

Emanuel Tov

## Reflections on the Septuagint with Special Attention Paid to the Post-Pentateuchal Translations

### I. Introduction

One of the core questions of LXX research is “What *is* the LXX?” This question refers to such matters as the nature of the individual translation units, their place of origin, the relation between the translation units, the nature of Greek Scripture as a whole, and the possible development of the translation enterprise. The case of the Greek Pentateuch is clearer than that of the post-Pentateuchal books and therefore it is on these that we will focus. These general questions are of limited relevance for the *klein-philologische* comparison of the LXX with Hebrew texts, but they do pertain to an analysis of the language of the LXX, its relation with the NT, and for many aspects that interest textual critics, historians, and exegetes.

The minimal points most scholars agree on regarding Greek Scriptures are: (1) the translation of the Torah was probably created in Alexandria;<sup>1</sup> (2) the name “Septuaginta”, although originally attached only to the translation of the Pentateuch, came to denote early on the Greek version of *all* the canonical books of Hebrew Scripture as well as some writings originally composed in Greek; (3) the translations of most if not all canonical books had been completed when Ben Sira’s grandson wrote the introduction to his translation in *c.* 116 BCE; (4) the text of the original translations was constantly revised towards an ever-changing text of the Hebrew Bible by known and anonymous revisers; (5) the present collection of Greek Scripture includes some of these revisions that replaced the original translations. If we accept these five points, by necessity we posit that the collection of Greek writings named the “LXX” is far from unified

---

<sup>1</sup> For an updated summary of the positions, see Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch and Ptolemaic Rule,” in *The Pentateuch as Torah — New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance* (ed. G.N. Knoppers / B.M. Levinson; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 289–300. Beyond the Alexandrian option, van der Kooij mentions the possibility that the translation was solicited by “the leading priests in Jerusalem” (297).

and does not do justice to its name. After all, the legendary seventy-two translators did not translate the post-Pentateuchal books to which we now turn.

Most of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the various books of Greek Scripture are unknown since we possess no external data about the translators and translations. The only extant information is embedded in legendary miracle stories about the creation of the Greek Torah included in the Epistle of Aristeas and subsequent sources.<sup>2</sup> However, the minimal information contained in these sources is analyzed time and again as if it is reliable and pertains also to the post-Pentateuchal books. Schenker discredits that story as well as other explanations given in the past for the very initiative to render the Hebrew Torah into Greek.<sup>3</sup> His own view is that the translation of the Torah was created as a “light to the nations” as prescribed in Deut 4:6–8. Be that as it may, the Epistle of Aristeas has greatly influenced the analysis of the Greek translation of the Torah. We suggest that it also influenced the analysis of the post-Pentateuchal books.

The approach of many modern scholars towards the post-Pentateuchal versions was already shaped in antiquity. In the second century CE the story of the seventy translators was referred to as applying also to these books. In his Apology (c. 152–155 CE), *Justin Martyr* extends the story of the translation initiated by King Ptolemy to all the Greek Old Testament writings that in his treatise are considered “prophetic writings,” presenting prophecies about the coming of Christ.<sup>4</sup> This tendency is continued in Justin’s later treatise *Dialogue with Trypho*.<sup>5</sup> The same tendency is visible in Epiphanius, *De mensuris et ponderibus*, §§ 3, 6. However, it would take a long time before the exact contents of the Christian canon were fixed. At the synod of Carthage (397) the Christian canon was more or less finalized, but the exact list was only completed at the council of Trent in

---

<sup>2</sup> For modern discussions of this source, see Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture — Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (Edinburgh / New York: T & T Clark, 2002), 75–80; Abraham and David Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Adrian Schenker, “Wurde die Tora wegen ihrer einzigartigen Weisheit auf Griechisch übersetzt? Die Bedeutung der Tora für die Nationen in Dt 4:6–8 als Ursache der Septuaginta,” *FZPhTh* 54 (2007): 327–47.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Hengel, *Septuagint*, 25–36.

<sup>5</sup> For example, in *Dialog* 68:7 Justin Martyr explicitly refers to the Greek rendering of Isa 7:14 as having been produced by the seventy elders who produced their translation for the Egyptian king Ptolemy. See further Hengel, *Septuagint*, 30, n. 14. For a detailed and updated analysis of the texts used by Justin Martyr, see Oskar Skarsaune, *The Proof from Prophecy: A Study in Justin Martyr’s Proof-Text Tradition, Text-Type, Provenance, Theological Profile* (NTSup 56; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1987).

1546. Consequently, the earliest comprehensive manuscripts of the LXX from the fourth and fifth centuries CE, A, B, and S, differ in the choice and sequence of the canonical and apocryphal books.

The LXX was a Jewish translation, but when we encounter the completed collection of Greek Scripture for the first time in manuscript form, the majority tradition of A and S was shaped as a Christian collection in which the order of the books follows Christian perceptions.

Although modern scholars realize that the expansion of the *name* Septuagint to include the post-Pentateuchal books is secondary, they are often unconsciously influenced by that name in their analysis of the later translations.

## II. The post-Pentateuchal versions

There are many open questions relating to the post-Pentateuchal versions: Are they Jewish? Are they Alexandrian? Were they produced within official projects? And are they homogeneous? Also, what is known about the compilation of the collection of translations, and what do we know about the Hebrew text underlying these translations? When addressing these issues we realize that there are more questions than answers.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Are the post-Pentateuchal versions Jewish?* The Jewish character of the Pentateuch translation is well established, while that of the post-Pentateuchal books is not, although this assumption is almost certainly correct.

The translation of the Torah was a Jewish venture, created for Jews and probably also Gentiles.<sup>7</sup> The translation contains some Aramaic words reflecting the language spoken by the Jews,<sup>8</sup> and in some cases it reflects Midrash-like exegesis that is also found in rabbinic sources.<sup>9</sup> Aptowitz<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> It is rare to find such a realistic note as in O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* (trans. P.R. Ackroyd; New York / Evanston: Harper and Row, 1965), 703: “But with few exceptions (pp. 575, 592, 597) we know nothing at all about the persons, period and method of working of the individual translators, and hence are here entirely dependent upon investigation of the individual books of G itself.”

<sup>7</sup> Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria — A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003) suggests that the LXX was prepared against the background of Homeric scholarship.

<sup>8</sup> For example, *σάββατα* (Hebrew *shabbat* and Aramaic *shabta'*) and *πάσχα* (Hebrew *pesah*, Aramaic *pasha'*).

<sup>9</sup> Jewish exegesis is visible wherever a special interpretation of the LXX is known also from rabbinic literature. Such exegesis reveals the Palestinian background or influence of at least some of the translators. For example, the “second tithe” in the LXX of Deut 26:12 (MT *shenat ha-ma'aser*, “the year of the tithe,” read as *shenit ha-ma'aser*,

and Prijs<sup>11</sup> provide examples for the post-Pentateuchal books, but the evidence is not impressive.

The Greek Torah reflects neologisms in the Greek language meant to represent some of the special Jewish customs or terms, such as the names of the festivals, for which no words existed in the Greek language.<sup>12</sup> This translation was used by Jews in their weekly ceremonial reading from the first century BCE onwards.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, Philo refers to this custom in Alexandria<sup>14</sup> and 4Macc 18:10–18, possibly written in Egypt in the first century CE, expressly mentions the reading of the Law accompanied by reflections taken from the Prophets, Psalms, and Hagiographa.

At the same time, the Jewish background of the post-Pentateuchal books cannot be proven as conclusively, although we have little doubt that Jews translated these books in the third and second pre-Christian centuries.

---

as if, “second, the tithe”) represents the rabbinic term *ma'aser sheni* (“second tithe”). For examples relating to the Torah, see Zacharias Frankel, *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig: Barth, 1851); Julius Fürst, “Spüren der palästinisch-jüdischen Schriftdeutung und Sagen in der Übersetzung der LXX,” in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Rev. Dr. Alexander Kohut* (ed. G.A. Kohut; Berlin: S. Calvary, 1897), 152–66; Leo Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition in der Septuaginta* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1948); Shmuel Safrai, “Halakha,” in *The Literature of the Sages* (ed. S. Safrai; CRINT, Section Two, 3 (Assen-Maastricht / Philadelphia: Van Gorcum / Fortress Press, 1987) 137–9. Additional literature published before 1948 on rabbinic exegesis is mentioned by Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition*, xiii and 105.

<sup>10</sup> Victor Aptowitzer, “Rabbinische Parallelen und Aufschlüsse zu Septuaginta und Vulgata, I. Die Bücher Samuelis,” *ZAW* 29 (1909): 241–52.

<sup>11</sup> Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition*, especially relating to Psalms and Proverbs.

<sup>12</sup> For example, the word ὅλοκαύτωμα (“whole-burnt offering”) was probably coined by the translators to reflect the special meaning of the *'olah* offering. Further, the Greek Torah made a distinction between two types of “altar” (*mizbeah*), a Jewish one which is rendered θυσιαστήριον, and a pagan altar rendered βῶμος. The Aramaic Targumim likewise distinguished between the Jewish *madb'ha'* and the pagan *'agora'* (literally “heap of stones”). This distinction derived from the translators' wish to differentiate between terms relating to the Jewish religion and those relating to the religions of the non-Jews.

<sup>13</sup> Early papyri of the Pentateuch from Egypt (P.Ryl. Gk. 458 [200–150 BCE] and P.Fouad 266a-c [1<sup>st</sup> century BCE]) show that the Greek translation was known in various parts of the country, but they do not necessarily prove use in religious gatherings. On the other hand, Martin Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW 223; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994) 256 does not believe that the Torah was read publicly in Greek in the pre-Christian centuries.

<sup>14</sup> Philo, *Prob.* 81–82: “They use these laws <those of the Torah> to learn from at all times, but especially each seventh day, since the seventh day is regarded as sacred. On that day they abstain from other work and betake themselves to the sacred places which are called synagogues ... Then one of them takes the books and reads.” See further Philo, *Hypoth.* 7:13; *Moses* 2:215. The existence of Greek Torah scrolls is also referred to in *m. Meg.* 1.8; 2.1 and *t. Meg.* 4.13. See further Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend*, 11–12.

There probably were no Gentiles in Egypt or elsewhere who would have had the skills to make such a trans-cultural translation, or would have had an incentive to do so.

Support for the assumption of the Jewish background of the later translations comes from the following areas:<sup>15</sup>

- a. Reliance on the Greek Torah by the later translators.<sup>16</sup>
- b. Midrashic tendencies to a very limited extent.<sup>17</sup>
- c. The Jewish background of the translation of Isaiah, as laid out in detail by I.L. Seeligmann, is reflected in several terms and ideas.<sup>18</sup>
- d. The Greek version of Proverbs includes Jewish exegesis.<sup>19</sup>

2. *Place of origin of the post-Pentateuchal books.* The Alexandrian background of the post-Pentateuchal books is presupposed by many or most scholars, but this assumption is very unlikely. The evidence for such an assumption, which is not supported by any hard data, has not been formulated, but the assumption could be supported by the following arguments:

- a. Analogy to the story about the Egyptian translation of the Torah, although this translation itself was probably produced by Palestinian experts.

**Kommentar:** Der Seitenumbruch sollte hier erhalten bleiben, da es sonst mit den Fußnoten Probleme gibt (Text auf dieser Seite, Fußnoten auf der nächsten Seite).

<sup>15</sup> Liturgical use is indicated by details in the superscriptions of many Psalms in the LXX beyond those in MT. See the views of van der Kooij described in n. 32 below. See also n. 36 below. However, this liturgical use can only have been Christian.

<sup>16</sup> See my study "The Impact of the LXX Translation of the Pentateuch on the Translation of the Other Books," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible — Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden/Boston/Cologne: E.J. Brill, 1999), 183–94.

<sup>17</sup> The evidence pertains mainly to Joshua and 1 Kings: Emanuel Tov, "Midrash-Type Exegesis in the LXX of Joshua," in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (1999), 153–63; D.W. Gooding, "Problems of Text and Midrash in the Third Book of Reigns," *Textus 7* (1969): 1–29, in both cases involving mainly Midrash-like exegesis.

<sup>18</sup> Isac L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap "Example Oriente Lux" 9; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1948), 70–121.

<sup>19</sup> Most of the discrepancies between the Hebrew and Greek versions of this book probably derived from the free translation character of the LXX, which gives us insights into the exegetical and theological world of the Alexandrian-Hellenistic Jewish community. This pertains especially to the trend in stressing the virtues of the pious and vices of the impious (see 1:10, 18, 19, 22, 31, 32) as well as to adherence to the νόμος. Thus, in 17:11 the translation implies that the *mal'akh* ("messenger," "angel") of MT is sent by the Lord. See further Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs — Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (VTSup 69; Leiden/New York/Cologne: E.J. Brill, 1997).

b. “Alexandrian” characteristics<sup>20</sup> pertaining to the Egyptian-Greek language<sup>21</sup> and connections with the Egyptian demotic language have often been invoked.<sup>22</sup>

The assumption of an Alexandrian background of the translation is so strong that one often speaks about the “Alexandrian version.”<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> For a very helpful summary, see Gilles Dorival in Marguerite Harl and Gilles Dorival and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante — Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Paris: CERF, 1988), 55–6.

<sup>21</sup> John A.L. Lee, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (SCS 14; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) showed that the LXX of the Torah reflects in many words and technical terms the Greek language of its time, that of the third century, but he did not always stress the Egyptian background, even though the parallels were found in papyri found in Egypt. Anna Passoni dell’Acqua stressed the Egyptian background of the LXX vocabulary in a long series of studies on individual words appearing in *different* books of the LXX, e.g. “La versione dei LXX e i papyri: note lessicali,” in *Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Congress of Papyrology, New York, 24–31 July 1980* (ed. R.S. Bagnall et al.; Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 621–32; “Ricerca sulla versione dei LXX e i papiri, I Pastophorion. II Nomos. III Andrizesthai,” *Aegyptus* 61 (1981): 171–211; 62 (1982): 178–94; “La terminologia dei reati nei προστάγματα dei Tolemei e nella versione dei LXX,” in *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25–31 May 1986*, III (Athens 1988), 335–50; “Notazioni cromatiche dall’Egitto greco-romano. La versione del LXX e i papiri,” *Aegyptus* 78 (1998): 77–115. See further the bibliography given by Marguerite Harl, “La langue de la Septante,” in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 243. A special type of Egyptian *couleur locale* is assumed by Jan Joosten, “Language as Symptom. Linguistic Clues to the Social Background of the Seventy,” *Textus* 24 (2007): 69–80. According to Joosten, “... the group among which the version came into being consisted largely of soldiers” (p. 80).

<sup>22</sup> Several examples are unconvincing, and most of them pertain to the Torah (Niv Alon of the Hebrew University kindly helped me to analyze these cases). The main arguments were provided by Siegfried Morenz, “Ägyptische Spuren in der Septuaginta,” *Mullus, Festschrift T. Klauser* (JbAC, Ergänzungsband I; 1964), 250–58 = id., *Religion und Geschichte des alten Ägypten. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (ed. E. Blumenthal et al.; Cologne: Böhlau, 1975), 417–28. See further: Manfred Görg, “Die Septuaginta im Kontext spätägyptischer Kultur-Beispiele lokaler Inspiration bei der Übersetzungsarbeit am Pentateuch,” in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta — Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel* (ed. H.-J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus; BWANT 153; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 115–30. The examples mentioned by Görg pertain to the representation of פִּנְחָה פִּנְחָה with ψουθομφανηχ in Gen 41:45, the rendering of רַפְּאִים as “embalmers” (ἐνταφιασταί) in Gen 50:2, the occurrence of the *ibis* in Lev 11:17 (יִנְשִׁירָה), and seven additional individual renderings. Yvan Koenig, “Quelques ‘égyptianismes’ de la Septante,” *BIFAO* 98 (1998): 223–32 (the strongest examples are the transcription Μωσσης for מֹשֶׁה and θυβις for the חֲבִיה in Exodus). For a summary of the arguments used, see Folker Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001), 186–91.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, e.g., Paul de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863) 2; Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1914), 1–28 (“The

Furthermore, not only has the Greek version been dubbed “Alexandrian,” but its Hebrew/Aramaic *Vorlage* has been likewise so named.

The following general problems should be raised against the assumption that the translation of the later Greek books was Alexandrian.

a. Are any unmistakable Alexandrian features in the realia, vocabulary, or ideas reflected in the post-Pentateuchal books? In my view, there is very little evidence. At least in the case of the Egyptian-Greek language and the possible connections with the Egyptian demotic language no convincing proofs have been provided. Below (p. 13) we will return to this issue.

b. If, as according to tradition, the Torah translators came from Jerusalem, why were the post-Pentateuchal books translated by Alexandrians? In other words, if Alexandria did not produce scholars who were able to translate the Torah, why would such translators be available after many decennia for the later books?

c. A related question: Should the canonical conception behind the LXX, different from that of MT, be considered Alexandrian even if it does not reflect any Alexandrian features?

There are no clear answers to these questions. I suggest that the default assumption for the post-Pentateuchal books should be that they were produced in Palestine, and not in Alexandria or any other part of the Jewish Diaspora (in the latter case, there is no positive evidence in favor of such an assumption). We first list the books of a probable or possible *Palestinian* origin, in order of decreasing probability.

i. The manuscripts of the Greek Esther contain a colophon<sup>24</sup> that states at the end that “it was translated by Lysimachus, the son of Ptolemaius, of the people in Jerusalem (τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ).” Most scholars accept this

---

Alexandrian Greek version”); Henry St.J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship — A Study in Origins* (The Schweich Lectures 1920; London: British Academy, 1921), 13 (“Alexandrian Bible”) and passim. My own statement in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2d rev. ed.; Minneapolis/Assen: Fortress Press/Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 134 is similarly imprecise: “G is a Jewish translation which was made mainly in Alexandria.” Equally imprecise is my statement concerning the *Vorlage* of the LXX of Jeremiah: “It was still known in the second century BCE in Egypt, when it served as the *Vorlage* for the LXX translation.” (*The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 364). Some of the references to Alexandria and Egypt were probably made inadvertently such as in the name of the following book: Hermann-Josef Stipp, *Das masoretische und alexandrinische Sondergut des Jeremiabuches — Textgeschichtlicher Rang, Eigenarten, Triebkräfte* (OBO 136; Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Elias Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” *JBL* 63 (1944): 339–62 = id., *Studies in Jewish and Christian History, Part One* (AGJU IX; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1976), 225–45; R. Marcus, “Dositheus, Priest and Levite,” *JBL* 64 (1945): 269–71.

colophon as pointing to a Palestinian origin.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, Hengel considers the translation of Esther to be a “piece of Hasmonaean propaganda among the Jews of Egypt.”<sup>26</sup>

ii. The “LXX” of Ecclesiastes was probably translated in Palestine by either Aquila or *kaige*-Th.<sup>27</sup>

iii. Sections of the “LXX” of Samuel–Kings, ascribed in modern research to *kaige*-Th (2Sam 11:2–1Kgs 2:1 and 1Kgs 22:1–2Kgs 24:15),<sup>28</sup> were translated in Palestine like the following three books.

iv. The “LXX” of Canticles.<sup>29</sup>

v. The “LXX” of Lamentations.<sup>30</sup>

vi. The “LXX” of Ruth.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> On the other hand, Benno Jacob, “Das Buch Esther bei den LXX,” *ZAW* 10 (1890): 280–90 tried to demonstrate the Egyptian character of the language of this book. This attempt has been refuted by Elias J. Bickerman who demonstrated that the words that Jacob considered to be Egyptian were common-Hellenistic: “Notes on the Greek Book of Esther,” *PAAJR* 20 (1951): 115 = id., *Studies*, 246–74 (258). See further Lewis B. Paton, *Esther* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908), 30–1.

<sup>26</sup> Martin Hengel, *The ‘Hellenization’ of Judaea in the First Century after Christ* (London/Philadelphia: SCM / Trinity Press International, 1989), 24–5.

<sup>27</sup> See Dominique Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d’Aquila* (VTSup 10; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1963), 32–3 (note the subtitle of this monograph: “sous l’influence du rabinat palestinien”); Hengel, “*Hellenization*,” 25, referring also to Canticles and Lamentations (without arguments). Kyösti Hyvärinen, *Die Übersetzung von Aquila* (ConBOT; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1977), 89–99 provides arguments against the assumption that Aquila had rendered this book, but in the case of the “LXX” of Ecclesiastes he assumes a “rabbinic recension.” Aquila was originally from Asia Minor (see Swete, *Introduction*, 31–3) and so was the historical Theodotion (see Swete, *ibid.*).

<sup>28</sup> The first to recognize the connection between the *kaige*-Th sections in Samuel–Kings with Palestine was Thackeray, *The Septuagint*, 17–8; id., “The Greek Translators of the Four Books of Kings,” *JTS* 8 (1907): 262–78 (276–7). The main arguments were provided later by Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, *passim*; Emanuel Tov, “The Methodology of Textual Criticism in Jewish Greek Scriptures, with Special Attention to the Problems in Samuel–Kings: The State of the Question: Problems and Proposed Solutions,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (1999), 489–99. Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 105 states that Thackeray and Barthélemy ascribe these sections to Alexandria, but Thackeray, *ibid.* actually ascribed the original translation to Alexandria and the revised sections (later named *kaige*-Th) to an “Asiatic-Palestinian school.” Barthélemy only speaks about Palestine.

<sup>29</sup> Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 33–4; Marguerite Harl, “La version LXX du Cantique des Cantiques et le groupe Kaige-Théodotion—Quelques remarques lexicales,” *Textus* 18 (1995): 101–20 ascribes this version to Theodotion.

<sup>30</sup> Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 33–4; Rolf Schäfer in *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (ed. A. Schenker et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004ff.), *Part 18: General Introduction and Megilloth* (ed. P.B. Dirksen et al.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004) 19\*.

<sup>31</sup> Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 33–4.

vii. Several scholars suggested that the Greek version of the Psalter originated in Palestine.<sup>32</sup> Pointing out several characteristic *kaige*-Th equivalents in the OG Psalter, among them the rendering of ׀ and ׀ with καὶ γάρ,<sup>33</sup> Venetz claimed that that version, like the *kaige*-Th revision, originated in Palestine.<sup>34</sup> This view was accepted by van der Kooij who added the argument that the Psalms headings to Psalms 24 (23), 48 (47), 94 (93), 93 (92), 92 (91) reflect a Palestinian reading cycle for the days of the week also prescribed by *m. Tamid* 7.4 (with additional days of the week).<sup>35</sup> Schaper suggests that the Psalms were translated in Palestine in the second half of the second century BCE.<sup>36</sup> In spite of all this, in my view there are no convincing arguments in favor of a Palestinian origin of this book.<sup>37</sup>

viii. Wacholder extends the evidence relating to the Greek Esther (above, i) to 1 Esdras and Daniel. These three books may have been rendered by the same hand, or at least they may have belonged to the same literary circle.<sup>38</sup> This assumption is possible but has not been proven.<sup>39</sup>

ix. The slavishly literal LXX translation of 1 Maccabees may have been produced in Palestine.<sup>40</sup>

x. Judith and Tobit were ascribed to Palestine by Mussies and Hengel.<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Hermann-Josef Venetz, *Die Quinta des Psalteriums. Ein Beitrag zur Septuaginta- und Hexaplaforschung* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1974), 80–84; Arie van der Kooij, “On the Place of Origin of the Old Greek of Psalms,” *VT* 33 (1983): 67–74.

<sup>33</sup> For example, Ps 16 (15):6; 19 (18):12; 25 (24):3.

<sup>34</sup> Venetz, *Quinta*, 80–84, emphasized greatly the Palestinian background of the noun βάρυς. Venetz’s assumption was preceded by Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 41–3.

<sup>35</sup> Albert Pietersma, “David in the Greek Psalms,” *VT* 30 (1980): 213–26: (214) considers these subscriptions secondary, while van der Kooij maintains their original status.

<sup>36</sup> Joachim Schaper, “Der Septuaginta-Psalter als Dokument jüdischer Eschatologie,” in *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (ed. M. Hengel and A.M. Schwemer; WUNT 72; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994) 38–61.

<sup>37</sup> See Olivier Munnich, “La LXX des Psaumes et le groupe *kaige*,” *VT* 33 (1983): 75–89. For a summary of the counterarguments, see Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante* 104. Dorival himself remained undecided.

<sup>38</sup> Ben Z. Wacholder, *Eupolemus, A Study of Judaeo-Greek Literature* (Cincinnati u.a.: Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion, 1974), 279. Thus also Hengel, *Hellenization*, 25 (without arguments).

<sup>39</sup> Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 106 is undecided.

<sup>40</sup> Thus Bickerman, “Colophon,” 357 = id., *Studies*, 240–41; Gerard Mussies, “Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora,” in *The Jewish People in the First Century*, (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; CRINT, II/2; Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1040–64 (1054); Hengel, *Hellenization*, 25 (both without arguments). Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 105 is undecided.

Negative arguments relating to the assumption of an Egyptian origin are also relevant: The translation could not have been produced by local Egyptians, among whom the knowledge of Hebrew no longer existed.<sup>42</sup> Further, the moving on from the translation of the Torah to that of the post-Pentateuchal books was not necessarily a logical step in Alexandria since the later books did not have the same authority as the Torah.<sup>43</sup> For example, in 50 BCE, Philo quoted mainly from the Torah and much less so from the post-Pentateuchal books,<sup>44</sup> possibly because he commented mainly on the Torah.

In any event, the Palestinian participation in the creation of the LXX was significant enough for Wacholder in order to claim that “[i]t becomes clear then that the putative attribution of the Greek Bible exclusively to ‘Alexandrian’ translators is misleading, if not false.”<sup>45</sup>

There seems to be less evidence<sup>46</sup> for the production of translations in Egypt.<sup>47</sup>

i. The grandson of Ben Sira asserts that coming from Jerusalem to Egypt he translated there the book of his grandfather on behalf of those “living abroad” (Preface to the book, 28, 34).<sup>48</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> Mussies, “Greek in Palestine,” 1054 and Hengel, *Hellenization*, 25 (both without arguments). However, other scholars ascribe these books to Alexandria. See below.

<sup>42</sup> The great majority of the synagogue and grave inscriptions as well as nearly all known proper names in Egypt are Greek; see William Horbury and David Noy, *Jewish Inscriptions of Graeco-Roman Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992) and the catalog of names in Victor Avigdor Tcherikover / Alexander Fuks, *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum* III (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1964), 167–96. See further Hengel, *Septuagint*, 80.

<sup>43</sup> Thus Barthélemy, “Pourquoi la Torah a-t-elle été traduite en grec?,” in *Études*, 322–40.

<sup>44</sup> From a total of about 2050 Biblical references in Philo’s writings, about 2000 pertain to the Torah and only about 50 to the other books, that is, a ratio of 40:1. See W.L. Knox, “A Note on Philo’s Use of the Old Testament,” *JTS* 41 (1940): 30–34; Francis Henry Colson, “Philo’s Quotations from the Old Testament,” *JTS* 41 (1940): 237–51.

<sup>45</sup> Wacholder, *Eupolemos*, 276.

<sup>46</sup> The list of probable Alexandrian books given by Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, 105–7 is somewhat exaggerated. For example, Lee, *Lexical Study*, 148 does not say that Judges is Alexandrian; Dorival does not provide real arguments in favor of the Alexandrian background of Jeremiah, Baruch, Epistle of Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

<sup>47</sup> There is no support for the assumption that the LXX was prepared in Leontopolis; see Wasserstein/Wasserstein, *Legend*, 12; Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 102–3.

<sup>48</sup> The Greek translator of Sir 50:27 refers to his grandfather as “Iesous son of Sirach, Eleazar the Hierosolymite,” but this indication of the author’s origin, referring to the Hebrew text, is found only in the LXX, and not in the corresponding Cairo Geniza Hebrew text.

ii. An Egyptian background of Isaiah has been suggested in detailed studies of Ziegler and Seeligmann,<sup>49</sup> involving evidence from Egyptian papyri (see especially Ziegler's analysis of the jewels in chapter 3).

iii. McGlinchey pointed to words and ideas that in his view show the reliance of the LXX of Proverbs on ancient Egyptian wisdom, which could point to an Egyptian background of the translation.<sup>50</sup>

iv. On the basis of several equivalents, Thackeray,<sup>51</sup> Gerleman,<sup>52</sup> and Allen<sup>53</sup> claim that the Greek translation of Chronicles displays Alexandrian characteristics.<sup>54</sup>

v. The Minor Prophets, as suggested by Thackeray.<sup>55</sup>

vi. 3 Maccabees.<sup>56</sup>

vii. 2 Maccabees written in Greek.<sup>57</sup>

viii. The Wisdom of Solomon, composed in Egypt, as suggested by Larcher.<sup>58</sup>

ix. Daniel as suggested by Eissfeldt.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaías* (ATA XII, 3; Münster i. W.: Verlag der Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934), 175–212 (pp. 203–12 refer to Isaiah 3); Seeligmann, *Isaiah*, 70–91. Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 107 is undecided.

<sup>50</sup> James M. McGlinchey, *The Teaching of Amen-em-Ope and the Book of Proverbs* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1939), 17–19, 28 reviewed critically by Gillis Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint*, III. *Proverbs* (LUÅ NF I, 52, 3; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1956), 8.

<sup>51</sup> Thackeray, "Kings."

<sup>52</sup> Gillis Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint*, II. *Chronicles* (LUÅ NF I, 43, 3; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1946), 14–21.

<sup>53</sup> Most of Gerleman's examples, some of them first suggested by Thackeray, were strengthened by Leslie C. Allen, *The Greek Chronicles*, I–II (VTSup 25, 27; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), I.21–23. The most telling examples are διάδοχος and φίλος (Ptolemaic court titles), ἱερόν (temple), παστοφόριον (= לשכה), and ὑπομνηματογράφος (= מזכיר), as well as the names of two African peoples.

<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Hengel, *Hellenization*, 25 (without arguments) considers this book to be Palestinian.

<sup>55</sup> Thackeray, *The Septuagint*, 13, 28.

<sup>56</sup> See Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)*, A New English Version Revised and Edited by Geza Vermes, Fergus Millar, and Martin Goodman (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1986) III.i., 537–42; Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 105.

<sup>57</sup> For a thorough analysis, see Schürer, *History*, III.i., 531–37.

<sup>58</sup> Chrysostome Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse ou la sagesse de Salomon* (Paris: Gabalda, 1983) [*non vidi*].

<sup>59</sup> Eissfeldt, *Introduction*, 704: "That of Daniel is almost a paraphrase rather than a translation, and in fact in general G is in many respects more a witness to the exegesis of the Hebrew text reflecting Egyptian conditions and very Greek in spirit, than a testimony to the text itself." He quotes Georg Bertram, "Die religiöse Umdeutung altorientalischer Lebensweisheit in der griechischen Übersetzung des ATs," *ZAW* 54 (1936): 153–67.

x. Tobit as suggested by Festugière.<sup>60</sup>

Summarizing this section, it seems that a better case can be made for a Palestinian rather than an Egyptian background of most books.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, Hengel concludes that “it is not so simple to distinguish between the ‘Jewish-Hellenistic literature of the Diaspora’ and the ‘genuine Jewish literature’ of Palestine.”<sup>62</sup> Was there any cooperation between the two centers? In those days a bi-national cooperation enterprise seems unlikely,<sup>63</sup> so we are left with the assumption that the translation enterprise was either mainly Palestinian or mainly Egyptian. The people involved were either Jewish sages residing in Palestine or learned men who traveled from Palestine to Egypt for this express purpose. These two options are not mutually exclusive, as the post-Pentateuchal translations may have been produced at different places on which we shall say more below.

We have evidence for the temporary move of at least the translator of Ben Sira from Palestine to Egypt in order to translate his grandfather’s book. Wacholder extends this assumption to Esther, and in the wake of these two books he suggests: “It is likely that Lysimachus of Jerusalem, to whom the Greek Esther is attributed, and Ben Sira’s grandson, who translated Ecclesiasticus, were typical; and that the work was usually done by men who had resided both in Jerusalem and in Egypt.”<sup>64</sup> Larcher extended this view to Wisdom, translated by an Alexandrian Jew of Palestinian origin.<sup>65</sup> Whatever we may think of the circumstances surrounding the translation of Esther,<sup>66</sup> there must have been close cultural

---

However, this study merely refers to the change from oriental to Hellenistic terminology and ideas and not to its possible Alexandrian background. See further R. Marcus, “Jewish and Greek Elements in the Septuagint,” *L. Ginzberg Jubilee Volume* (New York: The American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945) I., 227–45.

<sup>60</sup> André-Jean Festugière, *Les romans juifs: Tobit, Judith, Esther, Jonas* (Apt: Morel, 1976) [*non vidi*]. Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 106 is undecided.

<sup>61</sup> Thus Wacholder, *Eupolemos*, 274–9 (“Judaeon Part in the Making of the Septuagint”) and previously Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism, Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 100–102 based on his *Judentum und Hellenismus* (WUNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1969), 186–90.

<sup>62</sup> Hengel, *Hellenization*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> On the other hand, Wacholder, *Eupolemos*, 276 believes in collaboration: “A reasonable solution may be that the Septuagint represented a work of collaboration between the two main centers of third century Judaism.” However, this idea is not supported by any evidence.

<sup>64</sup> Wacholder, *Eupolemos*, 278–9.

<sup>65</sup> Thus Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 108.

<sup>66</sup> However, in my view, the implication of the colophon of Esther is that the translation was produced in Jerusalem and later deposited in Egypt. Wacholder’s scenario is somewhat different.

ties between the two communities. Palestinian sages probably translated some books in Palestine and others in Egypt, and somehow the two sets of books were viewed as one group in Egypt, which had a larger Greek-speaking community than the land of Israel, although it is not impossible that they were combined in Palestine.

In order to be in a better position to evaluate the evidence for either Palestine or Egypt, the Greek language of Palestine needs to be contrasted with that of Egypt. It may well be that the Greek of the two countries differed little. Since we happen to know more about the language of Egypt, we are more easily inclined to ascribe LXX words to an Egyptian background.<sup>67</sup> At the same time, also in certain technical areas (irrigation, administration, clothing), the terminology of the Greek Torah is probably typically Egyptian if no opposition to Palestinian Greek can be established. Thus שקל כסף was rendered in Gen 23:15 with δίδραχμων ἀργυρίου, the local currency in Hellenistic Egypt. Further, words with the compound ἀρχι-, especially such professions as τσάραρχης – פקיד (Gen 41:34 and beyond), ἀρχιδεσμοφύλαξ – שר בית הסהר (Gen 39:21–23), etc. are known from Egypt.<sup>68</sup> The ἐργοδιώκται used for נגשים (taskmasters) of Exod 3:7; 5:6–13 are also known from Egyptian papyri.

The analysis of the place of origin of the individual Septuagintal books runs parallel to that of the collection as a whole, especially the question of whether or not it reflects a so-called Alexandrian canon. The common view that the LXX reflects such a canon is difficult from the outset because it is very unlikely that a Diaspora community that had to rely on Palestinian translators would have been sophisticated enough to have its own tradition on the scope of its sacred writings in the second century BCE. Besides, the Greek books themselves are linked more to Palestine than Egypt. The main argument in favor of an Alexandrian canon seems to be the fact that that country had a greater Greek-speaking Jewish community than did Palestine. The idea of an Alexandrian canon was rejected by Sundberg in a very impressive study<sup>69</sup> that has convinced many scholars.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Thus John Lee (private communication, January 2008). To give an example, Lee describes the background of the verbs for command in the Greek Torah against the background of the vocabulary of Ptolemaic Egypt, but he might have reached a similar conclusion for Palestine had we possessed better sources for that region: “*A Lexical Study Thirty Years on, With Observations on “Order” Words in the LXX Pentateuch,*” in *Emanuel, Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S.M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden/Boston: E.J. Brill, 2003), 512–24.

<sup>68</sup> See Rösel, *Genesis*, 243.

<sup>69</sup> Albert C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church* (HTS 20; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964) updated by id., “The Septuagint: The Bible of Hellenistic Judaism,” in *The Canon Debate* (ed. L. McDonald and J.A. Sanders; Peabody,

3. *The nature of the translation enterprise.* Probably the most pervasive influence from the Epistle of Aristeas on the understanding of the post-Pentateuchal books is in the general perception of the nature of the undertaking. In the scholarly mind, the translations of these books were produced as official projects, like that of the Torah. Thackeray reflects this view when describing the translation of the Prophets as a “semi-official production” produced by a “second company, analogous to the pioneering body responsible for the Greek Pentateuch.”<sup>71</sup> In his view, yet another company produced the books of the Kingdoms.<sup>72</sup> However, there is no proof that these books were rendered by groups of translators, and therefore I prefer to think in terms of individual units. I noticed, for example, that the translations of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets have in many ways a common vocabulary,<sup>73</sup> which may well point to a single translator. The individual books assigned to the revisional activity of *kaige-Th* (see § 2 above) come closest to the perception of a group, but even there the nature of the relationship between these books is unclear.

We need not think in terms of projects, neither with regard to the Torah nor the post-Pentateuchal books. Scholars are unconsciously influenced by modern parallels involving such parameters as official beginnings and endings of projects, deadlines, and quality control. However, none of these conditions would have pertained to the ancient translators. If the translation of the Torah was indeed created within an official project, cooperation between translators may be assumed, as well as some form of quality control. However, I believe that there is sufficient evidence to show that the translation of the five books of the Torah was a one-time effort by five different translators<sup>74</sup> who did not revise their own work.<sup>75</sup> It is even

---

Mass.: Hendrickson, 2002) 68–90. The kernel of Sundberg’s ideas was foreshadowed by Paul Katz, “The Old Testament Canon in Palestine and Alexandria,” *ZNW* 47 (1956): 191–217.

<sup>70</sup> See, e.g., Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 112–19; Roger Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1986), 382–6; Hengel, *Septuagint*, 20.

<sup>71</sup> Thackeray, *The Septuagint*, 13, 28–9.

<sup>72</sup> This translation was produced in Egypt (p. 17).

<sup>73</sup> See *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch: A Discussion of an Early Revision of Jeremiah 29–52 and Baruch 1:1–3:8* (HSM 8; Missoula, Mont. 1976), 135–55. The following groups of books may also have been rendered by one individual each: 1 Maccabees – 1 Esdras – Daniel, Job–Proverbs. See Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 108.

<sup>74</sup> Thus Hayeon Kim, *Multiple Authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch*, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2007.

<sup>75</sup> This supposition is supported by cases such as the rendering of *mittah* “bed,” a relatively rare word in Late Hebrew that was not understood by the translator of Genesis.

more likely that the translations of the post-Pentateuchal books were one-time translations that were not revised subsequently by the original translators or others. This is the only assumption that provides an explanation for the frequent mistakes in the understanding of grammar, words, and contexts that were not corrected subsequently.<sup>76</sup> Each translator followed his own systems and used his own vocabulary<sup>77</sup> and there is no proof of cooperation between them although sometimes clusters of books display shared equivalents, such as פלשתי – ἀλλόφυλος from Judges onwards as opposed to Φυλιστιειμ in the Greek Torah. Such cooperation would have been difficult if these translations were produced at different times in different localities. Only in the case of the Greek Torah may we assume influence of its vocabulary on that of the later books.<sup>78</sup> Influence at the level of translations should, of course, be distinguished from influence at the Hebrew level, as in the case of Jer 9:22–23 that was inserted in the Hebrew parent text of the LXX of the Song of Hannah (1Sam 2:10).

4. *Heterogeneity of Greek Scripture.* When reviewing the nature of the collection of Greek Scripture, we are struck by its heterogeneous character. This lack of unity was caused by lack of planning at all stages of the enterprise, including the choice of the Hebrew base texts and that of the composition of the archetype of the canonical collection, and is best visible in the post-Pentateuchal books. In my opinion, from a *textual* point of view, the choice of the texts included in this collection is coincidental,<sup>79</sup> like that in the Hebrew collection, since their contents were often not

---

This translator identified מטה as *matteh* in 47:31 (“staff” – ῥάβδος as in the earlier contexts Gen 38:18, 25), thus creating an unusual context: “Then Israel bowed at the head of the bed (JPS)” — “and Israel did obeisance at the top of his staff (NETS).” Two verses later (48:2) as well as in 49:33 the translator correctly identified this word as “bed” (κλίνη), but he did not correct the earlier incorrect renderings of this word. I owe this example to James Barr, “Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators,” *VTSup* 16 (1967): 1–11 (3). By the same token, transliterations of unknown Hebrew words, such as כברה – χαβραθα in Gen 35:16; 48:7 and המחבר – τὸ μαχμα in 2 Kings 8:15, were not replaced by Greek equivalents. See my study “Loan-words, Homophony and Transliterations in the Septuagint,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 165–82.

<sup>76</sup> See my study “Did the Septuagint Translators Always Understand Their Hebrew Text?” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 203–18.

<sup>77</sup> For an example of such translator independence note the occurrence of λοιμός from 1 Samuel onwards as “pestilent”, “pestilence” (e.g. 1Sam 1:16).

<sup>78</sup> See the study quoted in n. 16.

<sup>79</sup> See my study “The Coincidental Textual Nature of the Collections of Ancient Scriptures,” in *Congress Volume Ljubliana 2007* (VTSup 133; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 153–69.

planned in the modern sense of the word.<sup>80</sup> The different books of Greek Scripture are early and late, original (OG) and revisional, very literal and extremely free. In my view, the major reason for this diversity is connected to the fact that these collections were composed by the assembling of Greek scrolls, small and large, of a different nature and background.

Consequently, the books of the LXX contain an amalgam of diverse translation units. The clearest case is that of Samuel-Kings in which 2Sam 11:2–1Kgs 2:11 and 1Kgs 22–2 Kgs 25 contain the so-called *kaige*-Th revision. Similar revisions are contained in the “LXX” of Ruth, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes.<sup>81</sup> Previous studies have been unable to explain why section βγ of Kingdoms starts in the middle of a book (at 2Sam 11:2 according to Thackeray<sup>82</sup> and Barthélemy<sup>83</sup>) and ends at 1Kgs 2:11, and why section γδ that begins at 1Kgs 22 and not at 2Kgs 1, contains a revision. My own explanation is that this alternation derived from a purely mechanical factor.<sup>84</sup> In my view, the OG translation of Jewish Scriptures required many scrolls, and large books like Samuel–Kings would have filled several scrolls.<sup>85</sup> We suggest that the archetype of the Greek 1–4 Kingdoms was composed of scrolls consisting of different translation types,<sup>86</sup> probably because the compiler of the archetype was unable to obtain scrolls of the same nature, or was unaware of their mixture. The process of compiling the archetype probably took place in the last century BCE or the first century CE.<sup>87</sup> Also, in the classical world, large compositions were subdivided into independent units (scrolls), often regardless of their content.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> Textual transmission is likewise plagued by coincidence, as are all archeological excavations. See Alan Millard, “Only Fragments from the Past: The Role of Accident in Our Knowledge of the Ancient Near East,” in *Writing and Ancient Near Eastern Society, Papers in Honour of Alan R. Millard* (ed. P. Bienkowski; New York / London: T & T Clark, 2005), 301–19.

<sup>81</sup> See n. 27.

<sup>82</sup> Henry St.J. Thackeray, “The Greek Translators of the Four Books of Kings,” *JTS* 8 (1906–1907): 262–78 (263).

<sup>83</sup> Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 141.

<sup>84</sup> See Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*.

<sup>85</sup> This assumption is not supported by Qumran evidence for *Hebrew* scrolls except for the Torah scrolls. See Emanuel Tov, *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (STDJ 54; Leiden/Boston: E.J. Brill, 2004), 181.

<sup>86</sup> 2 Samuel (2 Kingdoms) was contained in two different scrolls (2Sam 1:1–10:1; 2Sam 10:2–1 Kgs 2:11).

<sup>87</sup> See Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*, 161–8.

<sup>88</sup> See Theodor Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen in seinem Verhältniss zur Litteratur* (Berlin, 1882; repr. Aalen: Scientia, 1971), 131–40; Frederick William Hall, *A Companion to Classical Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1913), 7–8; Frederic George Kenyon, “Book Divisions in Greek and Latin Literature,” in H.M. Lydenberg / A. Keogh

Likewise, the differences in translation character between the two parts of the LXX of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1–28; Jeremiah 29–Bar 3:8 according to the LXX) may have been caused by the juxtaposition of two scrolls of a different nature.<sup>89</sup> The first scroll would have contained the OG translation, while the second one was revisional. The division point between the two types occurred exactly in the middle of the book, according to the sequence of the chapters in the LXX. Similar differences were spotted among the three segments of Ezekiel (chapters 1–27; 28–39; 40–48).<sup>90</sup>

The LXX translation became hallowed Scripture within Judaism and later within Christianity, but we should realize that ancient Jewish Greek Scripture is a very diverse and unplanned collection. From a *textual* point of view, one could even say that the fact that this specific group of Greek translations, and not another, has become Christian Scripture is coincidental. For example, had the Greek translators rendered a different form of Daniel and Esther, without the so-called Additions, the Christian canon would have been different.

5. *The gradual development of the collection of translations.* Scholars usually assume that the collection of translations grew gradually,<sup>91</sup> but very little is known about this process. Was there an organizational force at work through the decades or at any given moment? Was the translation of the canonical books assigned to certain individuals or did these individuals embark on the translation project on their own initiative? Some books may have originated in Alexandria and others in Palestine, but we did not find any proof of collaboration between the two centers. Almost by necessity there must have been a single center for these translation efforts; how else could the simultaneous preparation of two different translations of the

---

(eds.), *William Warner Bishop: A Tribute* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1941), 63–76 (especially 73–4); id., *Books and Readers in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951) 64–70; John van Sickle, “The Book-Roll and Some Conventions of the Poetic Books,” *Arethusa* 13 (1980): 5–42; Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn. / London: Yale University Press, 1995), 42–66.

<sup>89</sup> See Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*. Our view was not accepted by Sven Soderlund, *The Greek Text of Jeremiah: A Revised Hypothesis* (JSOTSup 47; Sheffield, 1985), 153–92 on which see the review by J. Gerald Janzen, “A Critique of Sven Soderlund’s *The Greek Text of Jeremiah: A Revised Hypothesis*,” *BIOSCS* 22 (1989): 16–47; Tony S.L. Michael, “Bisectioning of Greek Jeremiah: A Problem to Be Revisited?” *BIOSCS* 39 (2006): 93–104.

<sup>90</sup> See Henry St.J. Thackeray, “The Greek Translators of Ezekiel,” *JTS* 4 (1902–1903): 398–411; Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*, 135–51. On the other hand, Priscilla D.M. Turner, *The Septuagint Version of Chapters i-xxxix of the Book of Ezekiel*. Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1970 believes in the unity of the translation.

<sup>91</sup> For example, Thackeray, *The Septuagint*, 13: “Thus, it seems was the Alexandrian Bible gradually built up.”

same book be avoided?<sup>92</sup> The existence of competing translations of the same book cannot be excluded, but there is no evidence for such an assumption. Some decisions were made on matters of principle. The translator of Jeremiah, who rendered not only the fifty-two chapters of that book but also the little book of Baruch,<sup>93</sup> must have relied on a decision or tradition of some kind.

The very fact that these books were rendered into Greek does not necessarily imply that at the time of the translation the Hebrew books themselves had been accepted as binding, but it is rather likely. Other Hebrew books were also translated into Greek, namely Enoch and Jubilees, but at a later period, in the first centuries of the common era.

Beyond the lack of planning that is visible in the heterogeneous character of Greek Scripture reflected in the different translation styles (see below), there are some signs of an overall design at the final stage. There must have been an overarching plan to include translations of at least all the canonical books in the corpus of sacred Greek Scripture. One need not assume that this principle guided the creation of the translation efforts from the beginning of the rendering of the post-Pentateuchal books, but it was effective when the Greek Torah was finished. Schenker stressed that the translation of the *Nevi'im* was expected, but that of the *Ketuvim* was not.<sup>94</sup> I agree. He also surmised that such an unusually free translation technique as applied to Job would not have been used for one of the earlier books. Again, I agree. Possibly a hesitation regarding the translation style is reflected in the relatively long interval between the translation of the Torah and that of the following books, no less than 100 years.<sup>95</sup>

Both planning and lack of planning characterize the collection of Greek Scripture. The latter feature is revealed in the fact that books of a different nature appear side by side. Thus the translation of Joshua is often free, while that of its neighbor Judges, in both the A and B texts, is rather faithful to its underlying Hebrew text. It is remarkable that the same types of approaches visible in the aforementioned translations of the historical books are recognizable in the versions of the Major Prophets. Similarly, the versions of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets are rather literal, while the translation of Isaiah is free and in places very free. The book of Psalms is presented in a very literal Greek version, while the now adjacent translations of Job and Proverbs are very free and paraphrastic.

---

<sup>92</sup> I refer to translations made directly from the originals, not to translations based on other ones, such as was probably the case with the Codex Barbarini of Habakkuk 3.

<sup>93</sup> See Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*.

<sup>94</sup> Personal communication, 2008.

<sup>95</sup> For a summary of the dates assigned to the books, see Dorival in Dorival and Harl and Munnich, *Septante*, 96–8.

The collection did not necessarily grow in the book sequence of the present Greek or Hebrew canon. Usually, it is assumed that the five books of the Torah were rendered sequentially, but this assumption is not necessary if they were rendered by five different translators.<sup>96</sup> For example, according to den Hertog, the translators of Leviticus and Numbers used an existing translation of Deuteronomy.<sup>97</sup> Likewise, the present formulation of Genesis constitutes such a finished literary product that it may not have stood at the beginning of the translation activity.<sup>98</sup> Indeed, Barr expressed the opinion<sup>99</sup> that the translation of Isaiah preceded that of the Torah because of the lack of consistent translation approach in the Greek translation of Isaiah. On the other hand, Rösel reflects the *communis opinio* that Genesis was the very first translation produced.<sup>100</sup> Without any argument, Tilly assumed that the translation of the Major Prophets preceded that of the other post-Pentateuchal books.<sup>101</sup> The post-Pentateuchal books could have been prepared in any sequence, certainly if they were prepared in different centers.

6. *The Hebrew text underlying the LXX.* While it is now evident that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX did not reflect an Egyptian text-type,<sup>102</sup> it remains very relevant to find out whether we can pinpoint features of the biblical texts rendered into Greek. This issue is all the more urgent since scholars attach much importance to the argument that the *Vorlage* of the

---

<sup>96</sup> Thus Kim, *Multiple Authorship*.

<sup>97</sup> Cornelis G. den Hertog, "Erwägungen zur relativen Chronologie der Bücher Levitikus und Deuteronomium innerhalb der Pentateuchübersetzung," in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta — Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel*, 2 (ed. S. Kreuzer and J.P. Lesch; BWANT 161; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 216–28.

<sup>98</sup> See my study "Studies in the Vocabulary of the Septuagint: The Relation between Vocabulary and Translation Technique," *Tarbiz* 47 (1978): 120–38 (Heb. with Eng. summ.; German summary in *Hebräische Beiträge zur Wissenschaft des Judentums deutsch angezeigt* 1 [Heidelberg: Lambert Schneider, 1985], 148). Frank Polak, "Context Sensitive Translation and Parataxis in Biblical Narrative," in Paul, *Emanuel*, 525–39 shows how from the beginning of Genesis the translator distinguished, however hesitantly, between καὶ and δέ, the latter particle setting off the new unit from the preceding one.

<sup>99</sup> James Barr, "Did the Greek Pentateuch Really Serve as a Dictionary for the Translation of the Later Books?" in *Hamlet on a Hill. Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. M. F. J. Baasten and W. Th. van Peursen; OLA 118; Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 523–43 (539).

<sup>100</sup> Rösel, *Übersetzung*, 10, 142, 257.

<sup>101</sup> Michael Tilly, *Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 52.

<sup>102</sup> For an analysis, see Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Second Edition, Revised and Enlarged; Jerusalem Biblical Studies 8; Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 185–6.

LXX is often better than MT and all other known texts. In my view, the texts underlying the LXX are often older than MT and/or they came from circles different from those that came to be included in MT.<sup>103</sup> But there is a further complication. If some or many of the translations were translated from Hebrew texts that came from Palestine sometimes together with the translators, we need not look for Egyptian features. Even if we assume that some of the texts were transmitted or formulated in Egypt, we have not discovered any Egyptian traits in these underlying Hebrew *Vorlagen*. The difficulty is apparent in Jeremiah, since the very different Hebrew text underlying the LXX was also found in Palestine, at Qumran, in the form of 4QJer<sup>b,d</sup>. How could the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Greek translation be typical of Egypt if this text was also found at Qumran?

Most LXX books were translated from Hebrew texts imported from Palestine in the third or second centuries BCE, but some scholars believe that they were imported at an earlier date. Mantel believes that when Jeremiah went to Egypt, he and the people around him took with them many Hebrew scrolls that were later translated into Greek;<sup>104</sup> alternatively,<sup>105</sup> according to Mantel, individuals took Hebrew scrolls to Egypt in the Persian period.<sup>106</sup>

In sum, we have focused on several general questions relating to the post-Pentateuchal books, mainly the Jewishness of the LXX, the place of origin of the individual translation units, the nature of the translation enterprise, the heterogeneity of Greek Scripture, and the gradual development of the collection of translations. In our view, the research of the post-Pentateuchal books is much influenced by that of the Torah,<sup>107</sup> and

---

<sup>103</sup> “The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources,” in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible. The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuaginta Reconsidered* (ed. A. Schenker; SCS 52; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 2003), 121–44.

<sup>104</sup> Hugo Mantel, “Was There an Egyptian Version of the Bible?,” *Proceedings of the Fifth World Congress of Jewish Studies ... 1969* (Jerusalem, 1973 [Hebrew]), 183–97 (183).

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>106</sup> There is no evidence for biblical texts at Elephantine. That colony was composed of very simple people, not sages, and we have no knowledge about the public reading of the Torah in their midst. See further Dorival in Harl and Dorival and Munnich, *Septante*, 33.

<sup>107</sup> To give an example, Gzella compared the description of the translation process of the Torah in the Letter of Aristeas with the Greek translation of the Psalms even though the former only spoke about the Torah: Holger Gzella, *Lebenzeit und Ewigkeit: Studien zur Eschatologie und Anthropologie des Septuaginta-Psalms* (Berlin: Philo, 2002). See the review of this book in B.G. Wright III, “Transcribing, Translating, and Interpreting in the Letter of Aristeas on the Nature of the Septuagint,” in *Scripture in Transition, Essays*

we therefore need to create new categories of thinking for these translations.

---

*on the Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (ed. A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta; JSJSup 126; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2008) 147–61.