CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

THEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED EXEGESIS EMBEDDED IN THE

SEPTUAGINT

> Es ist eine dankbare, fruchtbare Aufgabe, solche Vorarbeiten zu machen, damit endlich auch einmal eine längst ersehnte *Theologie der Septuaginta* geschrieben werden kann. (J. Ziegler, *Die Septuaginta. Erbe und Auftrag, Festfortrag ... 1962,* 28 = *Sylloge* [Göttingen 1971] 613)

1. *Introduction*

Every translation of the Bible, or of any work dealing with one or more deities, is bound to contain theologically motivated exegesis. The Homeric songs and hymns, for example, deal extensively with the world of the gods. Thus, any translation of Homer must take positions in matters relating to these gods. It is difficult to know whether such exegesis should be termed 'theologically motivated.' In the case of the Hebrew Bible, however, almost any individual translation option is potentially a carrier of theologically motivated (henceforth: 'theological') exegesis, because of the central place of the Hebrew Bible in the religions based on it. It is, in fact, difficult to imagine a biblical translation without theological exegesis. Scholars have frequently tried to locate such exegesis in different translations, hoping to find, among other things, certain developments from one translation to the next. Among all ancient translations, the Palestinian targumim probably provide the most data on embedded theological exegesis (see Levine, *Aramaic Version*).

Like all other biblical versions, the LXX reflects theological exegesis, but probably to a lesser degree than the Aramaic targumim. Yet for many reasons scholars have paid more attention to this aspect in the LXX than to the same phenomenon in other versions.[1] For one thing, the LXX reflects a biblical text that differs considerably from MT, and knowledge

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[1] See the bibliographical appendix to my article "Die Septuaginta in ihrem theologischen und traditionsgeschichtlichen Verhältnis zur hebräischen Bibel," in M. Klopfenstein and others (eds.), *Mitte der Schrift?* (Bern 1987) 237–268; M. Harl and others, *La Bible grecque des Septante* (Paris 1988) 254–259; Dogniez, *Bibliography.*

of its (theological) exegesis could provide many helpful insights into text-critical problems. Such a prospect alone justifies an intensive study of this aspect of the LXX. But there is more at stake. Scholars are very interested to see how the content, ideas, and words of the Hebrew Bible were translated or paraphrased by translators living in the radically different Hellenistic world of Alexandria. For generations scholars have tried to detect and to delineate what the transfer of texts from Hebrew into Greek involved. How much and what type of exegesis can be detected in the translation? And to what extent does the translation contain that special type of exegesis that we name 'theological exegesis'? One should always bear in mind that theological exegesis reflects but one aspect of the general area of exegesis, and that it can neither be separated from the translators' approach towards exegesis, nor from our approach to translation in other matters. There is another plausible explanation for the interest of scholars in the theological renderings of the Greek translators, an explanation that may well point to the major reason for this special interest in the LXX. In many respects the content, vocabulary, and ideas of the New Testament continue the world of the LXX. Moreover, the New Testament contains a plethora of theological terms; that is, many of its words, even common ones, have deep theological meanings. Many of these have been studied often by generations of clergymen and scholars. These studies did not leave the LXX untouched, since it was recognized that the special vocabulary of the New Testament was created in the LXX. Therefore along with the interest in the theology of the New Testament, a special interest developed in the theological background of the LXX.

By way of contrast, I have always preferred to ascribe deviations of the LXX from MT to factors other than theological *Tendenz*. However, while it may be true that books which reflect an easily perceived degree of theological exegesis form a minority within the LXX canon, it is clear that there are such books. It is also clear that relatively minor amounts of theological exegesis are found in almost all books of the LXX, but more substantial quantities are found in Isaiah, Daniel, Job, and Proverbs. Not only do these books reflect many *theologoumena*, but most of the examples of theological exegesis in the LXX derive, in fact, from them.

The Greek form of these books does not reflect a systematic theological system, but individual *theologoumena*, to be exemplified below. Therefore one should not isolate theological exegesis from other aspects of the translation. The books of the LXX contain no special theological message vis-à-vis their Hebrew text, and their layer of theological exegesis is only part of a much wider stratum of (very) free

exegesis in a variety of matters. Those who minimized the existence of theological exegesis were probably negatively influenced by the exaggerated remarks in the literature, which discovered *theologoumena* in almost every word of the LXX.

One such exaggerated approach is visible in the work of the scholars contributing to *ThDNT*, a work that contains also extensive information on the vocabulary of the LXX. Since many words in the New Testament were described as theological, often rightly so, this perception was projected back to the LXX, mostly without justification. The dangers of this approach have been pointed out at length by J. Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (Oxford 1961).

Theological exegesis of the LXX may be defined as any theological element added to the source text by the translation. A similar definition applies to other forms of exegesis as well. See *TCU*, 45–46.

The exegetical layer of the LXX consists of elements added as well as omitted. Most exegetical elements, however, are reflected in the lexical choices themselves, which were influenced by the immediate context and the conceptual world of the translators.

Among these exegetical elements, theological exegesis is quite prominent. It may relate to the description of God and His acts, the Messiah, the exile as well as the whole spectrum of religious experiences.

A translation may also reflect the intellectual background of its translator(s). This background may be partly reconstructed by the recognition of ideas and knowledge reflected in the choice of terms or methods of expression in the translation. Such ideas and knowledge are both idiosyncratic and culturally conditioned. It is not easy, however, to identify such elements and to distinguish between the two strands (personal, cultural). This is all the more so in the case of the LXX, since its Hebrew *Vorlage* is not sufficiently known.

2. *Theological exegesis in the LXX*

The fact that the LXX is a translation should guide every detail of our analysis of the theological exegesis of the LXX. All elements in the translation somehow relate to the Hebrew Bible: they either reflect their Hebrew counterparts or they are additions to certain elements in the Hebrew Bible. We do not turn to elements common to both, for these provide no indication of the intellectual and religious world of the translators. Nor are we interested in elements in the LXX that presumably reflect Hebrew readings different from MT, even though they may bear on theological issues. We focus only on the (Greek)

elements which the translation has in excess of the Hebrew, or which have been deleted from the Hebrew, for in these elements we can often recognize the mind(s) of the translator(s) and the world in which they lived.

We approach the LXX as a translation and not as a basic source, despite the fact that the LXX was for some ancients a primary authoritative source, viz., for its Hellenistic Jewish readers, some of the authors of the New Testament, and some Church Fathers. These readers of the LXX often read and understood the translation in a way different from that likely to have been intended by the translators (cf. Tov, "Dimensions"*), especially in matters bearing on theology. When analyzing the theology of the LXX translation we must try to disassociate ourselves from the layer of exegesis that has been attached to the LXX by the above-mentioned groups.

Focusing on the theological tendencies of the translators, we have no other source of information than the LXX itself. There are no external sources bearing on this issue (e.g., inscriptions, descriptions such as could have been included in the *Epistle of Aristeas*).

a. *Individual equivalents*

The LXX is a heterogeneous collection of translation units, so that no homogeneous theological approach should be expected in it. That is, there are no theological traits common to all the books of the Greek canon. Only a few books reflect theological exegesis, and even they differ one from another, so it is not surprising that no common theological features can be discerned in the LXX. The only area in which shared theological exegesis might be expected is that of the common LXX vocabulary. For example, the almost universal rendering of יהוה (the Lord) is κύριος, also used for אדני. If there is a theological conception behind this word choice, it may have been shared by all the translators. Likewise, if there is a theological motivation behind the choice of θεός for אלהים (God), of νόμος for תורה (Law) and of διαθήκη for ברית (covenant), the translators would again share a theological conception with respect to these word choices.

But this is not the case. Common renderings do not necessarily imply a common stance on matters of exegesis. Some equations of Hebrew and Greek words certainly carried theological overtones when they were first introduced into the area of biblical translation—probably at first orally in Jewish-Greek circles—but this exegetical element was not realized on each occasion when the word was used. For example, although when the equivalents יהוה - κύριος and תורה - νόμος were first used, they may have

carried certain theological overtones. The first translators seem quickly to have forgotten such implications, since they often merely rendered Hebrew words or roots automatically with the same Greek equivalents. The way in which some equivalents were used almost exclusively for all occurrences of their Hebrew counterpart makes it unlikely that the first translators were fully aware of the semantic content of their renderings in each individual case. Many examples of the automatic use of equivalents by the first translators, that is, the translators of the Torah, can be given. It is even more the case for the later translators who accepted the translation vocabulary from their predecessors. The later translators depended on the translation of the Torah to the extent that it even served them as a dictionary (see Tov, "Pentateuch"*).

In point of fact, the presence of theological exegesis in standard renderings is rare. The majority of translation equivalents derive from linguistic identifications of a given Hebrew root or word with a Greek equivalent; as such they are of more importance for our understanding of the linguistic knowledge of the translators than for our understanding of their conceptual world.

This is not a uniformly accepted view. Various scholars consider even many of the standard renderings of the LXX to have been theologically motivated. Long ago A. Deissmann claimed that 'the Bible whose God is Yahweh is a national Bible; the Bible whose God is κύριος is a universal Bible.'[2] Similar to Deissmann's view is that of C.H. Dodd, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London 1935) who opines that the renderings of יהוה by κύριος, of אלהים by θεός, and of ברית by διαθήκη are determined by theological factors. Dodd makes similar claims both for the standard rendering of תורה by νόμος and for various other words in the realm of religion (the names of God, words for righteousness, mercy and truth, sin and atonement).

However, it is questionable whether many of the equivalents used by the first translators (of the Torah) were indeed determined by theological or by other tendencies. For one thing, it is frequently difficult to distinguish between shades of meanings in the Hebrew and Greek. In the case of ברית (covenant) however this is not difficult. Did, then, the standard rendering of ברית by διαθήκη really reflect a certain theological view? In our view it did not. It simply reflected a certain view of the meaning of ברית in the Torah. See Tov, "Dimensions,"* for details. The equivalent is exegetical; it also had theological implications for the

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[2] "Die Bibel deren Gott Yahveh heisst, ist die Bibel eines Volkes, die Bibel deren Gott κύριος heisst, ist die Weltbibel," *Neue Jahrbücher für das klassische Altertum* 11 (1903) 174.

readers of the LXX, but for the translators themselves it involved only semantic exegesis.

The identification of the root צדק (to be righteous) with δικαιο- (e.g. צדיק - δίκαιος) was accepted by most of the LXX translators because the two words cover each other relatively well. At the same time, this lexical choice has given rise to an interesting semantic development within Greek: in classical Greek the stem δικαιο- is used mainly with regard to the relationship between human beings, but in the LXX (as a result of its Hebrew source) it refers predominantly to the relationship between man and God. In our view, the special use of δικαιο- in the LXX does not reflect any theological tendency of the translators, but it is an inevitable result of the identification of the roots צדק and δικαιο-. This is an example of an equivalent in which many scholars have recognized (theological) exegesis, or a shift in meanings, while in our view the differences between the LXX and MT resulted from a process of lexical identification coupled with the technique of stereotyped translation. By the same token it is not likely that the translators understood a different nuance in the meaning of δικαιοσύνη that according to Schreiner refers in classical Greek to 'the virtue of human justice' and denotes 'the mighty aid of God' in the LXX.[3]

A slightly more complicated case is the standard LXX translation of גר with προσήλυτος. See Tov, "Dimensions."* The equivalence גר - προσήλυτος reflects the linguistic, rather than the theological background of the translators.

Similarly negative results are obtained from the analysis of the equivalents אלהים - θεός (God), שלום - εἰρήνη (peace), and נפש - ψυχή (soul). J. Barr has demonstrated that also ἀγάπη (love) in the LXX for אהבה is not 'theologically motivated at all but has its basis in purely linguistic features.'[4]

Most of the renderings reflect linguistic and semantic identifications, which as a rule did not imply further forms of exegesis, such as theological exegesis. While the choice of these translation equivalents certainly had theological implications for generations of LXX readers, as a rule they did not have such implications for the translators themselves. Thus, in our view θεός was a logical choice for אלהים just as κύριος was

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[3] J. Schreiner, "Hermeneutische Leitlinien in der Septuaginta," in: O. Loretz und W. Strolz (eds.), *Schriften zur Weltgespräch 3. Die hermeneutische Frage in der Theologie* (Freiburg 1968) 391.

[4] "Words for Love in Biblical Greek," in: L.D. Hurst and N.T. Wright (eds.), *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament, Studies in Christology in Memory of G.B. Caird* (Oxford 1987) 3–18. The quotation is from p. 5.

for יהוה (pronounced *adonay*) νόμος for תורה, δικαιοσύνη for צדק, ἀγάπη for אהבה, ψυχή for נפש, etc. Although in these equivalents, as well as in others, theological exegesis has sometimes been postulated, for many other stereotyped equivalents no such exegesis is found, e.g., שמש - ἥλιος, אב - πατήρ, אם - μήτηρ, שם - ὄνομα. Thus some words have no theological implications at all. Thus Seeligmann, *Isaiah*, 96–97:

> The question is, to what extent the Greek terms employed were, in the translator's mind, charged with a significance, which caused the original biblical picture to be shifted to another plane of thought. In attempting to answer this question, we should not, of course, assume that the translator, in using these terms, was fully aware of their etymological evolution or the development of their signification, both of which have been determined only by modern science; neither are we justified in assuming that he took full account of all the religio-historic or religio-philosophic implications which might eventually be placed upon his choice of words.

At the same time, some renderings do reflect theological exegesis.

α. The translator(s) of the Latter Prophets (except for Isaiah) who rendered the phrase יהוה צבאות (literally: the Lord of armies) consistently with κύριος παντοκράτωρ (the Lord omnipotent) must have had a certain view of the nature of the Hebrew phrase. For him (them) צבאות included not just a body of 'angels' or 'armies,' but it encompassed everything. Thus, when choosing this rendering, the translator(s) exegetically rendered the Hebrew, at the same time that he (they) opted for a term also known from the world of the Greek gods, some of whom were described as παντοκράτωρ. For details, see Tov, "Dimensions."*

β. The translators of the Torah made a consistent distinction between a Jewish altar (מזבח - θυσιαστήριον) and a pagan altar (βωμός); the Aramaic targumim similarly distinguished between the Jewish מדבחא and the pagan אגורא (viz., 'heap' of stones).[5] This distinction undoubtedly derived from the translators' wish to differentiate the Jewish religion from that of the non-Jews (θυσιαστήριον, a neologism in the Greek language, was probably coined by the translators or at least within Jewish Alexandria). Interestingly enough, the altar erected by Aaron in Exod 32:5 for the golden calf was not named βωμός, but θυσιαστήριον, as in the Aramaic targumim (מדבחא), probably so as to minimize his sins, a tendency also reflected in the medieval commentaries. Daniel, *Recherches*,

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[5] For similar cases, see the distinction between idolatrous priests (כומרי ") and priests of God (כהני ",כהניא), idols (טעוו ",טעוותא) and God (אלהי ",אלהיא). See L. Smolar and M. Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan* (New York/Baltimore 1983) 154.

who described and documented in detail the different renderings of מזבח, also provided a few additional examples of distinctions made by the translators between cultic and profane uses of words: the cultic במה (high place) as opposed to the non-cultic במות (mountains); the cultic and non-cultic לחם (bread); and מנחה - 'sacrifice' as opposed to 'gift.'

γ. A much quoted example is that of ἀνομία (literally: lawlessness) and ἄνομος (lawless). Νόμος, the constant equivalent of תורה (law, 'Law'), must have played a very important part in Jewish Alexandria. It was only natural that the more one talked about the importance and virtues of the νόμος, the more frequently negative aspects of life would be described as opposed to the νόμος. It was recognized long ago by Flashar[6] that for the translator of Psalms ἀνομία (lack of νόμος) was often used to designate various forms of transgressions and irreligious-ness. Thus, according to this translator all these transgressions constitute sins against the νόμος, the Law. A similar trend is visible in Isa 57:4 where זרע שקר (offspring of deceit) is rendered by σπέρμα ἄνομον (offspring without νόμος).

The aforementioned analysis referred to possible theological exegesis observable in stereotyped renderings. The following discussion centers upon *theologoumena* extant in the renderings of individual words, omissions, and additions.

b. *Addition of details pertaining to the religious background*

α. The translations of the LXX and L of Esther fill in the religious background of the book that is lacking in MT. Likewise, the long Additions to that book, deriving from the same hand as the main translation of the LXX and L, fill in various details in the story. Thus, in MT, Esther is not concerned about dietary laws when she dines with the king, but in Add C 27–28 she is extremely concerned about this issue (LXX and L text). D 8 mentions God's intervention and C 20 mentions the temple. See the detailed analysis in Tov, "Esther,"* section iv 4.

β. Isa 5:13 (לכן גלה עמי מבלי דעת) is rendered as '... because they do not know the Lord.'

γ. This phenomenon is particularly frequent in Proverbs, as recognized especially by Bertram and Gerleman.[7] Proverbs contains a

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[6] M. Flashar, "Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter," *ZAW* 31 (1912) 81–116; 161–189; 241–268.

[7] G. Bertram, "Die religiöse Umdeutung altorientalischer Lebensweisheit in der griechi-schen Übersetzung des Alten Testaments," *ZAW* 54 (1936) 152–167; G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint* (LUA NF 1,52,3; Lund 1956) 36–57. In spite of the general title of Bertram"s article, it deals almost exclusively with Proverbs.

combination of secular and religious wisdom, so that religious interpretations are not foreign to the Hebrew book. However, the Greek translation contains more religious interpretations than its Hebrew source, and much of this layer has evidently been added by the translator, e.g.:

Prov 3:18   (עץ חיים היא) למחזיקים בה ותמכיה מאשר
             (She [wisdom] is a tree of life) to those who lay hold of
             her; those who hold her fast are called happy (RSV).
             καὶ τοῖς ἐπερειδομένοις ἐπ' αὐτὴν ὡς ἐπὶ κύριον
             ἀσφαλής
             ... and she is secure for all those who support themsel-
             ves on her, *as on the Lord*

In this translation wisdom is reinterpreted as God.

Prov 13:15   שכל טוב יתן חן
             Good sense wins favour.
             (1) σύνεσις ἀγαθὴ δίδωσιν χάριν, (2) τὸ δὲ γνῶναι *νόμον*
             διανοίας ἐστὶν ἀγαθῆς
             Sound discretion gives favour, and to know *the Law* is
             the part of a sound understanding.

It stands to reason that in this double translation, the free one mentioning νόμος (2) is original, while the literal one was added subsequently. This rendering, possibly influenced by νόμος σοφοῦ in the previous verse, transfers secular wisdom to the religious realm. It has also been added to the LXX of 9:10. Likewise, T^J often identifies דעת (knowledge) with אוריתא (e.g., Isa 28:9; 40:14; Hos 6:6).[8]

Especially frequent in this translation is the reinterpretation of non-religious words as religious terms. Often the ἀσεβεῖς, the ungodly, are brought into the picture:

Prov 1:7   חכמה ומוסר *אוילים* בזו
             Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
             σοφίαν δὲ καὶ παιδείαν *ἀσεβεῖς* ἐξουθενήσουσιν
             The *ungodly* despise wisdom and instruction.
     3:35   *וכסילים* מרים קלון
             ... but disgrace exalts *fools*.
             οἱ δὲ *ἀσεβεῖς* ὕψωσαν ἀτιμίαν

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[8] For further examples and a discussion, see P. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (Yale Oriental Series XIV) 122–123.

... but the *ungodly* exalted disgrace.

Likewise, ἀσεβής is introduced in the translation as an equivalent of רשע
(wicked) passim in Proverbs (as well as in Job and Psalms), of כסיל (fool)
in 1:22, 32; 13:19, and of a few other words.

In this translator's picture of the world, mankind is divided into
'poor' and 'rich,' 'good' and 'bad,' 'just' and 'unjust,' even more than in
the Hebrew source. The Greek translator loses no opportunity to add
such adjectives to the translation or to change existing ones.

Prov 16:7   ברצות ה׳ דרכי איש גם אויביו ישלם אתו
When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his
enemies to be at peace with him (RSV).

15:28a   δεκταὶ παρὰ κυρίῳ ὁδοὶ ἀνθρώπων δικαίων διὰ δὲ αὐτῶν
καὶ οἱ ἐχθροὶ φίλοι γίνονται
The ways of the *righteous* men are acceptable with the
Lord, and through them even enemies become friends.

19:22   ... וטוב רש מאיש כוב
... and a poor man is better than a liar.
κρείσσων δὲ πτωχὸς δίκαιος ἢ πλούσιος ψεύστης
... and a *righteous* poor man is better than a *rich* liar.

For similar additions of δίκαιος in Proverbs, see 3:9; 10:17; 12:25 and for a change
along these lines, see 16:9 (LXX 15:29b).

c. *Messianic interpretations.*

Although there is not as much evidence for messianic interpretation in
the LXX as some scholars would like to believe,[9] the translation of
Numbers 24 does contain two instances of such exegesis:

Num 24:7   יזל מים מדליו וזרעו במים רבים
Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall be
in many waters (RSV).
ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ
κυριεύσει ἐθνῶν πολλῶν

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[9] See the material analyzed by J. Lust, "Messianism and Septuagint," *VTSup* 36 (1985)
174–191; "The Greek Verson of Balaam's Third and Fourth Oracles. The ἄνθρωπος in Num
24:7 and 17. Messianism and Lexicography," in Greenspoon–Munnich, *VIII Congress*, 233-
257; "Septuagint and Messianism, with a Special Emphasis on the Pentateuch," in H. Graf
Reventlow (ed.), *Theologische Probleme der Septuaginta und der hellenistischen Hermeneutik*
(Projektgruppe Biblische Theologie, Tagungen in Pforzheim, 1993 und 1994; Gütersloh
1997) 26-45. Lust himself is very cautious; note, for example, the titles of the articles (not:
Messianism in the Septuagint).

A *man* shall come out of his seed, and he shall rule over
many nations.

Num 24:17   דרך כוכב מיעקב וקם שבט מישראל

A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a scepter shall
rise out of Israel (RSV).

ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακωβ καὶ ἀναστήσεται ἄνθρωπος
ἐξ Ἰσραηλ

A star shall come forth out of Jacob, and a *man* shall rise
out of Israel.

The unusual word choices in both verses make it very probable that the Greek
translator, as well as the targumim, explained these verses as referring to the
Messiah. Likewise the translation of Gen 49:10 probably reflects such exegesis in
several unusual word choices.

d. *Some* theologoumena *of the translator of Isaiah*

α. The translator of Isaiah[10] frequently used δόξα (glory), not only as the
standard translation of כבוד (honor, glory), but also as an equivalent of
several other words, especially with reference to God (אוֹן, גאות, הדר,
הוד, חסד, יפי, עז, תפארת). He even inserted it in the translation against MT,
e.g. Isa 6:1 ושוליו מלאים את ההיכל, LXX: 'and the house was full of his
glory (δόξα).' Hence, for the translator of Isaiah, δόξα is one of the central
characteristics of God.[11]

   β. The idea that God brings σωτήριον (salvation), referring parti-
cularly to salvation from the exile, has often been inserted into the LXX
against MT. E.g., Isa 38:11 לא אראה יה יה בארץ החיים has been rendered as
'I shall no more see at all the salvation of God...'. Isa 40:5 (ונגלה כבוד ה')
וראו כל בשר יחדו כי פי ה' דבר has been rendered as 'and all flesh shall see
the salvation of God.'

e. *Anti-anthropomorphic renderings*

Although the translators generally felt free to render literally verses or
words in which God is portrayed anthropomorphically, in some
instances anthropomorphic expressions were avoided. A few examples
of such renderings are: Num 12:8 ותמנת ה' יביט has been changed in the

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[10] For a description of this translator's theological inclinations, see Seeligmann, *Isaiah*,
95–121 ('The translation as a document of Jewish-Alexandrian theology') and A. van der
Kooij, "Zur Theologie des Jesajabuches," in: H.G. Reventlow (ed.), *Theologische Probleme*
(see n. 9 above) 9–25.

[11] See L.H. Brockington, "The Greek Translator of Isaiah and His Interest in δόξα," *VT* 1
(1951) 23–32.

translation to 'and he beholds the δόξα (glory) of the Lord.' Exod 4:24 'ויפגשהו ה has become 'the angel of the Lord met him.' The MT of Exod 24:10 says about Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel ויראו את אלהי ישראל. The directness of this expression has been toned down in the Greek translation to 'and they saw the place where the God of Israel stood.' In Josh 9:14 ואת פי ה' לא שאלו the word 'mouth' has been omitted in the translation. The existence of such presumed anti-anthropomorphic renderings has been emphasized by Fritsch,[12] but their number is actually much smaller than it would seem at the outset, as shown by Orlinsky and his students in a series of monographs.[13]

Likewise, the LXX consistently avoided a literal translation of צור (rock) as an appellation of God. The most frequent equivalents are θεός (God), βοηθός (helper), φύλαξ (guardian) and ἀντιλήμπτωρ (protec-tor).[14]

3. *Limitations*

The LXX translation reflects merely some *theologoumena* in a few freely translated books as well as several theologically motivated individual renderings, both the ones that occur occasionally and ones that occur often in the LXX. Therefore, to speak of a *Theologie der Septuaginta* (thus J. Ziegler, quoted in the beginning of this study) may be not only an overstatement, but also an ideal that can never be obtained, unless one defines the term 'theology' very loosely. References to the 'theology' of the LXX that are not based on concrete examples in given translation units, rather than in the LXX as a whole, are therefore of very limited value. Hence, the many articles written, for example, by Bertram did not do scholarship a good service. The names of these articles are very impressive, referring to such matters as "Zur Prägung der biblische Gottesvorstellung in der griechischen Übersetzung des Alten Testaments" (*WO* 2 [1954–1959] 502–513); "Vom Wesen der Septuaginta-Frömmigkeit" (*WO* 2 [1954–1959] 274–284); and "Der religionsgeschicht-liche Hintergrund der Erhöhung in der Septuaginta" (*ZAW* 68 [1956] 57–71; this study does not even mention any specific LXX texts.). However, the content of none of these articles does justice to the titles. Likewise, the section headings in J. Schreiner's study quoted in n. 3 ('Zur Gottesvorstellung der Septuaginta,' 'Vom Menschenbild der

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[12] Ch.F. Fritsch, *The Anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (Princeton 1943).

[13] For bibliographical references, see Tov, "Die Septuaginta" (see n. 1) 257.

[14] For details, see A. Wiegand, "Der Gottesname צור und seine Deutung in dem Sinne Bildner und Schöpfer in der alten Jüdischen Literatur," *ZAW* 10 (1890) 85–96; A. Passioni dell' Acqua, "La metafora biblica di Dio Roccia e la sua soppressione nelle antiche versioni," *Ephem. Liturgicae* 91 (1977) 417–453.

griechischen Bibel') should have been phrased more modestly, since there is insufficient information about these two subjects. Schreiner jumps from one book to the other although the LXX is a mere collection of books translated by different translators. The background of each of these units has constantly to be taken into consideration; any unit or series of units should never be taken as representative for other translation units. For example, Schreiner as well as Bertram before him, draws conclusions from the rendering of the divine name שדי as ὁ ἱκανός in Ruth 1:20 ff. However, this translation unit was rendered by *kaige*-Th and this reviser followed the midrash-type exegesis of שדי as שֶׁ-דַי, 'he who is sufficient.' No conclusions should be drawn for the LXX as a whole, nor even for the little book of Ruth. Likewise, the LXX translation does not display signs of what Schreiner (p. 375) calls in the wake of others 'jüdisches Erwählungsbewusstsein.'

Yet another example may be adduced to show how difficult it is to draw conclusions about the tendencies reflected in the LXX. On the basis of the following two verses Bertram, *ThWNT* II, 643–4, s.v. ἔργον, claimed that 'the negative attitude of Hellenistic Judaism to work decisively affects the text':

Gen 3:17   ארורה האדמה בעבורך
             Cursed is the ground because of you.
             ἐπικατάρατος ἡ γῆ ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις σου
             Cursed is the ground *in your labors.*

Gen 8:21   לא אסף לקלל עוד את האדמה בעבור האדם
             I will never again curse the ground *because of man.*
             οὐ προσθήσω ἔτι τοῦ καταράσασθαι τὴν γῆν διὰ τὰ ἔργα
             τῶν ἀνθρώπων
             I will not curse the ground any more *because of the works of men.*

However, the root עבד that underlies the translation reflects a Hebrew source or one in the translator's mind because of the context in both verses, where the tilling of the ground is implied (3:17) or suggested itself to the translator (8:21). For a similar rendering see Jer 14:4 בעבור האדמה - καὶ τὰ ἔργα τῆς γῆς.

If the difficulties described here are taken into consideration, and if each translation is analyzed separately, several theological ideas can nevertheless be isolated in the LXX, as described in section 2.