks go to Peter Dainty, Yolande Trainor, Prof John Barton, Sr Jennifer Dines and Dr Alison Salvesen.

Nicholas King

Introduction to the Histories

After the first five books of the Bible (the ‘Pentateuch’), there now comes a change of tone. The People of God, whose adventures we have been following from Genesis to Deuteronomy, have to cross the Jordan and settle in the land. The collection of texts that cover this part is known as the ‘Histories’, the long sweep of historical narrative that takes us all the way from the entry into the Promised Land down to the dreadful moment when Israel’s leadership was taken off in chains to their Exile in Babylon. Scholars speak of this narrative as the ‘Deuteronomic History’, an account of the story of Israel that runs from Joshua to 2 Kings. It is written from the vantage point of that time when it seemed that Israel’s story had ended. It had not, of course, because it was the story of God, who is forever faithful; but the question remained: how could this catastrophe (the city destroyed, David’s monarchy ended, the Temple razed to the ground) possibly have happened, if the story about God was true?

The books that we shall be reading in this section address this question; but their range is even wider than this might imply. The Hebrew Bible calls them ‘The Former Prophets’; we call them the ‘Deuteronomic History’: Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings. Rather confusingly for us, these last four books are known in LXX as 1–4 ‘Reigns’ (or ‘Kingdoms’). However, we shall be calling them by the more widely-used titles. In addition, the histories contain the charming little Book of Ruth; its four chapters interrupt the sequence of the Deuteronomic History, but are nevertheless an agreeable addition to it. Then come 1 and 2 Chronicles, followed by Ezra–Nehemiah. (Chronicles are known in LXX as *Paralipomena*, or ‘the things left out’). These books belong together, and may have emerged from the same circles. They are part of the same story of the People of God, but written from a perspective where the Temple has been restored, and services are once more taking place in the rebuilt house of God.

Before we continue, it may be good to define what we mean by the ‘Deuteronomic History’. We have already indicated that it is the name given to the historical writings that go from Joshua to 2 Kings. It is called ‘Deuteronomic’ because it takes its inspiration from the Book of Deuteronomy, and in particular its insistence on serving only one God, in only one place (Shiloh in the Books of Joshua and Judges, Jerusalem once you get to David). We do not know who the historians were whom we call ‘Deuteronomic’, but they are thought to have been writing either in the reign of King Josiah (640–609 BC) or at the time of Israel’s exile. What it does is to trace the story of Israel from their first entry into the Promised Land, all the way through to the disaster of the deportation of Babylon, trying to explain what God was

up to in the whole story; to cut a long story short, the explanation offered is in terms of the people's infidelity and God's unfailing fidelity.

At this point, the reader may need to know that the Greek canon and the Hebrew canon are not identical. For Greek-speaking Jews in the centuries before the birth of Jesus, they also gave importance to some books that you will find in the following pages, but not in the Hebrew Bible, namely Tobit, Judith, 1 and 2 Maccabees. Tobit and Judith are different again; they are set, almost as parables, in the history of God's people, telling the story of individuals, to give Israel confidence in their current difficulties. Esther also fits into this pattern, though it does appear in the Hebrew canon. It is a charming story of the victory of God and the People of God over all their enemies, another 'parable for our times'. More will be said about all these texts in their respective introductions. 1 and 2 Maccabees will likewise have an introduction of their own, but it may be enough to say here that they deal with the revolt against forced inculturation into Hellenistic ways that took place in the early second century BC, and therefore raise questions about what the People of God should look like. All the books in this collection deal with Israel's sense of itself as a people. The people finds its identity in that it is called by the God known by the sacred (and unpronounceable) name of YHWH. And part of being that people is an unfailing obedience to the duties and responsibilities that God's choice imposes.

In all these books, it is imperative that we notice the uniqueness of Israel's self-understanding. Only Israel had this theology of history, whereby God had led them out of slavery, into statehood (and out again), and that same God was still with his people, though jealously demanding their absolute fidelity; there was room for no competing deity whatever. Unless we grasp this we shall simply not understand the theme of 'divine anger' that runs through the Deuteronomic History, focused on anything that smacks of apostasy towards other gods. One way of reading this Deuteronomic History is to see it as a justification of God, from the standpoint of the Exile, and the shattering of all Israel's hopes.

Joshua (Jesus)

Introduction

This book is named, obviously enough, after a single person, because that person so dominates the story. That will change in the next book, which we call 'Judges'; but notice the name of our present book. In Greek it is 'Jesus', and when a Christian reads it in Greek, the name always causes a shock. In conformity with our normal practice, we shall preserve the conventional form, based on the Hebrew, and call this charismatic leader 'Joshua', but I should like the reader to think 'Jesus' every time the name appears, to get a sense of what it was like for the first Christian readers of the text. The letter to the Hebrews (see 4:8, 14, for example) makes considerable use of this; and you might like to look at Joshua 3:1 ('And Joshua arose, early in the morning'), and think how Christians acquainted with Mark 1:35 might have read it. That echo was there all the time for our forebears, for whom the LXX was their Bible.

Be warned, however: there is what we today regard as some rather chilling reading in the Book of Joshua, and from a perspective that is wholly opposed to war, and more open to the woman's point of view, not to mention contemporary ideas about how to treat prisoners of war, you may find this book rather strong medicine. But keep reading.

The Book of Joshua (Jesus) is the story of the children of Israel entering and slowly conquering Canaan; whereas Moses (as we saw in Deuteronomy) was only permitted to behold the Promised Land from the safe distance of Mount Nebo, Joshua actually led them in. Joshua is seen in this book as the agent of God, directing the conquest of Canaan, and the division of the land among the tribes. As the story unfolds, look out for two important themes: first, God graciously promised to give the land to his people – and God is always faithful. Second, God always punishes disobedience; but fidelity is always rewarded. Later books of the Bible would question this too-easy equivalence between obedience and prosperity, but that is another story.

It is in this context that we are required to read the (to our ears) appalling destruction of the native Canaanite cities. Looking back from the disaster of Exile, the authors and editors of this text could see clearly the immense danger posed by the attractiveness of the pagan cults to the worship of the one true God. We live in a very different world, one where the enemy is seen (by those who shape public opinion) to be the holding of any religious belief or practice at all. One other thought that may help the reader is this: the Israelites here are the underdogs (think, perhaps, of Britain in the 1940s), and the reader is invited, not to think of 'those poor Canaanites', but to have a kind of school-boy excitement at the unexpected victories of God's people over a brutal

enemy. Not all readers, of course, will be able to share in this excitement, and some may regard it as a bit crude.

The theological frame of the work is thought by many scholars to be its opening and closing chapters (1, 22–24). The central teaching is unmistakably the importance of keeping the Law and God's Covenant, and, as we have said, of worshipping only YHWH, God of Israel. Related to this demand is the notion of the Holy War and of the *herem* (the total destruction, connected with the command to holiness, of the cities conquered by the invading forces). God is in sole charge, but at the same time we should notice that it is clear from the book that Israel and Canaan did in fact co-exist, so it is not possible to reconstruct with any certainty what precisely happened. Archaeologists nowadays tend to think of a peaceful settlement by Israel, or even a gradual emergence of Israel within the land. Most scholars will accept that there are genuine historical memories of Israel's early existence in Canaan. As with all Israel's account of itself, you cannot separate theology from historical memory. So, for example, the crossing of the Jordan in chapters 3 and 4 clearly evokes the memory of the crossing of the Red Sea. What matters to the author and the reader is not the reconstruction of what happened, but the encounter with the Living God.

It is hard to be precise about the structure of the book, but a reasonable division would look something like the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| i) Entering the land | (1:1–4:24) |
| ii) Conquest of the land | (5:1–12:24) |
| iii) Joshua divides the Promised Land | (13:1–21:45) |
| iv) How to serve the Lord in the land | (22:1–24:33) |

The quality of the translation

There are some important differences between the LXX and the MT; the Greek has some added verses, some verses that are missing, and some verses that are transposed. Quite often the LXX, it is clear, preserves a better reading than the MT. Overall, the Hebrew text is about five per cent longer than the Greek. There are various views on whether the Greek translator was dealing with a different Hebrew text. Most scholars these days think so, and are confirmed in this view by the discovery at Qumran of some fragments of Joshua that go back to the first century, and provide evidence of both the shorter LXX readings and the more expansive versions of the MT. Many scholars think that the extra verses in the MT (which are found mainly in the first part of the book) are secondary additions.

What of the quality of the Greek translation? For the most part, it is intelligent and faithful to the original, where we can confidently reconstruct it. This is especially the case for technical and religious vocabulary; the translator shows himself to be thoughtful and sophisticated, and it is in consequence not easy to do justice to him in English (he has, for example, a remarkable range of Greek words for fighting: no less than 14 Greek equivalents for a single Hebrew word!).

Occasionally we can detect him tightening things up, abbreviating a Hebrew text that he deems too repetitious, cutting out contradictions and inconsistencies, or things that are not clearly understood (we shall be indicating some of these in the notes). Likewise he occasionally offers a double translation of a single Hebrew word, just to make things absolutely clear. Quite

often, (as was the case also in the Pentateuch) he makes a point of following Hebrew word-order and syntax, which can occasionally lead to obscurity. But he is also capable of writing sophisticated Greek.

Enjoy your reading of this text, and admire the prayerful devotion of those Egyptian Jews to their sacred volumes.

Entering the land (1:1–4:24)

God's address to Joshua (1:1-11)

- 1:1 And it happened after the death of Moses that the Lord said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' assistant, saying,
 2 'Moses my servant has died. So up you get, and cross the Jordan, you and all this people, into the land which I am giving them.
 3 Every place on which you set foot with the sole of your feet, I shall give you, just as I promised to Moses;
 4 the wilderness and Antilebanon, as far as the Great River, the River Euphrates, and as far as the furthest sea, your frontiers shall be from the setting of the sun.
 5 No one shall resist you to your face, all the days of your life; and as I was with Moses, so I shall be with you. I shall not abandon you or neglect you.
 6 Be strong, and play the man; for you are going to divide among this people the land which I swore that I would give to your fathers.
 7 So be strong, and play the man, and be careful to do exactly as Moses my servant commanded you. You are not to deviate from them, neither to right nor to left, that you may be understanding in everything that you do.
 8 And the book of this Law shall not depart from your mouth; and you are to meditate on it day and night, that you may understand how to do all the things that are written in it. Then you shall prosper, and be prosperous in your ways; and then you shall understand.
 9 Look! I have commanded you. Be strong, and play the man; do not be cowardly or fearful, for the Lord your God is with you, wherever you go.'
- 10 And Joshua commanded the scribes of the people, saying,
 11 'Go into the middle of the people's camp, and give orders to the people, saying, "Get provisions ready; for in three days from now you are crossing this Jordan; you are going in to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you."'

Preparing to enter the land: everyone together (1:12-18)

- 12 And to Reuben and to Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said,

1:1 *Moses*: the Hebrew here has 'the servant of God'. Some scholars think that a different Hebrew text may underlie our Greek translation.

1:4 *the River Euphrates*: after this, the Hebrew adds 'the whole land of the Hittites'.
the furthest sea: MT has 'the great sea', meaning the Mediterranean.

1:6 *play the man*: this is, literally, what the Greek means. The Hebrew has 'be strong', and normally I would use more inclusive language, but this is for male soldiers who need encouragement (women have more sense). It was only the males who went into the army (unlike the modern

Israel Defence Force), and who perhaps needed to be encouraged with tales of Joshua's victories. There is also that group of soldiers who return from fighting for their country to find that the country is not particularly grateful to them.

1:12 *Reuben and to Gad, and . . . the half-tribe of Manasseh*: they are specifically mentioned because they had been given land East of the Jordan. The People of God must move in solidarity, each with the other, and these tribes are not to give in to the temptation of staying comfortably in their allotted land.

- 13 ‘Remember the word of the Lord which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, “The Lord your God has given you rest, and has given you this land.”
- 14 Your wives and your children and your cattle: let them stay in the land which he has given you. But you are to go across, well-armed, ahead of your fellow-Israelites, everyone who is strong; and you are to fight alongside them,
- 15 until the Lord your God gives rest to your fellow-Israelites as he has done to you, and they also inherit this land which the Lord our God is giving them. Then you are to go each to your own inheritance, which Moses has given you across the Jordan in the East.’
- 16 And they answered Joshua, and said, ‘Everything that you are commanding us, we shall do; and to every place where you send us, we shall go.
- 17 And in everything that we obeyed Moses we shall obey you; only let the Lord our God be with you, just as he was with Moses.
- 18 And everyone who disobeys you, and who does not listen to your words, as you command them, let them die. But be strong, and play the man.’

Joshua’s spies are given unexpected help in Jericho (2:1-24)

- 2:1 And Joshua son of Nun sent two young men from Shittim to do some spying. He said, ‘Go up and see the land, and Jericho.’ And the two young men went and entered Jericho, and they entered the house of a woman who was a prostitute, whose name was Rahab; and they lodged there.
- 2 And it was reported to the king of Jericho, ‘Some men of the children of Israel have entered here, to spy out the land.’
- 3 And the king of Jericho sent and spoke to Rahab, saying, ‘Bring out the men who entered your house tonight; for they have come to spy out the land.’
- 4 And the woman took the men and hid them, and spoke to the [king’s messengers], saying, ‘The men entered my house,
- 5 but when the gate was shut at dusk, the men went out; I do not know where they went. Hunt them down – after them! Perhaps you will overtake them!’
- 6 And she had taken them up to the roof, and hidden them in the stalks of flax that were piled up for her on the roof.
- 7 And the men hunted after them, on the way to the Jordan, at the crossing-points. And the gate was shut; and it happened, when the pursuers went out after them,
- 8 and before [the men] went to sleep, she went up to them on the roof,
- 9 and said to them, ‘I know that the Lord has given you the land; for the fear of you has fallen upon us.
- 10 You see, we have heard that the Lord God dried up the Red Sea before you, when you came out of the land of Egypt, and we have heard what great

1:14 *wives and your children and your cattle*: these stay at home while the men go out to war, and, of course, have to be protected.

1:17 *we shall obey you*: this enthusiasm on the part of the Eastern tribes (at least in theory; the practice, as we shall see, was rather different) will become something of a theme in this book.

2:1 *a woman who was a prostitute*: it is presumably significant that the first ally that the incoming Israelites find is not a member of the Canaanite urban elite, but one who was doubly on the margins of society. Nothing in the narrative

permits us to raise an eyebrow at the company the Israelite spies are keeping.

2:3 *Bring out the men* . . .: there may be an echo, here and in the next verses, of the clamour of the inhabitants of Sodom who wanted the men who had visited Lot’s house. See Genesis 19:5 (and read the whole chapter, for a thoroughly disedifying tale).

2:4 *men entered my house*: MT continues here, ‘and I do not know where they are from’.

2:7 *the men hunted after them*: there is an undeniable touch of farce here.

- things he did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of the Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you completely destroyed.
- 11 And when we heard it, we were stunned in our hearts; and there was no spirit left in any of us at your advance, because the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on earth below.
- 12 And now swear to me, by the Lord God, because I am performing an act of mercy for you, that you will also perform an act of mercy for the house of my ancestor,
- 13 and keep my ancestor's household alive: my mother and my brothers and sisters and all my household, and all that belongs to them, and that you will deliver my soul from death.'
- 14 And the men said to her, 'Our life for your life, even to death.' And she said, 'When the Lord delivers the city over to you, you will perform an act of mercy and truth for me.'
- 15 And she let them down through the window,
- 16 and said to them, 'Go off into the hill-country; otherwise the pursuers may run into you. Hide there for three days, until those who are pursuing after you return; and after that you are to go your way.'
- 17 And the men said to her, 'We are guiltless in the terms of this oath of yours.
- 18 Look! We shall enter a part of the city; and you are to place the sign: you are to tie this scarlet thread on the window through which you let us down, and you are to gather to yourself, in your house, your father and your mother, and your brothers and sisters, and the whole of your ancestor's household.
- 19 And it shall be that anyone who goes out of the door of your house will be responsible, and we shall be guiltless in terms of this oath of yours; but we shall be responsible for anyone who is with you in your house.
- 20 But if anyone harms us or reveals this business of ours, we shall be guiltless in terms of this oath of yours.'
- 21 And she said to them, 'According to your word, so let it be.' And she let them go.
- 22 And they went off, and came to the hill-country; and they stayed there for three days. And their pursuers searched all the roads, and failed to find them.
- 23 And the two young men returned, and came down from the mountain, and they went across to Joshua son of Nun, and recounted to him all the things that had happened to them.
- 24 And they told Joshua, 'The Lord has delivered the entire land into our power, and all the inhabitants of that land are trembling because of us.'

2:11 *the Lord your God is God*: this is a formal declaration of faith in Israel's God on the part of Rahab; see Deuteronomy 4:39.

2:12 *house of my ancestor*: the MT here continues, 'and you will give me a sign of good faith'. This never happens in the text, so the translator may have decided to cut it out.

2:15 *through the window*: here the Hebrew adds, 'because her house was inside the wall of the fortification'. Many scholars regard this as a later clarification in the Hebrew text, which does not make much sense, since the walls are going to fall down, and yet Rahab's house is going to be saved.

2:16 *into the hill-country*: this would mean travelling West from Jericho, in the opposite direction to that which their pursuers would expect.

2:21 *she said to them, 'According to your word...'*: there may be an echo of this in Mary's response to the angel in Luke 1:38. Verses 14-19 have an oddly formal flavour, given the dramatic situation in which they ostensibly take place.

she let them go: here the Hebrew adds, 'and she tied the scarlet cord in the window'. Scholars think that this was probably a later harmonisation.

2:22 *for three days*: MT adds, 'until the pursuers had gone home'. Again, this may be a later addition.

The crossing of the Jordan (3:1-17)

- 3:1 And Joshua arose, early in the morning, and they departed from Shittim; and they came as far as the Jordan, and they camped there before going across.
 2 And it happened after three days that the scribes went through the camp;
 3 and they gave orders to the people, saying, ‘When you see the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord our God and our priests and our Levites carrying it, then you are to move on from your places, and march after it.
 4 But let there be a distance between you and it; you are to stand as much as two thousand cubits from it. Do not go near it, that you may know the way that you are to go, for you have not gone that way before.’
 5 And Joshua said to the people, ‘Consecrate yourselves for tomorrow; because tomorrow the Lord is going to perform wonders among you.’
 6 And Joshua said to the priests, ‘Lift up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and go before the people.’ And the priests lifted up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and went ahead of the people.
 7 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘On this day I am beginning to exalt you before all the children of Israel, that they may know that just as I was with Moses, so I shall be with you also.
 8 And now command the priests who are carrying the Ark of the Covenant, saying, “As soon as you enter a part of the water of the Jordan, you are to stand in the Jordan.”’
 9 And Joshua said to the children of Israel, ‘Draw near, and listen to the word of the Lord our God.
 10 This is how you will know that there is a living God among you, and that he will certainly destroy the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Amorites and the Girgashites and the Jebusites before us.
 11 Look! The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth is crossing the Jordan.
 12 Choose twelve men for yourselves from the children of Israel, one from each tribe.
 13 And it shall be, when the feet of the priests who are carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth, come to a halt in the water of the Jordan, the water of the Jordan shall cease, and the water that is coming down shall stop.’
 14 And the people moved from their tents, to cross the Jordan. And the priests lifted up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord ahead of the people.
 15 And when the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant entered into the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant dipped into part of the water of the Jordan (the Jordan overflowed all its banks about the time of the wheat harvest),
 16 then the waters coming down from above stopped; there stood a single solid mass, a very long way off indeed, as far as the region of Kiriath Arim; and the

3:2 *it happened after three days*: this episode, too, has a formal, almost ritual and formulaic quality, as it is narrated.

3:4 *before*: literally ‘yesterday and the third day’. None of this sentence is in the MT; but this phrase is a Hebrew rather than a Greek expression. So this may be an example where LXX has preserved an older Hebrew reading.

3:8 *you are to stand*: the Greek translation here picks up the liturgical flavour of the Hebrew: ‘to stand’ is precisely to operate in a priestly manner.

3:11 *crossing the Jordan*: here the MT adds, ‘before you’.

3:16 *Kiriath Arim*: transcribing a Hebrew phrase meaning the ‘village of Arim’ or possibly ‘of mountains’. The MT is rather difficult, and probably means ‘the town by the side of Zarethan’.

water that was coming down went down into the Sea of Arabah, the Salt Sea, until it stopped. And the people stood opposite Jericho.

- 17 And the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord stood on dry land in the middle of the Jordan; and all the children of Israel crossed over on dry land, but the whole people had completed its crossing of the Jordan.

The twelve memorial stones set up at Gilgal (4:1-24)

- 4:1 And when the whole people had completed their crossing of the Jordan, then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying,
 2 ‘Take some men from the people, one from each tribe,
 3 and give them orders: you are to take twelve prepared stones from the middle of the Jordan, and after carrying them across along with yourselves, place them in your camp, where you are to bivouac for the night.’
 4 And Joshua summoned twelve men of high repute from among the children of Israel, one from each tribe.
 5 He said to them, ‘Go before me, before the face of the Lord, into the middle of the Jordan; and each one is to pick up a stone from there, and carry it on his shoulders, according to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel,
 6 for these to be a sign for you, permanently set up, so that when your children ask you tomorrow, saying, “What do these stones mean to us?”,
 7 you will then explain to your children, saying, “Because the Jordan River dried up before the face of the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth, when it crossed [the river], then these stones shall be a memorial for you, for the children of Israel for ever.”’
 8 And this is what the children of Israel did, just as the Lord had commanded Joshua. They took twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, (just as the Lord had commanded Joshua when the crossing of the children of Israel was complete), and they carried the [stones] along with them into the camp, and they placed them there.
 9 (And Joshua set up another twelve stones in the Jordan, in the place that was under the feet of the priests who carried the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord – and they are there until the present day).
 10 And the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant stood in the Jordan until Joshua had completed everything that the Lord had commanded him to announce to the people; and the people hurried across.
 11 And it happened, when the whole people had completed their crossing, that the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord went across, and the stones before them.
 12 And the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh crossed over, ready for battle, ahead of the children of Israel, as Moses had commanded them.

4:3 *twelve prepared stones*: here the Hebrew has ‘twelve stones from the place where the priests’ feet were fixed’. The translator may simply have gone for something a bit more comprehensible. But see the note on 4:11 below, where the priests have likewise been omitted.

4:4 *men of high repute*: the Hebrew has ‘men whom he had fixed (i.e. appointed)’. Some scholars think that our translator has made this change to emphasise that they are appropriate for their ritual function.

4:7 *of all the earth*: these words are not in MT; and LXX omits, possibly as pointless, the Hebrew text’s repetition of ‘dried up’ with regard to the waters of Jordan.

4:9 *another twelve stones*: here the Greek differs from the Hebrew, which has ‘the twelve stones he set up in the Jordan’, which is not easily compatible with their also being set up in the camp. It seems that our translator has tidied things up a bit.

4:11 *the stones*: MT adds here ‘and the priests before the people’. Is the translator omitting mention of the priests?

4:12 *ready for battle*: the Hebrew word here is a rare and difficult one, used only here and at 1:14 in Joshua; it is also found at Exodus 13:18 and Judges 7:11. At Joshua 1:14 a different Greek word was used, which I translated as ‘well-armed’.

- 13 Forty thousand, well-armed for battle, crossed before the Lord to war, to the city of Jericho.
- 14 And on that day, the Lord made Joshua great before the whole race of Israel; and they feared him, as they had [feared] Moses, as long as he lived.
- 15 And the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying,
- 16 ‘Command the priests who are carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord’s Testimony to come out of the Jordan.’
- 17 And Joshua commanded the priests, saying, ‘Come out of the Jordan.’
- 18 And it happened, when the priests who were carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came out of the Jordan, and placed their feet on the land, that the water of the Jordan rushed back to its place, and went as before, over all its banks.
- 19 And the people went up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month. And the children of Israel camped at Gilgal, on the eastern part, towards the sunrise from Jericho.
- 20 And these twelve stones which he had taken from the Jordan, Joshua set them up at Gilgal,
- 21 saying, ‘When your children ask you, saying, “What are these stones?”,
- 22 you are to declare to your children that Israel crossed the Jordan on dry land,
- 23 when the Lord our God dried up the water of the Jordan from before them, until they had gone across, just as the Lord our God had done with the Red Sea, which the Lord our God dried up before us, until we passed over,
- 24 so that all the nations of the earth might know that the power of the Lord is mighty, and that you might revere the Lord your God all the time.’

Conquest of the land (5:1–12:24)

The reaction of the peoples across the Jordan (5:1)

- 5:1 And when the kings of the Amorites who were across the Jordan, and the kings of Phoenicia, who lived by the sea, heard that the Lord God had dried up the Jordan River before the children of Israel, when they crossed over, their hearts melted, and they were struck with terror, and there was no wisdom in them, because of the children of Israel.

The circumcision at Gilgal (5:2-9)

- 2 At about this time, the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Make for yourself stone knives, from sharp stone, and sit down and circumcise the sons of Israel.’
- 3 And Joshua made sharp stone knives, and circumcised the children of Israel, at the place called ‘Hill of Foreskins’.

4:13 *well-armed*: here LXX uses the same word as at 1:14, but translating a different Hebrew term.

city of Jericho: this is the only time when Jericho is so described. The Hebrew here has ‘plains of Jericho’.

4:22 *the Jordan*: MT and some Greek manuscripts read ‘this Jordan’.

5:1 *Phoenicia*: MT here reads ‘Canaan’; LXX may simply be updating the geographical term.

wisdom: the Hebrew has ‘spirit’. This is the only time that the word is so translated into Greek, possibly out of a desire to align the Canaanite kings to Rahab (see 2:11).

5:2 *The circumcision at Gilgal*: the account in LXX is far shorter than that in the MT, and some scholars think it may be more original, and that the Hebrew version has been lengthened, to comply with the orders given by God to Abraham at Genesis 17:10-14.

circumcise the sons of Israel: MT adds ‘a second time’.

- 4 This was the way that Joshua purified the children of Israel: as many as were born during the journey, and as many of those who came out of Egypt who were uncircumcised,
 5 Joshua circumcised them all.
 6 Because for forty-two years Israel had wandered in the Midbarite desert, for that reason most of them, of the warriors who had come out of the land of Egypt were uncircumcised, those who had disobeyed God's commands. These were the ones whom he decided that they should not see the land which the Lord had sworn to their ancestors, to give us a land flowing with milk and honey.
 7 And instead of them, he raised up their sons, the ones whom Joshua circumcised, because they had been born on the journey, and were uncircumcised.
 8 And when they had been circumcised, they rested, sitting in the camp until they were healed.
 9 And the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun, 'On this day I have removed the reproach of Egypt from you.' And he called the name of that place 'Gilgal'.

Celebrating Passover (5:10-12)

- 10 And the children of Israel kept Passover on the fourteenth day of the month, from evening, West of Jericho, on the other side of the Jordan, in the plain.
 11 And they ate from the grain of the land, unleavened bread and new corn. On this day,
 12 the manna failed, after they had eaten of the grain of the land; and the children of Israel no longer had manna; and they enjoyed the fruits of the land of the Phoenicians in that year.

Joshua's encounter with God (5:13-15)

- 13 And it happened, when Joshua was in Jericho, he looked up and saw with his eyes a man standing before him; and there was a drawn sword in his hand; and Joshua approached, and said to him 'Are you ours, or do you belong to our enemies?'

5:4 *This was the way . . .*: it may be helpful here to give a version of what the Hebrew says, to show some of the differences: ⁴This was the reason why Joshua performed this circumcision. The whole people, who had come out of Egypt, the males, all the warriors, had died in the desert, on the journey, after they had come out of Egypt. ⁵While all of the people who had come out of Egypt had been circumcised, all those of the people who had been born in the desert, on the journey, after they came out of Egypt, had not been circumcised'. This seems to be an attempt to deny that anyone in Egypt could possibly not have been circumcised.

5:6 *forty-two years*: at Numbers 10:11 there is a reference to a possible two years of wandering in the desert before the Israelites reached Paran. But this is the only place where the calculations make it up to 42 years. For the most part the texts offer a round figure of 40 years (see, for example, Numbers 32:13; Deuteronomy 2:7&c); Deuteronomy 2:14, however gives 38 years, in both Hebrew and Greek.

Midbarite: oddly, what the Greek translator has done here is to transcribe the Hebrew word for 'desert', which he must have known perfectly well.

5:7 *they had been born on the journey, and were uncircumcised*: clearly both Greek and Hebrew feel some embarrassment at the story.

5:8 *they rested*: this is the only instance of this Greek term in the LXX. It seems that the translator has given two versions of the Hebrew word that means 'sat' or 'lived'.

5:9 *Gilgal*: the Hebrew word *galal* means 'to be round', or 'to roll'. The Greek merely transcribes the Hebrew.

5:10 *children of Israel*: MT here continues 'made camp at Gilgal'.

5:11 *they ate*: here the Hebrew adds 'on the day after the Passover', possibly to bring the text into line with Leviticus 23:5, 6, which has Passover starting at the end of the 14th day of the month, and going through the 15th day. LXX itself is in line with Exodus 12:18, where Passover starts at the beginning of the 14th day.

- 14 And he said to him, ‘I am the commander-in-chief of the Lord’s army; I have come now.’ And Joshua fell on his face on the ground, and said to him, ‘Master, what is your command to your servant?’
- 15 And the Lord’s commander-in-chief said to Joshua, ‘Untie the sandal from your feet; for this place on which you are standing is holy.’

The capture and destruction of Jericho (6:1-27)

- 6:1 And Jericho was enclosed and besieged; and no one was coming out of it, and no one was going into it.
- 2 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Look – I am delivering Jericho into your hands, and its king inside it, and those who are powerful in strength.
- 3 And you are to set the men of war around it.
- 4 []
- 5 And it shall be that when you sound the trumpet, then let all the people cry out together; and when they have cried out, then the city walls shall fall down of their own accord; and the whole people is to go in, each one rushing ahead into the city.’
- 6 And Joshua son of Nun went in to the priests,
- 7 and spoke to them, saying, ‘Tell the people to go round and surround the city; and the men of war are to march past, armed, before the Lord.
- 8 And seven priests with seven sacred trumpets are to go past, just so before the Lord; and let them give the signal loudly, and let the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord follow.
- 9 And the men of war are to march past in front, and the priests in the rear-guard, behind the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, marching, and blowing the trumpets.’
- 10 And Joshua commanded the people, saying, ‘Do not shout, and do not let anyone hear your voice, until he declares the day to shout out – and then you are to shout out.’
- 11 And the Ark of the Covenant of God went round the city, and immediately went back into the camp, and stayed there.
- 12 And on the second day, Joshua arose early in the morning; and the priests took up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord.
- 13 And the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went on before the Lord; and after this, the men of war went in, and the rest of the crowd, behind the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; and the priests blew on the trumpets; and the whole of the rest of the crowd surrounded the city from close by.
- 14 And they went back into the camp; they did this for six days.

5:15 *place on which you are standing is holy*: echoing, of course, Exodus 3:5. In this Book of Joshua, the author is keen to point up the parallels between the two great leaders. Immediately after this, MT adds, ‘and Joshua did so’.

6:1 *The capture and destruction of Jericho*: the Greek offers a slightly different, and generally shorter, account than the Hebrew. And it shows a wide vocabulary, especially for military terms. The Hebrew lays more emphasis on the ritual aspect of the siege.

6:3 *men of war around it*: here the Hebrew adds, ‘to surround the city once; thus they are to do for six days’; and the whole of MT verse 4 is missing: ‘Seven priests are to carry seven rams’ horns in front of the Ark; and on the seventh day, you are to go round the city seven times;

and the priests are to blow on the horns’. Does the Hebrew text represent a later liturgical embellishment of the story, and the Greek preserve the original version?

6:7 *before the Lord*: here MT has ‘before the Ark of the Lord’.

6:8 *And seven priests . . .*: in MT, this starts the account of the capture of Jericho, whereas in LXX it is a continuation of the Lord’s instructions to Joshua.

6:11 *stayed*: literally ‘slept’, which hardly makes sense for the Ark of the Covenant; but the Greek word is often used in LXX for a Hebrew word for to ‘lodge’ or ‘pass the night’.

6:13 *the whole of the rest . . .*: this final part of the verse is missing from MT.

- 15 And on the seventh day, they arose early, at dawn, and they went six times round the city.
- 16 And on the seventh circuit, the priests blew on the trumpets, and Joshua said to the children of Israel, ‘Shout! Because the Lord has handed over the city to you.
- 17 And the city is to be *anathema*, along with all that is inside it, to the Lord. But Rahab the prostitute – you are to keep her alive, and everything that is in her house.
- 18 But you are to keep yourselves well away from the *anathema*, or you yourselves may desire it, and turn the camp of the children of Israel into an *anathema*, and you’ll destroy us.
- 19 And all silver or gold or bronze or iron is to be holy to the Lord; it shall be carried into the Lord’s treasury.’
- 20 And the priests blew on the trumpets; and when the people heard the sound of the trumpets, the whole people shouted aloud, with a great and powerful shout; and the whole wall fell down, all round. And the whole people went up into the city.
- 21 And Joshua put the city and everything in it under *anathema*, men and women, young and old, cattle and beasts of burden, by the edge of the sword.
- 22 And Joshua said to the two young men who had done the spying, ‘Go into the house of the woman, and bring her and whatever belongs to her out of there.’
- 23 And the two young men who had done the spying on the city went into the house of the woman, and brought out Rahab the prostitute and her father and her mother and her brothers and sisters, and everything that was hers, and all her kinsfolk, and they placed her outside the camp of Israel.
- 24 And the city, and everything in it, was burnt with fire, except for silver and gold and bronze and iron, which they gave to be brought into the treasury of the Lord.
- 25 And Joshua preserved Rahab the prostitute alive, and all her ancestral household; and she lived in Israel until the present day, because she hid those spies whom Joshua sent to spy on Jericho.
- 26 And Joshua made [them] swear an oath on that day before the Lord, saying, ‘Accursed is the one who shall build that city; they shall lay its foundations with their first-born, and set up its gates with their last-born.’ And this is what Hozan of Bethel did; with Abiron his first-born he laid its foundations, and he set up its gates with his youngest surviving son.
- 27 And the Lord was with Joshua; and his name was throughout all the land.

6:15 *six times*: the Hebrew text has seven times, in accordance with the instructions given in verse 4; and it adds, ‘only on this day did they go seven times round the city’, which is missing from the Greek.

6:17 *anathema*: in this episode, the translator always uses this Greek word, which we have left simply transcribed, for the Hebrew word *herem*, which means ‘devoted’ or ‘accursed’ or ‘under the ban’. Some scholars translate it as ‘consecrated offering’.

6:21 *edge of the sword*: here, and elsewhere, the literal meaning, in both Hebrew and Greek, is ‘the mouth of the sword’.

6:22 *out of there*: MT here adds ‘just as you swore to her’.

6:24 *treasury of the Lord*: the Hebrew has ‘treasury of the house of the Lord’ (i.e. the Temple).

6:26 *Accursed* . . . : the MT adds ‘before the Lord’ to the curse-formula, and ‘Jericho’, identifying ‘that city’. A Hebrew manuscript among the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran has the same text as the LXX, which may therefore have had a different Hebrew model.

this is what Hozan of Bethel did: this is not in MT, but may also be an ancient reading, illustrating how the curse was actually fulfilled. See 1 Kings 16:34, for the reference (though the name in Hebrew is Hiel of Bethel).

The sin of Achan and its punishment (7:1-26)

- 7:1 But the children of Israel committed a great sin; for they stole some of the *anathema*; and Achan son of Carmi, son of Zabdi, son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of the *anathema*; and the Lord was very angry with the children of Israel.
- 2 And Joshua sent men to Ai, which is near Bethel, saying, ‘Spy out Ai.’ And the men went up and spied out Ai.
- 3 And they returned to Joshua and said to him, ‘Let not the whole people go up, but let just two or three thousand men go up, and let them besiege the city; don’t take the people up there – for they are not many.’
- 4 And about three thousand men went up, and they fled from before the men of Ai.
- 5 And the men of Ai killed about thirty-six of them, and they chased them from the gate, and destroyed them on the descent; and the heart of the people was dismayed, and became like water.
- 6 And Joshua tore his clothes, and fell on his face on the ground before the Lord until evening, he and the elders of Israel; and they threw dust on their heads.
- 7 And Joshua said, ‘I pray, Lord, why did your servant bring this people across this Jordan, to hand them over to the Amorites to destroy us. If only we had remained and settled along the Jordan!’
- 8 And what shall I say, since Israel has turned its back in the face of the enemy?
- 9 And when the Canaanites and all those who live in the land hear [this], they will surround us, and destroy us from the land; and what are you going to do for your great name?’
- 10 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Arise – why have you fallen on your face?’
- 11 The people has sinned, and has transgressed the covenant that I made with them; and they stole some of the *anathema*, and put it into their things.
- 12 No way will the children of Israel be able to resist their enemies; they shall turn their backs before their enemies, because they have become *anathema*. I shall no longer be with you, unless you remove the *anathema* from yourselves.
- 13 Get up and sanctify the people, and tell them to sanctify themselves for tomorrow. Thus says the Lord God of Israel, “That which is *anathema* is among you. You shall not be able to resist in the face of your enemies until you remove the *anathema* from you.”
- 14 And you are all to gather, early in the morning, by tribes, and it shall be that you will bring forward the tribe which the Lord indicates, you are to bring it by divisions; and the division which the Lord indicates you are to bring forward by household; and the household that the Lord indicates you are to bring forward, one by one.
- 15 And whoever is indicated shall be burnt by fire; and everything that is theirs, because they have transgressed the covenant, and have committed iniquity in Israel.’

7:1 *they stole*: literally, ‘they kept apart’. The Greek word only appears here in LXX, and it reappears to describe the crime of Ananias and Sapphira at Acts 5:2. This whole sentence is absent from MT.

7:2 *near Bethel*: the Hebrew has ‘near Beth-Awen [= ‘house of iniquity’] East of Bethel’.

7:6 *on the ground*: this expression could also be translated ‘on the land’; it is important to keep both senses in mind. The act of disobedience has its effect on the people’s ability to inherit the land that they have been promised by

God. The reader will notice the two uses of the same word in verse 9, where it has to be translated ‘land’.

7:9 *what are you going to do*: Joshua is typical of our Jewish forebears in giving us an excellent example of plain speaking to the Lord.

7:15 *shall be burnt by fire*: although in fact, when we come to the punishment, in verse 25, this is not what happens. The point is that any kind of disobedience to God makes the entire nation impure.

- 16 And Joshua arose early, and he brought the people forward by tribes; and the tribe of Judah was indicated.
- 17 And [the tribe] was brought forward by divisions; and the division of Zerah was indicated; and it was brought forward, one by one.
- 18 And Achan son of Carmi son of Zerah was indicated.
- 19 And Joshua said to Achan, ‘Give glory today to the Lord God of Israel, and make your confession; and tell me what you have done – and do not hide it from me.’
- 20 And Achan answered Joshua, and said, ‘Truly I have sinned before the Lord God of Israel, this and this is what I have done:
- 21 I saw amidst the plunder a beautiful multi-coloured carpet, and two hundred didrachmas of silver, and a single golden tongue of fifty didrachmas; and I longed for them, and I took them. And look! they are hidden in the earth in my tent; and the silver is hidden underneath them.’
- 22 And Joshua sent messengers; and they ran to the tent, and these things were hidden in the tent, and the silver underneath them.
- 23 And they carried them out of the tent; and they brought them to Joshua and to the elders of Israel, and placed them before the Lord.
- 24 And Joshua took Achan son of Zerah and led him up to the Valley of Achor, and his sons and his daughters and his calves and his donkeys, and all his sheep, and his tent, and all his possessions; and all the people was with him. And he led them up to Emek Achor.
- 25 And Joshua said to Achan, ‘Why have you destroyed us? May the Lord destroy you likewise today.’ And they stoned him, all of Israel, with stones.
- 26 And they set up a great heap of stones over him; and the Lord ceased from the anger of his rage; because of this, they called it Emek Achor until the present day.

The capture of Ai by a trick (8:1-29)

- 8:1 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid, or play the coward. Take with you all the men of war, and arise and go up to Ai. Look! I have given the king of Ai into your hands, and his land.
- 2 And you are to do to Ai just as you did to Jericho and its king; and you are to take booty for yourself of the booty of its cattle. Prepare yourselves an ambush behind the city.’
- 3 And Joshua and all the men of war arose to go up to Ai; and Joshua chose thirty thousand men, powerful in might, and he sent them by night.
- 4 And he commanded them, saying ‘You people, set an ambush behind the city. Don’t go far from the city; and you will all be ready.
- 5 And I and all those with me shall approach the city; and it shall be that when the inhabitants of Ai come out to meet us, just like [they did] before, we shall flee from before them.
- 6 And when they come out after us, we shall draw them away from the city, and they’ll say, “These people are fleeing from before us, just as they did before.”

7:19 *Give glory . . . to . . . God*: the religious establishment says almost exactly the same thing to the man born blind, to whom Jesus has restored sight, at John 9:24.

7:20 *this and this*: the Greek translator here has captured the Hebrew idiom (one that does not appear in the Pentateuch).

7:21 *in the earth*: or ‘in the land’ (see the note on 7:6 above).

7:24 *he led them up to Emek Achor*: this is a repetition, one that is not in the Hebrew, of the phrase earlier in the verse, but here the translator has transcribed instead of translating, ‘Valley of Achor’.

- 7 And you people are to rise up out of [your] ambush, and go into the city.
 8 You are to act in accordance with this instruction. Look! I have commanded you.’
 9 And Joshua sent them off, and they went into ambush; and they lay in wait, between Bethel and Ai, seaward of Ai.
 10 And Joshua arose early in the morning, and reviewed the people; and they went up, he and the elders before the people, to Ai.
 11 And all the men of war went up with him, and as they marched, they came face to face with the city, from the East.
 12 And the ambush was seaward of the city.
 13 []
 14 And it happened that when the king of Ai saw, he quickly went out to meet them, directly into battle, he and the whole people with him; and he did not know that he had an ambush behind the city.
 15 And Joshua and Israel saw and they retreated before their face.
 16 And they chased after the children of Israel; and they went away from the city.
 17 And there was no one left in Ai who did not chase after Israel; and they left the city open, and chased after Israel.
 18 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Stretch out your hand, with the spear that is in your hand towards the city; for I have handed the city over into your power. And the ambush party are to rise up quickly from their place.’ And Joshua stretched out his hand, the spear towards the city.
 19 And the ambushing party quickly arose from their place, and came out, when he stretched out his hand; and they came upon the city, and seized it; and they quickly burnt the city with fire.
 20 And when the inhabitants of Ai looked behind them, and saw smoke coming up from the city to heaven, and they no longer had anywhere to flee, here or there,
 21 then Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambushing party had taken the city, and that the smoke of the city went up to heaven, then they turned round and struck the men of Ai.
 22 And these came out of the city to meet them, and they were in the middle of the army, some on one side and some on the other, and they struck them until none of them was left who survived and who escaped.
 23 And they took the king of Ai alive, and led him to Joshua.
 24 And when the children of Israel stopped killing all the people in Ai, those in the fields and on the mountain on the descent, where they chased after them from the city to the end, then Joshua returned to Ai and struck the city with the edge of the sword.
 25 And those who had fallen on that day men and women, were twelve thousand, all the inhabitants of Ai.
 26 []

8:9 *seaward*: here, and in verse 12, the Greek translator has translated literally the Hebrew indicator of direction; it really signifies ‘to the West’. MT then adds, ‘and Joshua spent the night in the midst of the people’.

8:11 *from the East*: here the Hebrew adds, ‘and they camped North of Ai, and the valley was between them and Ai’.

8:12 *And the ambush was seaward of the city*: this is notably shorter than MT which is then followed by verse 13, not in LXX, ‘And they placed the people, the whole camp

that was on the North side of the city, and its rear-guard on the seaward (=West) side of the city; and Joshua went that night into the valley.’ This is not easy to understand, and the translator may simply have been smoothing things over.

8:26 []: here the MT has a verse that reads, ‘And Joshua did not draw back his hand with which he stretched out his spear, until he had put all the inhabitants of Ai under the ban.’

- 27 Apart from the cattle and the booty which was in the city, everything that the children of Israel took as plunder for themselves, in accordance with the command of the Lord, just as the Lord had commanded Joshua.
- 28 And Joshua set fire to the city with fire, an uninhabited ruin for ever he made it, until the present day.
- 29 And he hanged the king of Ai on a forked tree; and he was on the tree until evening. And when the sun set, Joshua gave orders, and they took down his body from the tree, and they hurled him into the pit, and put a pile of stones on him to this day.

Joshua renews the covenant (8:30-35)

- 30 Then Joshua built an altar to the Lord God of Israel on Mount Ebal,
- 31 just as Moses the Lord's servant had commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the Law of Moses, an altar of whole stones, on which iron has not fallen; and there he offered up whole burnt-offerings to the Lord, and a peace-offering.
- 32 And Joshua wrote on the stones the second Law, of Moses, which he had written before the children of Israel.
- 33 And all Israel, and their elders and the judges, and their scribes went on both sides facing the Ark, and the priests and the Levites lifted the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, and the immigrant and the native-born. Half of them were near Mount Gerizim and half of them were near Mount Ebal, just as Moses the Lord's servant had commanded, to bless the people first.
- 34 And after this, Joshua read in this way all the words of this Law, the blessings and the curses, in accordance with everything written in the Law of Moses.
- 35 There was not a single word of all the things that Moses had commanded Joshua, that Joshua did not read in the hearing of the whole assembly of the children of Israel, to the men and the women and the children, and the immigrants who came to Israel.

The coalition against Israel (9:1-2)

- 9:1 And when the kings of the Amorites on the other side of the Jordan, those in the hill country, and those on the plain, and those in the whole shore of the Great Sea, and those near Antilebanon, and the Hittites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites, and the Amorites and the Gergesites and the Jebusites heard [about it],
- 2 they came together to make war on Israel and Joshua together.

The Gibeonites play a trick on Joshua (9:3-27)

- 3 And when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard how much the Lord had done to Jericho and to Ai,
- 4 they played a crafty trick. They went and provided themselves with provisions, and got themselves ready. And they took old sacks on their donkeys, and old and broken and patched flasks of wine;

8:30-35 *Then Joshua built an altar:* we have followed our normal practice of following the MT order. However the LXX manuscripts place these verses at 9:2, so that the coalition of the Canaanite kings appears to be the result of the victory over Jericho, and the building of the altar is something that has to be done before going to war

against them. In building the altar, Joshua is carrying out the instruction given by Moses at Deuteronomy 27:2-8, and all the vocabulary used here comes from those verses.
9:4 *on their donkeys:* other Greek manuscripts read 'on their shoulders'.

- 5 and their boots and their sandals were old, and had patched soles on their feet; and their clothes were worn out upon them; and the bread of their provisions was stale, and mouldy, and worm-eaten.
- 6 And they came to Joshua, in Israel's camp at Gilgal, and they said to Joshua, and to Israel, 'We have come from a far-off land; and now make a covenant with us.'
- 7 And [Joshua and] the children of Israel said to the Hivite, 'Careful, now; perhaps you live among us – and how am I to make a covenant with you?'
- 8 And they said to Joshua, 'We are your servants.' And Joshua said to them, 'Where are you from, and where have you come from?'
- 9 And they said, 'Your servants have come from a land very far away, in the name of the Lord your God; for we have heard his name, and the great things that he did in Egypt,
- 10 and what great things he did to the kings of the Amorites who are across the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og the king of Bashan, who used to live in Ashtaroth and Edrain.
- 11 And our elders, and all the inhabitants of the land, when they heard, said to us, "Take provision for yourselves for the journey, and go and meet them; and you are to tell them, 'We are your servants – and now make a covenant with us.'"
- 12 These are the loaves; they were hot when we were supplied with them, on the day when we came out to journey to you – but now they are dried out, and have become mouldy.
- 13 And these flasks of wine, which we filled when they were new, and they are broken, and our clothes and our sandals have become very aged from the journey.'
- 14 And the rulers took some of their provisions – *but they did not ask the Lord.*
- 15 And Joshua made peace with them, and made a covenant with them, to keep them alive; and the rulers of the congregation made an oath to them.
- 16 And it happened, three days after he had made a covenant with them, they heard that they were from nearby, and that they lived among them.
- 17 And the children of Israel went off to their cities; their cities were Gibeon, Chephira, Beeroth and Kiriath-Yearim.
- 18 And the children of Israel did not fight with them; because all the rulers had made an oath to them by the Lord the God of Israel; and the whole congregation grumbled against the rulers.
- 19 And the rulers said to the whole congregation, 'We have made an oath to them by the Lord the God of Israel; and now we shan't be able to touch them.
- 20 This is what we shall do: we shall take them alive, and the wrath will not come against us because of the oath that we swore to them.
- 21 They are to live, and they are to be wood-cutters and water-carriers for the whole congregation, just as the rulers said to them.'

9:5 *their boots*: literally, 'the hollows of their tie-underers'.

9:6 *now make a covenant with us*: from Deuteronomy 7:1-5, we already know that any relationship of this sort between Israel and the Canaanite inhabitants of the land is forbidden. The Gibeonites seem to know all this beforehand, and that is the heart of their trick.

9:14 *but they did not ask the Lord*: this is perhaps the point of the story. In that culture we admire appropriate trickery, and should expect it (Luke 16:8-9); but Israel could be

expected to ask the Lord their God before taking such a binding step. We also notice that the Gibeonites are well-informed about what God has done, while the Israelites are comparatively neglectful.

9:21 *wood-cutters and water-carriers*: they are to serve in the sanctuary; but the treaty is to be taken seriously. At 2 Samuel 21:2 we discover that Saul broke this treaty, and the consequences were serious.

- 22 And Joshua called them together, and said to them, ‘Why did you deceive me, and say, “We live a very long way off from you”, when in fact you are of this country; you are among those who live in our midst!
- 23 So now you are accursed: I and my God shall always have a slave and a wood-cutter from among you.’
- 24 And they answered Joshua, and said, ‘It was reported to us, the great things that the Lord your God had ordered Moses his servant, to give you this land, and to exterminate us and all who live on the land, from before your face. And we were very afraid for our lives, before you. And so we did this thing.
- 25 And now, look: we are in your power. Do to us as you please, and as seems good to you.’
- 26 And that is how they dealt with them. And Joshua rescued them on that day from the hands of the children of Israel – and they did not kill them.
- 27 And Joshua appointed them on that day as wood-cutters and water-carriers for the whole congregation, and for God’s altar. That is why the Gibeonites became wood-cutters and water-carriers for the altar of God, until the present day, and for the place that the Lord would choose.

Five Amorite kings march against Gibeon (10:1-11)

- 10:1 And when Adonibezek king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai, and had destroyed it, just as he had done to Jericho and its king, so they had done to Ai and its king; and the inhabitants of Gibeon had changed sides and gone over to Joshua and to Israel,
- 2 and they were very frightened by them; for he knew that Gibeon was a great city, like one of the mother cities, and all its men were mighty.
- 3 And Adonibezek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, and to Piram king of Jarmuth, and to Japhia king of Lachish and to Debir king of Eglon, saying,
- 4 ‘Come up here to me, and help me; and let us go to war against Gibeon; for they have gone over to Joshua, and to the children of Israel.’
- 5 And the five kings of the Jebusites went up, the king of Jerusalem and the king of Hebron, and the king of Jarmuth and the king of Lachish and the king of Eglon; and they encamped round Gibeon and besieged it.
- 6 And the inhabitants of Gibeon sent to Joshua in the Israel camp at Gilgal, saying, ‘Do not relax your hands from your servants; come up to us, quickly, and help us, because all the kings of the Amorites who live in the hill-country have gathered together against us.’
- 7 And Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and his warrior-people with him, everyone mighty in strength.
- 8 And the Lord said to Joshua, ‘Do not be afraid of them; for I have handed them over into your hands. Not one of them shall be left before you.’
- 9 And Joshua came suddenly upon them; he had marched all night from Gilgal.

9:27 *That is why the Gibeonites:* the story therefore functions partly to explain the survival of the Gibeonites (albeit in an inferior status), but also to praise them for their sharp thinking. In South Africa under *apartheid*, and in many other countries, earnest Bible-readers used to read texts like this to justify their use of certain sections of the population as slaves or persons of lower standing.

10:1 *Adonibezek:* this, rather than the MT’s Adoni-Zedek (= ‘my Lord is righteous’), is thought to be the original

reading (see Judges 5:1-7, where it appears in both Hebrew and Greek). The Hebrew reading is thought to be an adaptation of the name to suit the mention of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem: this is the first mention of the name in our Bible. At Joshua 15:8, 18:28, we are told that its ancient name was Jebus.

- ¹⁰ And the Lord confounded them before the children of Israel, and the Lord destroyed them, a great destruction at Gibeon; and they chased after them by way of the ascent of Horon; and they cut them to pieces as far as Azekah, and as far as Makedah.
- ¹¹ And as they fled before the children of Israel on the descent of Horon, the Lord flung hailstones from heaven at them, as far as Azekah; and more of them died because of the hailstones than those whom the children of Israel killed with the sword in the battle.

The sun stands still (10:12-15)

- ¹² Then Joshua spoke to the Lord, on the day when the Lord delivered the Amorites into the power of Israel, when he shattered them in Gibeon, and they were shattered before the face of the children of Israel. And Joshua said,
- ‘Let the sun stand still against Gibeon,
and the moon over the valley of Aijalon.’
- ¹³ And the sun stopped, and the moon stood still, while God repulsed their enemies; and the sun stood still in the middle of heaven. It did not go to its setting till the end of one day.
- ¹⁴ And there was not a day like it, neither before or after, that God should listen to a human being, because God fought alongside Israel.
- ¹⁵ [].

The five kings in the cave at Makkedah (10:16-27)

- ¹⁶ And these five kings fled and hid in the cave at Makkedah.
- ¹⁷ And it was reported to Joshua, ‘The five kings have been found, hiding in the cave at Makkedah.’
- ¹⁸ And Joshua said, ‘Roll stones against the mouth of the cave, and set men to keep guard over them;
- ¹⁹ and as for you, don’t stop pursuing after your enemies. Take hold of their rear-guard, and don’t let them go into their cities – for the Lord our God has handed them over into our hands.’
- ²⁰ And when Joshua and all the children of Israel stopped massacring them with a very great massacre, to the very end, and those who escaped had escaped to the strong cities,
- ²¹ the whole people returned safely to Joshua at Makkedah – and not one of the children of Israel murmured with their tongue.
- ²² And Joshua said, ‘Open the cave, and bring these five kings out of the cave.’
- ²³ And they brought the five kings out of the cave, the king of Jerusalem, and the king of Hebron, and the king of Jarmuth, and the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon.
- ²⁴ Then they brought them out to Joshua; and Joshua summoned the whole of Israel, and the war-commanders who were marching with him; and he said to them, ‘Come forward, and place your feet on their necks.’ And they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.
- ²⁵ And Joshua said to them, ‘Do not be afraid of them; don’t be timid. Behave like men, and be strong, for this is how the Lord will deal with all your enemies against whom you go to war.’
- ²⁶ And Joshua killed them, and hanged them on five trees; and they were hanging on the trees until evening.

- 27 And it happened, towards sunset, Joshua gave orders; and they took them down from the trees, and flung them into the cave where they had fled; and they rolled stones against the cave, until the present day.

Joshua conquers Southern Canaan (10:28-43)

- 28 And they took Makkedah on that day; and they put it to the edge of the sword; and they exterminated every living creature in the city; no one was left in the city who had escaped and taken refuge. And they dealt with the king of Makkedah just as they had dealt with the king of Jericho.
- 29 And Joshua went off, and all Israel with him, from Makkedah to Libnah; and he besieged Libnah.
- 30 And the Lord handed the city over into Israel's power; and they took the city and its king; and they put it to the edge of the sword, and every living creature in the city; no one was left in the city who had escaped and taken refuge. And they dealt with its king just as they had dealt with the king of Jericho.
- 31 And Joshua went off, and all Israel with him, from Libnah to Lachish, and he encamped around it and besieged it.
- 32 And the Lord handed Lachish over into Israel's power; and they took it on the second day, and they put it to the edge of the sword, and destroyed it, just as they had with Libnah.
- 33 And then Horam the king of Gezer went up to assist Lachish; and Joshua struck him with the edge of the sword, and his people, until not one of them was left preserved, who had escaped.
- 34 And Joshua and all Israel with him went off from Lachish to Eglon; and he encamped around it and besieged it.
- 35 And the Lord handed it over into Israel's power; and they took the city on that day and they put it to the edge of the sword; and they slaughtered every living creature in the city, just as they had done to Lachish.
- 36 And Joshua went off, and all Israel with him, to Hebron and he encamped around it,
- 37 and struck it with the edge of the sword, and all the living creatures that were in it were not saved, just as they had dealt with Eglon; they destroyed it, and all that were in it.
- 38 And Joshua returned, and all Israel, to Debir and encamped around it,
- 39 and they took it and its king and its villages; and they struck it with the edge of the sword, and destroyed it, and every living creature in it, and they left nothing surviving in it; just as they had done to Hebron and its king, so they did to Debir and its king.

10:38- *Debir*: now the name of a town, whereas in verse 3 it was
 39 the name of the king of Eglon. There may have been
 some confusion in the handing-down of the story.

- 40 And Joshua struck the whole land of the hill-country, and the Negev and the Plain, and the Asedoth and her kings. They did not leave any of them alive, and they destroyed every living creature, just as the Lord the God of Israel had commanded them,
 41 from Kadesh-Barnea to Gaza, and all of Goshem as far as Gibeon.
 42 And Joshua struck all their kings and their land, once and for all, because the Lord God of Israel was fighting on Israel's side.
 43 [].

The Northern kings defeated at Merom (11:1-9)

- 11:1 When Jabin king of Hazor heard, he sent to Jobab king of Merom and to the king of Shimron, and to the king of Achshaph,
 2 and the kings facing Great Sidon, to the hill country, and to Araba opposite Chinneroth, and to the plain, and to Naphoth-Dor,
 3 and to the Canaanites on the coast from the East, to the Amorites on the coast, and the Hivites and the Jebusites and the Perizzites in the highland, and the Hittites who live under Hermon, in the land of Mizpah.
 4 And they came out, they and their kings with them, like the sand of the sea in numbers, and horses, and very many chariots.
 5 And all these kings met together, and came to the same place; and they camped by the waters of Merom, to make war on Israel.
 6 And the Lord said to Joshua, 'Do not be afraid before them; for tomorrow at this hour, I am handing them over, routed by Israel; you shall hamstring their horses, and burn their chariots with fire.'
 7 And Joshua and all the people of war came suddenly against them at the waters of Merom, and they fell upon them in the hill-country.
 8 And the Lord handed them over into the power of Israel, and they cut them down and pursued them from Great Sidon to Misrephoth-maim and as far as the plains of Mizpah in the East; and they cut them down until not one of them was left that survived.
 9 And Joshua dealt with them just as the Lord had commanded him; he hamstrung their horses, and burnt their chariots with fire.

Hazor and the Northern cities fall to Joshua (11:10-15)

- 10 And Joshua returned at that time; and he captured Hazor and its king. Now Hazor in former times was the capital of all these kingdoms.
 11 And they killed every living thing in it with the sword, and destroyed them all. And there was not left any living thing in it. And they burnt Hazor with fire.
 12 And Joshua took all the cities of the kingdoms, and their kings; and he killed them with the edge of the sword, and destroyed them, just as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded.

10:40 *Asedoth*: here the translator has simply transcribed a Hebrew word that means something like 'foothills'.
and they destroyed every living creature: we find the notion that this is God's command fairly unpalatable. But the people of God has to be educated slowly into loving even our enemies, and we are not to sneer at our forebears for their brutal proclivities. The notion that it is permissible, or indeed obligatory to kill in the name of God, is one that resurfaces in every generation, and we need to resist it firmly.

10:43 []: this verse, which is identical to 15, is missing in LXX.
 11:8 *Misrephoth-maim*: this is what the MT has. LXX has Maseron, which may be an alternative reading of the first word. 'Maim', which is not in the Greek, means either 'of the waters', or 'from the West'.
 11:10 *and its king*: the Hebrew has a slightly longer version of this, 'and struck its king with the sword'.

- 13 However the other cities, the ones that were fortified, Israel did not burn. Joshua just burnt Hazor alone.
- 14 And the children of Israel took all the booty for themselves; they killed them all with the edge of the sword, until he had destroyed them. They did not leave even one of them alive,
- 15 just as the Lord had commanded Moses his servant, so Moses likewise ordered Joshua, and so Joshua did. He went against none of the commands that Moses had given him.

A list of Joshua's conquests (11:16-23)

- 16 And Joshua took all the hill country, and all the Negev, and the whole land of Goshen, and the plain, and the land towards the West, and the mountain of Israel, and the lowlands,
- 17 which are near the mountain, from Mount Halak which goes up towards Seir, and as far as Baal-Gad and the plains of Lebanon underneath Mount Hermon. And he took all their kings and destroyed them and killed them.
- 18 And for many days, Joshua waged war against these kings.
- 19 And there was no city that Israel did not take; they took everything in battle.
- 20 Because it happened through the Lord that their hearts were hardened, to go out to war against Israel, that they might all be destroyed, so that mercy might not be given them, but that they might be destroyed, just as the Lord said to Moses.
- 21 And Joshua came at that time, and destroyed the Anakim from the hill-country, from Hebron, from Debir, and from Anab, and from all the race of Israel, and from all the mountain of Judah, with their cities – and Joshua destroyed them.
- 22 None of the Anakim was left by the children of Israel, except at Gaza and Gath, and in Ashdod.
- 23 And Joshua captured all the land, just as the Lord had commanded Moses; and Joshua gave them for an inheritance for Israel by division, according to their tribes; and the land had rest from warfare.

Lists of the kings conquered by Moses (12:1-6)

- 12:1 And these are the kings of the land whom the children of Israel slew; and they inherited their land across the Jordan, from the East, from the Wadi Arnon as far as Mount Hermon, and the whole land of the Arabah on the East.
- 2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, and was ruler from Aroer which is in the wadi, on the edge of the wadi, and half of Gilead as far as Jabok, the borders of the children of Ammon.
- 3 And Arabah as far as the sea of Chinneroth to the East, as far as the Sea of Arabah, the Salt Sea in the East, in the direction of Jeshimoth from the South, under the slopes of Pisgah.
- 4 And Og the king of Bashan was left of the giants; [he was] the one who lived in Ashtaroth and at Edrei,

11:13 *Joshua just burnt Hazor*: some Greek manuscripts here read 'Israel just burnt...'

11:20 *through the Lord that their hearts were hardened*: this idea of God's opponents being deliberately made so is a common one in the Old and New Testaments. See, for

example, Mark 4:10-12, and the quotation there from Isaiah 6:9-10.

12:3 *South . . . slopes*: here the LXX has transcribed the Hebrew words as 'Thaeman' and 'Asedoth'.

- 5 ruling from Mount Hermon and Salecah, and all Bashan as far as the frontiers of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, and half Gilead, of the borders of Sihon king of Heshbon.
- 6 Moses the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel, struck them, and Moses gave them to Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh as their inheritance.

Lists of the kings conquered by Joshua (12:7-24)

- 7 And these [are] the kings of the Amorites whom Joshua and the children of Israel slew on the other side of the Jordan in the West, from Baal-Gad in the plain of Lebanon, as far as Mount Halak which goes up to Seir. And Joshua gave them to the tribes of Israel to inherit, according to their allotted portion,
- 8 in the mountain and in the plain, and in Arabah, in Asedoth, and in the desert and in the Negev, the Hittites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites,
- 9 the king of Jericho and the king of Ai, which is near Bethel;
- 10 the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron;
- 11 the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish;
- 12 the king of Eglon, the king of Gezer;
- 13 the king of Debir, the king of Geder;
- 14 the king of Hormah, the king of Arad;
- 15 the king of Libnah, the king of Adullam;
- 16 the king of Makkedah;
- 17 the king of Tappuah, the king of Hopher;
- 18 the king of Aphek, the king of Sharon;
- 19 the king of Hazor;
- 20 the king of Shimron, the king of Meron, the king of Achshaph;
- 21 the king of Kadesh, the king of Taanach;
- 22 the king of Megiddo, the king of Jokneam in Carmel;
- 23 the king of Dor in Naphath-Dor, the king of Goim in Galilee;
- 24 the king of Tirzah.
- All these kings are twenty-nine.

Joshua divides the Promised Land (13:1–21:45)

Parts of the land that remained unconquered (13:1-7)

- 13:1 And Joshua was old and advanced in years; and the Lord said to Joshua, ‘You are advanced in years, and there is much land left to be inherited.
- 2 And this is the land that is left: the borders of the Philistines, the Geshurite and the Canaanite,

12:10 *the king of Hebron*: from now until the end of the chapter, the Hebrew puts the word ‘one’ after each king. The Greek counts just twenty-nine kings; MT has thirty-one.

12:20 *king of Shimron, the king of Meron*: the Hebrew here has ‘the king of Shimron-Meron’, which is presumably an error.

12:23 *Goim*: this word is often translated by LXX as ‘gentiles/nations’, but not here.

12:24 *these kings are twenty-nine*: if you have been counting carefully you will see that there are thirty of them. The

MT counts them as thirty-one, adding the king of Madon in verse 19. In the prologue to Matthew’s gospel, there is a similar mathematical inexactitude. See Matthew 1:17, and do your sums from verses 12 to 16.

13:1 *much land left to be inherited*: you might be pardoned for supposing, on the basis of what you have read so far, that Israel had effortlessly conquered the whole land.

13:2 *the Canaanite*: this is not in MT, which shows a number of divergences in this and the next three verses.

- 3 from the uninhabited land which faces Egypt, as far as the borders of Ekron on the left of the Canaanites. [The land] is reckoned to the five satrapies of the Philistines: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, Ekron, and the Hivites.
- 4 From the South, and to the whole land of Canaan facing Gaza, and the Sidonians as far as Aphek, and as far as the frontier of the Amorites;
- 5 and the whole land of the Gebalites, the Philistines, and all of Lebanon from the East, from Gilgal, under Mount Hermon, as far as the Pass of Hamath,
- 6 everyone who lives in the hill-country, from Lebanon as far as Misrephoth-maim. All the Sidonians, I shall utterly destroy them from before Israel; but you are to distribute it by lot to Israel, just as I commanded you.
- 7 And now, divide this land as an inheritance, to the nine tribes and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, from the Jordan to the Great Sea in the West you are to give it. The Great Sea shall be the boundary.'

Distribution of the land East of the Jordan (13:8-14)

- 8 And to the two tribes and the half-tribe of Manasseh, to Reuben and to Gad, Moses gave [inheritance] on the other side of Jordan: in the East Moses the servant of the Lord has given it to them,
- 9 from Aroer which is on the edge of the Wadi Arnon, and the city which is in the middle of the Wadi, and all of Misor from Medeba as far as Dibon;
- 10 all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites who was king in Heshbon, as far as the frontier of the Ammonites,
- 11 and Gilead, and the territory of the Geshurites and the Maacathites, the whole of Mount Hermon, and all of Bashan as far as Salecah;
- 12 the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who was king in Ashteroth and Edrei; he was left over from the giants. Moses struck him and destroyed him.
- 13 And the children of Israel did not destroy the Geshurites and the Maacathites; and the king of Geshur and the Maacathite live among the children of Israel until the present day.
- 14 However of the tribe of Levi, no inheritance was given: the Lord the God of Israel, he is their inheritance, as the Lord said to them. And this is the division that Moses divided for the children of Israel in Araboth Moab, on the other side of the Jordan, by Jericho.

The territory of Reuben (13:15-23)

- 15 And Moses gave to the tribe of Reuben, according to their divisions;
- 16 and their borders were from Aroer which is opposite the Wadi Arnon, and the city that is in the Wadi Arnon, and all of Misor,
- 17 as far as Heshbon, and all the cities that are in Misor: Dibon, Bamoth-Baal, and Beth-Baal-Meon,
- 18 and Jahaz, and Kedemoth and Mephaath,
- 19 Kiriathaim and Sibmah and Zereth-Shahar on the mountain of the valley,
- 20 and Beth-peor and the slopes of Pisgah and Beth-Jeshimoth,

13:3 *uninhabited land*: the Hebrew here has Shihor, a rare word, designating one of the branches of the Nile Delta. The translator may simply not have known what it meant.

on the left: this ('the well-omened side') is what the Greek says; the Hebrew has 'North'; for one coming in from the Mediterranean, the North is, of course, on the left-hand.

13:4 *From the South*: see note on 12:3 above.

13:6 *Misrephoth-maim*: see note on 11:8 above.

13:9 *Misor*: here LXX has simply transcribed, as it frequently does, the Hebrew for 'plain'. The translator here understands it as a level area belonging to the tribe of Reuben, near the city of Medeba.

13:14 *And this is the division . . .*: this sentence is not in MT. Did LXX add it, or was it omitted from the Hebrew text?

- 21 and all the cities of Misor and the whole kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites, whom Moses struck, him and the leaders of Midian: Evi and Rekem and Zur and Hur and Reba, who ruled under Sihon, and those who lived in the land,
- 22 and Balaam the son of Beor, the prophet: they killed him at the decisive moment.
- 23 And it became the borders of Reuben: Jordan was its border. This is the inheritance of the children of Reuben by their divisions: [these were] their cities and their villages.

The territory of Gad (13:24-28)

- 24 And Moses gave [an inheritance] to the children of Gad, according to their divisions.
- 25 And their borders were Jazer, and all the cities of Gilead, and half of the land of the Ammonites, as far as Aroer, which is opposite Rabbah,
- 26 and from Heshbon to Ramoth by Mitzpeh and Botanim; from Mahanaim to the borders of Debir.
- 27 And in Emeq: Beth-Haram, and Beth-Nimrah and Succoth and Zaphon, and the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of the Heshbon; and the Jordan will be their frontier as far as part of the Sea of Chinneroth across the Jordan in the East.
- 28 This is the inheritance of the children of Gad according to their divisions: [these were] their cities and their villages.

The territory of the half-tribe of Manasseh (13:29-32)

- 29 And Moses gave [an inheritance] to the half-tribe of Manasseh, according to their divisions.
- 30 And their borders were from Mahanaim, and the whole kingdom of Bashan, and all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, and all the villages of Jair which are in the region of Bashan, sixty cities:
- 31 and the half of Gilead, and in Ashtaroth and Edri, the royal cities of Og in the region of Bashan. And they were given to the children of Machir son of Manasseh, to the half-tribe sons of Manasseh, according to their divisions.
- 32 These are the ones to whom Moses gave an inheritance across the Jordan, in the plains of Moab across the Jordan, by Jericho in the east.
- 33 []

Distribution of the land West of the Jordan (14:1-5)

- 14:1 And these are those of the children of Israel who received an inheritance in the land of Canaan, to whom Eleazar the priest and Joshua the son of Nun and the rulers of the ancestral families of the children of Israel gave the inheritance.
- 2 It was by drawing lots that they inherited, just as the Lord had commanded the nine tribes and the half tribe, through the person of Joshua,
- 3 from the other side of the Jordan. But he did not give any inheritance among them to the Levites.

13:33 []: here the MT simply repeats verse 14.

14:2 *through the person of Joshua*: the Hebrew attributes this to Moses. The Greek may be trying to harmonise with Joshua 13:7.

14:3 *from the other side of the Jordan*: as it stands, this does not make much sense, though I have linked it with the preceding verse. In MT it is the end of a sentence that reads, 'For Moses had given the two tribes and half a tribe an inheritance from across...'

- 4 For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim; and no inheritance in the land was given to the Levites, apart from cities to live in, and their areas set apart for their cattle, and their possessions.
- 5 As the Lord had commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did; and they divided the land.

Caleb gets Hebron (14:6-15)

- 6 And the children of Judah came to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said, 'You know what the Lord said to Moses, the man of God, with regard to you and me at Kadesh-Barnea.
- 7 Because I was forty years old when Moses the servant of God sent me out of Kadesh-Barnea to spy out the land; and I gave him a response, a message according to his mind.
- 8 But my brothers who went up with me changed the people's mind, while I continued to follow the Lord my God.
- 9 And Moses swore on that day, saying, "The land on which you have set foot will be yours by lot, and your children's for ever, because you continued to follow the Lord our God."
- 10 And now the Lord has kept me alive, precisely as he said: it is forty-five years since the Lord spoke this word to Moses, and Israel journeyed in the desert. And look! today I am eighty-five years old.
- 11 I am still strong today, now just as strong for going out and coming in to war as when Moses sent me.
- 12 So now I am asking you for this mountain, as the Lord said on that day. Because you heard this message on that day; but now the Anakim are there, large fortified cities. So, if the Lord is with me, I shall exterminate them, just as the Lord told me.
- 13 And Joshua blessed him, and gave Hebron to Caleb son of Jephunneh son of Kenez as an inheritance.
- 14 For this reason, Hebron became the inheritance of Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite until the present day, because he had followed the commandment of the Lord God of Israel.
- 15 And the name of Hebron before was City-of-Arbah, capital of the Anakim.

And the land had rest from warfare.

The territory allotted to Judah (15:1-12)

- 15:1 And the borders of the tribe of Judah according to their divisions were from the borders of Edom, from the desert of Zin to Kadesh in the South.
- 2 And their borders were from the South as far as part of the Salt Sea, from the ridge that leads to the South;

14:4 *and their possessions*: the Greek here repeats the word for 'cattle', though in a different case. It is, however, different by only one letter from the Greek for 'possessions'; and the Hebrew reads 'possessions', so I have taken this as the original reading.

14:7 *according to his mind*: MT here has 'according to my heart', i.e. completely honest.

14:9 *Moses swore on that day*: for the episode, though not in the same words, see Numbers 14:24.

15:1 *borders of the tribe of Judah*: these borders are idealised rather than actual. Judah never, for example reached to the Mediterranean (the 'Great Sea'). The reader will notice that in the next few verses the tense will slip from past, to present, to future (probably indicating the translator's awareness that the frontiers never quite matched their alleged span).