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Theological Development in the Hellenistic Age

Principles and Methods. The search for interpretative developments within the Greek versions must proceed with careful attention to methodological issues. Questions about textual transmission, the character of theological *Tendenz*, the use of lexical evidence, and the presence of midrashic rewriting need to be taken into account.

Messianism and the Septuagint. Scholars disagree regarding the degree to which messianic expectation can be detected in the Greek translation. We must appreciate the diversity that characterized early Judaism, and distinctions need to be made between texts viewed as messianic prior to the Christian era and texts that were appropriated by the NT writers in reference to Jesus.

Eschatology and the Septuagint. The Jewish concept of a future resurrection developed during the Hellenistic period. Whether this concept is reflected in the LXX cannot be easily determined.

Influence of Hellenistic Philosophy on the Septuagint. Some Jewish writings composed originally in Greek appropriated aspects of Stoic philosophy. It appears, however, that the LXX translators were restrained by their desire to preserve the sense of the Hebrew text.

Theological *Tendenz* of the Three. Because the production of later Greek versions may have been partly motivated by theological concerns, these versions can be a fruitful source for identifying interpretative elements.

More than one hundred years ago attempts were already being made to identify interpretative elements in the LXX and their significance for understanding the theological development of Judaism in the Hellenistic period.[1] A prominent example of this approach in the twentieth century is Isaac L. Seeligmann's analysis of the Greek version of Isaiah "as a document of Jewish-Alexandrian theology."[2] The goal of such research is to trace the development of the theology, practices, and exegetical traditions of Judaism in the Hellenistic period, with attention to the influence that Hellenistic philosophy and culture may have had on the text of the Greek versions. Moreover, the origins of Christianity and its relationship to Second Temple Judaism are also explored through LXX studies, especially because the LXX was the Bible of the earliest Christians.

Principles and Methods

The search for interpretative developments within the Greek versions has been motivated by different interests. For example, because Christianity, with its distinctive claim that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Messiah, emerged from Second Temple Judaism, the Jewish writings of this period (both the Greek writings of the Diaspora and Semitic documents like those discovered at Qumran) are studied to identify any messianic expectations they may reflect. Other studies of the LXX attempt to understand what, if any, influence Hellenistic philosophy or pagan religious practices had on the translation of Scripture produced for the Greek-speaking audience. More recently, modern sociological concerns have been brought to bear on LXX studies; feminism, for instance, has motivated some scholars to determine whether attitudes toward women reflected in the Greek translation differ from those in the Semitic texts.[3]

The endeavor to find theological development in the LXX logically presupposes that the work of textual criticism has been done and that both the original words that translated the Semitic parent text and any additions to or omissions from that original translation have been identified. This work allows the theological viewpoint (*Tendenz*) of the original translators to be distinguished from that of subsequent revisers. If the theological trait in question is indeed part of the original translation, then one must try to discern if it was introduced by the

1. Z. Frankel, *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig: Barth, 1851; repr. Farnborough: Gregg, 1972).

2. This phrase comes from the title of the fourth chapter of Seeligmann's monograph, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (Leiden: Brill, 1948), 95–121.

3. See, e.g., Susan Ann Brayford, *The Taming and Shaming of Sarah in the Septuagint of Genesis* (Ph.D. diss., Iliff School of Theology and University of Denver, 1998).

Greek translator or if it was already present in the Hebrew *Vorlage*. This distinction is of particular interest, since the majority of extant manuscripts of the LXX were transmitted and preserved within the Christian tradition.

Such a transmission history raises the possibility that Christian scribes harmonized Greek texts of the OT to agree with the use of those texts in the NT, or that they subtly introduced Christian exegesis into the text of the OT books.[4] Any such changes would, of course, be secondary to the original translation and therefore are of no value in determining what, if any, theological interests the original OG version may reflect. Changes introduced by Christian scribes, however, are of value for the history of interpretation, since they help us to understand, for example, how the early church used and interpreted the OT.

Robert A. Kraft groups possible Christian tendencies into three categories: (1) places where the title *Christ* or *Messiah* appears in such a way as to betray Christian interests; (2) the use of specifically Christian terminology in the Greek OT; and (3) passages in the OT that have been rephrased to agree with quotations of them in the NT or in the writings of Christian church fathers.[5] He concludes that while isolated examples of each category may be found in the LXX corpus, overall little evidence is found of distinctively Christian theology being imposed on the Greek text of the OT as it was copied and preserved by Christians. Kraft further points out that what once may have been thought of as distinctively Christian tendencies needs to be reexamined with a new appreciation of "what was possible within the broad framework of what we call ancient Judaism."[6]

When we speak of theological *Tendenz* in the LXX we must clearly remember that we are not speaking of some unified ideology being applied throughout the corpus by one special-interest group, because the OG translation was not a homogeneous work produced at one time by one group of translators. Whatever theological developments one may find in the translation are what Emanuel Tov calls individual *theologoumena*, which may reflect in a particular instance some theological understanding of a singular point.[7] Theological exegesis within the LXX may be evidenced by (1) the consistent choice of a particular translation equivalent for one word, (2) the rewriting of a given verse

4. Robert A. Kraft, "Christian Transmission of Greek Jewish Scriptures: A Methodological Probe," in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le monde antique: Mélanges offerts à Marcel Simon* (Paris: de Boccard, 1978), 207–26.

5. Ibid., 211.

6. Ibid., 226.

7. Emanuel Tov, "Theologically Motivated Exegesis Embedded in the Septuagint," in *Translation of Scripture: Proceedings of a Conference at the Annenberg Research Institute, May 15–16, 1989* (Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement; Philadelphia: Annenberg Research Institute, 1990), 215–33, esp. 215.

in translation to reflect a contemporary understanding of it, (3) pluses and minuses of a few words, and (4) the addition of extensive material (e.g., the six additional chapters of Greek Esther).

As many point out, all translation involves interpretation to some extent. One reason is that the use and semantic range of a word in the source language is seldom totally congruent with the use and range of the corresponding word in the target language. Translation equivalents, therefore, most often reflect purely linguistic rather than theological choices and provide at best unreliable indicators of theological *Tendenz*. Lexical choices of this sort must be distinguished from variations that belong on a "higher" level, such as deliberate additions and omissions.[8]

Seeligmann uses the lexical approach to examine the differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts of Isaiah for insight into how Alexandrian Judaism understood God, Torah, and Israel. He admits the difficulties that attend this approach: "The differences between the translation and the original form a fairly narrow basis on which to rest a reconstruction of the independent theological views of the translator."[9]

Seeligmann points out, for example, that at least two Greek words could have been used to render the divine name יְהוָה. Κύριος offered a better lexical choice for rendering the tetragrammaton than does δεσπότης, because the former was used more broadly in the Greek language to refer to someone with a just claim to authority and power.[10] However, once such a lexical equivalent was chosen, presumably by the translators of the Pentateuch, the occurrence of the same equivalence consistently throughout the rest of the LXX corpus may have no particular theological significance for any given book. All we can say is that κύριος became the standard way to render the name of God in Greek.

Theological intent might be discerned, however, when usage deviates from expected equivalents. An example where such intent seems apparent is the translators' handling of מִזְבֵּחַ ("altar"), which is consistently rendered with θυσιαστήριον when it refers to an altar of Israel but with βωμός when referring to a pagan altar. No clear semantic component makes one of these Greek words more appropriate for one

8. For a discussion of the difference between linguistic and conceptual factors, see above, chap. 4, p. 89. The significance of any variations for understanding theological development in the Hellenistic period depends, of course, on whether these differences were already present in the translator's *Vorlage*. If they were, they reflect shifts within the Hebrew tradition over time (many of these would have taken place at a relatively early date). If they were not in the translator's parent text, however, they represent elements introduced during the Hellenistic era and may thus be useful for understanding theological developments during that time.

9. Seeligmann, *Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 95.

10. Ibid., 97.

type of altar rather than another. We find therefore that theological *Tendenz* is introduced by the way the word consistently distinguishes a heathen altar from one devoted to Yahweh.

Theological reflection may also be found in the rewriting of an individual verse to express the translator's understanding of it. Such rewritings may reflect an attempt to actualize the biblical text for the contemporary reader. That is, this phenomenon is often found in the translation of biblical prophecy if, in the translator's understanding of it, the prophecy had been realized between the time of the original Hebrew text and that of the Greek translation. This is particularly true of biblical predictions that Israel would be sent into exile away from Jerusalem, because it was the very fulfillment of such prophecies that necessitated a translation of the Hebrew Bible into the language of exile!

For instance, Isaiah's prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and exile in Isaiah 31 are introduced by the curse, "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help" (v. 1). Of course, the Alexandrian Jews found themselves living in exile in Egypt precisely because Jerusalem had been destroyed as Isaiah had prophesied. MT Isaiah 31:8–9 continues with a promise that the Assyrians would fail to take Jerusalem because of the burning presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem:

> "Assyria will fall by a sword that is not of man;
> a sword, not of mortals, will devour them.
> They will flee before the sword
> and their young men will be put to forced labor.
> Their stronghold will fall because of terror;
> at sight of the battle standard their commanders will panic,"
> declares the LORD,
> whose fire is in Zion,
> whose furnace is in Jerusalem. [NIV]

Seeligmann notes that the last part of verse 9 (which he regards as a warning to the Jews not to seek the protection of Egypt) is transmuted by the LXX into a blessing not present in the Hebrew: Τάδε λέγει κύριος Μακάριος ὃς ἔχει ἐν Σιων σπέρμα καὶ οἰκείους ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ("thus says the Lord, Blessed is the one who has seed in Zion and relatives in Jerusalem"). The thought seems to express the solidarity of the Diaspora Jews with the remnant in Jerusalem and, according to Seeligmann, reflects the loyalty and yearning of Alexandrian Jews for their Holy City: "This remarkable liberty taken by the translator justifies the assumption that he sought to express an idea very prevalent among Alexandrian Jewry."[11]

11. Ibid., 114.

A similar interpretative element is found in God's provocative statement in Isaiah 19:25, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance," when it is recast in the Greek as εὐλογημένος ὁ λαός μου ὁ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ὁ ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις καὶ ἡ κληρονομία μου Ισραηλ ("blessed be my people *who are in* Egypt, and *who are in* Assyria, and my inheritance Israel"). Apparently the Diaspora Jews thought of themselves (rather than the pagan people of Egypt and Assyria) as the specific referent of this verse, and so the statement was rendered into Greek in such a way as to make that interpretation explicit.

An exacting analysis of Greek Isaiah is found in a recent monograph by Arie van der Kooij. The painstaking labor to distinguish interpretative elements from text-critical concerns is indicated by van der Kooij's decision to focus on but one chapter of the Book of Isaiah, chapter 23, the oracle against Tyre. He finds in the Greek translation of this passage the view that Isaiah's prophecies were fulfilled by contemporary political and military events, such as the destruction of Carthage by the Romans in 146 B.C.E., the Parthian invasion of Babylonia, and the involvement of Tyre in the Hellenization of Jerusalem.[12]

One of van der Kooij's valuable contributions is his discussion (in chap. 6) of the Theodotionic, Hexaplaric, and Antiochene (or Lucianic) revisions of the Greek text of Isaiah 23, along with the interpretation of this passage by church fathers Eusebius of Caesarea, Jerome, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, and Cyril of Alexandria. All four of the church fathers take the same basic approach: they divide the prophecy against Tyre into two parts, the first of which is understood to have historical fulfillment in the sixth century B.C.E. and the second in the Christian era, as Christianity spread all over the world, including Tyre. Van der Kooij finds no specific connection between this exegesis and the recensions.[13] In spite of the existence of a distinctively Christian interpretation of Isaiah 23, it seems significant that none of the three major revisions of the Greek biblical text—not even those by Origen and Lucian—reflects any Christian influence.

The difference in approach between the Jewish translator(s) who produced Greek Isaiah and the Christians who were involved in both transmitting and interpreting that same text is striking. The Jewish Greek translators apparently felt at liberty to change the biblical text

12. Arie van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah xxiii as Version and Vision* (Vetus Testamentum Supplement 71; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 95–109, in a section entitled "LXX Isaiah 23 as updated prophecy." For a somewhat different perspective on this passage, see Peter W. Flint, "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah 23:1–14 and the Massoretic Text," *BIOSCS* 21 (1988): 35–54.

13. Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 183; he thinks "this is partly due to the fact that not every passage of Isa. 23 is commented upon in the (four) commentaries."

to actualize the prophecies for their contemporary readers, but the Christians apparently transmitted the Greek text as they received it and introduced their interpretative commentary on the relevance of the text in separate writings.

A free approach to handling the biblical text is evidenced not only by Greek Isaiah, but also by those books that include extensive additional material, such as Daniel and Esther. The idea of introducing midrashic commentary within the biblical text seems to have been a distinctively Jewish approach not generally adopted by the early Christian fathers, who were Greco-Roman Gentiles. However, several NT authors were Jewish and one might have expected midrash to be introduced into Greek biblical texts intended for a Greek-speaking Christian reader. For instance, it is interesting that no Christian midrash was introduced into the Greek text of Isaiah itself in light of the apostle Paul's reinterpretation of Isaiah in his christological arguments in Romans and elsewhere. Indeed, one might wonder why Paul himself did not produce a Christian midrash of the Greek text of Isaiah.

That midrashic rewriting of the biblical text is a distinctively Jewish technique suggests that the longer pluses and minuses that exist only in the Greek biblical texts were introduced by Greek-speaking Jewish revisers. For instance, the Greek versions of Esther include six additional chapters not found in any of the Semitic versions. In the Hebrew text of Esther, God is not mentioned, nor is there reference to the central elements of Judaism, such as the covenant, past heroes of the faith, previous events in the history of Israel, the law, the temple, circumcision, prayer, sacrifice, etc. Most of these elements absent in the Hebrew text are introduced in the additions to Esther, especially in the prayers of Esther and Mordecai for the deliverance of their people (addition C). The addition of such extensive material moves the Greek version of the Esther story more into the mainstream of biblical tradition.[14] This and the other additions, as well as smaller insertions containing explicit references to God, clearly show how the Greek reviser was exegeting the story of Esther within the canonical context of the Hebrew Bible. Clearly these additions are intended to reflect how the Esther story was understood and interpreted by the reviser(s). Generally speaking, if the pluses found only in the Greek versions of a given book cohere with an intelligible interpretation or amplification of the

14. See Karen H. Jobes, *The Alpha-Text of Esther: Its Character and Relationship to the Masoretic Text* (Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series 153; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 176–83. For a different approach, see Kristin De Troyer, *Het einde van de alpha-tekst van Ester: vertaal- en verhaaltechniek van MT 8,1–17, LXX 8,1–17 en AT 7,14–41* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997).

surrounding verses, one can conclude that they result from interpretative development.[15]

Once such additional material has been identified, scholars ask if it reflects midrashic exegesis that could have been known to the translator and preserved in later rabbinic writings. Tov defines the term *midrashic exegesis* in the LXX to refer to material introduced into the Greek versions that is also found in the Targumim and rabbinic sources or that interprets the text in a way that resembles the midrashic exegesis found there.[16] The entrance point of such exegesis into the Greek versions is difficult to discern. The midrashic material may already have been present in the Semitic *Vorlage* from which the Greek translation was made, or it may have been introduced at the time the Greek translation was made, or it may have been added by a reviser subsequent to the original translation. Moreover, textual corruption is sometimes mistaken for exegesis. Midrashic exegesis in the LXX was first discussed by Z. Frankel in 1851 and more recently by, among others, David W. Gooding on Kings, Emanuel Tov on Joshua, and Dirk Büchner on Exodus.[17]

Generally speaking, when substantial new material is inserted in the Greek text, that material is not found elsewhere. For instance, the six additional chapters of Esther are not found in any extant Semitic sources, neither in the Targumim nor in rabbinic writings. Midrashic exegesis in the LXX, however, does not normally take the form of inserting large sections into the text. The approach is usually more subtle than that, and so the presence of midrashic influence in the LXX is often quite discreet.

One example is given by Dirk Büchner, who notes that the translator of Exodus 12:16c introduces an extra word that interprets and simplifies a difficult Hebrew reading by bringing it into agreement with halakhic discussion.[18] The MT of this verse, in agreement with the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Peshitta, prohibits work on the Passover "except that which everyone must eat" (אַךְ אֲשֶׁר יֵאָכֵל לְכָל־נֶפֶשׁ). Instead

15. See Arie van der Kooij's discussion of free renderings in "The Old Greek of Isaiah 19:16–25: Translation and Interpretation," in *VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Jerusalem 1986*, ed. Claude E. Cox (SBLSCS 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 127–66, especially his concluding comments on 158–59.

16. Emanuel Tov, "Midrash-Type Exegesis in the LXX of Joshua," *Revue biblique* 85 (1978): 50–61.

17. Frankel, *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese*; David W. Gooding, "Problems of Text and Midrash in the Third Book of Reigns," *Textus* 7 (1969): 1–29; Tov, "Midrash-Type Exegesis"; Dirk Büchner, "On the Relationship between Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael and Septuagint Exodus 12–23," in *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Cambridge 1995*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor (SBLSCS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 403–20.

18. Büchner, "Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael and Septuagint Exodus," 408–9.

of representing the verb אָכַל with ἐσθίω, the LXX introduces the verb ποιέω, resulting in the reading, πλὴν ὅσα ποιηθήσεται πάσῃ ψυχῇ ("except whatever *must be done* for everyone"). The rabbinic commentary *Mekilta* discusses whether what "may be done" on a typical Sabbath is compatible with "what may be done" on the holidays, such as Passover. Büchner approvingly quotes the commentary from La Bible d'Alexandrie on this passage, which concludes that the use of ποιέω is a halakhic variant introduced to conform the text to rabbinic exegesis.[19] This example shows just how subtle midrashic influence may be perceived to be and raises the question whether the LXX translator was intending to reflect known Jewish exegesis or simply drew the same inference from the sense of the Hebrew text.

David W. Gooding provides examples where the sequence of events in LXX 3 Reigns (1 Kings) was reordered to reflect interpretative bias. For instance, chapters 20 and 21 in the MT have been transposed in the LXX in order to reinterpret Ahab's character in a more positive light. Gooding observes:

> On the one hand, the Greek for long stretches agrees with the MT very closely, and many of its differences are readily explainable as having come from Hebrew Biblical manuscripts belonging to text-traditions differing from the MT. On the other hand, the whitewashing re-interpretation of Ahab has so much in common with R. Levi's re-interpretation of Ahab, recorded in the Jerusalem Talmud, that it is difficult not to think that it comes from a similar source. And certainly R. Levi's favourable re-interpretation of Ahab was not based on the discovery of some Biblical manuscript of a non-MT-type, still less on some extra-Biblical historical source. It was totally a matter of exegesis, dictated by theological considerations and achieved by shifting the weight of homiletic emphasis from one phrase of the Biblical text to another, all the while employing the same text.[20]

Gooding argues that the reordering of the material was not in the original translation, but was part of a subsequent revision based on written Semitic traditions that covered the whole book, and possibly beyond.

These examples show that it is often quite difficult to identify unambiguously the presence of midrashic influence in the LXX, and that when it is present, what we find is general agreement with previous exegetical tradition rather than the importation of text from other sources into the Greek.

19. A. le Boulluec and P. Sandevoir, *L'Exode* (La Bible d'Alexandrie 2; Paris: Cerf, 1989), 148.

20. Gooding, "Text and Midrash in the Third Book of Reigns," 26.

Messianism and the Septuagint

Because the NT writers interpret the Hebrew Bible to show that Jesus of Nazareth is the long-awaited Jewish Messiah as well as the Christ of all nations, the development of messianic expectation in Hellenistic Judaism is of interest to both Jews and Christians. It is sometimes claimed that messianic hopes were intensified in the Hellenistic period and that the Greek versions reflect, and possibly even amplify, *such expectations.*

One must keep in mind that Judaism in the Hellenistic period was politically, sociologically, and religiously diverse. Therefore, it would be unwarranted to assume that there was only one trajectory of development of the messianic expectation. As Marguerite Harl observes, there was apparently a difference between the messianic expectations of the Jews of Palestine and those found in the Diaspora.[21] At least among some Jews of Palestine, as the Qumran writings and the Targumim attest, messianic expectations increased during the tumultuous times of the Seleucid rulers and subsequent Hasmonean independence. Outside of Palestine, these hopes were muted by the political and social climate in which the Greek-speaking Jews found themselves. If the LXX was primarily a text for the Diaspora, it might be expected to reflect a Judaism pressed more by Hellenistic culture and politics than would be the case if it had been produced for Palestinian Jews.

When the LXX is examined for evidence of what, if any, messianic expectation the translators and revisers introduced or amplified, one must keep a further distinction in mind. Some texts of Scripture were understood as messianic by the Jewish people prior to the Christian era, and it is to these that one may rightly look for evidence of development in the LXX. Note, for example, Amos 4:13, where God is described in the MT as making known to humankind "what is his thought" (מַה־שֵּׂחוֹ). Reading the Hebrew as מְשִׁיחוֹ, the Greek translator rendered the clause ἀπαγγέλλων εἰς ἀνθρώπους τὸν χριστὸν αὐτοῦ ("announcing his anointed one to men"). Whether this rendering was the result of a simple mistake or of deliberate interpretation, it certainly reflects a messianic perspective on the part of the translator.

Other texts were later appropriated by the NT writers and early Christian church as prophetic references to Jesus and were henceforth understood as messianic. Johan Lust suggests that such cases should more properly be called "christological applications" rather than mes-

21. Marguerite Harl, Gilles Dorival, and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*, 2d ed. (Initiations au christianisme ancien; [Paris]: Cerf/Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1994), 220.

sianic readings.[22] Any LXX renderings that, in contrast to the Hebrew text, can be understood as messianic must therefore be scrutinized to determine if that understanding was intended by the original translator or was introduced by a pre-Christian reviser or by later Christian scribes.

Lust gives an example from Ezekiel that shows how the Greek text could be "messianized" by later Christian scribes.[23] Ezekiel 17:22b–23a reads: "And I myself will plant [a shoot] on a high and lofty [תָּלוּל] mountain; on the mountain height of Israel I will plant it." Most Greek manuscripts read: "And I myself will plant [it] upon a high mountain; *and I will hang it/him* [κρεμάσω αὐτόν] on the mountain height of Israel." Papyrus 967, however, reads: "And I will plant [it] on a high and *suspended* [κρεμαστόν] mountain."[24] Lust argues that in this case papyrus 967 preserves the original Greek reading (the translator understood the difficult Hebrew *hapax legomenon* to derive from the root תָּלָה, "to hang").

Originally the text had no intentional messianic element. Later Christian scribes associated the idea of the Messiah Jesus hanging on the cross (tree) on the mountain of Golgotha with the planting of a "tree" on a "hanging mountain." By changing the adjective κρεμαστόν to the verb κρεμάσω and adding the explicit direct object αὐτόν, they applied the verse christologically. Lust observes that this Greek verse fits into a series of OT passages that referred to "tree" or "wood" and thus were understood by the church fathers as alluding to the crucifixion of Jesus.

Numbers 24:7 and 24:17 are frequently cited as messianic readings found in the LXX but not in the Hebrew. The former verse reads, according to the MT, "Water will flow from his buckets, and his seed will have abundant water" (יִזַּל־מַיִם מִדָּלְיָו וְזַרְעוֹ בְּמַיִם רַבִּים), but the LXX reads, ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ κυριεύσει ἐθνῶν πολλῶν ("*a man* will come out of his seed, and he will rule many nations"). Similarly, in translating 24:17, "A star will come out of Ja-

22. Johan Lust, "Messianism and the Greek Version of Jeremiah," in *VII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Leuven 1989*, ed. Claude E. Cox (SBLSCS 31; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 87–122, esp. 87. In this article, Lust argues that Jer. 23:5–6 and 33:14–26 cannot be used as evidence for a messianic intent on the part of the Greek translator.

23. Johan Lust, "And I Shall Hang Him on a Lofty Mountain: Ezek 17:22–23 and Messianism in the Septuagint," in *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Cambridge 1995*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor (SBLSCS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 231–50, esp. 242–43.

24. This portion of the papyrus was not available to Joseph Ziegler in *Ezechiel* (Septuaginta 16/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952). The revised 1977 edition, however, includes an addendum by Detlef Fraenkel, where the new information is provided (p. 337).

cob, and a scepter [שֵׁבֶט] will rise out of Israel," the LXX uses the word ἄνθρωπος to represent שֵׁבֶט. Tov, who in general finds little messianic interpretation in the LXX, considers the Greek translation in this case to reflect the accepted exegetical tradition, found also in the targum of this passage, that understood "man" to be the Messiah.[25]

Johan Lust, however, argues that ἄνθρωπος ("man") is not used elsewhere in the Greek tradition as a messianic title and that it should be understood in verse 17 as replacing the royal imagery of "scepter" with a much more general reference.[26] He understands the Hebrew, with its conjoined symbols of star and scepter, to be much more messianic than the Greek, despite the apparent individualization present in the latter. Lust points out that when early church fathers Justin and Irenaeus cite this verse in reference to Jesus, they focus their exegesis on the word "star," not on "man." Furthermore, when Philo discusses the verse, he understands "man" to be not the royal Messiah, but an eschatological humankind answering to the primeval human being in the creation and fall. The obscuration of the promise of a royal Messiah in the Greek, achieved by substituting a generic "man" for a reigning king ("scepter"), is perhaps both a politically sensitive and theologically reinterpreted nuancing of the verse for Jews who found themselves living in the Diaspora under Gentile kings.

Joachim Schaper finds more evidence of true messianic development in the Greek Psalms than Lust does in Ezekiel or Numbers. In fact, he argues that two distinct messianic views are present in the Greek Psalter: a political Messiah (e.g., LXX Ps. 59, 107) and a transcendent Messiah (e.g., LXX Ps. 109:3). While discussing a network of messianic Psalms, Schaper takes up the discussion of Numbers 24:7 and 24:17 in relation to LXX Psalm 28:6.[27] Contrary to Lust's claim that ἄνθρωπος does not occur elsewhere in Greek texts as a reference to the Messiah, Schaper cites Testament of Judah 24.1 as evidence that "man" in Numbers 24:17 was indeed understood to be a messianic figure:

25. Tov, "Theologically Motivated Exegesis," 229. On the basis of the LXX and of the targumic tradition, proposals have been made to emend MT Num. 24:7. See, however, John W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (SBLSCS 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 406; Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti I: Numbers* (Aramaic Bible 3; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1995), 138; Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Leviticus and the Targum Onqelos to Numbers* (Aramaic Bible 8; Wilmington, Del.: Glazier, 1988), 137.

26. Johan Lust, "The Greek Version of Balaam's Third and Fourth Oracles: The Ἄνθρωπος in Num 24:7 and 17: Messianism and Lexicography," in *VIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies: Paris 1992*, ed. Leonard J. Greenspoon and Olivier Munnich (SBLSCS 41; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 233–57.

27. Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 76; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 118.

> And after these things shall a star arise to you from Jacob in peace,
> And a man [ἄνθρωπος] shall arise, like the sun of righteousness,
> Walking with the sons of men in meekness and righteousness,
> And no sin shall be found in him.

Unfortunately, although the pseudepigraphic work known as Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs probably originated in the Hellenistic Judaism of the second century B.C.E., it may have also experienced Christian interpolations during its history of scribal transmission. The text is extant in only five medieval manuscripts, the earliest dating to the tenth century, making it notoriously difficult to use in LXX studies.

The disagreement of scholars as to whether Numbers 24:7 and 24:17 reflect the development of messianic expectation illustrates several important points. First, the search for such development in the Greek versions rests on subtle differences between the Hebrew and the translation, such as the substitution of a single word or phrase. Although one might expect messianism to be present in the LXX, it is in fact not a prominent element, especially in comparison to the messianic themes in the Semitic Palestinian texts of the same period.

Second, while some subtle differences between the Hebrew and Greek are quite congenial to a messianic reading, especially in hindsight by Christians, other motivations may in fact have been in play. In the study of the history of the messianic idea, one must be able to identify texts that were understood in this way by the Jews before the time of Jesus. This is not always easy or straightforward to do, because most of the extant manuscripts have been preserved by the Christian tradition. Nevertheless, as pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, elements that may have been previously thought of as distinctively Christian tendencies need to be reexamined with a new appreciation of "what was possible within the broad framework of what we call ancient Judaism."[28] In any case, one must appreciate the complexities involved in approaching the LXX as a source for the development of theological ideas.

Eschatology and the Septuagint

Of course, messianism is but one concept of Hellenistic Judaism, and messianic expectation only one part of Jewish eschatology. It is also thought that during the Hellenistic period the Jewish concept of the future resurrection of the righteous developed. The text of 2 Maccabees—a book that was probably composed originally in Greek in the first century B.C.E.—provides evidence that resurrection was the expected reward for those devout Jews martyred under Seleucid perse-

28. Kraft, "Christian Transmission of Greek Jewish Scriptures," 226.

cution (ca. 175 B.C.E.). This book describes the torture and execution of seven sons and their mother and their bold testimony before their tormentors:

> And when he was at his last breath, he said, "You accursed wretch, you dismiss us from this present life, but the King of the universe *will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life*, because we have died for his laws." . . . When he was near death, he said, "One cannot but choose to die at the hands of mortals and to *cherish the hope God gives of being raised again by him. But for you there will be no resurrection to life!*" . . . "For our brothers after enduring a brief suffering *have drunk of ever-flowing life*, under God's covenant; but you, by the judgment of God, will receive just punishment for your arrogance." [2 Maccabees 7:9, 14, 36 NRSV, emphasis added]

Schaper finds evidence that such hope and interest in the resurrection is also found in the Greek translation of the Psalms, the provenance of which he ascribes to Hasmonean Palestine. Psalm 1:5, for example, reads, "Therefore the wicked will not stand [לֹא־יָקֻמוּ] in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous." The LXX has a straightforward rendering: διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἀναστήσονται ἀσεβεῖς ἐν κρίσει οὐδὲ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐν βουλῇ δικαίων. Schaper understands the Hebrew of this verse to be a wisdom teaching referring to the "innerworldly" action of God to separate the righteous from sinners. The Greek translator, he argues, reinterpreted a single word, קוּם, by translating it ἀνίστημι, which he takes to be a clear reference to future resurrection. Schaper explains that during the horrors of forced Hellenization that led to the Maccabean Revolt, earlier wisdom literature, with its concept of just retribution in this life, was no longer adequate theology. When the Greek translation was made, the hope of justice for the righteous was deferred to the afterlife.[29]

Schaper's thought is attractive at first, but he apparently overlooks linguistic evidence that complicates the picture. For instance, according to data provided by the Hatch-Redpath *Concordance to the Septuagint*, the Qal of קוּם is very often translated by ἀνίστημι in the LXX, even where the context prohibits the sense of resurrection. Within the Greek Psalter itself, note the intransitive use of the future middle indicative of this verb elsewhere, as in Psalm 93:16, τίς ἀναστήσεταί μοι ἐπὶ πονηρευομένους, ἢ τίς συμπαραστήσεταί μοι ἐπὶ ἐργαζομένους τὴν ἀνομίαν; ("who will rise up for me against the wicked, or who will stand up for me against those who practice lawlessness?"). This evidence renders LXX Psalm 1:5 ambiguous at best for the view that the concept of resurrection was in the translator's mind.

29. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, 46.

Schaper examines several psalms, but the eschatological development he finds in each depends on nuancing translation equivalents, a method that is linguistically problematic. If the evidence for theological development in the Greek Psalter is based on subtleties of language, one wonders how extensive such development really is, if it is present at all.

The transmission, preservation, and development of theological concepts such as messianism and resurrection no doubt occurred during the Hellenistic period, but the particular character of the LXX may minimize its usefulness as a window into Jewish thought at that time. Although it may seem natural to expect the LXX to reflect theological perspectives, one must always remember that the people who produced the Greek texts were translators. They had the well-defined task of producing a translation of an existing text, the Hebrew Scripture, not of writing a treatise on the eschatology of their day.

While each translator probably did have a certain messianic concept and view of the afterlife—views undoubtedly shaped by the times in which they lived—it is not obvious that, given the nature of their task, the text they produced would strongly reflect those views. In contrast, books that were composed during the same period might be expected to reflect more directly the perspectives of their authors, who were not constrained by an existing text. Commentaries and midrashim on the Greek Scriptures produced in the Hellenistic period would provide a better window into the development of theological ideas during that time. Unfortunately, such material is rare.

Influence of Hellenistic Philosophy on the Septuagint

An endeavor similar to finding theological exegesis in the LXX is that of identifying what influence, if any, Hellenistic philosophy had on the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Greek culture was enamored with wisdom, which was defined as living toward life's highest good. The various philosophical schools, such as Stoics and Epicureans, may have disagreed on the precise articulation of that goal, but the achievement of wisdom was arguably the highest intellectual value of that culture.

When the monotheistic Jews found themselves living in a culture that valued wisdom, they too had a definition of life's highest good: living in accordance with the Torah of God. Moreover, one of their own kings, Solomon, had the legendary reputation of being the wisest man who ever lived. As Jewish monotheism was defended and recommended to the polytheistic Greek culture, Hebrew wisdom literature became a natural point of contact between the Jewish people and their pagan culture.

The pseudonymous Wisdom of Solomon, one of the books usually included in the LXX corpus and originally written in Greek during the Hellenistic period, affirms the Jews as having true wisdom that issues in eternal life and provides an apologetic for monotheistic Judaism in a pluralistic culture. The Greek vocabulary and rhetorical style of this book indicate its Alexandrian origins, and the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on the author is apparent. For instance, Wisdom 8:7 commends the four cardinal virtues previously defined by the Greek philosopher Plato—self-control, prudence, justice, and courage—affirming that "nothing in life is more profitable for mortals than these." Stoic cosmogony is reflected when wisdom is conceived of as an emanation from God that is the soul of the universe (7:24–25). In 13:1–9, the knowledge of God is discussed from a philosophical perspective (as opposed to the perspective of revelation). The Wisdom of Solomon was a composition of Hellenistic Judaism, not a translation of an existing work, therefore it is not surprising that its philosophical tendencies are more apparent.

But what about wisdom books of the Hebrew Bible that were translated into Greek during this same period? Do they also reflect the influence of Hellenistic philosophy in its quest for wisdom? The Book of Proverbs is, of course, the best place to look for such influence. Johann Cook takes up that question in a recent monograph. After examining several chapters of Proverbs, Cook concludes that although the translator used words common to Classical Greek sources, especially Aristotle, he never introduced Greek philosophical or religious ideas in a positive light, but was foremost a conservative Jewish writer, intent on preserving the theological perspective of the Hebrew text.[30]

For instance, Proverbs 6:6–11 extols the ant as a tiny creature whose wisdom is nonetheless exemplified by its industriousness:

> Go to the ant, you sluggard;
> consider its ways and be wise!
> It has no commander,
> no overseer or ruler,
> yet it stores its provisions in summer
> and gathers its food at harvest.
> How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
> When will you get up from your sleep?
> *A little sleep, a little slumber,*
> a little folding of the hands to rest
> and poverty will come on you like a bandit
> and scarcity like an armed man.

30. Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (Vetus Testamentum Supplement 69; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 318–19.

Between verse 8 and verse 9, the Greek translation includes three extra verses not present in the Hebrew:

> Or go to the bee
> and learn how industrious she is,
> and how seriously she performs her work,
> and whose products kings and commoners use for their health
> and she is respected by all and renowned.
> Although she is physically weak,
> by honouring wisdom she has been honoured.[31]

Cook points out that both the ant and the bee, and in that order, are used by Aristotle in his *Historia animalium* (622B) as examples of industriousness. Moreover, the word translated "industrious" (ἐργάτις) is a *hapax legomenon* in the Greek Proverbs, but is the same word used by Aristotle in his description of the bee. Cook concludes that the Greek translator (and probably the original Greek readers) of Proverbs 6 knew of this description of the ant and the bee and that he makes use of Aristotle's philosophy "in order to explicate a religious issue in the Semitic text he is translating."[32]

This is an example of how a Greek translator may make use of words and motifs that would have been familiar to Greek readers while preserving the original sense of the Hebrew text. Cook concludes that the translator, a conservative thinker, wanted to preserve the sense of the Hebrew, though he was willing to use non-Jewish traditions to explicate that sense. He rejects the idea that the Greek Proverbs embraces explicitly Stoic perspectives. Cook finds the influence of Hellenism to be reflected in the "stylistic and lexical approach" of the translator.[33]

Therefore, the influence of Hellenistic culture on the translation is similar to what we found regarding the development of theological concepts like messianism and resurrection in the Greek text. Philosophical or ideological influence may be found in Jewish texts composed in the Hellenistic period, but the translators of the Hebrew Bible were constrained by their interest in preserving the message of their *Vorlage*.

Theological *Tendenz* of the Three

When looking for theological development or Hellenistic influence, one must distinguish between the original Greek translation (the OG) and its subsequent revisions. Because the books of the Hebrew Bible

31. Cook's translation, ibid., 164.
32. Ibid., 168.
33. Ibid., 320.

were initially translated into Greek by various translators at different times and probably in different places, it may be futile to look for anything but a very general influence of the Greek culture on the Greek text. Examining the work of the revisers of the OG may be a more fruitful task, because a revision is by definition a homogeneous effort by one person (or group of persons), whose motivation would be reflected in his work to the extent he succeeded in his purposes. Moreover, the work of a revision can be compared and contrasted with the OG, provided that all the work of the reviser can in fact be distinguished from the OG. Such a comparison provides a more solid basis of inference concerning theological tendencies, for surely a reviser would let the OG stand except where he was motivated to change it. The comparison of the types of differences between the revision and the OG should indicate whether theological *Tendenz* was one motivating factor.

Considerable debate, however, rages about the relationship of the Three—Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus—to the OG text and to each other, which complicates the search for the theological perspective of each. Of fundamental importance is the question whether the Three revised the OG or produced new translations.[34] Additionally, did one or more of the Three know and use the work of the others? And finally a text-critical question: to what extent and with what certainty can the revisions of the Three be untangled from the variant readings presented in the extant manuscripts?[35]

Some proposed rationales for the revisions/retranslations of the Three are the following: (1) to synchronize the contemporaneous Hebrew and Greek texts, which had become sufficiently different (perhaps especially when the pre-MT emerged as the standard text soon after 70 C.E.); (2) to excise Christian interpolations from the Greek text; and (3) to reflect the most recent Jewish scholarship and exegesis.

Aquila's motivation for his revision was explicitly theological, but in the sense that he believed that the linguistic details of the Hebrew Bible were significant. Therefore, his theological conviction led him to decide that every element of the Hebrew text must have a correspondence in its Greek translation. This kind of theological motivation expressed itself in the syntax and style of his revision—which attempted to represent every word, particle, and even morpheme—rather than in

34. See above, chap. 2, pp. 46–47.

35. Evidence from non-Greek sources also needs to be sifted. See, for example, Claude E. Cox, "Travelling with Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion in Armenia," in *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments: Papers Presented at the Rich Seminar on the Hexapla, Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, 25th [July]–3rd August 1994*, ed. Alison Salvesen (Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum 58; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 302–16.

the development of the sense of the Hebrew text. Aquila's revision is characterized, for instance, by rendering the direct-object marker אֵת with the preposition σύν, and even representing the morphemes of a word one by one (e.g., in 2 Kings 19:25 the words לְמֵרָחוֹק and לְמִימֵי are translated respectively with εἰς ἀπὸ μάκροθεν and εἰς ἀπὸ ἡμερῶν).

Theodotion's revision was not as extreme as Aquila's, but it nevertheless attempted to stereotype translation equivalents by using the same Greek word for a given Hebrew word, even where such a use was unwarranted by the context. For instance, although the Hebrew word אִישׁ bears two senses, "man" or "each," Theodotion translated it with the Greek word for "man" (ἀνήρ) even where it meant "each" and would therefore have been better translated by ἕκαστος. Moreover, Theodotion exhibited some tendency toward Aquila's approach, although not as excessive, by unnecessarily rendering Hebrew גַּם with καίγε and by transliterating Hebrew words rather than translating them.

Of the three, Symmachus most consistently produced a text that translated the sense of the Hebrew without representing every lexical element of the Hebrew or using stereotyped equivalents. Alison Salvesen explores the character of the variant readings attributed to this translator in an attempt to answer the question, Who was Symmachus?[36] Her premise is that enough of the theological *Tendenz* of Symmachus can be seen in his revision of the Greek that his identity as either a Samaritan convert to Judaism or an Ebionite Christian can be determined. Salvesen finds that when the readings distinctive to Symmachus are examined, they show his originality as an exegete and translator, but "they do not seem to point to his participation in any minor sect that is known to us."[37] She finds, among other things, that Symmachus was zealous to uphold the sovereignty of the God of Israel, that he tends to demote and demythologize angels and the heroes of Israel's history, and that he avoids messianic renderings, for instance in Numbers 24:7 and 24:17.[38]

In short, Salvesen finds that Symmachus rendered the text in a way congenial to the monotheism of both Jews and Christians. His work shows no trace of Ebionite belief, but does display a thorough knowledge of rabbinic exegesis. Salvesen views the conflicting historical information given about Symmachus in Eusebius and Epiphanius of Salamis in light of her examination of his extant work, and concludes that he was a Jewish translator working in Caesarea in the third century to produce a Greek version for the Jewish community. She char-

36. Alison Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph 15; Manchester: University of Manchester, 1991), chap. 9.

37. Ibid., 188.

38. Ibid., 192.

acterizes his revision as combining "the best Biblical style, remarkable clarity, a high degree of accuracy regarding the Hebrew text, and the rabbinic exegesis of his day: it might be described as a Greek Targum, or Tannaitic Septuagint."[39]

Conclusion

The literature surveyed in this chapter represents a very small proportion of the work being done in our day. As we examine the text of the LXX for evidence of theological thought, we must be sensitive both to the ambiguity of much of that evidence and to the significance of the Greek version as a monument of Jewish Hellenistic culture. Only when we have learned to appreciate the LXX on its own terms can we hope to make use of it in a responsible way. And those who are willing to labor in the mines of this rich document will find their work amply rewarded when they discover its treasures.

39. Ibid., 297.