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Joachim Schaper

Eschatology
in the Greek Psalter



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in the Greek Psalter

by

Joachim Schaper



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Meinen Eltern

Preface

The present study is a revised version of a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Cambridge in August 1993 and examined by Professor J. A. Emerton, Cambridge, and Dr M. P. Weitzman, London. I should like to thank the editors of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament*, Professors M. Hengel and O. Hofius, for accepting it into their series, and Mr Georg Siebeck of J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) for affirming this decision.

Looking back at the writing of this study and its subsequent typesetting, many thanks are due to a number of individuals and institutions. As far as the latter are concerned, I am particularly grateful to the *Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes* and its representative for Tübingen, Mr Gerhard Vöpel, for originally enabling me to come and study at Cambridge. Furthermore, I should like to thank the Master and Fellows of Trinity College for generously awarding me their Research Studentship in Theology, which enabled me to devote three carefree years to my research. Thanks also go to the Master and Fellows of Clare College who elected me to a Research Fellowship, which has given me the opportunity to pursue my research and also to prepare the present study for publication.

Many friends have contributed suggestions, helpful criticism and general support. Dr J. N. B. Carleton Paget kindly proof-read and commented on an earlier version of this study. At the memorable Rich Seminar on the Hexapla in July/August 1994, Dr Geoffrey Jenkins, Mr Galen Marquis and Mr Bas ter Haar Romeny gave me most helpful advice on how to cope with the niceties of computer typesetting. Later this year, Miss Rosamund Ions, with extreme generosity, copy-edited the whole typescript for me with true Oxford precision. I am particularly grateful and indebted to my wife, Mrs Marie-Luise Ehrenschwendtner, whose continual support and understanding made it ultimately possible for me to write my Ph.D. thesis at all and, eventually, to turn it into a book.

There are a number of scholars who, in advising the author, gave him the benefit of their considerable erudition. My warmest thanks go to Professor J. A. Emerton and Dr N. R. M. de Lange of Cambridge University, as well as to Professor M. Hengel at Tübingen whose enthusiastic interest in the topic has always proved a welcome source of inspiration. I also greatly appreciate the

help I received from a number of scholars at the Göttingen *Septuaginta-Unternehmen*, most notably Professor R. Hanhart, and from Professor M. Harl, Paris, who kindly invited me, in March 1992, to give a paper to her seminar. I am grateful too to Dr O. Munnich for making available to me a copy of his immensely valuable dissertation on the Greek Psalter.

The debt I owe to my supervisor, Dr W. Horbury, is immeasurable. Always patient, extremely helpful, and in possession of the most impressive knowledge of a wide variety of subjects, he has been the model supervisor and a true 'gentleman scholar'. I have also cherished the wonderful hospitality provided by him, his wife, Katharine, and his daughters, Mary and Kate. Furthermore, my sincere thanks go to Professor M. D. Hooker who, in her capacity as editor of the *Journal of Theological Studies*, gave me permission to reprint, in revised form, an article originally published in *JTS* NS 45 (1994), pp. 117-136. It appears here as ch. 8.2.10.

With regard to the work done by colleagues in the same field, I should like to stress that M. Rösel's interesting study *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung* on the Septuagint of Genesis only came to my attention when my typescript was being copy-edited. Dr Rösel and I share some basic assumptions concerning Septuagint translations, and I should have liked to discuss some of his theses. This will now have to be postponed to some other occasion.

Finally I should like to thank my parents for their unflagging support in many things and through many years. To them I dedicate this volume.

Clare College, Cambridge
Quinquagesima Sunday 1995

J. L. W. Schaper

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List of Abbreviations

AASF	Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fenniae
AAWG	Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen
AB	Anchor Bible
AC	<i>L'Antiquité Classique</i>
AGAJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Antiken Judentums und seiner Umwelt
AHAW	Abhandlungen der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistischen Judentums
ATA	Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen
ATD	Altes Testament Deutsch
Aug	<i>Augustinianum</i>
AUL	Acta Universitatis Lundensis
AUU	Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis
AV	Authorised Version
BA	La Bible d'Alexandrie
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research</i>
BB	Bibliotheca Bodmeriana
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BCAT	Biblischer Kommentar über das Alte Testament
BFCTL	Bibliothèque de la Faculté Catholique de Théologie de Lyon
BHK	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i> , ed. R. Kittel
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i>
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar: Altes Testament
BZ	<i>Biblische Zeitschrift</i>
BZAW	Beihefte zur <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
CBOTS	Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament Series
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
CCL	Corpus Christianorum Latinorum
CCWJCW	Cambridge Commentaries on Writings of the Jewish and Christian World 200 BC to AD 200

CE	Codices ex ecclesiasticis Italiae bybliotheccis delecti phototypice expressi
CHB	<i>Cambridge History of the Bible</i>
CHJ	<i>Cambridge History of Judaism</i>
CM	Collection Massorah
CRB	<i>Cahiers de la Revue Biblique</i>
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DJD(J)	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (of Jordan)
DMOA	Documenta et Monumenta Orientis Antiqui
EJ	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FOTL	The Forms of the Old Testament Literature
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten Testaments
FS	<i>Festschrift</i>
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
GB	W. Gesenius/F. Buhl, <i>Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch</i>
GHKAT	Göttinger Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
GK	W. Gesenius/E. Kautzsch, <i>Hebräische Grammatik</i>
GT	Grundkurs Theologie
HAL	L. Köhler/W. Baumgartner, <i>Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon</i>
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HKAT	Handkommentar zum Alten Testament
HNT	Handbuch zum Neuen Testament
HPB	Haupt's Polychrome Bible
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
ICA	Initiations au Christianisme ancien
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IOSCS	International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
ISLL	Illinois Studies in Language and Literature
JB	Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Gezelschap 'Ex Oriente Lux'
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JBS	Jerusalem Biblical Studies
JLAS	<i>Jewish Law Annual, Supplement</i>
JSNT	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i>

JSNTS	<i>Journal for the Study of the New Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTS	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> , Supplement Series
JSPE	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum Alten Testament
KEHAT	Kurzgefaßtes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KHCAT	Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament
LBS	Library of Biblical Studies
LD	Lectio Divina
LSJ	H. G. Liddell/R. Scott/H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i>
MD	<i>Maison Dieu</i>
MPG	Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Accurante J.-P. Migne. Series Graeca
MPL	Patrologiae Cursus Completus: Accurante J.-P. Migne. Series Latina
MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen
MV	Mededelingen en Verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap ‘Ex Oriente Lux’
NEB	New English Bible
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible
NTG	Neue theologische Grundrisse
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OE	Orientalistische Einführungen in Gegenstand, Ergebnisse und Perspektiven der Einzelgebiete
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
PsG	Psalterium Gallicanum
PsH	Psalterium iuxta Hebraeos
PSV	<i>Phoenix</i> Supplementary Volume
QS	Quaderni di Salesianum
RAC	<i>Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RE	<i>Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche</i> , 3rd edn.
RGG	<i>Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart</i> , 3rd edn.
RSV	Revised Standard Version
SAT	Die Schriften des Alten Testaments

SB	Sources Bibliques
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBPAW	Sitzungsberichte der Preußischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCO	<i>Studi Classici e Orientali</i>
SCSS	Society for Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series
<i>Sem</i>	<i>Semitica</i>
SeT	Studi e Testi
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
SNES	State University of New York Series in Near Eastern Studies
SPB	Studia Post-Biblica
<i>ST</i>	<i>Studia Theologica</i>
SVTP	Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha
TE	Textos y Estudios «Cardenal Cisneros»
<i>THAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum
<i>TWAT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament</i>
<i>TWNT</i>	<i>Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament</i>
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
VTS	Supplements to <i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
WB	Die Welt der Bibel
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
<i>WO</i>	<i>Die Welt des Orients</i>
<i>Wörterbuch</i>	W. Bauer, <i>Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YJS	Yale Judaica Series
ZAW	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästinavereins</i>

A. Septuagint Exegesis

1. Introduction

The literary history of the Greek Bible, its linguistic characteristics and its role in the transmission of Israel's faith to the Hellenistic world have been the subjects of controversial academic debates over several decades. Scholarly dialogue has not yet found a common basis from which to proceed towards a deeper understanding of what probably is 'the most important translation ever made'.¹ The work to be done in this field confronts the student with a plethora of problems, of which one of the most serious is the scarcity of historical evidence concerning the political, social and religious factors which influenced the translation of the 'Seventy'.

Much outstanding work concerning Septuagintal questions has been done,² especially in the area of textual criticism and textual history in general, but, surprisingly enough, not much effort has been expended on research into the *theological* innovations to be detected in the Greek Bible. Nevertheless, in conjunction with a number of articles in various journals,³ there are studies which prove to be exceptions to this rule: I. L. Seeligmann's book on the Septuagint of Isaiah,⁴ which, on a sound philological basis, investigates the political, religious and social situation of Jewish Alexandria at the time of the translation, and L. Prijs' study *Jüdische Tradition in der Septuaginta*.⁵ Seeligmann tries to view the Greek Isaiah as an attempt to actualize and to reinterpret an important part of the Jewish religious tradition – a rewriting of an

¹ E. J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age*, Cambridge, Mass./London 1988, p. 101.

² For extensive bibliographies cp. E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.-A.D. 135): A New English Version, rev. and ed. by G. Vermes, F. Millar, M. Goodman*, III.1, Edinburgh 1986, pp. 489-493, and S. Sabugal OSA, 'La interpretación septuagintista del Antiguo Testamento', in: *Aug* 19 (1979), pp. 341-357. Cp. throughout M. Harl/G. Dorival/O. Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*, Paris 1988 (ICA), and N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las versiones griegas de la Biblia*, Madrid 1979 (TE 23), and, comprising all the relevant literature up to 1973, S. P. Brock/C. T. Fritsch/S. Jellicoe, *A Classified Bibliography of the Septuagint*, Leiden 1973 (ALGHJ 6).

³ Cp. the bibliographies in Harl et al., *La Bible grecque*, pp. 219, 222.

⁴ *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of its Problems*, Leiden 1948 (MV 9).

⁵ Leiden 1948, repr. (together with his *Die grammatischen Terminologie des Abraham Ibn Esra*) Hildesheim/Zürich/New York 1987.

ancient book to suit the mental framework of the contemporary Hellenistic Jewish community which, of course, was a society entirely different from that of the Israelite fathers. This need informed all Greek translations of biblical books, which are commonly referred to collectively as ‘the Septuagint’. Before Seeligmann, C. H. Dodd had already stressed this important point in his study *The Bible and the Greeks*,⁶ in which he undertook a semantic survey of Septuagintal terms and an enquiry into the influence Hellenistic Jewish beliefs exercised upon contemporary paganism. In German scholarship it was especially G. Bertram who pursued research into ‘Septuagintal piety’ and theology,⁷ albeit often exaggerating the significance of his observations for the reconstruction of a supposed *Septuaginta-Frömmigkeit*.

Since the publication of Seeligmann’s book in 1948 some progress has been made⁸ in interpreting those hints in the work of the ‘Seventy’ concerning its historical setting and the changed ideological and religious outlook influencing its theology. J. Koenig, to name just one example, has published a significant study which has greatly contributed to our understanding of the Septuagint as a monument of Jewish exegesis and to which we shall devote more attention in due course.⁹

Z. Frankel asks: ‘Lieg hier nur eine Uebersetzung oder auch zugleich ein Religionswerk vor?’¹⁰ Against the background of such a question it is the aim of this study to demonstrate as clearly as possible the character of the Greek Bible as a work displaying a new, distinct quality in the religious history of Judaism and Hellenism.

⁶ London 1935.

⁷ Cp. for instance, G. Bertram, ‘Vom Wesen der Septuaginta-Frömmigkeit’, in: *WO* 2 (1956), pp. 274–284, and ‘Zur Bedeutung der Religion der Septuaginta in der hellenistischen Welt’ in: *TLZ* 92 (1967), cols. 245–250. Cp. also nn. 46 and 48.

⁸ But cp. R. Hanhart, ‘Die Septuaginta als Interpretation und Aktualisierung: Jesaja 9:1(8:23)–7(6)’, in: A. Rofé/Y. Zakovitch (edd.), *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume, III: Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World*, Jerusalem 1983, pp. 331–346. Hanhart treats the Isaiah passage as an example of Septuagintal ‘actualization’. Cp. his comment on the state of research into the subject, p. 331, and the conclusion, pp. 331f.: ‘... dann dürfte auch von den Fortschritten in diesem Bereich [i.e. textual history] her Recht und Verpflichtung gegeben sein, die Frage nach der Bedeutung der LXX als Interpretation und Aktualisierung ihrer eigenen Zeit, des vorchristlichen hellenistischen Judentums, immer neu aufzuwerfen.’

⁹ Cp. n. 17.

¹⁰ *Ueber den Einfluß der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik*, Leipzig 1851 (repr. Farnborough 1972), pp. 2f. Cp. p. 3: ‘Von einer Seite ist sowohl nach der damaligen geringen Stufe der Hermeneutik als dem herrschenden religiösen Geiste anzunehmen, dass bei einer Version der heil. Schrift das religiöse Element sich unwillkürlich geltend machen musste und eine völlig objective, nur an den Worten der Schrift haltende und von der religiösen Exegese der Gegenwart nicht berührte Auffassung [sic] nicht in der Macht, und wohl auch nicht in dem Willen der Uebersetzer lag.’

In the face of an enormous array of Septuagint texts which were produced over a span of roughly four centuries¹¹ we shall have to narrow down the scope and choose a single and singularly important body of texts within the Greek Bible: the Psalms.

The Hebrew Psalter has rightly been described as the ‘hymn-book’ of post-exilic Judaism.¹² Comprising material from very different times and backgrounds it served as the focus of worship, connected with the temple and also probably with common prayer and praise elsewhere.¹³

The *Greek Psalms* were to be of no lesser importance to Jewish life in the Diaspora than their Hebrew equivalents had been and still were to Palestinian Judaism. To take just one example: we find liturgical dedications in the Greek version (e.g. the superscriptions of the psalms assigning them to the days of the week) which form an addition to the original and were necessitated by changing liturgical needs in a new environment, by the ever-growing importance of synagogal worship.¹⁴

At a time when the canonical shape of the Prophets and, even more so, of the Hagiographa, was still in flux, it was therefore only natural that the thoughts and needs of the religious community using these texts would be left in traces detectable by modern exegesis. More than any other biblical book the Greek Psalter, because of its links with communal prayer, can be trusted to reflect the history of the Jewish community in a changing environment, trying to come to terms with the intellectual challenge of the emerging Hellenistic world civilization. Being the liturgical basis on which Jews expressed themselves as a

¹¹ On the dates of the translations of the Pentateuch, and, subsequently, of the Prophets, the Hagiographa and the ‘deutero-canonical’ books, consult Harl *et al.*, *La Bible grecque*, pp. 55-58, 86-101, esp. 96f.

¹² Cf. O. Eißfeldt, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament unter Einschluß der Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen sowie der apokryphen- und pseudepigraphenartigen Qumran-Schriften*, 3rd edn., Tübingen 1964 (NTG), p. 604: ‘In der . . . Phase der Psalmenforschung, die den weit aus größten Teil der Psalmen aus nachexilischer Zeit herleitete und nur bei ganz wenigen von ihnen die Möglichkeit höheren Alters erwog, bezeichnete man den Psalter als das Gesangbuch der nachexilischen jüdischen Gemeinde. Insofern unser Psalmbuch als ganzes erst in nachexilischer Zeit entstanden ist, trifft diese Bezeichnung auch zu.’

¹³ On the role of the psalms in Israelite and Jewish worship cp. E. Gerstenberger, *Psalms Part I with an Introduction to Cantic Poetry*, Grand Rapids, Ia. 1987 (FOTL 14), pp. 5-22. For the domestic use of psalms cp., for instance, Pes 10,6. For their communal application in thanksgiving cp. Taan 3,9. On the probable liturgical usage of psalms (canonical and non-canonical) in the Qumran community and beyond, cp. 11 Q Ps^a, col. XXVII, in: J. A. Sanders (ed.), *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11 Q Ps^a)*, Oxford 1965 (DJD IV), pp. 91-93.

¹⁴ This does not necessarily indicate any support by the present author for H. St. J. Thackeray’s theory of the Septuagint’s liturgical origin. For criticisms of Thackeray’s hypothesis (put forward in *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins [The Schweich Lectures 1920]*, 2nd edn., London 1923) cp. Harl *et al.*, *La Bible grecque*, pp. 68f., and N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción*, pp. 62-64.

community, and at the same time serving as a source of personal consolation, the Psalms formed one of the most important bodies of biblical literature, for the congregation as well as for the individual. They are therefore a source of the highest importance for any scholar intent upon investigating the history of Judaism in its transition towards 'universalism', its abandonment of a single national centre and language for the liberty of a world culture. This process in turn laid the religious, ideological and practical foundations for the rise of Christianity.

To perceive the intellectual atmosphere out of which the Greek translation of the Psalter emerged is indeed a formidable task. A first important step towards achieving this objective was made by M. Flashar¹⁵ who argued that the translator was influenced by a 'highly distinctive religious thought-world'.¹⁶

Unfortunately, Flashar has never really found a successor building on the foundation he laid nearly eighty years ago. His work is in fact preoccupied with the hitherto unexplored philological aspects of the Septuagint Psalter, with lexicography, statistical and semantic studies, and so his statements on the translators' ideas, motives and intellectual-historical background had to remain very general. Naturally, this study will also be subject to very strict philological demands. On the other hand, it will try to establish, on this philological basis and with the additional support of recent findings in biblical studies and in the historiography of the ancient world, a reliable picture of the date and place of origin, aspects of the history and theology and the role in Jewish religious life of the Greek Psalter.

In recent years, J. Koenig undertook a survey of the analogical hermeneutics of ancient Judaism with special reference to the Septuagint of Isaiah.¹⁷ Koenig has endeavoured to penetrate the depths of the Greek Isaiah and tackle the problems of its textual idiosyncrasies *vis-à-vis* the Hebrew original. His work is an important contribution to current Septuagint scholarship and has further refined our perception of the texts, as well as providing scholars with more precise methods of investigating the character of Septuagint texts.

Let us also make a few more general remarks on the scope of this study. Eschatological beliefs are at the heart of ancient Judaism and early Christianity.

¹⁵ Cp. 'Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter', in: ZAW 32 (1912), pp. 81-116, 161-189, 241-268.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 266: 'Dazu kam, daß dem Übersetzer eine scharf ausgeprägte religiöse Gedankenwelt und Frömmigkeit eignete. Ihr Einfluß erstreckt sich bis in die kleinsten Einzelheiten der Übersetzung, sei es, daß G die Aussagen, die seinem Denken nicht conform waren, änderte, sei es, daß er seinen eigenen Lieblingsgedanken und Vorstellungen bewußt oder unbewußt Geltung zu schaffen suchte.'

¹⁷ *L'herméneutique analogique du judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe*, Leiden 1982 (VTS 33).

This is why it is so important to scrutinize the Greek Psalter in search of the impact such beliefs may have had on the Jewish Greek translators. This cannot be done without taking into account their cultural and religious circumstances. Contrary to many other studies in the field, we shall therefore not concentrate on one single feature of the book we have undertaken to analyse. We shall rather endeavour to develop a fresh approach to the exegesis of a Septuagint text which takes into account the extreme variety of the world it came from, i.e. that of ‘inter-testamental’ Judaism.

This means that, while some space will be given to the inner-Septuagintal ‘dialogue’ between the translators of the various books, the author will attempt to view the Greek Psalter in context, viz. as a document of one of the most fertile periods in Jewish history and religion,¹⁸ 300 BC to AD 200. Therefore ‘what was called “intertestamental” now antedates the latest book in the Old Testament (or Tanach), *Daniel*, by about one hundred years’.¹⁹ This contextual view will give us some new insights into the development of individual and national eschatology in second century Judaism as exemplified in the Greek Psalter and related religious documents of Jewish thought of that time.

In order to succeed with this approach we shall have to rid ourselves of the notion of unconnected ‘corpora’ of literature.²⁰ This notion has led to, amongst other things, a certain neglect of religious-historical aspects of the study of Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Jewish and Christian scholarship. Our perception of these matters has been impaired by religious and practical developments (the formation of the canon, transmission of the texts, history of biblical translation, hermeneutical considerations of the Catholic and the

¹⁸ It is of small importance whether we call this period ‘middle Judaism’ (an interesting new term introduced by G. Boccaccini, *Middle Judaism: Jewish Thought, 300 B.C.E. to 200 C.E.*, Minneapolis 1991; cp., for instance, pp. 18–25) or, more traditionally, ‘early Judaism’ (cp. *ibid.*, ‘Foreword by James H. Charlesworth’ pp. xiii–xix, esp. p. xviii). What matters is to realize the essential unity of this epoch and to overcome the prejudices that led to the segmentation it suffered in scholarly treatment.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

²⁰ Cp. *ibid.*, p. 13: ‘We now arrive at the root of the problem: the existence of the corpora. They make sense in relation to epochs and ideologies that formed, delimited, and reinterpreted them. They are absolutely misleading, however, in their prejudicial interposition between the sources (their authors, their age and their ideological horizons) and the modern interpreter. The task of the historian of thought is to describe an age in its complexity and in the contradiction of its expressions, using *all* the material available, canceling and verifying every traditional division without confessional presupposition. The historian of thought is also to reconstruct as much as possible the chronological and ideological links among the sources. In short, the focus of attention should be shifted from the corpora to the age in which the consistent writings were composed, thus freeing the documents from the cage of their respective corpora and placing them on the same level. In so doing, the interpreter should not be afraid of or surprised at finding forgotten connections or unexpected distances, new hierarchies or unsettling marginalities, supporting roles elevated to protagonists and protagonists reduced to supporting roles.’

Protestant churches, etc.). In consequence, we shall dedicate ourselves to an ‘organic’ interpretation of the Greek Psalter and cognate texts, let them be canonical, deutero-canonical/apocryphal or pseudepigraphal. We shall attempt to look at the Septuagint Psalms not merely from a philological point of view, but also from the perspective of the history of ideas. Tracing the development of early Jewish eschatology, so far as this is possible within the physical limits of this study, and trying to assign to the Greek Psalter its proper place in this development will give us a fresh view of the importance and the formative power of Septuagint texts in early Judaism.

2. The Hebrew Text and its Greek Version

Is it academically justifiable to write a study based on a comparison between Hebrew and Greek texts of the Old Testament? Such a comparison would make sense only if the Hebrew text as preserved and presented in the shape of the Massoretic Text were more or less identical with the one to which the Greek translators referred. The second requirement is that of a reconstructable, basic Septuagint text representing the *unique original form* of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It used to be taken for granted that both these methodological requirements were actually met by the historical facts. However, these assumptions have come under fierce attack from two diametrically opposed angles. Should only one of these criticisms stand up to careful scrutiny, our initial question would have to receive careful reconsideration.

A central objection, destined, if true, to undermine the whole of the Göttingen project of a critical Septuagint edition was that of P. Kahle. According to his thesis, the extant collection of books commonly called ‘the Septuagint’ does not go back to one unique, original translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek. It is, rather, a collation of translations from the Hebrew that can be traced back to a plurality of places and situations. Kahle claims that what we now misleadingly name *the Septuagint* came into existence in a way very similar to the one in which the Aramaic Targums were produced. They were originally, according to Kahle, *oral* Greek translations of the portions of the Torah to be read out in synagogue services which were later collected, collated, and edited.

However, there are serious objections to Kahle’s thesis that allow for its definite refutation. The first important thing to be said against Kahle is that his comparison between the Greek Bible and the Targums rests on an assumption that cannot be validated. Whereas we *know* that the Targums represent a collation of formerly oral material we have no proof whatsoever for the Septuagint origins being analogous to those of the Targums. Kahle’s hypothesis is a tempting one, but after all it is a *petitio principii*.²¹

Secondly, the existence of New Testament and patristic quotations of Septuagint passages differing from the extant text of the Greek Bible does *not* prove, contrary to Kahle’s thesis, that there were independent Greek versions of the original. The different renderings could be due to distorted quotations from the New Testament authors’ *memories*, to early Jewish versions of the

²¹ This was pointed out first by P. Katz, ‘Das Problem des Urtextes der Septuaginta’, in: TZ 5 (1949), pp. 1-24.

Septuagint text or to reinterpretations of Septuagint texts in an early Christian framework.²²

Thirdly, and most importantly, the papyruses with a different Greek text adduced by Kahle in support of his hypothesis witness to revisions of the Old Greek text, not to independent traditions.²³

While O. Eißfeldt was still hesitating to give a final evaluation of the matter,²⁴ things are much clearer now: D. Barthélemy's interpretation of the manuscripts found at Nahal Hever in 1952 and 1960 has proved to be the more satisfying one. Kahle took these fragmentary manuscript witnesses to a hitherto unknown Jewish Greek version of the *Dodekapropheton* as evidence of just another, *independent* Jewish Greek *translation* of a biblical text. However, Barthélemy was able to demonstrate that these texts represent an early *revision* of the Old Greek of the Twelve Prophets. He called it the καίγε recension, according to its rendering of the Hebrew סְבִרָה, argued conclusively that the revisors' work predated that of Aquila and that they were influenced by the prevalent rabbinical hermeneutics of their time.²⁵

This in turn proves that the general idea behind the Göttingen Septuagint edition, the reconstruction of the oldest available text, is not futile. The books of the Greek Bible are indeed unified translation enterprises, and it makes sense to try and proceed, by means of textual criticism, towards an edition of the oldest recoverable texts.²⁶ P. de Lagarde's thesis of the Septuagint's original unity has thus been vindicated.²⁷ The Göttingen edition proceeds on the basis of this concept,²⁸ and the present study can therefore use one of the fruits of its labours, the 1931 edition of the Psalms published by A. Rahlfs.²⁹

But what can we say about the other side of the coin, i. e. the Hebrew text used by the translators as opposed to the extant Massoretic text? The evaluation

²² Cp. Harl et al., *La Bible grecque*, p. 184.

²³ Cp. *ibid.*

²⁴ Cp. *Einleitung*, p. 962.

²⁵ Cp. *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, Leiden 1963 (VTS 10).

²⁶ Cp. R. Hanhart, 'Septuaginta', in W. H. Schmidt/W. Thiel/R. Hanhart, *Altes Testament*, Stuttgart/Berlin/Cologne/Mainz 1989 (GT 1), p. 193: 'Daß es sich ursprünglich um ein in sich einheitliches Übersetzungswerk handelt, ergibt sich durch den Befund, daß die ältesten LXX-Texte jüdischer Herkunft grundsätzlich bereits die christlich überlieferte Textform der LXX zeigen; demgegenüber lassen sich abweichende Textteile, die meist der hebräischen Vorlage näherstehen, als Rezensionselemente nachweisen.'

²⁷ Cp. *ibid.*, p. 195.

²⁸ For a description of the concept of textual reconstruction followed in Göttingen cp. *ibid.*, pp. 195f.

²⁹ A. Rahlfs (ed.), *Septuaginta Societatis Scientiarum Gottingensis auctoritate, X: Psalmi cum Odis*, Göttingen 1931. It was the first publication of the project and has its shortcomings. A new edition of the Psalter is being planned in Göttingen but will not be executed in the foreseeable future.

of their relation is an even thornier problem of textual history and criticism. On the basis of Barthélemy's analysis it can reasonably be claimed that the revision of the Old Greek text rested on an already quite closely defined Hebrew text that is normally referred to as 'proto-Massoretic'. However, this only applies to the texts used from the first half of the first century AD onwards. Before that time, the text of the Hebrew Bible was still in what we may paradoxically call a state of 'restricted openness'.³⁰ Around 100 AD the basic form of the MT was already established; in earlier times, the Jewish community seems not to have felt such an immense need to pinpoint even the minutest details of its scriptures.³¹

H. M. Orlinsky has mounted several attacks on the notion of a 'Massoretic Text' altogether and prefers just to speak about the *textus receptus* handed down to us.³² According to Orlinsky, 'scholars have usually assumed that just as the books of the Bible were canonized, so was the Hebrew text of the books; expressions such as the "official" or "standard" or "stabilized" Hebrew text are the norm. Bu[t] this scholarly assumption, whether it be fiction or simply unproved or unprovable, has little practical value'.³³ However, he then goes on to admit that, concerning the story of the Letter of Aristeas, 'the idea behind the story is the fact that an acceptable translation could derive only from an acceptable Hebrew text, one that had the blessings of the head of the Jewish people'.³⁴

This is easy enough to accept. Unfortunately Orlinsky does not endeavour to offer a solution to the problem he highlights. In order to understand the nature of the question and the attitude of pre-Christian Judaism towards its sacred scriptures we have to go beyond a simple listing of textual diversities. Orlinsky's criticism is in fact, to a great extent, a play with words. We still have to account for the fact that early on in the textual history of the Bible a need was felt to return as closely as possible to what was conceived of as the original text.³⁵ The Scroll of the Twelve Prophets found at Nahal Hever is a case in

³⁰ Cp. Hanhart, 'Septuaginta', p. 195, naming as one of the criteria for finding out about the origin, age and place of recensional elements 'die hebräische Vorlage, die von der zweiten Hälfte des 1. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. an in der protomasoretisch verfestigten einheitlichen Form, für die vorangehende Zeit noch in einer *begrenzten Offenheit* [my italics] vorauszusetzen ist.'

³¹ Cp. Eißfeldt, *Einleitung*, pp. 928f.

³² Cp. 'The Septuagint and its Hebrew Text', in: *CHJ*, II, pp. 557ff.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 557.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 558.

³⁵ Cp. R. Hanhart, 'Die Septuaginta als Problem der Textgeschichte, der Forschungsgeschichte und der Theologie', in: P. A. H. de Boer (ed.), *Congress Volume Uppsala 1971*, Leiden 1972 (VTS 22), p. 188: 'Es ist die Grundgegebenheit dieser von Anfang an bestehenden, theologisch: in einer bestimmten Form von Kanonisierung, begründeten Verfestigung des alttestamentlichen Textes sowohl in der Gestalt der Ursprache als auch in der

point. Without the existence of some kind of standard Hebrew text the whole enterprise of such a recension would have been impossible. ‘It should be noted . . . that the *Vorlage* of the Greek text is by no means identical with the surviving *textus receptus*, but may be called Proto-Massoretic, since it differs even more decidedly with the Old Palestinian Hebrew text.’³⁶ The Hebrew text available to the scholars establishing the καίγε recension, on the other hand, was not fully identical with, for example, that used by Aquila later on. Both the Greek and the Hebrew texts were still, to some degree at least, in flux. This is once again proved by the *Dodekapropheton* of Nahal Hever.

There is no doubt that this Greek text was an early Jewish attempt to revise the standard Septuagint into conformity with a Proto-Massoretic Hebrew text, just as Aquila represents a sequent attempt to revise this revision in the direction of the official Rabbinic or Massoretic text which had been established by his day. We see, then, a series of attempts to bring the Greek Bible into conformity with a *changing* Hebrew textual tradition.³⁷

These changes only came to a halt when ‘by the beginning of the second century A.D. an authoritative text of the Hebrew Bible had been promulgated, the archetype of the Massoretic manuscripts of the Middle Ages’.³⁸ However, Orlinsky upholds his theory, against the evidence drawn together by F. M. Cross,³⁹ and argues that there is no reason to assume the existence of a standardized, authoritative text by the beginning of the second century – or, for that matter, at any time from the pre-Septuagint to the mediaeval eras.⁴⁰ Orlinsky is right in stressing the fact that different texts of some canonical books ‘were simultaneously in circulation, none of them any longer – if any ever were – identifiable as official, and all of them having experienced or still in the process of experiencing change’.⁴¹ Even in Aquila, as Orlinsky points out, we find some readings which differ widely from what has been handed down to us as the ‘Massoretic Text’.⁴² Even so, and in full knowledge of the fact that Cross’s explanation also raises a number of questions,⁴³ it seems to be an

Gestalt der griechischen Übertragung, aus der allein sich das Phänomen erklären lässt, das das Wesen der Textgeschichte in dieser ersten Zeit ausmacht: Dieses Phänomen besteht in der immer deutlicher werdenden Rückbewegung des im Anfang noch relativ freien Übersetzungstextes zur formalen und inhaltlichen Identität mit dem Text des Originals zurück.’

³⁶ F. M. Cross, ‘The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judean Desert’, in: *HTR* 57 (1964), p. 282.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 283.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 287f.

³⁹ Cp. *ibid.*, *passim*.

⁴⁰ Cp. n. 32.

⁴¹ ‘Septuagint’, p. 559.

⁴² Cp. *ibid.*

⁴³ It should be noted that Cross bases his case mainly on the evidence provided by *Greek* documents (cp. ‘History’, pp. 278f.) and that his Hebrew textual evidence is confined to the

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