CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

APPROACHES TOWARDS SCRIPTURE EMBRACED
BY THE TRANSLATORS OF GREEK SCRIPTURE

This study focuses on the philosophy behind the approaches of ancient translators towards Hebrew/Aramaic Scripture. The background of these approaches can be researched more easily now than two generations ago, as the recently discovered Hebrew/Aramaic and Greek manuscripts from the Judean Desert provide us with new insights into individual scribes and translators from antiquity.[1] The major focus in this discussion is upon the general approaches of translators, which are usually expressed in terms of "freedom" and "literalism" in the case of translators and "carefulness" and "carelessness" when referring to scribes, while realizing that these terms are very general.

The approaches of the anonymous translators are evaluated solely on the basis of internal evidence, since they did not describe their approaches to the text.[2] At the same time, a few remarks on the difficulties of the translator in finding the right equivalences in the receptor language were made by Ben Sira's grandson in the preface to his Greek translation of his grandfather's Hebrew text,[3] and impressions

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[1] In addition, even the scribal approach of the *Urexemplar* of MT can be researched occasionally through its medieval representatives when these details are compared with sources from antiquity.

[2] From a different world, see Cicero's remarks on translation types when discussing his own translations of Easchines and Demosthenes (*De optimo genere oratorum* § 14). See, further, Cicero's general remarks on translation in *De finibus* § 3.15 as well as Horatius, *Ars poetica* 133. For the references, I am indebted to Brock, "Aspects" and idem, "Phenomenon." Both studies will be discussed below.

[3] 0:15-24: παρακέκλησθε οὖν μετ' εὐνοίας καὶ προσοχῆς τὴν ἀνάγνωσιν ποιεῖσθαι καὶ συγγνώμην ἔχειν ἐφ' οἷς ἂν δοκῶμεν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν πεφιλοπονημένων τισὶν τῶν λέξεων ἀδυναμεῖν οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς Ἑβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῆ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι. In Wright's translation (p. 637): "You are invited, therefore, to give a reading with goodwill and attention and to have forbearance for those things where we may seem to lack ability in certain phrases, despite having labored diligently in the translation. For those things originally in Hebrew do not have the same force when rendered into another language; and not only these things, but also the Law itself and the Prophets and the rest of the books are not a little different when expressed in the originals." As stressed by B. G. Wright III, "Why a Prologue? Ben Sira's Grandson and His Greek Translation," in Paul,

of this activity are also embedded in the legendary description of the creation of the Greek translation of the Torah in the Epistle of Aristeas.[4] Jos. *Ant.* XII 45–115 likewise describes the difficulties encountered by the translators in transferring the message of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. In a later period, Jerome described the background of his contextual translation of Hebrew Scripture into Latin.[5] One can easily be impressed by the wealth of evidence adduced as parallels to the work of the translators, but it should not be forgotten that these are mere parallels, and our only source for the study of the Greek translations is an analysis of their translation technique.

With regard to scribes, much can be learned from rabbinic prescriptions relating to the copying and transmitting of Hebrew Scripture, such as recorded in rabbinic literature.[6] These prescriptions were often adhered to in the proto-Masoretic manuscripts found at the Judean Desert sites other than Qumran (see chapter 12*). However, we should not assume that the rabbinic prescriptions were carried out exactly as they were recorded in the literature. For one thing, they only pertain to a specific group of manuscripts and scribes. Furthermore, the manuscripts from the Judean Desert preceded the date of the prescriptions in rabbinic literature by several centuries.

In a way, it is easier to analyze the approaches of ancient translators than those of scribes of Hebrew/Aramaic Scripture since we know more about the *Vorlagen* of the former than of the latter. In both cases, the texts used remain unknown but, with the aid of reconstruction procedures, the *Vorlagen* of translators are better known than those of individual scribes. In its turn, such reconstructed information can be used in the analysis of the translators' approach towards these *Vorlagen*. Thus, in the case of translations that were based on the (proto-)rabbinic text (MT), namely the Vulgate, Targumim, and Peshitta (to a lesser degree), we can allow ourselves a judgment on how these translators approached their *Vorlagen.* But even when the translation was executed from a Hebrew text other than MT, we can often express a view on the translator's approach, especially when agreements between the Greek version and a Qumran manuscript provide that extra assurance in the reconstruction of the underlying parent text of the Greek. Obviously such an evaluation leans to some degree on circular reasoning and intuition, but despite this

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Emanuel, 633–44, this introduction is exceptional insofar as the grandson felt the need to remark at all on the translation, its nature, and background.

   [4] § 310–11.
   [5] Epistle to Pammachius, 57.
   [6] See *Scribal Practices*, 274–6**.**

subjectivity we can form a reasonably well-based opinion about the approach of translators when comparing their creations with the assumed *Vorlagen* even when they differed from MT. Less abstractly, 4QSam[a] helps us in analyzing the approach of the Greek translator of Samuel, and 4QJer[b] and 4QJer[d] are of help in describing the system used by the Greek translator of Jeremiah.

The approaches of translators to their *Vorlagen* have been analyzed from the beginning of the critical investigation of the Ancient Versions (AVs). The methods of investigation have improved over the generations, but already at an early stage scholars recognized the importance of a correct understanding of the translation technique for all aspects of the analysis of the translation. The two basic approaches recognized in the translations were usually named (1) "literal," "wooden," "stereotyped," "faithful," or "careful"; and their opposites, (2) "free," "contextual," or when exceedingly free, "paraphrastic." Such characterizations referred to renderings of individual words, syntagmata, and clauses, but if a certain characterization pertained to the translation unit as a whole, that complete unit (book) was dubbed a "literal" or "free" translation. The translator of such a unit was either described as someone who tried to be "faithful" to the underlying Hebrew text or who let his imagination run freely while transferring the details of the source text into the target language. Between these two opposite approaches, many gradations and variations may be discerned, from extremely paraphrastic (to the extent that the wording of the parent text is hardly recognizable) to slavishly faithful. Thus, in the Palestinian Targumim, it is often difficult to pinpoint the exact words in the source text behind elements in the translation. But all generalizations are problematic since, with the exception of some extremely free and literal translation units, most translations fall somewhere between the two extremes. Still, even in this intervening area, most versions are closer to either the "free" or "literal" model. Although there is room for further research in this area, the theoretical background has been covered well in J. Barr's lucid analysis.[7] In our view,[8] literalness (faithfulness to the *Vorlage*) implies (1) the separate representation of all elements (sometimes down to the level of individual morphemes) of the base text, (2) adherence to the word sequence, (3) the internally consistent rendering of all words, as far as possible, with the same equivalent, and (4) an attempt to represent the words in an etymologically adequate

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[7] Barr, *Literalism*.
[8] *TCU,* 17–35.

way.[9] One may characterize free translations by features that are diametrically opposed to those ascribed to literal ones.

AVs that were not produced by single individuals—such as Jerome's Latin translation of the complete Scripture—differ much internally with regard to the translation character of the individual books. We now turn our attention to these internal differences in the LXX, specifically the question of how the different types of translation systems *within* the corpus of a certain AV relate to one another.[10] We first discuss a few general principles.

a. *Multiple authorship*. Unless proven otherwise, it is assumed that each translation unit in the LXX, even the individual books of the Torah, was authored by a different individual, although some clusters of translation units are recognizable.[11] Also, the individual books of the Peshitta were probably rendered by different individuals.[12] The implication of this situation is that each unit used different translation principles, and was authored at a different period.

b. *Non-sequential creation of the translations*. In the great majority of the AVs, the sequence of preparation of the individual books is not known. It would seem logical to assume that the first version to be translated in all instances was that of the Torah. But this was not true in the case of Jerome.[13] For Greek Scripture, the account of the Epistle of Aristeas describing the priority of the translation of the Torah makes a trustworthy impression, at least in this detail. Further, the post-Pentateuchal books were clearly based on the Greek version of the Torah.[14] But the present formulation of the book of Genesis is such a finished literary product that it is hard to imagine that it stood at the

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[9] Failure to follow these principles does not always imply that the translation is free. It often means that the translator lacked the adequate lexical knowledge.

[10] This question can also be phrased as referring to a possible development of translation styles. Such developments could differ from version to version, and differing types of logic may prevail within the individual AVs. See also n. 25 below.

[11] Jeremiah + Ezekiel + Minor Prophets (see Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*, 135–55), Jeremiah + Baruch (considered one book, see Tov, ibid.), 1 Esdras + Daniel (see Thackeray, *Grammar*, 12), Job + Proverbs (see G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint*. III, *Proverbs* [LUÅ 52, 3; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1956] 59–60).

[12] See M. P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament: An Introduction* (University of Cambridge Oriental Publications 56; Cambridge: University Press, 1999) 164–205; Y. Maori, "Is the Peshitta a Non-Rabbinic Jewish Translation?," *JQR* 91 (2001) 411–18, esp. 412.

[13] Jerome first embarked on the Psalter (382–6, 391), while the following books were not translated sequentially. H. F. D. Sparks, "Jerome as Biblical Scholar," in *The Cambridge History of the Bible* (ed. P. R. Ackroyd and C. F. Evans; Cambridge: University Press, 1970) 1.510–541 (esp. 514–6) mentions the following sequence, which covers only some of the books: Chronicles, Samuel–Kings (391), Prophets, Job, Joshua–Judges–Ruth (404).

[14] See Tov, *Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 183–94.

beginning of the translational activity.[15] Indeed, Barr expressed the opinion[16] that the translation of Isaiah preceded that of the translations of the Torah because of the lack of consistent translation approach in the Greek translation of Isaiah. As the sequence in which the books of Greek Scripture were translated is not known, the translation of Judges was not necessarily produced after that of Joshua, etc.

   c. *Composite character of the canon of the "LXX."* The group of Greek Scripture texts contained in the collection of the "LXX," such as represented, for example, in A. Rahlfs's edition,[17] represents a heterogeneous group of texts, not only regarding their translation character, but also with regard to their date and status (private as opposed to official). Some of the books included in the "LXX" were added to the Greek corpus only at a late date, usually replacing earlier, freer renderings. This applies especially to translation units within Samuel–Kings (1–4 Kingdoms in the LXX) which contain the so-called revision of *kaige*-Th, i.e., 2 Sam 10:1 (11:1?)–1 Kings 2:11 and 1 Kings 21–2 Kings 25, included also in Ruth and Lamentations,[18] and further to the "LXX" of Ecclesiastes, ascribed to Aquila.[19]

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[15] 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). F. 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 καί and δέ, the latter particle setting off the new unit from the preceding one.

[16] Oral communication, July 2002.

[17] Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*.

[18] It is possible that also other sections contained such a late revision, see Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 34 ff.

[19] See Barthélemy, *Devanciers*, 21–30. It is possible that sections of individual books of the Bible were assigned to more than one translator. However, the "best" cases for the assumption of multiple authorship, i.e., Samuel–Kings and Jeremiah have now been shown to contain an alternation of original and non-original (revised) sections (see Barthélemy, *Devanciers* and Tov, *Jeremiah and Baruch*). On the composite character of the translation of the Torah, see especially J. Herrmann—F. Baumgärtel, *Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Septuaginta* (BWAT 5; 1923) 53–80. On Isaiah, see J. Fischer, *In welcher Schrift lag das Buch Isaias den LXX vor?* (BZAW 56; 1930) 2–5; Herrmann–Baumgärtel, *Beiträge*, 20–31; J. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (ATA XII, 3; 1934) 31–45; I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1948) 39–42. On Ezekiel, see H. St. J. Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of Ezekiel," *JTS* 4 (1903) 398–411; idem, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship* (The Schweich Lectures, 1920; London: British Academy, 1921) 37–9, 118–29; Herrman–Baumgärtel, *Beiträge*, 1–19; M. Turner, *JTS* 7 (1956) 12–24; P. D. M. Turner, *The Septuagint Version of Chapters I–XXXIX of the Book of* Ezekiel, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Oxford University, 1970. On the Dodekapropheton, see Herrmann–Baumgärtel, *Beiträge*, 32–8. Other books in the LXX for which a theory of multiple authorship has been suggested are Joshua, Psalms, Baruch, and Daniel. See further the long list of bibliographical references to two- (three-)translator theories *apud* H. M. Orlinsky, "The

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned constraints, we now turn to the vexing question of the different approaches to translation, which are clearly visible in the canon of Greek Scripture. For example, the translation of Joshua is often free, definitely more so than that of Judges in both the A and B texts and that of Samuel, all of which are rather faithful to their underlying Hebrew texts.[20] The translation of the Old Greek version of 1 Kings (3 Kingdoms) is relatively literal,[21] and Ezra–Nehemiah and Chronicles are very literal. 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. Thus, the versions of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Minor Prophets are rather literal, and parts of these translations may have been authored by one individual (see n. 11), while the translation of Isaiah was free and in places very free. Similar differences are visible within the Hagiographa, where Psalms is presented in a very literal Greek version, while the translations of Job and Proverbs are very free and paraphrastic in places.

We now turn to an analysis of the *background* of these differences. This question has not occupied scholarship much, with the exception of the first explanation.

1*. The following of a translation model.* The possibility that the translators followed a specific translation model has been discussed, *pro* and *contra*, with regard to the translation of the Torah. That the translators needed such a model was axiomatic for these scholars, and all that was left for them to do was to locate this model. Accordingly, insightful studies by Bickerman, Rabin, and Brock[22] tried to identify the

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Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators," *HUCA* 46 (1975) 89–90 (n. 2).

[20] In the case of Samuel, that *Vorlage* was often identical to 4QSam[a].

[21] The freely rewritten sections in that translation were probably translated from Hebrew. See chapter 20*.

[22] Bickerman, "Septuagint"; C. Rabin, "The Translation Process and the Character of the LXX," *Textus* 6 (1968) 1–26; Brock, "Aspects" and "Phenomenon." This view was accepted by A. van der Kooij, "Perspectives on the Study of the Septuagint—Who Are the Translators?," in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Early Judaism, Symposium in Honour of Adam S. van der Woude on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday* (ed. F. García Martínez and E. Noort; VTSup 73; Leiden/Boston/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1998) 214–29. Brock's often-quoted studies provide important background information on the types of translation known in Hellenistic Egypt at the time of the Greek translation, although not necessarily to the translators themselves. Beyond the evidence discussed by Brock, note also the Aramaic/Demotic equivalents of legal phrases as discussed by A. Botta, *Interrelationships between the Aramaic and Demotic Legal Traditions: An Egyptological Approach to the Withdrawal Clause in the Elephantine Aramaic Documents*, unpubl. Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2002; B. Porten, "Aramaic-Demotic Equivalents: Who is the Borrower and Who the Lender?," in *Life in a Multi-Cultural Society: Egypt from Cambyses to Constantine and*

role model of the translators that influenced them in their decision to employ a certain approach to Scripture. Central to these three studies is the assumption, phrased differently in each of them, that at the time of the translation a dragoman, a translator, was always available when needed for the translation of commercial or legal documents. However, the validity of this assumption was rightly questioned by Wright,[23] who claimed that the model of the dragoman did not serve as a model for the translators of the Torah for the simple reason that there is no evidence supporting the existence of such an institution in pre-Roman times.[24] Accepting Wright's view, we are deprived of one parallel that could have served the translators as a model. In a way, this model could have been a valid parallel, but actually the translation of the Torah is not literal enough to have followed such a model. Brock, "Aspects" mentions a second model as well, that of the literary translations known in Egypt, but that model is not suitable either, since the translation is not really literary. Besides, would the translators really have known the specific translations mentioned by Brock?[25] The translators possibly had no model at all, as suggested by Wright.[26]

   2. *Influence of the content of the biblical book.* Brock was the first to discuss the possible connection between the content of a biblical book (the Torah) and the translation style adopted, although he did not press for a linkage between the two.[27] When turning to this evidence, we first

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Beyond (ed. J. J. Johnston; SAOC 51; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1992) 259–64.

[23] B. G. Wright III, "The Jewish Scriptures in Greek: The Septuagint in the Context of Ancient Translation Activity," in *Biblical Translation in Context* (ed. F. W. Knobloch; Bethesda, Md.: University of Maryland, 2002) 3–18.

[24] Brock, "Phenomenon," 17 suggests including evidence from the early Roman period "owing to the scarcity of the evidence," but precisely this point complicates the analysis.

[25] Writing from the point of view of a modern-day scholar, it makes sense to compare translation models, and Bickerman, Rabin, and Brock move between them with admirable ease. However, one wonders how many of these texts would have been known to the Greek translators of the Torah: Bickerman, "Septuagint," 178–80 speaks about Greek-Latin literary translations and a Phoenician inscription. Brock, "Aspects" mentions biliteral Aramaic-Greek Asoka edicts (third century BCE, Kandahar, Afghanistan) and the Greek translator of the Demotic story of Tefnut preserved in P. Lond. Inv. 274. Brock, "Phenomenon," 18 mentions Egyptian-Greek translations from a later period than that of the Torah translation. On p. 20, Brock admits that the free literary translations were "possibly only familiar at that time from oral translation."

[26] Wright, "Scriptures," 17.

[27] A similar linkage was suggested by Barr, *Literalism*, 289–90 with reference to Job and Proverbs: "Thus the fact that books like Job and Proverbs have often been noted for the 'free' style of their Greek version can *rightly* [my italics, E. T.] be connected with the fact that these books are near the edge of the biblical canon and less central to the structure of religious doctrine. But if this is true on one side, it is equally proper to note that in these books the Hebrew diction itself was often very obscure, and that some fair proportion of

discuss the data analyzed in the previous paragraph, but from a different angle. In Brock's words, "since the Pentateuch was both a legal and at the same time a literary text, the initial translators were faced with a dilemma, and their hesitation is reflected in the inconsistent nature of their translation."[28] Brock thus thought in terms of a linkage between the content of the book and the translation model chosen, and in his view the translators had two different models in mind. I wonder, however, whether the inconsistency of the first translators really resulted from their doubts regarding the type of translation to be adopted. After all, the translation of the Torah is not inconsistent with regard to the translation style adopted, because if that were the case we would have witnessed many more literary renderings, at least in the poetic sections.[29] True, the translation of the Torah was far from the type of one-to-one translation presented by the later revisers such as *kaige*-Th and Aquila. However, at the time, such versions were *not* available as an alternative model,[30] since such a model did not yet exist in the beginning of the third century BCE. In short, the suggestion that the choice of translation system for the Torah was influenced by its content is not convincing.

The previous analysis pertained to the Torah only when taken as a unit. However, the relevance of content considerations in the choice of a translation model should not be ruled out completely. Thus, the nature of the Hebrew book of Leviticus is such that a more literal version than the other parts of the Torah would be needed, if the translators wished to guide the Jews of Alexandria in the implementation of the divine instructions. The translation of Leviticus is indeed somewhat more faithful to the Hebrew than the other parts of the Greek Torah, but this impression may be misleading because of its stereotyped language. In any event, the Greek translation could not provide guidance in practical

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the freest renderings seems to coincide with very obscure phrases of the original." I wonder whether this argument can be carried through consistently for other books as well. It seems that this characterization does not apply to the contrast between the free rendering of Isaiah and the more literal one of the other prophetic books. Nor is it appropriate in the case of the free translation of Joshua in contrast to the literal rendering of Judges. Further, Qohelet, which definitely was "near the edge of the biblical canon" (thus Barr, ibid.), was represented in Greek Scripture by a very literal translation.

[28] Brock, "Aspects," 72. At this point in the analysis, Brock mentioned the different renderings of a specific Hebrew phrase in the LXX, but he did not develop further the issue of the correlation between content and type of translation.

[29] We would have expected many more contextual equivalents, additions, and omissions, as well as the employment of literary principles in the translation of poetical sections. In short, such a translation would come close to the principle of rendering according to the *sensus* of the source text (*sensus de sensu*), as described by Cicero and Jerome (see notes 2–5 above).

[30] *Pace* Brock, "Aspects," 72.

matters, as the inconsistency in the choice of translation equivalents would have made practical use of that version extremely difficult.[31]

It would be hard to press the point that content considerations determined the choice of translation type for the other books. Thus, there seems to be no reason for applying a freer approach to Joshua than to the other historical books. Nor is there any explanation, it seems, as to why Isaiah was rendered rather freely, while the other prophetic books were rendered rather literally. One could argue that Isaiah was more popular, or its ideas more influential than those of the other Prophets. However, these features should or could also have influenced the creation of a literal translation that would ensure that the words of this prophet would continue to influence the Jewish people in exactly the same form as intended by the prophet. By the same token, it is understandable why the Hebrew Psalms are rendered in a literal fashion as such a type of translation would ensure the perpetuation of these songs. However, by a different logic, a free rendering of these Psalms could have enhanced their poetic beauty and hence increased their influence. The very literal renderings of other books, such as 2 Kings, Canticles, and Ecclesiastes, have yet a different background, having perhaps been produced by late revisers (see above).

Within the individual Targumim, the differences between the biblical books are not as pervasive as in the case of the LXX. Yet, some books are rather idiosyncratic; for example, the utterly paraphrastic rendering of the Targum of Canticles may have resulted from a wish to avoid a literal translation of that book, which would have proved difficult within Scripture. In another example, within the Peshitta, the character of Chronicles differs completely from that of the other books (as it contained a significant layer of Jewish exegesis),[32] and it is unlikely that this feature had anything to do with the content of that book. In short, there seems to be no necessary link between the content of any Hebrew book and the character of its ancient translation.

3. *Chronological considerations*. In principle, it is not impossible that certain trends towards either literalism or freedom or even midrashic renderings developed in certain periods. One type of development would be the assumption that the faithful translation model developed *after* that of the free translation. The logic behind such an assumption would be that in the beginning translators searched for the correct system to be used in translating Scripture, and that the free translation

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[31] This point was made by D. W. Gooding, *The Account of the Tabernacle* (TS, NS VI; Cambridge: University Press, 1959).

[32] See Weitzman, *Syriac Version*, 111–21 (see n. 12 above).

model appealed more to the first translators than that of a literal translation. According to this assumption, the concept of faithfulness to the source at the level of words, roots, and syntagmata, such as reflected in literal translations, was created only at a later stage in the development of the translation enterprise. The concept behind such a presumed development appeals to modern logic, and it can be supported in a general sense by the collection of Greek Scripture, in which the so-called revisions appeared at a second stage of the development of that corpus. These revisions are included in the work of the independent translators *kaige*-Th, Aquila, and Symmachus, who created new, revised versions on the basis of earlier translations. However, the development could also have taken place in reverse. In such a scenario, the first translators would have espoused a rather literal school-type system of translation, to be streamlined subsequently.

While both options seem possible, there is no real evidence in favor of one of the two scenarios. It seems more likely that both models co-existed from the beginning and that translators opted for different translation systems. Thus, the model of the slightly more literal translation (Leviticus), though far less literal than the later revisions, co-existed at an early stage with the slightly freer rendering of Genesis. The very literal revisions, such as *kaige*-Th definitely belonged to a later stage, but the paraphrastic versions also probably derived from a later stage. At the same time, the emergence of such paraphrastic translations cannot be dated. One could claim that such paraphrastic translations as Esther and Daniel emerged at a late stage because the Hebrew/Aramaic books themselves are relatively late, but this reasoning does not apply to Proverbs. In short, we may have to conclude that chronological considerations cannot be applied profitably to the choice of translation styles in the LXX.

Students of the development of the Targumim struggle with exactly the same problems. What came first, the literal Targum Onkelos, probably Babylonian, or the later Palestinian midrashic versions? Or should a third model be devised? Alexander reconstructed a yet earlier stage, an "Old-Palestinian Targum" from which both the Babylonian Targum Onkelos and the later Palestinian Targumim derived. In this way, he was able to adhere to the usual explanation of a development from free to literal versions.[33]

4. *Different Egyptian backgrounds*. If the preceding explanations do not appropriately explain the background of the differences in translation

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[33] P. S. Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations of Hebrew Scriptures," in *Mikra,* 217–53, esp. 244.

character between the various units, additional explanations must be explored. An attractive possibility for the LXX would be the assumption that the different types of translation derived from different backgrounds in Egypt. For example, literal versions may have originated in a school milieu, where the one-to-one equivalents would facilitate study of the text. This view has been defended by van der Kooij and Pietersma for the Torah as a whole.[34] Free translations could have originated in a synagogue milieu, where the audience needed to become familiarized with the meaning, rather than the exact words, of Scripture. Such free renderings would occasionally allow for contemporizing changes.[35] In practical terms, taking into consideration the translation character of the books of the LXX, this assumption would imply that, for example, the literal Greek translation of Psalms originated in an environment of learning, while the paraphrastic translations of Job and Proverbs derived from the synagogue. However, there seems to be no intrinsic reason for these three books to be split up in this way, or for Joshua to have been prepared in the synagogue and Judges in the school. Furthermore, we do not know whether such houses of learning in which Scripture was studied in a literal fashion existed in Egypt. Besides, there was a need for literal translations in the synagogue also.[36] It is therefore

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[34] Van der Kooij, "Perspectives," esp. 226–9 (see n. 22 above). Without making a distinction between different types of translation styles, Pietersma suggested that the translation of the Torah was created in a school environment. The major argument for this assumption is the fact that, in Hellenistic Alexandria, Homer was studied in schools in which colloquial versions of that poet were created. For this purpose, Pietersma quotes from PSI 12.1276 from the first century CE. See A. Pietersma, "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint," in *Bible and Computer. The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference. Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique "From Alpha to Byte." University of Stellenbosch 17–21 July, 2000* (ed. J. Cook; Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2002) 337–64. This specific example is impressive, to be joined by additional literary school texts from the third to sixth centuries CE. However, the relatively late date of these parallels may militate against their relevance for LXX study. More significantly, there seem to be no intrinsic elements in the translation of the Torah *as a whole* in favor of its being the product of a school-room environment.

[35] There is ample evidence for such contemporizing renderings in the LXX, exemplified for Isaiah by Seeligman, *Isaiah,* 76–91 (see n. 19 above). In the case of the Targumim, according to Tal, these versions were meant to allow for modernization and exegesis, so that the Hebrew text itself could be left unaltered. In this way, the Targumim became the official companion volume to Hebrew Scripture in rabbinic Judaism, prepared for the learned, not for the masses. See A. Tal, "Is There a Raison d'Être for an Aramaic Targum in a Hebrew-Speaking Society?" *REJ* 160 (2001) 357–78.

[36] Even in the case of the Targumim, their exact *Sitz im Leben* is unclear. While it is usually said that these versions originated in the synagogue, and there is ample evidence that they were actively used there, it can also be shown that the Targumim were used in the *beit midrash.* See A. Shinan, *The Biblical Story as Reflected in Its Aramaic Translations* (Heb.;

unclear whether such a distinction between different milieus can or should be made for the LXX. In the Torah, such reasoning is further complicated by the fact that the exegesis in this version bears all the marks of Palestinian origin and scholarship,[37] thereby rendering the distinction between different Egyptian milieus less relevant. In most books of the LXX, this assumption is also complicated by the juxtaposition in single translation units of free and wooden translations.

5. *Different views about the sacred character of the books translated*. It stands to reason—although it cannot be proven—that all translators were aware of the sacred nature of the texts they were translating. Accordingly, the different translation styles should not be ascribed to different views about the degree of acceptance (authority, sacredness) of the material translated. The background of literal translations is definitely that of sacred literature. The background of free translations could imply a less strict view of the sacred character of the books rendered, but the example of the free Palestinian Targumim undermines such an assumption.

6. *Different personal approaches by translators*. Since none of the explanations of the above-mentioned differences in translation character is satisfactory, we turn to the possibility that these differences simply reflect the *personal* approaches of the translators. After all, each of the original Greek translations was the product of an individual, forming a very personal translation, as opposed to an official one. Even the translators of the five books of the Torah produced personal translations,[38] later to be accepted as official documents. The two basic approaches toward the nature of the translation, the free and the literal, probably existed from the very beginning of the translation enterprise in the minds of the translators even if they did not have specific models in mind. The translators of the Torah may have been influenced by the two above-mentioned approaches to the translation enterprise or by other

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Hakibbutz Hameuchad Publishing House, 1993) 20; Alexander, "Jewish Aramaic Translations," 248 (see n. 33 above).

[37] This aspect of the description of the Epistle of Aristeas is probably trustworthy. The same translation also displays Egyptian technical terms (see n. 45 below), and therefore a way must be devised to account for both types of background. I am inclined to think that the Palestinian translators either knew Egyptian Greek, or cooperated with local experts.

[38] The use of this terminology implies that the translator reflected his views only and that, as a rule, he did not go revise his own translation on the basis of newly gained linguistic insights. Accordingly, we still find occasional transliterations of words that were not understood when the translation was made and were not corrected afterwards. By the same token, Hebrew words that were not understood initially were *not* corrected after the translator gained an understanding of them. For examples of the former, see Tov, *Greek and Hebrew Bible,* 165–82; for the latter, see J. Barr, "Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators," *VTSup* 16 (1967) 1–11, esp. 3.

conditions (see below), or they may have been guided mainly by their intuition.[39] The later translators all went their own way, somehow influenced by the translation of the Torah, which is relatively literal.[40] Some translators adopted more literal translation models than that of the Torah, while others opted for free or paraphrastic renderings.

While some translators considered a literal type of translation appropriate for the divine message, others preferred a slightly or very free translation. According to some, in an abstract sense, the message of God could be more clearly presented in a free translation style. According to that approach, what matters is not the exact or consistent representation of each and every word, but the overall message of the biblical book. A translator who explained a word or part of a sentence to the best of his understanding, thought that his rendering better reflected the source than the philologically correct representation of the wording of the source language. Or, possibly, he may have thought that the target audience needed an explanation. By the same token, a translator who varied the translation vocabulary may have thought that he was reflecting the spirit of the source better than he would via a wooden and stereotyped rendering of the words.

It seems to us that the majority of the LXX translators somehow followed the lead of the translators of the Torah, who served as their models for the style and vocabulary of the translation. But which model did the first translators themselves follow? It may well be that they followed no model at all, but were simply guided by intuition and their general approach toward Scripture. "Necessity was indeed the mother of invention," Wright says ("Scriptures," 18), and I concur. But a little more was involved, and I assume—although this cannot be proven—that throughout the translation enterprise, the translators were influenced by thought patterns and models that had developed in ancient Israel. First and foremost, the translators were individuals but they were influenced additionally by their spiritual center. Possibly we should call this a model, namely that of the approach or approaches toward Scripture extant in Palestine.

The translators must have come from Palestine because such refined knowledge of the Hebrew Bible was not part of the education in Egypt (otherwise, there would have been no need for a translation). The translators brought with them knowledge of Palestinian rabbinic

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[39] At a later point in the tradition, the early translators were considered divinely inspired. See the evidence and literature quoted by Brock, "Phenomenon," 24–5.

[40] Already the Epistle of Aristeas, § 311 praised the precision of the translation.

exegesis.[41] They were conversant with postbiblical Hebrew[42] and were influenced by the vernacular Aramaic[43] when they should have been translating according to the meaning of the Hebrew.[44] All these features, together with the kernel of the story in the Epistle of Aristeas, that is considered to be historical, lead us to believe that these sages from Jerusalem also brought with them their approaches. True, the LXX also reflects an Egyptian *couleur locale*, visible in certain technical terms,[45] but this is to be expected in a translation produced in Egypt (possibly reflecting the translators' knowledge, possibly reflecting cooperation with local experts). It would therefore not be far-fetched to assume that the translators brought with them from Palestine their exegetical traditions as well as their approach to Scripture in general. After all, why should we try to locate a model for the Greek translation in Egypt if the translators themselves came from Palestine? Besides, if we were not able to locate the model for the translation in Egypt, we should be able to find such a model in the Palestinian approach to the Torah.

The approach reflected in the translation of the Torah is one of precision and carefulness. The five[46] translators of the Torah may have witnessed such an approach either in translations they came across in Palestine or in copies of Hebrew Scripture circulating there. We suggest that the translators from Jerusalem brought with them this relatively strict approach towards Scripture, which guided them in transferring the message of the source language to the receptor language. Such precise Hebrew copies must have circulated in Palestine at the time of the translation (around 280 BCE); they are known to us from a slightly later period from Qumran (the proto-Masoretic manuscript 4QSam^b from 250–200 BCE, and to a greater extent in manuscripts from the following

[41] See chapter 24*, n. 12.

[42] See chapter 25*, n. 6.

[43] See chapter 25*, n. 5.

[44] The extent to which these remarks are impressionistic is shown by the fact that Brock, "Phenomenon," 34 arrives at diametrically opposed conclusions: "…I think that it can be reasonably assumed that Greek was their mother tongue, and Hebrew perhaps largely a language learnt at school: alongside these too it seems very likely that they knew both Aramaic and Egyptian."

[45] Cf. especially S. Morenz, "Ägyptische Spuren in der Septuaginta," *Mullus, Festschrift T. Klauser* (JbAC, Ergänzungsband I; 1964) 250–58. See further Thackeray, *Grammar*, index; Swete, *Introduction*, 21; G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint*, II. *Chronicles* (LUÅ NF I, 43, 3; Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup, 1946) 14–21; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 175–212 (see n. 19 above); J. Schwarz, "Notes sur l'archéologie des LXX," *REg* 8 (1951) 195–8. The evidence was collected for the first time by H. Hodius, *De bibliorum textibus originalibus, versionibus graecis, latina Vulgata* (Oxford: Sheldonian Theater, 1705), book II, ch. IV.

[46] Thus Hayeon Kim, *Multiple Authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch*, unpublished Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2007.

century).[47] The strict approach to Scripture was at the base of the precise copying, which did not allow the insertion of changes within the Masoretic tradition. However, some non-Masoretic texts were also copied carefully. The copies from which the Greek Torah was rendered could have been such precise Hebrew manuscripts. Indeed, we know of rabbinical authorities from later periods, such as Akiba (first third of the second century CE), who adhered strictly to the words of Scripture and who influenced their contemporaries. Such men must have existed also in earlier periods.

The background of the free and paraphrastic translations is more complicated. Everyone treated Scripture with great reverence, even those who copied the Hebrew text with less precision. By the same token, even those who did not produce a philologically precise rendering of Scripture did so not out of disrespect, but because they felt that Scripture could also be translated by focusing on its general sense. Such freedom is less visible in the translation of the Torah, but it may be at the background of the translation of several books in the Prophets and Hagiographa. The freedom behind these renderings reflects a certain philosophical approach towards the act of translating that may be related to the nature of Hebrew Scripture scrolls. Such an approach is visible also in the Targumim.[48]

In view of this evidence, it may be safely said that the different approaches to Scripture that are visible in the Greek translations were not created in Egypt for the translation enterprise, but rather were exponents of the general approach to Scripture and Scripture scrolls in ancient Israel.[49] Everything points to the assumption that the translation was made from scrolls from Israel, and that the translators came from there as well. These translators probably brought with them the approaches toward Scripture that were current in Israel.

In summary, this study focuses on the approaches of ancient translators toward Scripture, especially those of the LXX. The discussion turned especially towards the riddle of these different approaches within the various books of the LXX and their interrelation. Although the question has not been posed in this way in previous analyses, partial

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[47] See chapter 10*.

[48] The scribal freedom reflected in many Hebrew Qumran scrolls (see *Scribal Practices*, 261–73 and see chapter 10* above) could have encouraged that approach. These copies were full of mistakes, corrected or not, and exegetical changes. This possible influence should not be emphasized too much since the Targumim were probably translated from precise copies of MT.

[49] We find some support for our view in the study of van der Kooij, "Perspectives," 227 (see n. 22 above) who regards the Greek translators as "scribes-translators."

answers have been given, while other possible explanations have been explored here: the following of a translation model, influence of the content of the biblical book, chronological considerations, different Egyptian milieus, and different views regarding the sacred character of the books translated. Since no satisfactory answer could be found in these explanations, we turned to a simpler one, viz., different personal approaches by translators, which had their *Sitz im Leben* in the general approaches towards Scripture in Palestine.