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## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SEPTUAGINT AND THE MASORETIC TEXT

*Abstract:* In this paper, we will make an overview of the relationship between distinct text-forms of the so-called Old Testament, the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text. In that context, we will deal with both philological and theological issues concerning the Septuagint. With regard to the textual differences between the respective text variants, they could be the result of the transmission process and translation process. In the first part of the paper, we will examine possible reasons for textual differences based on transmission process: different textual strands and other internal or external reasons. The second part of the paper will focus on differences which are the result of the translation process and their underlying causes, such as the difference in language systems, the involvement of different translators in the translation process and the context of the translation process. In the third part of the paper, we will deal with the differences created by a different understanding of theological notions in the Septuagint and in the Masoretic Text.

► *Key words:* Septuagint, Masoretic Text, translation, translation process, theology of the Septuagint,

In literary perspective, the relationship between Septuagint and the Masoretic text concerns the relationship between distinct text-forms of the so-called Old Testament, the Septuagint and the Masoretic text. In hermeneutical perspective, it seems wise to underline that this debate does not intermix the legitimation of their respective churches with regard to distinct text-forms as reference texts for liturgy. In his commentary on Matt 2:15, Theophylact of Achrida states that the evangelist Matthew did not use “the authentic Septuagint but the Hebrew version”.<sup>1</sup> This statement

<sup>1</sup> Theophylact of Achrida, *In Matt*, PG 123:140ab, referring to Matt 2:15 with its quotation of Hos 11:1 MT diff. LXX. In his commentary on Hos 11:1, he refers to Jesus Christ not via Matt 2:1 but via the identification Jacob — Israel — Christ as spiritual reading of Hos 11:1 (*In Hos.*, PG 126:758b). Of course, Theophylact knows the problem of Isa 7:14 (παρθένος vs. νεάνις) when commenting Matt 1:23 (Theophylact of Achrida, *In Matt*, PG 123:160a).

reveals a common evaluation of the Greek Old Testament text as a reliable biblical text source within Greek-speaking churches of his day.

According to John Chrysostom, it is God's grace and wisdom which inspired the idea to translate the Mosaic Law into Greek — non-Jews should be able to partake salvation and divine wisdom as well.<sup>2</sup> This statement reveals the consciousness of both, the character of the Septuagint as translation and the divine legitimation of this process. Following these thematic presuppositions of Theophylact and John Chrysostom, we will deal with both philological and theological issues concerning the Septuagint. In both aspects, however, we have to differentiate: The Septuagint is not simply a translation but rather a collection of distinct translations and other books written originally in Greek — no one at any time in the ancient epoch gave a definition of the term "Septuagint". Theologically, we first try to understand the Septuagint as a Jewish collection of texts caused by inner-Jewish necessities of education. Further, we should be aware that Judaism, in the whole, had developed to a reflexive religion when the Septuagint came into being. When the first part of the Septuagint, the Greek Pentateuch, came into being, the books of Chronicles and of Tobit with their references back to previous texts<sup>3</sup> and their stylizing of biblical figures<sup>4</sup> had already existed. The first of the post-Pentateuchal books was translated at the same time as Baruch and when the Hebrew Jesus Sirach were written.

## 1. THE TRANSMISSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT TEXT

### 1.1. *Distinct Textual Strands*

The concept of canonicity was not the beginning but the result of a long transmission process ending in the first centuries after Christ. Between the fifth and the second century *before* Christ, a group of thematic issues regarding Jewish practice and historical traditions has established. This does not yet result in a fixed group of invariable texts, which were valid for canonical divergent Jewish groups.<sup>5</sup> Until the second century B.C.E., Jewish authors wrote texts, which are not comments on the Bible but rather claim authority for themselves, for example, the Qumran scrolls 1Q22; 11Q19 and the Books of Jubilees. Some other authors did not hesitate to acknowledge such claims: According to Jan Dochhorn, the book of Jubilees could serve as canonical *Vorlage* for the Greek "Life of Adam and Eve"<sup>6</sup>, additionally to

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<sup>2</sup> John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Gen.* 4.4, PG 53:42f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the reference in Tob 2:6 to Am 8:10.

<sup>4</sup> The cities of Judah are not conquered due to the piety of Hezekiah (2Chr 32:1 diff 2Kgs 18:13). The long term of Manasseh's kingship is possible because of his repent (2Chr 33:12). On the negative side compare 1Chr 10:13 (death of Saul) and 2Chr 33:6 (Manasseh as ventriloquist).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Karlheinz Müller, "Beobachtungen zum Verhältnis von Tora und Halacha in frühjüdischen Quellen," in *Jesus und das jüdische Gesetz*, ed. Ingo Broer (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1992), 105–134.

<sup>6</sup> Jan Dochhorn, *Die Apokalypse des Mose. Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, TSAJ 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 217.

the book of Genesis. The texts, which are attributed to the collection of Old Testament texts in our churches, *became* authoritative in most cases in the first century B.C.E. At the margins, the group of texts becoming canonical was not fixed even in New Testament times. On the one hand, the apostle Paul in 1Cor 2:9 quotes an apocryphal text of unknown offspring.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, I am not sure whether he regarded the book of Daniel as canonical — despite his own apocalyptic worldview — or not. He does not use the formula καθὼς γέγραπται in order to introduce a quotation or allusion on Daniel.<sup>8</sup> The author of the Letter of Jude quotes the apocalyptic First Enoch (1Hen 1:10) — with the result of its canonization in the Ethiopian Church and its full transmission. In Luke 24:44, the evangelist offers a list of canonical books (“Law, Prophets, and Psalms”), which correspond to the biblical books he quotes: Concerning the so-called Wisdom Literature, he does not use Proverbs nor Job but only the Psalms.

Even the texts of the Old Testament, though becoming sacred texts, did not have a fixed status from the beginning. We distinguish different text forms: Proto-Masoretic, Qumran, Septuagint, the Source texts for the Targumim, and the Samaritan Pentateuch.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps apocalyptic groups owned their own forms of some of these texts. Sometimes Qumran and Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Septuagint<sup>10</sup> are in harmony in their readings against the Masoretic text. Sometimes, however, Qumran and Masoretic text harmonize against the Septuagint reading. Even some New Testament readings witness textual variants of their own.

Some of the authoritative texts of Israel’s sacred traditions were translated although their literary structure had not been fixed in every case yet. Within the books of Exodus and third Kingdoms, we have transpositions of pericopes<sup>11</sup> and miscellanies<sup>12</sup> written in a form of Greek stylized close to Hebrew but without counterpart in the Masoretic text. The Septuagint of Jeremiah is shorter than the

<sup>7</sup>Theophylact of Achrida, *In 1Cor*, PG 124:589d.

<sup>8</sup>In the synoptic Gospels, quotations of Daniel are present, e.g. in Mark 13:27. Perhaps distinct Christian groups are evaluating Daniel in a distinct way.

<sup>9</sup>Cf. Emanuel Tov, “The Shared Tradition of the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch,” in *Die Septuaginta — Orte und Intentionen*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer and Martin Meiser and Marcus Sigismund, WUNT 361 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 277–293.

<sup>10</sup>This is true for Gen 2:2: The finishing of creation is dated at the sixth day (MT: at the seventh day) in order to avoid any antagonism to God’s command concerning the Sabbath.

<sup>11</sup>Within the Book of Exodus, Exod 28:23–28; 30:6b; 35:8, 14a; 38:25b; 40:11 do not have any parallel in the Septuagint; the passage concerning the vestments of the priests (Exod 39:1–31<sup>MT</sup>) is transposed to the beginning of the Second paragraph concerning the tabernacle (Exod 36:8–30<sup>1XX</sup>). Likewise the ordering of the Ten Commandments (Exod 20:13–15) is altered: The forbidding of murder is placed after the forbidding of stealing. Within the First Books of Kings, 1Kgs 7,1–12 is transposed after the periscope of the temple’s construction; 1Kgs 8:12f. is transposed at the end of Salomon’s prayer (3Reg 8:53f.); the ordering of 1Kgs 20; 21 is revised.

<sup>12</sup>Cf 3Reg 2:35a–o; 3Reg 2:46a–l; 12:24a–z. On the other hand, also the Masoretic Text offers passages without parallels in the Septuagint (1Kgs 6:11–14, 17b.18, 21a, 22b–d,37f; 1Kgs 11:38b, 39).

Masoretic text. The translator translated the text in a very literal way. We can exclude that he dared to omit some verses or half-verses — his source text differed from the Masoretic text. Alterations concern also the literary structure of the book of Jeremiah as a whole. The preaching against foreign nations Jer 46–51<sup>MT</sup> is transposed from the end to the midst. In sum, the translation is not initiator of a new, especially Greek reflection on Jeremiah but witnesses an alternative Hebrew text-form. There is, however, a vigorous dispute whether the source of the Septuagint or the proto-Masoretic text stands at the beginning of the textual development<sup>13</sup> or not. There are disputes on the Vorlage as older than the MT also in the case of the books of Joshua<sup>14</sup> and Isaiah.<sup>15</sup>

Despite of inner-Greek variants in detail there is an inner-Greek pluriformity, as well as with the sacred texts in general, beginning with the so-called kaige-recension, which implies a closer nearness of the translations to the proto-Masoretic text. This recension is witnessed by the Nahal-Hever-Scroll containing the Twelve Prophets and some major parts within the books of Samuel and Kings. The Nahal-Hever-Scroll, written in the first pre-Christian century, proves the pre-Christian character of this recension. Not anti-Christian motives but inner-Jewish debates on identity and rendering of sacred texts are responsible for this process. The same applies to the recensions of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus.<sup>16</sup> Only a few alterations are anti-Christian; most of alterations follow the intentions of the kai-ge-recension.

Due to Origen's Hexapla, most of the Church Fathers principally were familiar with the recension of Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus. They quote these recensions by name, by οἱ ἄλλοι, or by "the Three". Sometimes the Church Fathers complained about the inner-Greek variety of text-forms; sometimes they simply noted it.<sup>17</sup> In other cases, the versions of "the Three" gave inspiration for new explanations.<sup>18</sup> Their translations sometimes are praised as ἀκριβῶς<sup>19</sup> or

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Georg Fischer, "Die Diskussion um den Jeremiatext," in *Die Septuaginta. Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 612–629 (u.ö.), on the one side, Hermann-Josef Stipp, "Gottesbildfragen in den Lesartendifferenzen zwischen dem masoretischen und dem alexandrinischen Text des Jeremiabuches," in *Text-Critical and Hermeneutical Studies in the Septuagint*, ed. Johann Cook and Hermann-Josef Stipp, VTSup 157 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 237–274, on the other.

<sup>14</sup> Kristin de Troyer, "The Battle against Ai and the Textual History," *JSCS* 48 (2015): 39–53.

<sup>15</sup> Eugene E. Ulrich, "Light from 1QIsaa on the Translation Technique of the Old Greek Translator of Isaiah," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, ed. Jutta Jokiranta/Anssi Voitila, JSJSup 126 (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2008), 193–204.

<sup>16</sup> On Aquila and Symmachus cf. Alison Salvesen, "Aquila, Symmachus and the Translation of Proof-Texts," in *Die Septuaginta — Text, Wirkung, Rezeption*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Siegfried Kreuzer, WUNT 325 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 2014), 154–168: 161.

<sup>17</sup> Theophylact of Achrida, *In Hab*, PG 126:867b.

<sup>18</sup> Cyril of Alexandria, *In XII*, PG 71:464b.

<sup>19</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *In Is.* 83, GCS 58:152, on Isa 23:18.

εικότως<sup>20</sup> or κύριον<sup>21</sup> or σαφές<sup>22</sup> or σαφέστερον<sup>23</sup> or λευκός,<sup>24</sup> because they help to explain the meaning of a text<sup>25</sup> or confirm the Christian truth<sup>26</sup> or self-consciousness<sup>27</sup> while the translation of the Septuagint is ἄδηλον.<sup>28</sup>

The distinct ordering of the main parts of the Septuagint refers to distinct hermeneutical approaches whereas the distinct ordering of the prophetic books refers to chronology. The great codices Alexandrinus, Sinaiticus, Vaticanus offer different arrangements of the prophetic corpus in a whole<sup>29</sup>; the beginning with the great prophets (Sinaiticus) may be a result of the relevance especially of Isaiah already existing in Judaism; the beginning with the Twelve (Vaticanus; Alexandrinus) is a secondary harmonization with history<sup>30</sup>: Hosea was one of the predecessors of Isaiah. But also within the Twelve, the arrangement of Hosea, Amos, and Micah is based on arguments of chronology. Theophylact debates why the book of Hosea is arranged at the first position though Amos lived at the same time: Hosea was the first who achieved the ministry of prophecy.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Origen, *Sel. Ps.*, PG 12:1072a, on the divergent translations of Ps 71:20 by the Three (instead of ἐξέλιπον).

<sup>21</sup> Origen, *Sel. Ps.*, PG 12:1148a, on Aquila's translation of Ps 4:5 (κλονεῖσθε instead of ὀργιζέσθε).

<sup>22</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *D.e.* 7.1.67, GCS 23:310; cf. Augustine, *Qu. Gen.* 11, CC.SL 33:5.

<sup>23</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *In Is.* 71, 85 GCS 58:112, 163; John Chrysostom, *In Ps.*, PG 55:185; Theodor of Mopsuestia, *In Psalm*, CC.SL 88 A:100, on Symmachus; id., *In Psalm.*, CC.SL 88 A:140: *melius*, on Aquila and Theodotion, CC.SL 88 A:142: *melius*, on Aquila; *manifestius*, on Symmachus, CC.SL 88 A:155; Theodoret of Cyrus, *In Is.*, SC 276:156; id. *In Ez*, PG 81:912d, 916d (on Symmachus), 920b, 997a (on Aquila); id., *In XII*, PG 81:1668c, 1813c, on Symmachus, 1856a, on the Three; Jerome, *In Is.* 1,1,1 CC.SL 73:5, on Symmachus; Olympiodor, *In Iob*, PG 93, 20d, 117ab, on Symmachus.

<sup>24</sup> Eusebius of Caesarea, *In Is.* 71, GCS 58:110, on Symmachus' translation of Isa 16:6–14.

<sup>25</sup> Augustine, *Doctr. Christ.* 2.15/22, CC.SL 32:48.

<sup>26</sup> Eusebius of Caesaria, *D.e.* 5. Prooem. 35f., GCS 23:209–10.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Comm. m. Ps.*, PG 93:1289a, on Ps 103 [104]:22 (Ἀνέτειλεν ὁ ἥλιος, καὶ συνήχθησαν): Ἀναστάντος γὰρ Χριστοῦ ὑπεχώρησαν. Διὸ Σύμμαχος ἀντὶ τοῦ συνήχθησαν, ὑποχώρησουσιν ἔγραψε. This reading is unknown to Eusebius of Caesarea, *in Ps.*, PG 23:1281bc.

<sup>28</sup> Eusebius of Caesaria, *In Is.* 67, GCS 58:100.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Heinz-Josef Fabry, "Der Beitrag der Septuaginta-Codices zur Kanonfrage," in *Die Septuaginta — Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer and Martin Meiser and Marcus Sigismund, WUNT 286 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 582–599 (588–593).

<sup>30</sup> We find other examples of harmonization with history. In Papyrus 967, Dan 7: 8 are arranged before Dan 5 in order to present Daniel's visions during Belsazar's life-time, before his death (Dan 5:30). Another example we find in Isa 7:9 ("if you do not believe, neither shall you understand"): "neither shall you understand" replaces "neither shall you remain" — the Davidic dynasty did not "remain", and it is not possible that Isaiah should announced things which came not true. In Gen 35:12LXX, the translator added a plus (σοὶ ἔσται) in order to avoid a contradiction between the perfect σοὶ δέδωκα and the conquering which has not yet been finished. In Zech 13:2, the rendering ψευδοπροφήτης for מְרַבֵּי is caused by the history of prophecy. After Zechariah, Malachi arose, and contradiction between God's announcement in Zech 13:2 and the sending of Malachi is impossible. But harmonization with history is by no means a dominating tendency in the Septuagint.

<sup>31</sup> Theophylact of Achrida, *In Hos.*, PG 126:573bc.

### 1.2. Alterations between Hebrew und Greek Versions in Detail

Alterations in detail can be caused by external reasons or intentional changing. In most cases, external reasons are responsible.

#### 1.2.1. External Reasons for Divergences

The Septuagint presupposes an unvocalized Hebrew text, written in a defective way, i.e. without vocals and vocal characters ו and י.<sup>32</sup> Papyrus was a very expensive material base for writing texts. Sparsity was required. Sometimes copyists confused Hebrew characters, ו and ו, כ and כ. “Hebrews” can change to “servants” or vice versa. Sometimes copyists were not able to decide whether the source text included a ו or a י. At the end of a word, that can be a suffix of the first or the third person. In this way, we can explain all the variants of Hab 2:4 where the semantic ambiguity of πίστις (“faith” or “fidelity”) includes additional possibilities of interpretation. Additionally, Theophylact of Achrida refers to the inner Greek textual variety in this case.<sup>33</sup>

#### 1.2.2. Internal Reasons for Divergences — the Scribal Milieu in Israel

Since the fourth century B.C.E., we observe the emerging of a Scribal milieu in Israel.<sup>34</sup> Scribes, priests and Sages are the representatives. The books of Chronicles, some Qumran texts, and Jesus Sirach are witnesses of such a milieu. Tendencies to be named here are harmonizing authoritative pretexts and Torah orientation, actualizing pretexts with regard to the own époque, to the own situation, to the own group in some Qumranic texts. Harmonizing authoritative texts means combination of diverse elements of distinct pretexts. Torah orientation means depicting post-Mosaic figures positively or negatively based on their adherence to Torah.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, the prophets of the past are seen as teachers of Torah and preachers of repentance, and the formula “servants of the Lord”<sup>36</sup> is a link between the prophets and Moses. The actualizing tendency is present when the Qumran group actualizes prophetic texts with regard to the conflicts of the own group with the Wicked Priest who pursued the Teacher of Righteousness.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> In this way, Deut 19:3 presupposes תכנ (from תכנ, “estimate for yourself”) instead of תכין (from כון, “you must prepare”).

<sup>33</sup> Theophylact of Achrida, *In Hab.*, PG 126:853b.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. also Arie van der Kooij, “Zum Verhältnis von Textkritik und Literarkritik: Überlegungen anhand einiger Beispiele,” in *Congress Volume Cambridge 1995*, ed. John A. Emerton; VTSup 66 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 185–202: 198–200.

<sup>35</sup> Methodologically, we can disclose such tendencies by comparing the Chronicles and the books of Kings. I only mention three examples. Saul has to die due to his inquiring the woman at Aen-Dor. David is stylized as hero — the author does not mention his sin against Bathsheba and Uriah. The long term of rulership for Manasse is possible due to his repentance. In general, cf. Isaac Kalimi, *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten. Literarisch-historiographische Abweichungen der Chronik von ihren Paralleltextrn in den Samuel- und Königsbüchern*, BZAW 226 (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1995), 128.

<sup>36</sup> Bar 2,24; Dan 9,6; IQS I 3; 4Q166 II 5; 4Q390 Frgm. 2 I 5.

<sup>37</sup> 1QpHab XI, 4f.

There are similar tendencies to be found within the Septuagint. If we combine this insight with the fact of external factors for textual variants, it seems wise to characterize the Septuagint in many cases as indicator but not author of textual alterations. Within the Hebrew tradition, Sages felt free — or felt forged to change jarring details whereas in Greek milieu the translators faithfully translated the source text, even if the result was an awkward<sup>38</sup> or even hazardous text.<sup>39</sup> With regard to every variant between other text-forms and the Septuagint, we have to ask ourselves whether the special reading of the Septuagint is the result of transmission, or of translation.

## 2. ON TRANSLATION

### 2.1. *Differences of Language Systems*

Ancient anti-Christian critiques mocked the evangelists for their poor style<sup>40</sup>, but they would also mock the Septuagint. The language systems of Hebrew and Greek are very different. The imitation of Hebrew syntax and morphology results in all but a stylistic proper Greek text.

The first Jewish author who referred to the differences between Hebrew and Greek was the grandson of Jesus Sirach who translated the book of his grandfather into Greek: “what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have the same force when it is in fact rendered in another language”.<sup>41</sup> Theophylact also stresses the diversity of languages; Hebrew idiomatic does not fit to Greek; the result is the ἀσάφεια of many biblical texts.<sup>42</sup>

In the following, I will present just a few examples.

#### 2.1.1. *Differences of Morphology*

Greek contains four cases, whereas in Hebrew the analogy of the genitive is formed as a status constructus with norms of its own (e.g. avoiding double determination). Dative and accusative are indicated by prepositions ἅ and ἅ. Additionally, four past tenses are found in the Greek language. The translator of a Hebrew text has to choose between the durative imperfect, the resultative perfect, the ingressive or narrating aorist or the pre-past plusquamperfect.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Hos 7:1f.; 8:1a etc.

<sup>39</sup> In Hos 9:12, σάρξ μου (with regard to God!) is the result of a misreading of יְהוָה as יִשְׂרָאֵל. Christian exegetes interpreted σάρξ μου as referring to Jesus Christ, cf. Theophylact of Achrída, in Os., PG 126:729 CD.

<sup>40</sup> Julian the Apostate, *Frgm.* 7.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Jesus Sirach, prol. 20f: οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Εβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῆ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν (ET: NETS).

<sup>42</sup> Theophylact of Achrída, *In Hos.*, prol., PG 126:569c. Theophylact has his predecessors, cf. John Chrysostom, *Hom. de obscuritate prophetarum* 2.2, PG 56:178; Gregory of Nyssa, *Hom. Cant.* 2, FC 16/1: 174; Procopius of Gaza, *In Gen.*, prol., GCS NF 22:5.

The Hebrew verbal system includes seven forms indicating nuances of reinforcement or causation. Compared to Greek, it is not possible to render a Hebrew Pi'el as reinforcement form in distinction of the normal Qal. For the rendition of Hiph'il, verbs carry the suffix -ίζω at times, which enables a direct translation, as in γνωρίζω "I let you know that". The same is true concerning the suffix -όω in θανατόω (to put to death). In other cases, the translators had to paraphrase by using ποιέω + Inf.; cf. καλλίονα ποιέω = כּוּיָהּ (Jer 18:11)

The Hebrew nominal system allows the adding of suffixes instead of personal pronouns as attributive or object. In Greek, you have to add the personal pronouns as distinct words. Here, however, emerges a stylistic problem in the Greek language when an enclitic pronoun comes to stay at the end of a clause. No native Greek would have formulated within the Lord's Prayer ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου (Matt 6:9) or Jesus' plea at the cross ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός μου, ἵνα τί ἐγκατέλιπές με (Ps 21:2 = Mark 15:34) in this way.<sup>43</sup> The re-iteration of the personal pronoun is equally disturbing, cf. 1Reg 31:9 (εὐαγγελίωοντες τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν καὶ τῷ λαῷ αὐτῶν) or Gen 34:28 (τὰ πρόβατα αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς βόας αὐτῶν καὶ τοὺς ὄνους αὐτῶν) or Jer 2:26 (αὐτοὶ καὶ οἱ βασιλεῖς αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἄρχοντες αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ προφῆται αὐτῶν).

The Greek morphological distinctiveness allows the imitation of the Hebrew word order within the Greek translation — such a translation, however, is by no means good Greek.

### 2.1.2. Differences of Semantics

The Septuagint is part and witness of the Koine-Greek of its time. There is a consensus among philologists that in the most cases the normal Greek meaning of a word is presupposed also in the Septuagint.

Sometimes Egypt or Aramaic influences are visible. Egypt nouns are e.g. θίβις for the basket of Moses as child or παστοφόριον as a part of an Egypt temple, used in Ezek 40:17. The noun ἀντιλήμπτωρ (supporter, cf. Ps 3:4) is used in Ptolemaic Egypt for a high official who is named as supporter.<sup>44</sup> Aramaic influence results in the rendering πασχα for ܦܫܚܐ.

In other cases, Greek lexemes offer a conundrum of meanings, where the Septuagint translators chose a secondary meaning, not the main usage. This opens the opportunity for translators to use a connotation of δόξα in order to render כּוֹדָא, which includes consequences for the Christmas tale in Luke 2:14. Subsequently, the translators use the verb ἀγαπάω for characterizing the proper behavior concerning our neighbor — erotic nuances are not any longer relevant. In a similar way, the Septuagint translators chose ψυχή for rendering שׁפּוּחַ. In the Septuagint but also in

<sup>43</sup> Within the Septuagint, cf. Gen 26:24 (πληθυνῶ τὸ σπέρμα σου διὰ Ἀβρααμ τὸν πατέρα σου) or 1Reg 28:16 (γέγονεν μετὰ τοῦ πλησίον σου).

<sup>44</sup> Eberhard Bons, "Psalm 3," in *Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 1502–1504:1503.



many New Testament texts, the noun does not design the soul as one part of human being aside the body and the spirit, but just “life”. A normal Greek could not understand Matt 6:25: “Do not care for your ψυχή what you will eat and drink”, but everyone who is familiar with the Septuagint understands what is meant. In other cases, Hebrew idiom is relevant also for the Septuagint, cf. ἄνδρες δυνάμεως = אַנְדְּרֵי דִּי כֹחַ (2Reg 11:16) instead of ἄνδρες ἰσχυροί or ἐν χειρὶ = עַל כַּיּוֹד functioning as instrumentalis, cf. καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου ἐν χειρὶ Ἰου (cf. 3Reg 16:1).

In general, the translators do not intend to create a “Holy Language”. Dirk Buchner emphasizes, that the translator of Lev 3 uses Greek cultic terminology “in order to demonstrate intellectual plausibility and to remove polemical undertones”.<sup>45</sup> However, sometimes their translation intends to preclude any misunderstanding in concerns of God and Israel’s identity.

Whereas in Greek literature the word group δαιμόνιον can carry negative as well as positive nuances, but in the Septuagint we find only negative connotations. The same applies for the term μάντις.<sup>46</sup> According to the Torah, οἰωνισμὸς and μαντεία do not exist in Israel<sup>47</sup> or should not exist among Jews;<sup>48</sup> both are practices typical of the gentiles.<sup>49</sup> Within the Septuagint of the Twelve Prophets and Jeremiah,<sup>50</sup> the word families μάντις, ὄρασις, ἐνύπνιον and ψευδής<sup>51</sup> constitute a stable semantic field of refuted practice.<sup>52</sup> Soothsayers are evaluated as false prophets.

<sup>45</sup> Dirk Buchner, “The Thysia Soteriou of the Septuagint and the Greek Cult: Representation and Accommodation,” in *Florilegium Lovaniense. Studies in Septuagint and Textual Criticism in Honour of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Hans Ausloos and Bénédicte Lemmelijn and Marc Vervenne, BETL 224 (Leuven: Peeters, 2008), 85–100: 100.

<sup>46</sup> Also other translations of מַנְטִי are to be found in negatively connoted contexts (στοχαστής in Isa 3:2; ἀποφθέγγεσθαι μάταια in Ezek 13:9) or are nuanced negatively by themselves: οἰωνίσμα in Jer 34 [27]:9. In the Sibylline Oracles, μαντεύομαι is used in a positive way concerning the prophecy of the Sibyl in Sib III 163; 298; 822 IV, 3. The word group is nowhere connected in the Sibylline Oracles with the biblical prophets. The same is true for Philo of Alexandria; he uses the word group only seldom in a positive way (*Cher* 27; *Conf.* 118; *Migr.* 190; *Flacc.* 186; *Gai.* 109). In the “life of Moses” and in *Conf.* 159, the references to this word group are related to Balaam and participate in the ambivalence given by the author. Another bulk of references to this word group is to be found in Philo’s rendering of Deut 18:10–11. In *Spec Leg* I 65; IV 48–52, Philo develops an analogy between soothsayers and false prophets whereas the real prophet does not report on his own.

<sup>47</sup> Num 23:23 οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν οἰωνισμὸς ἐν Ἰακωβ οὐδὲ μαντεία ἐν Ἰσραὴλ. The reader should perceive Balaam’s saying as an external witness for Israel’s intellectual superiority.

<sup>48</sup> Deut 18:10–11; 4 Kgdms 23:24.

<sup>49</sup> Deut 18:14; Josh 13:22 (Balaam); 1 Kgdms 6:2 (the Philistines). But Saul also failed, cf. 1 Kgdms 28:8, to be related to Deut 18:14 *Ad vocem* μαντεύειν and ἐγγαστρίμυθος.

<sup>50</sup> Mic 3:11; Zech 10:2; Jer 14:14; 36 [29]:9.

<sup>51</sup> The term ψευδής renders קֶשׁ in Zech 10:2; Jer 14:14, אִוֵּן in Ezek 13.

<sup>52</sup> Different combinations of these terms do not imply a different meaning; cf. Zech 10:2 (οἱ ἀποφθεγγόμενοι ἐλάλησαν κόπους, καὶ οἱ μάντις ὄρασις ψευδεῖς, καὶ τὰ ἐνύπνια ψευδῆ ἐλάλουν, μάταια παρεκάλουν) with Jer 14:14 (ὄρασις ψευδεῖς καὶ μαντείας καὶ οἰωνίσματα καὶ προαιρέσεις καρδίας αὐτῶν αὐτοὶ προφητεύουσιν ὑμῖν;); Ezek 13:7f. (οὐχ ὄρασιν ψευδῆ ἐωράκατε καὶ μαντείας ματαίας εἰρήκατε;); Ezek 22:28 ὀρώντες μάταια, μαντευόμενοι ψευδῆ.

### 2.1.3. *Differences of Syntax*

The verb takes an initial position within a Hebrew clause, whereas the verb in a Greek clause is located in final position or at least after the subject. A Greek native speaker would have formulated the second clause of the Lord's Prayer as ἡ βασιλεία σου ἐλθέτω. The stylistic implications of this difference will be visible in our next paragraph.

In Hebrew, the  $\gamma$ -copulativum can be used at the beginning of the main clause. Therefore, we find the beginning καί also in the Septuagint (Lev 14:1; 1Reg 17:9a etc.). Instead of hypotactic constructions, parataxis is regular. In Hebrew, the participle is not used in a way like the genitivus absolutus; therefore, in the Septuagint, genitivus absolutus seldom is used. Cf. καὶ γίνεται ἡμέρα καὶ εἶπεν (1Reg 14:1) instead of γενομένης ἡμέρας εἶπεν.

### 2.2. *Difference between the distinct Translations*

The distinct parts of the Septuagint are shaped in a distinct style of translation. Even a young student of ancient Greek can detect this difference by using a very simple criterion. The Hebrew copulating  $\gamma$  can indicate the simple connection but also an antagonism. If you study the translation of Proverbs, you will find the conjunction δέ, if you study the translation of 1 Samuel, you will find the standard rendering καί. There are two reasons for the translator to choose καί: 1. He intended to render every distinct Hebrew word thoroughgoing by the same Greek word. 2. The Greek δέ is postponed — this does not have any analogy in Hebrew. In order to respect the holiness of the text, he intended to imitate the grapheme surface of his source text.<sup>53</sup> The literal character of a translation does not indicate the language used by Greek Jews in Alexandria or the stubbornness of the translator. It presents and represents a high-levelled hermeneutical consciousness.

The books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, Job, Proverbs, and Isaiah are translated in a relatively free way whereas books like Deuteronomy, Kingdoms, and Ecclesiastes/Kohelet are translated in a very literal way.

### 2.3. *The Rationale of Translation*

There is a vivid debate on the reasons for translation. If we follow the first witness of the so-called Septuagint Legend, the Letter of Aristeas, the librarian suggested the translation of the Pentateuch to the Egyptian king Ptolemaeus II. Philadelphos,

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. Siegfried Kreuzer, "Das frühjüdische Textverständnis und die Septuaginta-Versionen der Samuelbücher. Ein Beitrag zur textgeschichtlichen und übersetzungstechnischen Bewertung des Antiochenischen Textes und der Kaige-Rezension an Hand von 2Sam 15,1–12," in *La Septante en Allemagne et en France/Septuaginta Deutsch und Bible d'Alexandrie*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Olivier Munnich, OBO 238 (Fribourg: Academic Press/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 3–28.

and the king supported this work and praised the result.<sup>54</sup> In fact, the king was not interested in Judaism, therefore, I believe that political or apologetic reasons are not decisive. Modern researchers suggested needs of liturgy<sup>55</sup> or jurisdiction<sup>56</sup> for being the rationale. With regard to liturgy in ancient Jewish Alexandria, we do not have any witnesses. The best witness for synagogue liturgy is the New Testament (Luke 4:16–21; Acts 13) with its mentioning of prophetic texts being read during the worship, but these texts were created two or three hundred years after the translation of the Septuagint. The thesis of jurisdiction as rationale cannot be proven as well. Jewish papyri in Egypt only offer general allusions but not exact quotations. From my view, we have to distinguish the main parts of the Septuagint also concerning their rationale of coming-into-being. The Pentateuch was translated for sakes of education concerning Jewish practice, the historical books and the Wisdom literature for sakes of education concerning Jewish history and piety, the prophetic books due to a possible actual importance (in discussion on Sach 14:14<sup>57</sup>, Isa 7:10–14<sup>58</sup>; 14:3–19<sup>59</sup>; Ezek 21:25–28[30–33]).<sup>60</sup>

Philo of Alexandria characterized Greek as “our language”<sup>61</sup> and enriched the well-known Septuagint legend by the idea of inspiration.<sup>62</sup> In this way, the problem of legitimacy of translation is stated and solved at the same time. The legitimacy of translation principal was only questioned in later times. Some Jewish rabbis

<sup>54</sup> EpArist. 300–311.

<sup>55</sup> Henry St. John Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (London: Oxford University Press, 1921); Momigliano, Arnaldo, *Alien Wisdom. The Limits of Hellenization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 91 f.

<sup>56</sup> Elias J. Bickermann, “The Septuagint as a Translation,” *PAAJR* 28 (1959):1–39; Joseph Méléze-Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt. From Ramses II to Emperor Hadrian* (Translated by R. Cornman; Philadelphia/Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1995); Gilles Dorival, “New Light About the Origin of the Septuagint?,” in *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Theologien und Einflüsse*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Meiser, WUNT 252 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 36–47: 45.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Thomas Pola, “Von Juda zu Judas. Das theologische Proprium von Sach 14,12–21 LXX,” in *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 572–580:576.

<sup>58</sup> Michaël N. van der Meer, “Visions from Memphis and Leontopolis: the phenomenon of the vision reports in the Greek Isaiah in the light of contemporary accounts from Hellenistic Egypt,” in *Isaiah in Context: Studies in Honour of Arie van der Kooij on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michaël N. van der Meer et al., VTS 138 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 281–316: 314.

<sup>59</sup> Isac Leo Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (1948), repr. in ID., *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, ed. Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann, FAT 40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 119–294, 240–42; Cornelis de Vos, “Das Land Israel in der Sicht der Septuaginta,” in *Die Septuaginta und das frühe Christentum/The Septuagint and Christian Origins* (ed. Thomas Scott Cauley and Hermann Lichtenberger, WUNT 277 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 87–105: 97.

<sup>60</sup> Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Ezekiel and Hasmonean Leadership,” in *Interpreting Translation. FS Johan Lust*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Marc Vervenne, BETL 192 (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 437–446.

<sup>61</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Congr.* 44.

<sup>62</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Vit. Mos.* II 31–44.

stated that there is no legitimate possibility for rendering the Torah in another language as in Hebrew.<sup>63</sup> The Christian Western exegete Jerome refused the idea of inspiration.<sup>64</sup>

### 3. ON THEOLOGY

At the beginning of this paragraph, we have to remember an important issue of methodology. In some cases, it is not clear whether the Masoretic text or the source text of the Septuagint is the primary text. In other cases, it is the Masoretic text, which represents a proceeding state of theological reflection. Developments of emphasizing God's transcendence or avoiding un-intellectual modes of speaking about God are by no means restricted to Greek-speaking Judaism. In many cases, the Aramaic Targumim offer changings comparable to the Septuagint when dealing with jarring source texts.

#### 3.1. *Concept of God*

##### 3.1.1. *Names of God*

Within Judaism, a custom has been established to avoid any spelling of the Holy name. In Lev 24:16, God's command is altered according to this custom: Not only cursing God's name, but also spelling God's name is forbidden. We have just one example in Jewish Greek tradition which is not in harmony with this rewriting of God's command, 4QLXXLev<sup>b</sup> (on Lev 4:27) where we read ΙΑΩ. In all the other manuscripts, we find the Tetragrammaton written in Hebrew letters or the reading κύριος.

Exod 3:14 does offer a special problem — and a special solution. The Hebrew formula יהוה אשר אהיה is rendered by ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν. In this way, the translator of the book of Exodus reclaims the highest predicate of Platonic theology for the God of Israel.<sup>65</sup>

How to translate יהוה צבאה? Distinct translations offer three variants of rendering this formula. The translator of the Psalms chose a literal rendering: κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων. The translator of the books of Jeremiah and the Twelve Prophets chose a free rendering: παντοκράτωρ. The translator of Isaiah chose the very transliteration κύριος Σαβαώθ. Each rendering has its advantage and its disadvantages. The first

<sup>63</sup> TosMeg III 21.

<sup>64</sup> Jerome, Prologus in Pentateucho, in *Biblia sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem* (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 3.

<sup>65</sup> The Translator of Jeremiah derives אהיה in Jer 1:6; 4:10 from יהוה in Exod. 3:14 and rendered the wording יהוה אדני אהיה אהיה by Ὁ ὢν δεσποτα κύριε; cf. Emanuel Tov, "The Impact of the Septuagint Translation of the Torah on the Translation of the Other Books," in *id.*, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible. Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, VTSup. 72 (Leiden: Brill/Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999), 183–94 (193).

one, κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων, is a literal rendering, but can lead to misunderstanding in terms of polytheism, due to the semantics of δύναμις including also heavenly powers.<sup>66</sup> The second one, παντοκράτωρ, does make sense in order to emphasize God's transcend but does not exactly mirror the Hebrew *Vorlage*. Therefore, the translator of Isaiah chose the third one, the very transliteration κύριος Σαβαώθ — important for the Eucharist liturgy but not used very often in ancient Judaism.<sup>67</sup>

### 3.1.2. Inanimate Metaphors for God

The translators of the Septuagint are not the first to reduce inanimate metaphors; in the prayer texts of Chronicles, inanimate metaphors are not existent. In the Septuagint, the metaphors “rock” and “sun” (Ps 84:12) are often not translated but rather replaced. For “rock”, most translators write “God”. In Ps 84:12b, the translator wrote “mercy and truth the Lord God loves” for “God Lord is sun and shield.” There is no graphic bridge between the Hebrew and the Greek in this case — insofar I suppose that the new texts are the translators’ ones. But why did the translators alter? From my point of view, the answer is just simple: You cannot pray to a rock, and you should not pray to the sun.<sup>68</sup> The metaphor „rock” with regard to God is avoided also in the Targum on 2Sam 22.<sup>69</sup>

### 3.1.3. God's Dwelling

Concerning this issue, especially the Septuagint of Exodus and the Septuagint of Deuteronomy are interesting.

In the Septuagint of Exodus, the idea of God's dwelling in Exod 25:7 is replaced by the notion of God's appearance and in Exod 29:45f. by the motive of human invocation of God.<sup>70</sup> The connection of “dwelling” with the glory of God is replaced in Exod 24:16 by the motif of descending,<sup>71</sup> in Exod 40:35 by the motif of overshadowing. These changes also apply to critical examination as conscious work of the translator.<sup>72</sup> Due to this emphasis of God's transcendence, any definition of physicality or containment of God is avoided.<sup>73</sup> This interpretation is supported by the

<sup>66</sup> Cécile Dogniez, “Le Dieu des armées dans le Dodecapropheton: quelques remarques sur une initiative de traduction,” in *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor, SCSt 45 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 19–36.

<sup>67</sup> In Qumranic literature, it is used only in 1Q28b IV 25, but not in 4Q400–407.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. the warning in 11QT 19/20 LV, 18.

<sup>69</sup> Martin Meiser, “Samuelseptuaginta und Targum Jonathan als Zeugen frühjüdischer Geistigkeit,” in *Die Septuaginta. Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 323–335: 329.

<sup>70</sup> The replacement of יָשַׁב by ἐπικληθῆναι is not imitated in the Septuagint.

<sup>71</sup> Philo of Alexandria, *Qu. Exod.* II 45 (LCL Philo, Appendix, ed. Ralph Marcus, 1959, 89), however, feels the necessity to defend even this notion: There are no movements of place or of change in the Deity. It is the glory of God, which descends, not God himself.

<sup>72</sup> Jan Joosten, “Une théologie de la Septante?,” *RThPh* 132 (2000): 31–46: 39f.

<sup>73</sup> Martin Rösel, “Tempel und Tempellosigkeit. Der Umgang mit dem Heiligtum in der Pentateuch-LXX,” in *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer WUNT

unifying translation σακηνη τοῦ μαρτυρίου (tent of the testimony) for אהל מועד (tent of meeting) or אהל עדות (Tent of the testimony); in this case, the translator made a selection emphasizing the transcendence of God. Nevertheless, two questions arise: 1. Why is the idea of God's dwelling changed so differently? 2. Why is it changed at all?<sup>74</sup> In Ex 15:17LXX the concept of earthly abode, of the κατοικητήριον of God to which the Israelites are to be brought, is not avoided.

1. In Exod 24:16, the idea of God's dwelling in heaven evokes the changing whereas in Exod 40:3, phenomena typical for clouds are decisive. In Exod 25:7 perhaps an anticipatory reference to Ex 40:28<sup>75</sup> or Lev 9:23 is intended. Ex 29:45f.<sup>76</sup>, however, does not function in an anticipatory way in the Pentateuch; there are no parallels for ἐπικαλέω implying God as addressee. Perhaps both passages form a diptych: Exod 25:7 deals with the appearance of God and Ex 29:45f. with Israel's reaction.

2. But why is it changed at all, beyond of any notions of transcendence? A close look at Exod 15:17 can help. "The habitation of thy dwelling"<sup>77</sup>, the sanctuary is considered to be built by God himself<sup>78</sup> whereas the "tent of testimony" is to be prepared by Moses. One could construe: The "tent of testimony" names the place where the Torah is mediated to the people, the synagogue; the temple is the sanctuary erected by God. In this way, the translator could balance between the institute of synagogue and the order of cult centralization in Deuteronomy 12.

In the Septuagint of Deuteronomy, the idea that God let his Name<sup>79</sup> "dwell" in Jerusalem (שכן Hi.)<sup>80</sup> or "puts" his name there (שים Hi.)<sup>81</sup>, is fundamentally replaced

252 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 447–461: 454. Even Alain Le Boulluec and Pierre Sandevioir, *L'Exode. Traduction du texte grec de la Septante, Introduction et Notes*, BdA 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1989), 252 argues for this interpretation, but also consider as an alternative the concern to avoid contradiction with the idea that God dwells only in Jerusalem.

<sup>74</sup> Rösel, "Tempel und Tempellosigkeit," 461, refers on contradicting tendencies in the Targumim.

<sup>75</sup> John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus*, SCSt 30 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990), 395.

<sup>76</sup> In Ex 29:45f., the replacement of שכן by ἐπικληθῆναι the consequence that the relationship between God and Israel appears even more based on God's activity concerning Israel's exodus from Egypt. This is, however, consequence of the translation and amendment process, but not its motivation.

<sup>77</sup> Wevers, *Exodus*, 234f. argued convincingly why כב replaced by ἔτοιμον: The closeness of rendering כן Pil. (build up, establish, fix up) by ἐτοιμάζω was decisive.

<sup>78</sup> One can consider, with Martin Rösel, "Tempel und Tempellosigkeit", 454, whether the idea of a heavenly preexistent sanctuary is effective. Rösel based his theory on the terms παράδειγμα in Exod 25:8 and τύπος in Ex 25:40 and the concept of an archetypal sanctuary in heaven to be found in the Sabbath sacrifice songs 4Q400–407.

<sup>79</sup> Perhaps this idea is to be interpreted as withdrawal of a massive notion of God's dwelling in the temple; cf. Martin Metzler, "Sacred and Profane abode of the Lord (1970)," in: ID., *Schöpfung, Thron und Heiligtum. Beiträge zur Theologie des Alten Testaments*, ed. Wolfgang Zwickel, BThSt 57, (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 2003), 1–38: 20; Otto KAISER, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, Vol. 2 (UTB 2024; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 201 (he finds represented the older idea in Isa 8:18; Joel 4:17, 21 Ps. 135:21).

<sup>80</sup> Deut 12:11; 14:23; 16:2, 6, 11; 26:2.

<sup>81</sup> Deut 12:21; Deut 14:24 Cod. B etc.

by the formulation<sup>82</sup> “wherever the Lord ... may choose for his name to be called there” (ἐπικληθῆναι).<sup>83</sup> Ex 29:45f. served as a role model.<sup>84</sup> According to John William Wevers, the intention of the Septuagint “is the understanding that God’s earthly presence signifies the reality of his invocation”.<sup>85</sup> Perhaps the problem of the Deuteronomistic idea for the translator was not a problem of transcendence, but a problem of logic: what should one thereby understand, that the name of God “dwells” somewhere? Probably he meant that the name of God is present, by invocation.<sup>86</sup>

### 3.1.4. *God’s Omniscience*

In 2Reg 7:5<sup>LXX</sup>, the question particle from the MT (ה) is replaced by the negation οὐ (=אֵל), following 1Chr 17:4 MT. The translator (or the transmitter of the source text) keeps in mind that it was not David but Salomon who built the temple.<sup>87</sup> It is not possible the God should announce something that not will come true. Hos 8:4MT reads: They made kings, and I did not know (לֹא ידעתי). In the Septuagint, the translation οὐκ ἐγνώρισάν μοι correspondents to Hebrew לֹא ידעוני. Perhaps already the transmitter of the Hebrew text altered in order to avoid any antagonism to the concept of God’s omniscience.

### 3.1.5. *The Problem of God’s Arbitrariness and Repentance*

In his critique on Homer’s works, Plato defines two maxims relevant for ancient times in general: 1. God is good, and he is the author of the good, not of the bad; 2. God is unchangeable and does not deceive human beings.<sup>88</sup> These maxims have consequences for translation and interpretation of biblical texts as well.

Concerning God’s wrath against sinners,<sup>89</sup> the translators avoided to present “God’s wrath” as an entity of its own<sup>90</sup> but did not introduce new ideas, it was

<sup>82</sup> In 2Esdr 6:12; 11:9, the translation is offered that one would expect in Deuteronomy: οὐ κατασκηνοῖ τὸ ὄνομα ἐκεῖ (2Esdr 6:2)/τὸν τόπον ὃν ἐξελεξάμην κατασκηνώσαι τὸ ὄνομά μου ἐκεῖ (2Esdr 11:9).

<sup>83</sup> In Deut 12:5, both elements, שׁים Hi. and שׁכן Hi., encounter sequentially. The verb ἐπνομοᾶσαι, in the Septuagint otherwise the equivalent of שׁקר, probably is used in a free way, in order to avoid duplication.

<sup>84</sup> Anneli Aejmelaeus, “The Septuagint of Deuteronomy,” in *Deuteronomy and its Interrelations*, ed. Timo Veijola, SESJ 62 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 1–22: 13.

<sup>85</sup> John William Wevers. *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, SCSt 39 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 209, referring to TargumOnqelos, ad loc. (“Place of a Schekhinah”).

<sup>86</sup> Anneli Aejmelaeus, “Von Sprache zur Theologie. Methodologische Überlegungen zur Theologie der Septuaginta,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism*, ed. Michael A. Knibb, BEThL 195 (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 21–48: 37. According Aejmelaeus it is not clear that the name of God has been equated with God himself.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. William M. Schniedewind, “Textual Criticism and Theological Interpretation: The Pro-Temple *Tendenz* in the Greek Text of Samuel-Kings,” *HThR* 87 (1994): 107–116: 111.

<sup>88</sup> Plato, *Rep.* 378a — 383e.

<sup>89</sup> The aggression against Moses according to Ex 4:24 is another case. The Septuagint offers “angel of the Lord” instead of “the Lord”; similarly the Targumim: TgOnq Ex 4,24; Tg.-Ps.Jon. Ex 4,24 („angel of the Lord“); TgNeofiti Ex 4,24 („angel from before the Lord“).

<sup>90</sup> Siegfried Kreuzer, “Übersetzung — Revision — Überlieferung. Probleme und Aufgaben in den Geschichtsbüchern,” in *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer, WUNT 252 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 101–16: 112.

simply unnecessary in ancient hermeneutics: Tales of God's wrath should warn human beings.<sup>91</sup> The translator of Job states that God delivers (παραδίδωμι) Job to the devil (Job 2:6), because God knows that Job would be victorious.<sup>92</sup> There are other problems: God's arbitrariness and God's repent.

Concerning God's arbitrariness, we should remark that the authors of the books of Chronicles have already re-told some tales with alterations. He introduces some prophets whose message is the following: repentance of Israel can prevent the realization of announced punishment.<sup>93</sup> In this case, the Septuagint is not motor but witness of a thoroughgoing Jewish reflection of Biblical concepts.

We already find alterations of this kind in the Septuagint of Genesis. If it is not possible to accuse God of wickedness, the responsibility must fall onto a human being. The case of Gen 4:4f. is well-known. According to the Hebrew text, both Cain and Abel offer a מנחה. In the Septuagint, we find a distinction: Cain's offering is called a θυσία, whereas Abel's offering is designated a δῶρον. The translator emphasizes the higher value of Abel's offering, which signifies a higher degree of piety.<sup>94</sup> In Am 5:15, God's response to human repentance is at issue. The Hebrew adverbial אולי ("perhaps") does not exclude the possibility of arbitrariness. In the Septuagint, the conjunction ὅπως prevents such a misconception. In Isa 6:9f.LXX, the translator avoids the concept of God's hardening, in accordance with Deut 30:11–16; Sir 15:11–20; PsSol 9:4.<sup>95</sup>

Sometimes, however, the history of textual transmission is ambiguous. According to Jer 21:7<sup>LXX</sup> it is God who will not be sparing toward Israel, according to Jer 21:7<sup>MT</sup> it is the king of Babylon. Perhaps the Masoretic text avoids the notion of God's cruelty,<sup>96</sup> but also the reading of the Septuagint can be a secondary harmonization with Jer 13:14.

With regard of God's repentance, some translators of the Septuagint avoid rendering נחם by μετανοέω if God is the subject and use the verb παρακέκλημαι ("to be comforted").<sup>97</sup> There are two rationales for this rendering: 1. This rendering can avoid an

<sup>91</sup> Cf. John Chrysostom, *In illud Isaiaae, Ego Dominus Deus feci lumen etc.*6, PG 56:151; Theodoret of Cyrus, *In Jonam*, PG 81:1736c.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Olympiodor, *In Job*, PG 93:28b.

<sup>93</sup> Samaia (2Chr 12,5), Azarias (2Chr 15,1), Anani (2Chr 16,7), Elieser (2Chr 20,37) Sacharja ben Jujada (2Chr 24,20–22).

<sup>94</sup> Cf. Marguerite Harl, *La Genèse*, BdA 1, (Paris: Cerf, 1986), 113.

<sup>95</sup> Ancient Christian exegetes interpreted Isa 6:9f. by the concept of human free will, cf. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Is.* 42, GCS 58:42; Theodoret of Cyrus, *In Is.* III, SC 276:270; Prokopius of Gaza, *In Is.*, PG 87/2:1945b.

<sup>96</sup> Hermann-Josef Stipp, „Zur aktuellen Diskussion um das Verhältnis der Textformen des Jeremiabuches“, in *Die Septuaginta — Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 630–653; 652.

<sup>97</sup> Gen 6:6LXX; 1Chr 21:15LXX; 1Reg 15:11LXX; Jer 20:16LXX; Jer 49:10LXX. — The translator of Am 7:5 read the consonants נחם as imperative. He interpreted the text as the prophet's plea for God's repenting, not as statement of real acting of God.



antagonism to 1Sam 15:29 (God “is not a mortal that he should change his mind. 2. If repenting would be really necessary for God, any Stoic wise man would be superior to him.”<sup>98</sup> Other translators feel not free to change this theological concept, e.g. the translator<sup>99</sup> or a revisor of Jonah 3:10: Due to the repentance of the inhabitants of Ninive, God also repented and did not punish them. Following the lines of John Chrysostom and Theodoret of Cyrus, Theophylact of Achrida demonstrates that God’s μετάνοια is not a changing of his flattering will — οὐ γὰρ νῦν μὲν τοῦτο, νῦν δὲ ἐκεῖνο βούλεται — but his withdrawal from his announcements; due to God’s intention to save human beings, he announced but did not immediately punish.<sup>100</sup>

In other cases, the translators did not feel free to make a correction. In Jer 20:7<sup>LXX</sup>, the translator rendered Jeremiah’s charge against God by Ἠπάτησάς με, κύριε, καὶ ἠπατήθην, in full accordance to the Hebrew text. Ps.-John Chrysostom tried to excuse the prophet: εἰ γὰρ καὶ προφήτης ἦν, ἄνθρωπος ἦν.<sup>101</sup>

### 3.1.6. Monotheism and Other Deities

Sometimes the exclusive monotheism<sup>102</sup> is underlined, sometimes other deities like Baal<sup>103</sup>, Melchom<sup>104</sup> or Rephesch<sup>105</sup> are deleted in the Septuagint. The dual אלהים enables to suppress polytheistic concepts. “Sons of the Gods” become “sons of God”<sup>106</sup>; אלהים aside JHWH become “angels”.<sup>107</sup> In Jos 23:7MT the swearing on the name of foreign deities is forbidden, in Jos 23:7LXX even the mentioning of these names.

References to the worship of foreign deities are concentrated on the beginning of the post-exilic period but perhaps the thoroughgoing reading ἡ Βααλ in the book of Jeremiah can be a critical allusion to the popularity of the Isis-cult in Egypt even among Jews.<sup>108</sup> New introduced renderings as ἄλση (groves)<sup>109</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Philo, *Imm.* 22; cf. Origen, *Hom. in Jer.* 18,6, SC 238:196.

<sup>99</sup> 8HēvXIgr. III 30 offers παρεκλήθη in Jonah 3:9.

<sup>100</sup> Theophylact of Achrida, *In Jonam*, PG 126:952bc.

<sup>101</sup> Ps.-John Chrysostom, *In Jer.*, PG 64:928b.

<sup>102</sup> Exod 8:10 [6]; Isa 44:28.

<sup>103</sup> 2Reigns 5:20: בעל is split in ב and על and rendered as ἐπάνω. The name “Baal” also is avoided, when it is part of a personal name. Memphi-baal is called מִפְּיִבְשֶׁת/Μεμφίβοσθ (2Sam/Reg 9:6; 19:25); Ιεσβααλ (2Reg 23:8LXX<sup>Ant</sup>) is rendered as יֵשׁבִיבְשֶׁת/Ιεσβόσθε (2Sam 23:8/2Reg 23:8<sup>Ra</sup>). But there is no consistency in the Septuagint: In 3Reg 18:18, the βααλειμ are mentioned; the name Isch-baal is preserved in 1Chr 9:39.

<sup>104</sup> 3Reigns 11:33: מלכּם is read as מלך + Suffix ם and translated τῶ βασιλεῖ αὐτῶν. The other deity, Χαμως, is not suppressed — there was no possibility of a distinct reading.

<sup>105</sup> Hab 3:5.

<sup>106</sup> Ps 28:1b; 88:7b.

<sup>107</sup> Ps 8:6a; 96:7c; 137:1d.

<sup>108</sup> Pierre-Maurice Bogaert, Jeremias, in *Einleitung in die Septuaginta*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, LXX.H 1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2016), 577–595: 585, 592. An alternative explanation also is possible: When reading the text, the reader should avoid to name “Baal” and should read ἡ αἰσχύνη.

<sup>109</sup> Mic 5:14; cf. Exod 34:13.

or οἰωνισμός (divination)<sup>110</sup> demonstrate the seducing effect of pagan practices also for Jews.

### 3.2. *Anthropology and Ethics*

#### 3.2.1. *Creation and Destination*

In Gen 1:26, God announces the creation of human beings κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ κατ' ὁμοίωσιν. Maybe the last element alludes Plato's formula of human being's destination, which reads ὁμοίωσις τῷ θεῷ κατὰ τὸ δύναντον (Theatet 176b). Human beings are created in order to imitate God.<sup>111</sup> In Ps 50:14, the repentant prays to God "with a leading spirit support me". The Greek wording πνεῦμα ἡγεμονικόν reminds an educated reader of Stoic anthropology where the human νοῦς is the ἡγεμονικόν with regard to the affects of the soul and the desires of the body. The convergence between theology and Platonic or Stoic philosophy, seminal for orthodox thinking in my opinion, has its roots already in Greek-speaking Judaism. Philo of Alexandria combines Platonic cosmology and elements of Platonic and Stoic ethics in order to explain the Torah and to establish the Jewish claim that cosmogony and ethics included in the Torah is co-equate to Greek philosophy.

On the other hand, the translator of Job introduces the Homeric βροτός in order to characterize the fugacity of human being. In Hi 28:28, he renders הַיָּבִיחַ (insight) by ἐπιστήμη, the Aristotelian central category for describing appropriate practice.

#### 3.2.2. *Ethics and Torah Orientation*

In analogy to tendencies of the surrounding literature<sup>112</sup>, some translators reinforce the moment of the Torah-orientation in their vocabulary; ἀσεβής is rendering עָרָב; ἀνομία is used for some Hebrew words characterizing human sin,<sup>113</sup> e.g. for עָרָב (Ezek 3:19; Psalm 5:4; Mi 6:10, חַמַּס (Ezek 8:6, 9), תְּסֻעָבָה (Ezek 8:6, 9)<sup>114</sup>. In the Psalter, ἀνομία renders 14 different Hebrew words.<sup>115</sup> The translator of Proverbs 6:24 renders the warning against the wicked woman as warning against the married woman. Perhaps already the Hebrew source text altered from אִשָּׁת רָעָה to אִשָּׁת רָעָה.

Some translators follow the lines of Chronicles and emphasize the Torah-orientation when dealing with post-Mosaic figures.<sup>116</sup> Elkanah's and Hannah's offering

<sup>110</sup> 1Reg 15:23.

<sup>111</sup> For this concept, cf. Lev 19:2; EpiArist 188; Eph 5,1.

<sup>112</sup> Cf. Tob 6:13; Bar 4:4; Sirach, prol. 36 (ἐννόμως βιοτεύειν); 19:19; 24.

<sup>113</sup> Folker Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta*, Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9 (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001), 237.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Maria Victoria Spottorno, "Some Lexical Aspects in the Greek Text of Ezekiel," in *Ezekiel and his Book. Textual and Literary Criticism and their Interrelation*, ed. Johan Lust, BETHL 74 (Leuven: Peeters, 1986), 78–84: 81.

<sup>115</sup> Frank Austermann, *Von der Tora zum Nomos. Untersuchungen zur Übersetzungsweise und Interpretation im Septuaginta-Psalter*, Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens 27 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003), 180–192.

<sup>116</sup> Cf. Kalimi, *Geschichtsschreibung*, 115–143.

according to 1Reg 1:21 is modified by a plus: they offer “all the tithes of the land”, according to Lev 27:30. The vow of 1Reg 3:11 in the Septuagint and in 4Q51 includes a plus (“and he will drink no wine”); this rendering portrays Samuel as a nazirite according to Nbs. 6:5. Joshua is the son of Nave, not of Nun (Josh 1:1): The name of an Egyptian deity does not fit the father of Moses’ successor. At David’s escape, his wife puts Teraphim on his bed in order to deceive the servants of Saul. The translator of the Septuagint writes κενοτάφια in order to avoid the notion as if David would worship foreign deities. According to 2Reigns 8:18, David’s sons are not “priests” but chiefs of the court; the Septuagint follows the allowance of 1Chr 18:17.

Reports mentioning wrath of Israel’s élites are an obstacle for any self-portrait of Judaism as a philosophical way of life. Therefore Moses’ harsh reaction on Dathan’s and Abiram’s rebuke (Nbs 16:12–14) in Nbs 16:15 is smoothed to being indignant.<sup>117</sup> 2Kgs 2:23 reports a jeering of small children against Elisha. The prophet curses the children, and two bears tore open forty-two children of them. The Antiochene text or its Hebrew Vorlage offers the plus καὶ ἐλιθαζὼν αὐτόν (they threw stones on him), added in order to excuse the prophet’s harsh reaction. Similarly, not wrath but being disheartened is the proper mode of communicating with God, for Samuel,<sup>118</sup> David,<sup>119</sup> and Jonah.<sup>120</sup>

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Both Septuagint and the Masoretic text are Jewish documents including divergent answers how to actualize God’s word in faithfulness to God’s will. Within the Greek textual tradition, the different styles of translation reveal a different hermeneutical approach how to be faithful to Jewish identity. Insofar the Septuagint is by no means a totally harmonized text. The apostles used different text-forms of the Old Testament tradition: Whereas Luke and the author of Hebrews closely follow the Septuagint text. As known to us, Paul and especially Matthew offer readings sometimes more closely to the Masoretic text. The Church Fathers had no problems with the distinct Greek text-forms insofar interests of Christian dogmatics were not violated.

<sup>117</sup> The mentioning of Moses’ humility (Lev 12:3MT)/meekness (Lev 12:3 LXX) is decisive.

<sup>118</sup> 1Reg 15:11LXX.

<sup>119</sup> 2Reg 6:8; 1Chr 13:11. Another explanation, however is also possible, an inner-Greek error (ἀθυμέω instead of θυμώω).

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Theo K. Heckel, “Jonas,” in *Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 2011), 2394–2404: 2403, referring to L. Perkins, “The Septuagint of Jonah: Aspects of Literary Analysis Applied to Biblical Translation“, *BIOSCS* 20 (1987): 43–53: 45.

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## ОДНОС ИЗМЕЂУ СЕПТУАГИНТЕ И МАЗОРЕТСКОГ ТЕКСТА

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*Сажетак:* У овом раду ћемо приказати каквеу су међусобне везе различитих верзија Старог Завета — Септуагинте и Масоретског текста. У том контексту ћемо се бавити и филолошким и теолошким проблемима Септуагинте. Када је реч о текстуалним разликама између наведених верзија оне могу бити резултат процеса преношења текста и процеса превођења. У првом делу рада ћемо се фокусирати на могуће разлоге за настанак разлика у тексту насталим у процесу преношења — постојање различитих текстуалних токова, као и одређени унутрашњи односно спољни узроци. У другом делу рада ћемо се фокусирати на разлике настале у процесу превођења, и узроке који су довели до њих, као што су разлика у језичком систему, учествовање више преводаца у процесу превођења и сам контекст настанка превода. У трећем делу рада ћемо се бавити разликама које су настале као резултат различитих теолошких схватања у Септуагинти и Масоретском тексту. ► *Кључне речи:* Септуагинта, Масоретски текст, превод, процес превођења, теологија Септуагинте