

Die Septuaginta – Themen, Manuskripte, Wirkungen

Herausgegeben von
EBERHARD BONS,
MICHAELA GEIGER,
FRANK UEBERSCHAER,
MARCUS SIGISMUND
und MARTIN MEISER

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen
zum Neuen Testament*

Mohr Siebeck

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Marcus Sigismund und Martin Meiser

Mohr Siebeck

EBERHARD BONS, geboren 1958; 1988 Dr. phil.; 1993 Dr. theol.; 2000 Habilitation; seit 2004 Professor für Altes Testament an der Universität Straßburg.

MICHAELA GEIGER, geboren 1970; 2008 Dr. theol.; seit 2015 Juniorprofessorin, seit 2020 Professorin für Altes Testament an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel; Pastorin der EKiR.

FRANK UEBERSCHAER, geboren 1972; 2008 Promotion; 2014 Habilitation; seit 2016 Professor für Exegese und Theologie des Alten Testaments an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg.

MARCUS SIGISMUND, geboren 1971; 2002 Dr. phil.; seit 1999 Lehrbeauftragter an der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal; seit 2007 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter am Institut für Septuaginta und biblische Textforschung an der Kirchlichen Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel.

MARTIN MEISER, geboren 1957; 1992 Promotion; 1996 Habilitation; seit 2007 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter in Saarbrücken.

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Vorwort

Veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D) unter der Tagungspräsidentschaft von Eberhard Bons fand vom 19. bis 22. Juli 2018 in Wuppertal die „7. Internationale Septuaginta-Konferenz“ statt. Sie stand unter dem Thema: „Die Septuaginta. Themen – Manuskripte – Wirkungen“. Bei der Vorbereitung der Tagung war es uns ein wichtiges Anliegen, den Kreis der Teilnehmenden zu erweitern. Neben Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus Mitteleuropa, Skandinavien und Großbritannien wurden zu dieser Tagung Wissenschaftlerinnen und Wissenschaftler aus den südeuropäischen Ländern, aus Russland, aus den Vereinigten Staaten, aus Kanada und aus Südafrika eingeladen. Das Spektrum der Themen ist aus diesem Grund noch einmal vielfältiger. Die im vorliegenden Band versammelten Beiträge greifen daher eine Fülle von verschiedenen Fragestellungen auf: Textkritik und Textgeschichte, Vokabular und Themen, Manuskripte und Überlieferungen, Wirkungen und Einflüsse, um nur die wichtigsten zu nennen. Eine „Precelebration („IOSCS at 50‘)“ mit einer Rede des Präsidenten, Prof. Dr. Robert J.V. Hiebert, und die Präsentation von Band 3 des „Handbuches zur Septuaginta. Die Sprache der Septuaginta/The Language of the Septuagint“, hg. Eberhard Bons und Jan Joosten, Gütersloh 2018, rundeten das Programm ab.

Die Durchführung der Tagung und die Publikation dieses Bandes wurden ermöglicht durch vielfache finanzielle, ideelle und personelle Unterstützung. Die finanzielle Förderung durch die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft erlaubte es uns, die vielen Kolleginnen und Kollegen aus dem Ausland einzuladen. Weitere Fördermittel kamen vor allem von der Kirchlichen Hochschule Wuppertal/Bethel, der Sparkasse Wuppertal und der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal. All diesen Institutionen sei herzlich für ihre Bereitschaft gedankt, eine Tagung zu fördern, die einmal mehr Brücken zwischen Sprachen, Ländern und Forschungspositionen schlug. Besonders erwähnt sei auch wieder die fruchtbare Zusammenarbeit mit Prof. Dr. Stefan Freund von der Bergischen Universität Wuppertal, der die Verbindung zur Klassischen Philologie intensivierte.

Unser Dank geht auch an das Rektorat und die Verwaltung der Kirchlichen Hochschule sowie an das Tagungshaus und alle Mitarbeitenden, die zum Gelingen und zur guten Atmosphäre der Tagung beigetragen haben.

Ein letztes Mal wurde die Tagung von den drei Gründervätern von *Septuaginta Deutsch*, Martin Karrer, Wolfgang Kraus, Siegfried Kreuzer unter Beteiligung von Michaela Geiger mitveranstaltet. Den drei Gründervätern gilt der Dank, die Septuaginta und mit ihr die Frage nach der Textgrundlage für die gesamte alttestamentliche Wissenschaft in den Fokus gerückt zu haben. Die Impulse, die von ihrer Arbeit und den von ihnen verantworteten Tagungen für die Textwissenschaft ausgehen, haben Folgen für die gesamte weitere Exegese, betreffen sie doch nicht weniger als den Ausgangspunkt allen Theologietreibens. An ihre Stelle werden nun Michaela Geiger (Wuppertal), Frank Ueberschaer (Halle) und Martin Vahrenhorst (Saarbrücken) treten und die Verantwortung für die organisatorische und inhaltliche Fortführung und Weiterentwicklung der Tagungen übernehmen.

Das lebhafte Interesse und die Attraktivität der Tagungen in Wuppertal werden auch an der Zahl der Beiträge sichtbar. Deshalb mussten die Register auf das Allernotwendigste beschränkt werden.

Um die Arbeiten an den Bibliographien und den Registern haben sich Elena Belenkaja, Nora Hempel, Kerstin Kirsch und Franziska Offelnto verdient gemacht. Von Seiten des Verlages besorgten in gewohnter vorzüglicher Qualität Frau Müller die Programmleitung, Herr Stäbler das Lektorat, Frau König und Herr Spitzner die Herstellung. Ihnen allen gilt unser Dank für die bewährte und vertrauensvolle Zusammenarbeit.

Zuletzt sei aber allen Autorinnen und Autoren gedankt, die durch ihre Beiträge nicht nur die Forschung zur Septuaginta bereichern, sondern den Austausch über die Grenzen von Schulen, Forschungsrichtungen und religiösen Überzeugungen hinaus ermöglichen.

Strasbourg, Halle, Wuppertal und Saarbrücken im Juni 2020

*Eberhard Bons
Michaela Geiger
Frank Ueberschaer
Marcus Sigismund
Martin Meiser*

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Themen

Eberhard Bons

Septuagint Studies between Past and Future

State of the Art and New Perspectives*

Introduction

“I am not bold enough to specify the time when academical lectures and exercises upon the Septuagint will again be given in Germany. But the coming century is long, and the mechanical conception of science is but the humour of a day!”¹

This quotation dates from the last decade of the 19th century. It is taken from the *Bible Studies* of the German New Testament scholar Gustav Adolf Deissmann (1866–1937) to whom we are indebted for important insights into the linguistic features of Septuagint Greek.² In the preface of his work, Deissmann expressed the hope that the Septuagint would be studied in Germany in the following century, i.e. the twentieth century. More than one century after Deissmann has written his preface, on the threshold of the third millennium, it is beyond any doubt that Deissmann’s expectations have been fulfilled. In fact, since the 1980s Septuagint studies are of increasing importance. Not only in the German speaking countries but also in the English language area, in France, Italy, Spain, Eastern Europe and elsewhere in the world Septuagint studies are flourishing, going beyond the narrow confines of biblical exegesis and involving amongst others, classicists, papyrologists, and historians.

The aim of my paper is to provide some reflections on past and present studies on the Septuagint and to open perspectives for future research. In particular, I would like to raise the three following issues.

– In a first step, it is necessary to explain briefly why Septuagint studies over centuries only played a minor role in Western biblical studies. In

* I wish to express my sincere thanks to Richard Bautech, Austin TX, who corrected my English, and to my colleagues with whom I was able to discuss several aspects of this article, especially Anna Passoni Dell’Acqua (Milan), Jennifer M. Dines (Cambridge), and Christoph Kugelmeier (Saarbrücken).

¹ DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, XI. The original German text had already been published in 1895: *Bibelstudien*, IX.

² See e.g. PORTER, “History,” 20–21.

particular, we have to reckon with the fact that research has been strongly influenced by some decisive choices made in a distant past. In terms of epistemology, we should think of paradigms originating from Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the early modern period which have impacted upon biblical studies and especially the importance attributed to the Septuagint. In other words, the renewed interest for Septuagint studies has to be explained against the background of an *histoire de la longue durée* (Fernand Braudel).

– In a second step, I will focus on current research on the Septuagint, its achievements, and its open questions. Apparently, recent scholarship on the Greek Bible did not start *ex nihilo* but was from the very outset embedded in the current debate of biblical exegesis, Jewish and early Christian studies, and Greek philology, to mention the most important ones. In particular, the following questions arise: As for biblical studies in the strict sense, to what extent is a deeper investigation of the Septuagint expected to fill gaps in our knowledge of the text of the Bible and its evolution in the last centuries B.C.E.? As for Jewish and early Christian studies, to what extent can the study of the Septuagint as a biblical source text add to a better understanding of specific features of later Jewish and Christian literature? Finally, as for Greek philology, to what extent can a thorough investigation both of the Septuagint and of contemporary non Jewish sources, e.g. papyri and inscriptions of the Hellenistic era, can contribute to a better explanation of hapaxlegomena, rare words, and technical terms, let alone theological vocabulary? If so, is it possible to draw some conclusions concerning the *milieu* where the Septuagint came into being and its target audience?

– In a third step, I will try to open some perspectives and define several tasks for future research on the Septuagint without, however, any claim to completeness. On the one hand, recent studies have opened some new and exciting fields of research that are still in an early stage. Therefore, it would be extremely useful to foster such approaches and, if necessary, to involve scholars of different academic disciplines. On the other hand, in-depth research on the Septuagint makes us aware of the evolution of the text of the Bible and its plurality. It is beyond any doubt that this issue has implications for both exegesis and theology that require further studies.

1. A Shift of Paradigms in the Appraisal of the Septuagint

The starting point of my reflections is the following question: Which arguments have contributed in the past to the fact that the Septuagint – at least in Western thought – has not received special attention either in Biblical

studies or in church practice? My aim is not to give a detailed overview of the history of Western scholarship of the Septuagint. Rather, I will highlight some important factors that have determined over centuries the reception of the Septuagint.³

a) A central position in the appraisal of the Septuagint is taken by Jerome, Bible translator and commentator who died in 420 C.E. Contrary to what is often assumed, he did not reject the Septuagint categorically⁴, but pleaded for the *hebraica veritas* for three main reasons:

– In the *Prologus in Pentateuco* that precedes his Latin translation of the Bible, Jerome distinguishes exactly between the *vates* and the *interpretes*: the first represents the seer who, by direct divine inspiration, puts into words the received message and announces the future. The latter, on the other hand, is the translator who, as it were, only relies on second hand information. Nevertheless, his solid grammatical and rhetorical skills allow him to translate the source text into another language.

– According to the Septuagint origin legend, the seventy translators arrived at a consistent Greek translation, although they worked separately from each other (Philo, *De vita Mosis*, II, 37). However, Jerome distrusts this tradition and claims that the seventy translators only have compared their texts instead of prophesying (*Prologus in Pentateuco: contulisse ... non prophetasse*)

– In his Letter 57, Jerome refers to numerous differences between the Greek and Hebrew Bible manuscripts available to him, including pluses and minuses in the Septuagint.⁵ This raises the problem of assessing these variants. As a rule, for Jerome, the decisive criterion is which text is original and which is translated. The answer is clear: The Septuagint is only a translation. Thus, in textual criticism of the Old Testament, the *hebraica veritas* is to be considered decisive.⁶

b) Jerome's influence on Western biblical interpretation turned out to influence decisions to be taken more than one millenium after his death. In fact, in the wake of his choices Humanist scholars like Giannozzo Manetti (1346–1459) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466?–1536) argued for the prio-

³ For more details, see also BONS, "Die Septuaginta als biblischer Referenztext," 343–348.

⁴ See e.g. SCHULZ-FLÜGEL, "Hieronymus," 753.

⁵ See Jerome, *Epistula* 57.11 (CSEL 54, 522): *Longum est nunc evolvere quanta Septuaginta de suo addiderint, quanta dimiserint, que in exemplaribus ecclesiae obelis asteristicque distincta sunt.*

⁶ See Jerome, *Epistula* 106.2 (CSEL 55, 239): *Sicut autem in novo testamento, si quando recurrimus ad fontem Graeci sermonis [...], ita in veteri testamento, si quando inter Graecos Latinosque diversitas est, ad Hebraicam confugimus veritatem, ut, quicquid de fonte proficiscitur, hoc quaeramus in rivulis.*

rity of sources, i.e. the Hebrew Bible, over the ancient translations.⁷ Following these options, the Reformed Churches advocated the importance of the *hebraica veritas* for teaching and preaching⁸ while the Roman Catholic Church went exactly in the opposite direction. At the Council of Trent in 1546, the Vulgate was declared the normative biblical text for scripture reading, sermon, research and teaching.⁹ It is not overstating it to say that these two decisions had a decisive impact on exegetical practice for five centuries. Admittedly, Western exegesis still considered the Septuagint as one of the most important textual sources of the Old Testament. However, in privileging either the Masoretic text or the Vulgate, the Septuagint was denied its own particular place in biblical scholarship. As a result, scholars were not used to considering the Septuagint as an autonomous text which, though translated from a Hebrew source, does undeniably have its own literary and theological features and which, for this reason, deserves detailed study in its own right. Roughly speaking, in Old Testament exegesis the role of the Septuagint was limited to textual criticism: Where the Masoretic text appeared enigmatic, untranslatable or even wrong, the Septuagint was expected to provide “spare parts” supposed to improve the biblical text. A look at numerous modern commentaries and translations of the Old Testament shows how often the biblical text got corrected according to the Septuagint. As for New Testament exegesis, a deeper knowledge of the Septuagint proved to be important when dealing with quotations or concepts taken from the Greek Bible, e.g. for christological or ecclesiological purposes.

c) In recent decades, the function of the Septuagint in biblical research has changed. To be sure, a detailed study of this long neglected Bible text is still necessary for Old Testament textual criticism. But above all, three considerations have helped to place the Septuagint at the centre of biblical research.

– The Septuagint writings translated from a Hebrew source text have many literary and theological peculiarities more or less neglected in the past. Moreover, as an ancient translation, the Septuagint is not only a witness of the textual history of the biblical text, but also provides insight

⁷ See MANETTI, *Apologeticus*, V, 66: *Totum enim Vetus, ut dicitur, Testamentum a Septuaginta interpretibus in grecum eloquium conversum, partim addita-mentis, partim omissionibus, partim denique alienis interpretationibus ita referctum reperitur, ut horum omnium cumulus, si simul congeretur ita ut uno aspectu aspici viderique posset, profecto talium discrepantiarum numerus pene incredibis et quasi infinitus putaretur.* For Erasmus of Rotterdam, see e.g. DESIDERIUS ERASMUS, *In Novum Testamentum praefationes*, 98.

⁸ For details see e.g. HOBBS, “Pluriformity,” *passim*.

⁹ DS 1506: *haec ipsa vetus et vulgata editio, quae longo tot saeculorum usu in ipsa Ecclesia probata est, in publicis lectionibus, disputationibus praedicationibus et expositi-onibus pro authentica habeatur.*

into the world of the Hellenistic Jewish communities in Egypt, where it originated. On the one hand, the social, political and literary environment has left its clear traces in the texts of the Septuagint, and on the other hand, conspicuous theological deviations from the Hebrew Bible might betray corresponding discussions in the Greek-speaking Jewish communities. In this respect, a thorough study of the Septuagint reveals new insights into the relationship of these communities to Hebrew or Aramaic-speaking Judaism, on the one hand, and to their Egyptian-Hellenistic environment, on the other.

– The Septuagint is a central biblical source text – in many cases the only one – not only for the various authors of the New Testament, but also for the mostly anonymous authors of the so-called “inter-testamental literature”, furthermore for Philo of Alexandria and Josephus. The same applies to the many Greek speaking Fathers of the Church who had no access to the Hebrew Bible or did not even speak or understand Hebrew. Numerous terminological and content-related details of these extensive literatures are only understandable if it is taken into account that they are based on the Greek Bible text and its explicit or implicit statements.

– In the last decades, text-critical and text-historical research into the Old Testament has led to some new insights. These can help to at least partially revise the widespread view that the Septuagint is characterized by numerous errors, additions and omissions as already claimed by Jerome in his Letter 57. To begin with, the discovery of biblical and parabiblical texts in the Judaean Desert has significantly influenced the studies of Old Testament text criticism and text history, especially in the field of those books in which the Septuagint differs considerably from the Masoretic text. The comparison of Qumran manuscripts and Septuagint texts has in some cases led to the result that the Septuagint conveys a certain text form whose quantitative differences vis-à-vis the Masoretic text, e.g. in the case of the book of Jeremiah, cannot be attributed to the translators themselves. Rather, the differences suggest a Hebrew *Vorlage* that was not necessarily identical to the later Masoretic text. It can therefore be concluded that the Septuagint is rather the indirect witness of a plurality of text forms of the Bible text in the Hellenistic-Roman epoch and thus a document of its complex textual history. Finally, the intensive analysis of the translation technique underlying the various Septuagint books led to a new assessment of the Septuagint variants.¹⁰ In the past, scholars used to correct the Masoretic text in the light of the Septuagint, if it appeared to be incomprehensible, enigmatic or even incorrect. However, there are limits to such a procedure. The variants of the Septuagint are only suitable for correcting the Masoretic text if it can be excluded with great certainty that

¹⁰ See e.g. TOV, *The Text-Critical Use*, 18–20.

they cannot be attributed to the translators, i.e. to their interest in giving the text a different profile in the target language Greek.

To conclude, in recent decades – especially since the discovery of the biblical Qumran fragments – there has been a growing focus on the Septuagint. On the one hand, the Greek Bible text is of interest as a source text which had a decisive influence on the Jewish literature of the Hellenistic-Roman period, later also on the New Testament and Christian literature in Greek. On the other hand, the Septuagint is seen more than ever as an autonomous, albeit long neglected document of biblical textual history that requires thorough analysis and commentary.

2. Current Research on the Septuagint: Achievements and Open Questions

The recent renewal of Septuagint studies is closely connected with the various translation initiatives of the last decades. Since the 1980s, several new initiatives in editing translations of the Septuagint have been launched in European countries as well as in the United States: the French “*La Bible d’Alexandrie*” (BA), the English “*New English Translation of the Septuagint*” (NETS), the German “*Septuaginta Deutsch*” (LXX.D), the Spanish “*La Biblia griega – Septuaginta*”, and the Italian “*La Bibbia dei Settanta*”. Four of these translations are complete (NETS, LXX.D, “*La Biblia griega – Septuaginta*”, and “*La Bibbia dei Settanta*”). Needless to say, these translations differ in terms of approaches and objectives. A major distinctive feature is the point of view taken by the modern translators and commentators. Using the categories introduced by the French scholar Marguerite Harl, two fundamental points of view can be distinguished: an “upstream approach” (“*amont*” in French) and a “downstream approach” (“*aval*” in French).¹¹ The first places emphasis on the underlying Hebrew text and the manner in which it was rendered into Greek by the original translator(s). By contrast, the second focusses on the reception of the Septuagint, both in Jewish and in Christian literature, including rabbinic texts and patristic writings. It goes without saying that both approaches – “upstream” and “downstream” – are not mutually exclusive. Rather, having been personally involved in “*Bible d’Alexandrie*” and “*Septuaginta Deutsch*” and having followed the scholarly debate since the 1990s, it seems to me that the Septuagint requires a multifaceted approach. Let me illustrate this by some key questions followed each by an example:

¹¹ See HARL, “*Traduire la Septante*,” 32–33.

a) From the point of view of textual criticism one question appears to be crucial: Does the Septuagint text offer a variant compared with the MT or the Hebrew textual witnesses from the Judaean Desert, e.g. a plus or a minus or a very different verbal form? If so, does this variant give access to a Hebrew *Vorlage* different from the extant Hebrew sources? In order to explain such a phenomenon a wide range of scenarios can be taken into account, e.g. confusion of similar letters or confusion of homonyms. In Amos 3:7, e.g., God is said to reveal his secret (יְסוֹדֵי) to his servants, the prophets. The Septuagint diverges from this text insofar as the Greek text reads that God reveals his education or instruction (παιδείαν αὐτοῦ) to the prophets. How to explain this variant of the Septuagint? Obviously, the translator did not render the noun יְסוֹד but probably a noun to be derived from the verbal root יָסָר “to chastise, to discipline”. The manuscripts from the Judaean Desert do not provide material suitable to confirm or to rule out the lesson יְסוֹדֵי. Only some centuries later the Christian translator and commentator Jerome quotes both texts in Latin translation, *segretum* and *eruditio* respectively (CCL 76, 245). This implies that Jerome had at his disposal a Hebrew text that probably read יְסוֹדֵי. Therefore, we might cautiously conclude that the Hebrew lesson יְסוֹדֵי is attested in documents previous to the MT. – In the past, scholars have made numerous attempts to explain such kind of variants putting forward more or less plausible hypotheses. Nevertheless, the ongoing debate on textual criticism and textual history of the Bible as well as the decipherment of Qumran manuscripts require further investigations that place Septuagint variants in a wider context of textual history, ancient exegesis and philology. To return to the quoted example of Amos 3:7, the crucial question is not first and foremost the problem of the biblical *Urtext* – probably the MT offers an older lesson than the Septuagint – but the question as to whether the idea of divine *παιδεία* plays a role in an early stage of the reception of biblical texts. Obviously, in the book of Hosea, translated probably by the same translator or group of translators as the book of Amos, this idea is more predominant, God being presented as the educator (παιδευτής) of his people, a divine epitheton that is extremely rare in the biblical and parabiblical writings.¹²

b) From the point of view of textual criticism the presence of variants in the Septuagint has led to another question: Is an alleged variant due to a *Vorlage* different from the MT or other Hebrew textual witnesses and, if not, does it reveal a literary, exegetical or theological preference of the translator? On the assumption that similar phenomena can be found

¹² For more information, see BONS, “‘Je suis votre éducateur’ (Os 5,2 LXX), 191–206. For the idea of “divine education” and its differences between the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, see POUCHELLE, *Dieu éducateur*, passim.

throughout a book of the Septuagint it is highly likely that such variants betray the influence of the translator. In the past, numerous elements of a specific translation technique have been described which can diverge from book to book. As for the Septuagint Psalter, e.g., various Hebrew verbs denoting embarrassment, perplexity, and confusion are rendered by the Greek verbs *παράσσω* (e.g. Ps 6:3) and its compound *συνταράσσω* (e.g. Ps 17[18]:5) which are certainly favorite verbs of the translators.¹³ Moreover, when the nouns of the semantic field of “rock” or “fortress”, e.g. *צור* and *מצודה*, are used to speak of God, the Septuagint Psalter does not translate them literally but employs other terminology, e.g. *ἀντιλήμπτωρ* “protector” and *βοηθός* “helper” (e.g. Ps 17:3^{LXX}), i.e. terms that occur especially in contemporary petitions preserved in papyri.¹⁴ However, if the Hebrew nouns mentioned are not used metaphorically but refer to a real rock or stone the translator opts for nouns like *πέτρα*, e.g. in Ps 26:5; 60:3; 77:15; 20^{LXX}. Regardless of whether these and other translations are influenced by literary or theological concerns, they offer a glimpse into the world of the translators, in particular their literary skill and their theological background. In fact, the question arises of whether a phrase like “the Lord is my rock and my fortress” was not more understandable in a Hellenistic-Jewish community located in Alexandria in Egypt and, if so, why. Admittedly, in the last three decades thorough comparisons between the MT and the Septuagint have yielded significant results, at least as far as rather literally translated books are concerned, e.g. the Psalter. New results could be expected by comparing the translation techniques of different books, e.g. those translated in an earlier stage (namely the Pentateuch) and those translated in a later stage (namely the Psalter and the former and latter prophets). This approach proves to be promising when theological issues in a wider sense are at stake. In Hezekiah’s prayer according to the Hebrew text of Isa 37:19, for example, the Judean king states that the Assyrian kings have cast the gods of the conquered nations into the fire, and he explains that they were no gods but the work of human hands. The Septuagint differentiates: The “gods” thrown into the fire are only “their idols” (*τὰ εἰδωλα αὐτῶν*). By contrast, in the parallel text in 4 Kgdms 19:18 the translator opts for the literal translation *τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῶν* “their gods”. This difference is perhaps an indication of an underlying debate concerning “theologically correct language”. Is a “god” fashioned by human hands and carved in wood and stone a *θεός* in the full sense of the word? Probably not, as the rendering *εἰδωλον* suggests. Once more, the biblical scholar would get stuck halfway if the context of the Greek book of Isaiah would

¹³ See BARR, *Comparative Philology*, 252; SPICQ, *Lexique théologique*, 1514–1515.

¹⁴ For a thorough investigation of this topic see PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, “La metafora biblica di Dio,” 417–53. For the divine title *βοηθός* see BONS, “The Noun *βοηθός*,” 53–66.

not be taken into account, in particular the passages where the Septuagint underscores the incomparability of the God of Israel (Isa 43:10; 45:21–22) claiming that there is no other god before him nor shall there be after him. Research could even go beyond the book of Isaiah. A similar phenomenon can be found in the two versions of Dan 3:12 where the three young Jews are accused of not serving Nebukadnezzar's gods (יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ). Dan 3:12^{OG} renders the phrase in question as follows: τῶ εἰδώλω σου οὐκ ἐλάτρευσαν, while Dan 3:12^{Theod} follows the Aramaic text (τοῖς θεοῖς σου οὐ λατρεύουσιν). – Be this as it may, the starting point of the investigation of Septuagint translation technique is the observation of differences between the Hebrew and the Greek biblical text, no matter how important or insignificant they might appear at first glance. Therefore it is not only legitimate but necessary to describe recurring Septuagint renderings of typical phenomena of Hebrew language, e.g. the infinitive absolute, conjunctions or particles like וַ and the specific Hebrew word order. Nevertheless, the systematic comparison of the Hebrew and Greek biblical text should pave the way to further reflections concerning the literary and theological profile of a given book.

c) The starting point of biblical scholars interested in the Septuagint is very often the Hebrew text. Only in the last decades has our perspective shifted. Of course, it is important to know if a given element of the Hebrew text, including “small” ones like prefixes and enclitic pronouns, has its counterpart in the Septuagint. However, it is equally important to study the Greek text from another point of view, i.e. from the text in the target language.¹⁵ I only want to address some key issues: Which morphological, syntactic, and terminological elements of the target language does the translator use to reproduce his Hebrew source text in Greek? How does he translate the Hebrew “tenses”? Does he use Greek *termini technici* and, if so, which ones, to reproduce specific Hebrew lexemes? Does he translate a term concordantly or in a differentiating manner within a given text or text corpus? Furthermore, what about stylistic features and the elements of *ornatus*? In this respect, it is necessary to examine all of the available sources, starting from Greek literature, papyri and inscriptions until Jewish and Christian interpretations of the first centuries C.E. It will suffice to quote three examples:

¹⁵ In my mind, the approach advocated by Albert Pietersma is too restricted, see e.g. PIETERSMA, “Exegesis in the Septuagint,” 38: “... the primary reason for a word's presence in such a translated text is to represent its Hebrew counterpart, rather than its appropriateness to the new context that is being created. The primary cognitive process is thus that Greek X is deemed a good match for Hebrew Y. In other words, prototypically, suitability in the Greek context is a secondary consideration, not a primary one ...”

α) In the concluding prophecy of the Book of Amos, God announces prosperity and fertility: “And the mountains will run with new wine and the hills all flow with it” (Amos 9:13). As for the second half of the verse, the MT reads the verb, $\text{הִגְדְּלוּ מְטַחְתֵּי}$, whose exact meaning is debated, perhaps “they will flow”¹⁶. Anyway, the Septuagint translates the phrase in question as follows: $\text{πάντες οἱ βουνοὶ σὺμφυτοὶ ἔσονται}$. But what does σὺμφυτοὶ mean? NETS translates as follows: “and all the hills shall be thickly grown”, and “Septuaginta Deutsch” goes in the same direction: “und alle Hügel werden dicht bewachsen sein”. Probably both translations are borrowed from LSJ where “thickly wooded” is indicated as one possible translation of the adjective σὺμφυτος . The Spanish *La Biblia griega – Septuaginta* reads: “y todas las colinas estarán arboladas” “and all the hills will be wooded”. These translations are certainly based on the available lexicons of ancient Greek, but a closer look at the language of the papyri reveals that the adjective has a special meaning in Egyptian Greek, in particular in texts dealing with agriculture and viticulture: “fully cultivated”¹⁷. If this interpretation were correct the Greek text would mean that in the future the vineyards of Israel are not abandoned but cultivated, a translation that obviously makes sense in the immediate context. Does this specific word allow drawing conclusions about the *milieu* of the Septuagint of the Book of Amos? To be sure, as such the word is not a sufficient criterion to make reliable statements. However, the example shows that it is useful to try to place the language of the Septuagint, especially technical terms, in a broader linguistic and social context.

β) The second example is taken from the Psalms, especially the so-called lamentations where Psalmist speak of several dangers and sufferings: enemies, weakness, illness, imminent death, to mention the most important ones. More than once, they use a specific term to describe their suffering in one word: צָר . The Septuagint renders this Hebrew term with the verb θλίβομαι . Thus, as if they want to put in a nutshell whatever they suffer from and why they invoke God, the Psalmists of the Septuagint complain of “being afflicted” (e.g. Ps 17[18]:7; 30[31]:10). The history of the Greek language shows that the verb θλίβω originally means “to squeeze” and that especially in Hellenistic and later times the middle voice θλίβομαι assumes the meaning of “to be afflicted”.¹⁸ Once again, some papyri of the Hellenistic era might better explain the Septuagint evidence. The verb θλίβομαι is attested in some papyri, especially in petitions, the so-called *enteuxeis*. Thus, in a document dating from 258 B.C.E. (SB 18.13881) “the foremen of some stonecutters complain that they are having

¹⁶ See the lexicons of Hebrew, e.g. Ges¹⁸, 641.

¹⁷ See SPICQ, *Lexique*, 1459.

¹⁸ See CHANTRAINE, *Dictionnaire étymologique*, 437–438.

to work only on the hard stone, while other quarry workers get to cut all the soft stone”¹⁹. Concretely, they ask the architect to take measures in order to stop the injustice. The petition ends by a wish: ἵνα μὴ ἡμεῖς θλιβώμεθα “that we may not be oppressed”. As is the case in the Septuagint Psalms, the verb θλιβόμεθα is used to resume what is said before or afterwards and refers to the writer who speaks in the first person singular or plural. Needless to say that the verb as well as the noun θλίψις become key terms of later Jewish and Christian prayer language.²⁰

γ) The third example is again taken from the Book of Amos. In Amos 6:5, in the context of polemics against luxury and debauchery the prophet accuses his listeners of considering their riches as permanent and not as fleeting (ὡς ἐστῶτα ἐλογίσαντο καὶ οὐχ ὡς φεύγοντα). As Jerome already states, the Septuagint diverges considerably from the Hebrew text which reads מְהֵלֵךְ דָּוִד כְּשֶׁבַח וְלִישָׁרִים כְּפִי־יָדָיִם “like David, they invent musical instruments”. Except for the verb שָׁבַח/ἐλογίσαντο, the Greek text appears to be a free translation. In his *Letter 57.11*, Jerome quotes this example admiring its rhetorical qualities: *re vera sensus rhetoricus et declamatio tulliana* “a very rhetorical sentence quite worthy of Tully” (= Cicero). Furthermore, in his commentary upon the Twelve prophets Jerome mentions the *sensus ... pulcherrimus* (CCL 76, p. 304) of this explanation that prompts him to make connections with Virgil’s quotations on the fugacity of time (*Georgica* III.284). Where does the Greek text of Amos 6:5 come from? It seems impossible to find exact parallels between this quotation and extant Greek texts.²¹ Nevertheless, in the absence of a clear-cut answer we can only state that this example offers us a glimpse into the philosophical thought of the translator and into his rhetorical skill.

To conclude, these examples can illustrate that an in-depth study of the Greek terminology of the Septuagint is not only worthwhile and promising but also useful to get further insight into the milieu of the translators. This milieu probably reflects a host of different influences: the everyday language of the papyri, technical language, Hellenistic bureaucracy, juridical terminology, philosophical doctrines, to mention only a few.

¹⁹ For this document and its translation see BAGNALL/DEROW (eds.) *The Hellenistic Period*, 169.

²⁰ For some selected examples see BONS, “Der Einfluss des Septuaginta-Psalters,” 113–137.

²¹ For a thorough investigation of the Greek text of Amos 6:5 and its putative parallels, see DINES, *The Septuagint of Amos*, 187–196.

3. New Perspectives

In this last paragraph of my essay I would like to outline only two research areas that in my mind deserve further attention.

a) Research of the last three decades allows us to draw more precise conclusions concerning the literary and theological features of each of the books of the Septuagint. Therefore, a promising research area would lie in an in-depth description of the innovations of the Septuagint in the field of theology in a broader sense. The following questions are worth further consideration: How does the Septuagint separate the God of Israel from the gods of the ancient Near Eastern as well as the Hellenistic environment? How are foreign gods and their images described? Are there tendencies in the Septuagint towards an universalization of the God of Israel and an emphasis on his incomparability or even his uniqueness? An interesting question in this respect is how the noun אֱלֹהִים was translated, which can be interpreted both as plural and as singular. Thus, Ps 81:1^{LXX} can apparently speak of gods in the plural, since divine qualities are denied to them in verse 7. The question arises, however, where apparently polytheistic ideas were no longer considered “theologically correct”. On the one hand, we do not lack studies on somewhat “monotheistic” tendencies in the various of the Septuagint writings.²² On the other hand, it would be interesting to go one step further, to explore overarching tendencies in the writings of the Septuagint and, if possible, to correlate them with other Jewish texts of the Hellenistic era.

Another promising research area is the question of divine epithets. Which Greek equivalents of nouns and adjectives referring to the God of Israel cannot be explained (or explained sufficiently) against the backdrop of the Hebrew biblical text? As for the Greek equivalents of the rock metaphors of the Psalter basic studies on the Egyptian background of terms like *καταφυγή* “refuge”, *βοηθός* “helper”, *ὑπερασπιστής* “protector”, and *ἀντιλήμπτωρ* “defender, helper” are available.²³ The same holds true for the divine title *παντοκράτωρ*.²⁴ But these studies only represent the tip of the iceberg. Further studies, which investigate the use of the terms mentioned in Greek sources, are still necessary.²⁵

²² For the Septuagint Psalter, see e.g. SCHENKER, “Götter und Engel im Septuaginta-Psalter,” 185–95.

²³ See note 14.

²⁴ For a detailed analysis of this divine title see BACHMANN, *Gott, der „Allmächtige“: Der Pantokrator der Bibel und die Theodizediskussion*.

²⁵ For an in-depth study of epithets borrowed from Greek documents (literature, papyri, inscriptions), see BELLANTUONO, *Divine Epithets in Jewish-Hellenistic Literature*, Ph.D. thesis, 2019.

b) A problem for theological hermeneutics is the plurality of biblical texts, especially where they differ significantly from one another. Let me quote one example: One of the most famous Psalms is Psalm 23 “The Lord is my shepherd”. In verse 4, the MT reads תַּנְחַלְכֵנִי בְּצֵלַת מוֹתָם translated by the Septuagint as follows: ἐὰν γὰρ καὶ πορευθῶ ἐν μέσῳ σκιᾶς θανάτου “even if I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death”. Philologically speaking, the Greek translation ἐν σκιᾶς θανάτου “in the shadow of death”, is inaccurate although the MT vocalizes the word in question as “shadow of death”, so as if it were a sort of construct state. However, the misunderstanding underlying the Greek text is a “productive misunderstanding” which consists in giving Psalm 23 a different tone. The psalmist no longer imagines himself in the “valley of darkness” (= MT) but “in the middle of the sphere of death”. It is not surprising to note that this version of the psalm has generated multiple interpretations fostered by the association of two ideas: on the one hand, the statement of the psalmist pronounced in verse 4 and, on the other, the conviction that believers can hope for resurrection and life in the afterlife. If God does not abandon them when they are in the sphere of death, it is because he intervenes on behalf of them, not only during their lifetime but also at the moment when their earthly life ends. Perhaps the first witness of such a rapprochement is the First Epistle of Clement (1 Clem 26:2: ὅτι σὺ μετ’ ἐμοῦ εἶ). How to deal with the diversity of biblical texts? It is impossible to give a clear-cut answer. However, the study of Old Testament texts in their plurality and diversity opens up a vast field of research that is not yet sufficiently exploited. Finally, let us not forget that these different versions of the biblical text have each produced their own *Wirkungsgeschichte*, better: their *Wirkungsgeschichten* of their own in the plural, whether in the Jewish world, in the Christian world or in both of them. This is why biblical research must be complemented by another research field that seeks to trace Jewish and Christian interpretations of biblical texts: history of reception whose aim is to study the different versions of the Bible and the different interpretations to which they have given rise. As Septuagint scholars, we certainly will not run out of work in the coming years.

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Emanuel Tov

The Palestinian Source of the Greek Translation of the Torah

The focus of this study is an analysis of the Hebrew texts from which the Torah was translated into Greek. Should we think of them as Hebrew texts that developed on Egyptian soil, as several scholars believe, or were they taken to Egypt from Palestine, as described in the Epistle of Aristeas? It is seemingly almost a “Mission Impossible” to make this distinction, but it is worthwhile to make an attempt. Our major task is to present the different types of evidence, especially new ones, and to evaluate their relevance.

This issue is closely connected to the question regarding the identity of the translators. This is not our topic, but in many ways the two issues are interrelated. Scholars agree that the translators were gifted bilingual scholars, but were they Palestinian sages well trained in the Greek language, as claimed by the Epistle of Aristeas, § 122,¹ or were they Alexandrian Jews who acquired their knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic in their own community and in the Sunday school, so to speak? How can we distinguish at all between these two options? Further, is the source of the Hebrew scrolls necessarily related to the translators’ skills? If the translators came from Palestine, they could have taken Palestinian scrolls with them, but they could also have used “Egyptian” Hebrew scrolls. Likewise, Egyptian translators could have used both types of scrolls.

There is no consensus in modern scholarship with regard to the origin of the translators. I agree with Tessa Rajak’s conclusion regarding the Epistle of Aristeas: “Yet essentially there is no sensible way of choosing between the positions. The story in general lines is not impossible ...”² This implies that, in line with that Epistle³ and subsequent sources, the translation of the Torah could have been carried out in Egypt at the beginning of the third century BCE, possibly at the initiative of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (reigned

¹ According to the Epistle of Aristeas, § 122, the translators “had not only mastered the Jewish literature, but had made a serious study of that of the Greeks as well.”

² RAJAK, *Translation and Survival*, 42.

³ The evidence was collected by PAUL WENDLAND, *Aristeae ad Philocratem epistula*. For an expanded version of the story, see especially Epiphanius, *De mensuris et ponderibus*, §§ 3, 6.

287–247 BCE).⁴ This assumption is compatible with the early date of several Greek papyrus and leather fragments of the Torah from Egypt and Qumran dating from the middle or end of the second century BCE.⁵

If we follow the Epistle of Aristeas, we need not accept its lead regarding the provenance of the translators. Possibly the translators were not sent from Palestine by the high priest Eleazar as narrated in the Epistle of Aristeas (§§ 172–176), but were instead talented Egyptian Jews. According to Aitken, “it would seem best to place the translators within the scribal class of Egypt, who were writing documentary papyri and producing translations of documentary texts.”⁶ Some Jews were also found among these scribes. Likewise, Dorival suggested that *most* scholars believe that the translators were learned Egyptian Jews,⁷ but I am not certain that the majority of scholars indeed espouse this view. As the sole voice of dissent, he quotes Isserlin, who suggested that the names of the translators as listed in the Epistle of Aristeas, § 47–50, have mainly a Palestinian background.⁸ However, the apologetic Epistle cannot provide this kind of proof, and there are additional scholars who believe that the translators originated from Palestine.⁹

The provenance of the translators of the Torah will continue to preoccupy us, but I now turn to our main topic, the provenance of the Hebrew Torah scroll(s) from which the translation was made.

The assumption of the Alexandrian background of the translation enterprise of all the books of the LXX is so pervasive that scholars have often

⁴ The legend about the translation in Egypt by seventy-two (seventy) men initially pertained only to the Torah, but was subsequently extended to include the other books of the Bible. See my study “Reflections on the Septuagint with Special Attention Paid to the Post-Pentateuchal Translations,” 429–448.

⁵ Pap. Ryl. Greek 458 of Deuteronomy (2nd century BCE); 4QLXXDeut of Deuteronomy 11 (middle of 2nd century BCE); 4QLXXLev^a of Lev 26 (late 2nd century BCE or early 1st century BCE); Pap. Fouad 266a (942) of Gen 7, 38 (middle of 1st century BCE); Pap. Fouad 266b (848) of Deuteronomy 10–33 (middle of 1st century BCE); Pap. Fouad 266c (847) of Deuteronomy 10–11, 31–33 (50–1 BCE).

⁶ AITKEN, “The Language of the Septuagint,” 133. See also ID., “The Septuagint and Egyptian Translation Methods,” 269–293.

⁷ DORIVAL in ID., HARL, and MUNNICH, *La Bible grecque des Septante*, 61 (“Les traducteurs viennent-ils de Palestine?”): “L’opinion majoritaire est que cette présentation des choses est légendaire: la traduction serait en réalité l’œuvre de lettrés juifs d’Alexandrie.” One prominent view is that of BROCK, “The Phenomenon of the Septuagint,” 34: “...I think that it can be reasonably assumed that Greek was their mother tongue, and Hebrew perhaps largely a language learnt at school: alongside these too it seems very likely that they knew both Aramaic and Egyptian.”

⁸ ISSERLIN, “The Names of the 72 Translators,” 191–197.

⁹ According to VAN DER KOOIJ, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch and Ptolemaic Rule,” 289–300, the translators came from Palestine.

named the Septuagint an “Alexandrian” version.¹⁰ Furthermore, not only has the Greek version been dubbed “Alexandrian,” but its Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* also has been so named or characterized. For example, the assumption of an Egyptian Hebrew text was mentioned, but not developed, by Geiger and Wiener.¹¹ It was developed further, but based on little evidence, in the “local texts theory” suggested by Albright. According to that theory, an Egyptian branch of the Hebrew Scripture text was faithfully rendered into Greek by the LXX translators.¹² Albright’s views¹³ were followed closely by his student Cross, who remarked in a similar fashion “There is evidence that the Septuagint of Samuel and Kings was translated from an *Egyptian* Hebrew text that separated from the Old Palestinian textual tradition no later than the fourth century B.C.”¹⁴ Eleven years later, Cross repeated this claim in an additional study,¹⁵ while realizing that this view is not compatible with the story of the Epistle of Aristeas. He was therefore more or less required to doubt the veracity of the story told in that Epistle, according to which the Torah was translated from a scroll sent from Jerusalem.¹⁶

The validity of Albright’s arguments was undermined strongly by Mantel, who did not believe that Hebrew scrolls existed in Egypt in the Persian period or that there were Egyptian scribes who dealt with Hebrew Scrip-

¹⁰ Thus, e.g., DE LAGARDE, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverben*, 2; SWETE, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1–28 (“The Alexandrian Greek version”); THACKERAY, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship*, 13 (“Alexandrian Bible”) and *passim*.

¹¹ GEIGER, *Urschrift*, 98; WIENER, “The Pentateuchal Text,” 221–235.

¹² ALBRIGHT, “New Light.” I quote from pp. 31–32: “We are, therefore, compelled to reckon with the probability that the translators dealt piously with a text that had been handed down for generations in Egypt itself.” The characterization of the *Vorlage* of the LXX as “Egyptian” in this theory rests on rather weak grounds. As examples of “pre-Septuagintal Egyptian influence on the text of several books” of the LXX, Albright (p. 30) cites the transliteration of the Egyptian name of Joseph in the LXX which, according to him, reflects the late Egyptian equivalent of an earlier name (Ψονθομφανηχ [Gen 41:45]); Γεσεμ Αραβιας for גשן (Gen 45:10; 46:34); ἡ χώρα τῶν χαλδαίων (Gen 11:31), reflecting ארץ הכשדים for אור כשדים; and Θεαεμινα for תחפניס (1 Kgs 11:19–20), which he called “the Female Attendant of Min.” This evidence hardly supports the assumption of an Egyptian Hebrew text for the Greek Pentateuch.

¹³ ALBRIGHT, “New Light,” 31 spoke about forms of the Torah and the prophets that were edited in Egypt between the sixth and the fourth centuries BCE.

¹⁴ CROSS, “The History of the Biblical Text,” 295 (italics E.T.). At an earlier stage Cross had already surmised that the text of Samuel was brought to Egypt from Palestine in the fourth century BCE and was edited there: *Ancient Library of Qumran*, 188–190.

¹⁵ “The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts,” 310: “Once again, it is simplest to look to the Jewish community in Egypt as the conservators of the text type used in the Greek translation made in Alexandria.”

¹⁶ CROSS, “The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts,” 310, n. 16.

ture in that country.¹⁷ According to him, the existence of scribes who worked independently on Hebrew Scripture may be assumed only in a developed Jewish community, the presence of which is not known for the Persian period. The settlement in Elephantine may not be taken as relevant proof, since that was a community of soldiers.

I now turn to the question of the provenance of the scrolls from which the translation was made. For that purpose, I review not only sets of data that have been analyzed in the past (Egyptian elements, Aramaic elements, Palestinian exegesis), but also a new argument, namely characteristic features of the text of the LXX (textual ties with Palestinian Hebrew texts). In this discussion, we need to find an equilibrium between the various arguments that have been brought to bear on this issue.

1. Egyptian Elements in the Translation¹⁸

The translation reflects several Egyptian elements, although they are not easy to detect. The few Egyptian words show that the translation was carried out on Egyptian soil, and the Egyptian-Greek vocabulary shows that the translators were aware of several local terms. The strength of the latter type of examples is that they are backed by Egyptian sources, especially papyri; their weakness is the lack of comparison with Greek words used in Palestine because of the paucity of Greek sources from that area.

a) The main examples of the Egyptian words used by the LXX translators were provided by Morenz and Görg,¹⁹ but they are not numerous. The examples mentioned by Görg pertain to the representation of פִּנְנָה פִּעֻנָּה with Ψονθομφανηχ in Gen 41:45 (Joseph's Egyptian name, Zaphenath-paneah, was changed in the translation to its Egyptian form, Psonthomphanech), the occurrence of the typically Egyptian *ibis* in Lev 11:17 (MT יִשְׁוֹי), and seven additional renderings.²⁰ Koenig further refers to the

¹⁷ MANTEL, "Was There an Egyptian Version of the Bible?", 183–197 (in Hebrew).

¹⁸ The most recent article on this topic, by Jan Joosten, presents the evidence in a refreshing and helpful way: JOOSTEN, "The Egyptian Background," 79–87.

¹⁹ MORENZ, "Ägyptische Spuren," *Mullus, Festschrift T. Klauser*, 250–258 = ID., *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten*, 417–428; GÖRG, "Die Septuaginta im Kontext spätägyptischer Kultur," 115–130. Not all examples provided in these studies are relevant, since they refer to books other than the Torah. See further THACKERAY, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek*, index; SWETE, *Introduction*, 21; SCHWARZ, "Notes sur l'archéologie des LXX," 195–198. The evidence was collected for the first time by HUMFREY HODY (1659–1707), *De bibliorum textibus originalibus, versionibus graecis, latina Vulgata*, book II, ch. IV.

²⁰ In the following sequence: Deut 9:26; Gen 1:2, 2:1; 37:3; Exod 2:10, 33:11. None of these examples is convincing, in my view.

transcription Μωσσης for משה and θίβις “basket” for the כַּבֵּיץ in Exod 2:3, 5,²¹ and Siegert summarized the arguments while adding Potiphar’s name in the LXX, Πετεφρης (37:36; 39:1; 41:45, 50; 46:20).²² Note further the Egyptian loan-words ἄχει “reed-grass” (Gen 41:2, 18 ἰχῆ) and οἶφι (Lev 5:11; 6:13; Num 5:15, 15:4, 28:5 ἡφ(ῖ)ῃ).

b) Egyptian-Greek vocabulary choices were recognized especially in the twentieth century in the wake of the discovery of many papyri in Egypt that illustrated the language spoken and written locally. This trend started with the important studies of Deissman²³ and others at the end of the nineteenth century; in modern times, the studies of Lee²⁴ and Anna Passoni dell’Acqua²⁵ stand out. Lee showed that many words and technical terms in the LXX of the Torah reflect the Greek language of the third century BCE, although he did not always stress their Egyptian background.²⁶ A special type of Egyptian *couleur locale* was suggested by Jan Joosten, who surmised that “... the group among which the version came into being consisted largely of soldiers.”²⁷ The Egyptian background of the language of the LXX has been illustrated well in the still-valuable lexicon of Moulton and Milligan (1930), which provides parallels from the papyri to the language of the LXX and the NT.²⁸

A telling example is that of the ἐργοδιῶνται (“pursuers of work”). This word, representing the equivalent of the מַשְׂנֵי (“taskmasters”) in the story of the Israelites in Exod 3:7; 5:6, 10, 13, shows an Egyptian technical term for the persons in charge of the forced labor in Hellenistic times.²⁹ Görg

²¹ KOENIG, “Quelques ‘égyptianismes’,” 223–232; see further LEE, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch*, 115.

²² SIEGERT, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament*, 186–191. See further PFEIFFER, “Joseph in Ägypten,” 317–318.

²³ DEISSMANN, *Bibelstudien*, 1895; ID., *Neue Bibelstudien*, 1897; ID., *Licht vom Osten*, 1908.

²⁴ LEE, *Lexical Study* and many smaller studies.

²⁵ This scholar focused on the Egyptian background of the LXX vocabulary in a long series of studies on individual words appearing in different books of the LXX. See PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, “La versione dei LXX e i papyri: note lessicali,” 621–632; EAD., “Ricerca sulla versione dei LXX e i papiri, I Pastophorion. II Nomos. III *Andrizest-hai*,” EAD., “La terminologia dei reati nei προστάγματα dei Tolemei e nella versione dei LXX,” EAD., “Notazioni cromatiche dall’Egitto greco-romano. La versione dei LXX e i papyri.” See further the bibliography provided by HARL, “La langue de la Septante,” 243.

²⁶ For some Egyptian parallels, see LEE, *Lexical Study*, 111, 113.

²⁷ JOOSTEN, “Language as Symptom,” 80. This and other studies by Joosten were published in his *Collected Studies on the Septuagint* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012).

²⁸ MOULTON and MILLIGAN, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*.

²⁹ Pap. Flinders Petrie 2 (3rd century BCE) quoted by the lexicon of LIDDELL, SCOTT, and JONES, *A Greek-English Lexicon*.

referred to the rendering of מִיִּצְרָיִם as Egyptian “embalmers” (ἐνταφιασταί) in Gen 50:2, a technical term used in the Egyptian medical world.³⁰

c) Knowledge of details of life in Egypt, especially in the Joseph story, was analyzed by Pfeiffer.³¹

d) Some scholars suggested that the LXX reflects traces of Alexandrian legal interpretation in the LXX, but the evidence is dubious. Of course, this assumption would be relevant only to the translators, and not to their *Vorlage*.³² In particular, Frankel believed that in addition to the influence of the Palestinian legal exegesis of the rabbis on the translators, one may identify in the LXX traces of a local legal system. If Frankel’s intuition and examples were correct, they would point to a highly developed and sophisticated local system of legal interpretation in third-century BCE Alexandria for which there is otherwise no evidence. In discussing the examples of halakhic exegesis in the LXX of Leviticus, Frankel stated that the translator followed the Alexandrian halakha, which in turn is based on the Palestinian halakha.³³ However, Frankel may have been too quick in assuming local Egyptian exegesis. In this group, he included harmonizing renderings of the LXX (e.g., Lev 19:19 rendered according to Frankel in accord with Deut 22:9 following a local custom),³⁴ an ancient addition or possibly a different tradition (the addition of καὶ ἄλλα in Lev 24:7 ascribed to the temple in Heliopolis),³⁵ and a harmonizing rendering or an ancient variant.³⁶

³⁰ GÖRG, “Die Septuaginta im Kontext,” 119–120.

³¹ PFEIFFER, “Joseph in Ägypten.”

³² This point could be supported by evidence that would be equally relevant to the translators only. Two centuries later, Philo’s knowledge of oral Palestinian traditions has been remarked upon by several scholars. See BAMBERGER, “The Dating of Aggadic Materials,” 122, 123; COHEN, *Philo Judaeus*, 33–51.

³³ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 133–134. This line of argumentation has been accepted by JOOSTEN, “Aramaic Background,” 55.

³⁴ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 156.

³⁵ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 157.

³⁶ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 98. In the LXX of Exod 34:20 תִּפְתְּחֵהּ וְעָרַפְתָּהּ אֶל־אִמָּוָה (if you do not redeem it, you must break its neck) has been rendered by ἐὰν δὲ μὴ λυτρώσῃ αὐτό, τιμὴν δώσεις (Now if you do not redeem it, you shall give a price). This translation differs from the parallel passage 13:13 where the expected translation is found: ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἀλλάξῃς, λυτρώσῃ αὐτό (But if you do not make an exchange, you shall redeem it.) Frankel believes that the reason for the discrepancy between the two renderings must be sought in a halakhic interpretation by the translator in 34:20, but if that were the case, why was that interpretation not invoked in the same situation 13:13? According to Frankel, the halakhic situation pertains to situations outside Palestine, not necessarily to Egypt. In my view, this is not the case. The LXX uses a phrase τιμὴν δώσεις that together with the previous verb probably reflects a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, either כַּעֲרַךְ בַּעֲרַךְ as in Lev 27:27 and Num 18:16, or וְעָרַכְתּוּ for MT וְעָרַפְתּוּ. The first possibility involves the assumption of a harmonizing reading at the base of the LXX, as often elsewhere. The second possibility involves the interchange of similar letters. Such an interchange was

On the other hand, in another thorough discussion of rabbinic exegesis that influenced the LXX translators, Prijs mentioned many examples of the influence of Palestinian exegesis, while not mentioning the possibility of a separate branch of Alexandrian halakha;³⁷ Prijs stated that he does not accept Frankel's idea of the reflection of Alexandrian exegesis in the LXX of Exod 22:8.³⁸

e) Possible connections with an "Egyptian" Hebrew text. Papyrus Nash (PN) (containing the Decalogue and two additional passages³⁹), found in Egypt, displays a few agreements with the LXX, causing scholars to believe that it reflects a local Egyptian tradition. However, upon further investigation, the agreements with the LXX in the Decalogue should be seen in a wider context. The major argument for the contention that PN and the LXX are closely related is the harmonizing inclusion in PN of the argument for the Sabbath in Exod 20:11 *instead* of that in Deut 5:15. This supposedly resembles Codex B in LXX-Deut, but it is far from identical to that codex, since the codex includes *both* arguments, as does 4QDeutⁿ. Rather, PN follows the same textual tradition as 4QPhyl G and 8QPhyl III, which replace the argument of Deuteronomy with that of Exodus. PN also differs from Codex B of LXX-Deut in that it includes only part of the plus of PN.⁴⁰

At the same time, in the last three lines of PN one notices an agreement with the LXX. The Decalogue in PN is followed by a revised form of Deut 4:45 and the *Shema* ' pericope, 6:4–9 (Deut 6:4–5 have been preserved).

suggested by Tychsen as quoted by SCHLEUSNER, *Novus thesaurus philologicus-criticus*, 5.511 s. v. *τιμή*. That possibility is based on a variant וערכתו reflected by *τιμήν δώσεις* (cf. the equivalence of ערך – *τιμάω* in Lev 27:12, 14 and of ערך – *τιμή* in Lev 5:15, 18, 25 etc.).

³⁷ PRIJS, *Jüdische Tradition* (1948).

³⁸ PRIJS, *Jüdische Tradition*, 3. The presence of Alexandrian legal terminology in the LXX, commonly accepted by scholars, should not be confused with legal exegesis. For an excellent analysis of such legal exegesis, see VERBURG, "The LXX of the Law of Deposit," 65–82.

³⁹ Deut 5:6–21 (= Exod 20:2–17) was followed by a revised form of the introductory formula Deut 4:45 and the *Shema* ' pericope (Deut 6:4–5 have been preserved).

⁴⁰ It should be noted that the resemblance with the LXX is limited to Codex B. Furthermore, the sequence 768 of the 6th–8th commandments of PN is shared only with Codex B in LXX-Deut. On the other hand, PN and Codex B differ in six details. As a result, no close connection with Codex B in Deuteronomy need be assumed. Codex B is only a codex, and therefore the full evidence of the LXX needs to be taken into consideration. PN is not close to the joint textual tradition of either LXX-Deut or LXX-Exod. For various reasons, the agreements between PN and the LXX (against one or two of the Hebrew texts) are therefore not meaningful, and the differences between them and PN should also be considered. For all these, see in greater detail my study "Papyrus Nash and the Septuagint," forthcoming, and DEN HERTOOG, "Het *Shema* ' in de Griekse vertaling van het Oude Testament," 8.

The context of PN is that of a Palestinian *tefillin*, and in another paper I point to several Judean Desert *tefillin* that similarly juxtapose these two texts.⁴¹ The Decalogue and the *Shema*’ pericope were also read together in the morning service in the temple, as specified in m. Tamid 5:1. Remarkably, there is an important agreement between PN and the LXX in one detail with the appearance of a verse resembling Deut 4:45 in the same place in both sources, before 6:4. The placing of “4:45” in its present location in the LXX before 6:4, as a ceremonial introduction to the *Shema*’, matches the position of the same verse that introduces the Decalogue in Deut 4:45. The implication of the addition is that the *Shema*’ pericope deserves the same introduction as the Decalogue. At present, no textual evidence other than PN and the LXX to Deut 6:4, where the translation undoubtedly is based on a Hebrew text, has been found for this tradition. The closeness between the LXX and PN in this detail should be recognized, but it should be viewed in its Palestinian liturgical context. For details, see my mentioned study.

Summarizing the paragraph on the Egyptian elements in the LXX, we conclude that such elements are undeniably found in the LXX. As a rule, they point to the translators and not to the provenance of the *Vorlage* of the LXX.

Deut 4:45 provides a ceremonial introduction to the *Shema*’, similar to its original position where it was taken as an introduction to the Decalogue (Deuteronomy 5). The very juxtaposition of the Decalogue and the *Shema*’ in several *tefillin* records the “upgrading” of the *Shema*’, and therefore the presence of such an introduction, “borrowed” from the Decalogue, is not surprising.

2. Aramaic Elements in the Septuagint

While the presence of Egyptian elements in the LXX of the Torah points undeniably to Egypt as the land of origin of the translation, its Aramaic elements can be explained in different ways. They point to the translators, both if they originated from Palestine and if they were Egyptians, since Aramaic was at home in both Palestine and Egypt in the third century BCE. Some scholars use the presence of Aramaic elements in order to stress the connection of the LXX to Egypt.⁴² The translation contains a few Aramaic words that reflect the language spoken by the Jews, for example,

⁴¹ See my study mentioned in the previous note.

⁴² JOOSTEN, “Aramaic Background,” 53–72; ID., “Septuagint Greek and the Jewish Sociolect in Egypt,” 246–256. See also WALTERS (KATZ), *The Text of the Septuagint*, 166–174; LOISEAU, *L’Influence de l’araméen* (2016).

σαββατα from Exod 16:23 onwards (Aramaic ܫܒܬܐ as opposed to Hebrew ַשְׁבֻּעַ), πασχα from Exod 12:11 onwards (Aramaic ܫܦܫܬܐ as opposed to Hebrew ַחֲדָשׁ), and μαννα from Num 11:6 onwards (Aramaic ܡܢܢܐ as opposed to Hebrew ַמָּן). These cases are joined by the single occurrence of γειώρας based on ܡܘܪܝܢܐ (Exod 12:19, also Isa 14:1), for Hebrew ַמֶּזֶז. Elsewhere the word is always translated as πάροιχος (from Gen 15:13 onwards) and προσήλυτος (from Exod 12:48 onwards).⁴³

Jan Joosten provided ample evidence of inappropriate reliance on Aramaic in the LXX,⁴⁴ but such evidence is very limited for the Torah.⁴⁵ Furthermore, this kind of argument relates to the translators, and not to their *Vorlage*.

3. Palestinian Exegesis Reflected in the LXX

The Septuagint reflects Palestinian exegesis, that is, exegesis that is known from rabbinic sources. It is assumed that these connections point to an exclusive link to Palestine, since there is no indication that any similar literature existed on Egyptian soil in that period. The exclusive connection between the Septuagint and rabbinic exegesis was first exposed extensively by Zecharias Frankel⁴⁶ and subsequently by J. Fürst and Leo Prijs.⁴⁷ This area,⁴⁸ for which many convincing examples have been mentioned, relates to the translators, and not to their *Vorlage*.

⁴³ The best analysis is that of JOOSTEN, “Aramaic Background,” who also gives additional examples, such as transliterations that are based on Aramaic and not Hebrew. E.g., ַחֲדָשׁ לַעֲבָד – Βεελσεπφων (Exod 14:2, 9; Num 33:7) and not Βααλσεπφων; ַעֲבָד לַעֲבָד – Βεελφεγωρ (Num 25:3, 5; Deut 4:3); ַמֶּזֶז – Βεελλμεων (Num 32:38). Joosten was preceded by DELEKAT, “Ein Septuagintatargum,” claiming that the LXX of Isaiah was translated from a Targum.

⁴⁴ JOOSTEN, “On Aramaizing Renderings in the Septuagint,” 587–600. For an earlier analysis, see EMANUEL TOV, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 196–197.

⁴⁵ Note that the study by Joosten mentions several examples from books other than the Torah.

⁴⁶ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 222.

⁴⁷ FÜRST, “Spuren der palästinisch-jüdischen Schriftdeutung,” 152–166; PRIJS, *Jüdische Tradition*. Additional literature published before 1948 on rabbinic exegesis was mentioned by PRUIS, *Jüdische Tradition*, xiii and 105.

⁴⁸ For the general background, see SHEMUEL SAFRAI, “Halakha,” in *The Literature of the Sages*, 137–139. Halakhic variants mainly in Hebrew sources are analyzed in the study of D. ANDREW TEETER, *Scribal Laws* (2014).

In this vast area of halakhic and haggadic exegesis reflected in the LXX, it suffices to refer to Exod 22:12,⁴⁹ Deut 26:12,⁵⁰ and a few additional examples.

A הַשֶּׁשֶׁק (a monetary unit of unknown value) is rendered in Gen 33:19 (and subsequently also in Josh 24:32 and Job 42:11) as a “lamb” (ἀμνός, ἀμνάς) in the LXX (and similarly in Targum Onkelos and the Vulgate). This explanation is also reflected in Gen. Rab. 79:7.

Exod 22:10 MT וְהָיָה כִּי יִשָּׂא אֶת-כֶּסֶף הַיָּחֵד לְיָדוֹ

JPS that the one has not laid hands on the property of the other

LXX ἢ μὴν μὴ αὐτὸν πεπονηρεῦσθαι ἐφ’ ὅλης τῆς παρακαταθήκης τοῦ πλησίον.

NETS that surely he has not acted wickedly against the entire deposit of the neighbor

The usual equivalent of מַלְאכָה is ἔργον (work), but the word is explained here according to its technical meaning as a “deposit” (παρακαταθήκη), often utilized in rabbinic literature. This resembles the equivalent in the⁵¹ LXX of Lev 5:21, 23 of פְּקֹדֶיךָ – παραθήκη (cf. the equivalents of פְּקֹדֶיךָ – παρακατατίθῃ in Jer 40:7 [LXX: 47:7], 41:10 [LXX: 48:10]).

In concluding this paragraph, it seems to me that the halakhic (and haggadic) exegesis in the translation of the Torah points to a deep involvement of the translators in Palestinian exegesis. This level of involvement points to the translators, and not to their *Vorlage*.

4. Textual Ties with Palestinian Hebrew Texts

So far, we have found no positive criteria for identifying the provenance of the *Vorlage* of the LXX. All the criteria analyzed above point to the translators, and not to their *Vorlagen*. The connection of the translation to Egypt is undeniable, but the evidence points only to the outer layer of the translation, not to the essence of the manuscripts from which the text was translated. In order to penetrate into the core issue we must identify features that characterize the *Vorlage* of the LXX. Naturally, any attempt to characterize the LXX’s *Vorlage* is bound to be subjective. When determining the elements that characterize a Hebrew text, we are in a difficult position and even more so in the case of the *Vorlage* of a translation, because of the added uncertainty of reconstructing its parent text.

⁴⁹ Analyzed in TOV, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 65.

⁵⁰ Analyzed in TOV, *Text-Critical Use*, 85.

⁵¹ For references to the rabbinic literature, see JASTROW, s.v. פְּקֹדֶיךָ. See further PRIJS, *Jüdische Tradition*, 2.

In determining the most prominent textual features of the *Vorlage* of the Torah, I disregard for a moment the LXX of Exodus 35–40, where the LXX probably followed a completely different midrashic Hebrew manuscript. The most prominent textual feature of the LXX are its harmonizing features, mainly additions, which surprisingly⁵² are more frequent in the LXX than in the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP). Still, the LXX shares a good many of them with SP. The exclusive links between the LXX, SP, and the pre-Samaritan texts (a) may imply that the *Vorlagen* of the LXX of the Torah derived from the area where the SP and the pre-Samaritan texts were at home, namely Palestine. Further links with that area are: (b) Hebrew Qumran texts, and (c) Hebrew parabiblical compositions created on Palestinian soil. This evidence has not been brought to bear on the discussion of the origin of the LXX.

a) The connections between the LXX and SP, pertaining equally to all five books of the Torah, are pervasive. The extensive agreements between the LXX and SP were known already in the seventeenth century, starting with the analysis of Jean Morin (Johannes Morinus).⁵³ This scholar initiated the discussion on the value of SP when he opined that the combined evidence of the SP and LXX weighed more heavily than that of MT alone. This view was expressed within the seventeenth-century theological discussion of the comparative value of MT and the LXX and should therefore be taken *cum grano salis*.

The special relation between these two sources has been explained in different ways from the seventeenth century onwards.⁵⁴ It has been claimed that the LXX was translated from a Samaritan source, that the LXX was revised according to a Samaritan source, or that SP was translated from the LXX. However, in 1815, the discussion was led in a more sound direction by Wilhelm Gesenius who suggested that “the Alexandrian translation and the Samaritan text derived from Judean codices which were similar to each other.”⁵⁵ I expressed my agreement with this view in detail in 2016.⁵⁶ This common text was of a special nature, as the LXX and SP agree mainly in secondary readings, especially in harmonizing pluses, as well as in their rewriting of the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, which differed from that of MT. The two texts are far from identical, but they show significant common features.

⁵² I say “surprisingly,” because in the research this feature is usually considered to be typical of SP. See my summarizing study “Textual Harmonization in the Five Books of the Torah: A Summary,” 31–56.

⁵³ MORINUS, *Exercitiones ecclesiasticae* (1631).

⁵⁴ For details, see my study “The Shared Tradition of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch,” 277–293.

⁵⁵ GESENIUS, *De Pentateuchi Samaritani origine*, 14.

⁵⁶ Tov, “The Shared Tradition.”

In both texts, the harmonizing changes, especially the pluses, constitute their most prominent textual feature, based probably on a Hebrew text in the case of the LXX. These pluses, sometimes comprising one or more words or half a verse, were meant to improve the message of the Scripture text. Many of these harmonizing pluses were specific to either the LXX or SP, while others were common to them both as in the following examples in which their secondary nature is evident:

Gen 20:14 MT SP LXX ושבך ובקרה ועבדים ושפחה (ויקה אבימלך); SP LXX + אלה כסף + (χίλια δίδραχμα). Based on v. 16 MT SP LXX.

The harmonization in this verse reveals its secondary nature. According to v. 14 MT, Abimelech gave Abraham “sheep and oxen, and male and female slaves” but, according to v. 16 MT SP LXX, he told Sarah that he had given Abraham “a thousand pieces of silver.” That monetary unit probably represented the value of the items he had given Abraham according to v. 14. However, this detail from v. 16 was added in the SP and LXX version of v. 14, and thus according to that version Abraham received twice as much in reparation. The harmonization solved one issue in the common text of SP LXX, but left a discrepancy between vv. 14 and 16; indeed, many harmonizations create new problems.

Gen 43:28 MT SP LXX + ויאמר ברוך האיש ההוא לאלהים (και εἶπεν Εὐλόγητος ὁ ἄνθρωπος ἐκεῖνος τῷ θεῷ).

When Jacob’s sons visit Joseph, the latter inquires after the well-being of his father, upon which he hears that his father is still alive. According to SP LXX, Joseph then blesses his father. The added blessing for Jacob resembles his blessing to his sons in 49:28 ויברך אותם איש אשר כברכתו ברוך (אתם), but the exact wording of the plus in 43:28 is not found anywhere in Scripture. In the words of Skinner, this addition is “hardly original.”⁵⁷

Gen 50:25 MT SP LXX מזה את עצמתי (את העלתם); SP LXX + אתכם + (μεθ’ ὑμῶν)

Based on Exod 13:19 MT SP LXX זה אתכם מזה את עצמתי = S.

This example shows how well the harmonizing scribe of Genesis knew the Scripture text. Joseph’s words in Gen 50:25 are quoted with a slight expansion in Exod 13:19, and this expansion was in turn inserted in SP LXX in Genesis.

These examples are merely a few of the tens of others analyzed in my studies on harmonizations in the five books of the Torah.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ SKINNER, *Genesis*, 482.

⁵⁸ TOV, “Textual Harmonizations in the Ancient Texts of Deuteronomy,” 271–282; ID., “Textual Harmonization in the Stories of the Patriarchs;” ID., “The Harmonizing Character of the Septuagint of Genesis 1–11;” ID., “The Septuagint of Numbers as a

A challenging problem in analyzing these non-Masoretic agreements between SP and the LXX is the original language of these harmonizations. In my view, most of them were already found in the *Vorlage*, in which case they are relevant to the issue under investigation. It cannot be coincidental that so many instances of identical harmonization were found in both texts. Besides, the two sources also agree in several additional groups of secondary readings, such as contextual adaptations,⁵⁹ as well as in several primary readings. All these factors together suggest that the LXX and SP must have derived from a common source.

On the other hand, it has been claimed by others that the translators inserted the harmonizations in the LXX translation. The first scholar to make this claim was Theophilus Toepler (1830), who provided a long list of examples.⁶⁰ He was followed by Zacharias Frankel who based himself on Toepler and added several examples, but he usually ascribed the phenomenon to anonymous editors of the manuscripts (*diaskeuastes*),⁶¹ and on occasion to the translators.⁶² In recent times, several scholars have returned to the earlier view of ascribing the harmonizations to the translators of the book of Numbers.⁶³

In 1985, I suggested that these harmonizations had been inserted into the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX, rather than being the work of the translators,⁶⁴ based on the following arguments: (1) the translators' fidelity to their sources; (2) the level at which the harmonization took place; (3) the frequent agreement of SP with the LXX; and (4) occasional agreement of the LXX with a Qumran scroll. These arguments, suggested in my earlier studies on the Torah books,⁶⁵ are exemplified here using select examples.

1. *The translator's fidelity.* If a translation was literal, by implication the harmonizations reflected in that translation took place in his *Vorlage* because harmonization is a sign of great freedom. The overall impression of the LXX translation technique in the books of the Torah is one of fidelity-

Harmonizing Text;" ID., "Textual Harmonization in Exodus 1–24;" ID., "Textual Harmonization in Leviticus (forthcoming).

⁵⁹ See my study "The Shared Tradition of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch," 277–293.

⁶⁰ TOEPLER, *De Pentateuchi interpretationis alexandrinae*, 8–16.

⁶¹ FRANKEL, *Einfluss*, 58–63; 103–104; 163–164, 187–188; 221–223. The basis for Frankel's approach was laid in his earlier *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, 78–79.

⁶² See, e.g., Frankel's remarks in *Einfluss*, 187–188.

⁶³ DORIVAL, *La Bible d'Alexandrie, 4: Les Nombres*, 42–43. See also his summarizing methodological remark on p. 40; WEVERS, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers*, xvii–xviii; MARTIN RÖSEL, "Die Septuaginta und der Kult," 29–30.

⁶⁴ "The Nature and Background of Harmonizations." This argument was accepted by HENDEL, *The Text of Genesis 1–11*, 82–92 ("Harmonizing Tendencies in S and G").

⁶⁵ See n. 58; the results were summarized in a study referred to in n. 52.

ty to the Hebrew parent text, but the translation technique of each of the books needs to be investigated further.

2. *The level at which the harmonization took place.* If all or most instances of harmonization were created by the same hand, the changes must have taken place at the Hebrew level and were not created by the translator. This suggestion is based on the fact that in some cases the content of the two Greek texts – the text that was changed by way of harmonization and the text to which it was adapted – differs, rendering it impossible that the translator himself was influenced by the Greek context. Examples are provided below of differences in Hebrew *Vorlage*, vocabulary, and construction:

Vorlage (the plus is based on a slightly different *Vorlage*):

Lev 10:15 MT SP LXX ולבנית; SP LXX + ולבנתיך + (και ταῖς θυγατρᾶσι σου). Based on v. 14 MT SP, and not on the LXX because the LXX reflects a different *Vorlage*, אתה ובינתך ובניתך (σὺ και οἱ υἱοὶ σου και ὁ δῶός σου).

Lev 22:18 MT SP בני; LXX (קהל ישראל) (συναγωγῆ Ἰσραήλ). Based on 16:17 MT SP לה קהל ישראל. The LXX in 16:17 combines the two readings (συναγωγῆς υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ). Therefore, the harmonization could not have taken place at the translational level.

Num 29:11 MT SP LXX (ונסכיהם); LXX + ליהוה אשה ליהוה + (κατὰ τὴν σύγκρισιν, εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας, κάρπωμα κυρίῳ). Based on v. 6 (κατὰ τὴν σύγκρισιν αὐτῶν, εἰς ὁσμὴν εὐωδίας κυρίῳ) with a different *Vorlage* (יהוה ליהוה) (במשפטם לריח ניחח ליהוה).

Vocabulary (the wording of the plus differs from that of the source of the harmonization):

Lev 6:8 MT SP LXX (המזבח); SP LXX + אשה + (κάρπωμα). Based on 2:2 (θυσία).

Lev 13:39b MT SP LXX בעור; LXX + בשרו + (τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ). Based on v. 11 (τοῦ χρωτὸς). Similar argument in Lev 13:43 based on v. 2.

Lev 25:50 MT SP LXX שכיר; LXX + שנה בשנה + (ἔτος ἐξ ἔτους). Based on v. 53 (ἐνιαυτὸν ἐξ ἐνιαυτοῦ).

Lev 26:20 MT SP הארץ; SP LXX השדה (και τὸ ξύλον τοῦ ἀγροῦ). Based on v. 4 (και τὰ ξύλα τῶν πεδίων).

Different construction (the construction of the plus differs from that of the source of the harmonization):

Lev 25:25 MT SP LXX אחיך; LXX + עמך + (ὁ μετὰ σοῦ). Based on v. 39 (παρὰ σοί).

Lev 25:46 MT SP LXX לרשת; LXX + להיו לכם + (και ἔσονται ὑμῖν). Based on v. 45 (ἔστωσαν ὑμῖν).

Lev 26:21 MT SP LXX ואם; LXX + באלה + (μετὰ ταῦτα). Based on v. 23 (ἐπὶ τούτοις).

While usually no judgment can be expressed on the vocabulary of any two Greek texts because the Greek renderings use common LXX vocabulary, in

the mentioned cases a strong argument against inner-LXX harmonization may be made.

3. *Frequent agreement of SP with the LXX.* The fact that the LXX agrees with the Hebrew text of the SP in so many harmonizations in all five books of the Torah strengthens the assumption of a Hebrew background also for the other harmonizations in which they do not agree.

4. *Occasional agreement of the LXX with a Qumran scroll.* In several instances, the LXX agrees with a Qumran scroll and these agreements support the idea that the LXX reflects a Hebrew text:

Exod 2:11 MT SP LXX בימים; 4QExod^b LXX + והרבים + (ταῖς πολλαῖς). Based on v. 23.

Lev 26:24 MT SP בקרי; 11QpaleoLev^a LXX בחמת קרי (θυμῶι πλαγίω). Based on v. 28.

Num 22:11 MT SP LXX הארץ; 4QNum^b LXX + והוא יושב ממולי + (καὶ οὗτος ἐγκάθηται ἐχόμενός μου). Based on v. 5.

Num 22:11 MT SP LXX וגרשתיו; 4QNum^b LXX + מן הארץ + (ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς). Based on v. 6 (ἐκ τῆς γῆς). Difference in Greek.

Because of these arguments, I believe that the harmonizations of the LXX were based on Hebrew texts. Beyond the examples provided above, I believe that it is unlikely that Greek translators, certainly relatively literal ones, harmonized scriptural verses, especially when harmonizing with remote contexts. It is my feeling, and no more than such, that the translators limited their mission to the transferring of the message of the Torah to the target language, with occasional exegetical deviations from the plain meaning of the text. The frequent agreement between the LXX and such Hebrew sources as SP and pre-Samaritan scrolls makes it difficult to maintain a view that harmonization is an inner-Septuagintal phenomenon.⁶⁶ Furthermore, harmonization in small details is the major textual phenomenon in a group of Hebrew liturgical biblical texts and in most *tefillin*,⁶⁷ all of which support the likelihood of harmonization having taken place also in the *Vorlage* of the LXX. Especially relevant is the fact that these harmoni-

⁶⁶ Inner-LXX influence is not unimaginable, but such instances would be very rare. I submit one such possible instance in which the translation equivalents common to Exodus and Numbers show the possibility of such influence. The description of the features of God in LXX Num 14:18 **וַאֲמַתָּה נִשְׂא עֵן וּפְשַׁע וְחַטָּאתָה** is expanded twice in Numbers in accord with Exod 34:6–7: “The Lord is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love *and faithfulness*, forgiving iniquity and transgression *and sin*.” The underlined words have been added in the LXX of Num 14:18 (Κύριος μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός, ἀφαιρῶν ἀνομίας καὶ ἀδικίας καὶ ἁμαρτίας). Cf. the wording of Exod 34:6–7: Κύριος ὁ θεὸς οἰκτιρῶν καὶ ἐλεήμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός, ⁷καὶ δικαιοσύνην διατηρῶν καὶ ποιῶν ἔλεος εἰς χιλιάδας, ἀφαιρῶν ἀνομίας καὶ ἀδικίας.

⁶⁷ The data are listed in my study “The Development of the Text of the Torah in Two Major Text Blocks.”

zations are more frequent in the pre-Samaritan Qumran scrolls than in the SP and LXX.⁶⁸

The common elements in the LXX and SP in these textual matters should be viewed together with their agreement in an important editorial feature: In Genesis, SP and LXX (albeit with differences between them) differ systematically from MT in their presentation of the chronological data in the genealogies in chapters 5 and 11. I posit two recensions (SP, LXX) and one text (MT) in chapter 11, and possibly three recensions in chapter 5.⁶⁹ The *Vorlagen* of the LXX and SP display several common features.

So far, my argument regarding the common provenance of the LXX and SP, for which there seems to be only one solution, namely that the *Vorlage* of the LXX came from the area where the pre-Samaritan texts were at home. These pre-Samaritan texts such as 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QNum^b caused a small revolution in textual studies. SP was at home in ancient Israel as scrolls found at Qumran share their idiosyncratic features with SP except for its few sectarian readings, and therefore they are named pre-Samaritan. This suggestion comes as a surprise to those who know SP because, after all, its deviations from the LXX exceed their resemblance. This situation resulted from the complicated transmission history of the Torah text.⁷⁰

b) Hebrew Qumran texts. A second area pointing to ancient Israel as the source of the *Vorlage* of the LXX is that of two Hebrew Qumran texts. Two fragmentary Qumran texts display exclusive links to the LXX, which leads us to believe that in these two instances the *Vorlage* of the LXX came from the land of Israel.

4QDeut^d agrees with the LXX against MT in the addition of two meaningful stichs in Deut 32:43 that give the song a polytheistic flavor. The two also agree in four small details, and differ in three small details. Due to some discrepancies between the two, the LXX could not have been trans-

⁶⁸ See TOV, "The Samaritan Pentateuch and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Proximity of the Pre-Samaritan Qumran Scrolls to the SP." These texts are closer to SP than to the LXX, while 4QNum^b, a transition text, is close to both the SP and LXX. See TOV, "Textual Harmonization in the Five Books of the Torah."

⁶⁹ TOV, "The Genealogical Lists in Genesis 5 and 11 in Three Different Versions."

⁷⁰ Like Gesenius, I surmise that the two texts had a common Palestinian background, but SP gave that common text a special twist. See n. 55 above. The pre-Samaritan texts and SP changed their common text more than the source of the LXX did, since it incorporated large editorial interventions, such as in the story of the plagues in Exodus 7–11 and in the addition to Exodus and Numbers of segments copied from Deuteronomy 1–3. Besides, SP also incorporated a few sectarian readings. The *Vorlage* of the LXX distanced itself from the common Palestinian text at an early stage, when it still had much in common with the tradition of the pre-Samaritan texts and the SP, and later the SP group distanced itself more from their common base.

5. Conclusions

The Septuagint translation of the Torah undeniably reflects Egyptian linguistic elements showing that the translation was made on Egyptian soil. These elements indicate the activity of translators in Egypt, but they do not point to the provenance of the manuscripts from which they translated. I will not pronounce a judgment on the question of whether these translators were sages who came from the land of Israel and learned the Greek culture or were Egyptian wise men who learned Hebrew.⁷⁵

Our focus is the origin of the text(s) from which the LXX was translated. I hope to have provided sufficient arguments in support of the view that the content of the LXX is closely related to Palestinian texts and compositions. I have pointed to exclusive textual connections between the LXX, SP, and pre-Samaritan texts regarding their common harmonizing tendencies and their edition of the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11. I thus surmise that the *Vorlagen* of the LXX of the Torah were Palestinian texts that were taken to Egypt. I am not aware of any specific Egyptian features of those Hebrew texts.⁷⁶

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⁷⁵ This question is not discussed in this study, but my intuition tells me that the translators came from Palestine.

⁷⁶ In principle such features could have developed in a presumed Egyptian local text, but I do not see any convincing argument in favor of the assumption that the parent text of the LXX was such a local text.

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Christian A. Eberhart

Leontopolis, Onias und die Septuaginta

Einflüsse und Auswirkungen

Bei der Beschäftigung mit diversen Textdifferenzen zwischen dem Masoretischen Text (MT) – eigentlich einem hypothetisch rekonstruierten Proto-MT – und der Septuaginta oder mit thematischen Verschiebungen in theologischen Aussagen stößt man immer wieder nicht nur auf „Alexandria“ als relevante lokale Größe, sondern auch auf „Leontopolis“. Die Siedlung Leontopolis, der dort befindliche frühjüdische Tempel, und dann auch der Priester Onias als dessen Gründer verdienen also besondere Beachtung bei der Untersuchung der Septuaginta. Deshalb geht es in diesem Beitrag um eine Bestandsaufnahme chronologischer und geographischer Aspekte sowie kultureller, soziopolitischer und religiöser Einflüsse und Auswirkungen des dortigen Umfeldes auf die Übersetzungsarbeit der Septuaginta.

Allerdings hat Leontopolis in der bisherigen Forschung nur mäßige Beachtung gefunden, was angesichts des dort befindlichen frühjüdischen Tempels erstaunen mag. Zwar sind in der Vergangenheit einige Aufsätze zu Leontopolis erschienen, nämlich u. a. von Felix Stähelin oder Jörg Frey.¹ Auch im gerade erst erschienenen Tagungsband dieser Konferenz beschäftigen sich z. B. immerhin drei Beiträge mit Leontopolis oder dem Onias als Gründer des Tempels; sie stammen von Michaël N. van der Meer, Arie van der Kooij und mir selbst.² Diese drei Aufsätze thematisieren Leontopolis aber eher am Rande. Meines Wissens ist bisher nur eine einzige Monographie zu diesem Thema publiziert worden, nämlich die 2007 veröffentlichte Doktorarbeit von Livia Capponi.³ Dazu kommt außerdem die jüngst von Meron M. Piotrkowski an der Hebrew University of Jerusalem eingereichte (und noch unveröffentlichte) Dissertation mit dem Titel „Priests in Exile. The History of the Temple of Onias and Its Com-

¹ STÄHELIN, *Elephantine*, 180–182; FREY, *Temple and Rival Temples*, 171–203.

² VAN DER MEER, *Reception History*, 431–463; VAN DER KOOIJ, *Old Greek*, 673–684; EBERHART, *Opferterminologie*, 341–358.

³ CAPPONI, *Il tempio di Leontopoli*. Eine weitere, allerdings kürzere Arbeit zu diesem Thema auf Italienisch ist TROIANI, *Sulla tradizione*, 131–134. Ich bin LIVIA CAPPONI sehr dankbar für diverse Hinweise und einen gelehrten Austausch zum Thema dieses Beitrages.

munity in the Hellenistic Period“, die einige Ergebnisse der jüngeren Forschung und eine gewisse sich abzeichnende opinio communis hinterfragt und zu anderen Resultaten kommt.⁴

1. Jüdische Hohepriester in Leontopolis – die Geschichte der Oniaden

Im 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. änderte sich viel für das Judentum in Jerusalem und den dortigen Tempel, also den nachexilischen, kleineren Tempel des Serubbabel. Als der Weisheitslehrer Ben Sira⁵ in Jerusalem nahe am Tempel wohnte, war die Institution des zadokitischen Priestertums noch intakt. In der Stadt herrschte Frieden, und zwar ausdrücklich „wegen der Frömmigkeit und Rechtschaffenheit des Hohepriesters Onias“ (διὰ τὴν Ονίου τοῦ ἀρχιερέως εὐσέβειάν τε καὶ μισοπονηρίαν, 2Makk 3,1). Der allgemeine Respekt für den Tempel und seinen Gottesdienst manifestierte sich u. a. darin, dass in einer bemerkenswerten Geste „Seleukos, der König von Asien, aus seinen eigenen Einkünften alle für den Opferdienst entstehenden Aufwendungen aufbrachte“ (Σέλευκον τὸν τῆς Ἀσίας βασιλέα χορηγεῖν ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων προσόδων πάντα τὰ πρὸς τὰς λειτουργίας τῶν θυσιαῶν ἐπιβάλλοντα δαπανήματα, 3,3). Ben Sira konnte noch seine berühmte Lobeshymne in Sir 50,1–24 anstimmen, die dem „Hohepriester Simeon, Sohn des Onias“ (50,1), galt.⁶ Gemeint ist Simeon II. (ca. 220–200 v. Chr.), bekannt auch als „Simeon der Gerechte“. Das hebräische Buch Ben Sira wird gegen Ende der Lebenszeit des Lehrers angesetzt, also im Zeitraum von 190–175 v. Chr.; sein Autor steht dem Tempel in Jerusalem gedanklich wie auch räumlich sehr nahe.⁷

Ben Sira wäre also mit den Verhältnissen um den Priesterstand und Tempel in Jerusalem vertraut gewesen. Allerdings sind diese komplex, umfassen eine lange Zeitspanne und sind von dramatischen Änderungen markiert, wozu u.a. die Gründung eines anderen frühjüdischen Tempels in Unterägypten durch den jüdischen Priester Onias gehört. Im Folgenden

⁴ Diese im Jahre 2014/5775 eingereichte Arbeit enthält auch einen detaillierten Forschungsüberblick zum Tempel in Leontopolis (ebd., 13–20).

⁵ Ben Sira hieß eigentlich „Josua, Sohn des Eleazar, Sohn des Sira“ (ישוע בן אליעזר בן סיִרא; hebräischer Text nach BEENTJES, Ben Sira, ad loc.) bzw. „Jesus, der Sohn des Sirach, des Eleazar, des Jerusalemers“ (Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Σιραχ Ἐλεάζαρ ὁ Ἱεροσολυμίτης, Sir 50,27). Vgl. auch BECKER/FABRY/REITEMEYER, Sirach, 2160.

⁶ Bekanntlich gehört die Passage Sir 50,1–24 als Abschluss und Höhepunkt zum „Lob der Väter“ in 44,1–50,24. Das „Lob der Väter“ wird seinerseits durch einen Epilog abgeschlossen (50,25–29).

⁷ Vgl. HARRINGTON, Invitation, 78f.; UEBERSCHAER, Sophia Sirach, 446; SAUER, Ben Sira, 32.

sind Informationen zur Priesterdynastie der Oniaden zusammengefasst (weitgehend nach Josephus; extra erwähnt werden nur andere Quellen). Diese wurde durch Onias I. (um 300 v. Chr.) am Tempel in Jerusalem begründet (1Makk 12,7–8). Ihm folgte sein Sohn Simon I. mit dem Beinamen „der Gerechte“ (1. Hälfte des 3. Jahrhunderts) und diesem dessen Sohn Onias II. (2. Hälfte des 3. Jahrhunderts), der aufgrund von proseleukidischer Politik bekannt wurde. Letzterer wurde von Simon II. (um 200 v. Chr.) beerbt, der die väterliche Politik fortsetzte und in Sir 50,1–21 gelobt wird. Dessen Sohn ist Onias III. (1. Hälfte des 2. Jahrhunderts). Wie es diesem erging und ob er noch einen weiteren Sohn hatte, ist Gegenstand gelehrter Diskussionen, was u.a. mit widersprüchlichen Informationen zum Thema bei Josephus und im 2. Makkabäerbuch zu tun hat.⁸

Einerseits – so die *opinio communis* der Forschung seit 1959 – geht die Tempelgründung von Leontopolis auf den Sohn von Onias III., nämlich Onias IV. zurück, wie Josephus in seinem Werk *Antiquitates Judaicae* (eigentlich *Ἰουδαϊκὴ ἀρχαιολογία*) behauptet.⁹ Dieser Version zufolge fand im Jahre 175 v. Chr. die hohepriesterliche Dynastie nämlich ein jähes Ende, denn Onias III. sei in Daphne bei Antiochien ermordet worden. Zunächst sei Onias III. von seinem Tempelvorsteher nach einem proptolemäischen politischen Manöver denunziert worden. Dabei habe der große Tempelschatz als Vorwand und Köder gedient, der denn auch konfisziert wurde (2Makk 3,4–21). So sei es zur Entmachtung des Onias gekommen; Antio-

⁸ Vgl. dazu auch PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 79–81.427 (Appendix 1). Die Quellen bei Josephus sind Bell. 1,31–33; 7,421–436; Ant. 12,237–239.383.387–388; 13,62–73.285; 14,131; 15,41; 19,298; 20,235–237; Contr.Ap. 2,49–55. Direkt widersprüchlich sind hier u. a. Bell. 7,423 und Ant. 12,237; 13,62; 20,235–237 (vgl. die Synopse bei PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 30–32).

⁹ Zu dieser *opinio communis* vgl. z. B. WASSERSTEIN, *Notes*, 122f.; LOHSE, *Onias*, 1632; DEXINGER, *Judentum*, 339; ZANGENBERG, *Joseph*, 167; LAUBER, *JHWH*, 376; EGO, *Priester*, 392. Diesen Konsens hatte auch ich früher rezipiert (EBERHART, *Opferterminologie*, 353). Erwähnt sei, dass das spezielle Interesse des Josephus (37/38–nach 100 n. Chr.) an der Geschichte der Oniaden damit zu tun haben mag, dass manche Verbindungslinien zur Lebensgeschichte des Onias III. bzw. IV. zu beobachten sind. Erstens entstammte Josephus selbst einem Geschlecht priesterlicher Aristokraten und stand deshalb anfänglich den Sadduzäern nahe (vgl. dazu u.a. seinen jüdischen Namen „Joseph ben Mathitjahu ha Kohen“). Zweitens war auch er Militärkommandeur, nämlich in Galiläa (vgl. MAYER, *Josephus Flavius*, 258–260). Drittens sah sich Josephus, seit er im Jahre 67 n. Chr. bei der Eroberung Jotapatas nicht am kollektiven Suizid seiner Mitkämpfer partizipierte, sondern sich den römischen Truppen ergab und in Gefangenschaft geriet, kontinuierlichen Anfragen an seine Identität und Loyalität als Jude ausgesetzt. Viertens schließlich siedelte sich der einstige Priester aus Jerusalem bald in Rom und vorübergehend sogar in Ägypten an. Infolgedessen hatte auch er sich mit der besonderen Situation auseinanderzusetzen, dass er die großzügige Gastfreundschaft und den Schutz eines Landes genoss, das in den schriftlichen Traditionen seines eigenen Volkes wenigstens zeitweise als feindlich eingestuft wurde.

chos Epiphanes IV. (175–164 v. Chr.) habe das Hohepriesteramt gleich zu Beginn seiner Regierungszeit an Jason übertragen, den Bruder von Onias III., denn der hatte dafür eine hohe Geldsumme gezahlt (2Makk 4,7–10). Damit hätte immerhin noch ein Zadokide diese Position bekleidet. Jason selbst sei allerdings schon drei Jahre später von Menelaos verdrängt worden. Der Mord an Onias III. durch einen gewissen Andronikus sei orchestriert worden, um zu vertuschen, dass sich Menelaos am Tempelschatz bereichert habe (2Makk 4,30–38). So sei die hohepriesterliche Dynastie der Oniaden in Jerusalem durch Intrigen und Mord beendet worden.¹⁰

Allerdings hatte Onias III. nach Ant. 13,62 einen homonymen Sohn (Ὁ δὲ Ὀνίου τοῦ ἀρχιερέως υἱὸς ὁμώνυμος δὲ ὦν τῷ πατρὶ), nämlich Onias IV. Dieser wäre nach dem Mord an seinem Vater vor Antiochos Epiphanes aus Jerusalem nach Ägypten geflohen (Ant. 13,62–73).¹¹ Er hätte sich auf Geheiß von König Ptolemaios VI. Philometor (180–145 v. Chr.) und Königin Kleopatra II. mit seinen jüdischen Soldaten und Siedlern im Gau Heliopolis niedergelassen, das in alttestamentlichen Texten unter seinem ägyptischen Namen „On“ bekannt ist (Gen 41,45.50; 46,20; Ex 1,11 LXX). Er hätte dann wohl die Position eines Generals in der ptolemäischen Armee bekleidet.¹² In Heliopolis errichte er in den Ruinen eines verlassenen ägyptischen Bubastis-Heiligtums nicht nur eine Festung, sondern auch einen jüdischen Tempel. (Datiert werden diese Ereignisse in der Forschung um 150 v. Chr.) Den Tempel ließ er auf einem Hügel als eine kleinere Version des Tempels des Serubbabel in Jerusalem bauen. Dass er diesen weitgehend zu imitieren suchte, wird immerhin dreimal erwähnt (Ant. 13,63. 67.72).¹³ Als Motivation wird zunächst angegeben, Onias habe Ruhm und eine immerwährende Erinnerung erwerben wollen (βουλόμενος αὐτῷ δόξαν καὶ μνήμην αἰώνιον κατασκευάσαι, 13,63). Später wird als Grund hinzugefügt, „dass die in Ägypten wohnenden Juden einen Ort hätten, an dem sie in Eintracht zusammenkommen könnten ..., denn der Prophet Jesaja hatte dieses vorhergesagt: in Ägypten wird ein Altar für Gott, den Herrn, sein“ (Ἴν’ ἔχωσιν οἱ τὴν Αἴγυπτον κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι εἰς αὐτὸ συνιόντες κατὰ τὴν πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὁμόνοιαν ταῖς σαῖς ἐξυπηρετεῖν χρεῖαις· καὶ γὰρ Ἡσαΐας ὁ προφήτης τοῦτο προεῖπεν· ἔσται θυσιαστήριον ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ, 13,67f.). Angesichts der vorhergehenden dramatischen Ereignisse ließe

¹⁰ Vgl. SHEHAN, DI LELLA, Wisdom, 554; WARDLE, Temple, 124f.

¹¹ Vgl. TCHERIKOVER, Hellenistic Civilization, 275–285; DAVIS, Onias, 1402–1404; SCHALIT, Onias, 1404–1405; DELCOR, Temple, 188–193; FREY, Temple, 188f.; COLLINS, Between Athens, 69; WARDLE, Temple, 122f.126–129.136–139.

¹² Vgl. CAPPONI, Deserving the Court’s Trust, 349. CAPPONI beschreibt auch, dass unter Ptolemaios VI. Philometor in Ägypten eine Vielzahl jüdischer Garnisonen bestand und Juden auch polizeiliche Aufgaben anvertraut worden waren (ebd., 351–353).

¹³ Vgl. CAPPONI, Il tempio di Leontopoli, 66, dazu auch den Grundriss von Leontopolis und dem Tempel in ebd., 237.

sich hier also an eine polemische Intention gegen den Tempel in Jerusalem denken, dem derjenige in Leontopolis Konkurrenz gemacht hätte. Dem würde eine fortdauernde Rivalität zwischen Onias IV. und den Priestern in Jerusalem entsprechen.

Anderen Quellen zufolge wurde im Jahre 169 v. Chr. der Tempel in Jerusalem durch Antiochos IV. Epiphanes entweiht und verwüstet, was zur Revolte unter Judas Makkabäus führte. Bemerkenswert ist, dass nach 2Makk 15,11–36 dem Judas Makkabäus vor dem Kampf gegen Nikanor ein – nicht näher bestimmter – Hohepriester Onias in Begleitung des Propheten Jeremia im Traum erscheint und Mut zuspricht. Daraufhin erringt Judas Makkabäus den Sieg und stellt den legitimen Tempelkult wieder her, was im Judentum noch heute im Chanukka-Fest dankbar commemoriert wird. Die Notiz im 2. Makkabäerbuch lässt also generell auf ein positives Verhältnis zwischen der Priesterdynastie der Oniaden und dem Tempel in Jerusalem schließen, nicht aber auf Rivalitäten.

Aus diesem Grund stellt sich u.a. die Frage nach der historischen Zuverlässigkeit der Erzählung des Josephus in *Antiquitates Judaicae* (und damit auch nach der Faktizität des im 2. Makkabäerbuch Berichteten).¹⁴ Josephus schildert den Ursprung des Tempels in seinem früher entstandenen Werk *De bello Judaico* anders und ordnet ihn dort Onias III. zu, wie schon aus dem einführenden Satz hervorgeht: „Onias, Sohn des Simon, einer der Hohepriester in Jerusalem, floh vor Antiochus, dem König von Syrien, als dieser gegen die Juden Krieg führte, und kam nach Alexandria“ (Ὀνίας Σίμωνος υἱός, εἷς τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις ἀρχιερέων, φεύγων Ἀντίοχον τὸν Συρίας βασιλέα πολεμοῦντα τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις ἦκεν εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν, Bell. 7,423). Ein Onias IV. ist hier also unbekannt. Stattdessen stellt Onias III. an Ptolemäus das Gesuch, „an irgendeinem Ort in Ägypten einen Tempel zu bauen und dort nach den väterlichen Bräuchen Gott zu verehren“ (νεῶν τε που τῆς Αἰγύπτου κατασκευάσασθαι καὶ τοῖς πατρίοις ἔθεσι θεραπεύειν τὸν θεόν, 7,423f.). Als Grund wird angeführt, Antiochus habe den Jerusalemer Tempel verwüstet (7,424). So stellte Ptolemäus in einem Bezirk, der derjenige von Heliopolis genannt wurde (νομὸς δ' οὗτος Ἡλιοπολίτης καλεῖται, 7,426), ein Stück Land bereit, wo Onias III. erst eine Festung errichten ließ. „Dann baute Onias den Tempel, der nicht dem in Jerusalem, sondern einem Turm ähnlich war“ (Ὀνίας τὸν μὲν ναὸν οὐχ ὅμοιον ὠκοδόμησε τῷ ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις, ἀλλὰ πύργῳ παραπλήσιον, 7,427). Insofern diese Ereignisse eine Generation früher anzusetzen wären, fiel die Gründung des Tempels in den Zeitraum 170–164 v. Chr.

¹⁴ Zu weiteren Diskussionen von Widersprüchen und historisch unglaubwürdigen Informationen in den Quellentexten vgl. u.a. KEIL, Märtyrer, 221–233; PARENTE, Onias III's Death, 74.96; WARDLE, Temple, 124–129.

Diese frühere Version der Geschichte wurde – gegen die *opinio communis* der jüngeren Forschung – z. B. von Volkmar Keil und Fausto Parente bevorzugt.¹⁵ Entscheidende Argumente sind u.a., dass ein Onias IV. ansonsten unbekannt ist und nur im Anschluss an die vermeintliche Ermordung von Onias III. in Erscheinung tritt.¹⁶ Dazu kommt, dass eine erstaunliche Parallele zur Erzählung in 2Makk 4,33–35 von der Ermordung des Onias III. durch Andronikus existiert; gemäß dieser Parallele in Diodor 30,7,2 hat König Antiochos IV. den Andronikus als Handlanger bei der Tötung des Sohnes seines Vorgängers und Bruders Seleukos IV. umbringen lassen.¹⁷ Volkmar Keil erkennt von dieser Erzählung her redaktionelle Einflüsse auf spätere Märtyrertraditionen und resümiert: „... in II Macc ... wird Onias III. ausdrücklich als besonnener und reiner Mann verherrlicht, dem die Reinheit des Kultus ganz besonders am Herzen lag. Für II Macc. gehört aber als höchste Form der Treue zum jüdischen Glauben das Martyrium. Durch Übertragung der Ermordung des Seleukos-Sohnes auf Onias wird dieser nun zum ersten jüdischen Märtyrer. Er verliert sein Leben, weil er um der Reinerhaltung des Tempels willen die Ausraubung des Tempelschatzes öffentlich brandmarkte“.¹⁸ Historisch am plausibelsten ist damit, dass Onias III. im Jahre 169 v. Chr. wegen der Entweihung und Verwüstung des Tempels in Jerusalem durch Antiochos IV. Epiphanes nach Ägypten geflohen war, um dort einen Tempel zu gründen und die traditionell jüdische Kultradition aufrecht zu erhalten; auf diese Ereignisse würde sich auch die Weissagung in Dan 9,26 beziehen: „Und nach den zweiundsechzig Wochen wird ein Gesalbter ausgerottet werden und nicht mehr sein. Und das Volk eines Fürsten wird kommen und die Stadt und das Heiligtum zerstören“. Dieser Onias wurde also nicht Opfer eines Mordkomplotts. „It is likely that Onias died a peaceful death around the years 145–143/142 BCE“.¹⁹ Damit wäre Onias IV. eine fiktive Gestalt.

Der so entstandene Tempel in Leontopolis ist wenigstens in zweifacher Hinsicht für die Erforschung der Septuaginta relevant. Erstens fällt er mit dem Gründungsdatum von ca. 170–164 v. Chr. (unter Onias III.)²⁰ in die

¹⁵ Vgl. KEIL, Märtyrer, 228–231; PARENTE, Onias III's Death, 69–98; jüngst auch AMELING, Leontopolis, 117–121; PIOTRKOWSKI, Priests in Exile, 12.17.107–122.

¹⁶ Vgl. KEIL, Märtyrer, 230.

¹⁷ Vgl. KEIL, Märtyrer, 223.

¹⁸ KEIL, Märtyrer, 232. Vgl. auch PIOTRKOWSKI, Priests in Exile, 109.121.

¹⁹ PIOTRKOWSKI, Priests in Exile, 121.

²⁰ Unter der Annahme, dass doch Onias IV. nach Leontopolis geflohen ist, wäre der Zeitraum ca. 150 v. Chr. Allerdings ist diese Datierung aus einem weiteren Grund fragwürdig. Es scheint, als habe ein an einen Onias adressierter ägyptischer Papyrus die Zeiten überdauert. PIOTRKOWSKI zufolge stammt *CPJ* I, 132, der an einen hochrangigen ptolemäischen Beamten gerichtet ist, aus der Zeit um 164 v. Chr. und könnte ein Beweis

Anfangsphase dieses großangelegten und lange andauernden Übersetzungsprojekts ins Griechische. Zweitens fand von diesem Zeitpunkt an auch in Leontopolis jüdischer Gottesdienst samt Opferkult – ebenfalls nach dem Vorbild in Jerusalem – statt. Man darf davon ausgehen, dass der dortige Tempel auch von den in und um Alexandria ansässigen Diasporajuden frequentiert wurde. Das aber bedeutet, dass Leontopolis unter den Städten und Gebieten der frühjüdischen Diaspora einen besonderen Status eingenommen hätte. Allgemein hatten sich Synagogengemeinden zu einem charakteristischen Merkmal der Diaspora herausgebildet. Auf die kontrovers geführten Diskussionen zum zeitlichen und geographischen Ursprung der Synagoge braucht hier nicht ausführlich eingegangen zu werden. Sicher ist allerdings, dass es in Ägypten in den beiden Jahrhunderten v. Chr. schon eine Synagogenkultur gab.²¹ Leontopolis würde sich also insofern auszeichnen, als hier eine frühjüdische Diasporagemeinde um einen Tempel versammelt war.²²

Eine eigene Frage ist die nach dem Verhältnis zwischen Oniaden und Hasmonäern ab 153/152 v. Chr. Anzunehmen ist, dass dieses zunächst gespannt war, als Jonathan Hohepriester in Jerusalem wurde, womit evtl. gehegte Hoffnungen des Onias auf eine Rückkehr und Wiedereinsetzung in sein Amt zerschlagen wurden.²³ Gleichzeitig war den Hasmonäern der Anspruch des Onias auf dieses Amt ohne Zweifel bewusst, weshalb sie es bevorzugten, ihn im fernen Ägypten zu ignorieren. Doch diese Situation änderte sich bald. Aus den Schriften des Josephus geht hervor, dass eine Generation später ein hochrangiger ptolemäischer General namens Hananias (Ἀνανίας), der als Oniade vorgestellt wird, Kleopatra III. von ihrem Plan abbringt, Judäa zu annektieren (Ant. 13,354–355). Politische Animosität ist hier also nicht mehr feststellbar.²⁴ Dem entsprechen spätere hala-

sein, dass Onias III. dann bereits in Ägypten weilte (vgl. PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 196–198.202.346).

²¹ Die im Jahr 1913 in Jerusalem gefundene „Theodotos-Inschrift“ bezieht sich auf eine Anfang des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. gegründete Synagoge und belegt folglich die Existenz dieser Institution in Palästina zu dieser Epoche (vgl. BINDER, *Temple Courts*, 155–226). Synagogen sind aber in der babylonischen und ägyptischen Diaspora schon bis zu zwei Jahrhunderte früher entstanden, wie sich aus diesbezüglichen literarischen Quellen und archäologischen Funden schließen lässt (vgl. LEVINE, *First-Century Synagogue*, 70–102; BINDER, *Temple Courts*, 233–254; HACHLLI, *Ancient Synagogues*, 525; WICK, *Gottesdienste*, 110f.). Zur Vermeidung von Generalisierungen ist es wichtig, die Entwicklung dieser Institution detailliert und geographisch differenziert zu beschreiben (vgl. BINDER, *Temple Courts*, 4–8).

²² Damit ist nicht ausgeschlossen, dass es dort auch eine Synagoge gab. Vgl. AMELING, *Leontopolis*, 126.

²³ Vgl. CAPPONI, *Deserving the Court's Trust*, 349f.

²⁴ Vgl. DAVIS, *Onias*, 1402–1404; PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 349f.; CAPPONI, *Deserving the Court's Trust*, 351.

chische Anweisungen im rabbinischen Judentum, die von Abraham Schalit folgendermaßen zusammenfasst werden: „The status of the temple of Onias from the point of view of *halakhah* is not clear. In the Talmudic account (Men. 109a–110b), which combines both historical and aggadic elements, its being built is attributed to a dispute between the two sons of Simeon the just over the high priesthood and to Onias’ jealousy of his brother Simeon. Some say that Onias ‚offered sacrifice to an idol,‘ but other say that ‚it was to heaven.‘ Apparently, the latter view prevailed, since the *halakhah* (Men. 13:10) does not consider sacrifices in the temple of Onias as idolatry, although it disqualifies its priests from serving in Jerusalem“.²⁵

Wie ging es mit dem Tempel in Leontopolis weiter? Er überdauerte sogar den Tempel des Herodes in Jerusalem, da er erst in den Jahren 73–74 n. Chr. unter Vespasian von den Römern geschlossen (nicht zerstört) wurde. Entsprechende Order wurden von Tiberius Julius Lupus, dem praefectus aegypti, eingeleitet und nach dessen Tod vom Amtsnachfolger Paulinus abgeschlossen (Bell. 7,421–422.433–434). Diese Maßnahme wurde wohl ergriffen, um nach der Zerstörung Jerusalems im Jahre 70 n. Chr. die Entwicklung eines alternativen jüdischen Kultzentrums zu verhindern.²⁶

2. Topographie und Archäologie von Leontopolis

Topographie und Archäologie von Leontopolis und dem dort befindlichen Tempel werden vor allem in der 2007 publizierte Dissertation von Livia Capponi thematisiert; auch die Dissertation von Meron M. Piotrkowski geht darauf ein. Ein Leontopolis im Gebiet von Heliopolis liegt ca. 190 km südöstlich von Alexandria. Beide Örtlichkeiten sind durch den westlichen Arm des Nil-Deltas halbwegs miteinander verbunden, sodass z. B. Schiffsverkehr zwischen ihnen möglich war.²⁷ Piotrkowski zufolge war Leontopolis eine Neugründung unter Onias. Sie sollte als *λεόντων πόλις* – „Stadt der Löwen“ für Juden attraktiv sein, deren Symbol der Löwe war; der Name *λεόντων πόλις* war also gleichbedeutend mit „Stadt der Juden“. Piotrkowski weist auch darauf hin, dass dieser Name ferner mit der ägyptischen Löwen-Gottheit Bast/Bubastis (*βούβαστις*) in Relation steht.²⁸ Wie schon erwähnt hatte Onias Ant. 13,66.70 zufolge seinen Tempel in einem verfallene-

²⁵ SCHALIT, Onias, 1404. Vgl. auch COLLINS, *Between Athens*, 72. Interessant ist, dass zur Zeit solcher rabbinischen Diskussionen weder der Tempel in Jerusalem noch derjenige in Leontopolis existierten. Solche Debatten waren also „purely academic“ (WASSERSTEIN, Notes, 126).

²⁶ Vgl. z. B. SIJPESTEIJN, Flavius Josephus, 117–125; JONES, *Egypt*, 250.

²⁷ Vgl. zur geographischen Lage z. B. die Karten in CAPPONI, *Il tempio di Leontopoli*, 235f.

²⁸ Vgl. PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 342.

nen Bubastis-Heiligtum errichtet. Allerdings stimmen Capponi und Piotrkowski auch darin überein, dass die genaue Lage von Onias Tempel heute nicht mehr zu bestimmen ist. Das liegt nicht zuletzt daran, dass ein noch immer als *Tell el-Jehūdīje* – „Hügel der Juden“ bekannter Ort in Ägypten, auf dem der Tempel in der Vergangenheit vermutet wurde, im sog. „Land des Onias“ liegt, in dem es wahrscheinlich mehrere frühjüdische Siedlungen und Garnisonen gab.²⁹ Diese waren jedoch von begrenztem Umfang; eine voll entwickelte Stadt ließ sich archäologisch nicht nachweisen. Außerdem hatten offenbar mehrere Orte in Unterägypten den Namen *Tell el-Jehūdīje*, sodass sich eine eindeutige Identifizierung heute schwierig gestaltet.³⁰

Deshalb können Informationen zum Tempel in Leontopolis nur literarischen Quellen entnommen werden, zu denen einmal mehr *De bello Judaico* von Josephus gehört.³¹ Hier findet sich der Hinweis, der Tempel sei anders als derjenige in Jerusalem gewesen, nämlich einem Turm ähnlich und „aus großen Steinen bis zu 60 Ellen hoch“ (λίθων μεγάλων εἰς ἑξήκοντα πήχεις ἀνεστηκότα, Bell. 7,427). Der Altar (βωμός) sowie die Weihgeschenke (ἀνάθημα) waren aber doch nach denen in Jerusalem gestaltet; demgegenüber war die Menora (λυχνία) wieder unterschiedlich (7,428f.). Diese Informationen sind in verschiedener Hinsicht aufschlussreich. Die Erwähnung des Altars lässt erstens darauf schließen, dass es einen funktionierenden Opferkult am Tempel in Leontopolis gab. Zweitens fällt die separate Erwähnung der Menora auf, die gar keine war: „Er machte nämlich keine Menora, stattdessen ließ er eigens eine goldene Lampe schmieden, die Licht ausstrahlte und an einer goldenen Kette hing“ (οὐ γὰρ ἐποίησε λυχνίαν, αὐτὸν δὲ χαλκευσάμενος λύχνον χρυσοῦν ἐπιφαίνοντα σέλας χρυσῆς ἀλύσεως ἐξεκρέμασε, 7,429). Diese Abweichung von der detaillierten Beschreibung der für das Judentum so charakteristischen *הַנֵּר* / *λυχνία* in Ex 25,31; 37,17 ist auffällig. Meron M. Piotrkowski erkennt hier keinen Synkretismus; vielmehr sei die goldene Lampe in Verbindung mit der kultisch-theologischen Wichtigkeit der Sonne und des Sonnenkalen-

²⁹ Vgl. CAPPONI, *Deserving the Court's Trust*, 351–353.

³⁰ Vgl. AMELING, *Leontopolis*, 117–119; WARDLE, *Temple*, 129–131; PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 165–169.343. Aufschlussreich ist die Bemerkung von AMELING, dass jüdische Grabinschriften eine Frau als „Priesterin“ bezeichnen, was „im Umfeld des Tempels am leichtesten zu erklären“ ist (AMELING, *Leontopolis*, 125).

³¹ Interessanterweise befindet sich in Ant. 13,72 statt einer Beschreibung des Tempels folgender Querverweis: „Seine Dimensionen und Gerätschaften nun darzustellen erscheint mir nicht als angebracht, da ich sie schon in meinem siebten Buch der jüdischen [Kriege] beschrieben habe“ (τὰ δὲ μέτρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὰ σκεύη νῦν οὐκ ἔδοξέ μοι δηλοῦν· ἐν γὰρ τῇ ἐβδόμῃ μου βίβλῳ τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν ἀναγέγραπται). Dass diesbezügliche Beschreibungen z. B. in Ant. 13,63.67.72 trotzdem vorliegen, von denen diejenigen in *De bello Judaico* abweichen, wurde oben bereits thematisiert.

ders zu sehen; beide waren charakteristische Symbole des zadokitischen Priestertums.³²

War angesichts dessen der Tempel des Onias als schismatisch und evtl. heterodox einzuschätzen? So stellt Josephus die Situation dar, wenn er als Ziel der Tempelgründung angibt, den Juden in Jerusalem Konkurrenz zu bieten (Bell. 7, 431). Der Tempel in Leontopolis wäre dann aus ähnlichen Motiven wie derjenige auf dem Garizim errichtet worden.³³ In der Forschung wird deshalb verschiedentlich auf die Konkurrenz zwischen dem zadokitischen Hohepriestertum und den Hasmonäischen Herrschern und Hohepriestern hingewiesen; auch die Gemeinschaft in Qumran hat sich aus Protest gegen die Hasmonäer von Jerusalem abgewandt und in die Judäische Wüste zurückgezogen. In der jüngeren Forschung wird der Tempel in Leontopolis – trotz der spezifischen Umstände seiner Entstehungsgeschichte – aber nicht als schismatisch eingeschätzt.³⁴ Dargestellt wurde bereits, dass literarische Quellen verschiedener Epochen (Ant. 13,354–355; Men. 109a–110b) nach anfänglichen Spannungen ein positives Verhältnis zwischen Oniaden und Hasmonäern vermitteln.

3. Leontopolis und Alexandria: Zur Ausdifferenzierung frühjüdischer Diaspora

Mit solchen Einsichten sind schon erste Schritte in Richtung Ausdifferenzierung und Nuancierung heutiger Kenntnisse der frühjüdischen Diaspora in Ägypten in chronologischer, geographischer und soziopolitischer Hinsicht getan. So hatte sich, wie gezeigt, die Einstellung der Oniaden in Leontopolis zum Tempel in Jerusalem im Laufe der Jahrzehnte geändert. Einzelne Aspekte der geographischen und soziopolitischen Nuancen dieser Diasporagemeinde sind nun weiter zu verfolgen.³⁵ Über lange Zeit hinweg entwarfen wissenschaftliche Darstellungen freilich ein Bild der Dinge mit der Metropole und Hafenstadt Alexandria als dominanter Größe, auch wenn dort lediglich ein Fünftel der bis zu einer Million Diasporajuden Ägyptens wohnte.³⁶ Juden machten allerdings zeitweise immerhin

³² Vgl. PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, 385: „... the Zadokite priesthood and solar imagery seem to be connected. That observation is particularly intriguing in reference to the Oniad Temple that was founded by Zadokite priests in Heliopolis, the ‚City of the Sun‘“. Vgl. auch ebd., 383–386.

³³ So z. B. GRANERØD, *Dimensions*, 125.

³⁴ Vgl. COLLINS, *Between Athens*, 71f.; CAPPONI, *Il tempio di Leontopoli*, 41f.; GRUEN, *Origins*, 47–70; DERS., *Construct of Identity*, 309.

³⁵ Vgl. PIOTRKOWSKI, *Priests in Exile*, III.7.

³⁶ Zur jüdischen Präsenz in Ägypten vgl. AMELING, *jüdische Diaspora*, 195.

ein Drittel der Bevölkerung dieser Stadt aus.³⁷ Organisiert waren sie weitgehend in Synagogen (*προσευχαί* – „Gebethshäuser“).³⁸ Die Stadt selbst galt gleichwohl als bedeutendste hellenistische Metropole. Die von Ptolemäus eingerichtete Bibliothek war die größte der antiken Welt und begründete die Stellung der Stadt als Zentrum hellenistischer Wissenschaft und Literatur.³⁹ Das Diasporajudentum war zum Teil seit Generationen griechischsprachig und hatte hellenistische Kultur verinnerlicht.⁴⁰ Diese Prägung zeigt sich u. a. im Selbstverständnis einiger seiner bedeutendsten Vertreter, nämlich Gelehrten wie Philo, Aristobul oder dem Autor des Aristeasbriefes. Durch die so konstituierte herausragende Stellung Alexandrias wurde eine undifferenzierte Außenwahrnehmung der Verhältnisse in Ägypten sicherlich gefördert; diese Situation manifestierte sich z. B. zur Zeit des Römischen Imperiums darin, dass der oben schon erwähnte Statthalter des Landes als Praefect Alexandrias bekannt war (Bell. 7,420). Diese Nomenklatur lebte fort; der Stadtname „Alexandria“ konnte u. a. noch in späteren und rabbinischen Quellen *pars pro toto* ganz Ägypten bezeichnen.⁴¹

Ganz anders als in Alexandria waren die Verhältnisse aber einerseits in der Militärkolonie des Onias in Leontopolis und andererseits in sonstigen ländlichen Gebieten Unterägyptens. So erkennt Arie van der Kooij die Gruppe um Onias als eigenständige Größe in der ägyptischen Diasporalandschaft, insofern ihre Mitglieder immerhin als jüdische Intellektuelle gelten mögen. Selbst das nahegelegene Heliopolis war, allerdings bereits im 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr. zur Zeit des Ptolemaios II. Philadelphos, als Bildungszentrum bekannt gewesen, wenn auch innerhalb der ägyptischen Be-

³⁷ Vgl. MÉLÈZE-MODRZEJEWSKI, *Alexandrien II*, 289f.; zum Diaspora-Judentum in Ägypten vgl. allgemein AZIZA, *L'utilisation polémique*, 41f.; COLLINS, *Between Athens*, 64–112.

³⁸ Vgl. CAPPONI, *Egypt, Ancient. I.B.*, 473.

³⁹ Vgl. KREUZER, *Septuaginta*, 33–36; DERS., *Entstehung und Entwicklung*, 8–11; VENIT, *Alexandria*, 108f.119; HUZAR, *Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, 627.644f.; PARSONS, *Library*, 70.166–174. ELEANOR HUZAR erklärt: „Alexandria ad Aegyptum was the second city of the Roman Empire. The second rank in the vast imperial complex was won by its size, its productivity, its geographic domination of trade routes to the Near and Far East“ (*Alexandria ad Aegyptum*, 619). Ein solcher Rang war gleichwohl eine Schmach für die Alexandrier. Seit ihrer Gründung war diese Stadt aufgrund ihres schon von Homer (*Od.* 4,351–592) als vorteilhaft beschriebenen Hafens – der auf der Pharos-Insel befindliche Leuchtturm galt zudem als eines der sieben Weltwunder –, ihrer Bibliothek und ihres kosmopolitischen Status unbestritten die Königin des östlichen Mittelmeeres (ebd., 619–626).

⁴⁰ Vgl. MÉLÈZE-MODRZEJEWSKI, *Jews*, 81; COLLINS, *Between Athens*, 67. Inschriften zufolge trugen Diasporajuden im 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr. auch oft griechische Namen, eine Praxis, die sogar mit der Septuaginta in Verbindung gebracht worden ist (vgl. HONIGMAN, *Diaspora*, 93–127).

⁴¹ Vgl. WASSERSTEIN, *Notes*, 127f.

völkerung.⁴² Walter Ameling zählt zudem die verschiedenen dortigen Siedlungsformen der Juden auf, die in Dörfern, Stadtteilen und Garnisonen wohnten.⁴³ Das Leben in diesen Gegenden dürfte sich sehr von demjenigen in der Hauptstadt unterschieden haben. So ist bemerkenswert, dass Philo von Alexandria trotz relativer räumlicher Nähe Leontopolis nie erwähnt, obwohl seine Lebensdaten in die Periode des Bestandes des dortigen Tempels fallen. Hat das damit zu tun, dass der Tempel des Onias eher als Lokalheiligtum der Militärkolonie in Leontopolis fungierte,⁴⁴ oder kommt hier ein gewisser Snobismus des gelehrten Philosophen und Theologen zum Ausdruck? Auch soziopolitische Entwicklungen könnten hierfür verantwortlich gemacht werden; so gibt Arnaldo Momigliano zu bedenken: „The Jews of Alexandria were especially exposed to royal resentment and mob hatred because of what the Leontopolis mercenaries were doing“.⁴⁵ Es gab also diverse Fraktionen und daraus resultierenden Konstellationen mit gelegentlicher Antipathie zwischen den Fronten unter den Diasporajuden Ägyptens.

Auch für Einleitungsfragen sind solche Differenzierungen relevant. Wurde in der älteren Forschung oft lediglich zwischen Palästina und Ägypten als Entstehungsorten biblischer Texte oder diesbezüglicher Redaktionsarbeit unterschieden, so wird neuerdings bei der Frage nach der Übersetzung verschiedener biblischer Bücher für das Septuaginta-Projekt zunehmend differenziert. John J. Collins hält inzwischen nicht mehr die jüdische Diaspora in Alexandria für die Trägergemeinde des 3. Buches der Sibyllinischen Orakel, sondern angesichts des großen Interesses am Tempel in Jerusalem diejenige in Leontopolis.⁴⁶ Dieser Trend soll im Folgenden noch weiter verfolgt und entfaltet werden.

4. Leontopolis, Onias und der Text der Septuaginta

Der neueren Forschung zufolge ist der Großteil des Übersetzungswerks der Septuaginta zwischen 250 v. Chr. und 100 n. Chr. im Diasporajudentum

⁴² Vgl. ZANGENBERG, Joseph, 166.

⁴³ Vgl. AMELING, jüdische Diaspora, 196; vgl. ferner VAN DER KOOIJ, *Old Greek*, 674. REINHARD KRATZ zufolge setzt Onias mit seiner Garnison und seinem Tempel die Tradition der jüdischen Militärkolonie von Elephantine fort (vgl. KRATZ, *Elephantine und Alexandria*, 197). Zum jüdisch-aramäischen Heiligtum in Elephantine vgl. nun auch die ausführliche Arbeit von A. ROHRMOSER, *Götter*.

⁴⁴ Vgl. MÉLÈZE-MODRZEJEWSKI, *Jews*, 128; COLLINS, *Between Athens*, 71.

⁴⁵ MOMIGLIANO, *Second Book*, 83.

⁴⁶ COLLINS, *Sibylline Oracles*, 355; DERS., *Sibylline Oracles of Egyptian Judaism*, 51f.

Unterägyptens entstanden.⁴⁷ Damit fällt dieses Projekt in die die ägyptische Spätzeit (bis 332 v. Chr.) ablösende ptolemäische und römische Epoche.⁴⁸ Für diese Verortung lassen sich verschiedene Beispiele beibringen, so in der zweiten Tempelvision des Ezechiel (Kap. 40–48). Hier bleibt manche Einzelheit einer Tempelbeschreibung in der Septuaginta unverständlich, die sich dafür an hellenistischer Sakralarchitektur orientiert.⁴⁹ So werden in Ez 42,3 MT in einem Vorhof dreifach terrassierte Anlagen erwähnt, wovon die griechische Übersetzung deutlich abweicht: „*Sie waren auf die gleiche Weise gestaltet wie die Tore des inneren Hofes und auf die gleiche Weise wie die Säulengänge des äußeren Hofes, dreistöckige Säulenhallen, einander gegenüber angeordnet*“ ([διαγεγραμμένοι ὄν τρόπον αἰ πύλαι] τῆς αὐλῆς τῆς ἐσωτέρας καὶ [ὄν τρόπον τὰ περιστυλα] τῆς αὐλῆς τῆς ἐξωτέρας, [ἐστιχισμένοι ἀντιπρόσωποι στοαὶ τρισσαί]).⁵⁰ Weiterhin lässt sich in 40,14 mit dem Begriff „Aithrion“ ein spezifischer Terminus Technicus ägyptischer Architektur für einen quadratisch angelegten Hof inmitten einer Hausanlage erkennen: [καὶ τὸ αἶθριον τοῦ αἰλαμ τῆς πύλης] ἐξήκοντα πήχεις, [εἴκοσι θεῖμ] τῆς πύλης κύκλω „*Und der Lichthof des Ailam des Tores: 60 Ellen, 20 Theim des Tores ringsum*“. Solche Beobachtungen zu Details der griechischen Übersetzung lassen also jeweils ägyptische Verhältnisse erkennen, wobei die Sakralarchitektur speziell mit dem Tempel in Leontopolis in Verbindung gebracht werden kann.⁵¹

Die Ansicht, dass dieser Ort neben seiner Funktion als Kultheiligtum der dortigen Militärkolonie auch ein Ort frühjüdischer schriftstellerischer Tätigkeiten war, wird heute verschiedentlich vertreten; konkret könnten hier – neben dem oben schon erwähnten 3. Buch der Sibyllinischen Orakel und dem Ezechielbuch – auch das 3. Makkabäerbuch und Joseph und Aseth entstanden sein.⁵² Außerdem werden heute Übersetzungen weiterer Bücher der Septuaginta (u.a. Jesaja, Jeremia, Dodekapropheten) nach Leontopolis verortet.⁵³ Auch das Weisheitsbuch des Ben Sira, dem Prolog zufolge vom anonymen Enkel in Ägypten für das Diasporajudentum übersetzt, könnte hier entstanden sein.⁵⁴ Unter der Annahme, dass der Enkel den Tempel in Leontopolis besucht hatte, wäre er dort ggf. einem Nachfah-

⁴⁷ Vgl. TOV, Bibelübersetzungen, 152.

⁴⁸ Vgl. SCHENKEL, Ägypten II., 199.

⁴⁹ Vgl. HAMMERSTAEDT-LÖHR/KONKEL/LÖHR/USENER, Jezekiel, 2968.

⁵⁰ Die Kursivschreibung in der deutschen Übersetzung sowie die eckigen Klammern im griechischen Text machen Textdifferenzen zwischen MT und Septuaginta deutlich.

⁵¹ Vgl. HAMMERSTAEDT-LÖHR/KONKEL/LÖHR/USENER, Jezekiel, 2968f.

⁵² Vgl. z. B. CAPPONI, Il tempio di Leontopoli, 67–78; PIOTRKOWSKI, Priests in Exile, 207–317; COLLINS, Sibylline Oracles, 355; ZANGENBERG, Joseph, 163–169.

⁵³ Vgl. VAN DER KOIJ, Esaias, 566; HAMMERSTAEDT-LÖHR/KONKEL/LÖHR/USENER, Jezekiel, 2968–2971; BOGAERT, Jeremias, 585.

⁵⁴ Vgl. HARRINGTON, Invitation, 79; BECKER/FABRY/REITEMEYER, Sirach, 2162.

ren des Hohepriesters Onias begegnet, dessen Vorfahren die Lobeshymne in Sir 50,1–24 mit der Erwähnung von „Simeon, Sohn des Onias“ (50,1) gepriesen hatte.

Lassen sich abgesehen davon noch weitere Resonanzen auf Leontopolis und Onias in der sonstigen biblischen Literatur plausibilisieren? In der Vergangenheit wurde verschiedentlich neben Daniel 9,26 und ggf. 8,10–11 nicht zuletzt auch die berühmte Gestalt des Gottesknechtes im Jesajabuch vorgeschlagen.⁵⁵ Dass der aus Jerusalem geflohene Hohepriester Onias im Sinne solcher Texte als „gerecht“ erscheint, wäre leicht nachzuvollziehen. Entscheidet sich die Forschung nun gegen die historische Faktizität der Gestalt des Onias IV. und damit auch gegen die dramatische und schändliche Ermordung seines Vaters Onias III. nach Ant. 13 und 2Makk 3–4, dann ist allerdings der in Jes 53,7–10 beschriebene Märtyrer abhandengekommen, der der eigentliche Gottesknecht ist. Gegen derartige Bedenken ist jedoch einzuwenden, dass für eine solche Tradition historische Faktizität letztlich nicht entscheidend ist. Texttraditionen können bekanntlich ein Eigenleben jenseits verifizierbarer historischer Tatsachen entwickeln. Die fiktive Erzählung von Onias IV. nach Ant. 13 und 2Makk 3–4 könnte gleichsam zur Schaffung einer literarischen Gestalt bzw. eines kerygmatischen Onias III. einschließlich seines Martyriums beigetragen haben, sodass zugrundeliegende literarische Traditionen seitdem als Intertexte für soteriologische Konzepten rezipiert werden konnten.

Schließlich gehören zu solchen einleitungswissenschaftlichen Überlegungen dann auch Beobachtungen zur „Sondersprachlichkeit“ der Septuaginta, die an anderem Ort wenig schmeichelhaft gar als „clumsy incompetence“ apostrophiert werden kann. Sie sei auf die mangelhafte Sprachkompetenz der Übersetzer zurückzuführen, die nicht zur kulturellen Elite gehörten und sich aufgrund der Verwendung von militärischem Fachjargon als Soldaten identifizieren lassen.⁵⁶ Typisch sind solche sprachlichen Phänomene gleichwohl auch für Grenzlinien und Schnittmengen zwischen unterschiedlichen Kulturen und Bevölkerungsgruppen. Bestätigen sich die einleitungswissenschaftlichen Thesen zum griechischen Übersetzungsprojekt, dann hätten Ägypten und speziell Leontopolis mit dem Tempel des Onias prägende Einflüsse und Auswirkungen auf die Entstehung der Septuaginta und ihre konkrete sprachliche Form gehabt.

⁵⁵ Vgl. HENGEL, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, 83–85 (mit Blick auf Jes 53); VAN DER KOOIJ, *Servant*, 383–397 (mit Blick auf Jes 19,24).

⁵⁶ USENER, *Griechisches*, 81; JOOSTEN, *Ornamentation*, 12; DERS., *Language*, 188.191–194.

5. Zusammenfassung

Leontopolis im Gau Heliopolis hatte als Ort der griechischen Übersetzung verschiedener Bücher der hebräischen Bibel seinen bedeutenden Einfluss auf die Septuaginta. In Leontopolis stand ein frühjüdischer Tempel, gegründet von Onias, einem zadokitischen Priester aus Jerusalem. Gegen die *opinio communis* der jüngeren Forschung geht der vorliegende Beitrag davon aus, dass Onias III. (und nicht Onias IV.) nach der Entweihung des Tempels in Jerusalem durch Antiochus IV. Epiphanes (169 v. Chr.) nach Unterägypten geflohen war, um dort besagten Tempel zu begründen und eine Militärgarnison einzurichten. Dieser Tempel wurde nach anfänglicher Konkurrenz bald als loyal zu dem in Jerusalem eingeschätzt und überdauerte ihn sogar. Die exakte Identifizierung von Leontopolis oder dem Ort des Tempels gestaltet sich heute als schwierig. Klar ist allerdings, dass an diesem Ort ein eigenes Bildungszentrum existiert hatte, das allmählich zum Gegenpol des Zentrums der Wissenschaft in Alexandria avancierte. Die „Sondersprachlichkeit“ der Septuaginta lässt sich teils mit Leontopolis und dem dort gepflegten militärischen Fachjargon in Verbindung bringen.

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Robert J.V. Hiebert

Hermeneutical Observations Regarding the Work of the Translator of Septuagint Genesis

1. Introduction

A New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)¹ was the first English version of the Septuagint to be published since the translations of Charles Thomson² and Lancelot C.L. Brenton³ made their appearance in the first half of the nineteenth century. The subsequent launch of the Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on the Septuagint (SBLCS) based on the same principles that guided the NETS project constituted the next logical step in the realization of a longstanding dream within the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS) to produce a commentary on the Old Greek (OG) version of the Jewish Scriptures. The preamble to the guidelines for the commentary series articulates the vision that is embodied in both NETS and the SBLCS: “The objective of the Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on the Septuagint (SBLCS) is to elucidate the meaning of *the text-as-produced* in distinction from *the text-as-received*. ‘Meaning,’ however, is neither to be presupposed nor to be superimposed from either the source text or the text-as-received.”⁴ This statement highlights the distinction that should be made between the meaning to which the Septuagint translators gave expression in their renderings of the Semitic *Vorlage*, and the meaning attributed to these translation products by subsequent readers.

The SBLCS project is grounded on four principles that derive from the guidelines statement quoted above. In the present essay, I shall cite and

¹ PIETERSMA and WRIGHT, eds., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (2007). Unless otherwise indicated, English translations of Septuagint words or passages are those of NETS.

² *The Holy Bible, containing the Old and the New Covenant* (1808).

³ *The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament* (1844).

⁴ BÜCHNER, ed., *The SBL Commentary on the Septuagint*, 257. See pp. 257-259 for the whole preamble.

elaborate on those principles in connection with my work on a commentary on Septuagint Genesis currently in preparation.⁵

2. Fundamental Principles of the SBLCS Series

1. Principle 1

The first basic principle of the SBLCS project is stated as follows:

1.0 The commentary is *genetic*, in the sense that it seeks to trace the translation *process* that results in the *product*, i.e., the so-called original text of the Old Greek.

This implies that a critically-reconstructed eclectic text will be commented upon rather than that of any individual Septuagint manuscript. Practically speaking, this will mean reliance on the Göttingen Septuaginta volumes for those sections of the corpus that have been published, and in the case of the book of Genesis, the edition of John Wevers.⁶ The quest for the pristine OG text is an ongoing one, as Wevers himself demonstrated in his *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis*,⁷ which includes an appendix of proposed changes to the critical text.

The first sub-point to principle 1 reads as follows:

1.1. The text-as-produced is conceptualized as a *dependent* entity, derived from its source text. That is to say, it is perceived to be *compositionally* dependent on its source, though not *semantically* dependent.

A question that has been the focus of much recent debate is whether or not the Septuagint would have been regarded from the outset by the original translators to be a replacement for its source text. It is true that early in the Septuagint's reception history there were those who considered the translators' work to be the product of divine inspiration and to be revered as Scripture. In the so-called *Letter of Aristeas*, for example, there are intimations that the translation project was considered to have been achieved in accordance with divine design; in fact the royal patron of this undertaking, Ptolemy II Philadelphus, upon its completion "gave orders that great care

⁵ I express my gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for the funding to support my research for this commentary volume.

⁶ *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum*, vol. 1: *Genesis*, ed. WEVERS (1974). In the case of books for which there is not yet a full-fledged Göttingen critical edition (Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings [1–4 Kingdoms], 1 Chronicles, 4 Maccabees, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, and Psalms of Solomon), the Septuagint edition by ALFRED RAHLFS will serve as the primary default text.

⁷ WEVERS, *Notes*, 855–856.

be taken of the books and that they be watched over reverently.”⁸ Furthermore, Philo of Alexandria, who embellishes the account of the translation of the Pentateuch in the *Letter of Aristeas*, talks about the translators as being “possessed” and “under inspiration,” and not merely translators but “prophets and priests of the mysteries.”⁹ Epiphanius of Salamis goes as far as to insist that not only the Pentateuch but also all of the canonical books and twenty-two apocryphal books were translated by each of the thirty-six pairs of translators who, working independently, produced thirty-six identical copies of each book.¹⁰ But would these translations, including that of Genesis, have been regarded to be the products of divine inspiration at the point of production, as Philo and Epiphanius would assert? Their textual-linguistic make-up would suggest otherwise, given what these Greek texts reveal about the freedom that the translators exhibited in employing various strategies when executing their task and about the kind of relationship that exists between the translation products and their source texts. That relationship implies compositional dependence, as stated above, but when one compares them semantically it is evident that correspondence of that sort is often simply not the case, contrary to what Philo and Epiphanius contend. This can be illustrated in a passage like the following, which specifies the place where Abram pitched his tent following his arrival from Haran, and in which the source and Septuagint texts are quantitatively equivalent:

Genesis 12:8

בַּיְתֵּי אֵל מִיָּם וְהָיָה מִקְדָּשׁ

NRSV: with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east

Βαιθήλ κατὰ θάλασσαν καὶ Ἀγγαὶ κατ’ ἀνατολάς

NETS: Baithel towards the sea and Haggai to the east

The Hebrew and Greek texts consist of seven morphemes each, with the Greek and Hebrew constituents corresponding to one another: proper noun, preposition, noun, conjunction, proper noun, preposition, noun. There is, however, semantic dissonance, as is reflected in the NRSV and NETS versions, in part because nowhere in contemporaneous or antecedent Greek compositional literature is *θάλασσα* attested to mean *west*, unlike the case

⁸ HADAS, ed. and trans., *Aristeas to Philocrates*, §§ 307, 317.

⁹ Philo, *Moses*, 2.37, 40 (Colson, LCL).

¹⁰ Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures* 76–83, 143–153, 155–156 (MOUTSOULAS, “Τὸ Ἐπερὶ μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν,” English translation in HADAS, *Aristeas to Philocrates*, 76–77).

for Hebrew \square . Both terms frequently denote *sea*, but the semantic range of \square also includes the directional signification *west*.

The preceding example illustrates as well the relevance of the second sub-point to the first principle of the commentators' guidelines:

1.2. The aim is to uncover the strategies and norms by means of which the text came into being. Therefore, the commentator will analyze the relationship between the target text and the source text, attempting to account for the *process* underlying the derivation of the Greek version from its Semitic parent. It is from this analysis that the commentator will formulate his or her principles of interpretation and procedural methodology.

The choice of $\theta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha$ to render \square in Gen 12:8 constitutes a case of what descriptive translation studies specialist Gideon Toury would call a form of *interference* from the source text, whereby "phenomena pertaining to the make-up of the source text tend to be transferred to the target text." This type of interference is known as *negative transfer*, which has to do with "deviation from normal, codified practices of the target system."¹¹ The translator's strategy in the present case was to employ the default equivalence that is found throughout Genesis,¹² despite the semantic tension this created. That resulted, adopting Toury's terminology once again, in an *adequate translation* – namely, one that accords with "the norms of the source text, and through them also to the norms of the source language and culture."¹³

Another kind of interference, which Toury calls *positive transfer*, involves the employment of a given linguistic item that is attested in the target system but whose frequency of occurrence is linked to the incidence of its counterpart in the source text.¹⁴ An example of this is the use of $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ + the articular infinitive to render \square + the infinitive construct. This Hebrew syntagm occurs forty-three times in Genesis, for which $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ + the articular infinitive, indicating attendant or accompanying circumstances of one sort or another, is the equivalent eighteen times.¹⁵ The Greek construction does

¹¹ TOURY, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 275.

¹² \square – $\theta\acute{\alpha}\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\alpha$ (1:10, 22, 26, 28; 9:2; 12:8; 13:14; 14:3; 22:17; 28:14; 32:13; 41:49); \square $\eta\eta\eta$ – $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}\lambda\iota\omicron\varsigma$ (49:13).

¹³ TOURY, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 56. See also EVEN-ZOHAR, "Decisions in Translating Poetry," 43.

¹⁴ TOURY, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 252, 275.

¹⁵ Gen 4:8; 9:14; 11:2; 19:29, 29, 33, 33*, 35, 35*; 28:6; 32:20, 26; 34:22; 35:1, 7, 17(2°), 18; 38:28. In the preceding asterisked cases, the Greek counterpart for the second of a pair of \square + infinitive construct combinations lacks $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tau\acute{\omega}$ due to ellipsis, with the lone $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ $\tau\acute{\omega}$ sequence doing double duty. As for 35:17(1°), the first Hebrew infinitive construct of a juxtaposed pair is translated by an adverb. Other renderings of this Hebrew syntagm in Genesis are: $\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ + articulated noun (35:16); $\theta\tau\epsilon$ + finite verb (2:4; 12:4; 25:20, 26; 33:18; 34:25; 35:9; 36:24; 41:46; 42:21); $\eta\nu\acute{\iota}\chi\alpha$ + finite verb (16:16; 17:24, 25; 21:5;

appear in Classical and Hellenistic Greek texts, though not as frequently as it does in the Septuagint. Sophocles (v BCE) employs it four times.¹⁶ Nigel Turner reports that it occurs in the writings of Thucydides (v BCE) six times, in those of Xenophon (v–iv BCE) sixteen times, and in those of Plato (v–iv BCE) twenty-six times, whereas in the Septuagint as a whole the number is five hundred times.¹⁷ In the writings of Polybius (iii–ii BCE), who was presumably a contemporary of at least some of those responsible for the OG translation of the Jewish Scriptures, ἐν + the articular infinitive is attested twenty-five times.¹⁸

In addition to adequate translations that reflect source text norms, the translator of Genesis has also produced *acceptable translations*, for which “norm systems of the target culture are triggered and set into motion.”¹⁹ These two approaches may be illustrated by contrasting different ways of rendering the Hebrew prepositional construction מִן. One strategy results in an adequate translation, which is the case in the following example:

Genesis 9:5

וְנִשְׁפַּח אֶתְדַמְדָּמְכֶם לְנַפְשׁוֹתֵיכֶם אֶתְדָרְשָׁה מִן כָּל־חַיָּה וְאֶתְדָרְשָׁה

NRSV: For your own lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning: from every animal I will require it

καὶ γὰρ τὸ ὑμέτερον αἷμα τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν ἐκζητήσω, ἐκ χειρὸς πάντων τῶν θηρίων ἐκζητήσω αὐτό

NETS: For truly, your blood of your lives I will seek out: from the hand of all the animals I will seek it out

The phrase ἐκ χειρὸς πάντων τῶν θηρίων “from the hand of all the animals” reflects negative transfer from the source text inasmuch as ἐκ χειρὸς is not a construction employed in contemporaneous compositional Greek in a declaration of accountability as מִן does in this case, let alone when the

30:42; 35:22; 38:5; 45:1; 48:7); genitive absolute construction (27:25; 30:38; 50:17); ἐάν + finite verb (42:15).

¹⁶ Sophocles, *Ajax* 553 (ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν); *Oedipus coloneus* 495–496 (ἐν τῷ μὴ δύνασθαι μῆδ' ὀρᾶν: in this case ἐν τῷ does double duty), 795 (ἐν δὲ τῷ λέγειν).

¹⁷ TURNER, *Syntax*, 144–145.

¹⁸ Polybius, *Histories* 1.23.8 (ἐν δὲ τῷ συνεγγίξειν), 1.51.9 (ἐν τῷ ναυμαχεῖν), 1.62.4 (ἐν τῷ πολεμεῖν), 2.29.4 (ἐν τῷ λείπεσθαι), 2.32.10 (ἐν τῷ νικᾶν), 3.79.9–10 (ἐν τῷ πεσεῖν), 3.89.6 (ἐν τῷ νικᾶν), 4.12.7 (ἐν δὲ τῷ τούτους ἐγκλίναντας φεύγειν), 4.64.7 (ἐν τῷ ταύτην τε μείναι), 5.52.8 (ἐν δὲ τῷ συνάψαι), 6.42.2 (ἐν τῷ στρατοπεδεύειν), 6.53.3 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν), 7.8.9 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν), 8.12.8 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν)?, 9.8.2 (ἐν τῷ πολεμεῖν), 9.10.7 (ἐν τῷ φθονεῖν), 10.12.9 (ἐν τῷ παραπίπτειν), 10.19.5 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν), 15.25.9 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν), 21.4.5 (ἐν τῷ χειρώσασθαι...ἐν τῷ νικήσαντας τὸν Ἀντίοχον κρατῆσαι), 23.12.6 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν), 31.2.5 (ἐν τῷ λέγειν); Frag. 159 line 3 (ἐν τῷ ζῆν ... ἐν τῷ τελευτᾶν).

¹⁹ TOURY, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 56.

object of the phrase involves a plurality of animals. The following passage exhibits an alternative strategy for rendering the מִיָּד construction, which results in an acceptable translation that conforms to target culture norms:

Genesis 31:39

אֲנִי אֶחְטָא מִיָּדִי תְּבַקֶּשְׁנָהּ

NRSV: I bore the loss of it myself; of my hand you required it

ἐγὼ ἀπετίνημι παρ' ἑμαυτοῦ

NETS: I would exact from myself (what was stolen)

In this passage, the Septuagint *Vorlage* may or may not have differed in part from the MT since there is no counterpart in Greek to תְּבַקֶּשְׁנָהּ “you required it,” but in any case מִיָּדִי “of my hand” is rendered acceptably as παρ' ἑμαυτοῦ “from myself.” A similar strategy has been employed in the following context:

Genesis 21:30

אֶת־שִׁבְעַת כְּבָשֹׂת תִּקַּח מִיָּדִי

NRSV: These seven ewe lambs you shall accept from my hand

Τὰς ἑπτὰ ἀμνάδας ταύτας λήμψη παρ' ἐμοῦ

NETS: ...these seven ewe lambs you shall receive from me

2. Principle 2

The second foundational principle of the SBLCS project states:

2.0 The primary focus of the commentary is the *verbal make-up* of the translation, understood in terms of *conventional* linguistic usage (i.e., the grammar and lexicon of the target language) rather than in terms of what may be encountered in translation Greek.

This principle is based on the supposition that, although a Semitic source text lies behind the Septuagint translation, the role and function of that translation in the Hellenistic Jewish target culture in which it made its appearance can only be established by comparing it to contemporaneous compositional, rather than translational, Greek writing. The implications of this supposition in regard to discerning this translated text's meaning are further spelled out in the following sub-point.

2.1. The text-as-produced can be said to have semantic autonomy because it means what it means in terms of the grammar and lexicon of the Greek language at the time of the Septuagint's production.

Henry Gehman argued for the existence in the Hellenistic period “of a Jewish-Greek, which was in use in the synagogues and in religious circles,” and consequently that the Septuagint would have “made sense” and

been “intelligible” to Jews who did not understand Hebrew.²⁰ He went on to cite various examples of Septuagint renderings that he maintained are semantically equivalent to the underlying Hebrew: *καί* as the counterpart to *ו* means *that* when introducing a substantive clause (Gen 4:8), *while* when introducing a circumstantial clause (2 Sam/Reigns 11:4), *then* when introducing an apodosis (1 Sam/Reigns 17:9), *so* when introducing a preventative clause that follows a Hebrew *יִּפְּ* clause (Gen 3:22–23); *ὅτι* as the equivalent for *כִּי* means *when* in a situation in which the latter is understood to be temporal (Gen 4:12); *θάλασσα* as the counterpart to *יָם* means *west* when the latter is used in a directional sense (Gen 12:8); and *χῆλος* as the translation of *לשון* means *language* as a result of “a non-Greek usage taken over from Hebrew” (Gen 11:1, 6, 9).²¹

Gehman’s understanding of lexical semantics was, however, based on the notion that the Greek translation can generally be assumed to mean what the Hebrew *Vorlage* does. The problem is that contemporaneous non-translation literature often does not support such proposed adjustments of the Greek lexicon. Research on the Greek papyri and inscriptions has revealed that the language of the Septuagint is, by and large, consistent with Greek of the Hellenistic period. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Gustav Adolf Deissmann wrote:

A more exact investigation of Alexandrian Greek will, as has been already signified, yield the result that far more of the alleged Hebraisms of the LXX than one usually supposes are really phenomena of Egyptian, or of popular, Greek....the real language, spoken and written, of the Seventy Interpreters was the Egyptian Greek of the period of the Ptolemies. If, as translators, they had often, in the matter of syntax, to conceal or disguise this fact, the more spontaneously, in regard to their lexical work, could they do justice to the profuse variety of the Bible by drawing from the rich store of terms furnished by their highly-cultured environment. Their work is thus one of the most important documents of Egyptian Greek. Conversely, its specifically Egyptian character can be rendered intelligible only by means of a comparison with all that we possess of the literary memorials of Hellenic Egypt from the time of the Ptolemies till about the time of Origen.²²

Anticipating the faulty logic exhibited by Gehman, Deissmann warned

that no future lexicon to the LXX shall content itself with the bringing forward of mere equations; in certain cases the Greek word chosen does not represent the Hebrew original at all, and it would be a serious mistake to suppose that the LXX everywhere used each particular word in the sense of its corresponding Hebrew. Very frequently the LXX did

²⁰ GEHMAN, “The Hebraic Character of Septuagint Greek,” 92. In his critique of Gehman’s statement, John A.L. Lee points out that “no one would suppose that because we can understand the English of the AV its idioms must be a normal feature of the English we speak” (*A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch*, 19).

²¹ GEHMAN, “Septuagint Greek,” 92–101. Another proponent of the idea of a Jewish-Greek dialect is TURNER (“The Unique Character of Biblical Greek,” 208–213).

²² DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, 70.

not translate the original at all, but made a substitution for it, and the actual meaning of the word substituted is, of course, to be ascertained only from Egyptian Greek. A lexicon to the LXX will thus be able to assert a claim to utility only if it informs us of what can be learned, with regard to each word, from Egyptian sources.²³

Deissmann also asserted that there is in fact evidence within the Septuagint and the New Testament of the difference between the spoken vernacular and translation Greek:

The relation which the language of the Prologue to Sirach bears to the translation of the book is of the utmost importance in this question. (Cf. the similar relation between the Prologue to Luke and the main constituent parts of the Gospel....) The [Sirach] Prologue is sufficiently long to permit of successful comparison: the impression cannot be avoided that it is an Alexandrian Greek who speaks here; in the book itself, a disguised Semite. The translator himself had a correct apprehension of how such a rendering of a Semitic text into Greek differed from Greek – the language which he spoke, and used in writing the Prologue. He begs that allowance should be made for him, if his work in spite of all his diligence should produce the impression *τισι τῶν λέξεων ἀδυναμεῖν· οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑβραϊστί λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῆ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν*. Whoever counts the Greek Sirach among the monuments of a “Judaeo-Greek,” thought of as a living language, must show why the translator uses Alexandrian Greek when he is not writing as a translator.²⁴

Many examples of semantic differences between the Hebrew source text and translations of it in Septuagint Genesis could be cited. One such case is found in the passage that narrates the episode of Rachel naming the second son of her *הַפְּהָשׁ* “maid”/παιδίσκη “female slave” Bilhah:

Genesis 30:8

נִפְתָּלִי אֶלְהִים | נִפְתַּלְתִּי עִם־אָחֲתִי גַם־יָכַלְתִּי וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ נִפְתָּלִי

NRSV: “With mighty wrestlings I have wrestled with my sister, and have prevailed”; so she named him Naphtali.

Συνελάβετό μοι ὁ θεός, καὶ συνανεστράφηγν τῇ ἀδελφῇ μου καὶ ἠδυνάσθηγν· καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Νεφθαλί.

NETS: “God has assisted me, and I have lived together with my sister and have been strong enough,” and she called his name Nephthali.

This is an admittedly challenging Hebrew text, not least with respect to the rendering of *נִפְתַּלְתִּי* *niphalt* denoting *wrestle with*.²⁵ For passive and medio-passive forms of *συναναστρέφω*, LSJ gives the meaning as *live together, associate with*, though another definition suggested for its occurrence in Genesis 30:8 is *wrestle with*,²⁶ namely the same meaning as that of the He-

²³ DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, 73–74.

²⁴ DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, 69 n 1.

²⁵ DCH, s.v. *נִפְתַּלְתִּי*.

²⁶ LSJ, s.v. *συναναστρέφω*.

brew counterpart. This latter sense appears to be consistent with how Wevers understands its meaning in the present context. Commenting on the work of the Septuagint translator, Wevers asserts: “That he understood the verb נִתְלַחֵת adequately is obvious from his *συνανεστράφη*, a second aorist passive (with active meaning) ‘and I competed (with my sister).’”²⁷ Similarly, Marguerite Harl renders Rachel’s declaration as “j’ai rivalisé avec ma sœur et j’ai prévalu.”²⁸ She goes on to note that LSJ offers a definition of *συνανεστρέφω* that corresponds to the meaning of the Hebrew counterpart, but then proceeds on the basis of a linkage between *συνανεστρέφω* and *ἀναστρέφω* to suggest that *συνανεστρέφω* “peut signifier ici que Rachel a voulu mener le genre de vie de sa sœur, c’est-à-dire qu’elle a rivalisé avec elle.”²⁹ In *Septuaginta Deutsch*, the rendering of the verb in question is somewhat ambiguous with respect to the nature of Rachel’s action: “[I]ch bin mit meiner Schwester umgegangen und ich habe mich behauptet.”³⁰ The latter half of this statement does, however, appear to cast the former half in an aggressive light in much the same way as the renderings of the above-mentioned interpreters do. George Caird quite appropriately calls for a return to the “normal sense” of *συνανεστρέφω* that LSJ initially presents when he suggests “that the translator, despairing of a Greek equivalent for a Hebrew pun, and perhaps also feeling the metaphor out of keeping with ladylike behaviour, decided to paraphrase...and had Rachel say: ‘I have shared the family circle with my sister and have come out on top.’”³¹

The second sub-point focuses on the intended reader of the translated text:

2.2. The “reader” of the text-as-produced is conceptualized as the *prospective* or *implied* reader, a construct based on the text itself, in distinction from any reader, actual or hypothetical, exterior to the text. The prospective reader is to be inferred from those features of the text’s make-up that are indicative of a specific linguistic, literary, or cultural aim.

There is really no independent contemporaneous evidence regarding the circumstances of the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch into Greek. The account in the *Letter of Aristeas*, which was written at least a century after the appearance of that translation, tells an idealized story about seventy-two linguistic experts and biblical scholars (six from each of the twelve Israelite tribes) dispatched, bearing a copy of the Torah written in letters of

²⁷ WEVERS, *Notes*, 478.

²⁸ HARL, *La Bible d’Alexandrie: La Genèse*, 228.

²⁹ HARL, *La Genèse*, 229.

³⁰ KRAUS and KARRER et al., eds., *Septuaginta Deutsch*, 32. In the accompanying *Erläuterungen* volume, a suggested alternative rendering is “sich mit jemandem drehen” (KARRER and KRAUS et al., eds., *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen*, 209).

³¹ CAIRD, “Towards a Lexicon of the Septuagint. II,” 147.

gold, to Egypt by the high priest in Jerusalem in response to the cordial invitation of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in order to translate the Hebrew laws so that they could be deposited in the great library of Alexandria³² – a story that would appear to be motivated by the apologetic interests of an author intent on asserting the authoritativeness of this version. There has been some scholarly speculation regarding the possibility that the Ptolemaic administration in Egypt would have had an interest in gaining linguistic access to this body of literature that was so important to a significant group within the Egyptian body politic, especially since it contained traditions and regulations according to which its members would, to some degree at least, have intended to order their lives.³³ As indicated above, however, we have no direct knowledge of who actually did the work of translation, why they did it, or who the originally intended readers were. In that light, we would be advised to look to the translation product itself for answers to the preceding questions. In other words, the search for the prospective or implied readers must be based on careful philological analysis of the text.

The very fact that the Semitic source text of Genesis was translated into Greek in the early Hellenistic period does allow us to make some inferences about the implied readers. One assumption is that, because the text selected for this undertaking was a portion of the Hebrew Bible – revered as sacred Scripture by Jews – the primary intended readership is likely to have been Jewish. There are, as might be expected, indications in Septuagint Genesis that matters of particular significance for Jewish readers are expressed in a distinctive way – even in comparison to the way that they are articulated in the Hebrew source text – so as to address Jewish interests and concerns. One example has to do with the description of the circumcision of Abraham, Ishmael, and the other males of the patriarch's household. A male child was, of course, to be circumcised on the eighth day after his birth (Gen 17:12), though by the time this rite was established for Abraham he was ninety-nine years of age (Gen 17:24) and Ishmael was thirteen years old (Gen 17:25). The Hebrew Masoretic Text says that they were circumcised בַּעֲצֻם הַיּוֹם הַהוּא “that very day” – presumably the day on which God issued this injunction to Abraham – whereas the Septuagint translator renders the phrase ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης “at the opportune time of that day” (Gen 17:23, 26). The distinctiveness of this rendering, which does not appear to be attributable to a different underlying

³² HADAS, *Aristeas to Philocrates*, §§ 35–51, 172–179, 301–307.

³³ MÉLÈZE MODRZEJEWSKI, *The Jews of Egypt*, 104–111; BARTHÉLEMY, “Pourquoi la Torah a-t-elle été traduite?”, 23–41; BICKERMAN, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* I, 137–166, 167–200; SCHÜRER, *The history of the Jewish people* 3.1, rev. and ed. VERMES, MILLAR, and GOODMAN, 474–476; COLLINS, *The Library in Alexandria*, 115–119, 178–181; FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, *The Septuagint in Context*, 62–64; JOBES and SILVA, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 18–23; MOSES HADAS, *Aristeas to Philocrates*, 66–73.

source text, is highlighted not only by the fact that in the one other place that this Hebrew phrase occurs in Genesis the Greek equivalent is ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ “[o]n this day” (Gen 7:13),³⁴ but also by the fact that nowhere else in all the Septuagint except for Gen 17:23, 26 is καιρός included in the Greek rendering of that phrase.³⁵

This focus on the opportune time of day for circumcision in the Septuagint version of Genesis 17 is reminiscent of Targumic, Mishnaic, and Talmudic notices with regard to the performance of this rite. Targum Neofiti 1 renders the phrase in question בזמן יומא הדין “on (or: at) the time of (*bzmn*) this day”³⁶ while Targum Onqelos has בְּכֶרֶן יוֹמָא הַדִּין and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan has ביכרן יומא הדין “that same day”³⁷ or “that very day”³⁸ or “at the hour/essence of this day.”³⁹ Although Marcus Jastrow renders כֶּרֶן יוֹמָא as “the very day,”⁴⁰ other scholars suggest that כֶּרֶן could be a loan word from Greek⁴¹ – i.e., χρόνος – and thus a signifier of time. Mishnaic and Talmudic stipulations as to factors regarding the kind or time of day for the performance of circumcision include the following considerations: avoidance of cloudy days or days when the south wind blows;⁴² circumstances when daytime is said to be the proper time (זמן)⁴³ or when it is specifically the morning that circumcision should take place;⁴⁴ the protocols to follow when a child is born at twilight on the eve of the sabbath or of festival days.⁴⁵ Admittedly, these regulations were codified long after Septuagint Genesis made its appearance, but they may provide some indication as to the issues that might have occasioned the renderings in Gen 17:23 and 26 as well as those in the above-mentioned Targums.⁴⁶

³⁴ See also Exod 12:17 and Deut 32:48.

³⁵ Other renderings of הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בַּעֲצָם הַיּוֹם in the Septuagint are: Josh 5:11 – ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ “on this day”; Exod 12:51 and Ezek 40:1 – ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐξεῖνη “on that day”; Lev 23:28, 29, 30 – ἐν αὐτῇ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ταύτῃ “on this [that: vv. 29, 30] particular day”; Lev 23:21 – ταύτῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ “this day”; Ezek 24:2 – ἀπὸ τῆς ἡμέρας τῆς σήμερον “from this very day.”

³⁶ MCNAMARA, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 76 n. 12.

³⁷ MAHER, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 41, 65.

³⁸ MAHER, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, 65.

³⁹ MCNAMARA, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 76 n. 12. For the texts of the various Targums, see the relevant databases of *The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon* at cal.huc.edu.

⁴⁰ JASTROW, *Dictionary of the Targumim*, s.v. כֶּרֶן.

⁴¹ DIEZ MACHO, *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense ms. de la Biblioteca Vaticana*, 6 vols., 5:50*–51*; MCNAMARA, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 76 n. 12.

⁴² *b. Yebam.* 8:71b–72a, in *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim*, trans. EPSTEIN, 1:485.

⁴³ *b. Yebam.* 8:72a–b in EPSTEIN, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim*, 1:489.

⁴⁴ *b. Yebam.* 8:71a–b, in EPSTEIN, *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Nashim*, 1:481–482.

⁴⁵ *m. Šabb.* 19:5, in DANBY, trans., *The Mishnah*, 117.

⁴⁶ HIEBERT, “The Hermeneutics of Translation,” 99–102.

Another marker of sensitivity to matters of concern for Jewish readers in Greek Genesis is to be found in the rendering of Jacob's declaration to Esau at their reunion in Gen 33:10: כִּי עַל־כֵּן רָאִיתִי פְנֵיךָ כְּרֵאֶת פְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים: "for truly to see your face is like seeing the face of God"/ἐνεκεν τούτου εἶδον τὸ πρόσωπόν σου, ὡς ἄν τις ἴδοι πρόσωπον θεοῦ "with regard to this I saw your face, as someone might see a divine face."⁴⁷ The translator "atténue la comparaison"⁴⁸ between seeing the face of God and that of Esau in two ways. This is accomplished, first, by rendering כְּרֵאֶת with the phrase ὡς ἄν τις ἴδοι, which includes the optative with ἄν, and second, by opting for anarthrous θεοῦ as the counterpart to אֱלֹהִים. It should be noted that this is the only place in the Septuagint where a potential optative + ἄν construction is used to translate the particle כִּי + an infinitive construct.⁴⁹ Furthermore, over against 153 cases in Genesis in which anarthrous אֱלֹהִים is rendered by ὁ θεός (including the article), the present passage contains one of only eighteen instances in which anarthrous θεός is the equivalent. What this all suggests is that the Greek translator downplays the likelihood that one would actually see the face of THE God (ὁ θεός) but allows for the possibility of experiencing a theophany involving some sort of θεός or other.⁵⁰ Preserving a sense of the transcendence of Israel's covenant God would no doubt be an important theological consideration for a translator who envisions a devout Jew as the prospective reader of Greek Genesis.

A further assumption about implied Jewish readers of the Septuagint that it would seem to be safe to make is that they must have been more at home in the lingua franca of the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean regions during this period than in Hebrew and Aramaic. Whether such readers would have had any competence in understanding the original languages of their Scriptures beyond what they may have picked up in liturgical contexts remains an open question. The fact that the translator sometimes provided explanatory glosses on the meanings of Semitic names might suggest that the familiarity of implied readers with the Hebrew source text was minimal. For example, in the descriptions of the naming of Lot's grandsons whom he fathers by his two daughters, the translator resorted to both transcription and explication: מוֹאָב "Moab"/Μωάβ· ἐκ τοῦ πατρός μου "Moab: 'From my father'" (Gen 19:37); בְּנֵי־עַמְּוֹן וְהוּא אָבִי בְנֵי־עַמְּוִי "Ben-ammi; he is the ancestor of the Ammonites"/Ἀμμών· υἱὸς τοῦ γένους μου·

⁴⁷ WEVERS translates the latter phrase: "as someone might see the face of (a) God" (*Notes*, 550).

⁴⁸ HARL, *La Genèse*, 245.

⁴⁹ "The potential character of seeing God's face is not present in the Hebrew infinitive" (WEVERS, *Notes*, 550).

⁵⁰ A similar strategy appears to be at work in Genesis 32:31(30) where פְּנֵי־אֵל "Peniel" is rendered Εἶδος θεοῦ "Divine-form."

οὗτος πατήρ Ἀμμανιτῶν “Amman: ‘Son of my race’; he is the ancestor of the Ammanites” (Gen 19:38).

What complicates the quest for “a specific linguistic, literary, or cultural aim” that might be discerned in the make-up of the text of Septuagint Genesis from which the prospective reader might be inferred, however, is what Deissmann characterizes as “the marvelous variety of the linguistic elements of the Greek Bible.”⁵¹ Despite the fact that “the idea of making the sacred book accessible in another language was at that time unheard-of,” the Septuagint translators, beginning perhaps with whoever rendered Genesis, nonetheless took up the task “of turning Semitic into Greek.”⁵² The unprecedented nature of this undertaking may account at least in part for the variability of the translation technique – whether lexical or syntactical equivalences are involved – that is found in a book like Genesis, which exhibits a generally conservative approach to the rendering of its source text. But it seems unlikely that the kind of linguistic divergence that is evident in the examples immediately below and that typifies this translation product as a whole can be explained solely on the basis of this being the first attempt at such a project.

Genesis 27:30

וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כָּלָה יִצְחָק לְבָרֵךְ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וַיְהִי אִשָּׁו יֵצֵא יַעֲקֹב מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יִצְחָק אָבִיו
וַיֵּשׁוּ אָחִיו בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

NRSV: As soon as Isaac had finished blessing Jacob, when Jacob had scarcely gone out from the presence of his father Isaac, his brother Esau came in from his hunting.

Καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὸ παύσασθαι Ἰσαὰκ εὐλογοῦντα Ἰακώβ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐγένετο ὡς ἐξῆλθεν Ἰακώβ ἀπὸ προσώπου Ἰσαὰκ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ, καὶ Ἡσαὺ ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ ἦλθεν ἀπὸ τῆς θήρας.

NETS: And it came about after Isaak had left off blessing his son Iakob, and it came about when Iakob had gone out from the presence of his father Isaak, that then his brother Esau came from the hunt.

Genesis 38:29

וַיְהִי | כִּמְשִׁיב יָדוֹ וַהֲגִה יֵצֵא אָחִיו

NRSV: But just then he drew back his hand, and out came his brother...

ὡς δὲ ἐπισυνήγαγεν τὴν χεῖρα, καὶ εὐθὺς ἐξῆλθεν ὁ ἀδελφὸς αὐτοῦ.

NETS: But when he retracted his hand, then immediately out came his brother.

In both verses וַיְהִי serves to inaugurate temporal clauses. Yet that construction is rendered in a stilted, Hebraistic fashion with the repetition of καὶ

⁵¹ DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, 65.

⁵² DEISSMANN, *Bible Studies*, 67.

ἐγένετο in Gen 27:30, but in a manner that accords with more idiomatic Greek with the choice of a ὥς + finite verb construction instead of one that includes καὶ ἐγένετο in Gen 38:29. The preference for formal over functional equivalence in translation technique along with an openness to variety in the choice of equivalents makes it evident that consistency of approach was not perceived by the translator of Genesis to be a necessity for the implied reader. Why that was the case continues to be a mystery.

The variability of translation technique exhibited in Septuagint Genesis is not an indication of the translator's incompetence, but in fact in various examples discussed above as well as elsewhere throughout the book he provides evidence that he both understands his *Vorlage* and possesses the linguistic skill to convey the essential meaning of that source text. This is accomplished even while at times accommodation is made for certain theological and cultural issues that the implied reader might bring with him/her to the translated text.

3. Principle 3

The third principle on which the SBLCS commentary series is founded asserts the following:

3.0 The text-as-produced represents *a historical event* and should be described with reference to the relevant features of its historical context.

Although the actual circumstances of that undertaking are not known, this does not mean that nothing can be concluded about that event or the context in which it occurred. The first sub-point articulates one of the implications of this principle:

3.1. The translation is to be viewed as a fact of the culture that produced it inasmuch as it is a specimen of discourse within that culture.

The Septuagint exhibits evidence of a Jewish, Egyptian, and Greek cultural matrix. Adherence to the Hebrew source text, at times giving rise to isomorphism and Hebraisms, point to the Jewish context of the translation. The $\text{וַיַּעַשׂ} = \text{ἐκ χειρὸς}$ and $\text{וַיְהִי} = \text{καὶ ἐγένετο}$ equivalences discussed above are examples of some of the most quantitative renderings that fall into Toury's category of adequate translations and that are occasioned by negative transfer from the source text. The Jewish context is also suggested by the specification of the opportune time (*καιρός*) of the day for circumcision in Gen 17 described earlier. Another passage dealing with circumcision also includes wording in the Greek version that indicates sensitivity to the attendant circumstances of this rite and that would have particular significance for a Jewish readership. This occurs in the description of the aftermath of the circumcision of the men of Shechem in Gen 34:25, where בַּיּוֹם

הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בְּהֵיוֹתָם כְּאֲבִים [o]n the third day, when they were still in pain” is translated as ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ, ὅτε ἦσαν ἐν τῷ πόνῳ “on the third day, when they were in pain.” The choice of the temporal adverb ὅτε + finite verb to render בָּ + infinitive construct is a syntagm that the Greek translator uses to signify a specifically temporal context rather than an accompanying circumstance of one sort or another.⁵³ This suggests that the third day after circumcision is being highlighted as being especially significant because of the soreness that is experienced, which is consistent with what other early biblical versions and rabbinic sources indicate in singling out the third day as the one on which the pain is considered to be the most intense.⁵⁴

Evidence for the Egyptian setting of the Genesis translator can be detected in a number of places in the book, some of which involve toponyms that are chosen as replacements for the Hebrew ones. One of these is Heliopolis Ἡλίου πόλις *city of the sun* as the counterpart to On אֹן (Gen 41:45, 50; 46:20). The Hebrew name is a reflection of the Egyptian toponym *Iwnw*, meaning “pillar town,” as well as Akkadian *Āna* and Coptic *Ōn*. The Greek replacement, attested already by Herodotus (v BCE), is indicative of the solar cult that was associated with this city.⁵⁵ Another example involves the rendering of שֵׁן Goshen as Ἡρώων πόλις Heronopolis in Gen 46:28(1°), 29, a toponym mentioned by Theophrastus (iv BCE).⁵⁶

An example of the Greek cultural milieu of the translator can be found in the way the identity of certain antediluvians is transformed in Septuagint Genesis:

Genesis 6:4

הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאַרְצָא בְּיָמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אֶת־רִיכֹן אֲשֶׁר יָבֵאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת
הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדּוּ לָהֶם הַמָּה הַגְּבֻרִים אֲשֶׁר מַעֲוֹלָם אֲנֹשִׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם:

⁵³ The בָּ + infinitive construct is rendered by ὅτε + finite verb ten times in Genesis, but by ἐν + the articular infinitive, signifying attendant circumstances in general, eighteen times.

⁵⁴ Targum Onqelos: והוה ביומא תליתאה כד תקיפו עליהון כיביהון “And on the third day when their pains grew strong against them”; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: והוה ביומא תליתאה “And on the third day when they were shaking with the pain of their circumcision”; Targum Neofiti: והוה ביומא תליתא כד הוון צעורין מן גזרתהון “And on the third day when they were suffering with the pain of their circumcision”; Peshitta: וְעַתָּה בְּיָמֵינוּ כְּאֲבִים הָיוּ בְּאַרְצָא בְּיָמִים הָהֵם וְגַם אֶת־רִיכֹן אֲשֶׁר יָבֵאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל־בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם וַיִּלְדּוּ לָהֶם הַמָּה הַגְּבֻרִים אֲשֶׁר מַעֲוֹלָם אֲנֹשִׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם “And on the third day when their pain grew strong”; Vulgate: et ecce die tertio, quando gravissimus vulnerum dolor est “And behold on the third day, when the pain of the wounds is most grievous.” See also *b. Ned.* 31b; *b. Sabb.* 134b; *b. B. Mes.* 86b.

⁵⁵ Herodotus, *Histories* 2.3.1 etc.; HALOT, s.v. אֹן III; REDFORD, “Heliopolis,” *AYBD* 3.122–123; HOFFMEIER, *Israel in Egypt*, 120–121; KITCHEN, *Reliability*, 257.

⁵⁶ Theophrastus, *Historia plantarum* 9.4.9; BDB, s.v., גֵּשֶׁן; KITCHEN, *Reliability*, 258.

NRSV: The Nephilim were on the earth in those days – and also afterward – when the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, who bore children to them. These were the heroes that were of old, warriors of renown.

οἱ δὲ γίγαντες ἦσαν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις καὶ μετ’ ἐκεῖνο, ὡς ἂν εἰσεπορεύοντο οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐγεννώσαν ἑαυτοῖς· ἐκεῖνοι ἦσαν οἱ γίγαντες οἱ ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, οἱ ἄνθρωποι οἱ ὀνομαστοί.

NETS: Now the giants were on the earth in those days and afterward. When the sons of God used to go in to the daughters of humans, then they produced offspring for themselves. Those were the giants that were of old, the renowned humans.

The employment of οἱ γίγαντες “the giants” to render נְפִלִים “the Nephilim” and הִיָּוִלִים “the heroes” in depictions of the primeval past suggests the influence of Greek mythology.⁵⁷ The epic poet Hesiod (viii/vii BCE), for example, speaks of personified heaven and earth cohabiting to produce giants, as is the case with the above-mentioned sons of God and daughters of humans: “And Heaven (Οὐρανός) came, bringing on night and longing for love, and he lay about Earth (Γαίη) spreading himself full upon her....and as the seasons moved round she bore the strong Erinyes and the great Giants (μεγάλους τε Γίγαντας) with gleaming armour.”⁵⁸

3.2. The verbal make-up of the translation should be understood in relation to the cultural system in which it was produced, that is to say, the sort of text it is as a Greek document.

Septuagint Genesis is a Greek document that, because it is a translation, evinces varying degrees of linguistic interference – both positive and negative – from its Semitic source text. Toury distinguishes three modes of translation: 1) linguistically-motivated, which involves “any act of translation yielding a product which is well-formed in terms of the target syntax, grammar and lexicon, even if it does not fully conform to any target model of text formation”; 2) textually-dominated, which “yields products which are well-formed in terms of general conventions of text formation pertinent to the target culture, even if they do not conform to any recognized literary model within it”; and 3) literary, which entails “the imposition of ‘conformity conditions’ beyond the linguistic and/or general-textual ones, namely, to models and norms which are deemed literary at the target end. It thus yields more or less well-formed texts from the point of view of the *literary* requirements of the recipient culture, at various possible costs in terms of the reconstruction of features of the source text.”⁵⁹ Septuagint Genesis tends to exhibit features that would be associated with either linguistically-motivated or textually-dominated modes, and consequently would not be characterized as exemplifying the literary mode. A linguisti-

⁵⁷ In Gen 14:5, the Rephaim רִפְּאִיִּם are likewise called γίγαντες “giants.”

⁵⁸ Hesiod, *Theogony* 176–178, 184–186 (trans. Evelyn-White, LCL).

⁵⁹ TOURY, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 171.

cally-motivated mode of translation could be reflected, for example, in typical conformity to source text word order, a textually-dominated one in the employment of hypotaxis to replace the parataxis of the source text, and a literary one in the favouring of norms that are characteristic of contemporaneous compositional texts over those of the source text. It remains an open question as to what slot within the original recipient culture that Septuagint Genesis would have occupied. Did it function as a liturgical document, a pedagogical tool, a cultural artifact to be deposited in the Alexandrian library? That it came in time to be regarded by Jews as inspired Scripture – a replacement for the Semitic source text – is clear from the pronouncements of the likes of Philo and Epiphanius cited above. The variability of its textual-linguistic make-up, however, makes it seem quite unlikely that it was viewed as such at its point of production.⁶⁰

4. Principle 4

The fourth foundational principle of the SBLCS commentary series states:

4.0. The text-as-produced is *the act of an historical agent* – the translator – and should be described with reference to the translator’s intentions, to the extent that these are evident.

The scarcity of reliable evidence with respect to the circumstances of the translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch, including the book of Genesis, means that a systematic analysis of the translation itself must be undertaken in order to unearth clues regarding what a given translator’s intentions may have been. How one should conduct such an investigation is taken up in the following two sub-points.

4.1. The meaning of the text is best understood as encompassing both *what* the translator did and *why*.

The range of translation strategies exhibited in Septuagint Genesis runs the gamut from transcription of Hebrew word forms, to construction of Hebraisms, to adoption of stereotypical equivalences, to introduction of explanatory glosses, to employment of idiomatic replacement renderings. The contextual factors discussed above indicate that the translator was Jewish, lived in Egypt during the Ptolemaic period, and produced a version of the Jewish Scriptures that contains indicators of his setting. One can only speculate as to why that product exhibits diversity of translation technique. Perhaps, if Genesis was the first of the books to be translated, it is due in part to the pioneering nature of the undertaking. The translator’s under-

⁶⁰ BROCK, “The Phenomenon of the Septuagint,” 11–36; BOYD-TAYLOR, “A Place in the Sun,” 71–105; HIEBERT, “Translation Technique in the Septuagint of Genesis,” 76–93; PIETERSMA, “A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions,” 337–364.

standing of the meaning of the source text is, however, typically apparent, though on occasion that seems not to be the case.

Genesis 14:14

וַיֵּרֶק אֶת-חֲנִיכָיו יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׂמֹנֶה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת

NRSV: ...he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred eighteen of them

ἤριθμησεν τοὺς ἰδίους οἰκογενεῖς αὐτοῦ, τριακοσίουσ δέκα καὶ ὀκτώ

NETS: ...he counted his own homebreds, three hundred eighteen

This passage is part of the narrative that has to do with Abram's mustering of forces in preparation for his pursuit of those who had captured his nephew Lot. The translator appears to have misunderstood the meaning of the verb וַיֵּרֶק in the present context. The *hiphil* stem of the root ריק in various contexts denotes *empty*, *pour out*, *pour down*, *unsheath*, but here *lead out*.⁶¹ Presumably taking his cue from the number that follows (318), the translator has produced a contextualized rendering, ἤριθμησεν "he counted." Such cases aside, the translator has, for the most part, conveyed the meaning of the source text adequately, if not always acceptably, in accordance with Toury's criteria.

4.2. The commentator's task thus includes the following: (a) to search out the intention of the translator insofar as this may be inferred from the transformation of the source text and the verbal make-up of the target text; (b) to describe the possibilities *deliberately* marked out by the language of the text.

The two-fold task of searching out a translator's intention and identifying translation possibilities can be accomplished by taking note of the different ways that a given Hebrew lexeme or syntagm has been rendered. A clear example discussed above involves the investigation of the various ways that the Hebrew phrase הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה בְּעֶצֶם הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה "that very day" is translated throughout the Septuagint corpus, which discloses not only the distinctiveness of the rendering ἐν τῷ καιρῷ τῆς ἡμέρας ἐκείνης "at the opportune time of that day" in Gen 17:23, 26 but also the Genesis translator's specific focus on the time of day in this passage. As this case illustrates, one must not be too quick to assume that different translation equivalences are to be attributed either to a different underlying *Vorlage* than the Masoretic Text or to a translator's quest for *variatio*; in any given situation other intentional factors may have been at play.

⁶¹ DCH, s.v. ריק I.

3. Conclusion

The focus of this essay has been on the principles that are foundational for the SBLCS project. The product of this venture will be a series of commentary volumes on the books of the OG version of the Jewish Scriptures, volumes whose purpose is to explain the meaning of the text-as-produced. Gaining access to that meaning, as has been demonstrated above by means of an investigation centered on Septuagint Genesis, involves examining the translation product in order to discover interpretive strategies that were employed in transforming or reconfiguring the source text for the benefit of the prospective reader living in the socio-linguistic context of the target culture.

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Dionisio Candido

Manipulating God?

On the Theology of the Book of Judith

The book of Judith immediately captivates its reader, though it is certainly not devoid of harshness. Indeed, one of the most delicate theological questions concerns the fraught relationship between the story's heroine and her God.

Scholars have been attracted by Judith's behaviour, characterised as it is by dubious morality and personal faith: but the role and influence of God himself in the narrative has been explored much less. Going through and beyond the mere theological lexicon it is important to grasp the dynamic of Judith's relationship with God. The Judith of the Greek text is probably much more complex and moving than the Judith of post-biblical tradition and Jerome's Vulgate.

1. Judith's Morality and Religious Life

The question of Judith's moral conduct¹ has been a source of embarrassment: she lies (Jdt 11:5–8), seduces (Jdt 10:3–4), and executes a premeditated murder with lucid cynicism (Jdt 13:6–10). However, from the Church Fathers to modern authors, various solutions to explain or justify the heroine's behaviour have been proposed. Thomas Aquinas' (1225–1274) interpretation of events in the Middle Ages has become standard: "*Judith laudatur, non quia mentita est Holopherni, sed propter affectum quem habuit ad salutem populi, pro qua periculis se exposuit.*"² And reflecting on whether unjust authorities should be obeyed, he quoted Cicero, who had spoken of the legitimacy of disobeying Julius Caesar's usurping assassins: "*Qui ad liberationem patriae tyrannum occidit, laudatur et praemium accipit.*"³ Words like these bring us into dialogue with such to thorny issues as civil disobedience, the assassination of

¹ WOJCIECHOWSKI, "Moral Teaching of the Book of Judith," 85–96.

² THOMAS AQUINATIS, *Summa Theologiae*, II–II, q. 110, art. 3 ad 3.

³ THOMAS AQUINATIS, *Commentum super secundum Librum Sententiarum Petri Lombardi*, dist 44, q. 2 ad 5.

tyrants, legitimate self-defence, and the protection of the weak, all of which remain controversial today. Certainly, the circumstances in which the actions in the book of Judith occur have to be taken into consideration.

In some respects, the theme of Judith's ethics is closely connected to her religious life. In the light of her dubious moral conduct, the reader might well question what type of faith the heroine actually has. The text supplies interesting data about her devotional practices: bodily penitence (Jdt 9:1; cf. 4:14–15), fasting (Jdt 8:6a; cf. 4:13), the keeping of prescribed feasts (Jdt 8:6b), ritual purification (Jdt 11:17; 12:9), and observance of dietary restrictions (Jdt 12:2–4; cf. 11:12–13). However, prayer is certainly the most important⁴. Already the use of *προσευχή* (Jdt 12:6; 13:3,10; cf. the verb *προσεύχομαι* in Jdt 11:7) and *δέησις* (Jdt 9:12; cf. the verb *δέομαι* in Jdt 8:31; 12:8) shows it. The prayers are recited by the inhabitants of Bethulia (Jdt 6:18–19; 7:19,24–28; 13:17–20), by those of Jerusalem (Jdt 15:9–10), but above all by the heroine (cf. Jdt 9:2–14; 13:4b–7; 16:1–17). Going beyond these strict limits, one can add the “reported prayers”, including Jdt 4:9–15; 5:5–21; 6:21; 7:29–31; 10:8; 11:17; 12:8. Even other elements may also be added, such as where blessings are asked for: Jdt 15:9–10,14–17. Finally, the times and places of prayer should be included in this list: Jdt 6:21; 9:1; 11:17; 12:7–8; 13:3.

It is then easy to see that prayer is a leitmotif running through the entire narrative, almost always with Judith as the subject⁵: her prayer is intense and personal, although it is in communion with the official prayer of the Temple in Jerusalem (Jdt 9:1). The final prayer (Jdt 16:1–17) is particularly significant because it bears witness to how the synergy between herself and God has brought about the deliverance of the people of Israel.

2. The Theological Lexicon

So far two contrasting elements are apparent: on the one hand, the question of Judith's dubious morality always comes to the fore, whilst on the other hand, there is also an emphasis on her constant religious practices and, in particular, on her prayer. However, one can still ask what is specific about the theology of the book of Judith: what moving picture of God emerges from the book? One way of answering is to start with a few examples from the theological lexicon, since in the book of Judith there are numerous syntagms and epithets that refer to God.

⁴ Cf. BEENTJES, “Bethulia Crying,” 231; VAN DEN EYNDE, “Crying to God,” 228; XERAVITS, “The Supplication of Judith (Judith 9:1-14),” 161–178.

⁵ Cf. MCDOWELL, *Prayers of Jewish Women*, 41–57.

The term *κύριος* is the most frequent one, occurring sixty-seven times throughout the book. Its significance, however, varies considerably according to the character in the narrative who is using it. It is pronounced for the first time by the Ammonite Achior, when he addresses Holofernes directly: “My lord (*ὁ κύριός μου*) would do better to abstain, for fear that their Lord (*ὁ κύριος αὐτῶν*) and God should protect them” (Jdt 5:21). Modern translations have the advantage of quoting Achior’s words explicitly, distinguishing between upper and lower case initials. Scorning Achior’s invitation to be prudent, Holofernes speaks of his king as “the Lord (*ὁ κύριος*) of the whole world” (Jdt 6:4; cf. 2:5). Judith herself makes use of this term in an elusive way, addressing Holofernes as *τῷ κυρίῳ μου*, “my lord” (Jdt 11:5). Immediately afterwards she says: “God will bring your work to a successful conclusion” (Jdt 11:6a). To Holofernes’ ears this means that *ὁ θεός* will be on his side; however, for Judith and the reader it means the exact opposite, that the God of Israel will bring about his deliverance of the people of Israel at the expense of the unsuspecting Holofernes. That is why the final part of the sentence is a masterpiece: “My lord (or Lord) will not fail in his undertakings” (Jdt 11:6b). The expression is deliberately ambiguous. Holofernes is free to believe that it refers to him (lord), while Judith is thinking about her God (Lord). In the light of these facts, one can realise that the fundamental issue of the book concerns the identity of the true God⁶ and the resulting eternal battle between good and evil⁷. Moreover, *κύριος* is found twice in an emblematic expression: “The Lord, the shatterer of war” (Jdt 9:7) and “The Lord is a God who shatters war” (Jdt 16:21)⁸. From the point of view of the narrative and of the theological message of the book of Judith, the God who gives the strength to kill the tyrant is also the God who does not love wars.

The term *θεός* occurs even more frequently than *κύριος*, appearing eighty-seven times and often as part of extremely important theological syntagms⁹. Three seem to be aspects concerning God: the personal, the ethnic and the universal. In at least a couple of instances, Judith speaks to God using a personal pronoun that indicates her special connection to him: “God, my God” (Jdt 9:4; cf. 16:3). Not infrequently the term “God” has a nuance that could be defined as ethnic, when he is being mentioned in connection with the fathers or Patriarchs (Jdt 7:28; 8:26; 9:2.12; 10:8) and with Israel (Jdt 6:21; 9:12,14). Elsewhere there are other epithets with

⁶ Cf. ZENGER, *Das Buch Judit*, 432–433.

⁷ Cf. HAAG, *Studien zum Buche Judith*, 61–78.

⁸ LANG, “The Lord Who Crushes Wars,” 179–187.

⁹ Note also the binomial *κύριος ὁ θεός* (which echoes the Hebrew *יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים*) in Jdt 4:2,7,19,29,30; 8:14,16,23,25,35; 9:2; 12:8; 13:18.

universal connotations: “God of heaven” (Jdt 5:8; 6:19; 11:17), “God most high” (Jdt 13:18), and “almighty, all-powerful” (Jdt 9:14). God is given also the unusual and effective epithet of θεὸς μισῶν ἀδικίαν, “God who hates wickedness” (Jdt 5:17). And finally, in a singular expression, he is presented “not like a man to be coerced, nor like a mere man to be cajoled” (Jdt 8:16).

The appellation of δεσπότης, “master”, refers once to God: “Master of heaven and earth” (Jdt 9:12). This expression is unique in the Bible. It is used elsewhere in the book of Judith with a certain adulation when addressing Holofernes (Jdt 5:20,24; 7:9,11; 11:10). Another important appellation is κτίστης¹⁰, “creator.” It is only used in Jdt 9:12: “Creator of the waters.” Here one might venture to hypothesis that the author of the book of Judith is referring both to the creation accounts (cf. Gen 1:6–10) and to the exodus (cf. Exod 14:21–22,26–29), in order to exalt him simultaneously as God of creation and of salvation.

The LXX text of the book of Judith includes other epithets that occur a few times, but that also contribute to building up an understanding of the theology the book of Judith. For example, following the sequential order of the three times in which the noun βοηθός¹¹, “help”, “helper” occurs, a sort of progression emerges. Firstly, in Jdt 7:25 the people complain that there is nobody capable of helping them: “Now there is no one to help us.” Secondly, in Jdt 9:4 Judith calls to mind Jacob’s sons’ supplication: “They called on you for help.” In Judith’s prayers before leaving for her mission, she calls God ἐλαττόνων [εἶ] βοηθός, “[you are] the support of the weak” (Jdt 9:11). In the same verse there are other significant syntagms and epithets: ταπεινῶν θεός, “God of the humble;” ἀντιλήμπτωρ¹² ἀσθενούντων, “protector of the weak;” ἀπεγνωσμένων σκεπαστής¹³, “refuge of the forsaken;” and ἀπηλπισμένων σωτήρ, “saviour of the despairing.” We also

¹⁰ The verb κτίζω appears in Jdt 13:8: “Lord God, the Creator of heaven and earth.” Endowed with a similar meaning, one finds in Jdt 8:14 the expression “God who made all things.” Cf. BONS and PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, “A Sample Article: κτίζω – κτίσμα – κτίστης,” 173–187.

¹¹ Cf. BONS, “The Noun βοηθός as a Divine Title,” 53–66.

¹² Among these, ἀντιλήμπτωρ, “protector,” is pronounced by David in 2 Kgdms 23:3 (translating רֹכֵץ, “rock”; cf. Pss 45[46]6:8,12; 58[59]:17,18; 61[62]:3), as part of his canticle of thanksgiving for the obtained salvation (cf. Ps 17[18]). There are numerous passages in prophetic literature (Isa 49:13; 57:14–21; 66:2; Zeph 2:3; 3:11) and the Psalms (Ps 21[22]:27; 33[34]:3ff; 36[37]:11ff; 68[69]:34; 73[74]:19; 148[149]:4) which refer to “Lord’s lowly ones” (Jdt 16:11). Cf. PASSONI DELL’ACQUA, “La metafora biblica di Dio come roccia,” 424–425; 428; 431–432.

¹³ The substantive adjective σκεπαστής, “defender,” is found twice in the LXX together with βοηθός, “help,” in Exod 15:2 and Sir 51:2. The last occurrence appears in Ps 70:6 LXX: “you have been my defender from my mother’s womb.”

find παντοκράτωρ¹⁴, “omnipotent” (Jdt 4:13; 8:13; 15:10; 16:5,17) used, surely one of the most striking characteristics attributed to God in this book. The term βασιλεύς is also used on one occasion to refer to the Lord, when Judith prays, “You, king of your whole creation...” (Jdt 9:12).

If one puts together all these examples of lexical features, it becomes clear that the book of Judith is extremely rich in theological imagery referring to God. The reader is forced to be aware of a decisive theological presence that pervades the entire narrative.

3. The Silence of Judith’s God

If one shifts attention away from the static analysis of lexical features towards the dynamic narrative development, the most salient feature of the text becomes how God reveals himself and intervenes in history. From this standpoint, the book of Judith is surprising precisely because of the virtual absence of any divine intervention. In other words, anyone who reads it looking for manifest divine actions is destined to be disappointed: in fact, here God is the “book’s absent hero.”¹⁵

Actually, only once in the narrative is he the subject¹⁶ of a verb, just because he only acts directly once. Faced with the dangers posed by the Assyrians, the people of Israel implore God to come to their aid and “the Lord heard (εἰσήκουσεν) them and looked kindly (εἰσεῖδεν) on their distress” (Jdt 4:13). There is quite a clear echo of Exod 2:24–25 according to the LXX: “God heard (εἰσήκουσεν) their groaning and he called to mind his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God looked upon (ἐπεῖδεν) the sons of Israel, and he took care” (cf. also Exod 3:7; Num 20:16; Deut 26:7; 27:10). This moment in the Exodus story was the lead up to Moses’ vocation and mission (cf. Exod 3:1–22).

Recalling this episode, the reader is reassured of the God of Israel’s power to intervene in history. However, in the book of Judith it must be noted that God acts only behind the curtain. Consequently, in the face of an omnipotent (cf. παντοκράτωρ, Jdt 4:13) but hidden God, what is the role of a mediator of deliverance? As far as the heroine of the story is concerned, her start is quite difficult: there is no precise command from on

¹⁴ Generally, in the LXX it is used to translate the Hebrew צְבָאוֹת (יְהוָה) (יְהוָה), “the God of armies” (cf. 2 Kgdms 7:8; 3 Kgdms 19:14; Hos 12:6; Amos 3:13; 5:27), but in the book of Job it is related to the couple לַאֲ and יְשׁ or the specific syntagma יְשׁ לַאֲ (among the fifteen occurrences, see Job 8:5; 13:3; 15:25). Cf. BACHMANN, *Allmacht*, 197–198.

¹⁵ Cf. DANCY, “Judith,” 128.

¹⁶ In his own right and elsewhere, God looks like the subject of other actions, but it is always according to what others refer to. One example is in Jdt 14:10: “Achior, seeing all the works that the God of Israel had done...”