A TEXTUAL-EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY ON THREE CHAPTERS IN THE
SEPTUAGINT
Emanuel Tov

This study is an exercise in method involving the writing of a commentary on three quite different chapters in the LXX. In Proverbs 1, most of the differences between the LXX and MT reflect the translator's exegesis. A smaller group of differences reflects the vicissitudes of the textual transmission of this chapter. On the other hand, probably most of the idiosyncrasies of Jeremiah 27 reflect an earlier stage in the development of the Hebrew composition than that reflected in MT. While the details commented on in these two chapters thus pertain to either the translator's exegesis or his deviating Hebrew *Vorlage*, 1 Samuel 1 involves differences of both types, most of them relating to textual criticism. It is the purpose of this study to compare the different types of information provided by the LXX.

The writing of a commentary on the LXX rather than MT is somewhat of a novelty. The valuable commentaries on the books of the Greek Pentateuch by J. W. Wevers[1] and the Brill commentary series[2] comment mainly on inner-Septuagintal issues. On the other hand, the commentary below focuses on a whole spectrum of issues, the translator's exegesis (excluding issues of translation technique and inner-Septuagintal problems), the text-critical comparison between MT and the LXX, and the literary nature of the Hebrew composition reconstructed from the LXX. The remarks submitted below are not full-blown commentaries as presented in one of the commentary series on Hebrew Scripture, since they lack a full apparatus of philological remarks. Our commentary refers to details in MT and the LXX in English translation.

1. Proverbs 1 (Introduction, Wisdom Sayings)

An analysis of Proverbs 1 illustrates the translator's exegesis of his Hebrew parent text, which was probably very similar to MT in this chapter, as well as that of some inner-Greek developments. As far as we can tell, almost all differences between the MT and LXX in this chapter were caused by the translator's exegesis, while in the case of double or triple renderings internal Greek corruption may have been at stake. The LXX reflects only some Hebrew variants in

---

[1] J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993); *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SBLSCS 30: Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1990); *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SBLSCS 44; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1997); *Notes on the Greek text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1995).
[2] A. G. Auld, *Joshua*, *Jesus Son of Naue in Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2005).

this chapter;[3] in other chapters, it may reflect a different editorial stage in the composition of the book.[4]

After some general words of introduction to the book (vv. 1–7), chapter 1 of Proverbs gives short wisdom instructions on two topics, the deadly alternative to parental wisdom (vv. 8–19) and the risk of disregarding the prudent advice of the author of the book (vv. 20–33). The LXX translation provides a free and often paraphrastic translation of its Hebrew parent text, which was very similar to MT in this chapter. At the same time, most of the discrepancies between the Hebrew and the Greek probably derived from the free translation character of the LXX,[5] which gives us insights into the exegetical and theological world of the Alexandrian-Hellenistic Jewish community.[6] More than anywhere else in the LXX, this translation presents double or even triple translations of the same verse (see vv. 7, 14, 21, 27).

Translation[7]

[1]Proverbs of Salomon, son of Dauid, who reigned in Israel:

[2]to learn wisdom and discipline,

---

[3] The possibility of Hebrew variants underlying the LXX was stressed much by M. V. Fox, "LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource," *Textus* 22 (2005): 95–128; idem, "Editing Proverbs: The Challenge of the *Oxford Hebrew Bible*," *JNSL* 32 (2006): 1–22.

[4] See my study "Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs," in *Of Scribes and Scrolls, Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. H. W. Attridge et al.; College Theology Society Resources in Religion 5; Lanham, Md./New York/London: The College Theology Society University Press of America, 1990), 43–56. Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible—Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden/ Boston/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1999), 419–31.

[5] This tendency was stressed much, possibly too much, by J. 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).

[6] Some of these changes involve the transformation of general ideas in the Hebrew book to religious thoughts in the translation. This pertains especially to the trend to stress the virtues of the pious and vices of the impious (see vv. 10, 18, 19, 22, 31, 32) as well as adherence to the *nomos*, Torah. In 17:11 the translation implies that the *mal'akh* (messenger, angel) of MT is sent by the Lord. This translator (or his Hebrew parent text?) often inserts ideas into the translation from other verses in Proverbs (see v. 18) or elsewhere in Scripture (see for example v. 12). Other changes involve a desire to clarify the Hebrew text to the Greek readers in the Hellenistic period, and even to formulate equivalent wisdom sayings that approximate the implication of the Hebrew. Thus in 17:16, the supranumeral verse of the LXX (v. 16a) reflects a paraphrase and moral elaboration of the theme of v. 16 (money has no value for fools, and a house bought by a rich fool is doomed to be destroyed). See further 6:1, 8 and 11:16 for additional examples.

[7] The translations from the Septuagint follow A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming). Professors Pietersma and Wright kindly made this translation available to me before its publication. A few details have been changed, and double translations (for example, v. 7) are indicated as **a**, **a'**, etc. The translations from MT follow the NJPS: תנ״ך. *Tanakh A New Translation of THE HOLY SCRIPTURES According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia/New York/Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

and to understand words of prudence

[3]and to grasp subtlety of words

and to understand true righteousness and to direct judgment

[4]in order that he might give shrewdness to the innocent,

and both perception and insight to the young child

[5]for by hearing these things the wise will become wiser

and the discerning will acquire direction

[6]and he will understand an illustration and an obscure word,

both the sayings and the riddles of the wise.

[7](**a**)Beginning of wisdom is the fear of God,

(**a'**) and understanding is good for all those who practice it,

(**a''**) and piety unto God is the beginning of perception;

(**b**) the impious, however, will despise wisdom and discipline.

[8]Hear, my son, your father's discipline,

and do not reject your mother's precepts,

[9]for you will receive a crown of graces for your head

and a golden collar around your neck.

[10]My son, let not impious men lead you astray,

and do not consent,

if they invite you saying:

[11]"Come with us; partake in bloodshed,

and let us hide a just man unjustly in the earth,

[12]and let us swallow him alive like Hades

and let us remove his remembrance from the earth;

[13]let us take his valuable possessions,

and let us fill our homes with booty.

[14](**a**) But throw your lot among us,

(**b**) and let us all acquire a common purse,

(**b'**) and let us have one wallet."

[15]Do not walk in the way with them,

but keep your foot from their paths,

[16]for their feet run to evil

and they are quick to shed blood;

¹⁷for nets are not spread

without reason for winged creatures.

¹⁸For they who take part in murder store up evil for themselves,

and the ruin of transgressing men is evil.

¹⁹These are the ways of all who perform lawless deeds,

for by impiety they take away their own life.

²⁰Wisdom sings hymns in the streets,

and in the squares she leads frankly,

²¹(**a**) and on the top of the walls she proclaims,

(**b**) and at the gates of the powerful she waits,

(**b'**) and at the gates of the city she speaks boldly:

²²"As long as the innocent hold on to righteousness,

they will not be ashamed,

but the fools, since they are lovers of pride,

after they became impious they hated perception

²³and they became liable to reproofs.

Look; I will bring forth to you the expression of my breath,

and I will teach you my word.

²⁴Since I would call but you did not heed

and I would prolong words but you were not paying attention,

²⁵but you would make my counsels invalid,

and you disregarded my reproofs;

²⁶therefore I in turn will also laugh at your destruction,

and I will rejoice when ruin comes upon you.

²⁷(**a**) Yes, when confusion strikes you unexpectedly

(**b**) and destruction arrives like a whirlwind

(**c**) and when affliction and siege come upon you

(**c'**) or when ruin comes upon you,

²⁸for it shall be when you call upon me, then I will not listen to you,

evil people will seek me but will not find me,

²⁹for they hated wisdom,

and did not choose the fear of the Lord,

³⁰nor were they willing to pay attention to my counsels,

      but despised my reproofs.

³¹Therefore they shall eat the fruits of their own way

      and be filled with their own impiety;

³²for, because they would wrong the simple, they will be murdered,

      and an inquiry will ruin the impious.

³³But he who hears me will dwell in hope

      and will be at ease without fear of any evil."

Commentary

3. subtlety … understand MT "the discipline for success" (or: "instruction in wise dealing" [NRSV]).[8] *Haskel,* rendered "success" or "wise dealings," is not connected in the LXX with the preceding word, as in MT. It is linked with the following words and accordingly rendered as "and to understand."

true … judgment MT "righteousness, justice, and equity." Having linked *haskel* with the following and not the preceding words (see previous note), the LXX restructured the sentence, creating a parallelism that is not found in the Hebrew. While doing so, the translator added the adjective "true," and changed the noun "equity" into a verb ("to direct").

7. Beginning … perception V 7a of MT "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" is rendered three times in the LXX. In the literal rendering **a** the elements of MT are reversed stylistically. Rendering **a″** is also literal. Translation **a′** is a variation on the theme of v. 7**a**, at the same time echoing Ps 111 (110):10 "The beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord; all who practice it gain sound understanding."[9]

10. impious men MT "sinners." Here, as often elsewhere in this translation (see the introduction), a general term for sinners (*ḥata'im*) has been rendered by a religious term, implying that the text speaks about sins committed against religion.

11. and … earth MT "let us lie in wait for the innocent (without cause!)." The difference between the MT and LXX probably resulted from the translator's reading of MT *nitzpenah*

---

[8] The LXX possibly derived *musar* from the root *s-w-r*, "to turn aside," while adding "of words" as an antithesis to its translation "words of prudence" in v. 2.

[9] The triple rendering reflects either different original translation attempts or mistaken combinations of details from various Greek manuscripts. According to de Lagarde's theory, the literal translations (**a** and **a″**) are secondary, correcting the earlier, free rendering **a′**: P. A. de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1863), 20.

(intransitive, "let us lie in wait") as *natzpinah* (transitive, "let us hide"). The transitive understanding of the verb required the addition of an object, namely "in the earth."

12. and let us remove … earth This translation differs much from MT "(swallow them alive), whole, like those who go down to the Pit." There seems to be no connection between the Hebrew and the Greek, and therefore the LXX is probably based on a different Hebrew text such as Ps 34:17 "The face of the Lord is set against evildoers, to erase their names from the earth."

14. and let us … wallet MT "we shall all have a common purse" is rendered twice, once freely (**b** "and let us all acquire a common purse"), and once literally (**b'** "and let us have one wallet"). Rendering **b'** may have corrected **b** (see n. 10).

18. MT "But they lie in ambush for their own blood, they lie in wait for their own lives" is rendered freely as "For … themselves." This freedom pertains to the rendering of MT "their own blood" as "murder" (as in the translation of 28:17) and "ambush" as "take part." The words "and the ruin of transgressing men is evil" reflect a free moralizing addition based on v. 27.

19. all … impiety MT *betza'* ("unjust gain" in the materialistic sense) was transformed in the LXX to religious transgressions (*a-noma*, "lawless deeds," deeds against the *nomos*, Torah). By the same token, the LXX adds the word "impiety," describing the actions of the evildoers.

21. on … walls MT "busy streets". The difference between the MT and LXX was created through an interchange of similar-looking Hebrew letters (MT *hmywt*, "busy streets"/ LXX *hmwt*, "walls").

and at the gates … boldly MT "At the entrance of the gates, in the city, she speaks out" has been rendered twice. Translation **b** is based on an interchange between similar-looking words (MT *she'arim*, "gates" and LXX *sarim*, "rulers"). A similar interchange is reflected in Prov 8:3 MT "gates", LXX "gates of rulers." Translation **b'** reflects MT faithfully. In that translation, "boldly" may reflect an etymological rendering of *'amareha* ("her words") according to the root *hit'amer,* "to boast."

22. As … ashamed The "simplicity" characterizing the "simple ones" in MT was changed in the LXX to a positive characterization, "righteousness." At the same time, the rhetorical question of MT starting with "How long …" was changed in the LXX to an assertive statement "… will not be ashamed."

impious In the Greek translation "fools" (NRSV) has been filled with religious content (for similar examples, see the introduction).

27. and, when … you MT "when trouble and distress come upon you" has been rendered twice, more or less literally (**c**) and with changes from MT (**c'**).

28. evil … me MT "they shall seek me." In his wish to create a contrast between "good" and "bad" people, the Greek translator added *kakoi,* "evil people," as in v. 18.

31. their … impiety "Their own counsels" of MT has been given a religious content in accord with the translator's system of translating (for similar examples, see the introduction). Likewise, "fools" (NRSV) in v. 32 has been rendered "impious" in the LXX.

2. Jeremiah 27 (The Yoke of the King of Babylon)

The case of Jeremiah 27 (34 in the LXX) is completely different from that of Proverbs 1. While in Proverbs most of the deviations from MT were created by the translator, in Jeremiah the translator found a much deviating Hebrew text, differing recensionally from MT. The argumentation for this claim is presented elsewhere.[10] The same type of phenomenon encountered in Proverbs (for example, a shorter text) will be ascribed in that book to the translator, but in Jeremiah to the Hebrew parent text.

Chapter 27 of the MT tells the tale of Jeremiah delivering a prophecy to a group of kings meeting in Jerusalem with King Zedekiah. The prophet calls for the complete submission to Nebuchadnezzar in accordance with God's plans. At the end of the chapter Jeremiah speaks out against the false prophets who prophesy optimistically to the Israelites, telling them that they need not surrender to Nebuchadnezzar. Among other things, Jeremiah opposes the claim of these prophets that the Temple vessels taken into exile will be returned. Jeremiah says that this will not happen, and that these prophets should implore God not to allow the remaining Temple vessels to be removed from Jerusalem.

Most of the expansions in MT to the short text of the LXX are based on ideas or details in the context, or reflect stylistic and theological concerns. MT showed a great interest in the fate of the Temple vessels, adding details from the context in Jeremiah and 2 Kings.

Translation

1(MT: 2)Thus did the Lord say, "Make bonds and collars, and put them around your neck. 2(3)And you will send them to the king of Idumea (Edom) and to the king of Moab and to the king of the sons of Ammon and to the king of Tyre and to the king of Sidon by

---

[10] See my study "The Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah in the Light of Its Textual History," in *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism* (ed. J. H. Tigay; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 211–37. Revised version: *The Greek and Hebrew Bible—Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (VTSup 72; Leiden/ Boston/Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1999), 363–84.

the hands of their envoys who are coming to meet them in Ierousalem, to King Sedekias of Iouda. $^{3(4)}$And you will instruct them to say to their masters: Thus did the Lord the God of Israel say: Thus you shall say to your masters: $^{4(5)}$Because it is I who by my great strength and my lofty effort have made the earth I will also give it to whom it may seem good in my eyes, $^{5(6)}$I have given the earth to King Nabouchodonosor of Babylon to be subject to him, and the wild animals of the field to work for him.

$^{6(8)}$And the nation and the kingdom, as many as do not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon, I will visit them with dagger and with famine, said the Lord, until they are consumed in his hand. $^{7(9)}$And you, do not keep heeding your false prophets and your diviners and your dreamers and your soothsayers and your sorcerers, when they say, 'You shall not work for the king of Babylon,' $^{8(10)}$because they are prophesying lies to you, so as to distance you far from your land. $^{9(11)}$And the nation that brings its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and works for him, I will also leave him on his own land, and it will work for him and will live in it.

$^{10(12)}$And I spoke to King Sedekias of Iouda according to all these words saying: Bring your neck, and work for the king of Babylon, $^{11(14)}$because they are prophesying wrong things to you, $^{12(15)}$because I did not send them, says the Lord, and they are prophesying wrongly in my name so as to destroy you, and you will perish, you and your prophets who are [wrongly] prophesying lies to you.

$^{13(16)}$I spoke to you and all this people and the priests saying: Thus did the Lord say: Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you, saying, "Behold, the vessels of the Lord's house are returning from Babylon,' because they are prophesying wrong things to you, $^{14(17)}$I did not send them. $^{15(18)}$If they are prophets, and if there is a word of the Lord in them, let them counter me, $^{16(19)}$because thus did the Lord say: Even some of the remaining vessels, $^{17(20)}$which the king of Babylon did not take when he exiled Iechonias from Ierousalem, $^{18(22)}$shall enter into Babylon, says the Lord.

Commentary[11]

1. V. 1 of the LXX runs parallel to v. 2 of MT. The LXX lacks v. 1 of MT: "At the beginning of the reign of King Jehoiakim son of Josiah of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the Lord." The earlier edition of this chapter included in the LXX had no editorial heading (like chapters 2, 7, 16, 47). Such headings were added at a later stage in the edition of MT. In this case, it was added mistakenly as a repetition of the heading of the preceding chapter mentioning Jehoiakim (26:1). However, the events depicted in this chapter took place during the subsequent reign of Zedekiah (see vv. 3 and 12).

3. the Lord MT adds "of Hosts." In thirty of its thirty-three occurrences in the MT of Jeremiah, the phrase "(Thus says) the Lord of Hosts (the God of Israel)" is represented in the LXX as "the Lord." This feature is usually explained as one of the many expansions of formulas in MT. However, according to Rofé, the term "of Hosts" (*tzeva'ot*) was systematically removed from the book of Jeremiah, since the phrase *YHWH tzeva'ot* does not occur at all in Genesis–Judges.[12]

4. made the earth MT adds "and the men and beasts who are on the earth." This phrase was added on the basis of such verses as Jer 10:12, 32:17, and 51:15.[13]

5. MT adds before this verse "And now" (NJPS: "herewith"). The addition of this word in MT made the argument flow more easily, as in the MT of 40:4 and 42:15.

King … be subject to him MT "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon, my servant." This phrase recurs in the MT in Jer 25:9 and 43:10, but is also lacking in these verses in the LXX. In the present verse the variation was caused by a textual interchange between *'vdy* of MT (*'avdi*, "my servant") and *l-'vdw* (*le'ovdo*, "to be subject to him") underlying the LXX. The parent text of the LXX artistically created a parallel structure between the infinitives "to be subject to him" (MT "my servant") and "to work for him."

work for him MT adds v. 7, "All nations shall serve him, his son and his grandson—until the turn of his own land comes, when many nations and great kings shall subjugate him." According to this addition Babylon, the instrument of God's punishment, will ultimately be punished itself, an idea that was added to the LXX also in the MT of 25:14. The secondary character of these additions is particularly evident in this verse in which the added section does not conform to its immediate context. In vv. 6 and 8 of MT nations are told to surrender to

---

[11] For a fuller version of the commentary, see my paper "Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX of Jeremiah 27 (34)" in *Greek and Hebrew Bible,* 363–84.

[12] A. Rofé, "The Name YHWH SEBA'OT and the Shorter Recension of Jeremiah," in *Prophetie und geschichtliche Wirklichkeit im alten Israel*: *Festschrift für Siegfried Herrmann zum 65. Geburtstag* (eds. R. Liwak and S. Wagner; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1991), 307–15.

[13] See A. van der Kooij, "Jeremiah 27:5–15: How do MT and LXX Relate to Each Other?" *JNSL* 20 (1994): 59–78.

Babylon and in this context a punishment of Babylon itself is not expected. According to one explanation, MT refers to the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, but Nebuchadnezzar did not have a grandson who ruled.[14] However, it is more likely that the phrase "his son and his grandson" is meant as a superlative referring to "many generations" after Nebuchadnezzar (cf. especially Jer 2:9).[15]

6. nation and a kingdom MT adds "that does not serve him—King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon—and ..." This stylistic addition is meant to stress beyond v. 6 of MT that Nebuchadnezzar is God's instrument of punishment. A similar addition is found in the MT of Jer 21:7 and 25:9 (against the LXX).[16]

with … famine MT adds "and pestilence" in accord with the full formula (see, for example, Jer 42:17,22).

7. when … say MT adds "to you, saying." MT often adds *l'mr* ("saying", "as follows") to the shorter text (for example, Jer 1:4, 39:16).

8. so … land MT adds by way of explanation of the previous phrase, "I will drive you out and you shall perish." The addition is based on v. 15 in MT, which is similar in content to the present verse.

9. on … land MT adds "declares the Lord." This phrase has been added sixty-five times to the shorter text by MT.

10. bring your neck MT adds by way of explanation, "under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve it and his people, and live!" The first part of this phrase has been repeated from vv. 8, 11. MT also adds v. 13, "Otherwise you will die together with your people, by sword, famine, and pestilence, as the Lord has decreed against any nation that does not serve the king of Babylon." This section does not mention any new ideas, but only repeats the elements of v. 8 in a different order.

11. MT adds before this verse: "Give no heed to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'Do not serve …'" This section in MT must be original as it is hard to understand the next words "for they are prophesying wrong things to you" (v. 12 [v. 15 MT]) without them. In the LXX these words refer misleadingly to the king of Babylon, while in MT they refer correctly to the false

---

[14] If the editor of ed. II added the phrase "... and his son and the son of his son ..." retrospectively, the section may have been written after 539, the last year of Nebunaid, although in fact he was not of Nebuchadnezzar's offspring. According to another interpretation, the section may have been written before 560, in which year Evil Merodach was murdered.

[15] Thus M. Weiss, המקרא כדמותו (3d ed.; Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1987), 106–10.

[16] See the discussions by T. W. Overholt, "King Nebuchadnezzar in the Jeremiah Tradition," *CBQ* 30 (1968): 39–48; Z. Zevit, "The Use of עֶבֶד as a Diplomatic Term in Jeremiah," *JBL* 88 (1969): 74–77. According to W. E. Lemke ("Nebuchadnezzar, My Servant," *CBQ* 28 [1966]: 45–50), the mentioning of *'ebed* in MT (ed. II) derived from a scribal error in 27:6.

- 11 -

prophets mentioned in the previous verse. Accordingly it stands to reason that these words were erroneously omitted by the LXX.

12. who … to you MT lacks "wrongly." The LXX probably combined two versions of an exegetical addition by way of harmonization. The brackets in the translation of the LXX indicate that within that tradition "wrongly" is probably secondary.

13. from Babylon MT adds "shortly." This addition is probably based on the date mentioned in Jer 28:3 for the return of the Temple vessels ("two years").

I … them MT reads instead, "Give them no heed. Serve the king of Babylon, and live! Otherwise this city shall become a ruin." This verse is based on v. 12 and further on Jer 25:18 and 26:9.

15. let … me MT "let them intercede with the Lord of Hosts not to let the vessels remaining in the House of the Lord, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem, go to Babylon!" While the argument in the LXX is general, in MT it is very specific.[17]

16. MT changes and adds "… of Hosts concerning the columns, the tank, the stands, and the rest of the vessels remaining in this city." According to the LXX, the prophet threatened that the vessels still left in the Temple would eventually be taken into exile in Babylon. These vessels are specified in MT on the basis of Jer 52:17 (= 2 Kings 25:13) where they are mentioned in a different sequence. Among other things, they include "the rest of the vessels remaining in this city," left in the royal palace (see MT vv. 18 and 21).

17. the … Babylon MT "King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon." Nebuchadnezzar's name was often added in MT to the shorter phrase "king of Babylon," see Jer 28:14; 29:3, 21, etc.

Iechonias MT adds "son of Jehoiakim of Judah." One of the characteristic features of MT is its frequent expansion of proper nouns by adding the name of the father and/or a title "king (of Judah)." Jeconiah's name was expanded in this way also in Jer 28:4.

from Ierousalem MT adds "to Babylon, with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem," probably on the basis of Jer 29:2.

17. MT adds v. 21: "For thus said the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, concerning the vessels remaining in the House of the Lord, in the royal palace of Judah, and in Jerusalem." This stylistic addition repeats parts of vv. 18–19 in order to remind the reader of the main issue. The

---

[17] The discrepancy between "me" (LXX) and "the Lord" (MT) may have been created by a textual error. A scribe may have written *b-y′* as an abbreviated form of the name of God (*y′*) which was later misunderstood as *by* ("for me") or vice versa. However, similar interchanges of the first and third person are acceptable elsewhere in this chapter in MT (see vv. 2 and 4 compared with 11 and 15). On the practice of abbreviating the tetragrammaton, see my *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2d rev. ed.; Minneapolis and Assen: Fortress Press/Royal Van Gorcum, 2001), 256–7.

editor of MT added so many elements in the preceding two verses that he felt obliged to repeat these details.

18. MT "They shall be brought to Babylon, and there they shall remain, until I take note of them—declares the Lord of Hosts—and bring them up and restore them to this place." The additions in this verse stress that the vessels that were still left in the Temple would be exiled to Babylon and subsequently would be returned to Jerusalem. The latter idea is not consistent with the spirit of the surrounding verses, which deal with false prophets and not with the fate of the Temple vessels. Even if the latter had been the case, it nevertheless would be anticlimactic to mention the ultimate return of the vessels to Jerusalem immediately after the threat of their plunder. Historically, the false prophets' statement was correct since the Temple vessels were ultimately returned to Jerusalem (see Dan 5:2–3 and Ezra 1:7, 11; 6:5). The later text of MT added these words, but without taking into consideration the tensions in the context.

3. 1 Sam (1 Kingdoms) 1:21–28 (Elkanah, Hannah, and Samuel in Shilo)

In 1 Samuel 1, many of the differences between the LXX and MT were probably created by Hebrew or Greek scribes during the course of the textual transmission. At the same time, tendencies are sometimes visible in groups of variants in the LXX that were created in the course of one of the composition stages of the Hebrew book.

Vv. 21–28 of chapter 1 depict the visit of Elkanah, Hannah, and Samuel to Shilo. They arrive at different times, but act together, especially in their offerings. MT, the LXX, and 4QSamᵃ dating to 50–25 B.C.E. differ in significant details. For example, Hannah's actions are downplayed in MT in order not to mention a woman's involvement in cultic activities (see the commentary on vv. 23 MT "His word"; 24 MT "she brought him"; 25 MT "they brought the boy"; 28 MT "And he bowed low there before the Lord," compared with the LXX and 4QSamᵃ). 4QSamᵃ often agrees with the LXX in its original readings as opposed to MT.

Translation

²¹And the man Elkana and all his household went up to offer in Selom the sacrifice of the days and his vows and all the tithes of his land, ²²and Hanna did not go up with him, for she said to her husband, "Until the boy goes up if I shall wean it, and it will appear to the face of the Lord and stay there forever." ²³And her husband Elkana said to her, "Do what is good in your sight; stay until you have weaned him; only may the Lord establish that which goes out of your mouth."

And the woman remained and nursed her son, until she weaned him. ²⁴And she went up with him to Selom with a three-year-old bull and bread and an *oiphi* of flour and a *nebel* (jar) of wine and she entered into the house of the Lord at Selom, and the boy was with them. ²⁵And they brought (him) before the Lord and his father slaughtered the sacrifice that he used to do from days to days to the Lord, and he brought the boy near and slaughtered the bull calf. And Hanna the mother of the child brought (it) to Eli. ²⁶and said, "By me, sir! Your soul lives, I am the woman who stood before you when praying to the Lord; ²⁷for this boy I prayed, and the Lord has granted me my request that I requested of him. ²⁸And I lend him to the Lord as long as he lives, a loan to the Lord."

Commentary[18]

21. offer MT adds "to the Lord" in accordance with the standard phrase

in Selom Lacking in MT. The addition in the LXX (repeated in v. 23 in the LXX and 4QSamª) clarifies where the action is taking place, although the reader should know from v. 3 that it takes place in Shilo (Selom in the LXX).

and all … land Lacking in MT. A "vow" by Elkanah is not known from the text, and it should probably be understood as a "votive offering." Indeed, Deut 12:6 requires the Israelites to bring both votive offerings and tithes to the central place of worship, here Shilo.

22. with him This addition in the LXX, lacking in MT, clarifies that Hannah did not go up to Shilo together with her husband.

until … wean it MT "When the child is weaned, I will bring him." The LXX and MT differ in describing the child's journey: either seemingly independent (LXX) or brought by his mother (MT). At the end of the verse 4QSamª adds, "[I will de]dicate him as a Nazirite forever all the days of [his life]" (similarly Josephus, *Ant.* 5.347 "but the woman remembered the vow she had made concerning her son, and delivered him to Eli, dedicating him to God, that he might become a prophet. Accordingly his hair was suffered to grow long, and his drink was water"). The expanded text of 4QSamª clarifies that Samuel was a Nazarite, although this is actually obvious in light of v. 11 "I will dedicate him to the Lord for all the days of his life; and no razor shall ever touch his head." Also in Ben Sira 46:13 and *m. Nazir* 9.5 Samuel is called a Nazir.

---

[18] For an earlier analysis, see S. D. Walters, "Hannah and Anna: The Greek and Hebrew Texts of 1 Samuel 1," *JBL* 107 (1988): 385–412. For my own analysis of the last verse in the chapter, see "Different Editions of the Song of Hannah," in *Tehillah le-Moshe*: *Biblical and Judaic Studies in Honor of Moshe Greenberg* (eds. M. Cogan, B. L. Eichler, and J. H. Tigay; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 149–70. Revised version: *Greek and Hebrew Bible,* 433–55.

23. that … mouth MT "His word." The LXX, in accord with 4QSam^a, describes Elkanah's words from Hannah's viewpoint as the fulfillment of her vow, while MT considers it to be the confirmation of an earlier utterance by God. The latter case should be compared with the terminology used for vows in Num 30:3 "he must carry out all that has crossed his lips."[19]

24. she … him MT "she took him up with her." 4QSam^a "she took him up." The young Samuel's journey to Shilo is described in slightly different ways in the various sources, giving more independence to the child in the formulation of the LXX (see also the commentary to v. 22).[20] After "him" MT and probably also 4QSam^a add "when she had weaned him" in accord with v. 23.

three-year-old bull MT "three bulls." Hannah probably offered only a single bull (LXX and 4QSam^a) and not "three bulls" (MT), since the next verse in MT speaks about "*the* bull." MT was corrupted when the continuous writing of the original words *prm/shlshh* (literally: "bulls three") underlying the LXX was divided wrongly to *pr mshlsh* ("three-year-old bull"). An offering of a "three-year-old bull" is mentioned in Gen 15:9.

bread The bread mentioned in the LXX and 4QSam^a, but lacking in MT, is a usual component of offerings (see Exod 29:1–2 "a young bull of the herd and two rams without blemish, ²also unleavened bread").

she entered MT "she brought him." The LXX version gives more independence to Hannah, while in MT Hannah's main task was to bring the boy to the Temple.

24–25. the boy … the boy Instead of the long text of the LXX, MT only has two words *we-han-na'ar na'ar* ("and the boy was a boy," translated in the JPS translation as "the boy was still very young").[21] The long text of the LXX helps explain Elkanah's presence in Shilo, otherwise

---

[19] Either the LXX or MT was altered, but it is difficult to establish the direction of such a change. The MT reading could have been changed by 4QSam^a and LXX because a "word" of the Lord is not mentioned in the preceding verses. By the same token, the reading of 4QSam^a and the LXX may have been corrected toward MT because the mentioning of a "word" of the Lord is more respectful than a vow uttered by a human. The latter scenario is more likely, as MT also minimizes the role of Hannah in other instances (see the introduction to this chapter).

[20] The background of these differences is probably the differing readings of the consonants *'tw* as *'oto* (him) in 4QSam^a and *'itto* in the base of the LXX. The latter word was changed to *'immah* ("with her") in MT.

[21] Apparently the longer text in the LXX was original, and textual corruption took place between the first and second occurrences of the word "the boy." 4QSam^a contains an addition similar to that in the LXX, but because of its fragmentary status, the details cannot be verified.

unaccounted for in MT (in that text Elkanah goes up to Shilo in v. 21 and apparently waits there until Hannah arrives much later after weaning the boy).[22]

25. And Hanna … (it) MT "they brought the boy." The LXX presents Hannah much more prominently than MT, probably reflecting the original text. The flow of ideas is more natural in the LXX since Hannah is mentioned in the next verse, while in MT she is mentioned in v. 26 without any introduction in the previous verse.

28. The various sources display two different endings of the story. MT mentions an unnamed male, probably Elkanah: "And he bowed low there before the Lord." MT likewise focuses on Elkanah in 2:11a ("Then Elkanah went home to Ramah") without mentioning Hannah.[23] On the other hand, 4QSamᵃ focuses on Hannah in v. 28, ascribing to her the actions that MT attributed to Elkanah: "[and she left] him there and she bowed down [to the Lord]." As in the Qumran scroll, the LXX of 2:11 ascribed these actions to Hannah upon her finishing the Song (prayer): "And she left him there before the Lord, and departed to Armathaim."[24] The three sources thus depict the leading person in this action as either Hannah (LXX, 4QSamᵃ) or an unnamed male, probably Elkanah (MT).

In sum, the commentaries on three chapters provided in this paper illustrate the relevance of the LXX for the study of Hebrew Scripture. By choosing these chapters we illustrate the different types of relevance that chapters in the LXX may have for the Hebrew Bible. Some are relevant for textual criticism, some for literary criticism, and some for both disciplines.

---

[22] According to MT, Elkanah went twice to Shilo (vv. 3, 21), while according to the LXX he went there three times (vv. 3, 21, 25). The presentation of the data in the LXX resolves the identity of the unnamed male in v. 28 "and he (JPS: they) bowed low there before the Lord." It was Elkanah who slaughtered the bull in v. 25 (thus LXX and 4QSamᵃ), and it was he who prostrated himself before the Lord in v. 28. At the same time, the longer text of the LXX and 4QSamᵃ is not without problems; see, for example, the double offering made by Elkanah in v. 25.

[23] The JPS translation adds Hannah in that verse without textual support.

[24] The sole difference between the LXX and the scroll is that in the scroll this episode appears just before Hannah's Song, while the LXX mentions it just after the Song.