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The Great Code: Greek Bible And the Humanities¹



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INTRODUCTION

Northrop Frye was a Professor in the Department of English at Victoria College in the University of Toronto from 1948 until his death in 1991. One of his most influential and significant books was entitled *The Great Code*.² In this work he argued that the Bible is foundational to much of the literature in the western world. In particular, in terms of *language, myth, metaphor, and typology*, the Bible functions as a code providing a system for imagination and metaphor necessary to the correct interpretation of texts. Prior to Frye, for example, the poetry of William Blake was poorly understood because readers did not grasp the system of metaphor derived from Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Bible upon which Blake's writings were based. Today, my hope is to extend the thesis of Frye to show how the Bible, and in particular the Greek Translation of the Jewish Scriptures, is at the foundation of many disciplines in the humanities.

¹ This lecture was first given as one of the Sizemore Lectures in Biblical Studies at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary November 29, 2012.

² Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1982).

Let me begin by describing the Greek Bible in the Jewish and Christian traditions. The translation into Greek of the Jewish Sacred Writings and the Christian First Testament is normally referred to as the Septuagint.

Definition

What is meant by the term Septuagint? A lack of precision is common in both popular and scholarly use of the word. Mainly responsible for this lack of precision are uncertainties about the history of the process of translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. There is general agreement that the books from Genesis to Deuteronomy known as the Pentateuch or Torah, were translated in Egypt early during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285/2-246 B.C.E.), possibly around 280 if we can rely on the testimony of the Church Fathers.³ The books in the "Prophets" and "Writings" sections of the Jewish Canon were translated later, most of them by 130 B.C.E. as is clearly indicated by the Prologue to the Greek Translation of Ben Sira (Ecclesiasticus). Questions have been raised about the date of translation of each of the books in the collection known as Megilloth (Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther). Some of these may have been first translated after 100 B.C.E. Thus the term Septuagint is applicable in a technical sense only to the Greek Pentateuch, although it is commonly employed in a loose manner of speaking for the Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures as a whole. To further complicate matters, long before all the books had been translated, revisions were already being made of existing translations. The process of making systematic, thoroughgoing revisions (called *recensions*) continued from possibly 150 B.C.E. through 200 C.E. The precise line of demarcation between original translations and revisions in this body of texts has, in fact, not yet been clearly established. Scholars are still working to prepare scientific editions of these translations based upon careful study of all available evidence in Greek manuscripts, citations in Church

³ N. L. Collins, "281 BCE: the Year of the Translation of the Pentateuch in Greek under Ptolemy II," in *Septuagint, Scrolls, and Cognate Writings* (eds. George J. Brooke and Barnabas Lindars; SCS 33; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 403-503. A recent re-analysis of the *Letter of Aristeas* and the origins of the Septuagint is Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003). Her conclusions do not challenge a date in the early third century B.C. as the proposed time of translation.

Fathers, and early daughter translations. Moreover it should be noted that the Greek Bible originated in Africa.

Purpose

What motivated the task of translation continues to be debated to the present time. Five major hypotheses have been advanced: (1) a generation of Greek-speaking Jews in the Hellenistic period begun by the conquest of Alexander the Great (333-323 B.C.E.) required Greek scriptures for their liturgy, or (2) for the education of their young; (3) the translation was required as a legal document or (4) as cultural heritage for the royal library being assembled in Alexandria; (5) Aristarchus' new edition of Homer around 150 B.C.E. employed textual criticism to produce an authoritative text and served as a model to produce an authoritative text of the Bible for Alexandrian Jews (hence early revisions and *The Letter of Aristeas*).

Origin

A document known as (*The Letter of*) *Aristeas* purports to relate the story of the origin of the Greek Pentateuch. This document is a piece of propaganda written 150-100 B.C.E. to authenticate the Greek version in the face of criticisms circulating at that time—criticisms to the effect that the Greek translation did not adequately reflect the current Hebrew text in Palestine.

The name Septuagint comes from *septuaginta*, the Latin word for seventy. According to *Aristeas*, there were seventy-two translators. The number seventy is an adaptation of seventy-two based on models like the Seventy Elders at Sinai, the Seventy Judges who assisted Moses, the Seventy Elders of the Sanhedrin, etc. (seventy in *Sefer Torah* i.8 and seventy-two in *Sôferîm* i.8). Likely there were just five translators for the Pentateuch as the rabbinic versions of the story indicate (*Aboth of Rabbi Nathan* 37, *Sôferîm* i.7). While church fathers like Justin Martyr (c. 135 C.E.) refer to the seventy translators, the earliest use of the term Septuagint as a reference to the translation itself is found in Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* (c. 303 C.E.).⁴

⁴ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.16.1.

Character

In both ancient and modern times different approaches to the task of translation have been adopted. Each language employs a code to 'cut up' and represent the 'pie' of reality. The code of one language may overlap with that of another in multiple ways or perhaps not at all in some aspects. Translations may be characterised in a continuum on a spectrum. At one end of the spectrum the translator seeks to follow as closely as possible the code of the source language where that of the target language will permit. Formal correspondence between the code of source and target languages may be at the clause level, phrase level, word level, or word-component morpheme level.⁵ At the other end of the spectrum, the translator seeks to follow the code of the target language where that of the source language will allow in order to communicate effectively to the readers. Thus the notion of fidelity to the Word of God motivates both ends of the spectrum. When the codes of source and target languages overlap in multiple ways, certainly more than one correct translation is possible. The books in the Greek Pentateuch as well as those in the Prophets and Writings vary widely within this spectrum. Some are literal and represent formal equivalence in the extreme; others are freer and represent many gradations of functional equivalence.

Genesis and Exodus are fairly dynamic translations while Leviticus through Deuteronomy are quite literal. The translator of the book of Job abbreviated many of the long, windy speeches for his Hellenistic readership so that the book is one-sixth shorter in Greek. The translator of Proverbs re-arranged the material to enhance the figure of Solomon. Other books have additions to them such as Esther and Daniel. The Greek Jeremiah differs significantly from the Hebrew Text in both arrangement and text. Most of the books, however, reflect the same Hebrew parent text as that later preserved in the Masoretic Text.

In general, the differences between the Septuagint and the later standard text (Masoretic Text) are due to a number of factors. In some cases, the translators were using a Hebrew parent text which differs somewhat from the Masoretic Text. In other cases, differences are due simply to a different way of reading the same text or understanding the grammar and meanings of words.

⁵ Harry Sysling, "Translation Techniques in the Ancient Bible Translations: Septuagint and Targum," in *A History of Bible Translation* edited by Philip A. Noss (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 2007), 285-86.

The Septuagint quickly became popular among the Jews of the Diaspora for whom Greek was the familiar spoken language. When the Christian church began to spread beyond Jewish borders, it adopted the Septuagint as its Bible with minor modifications. For example, the book of Daniel in the Septuagint was considered so deficient by the Christian church that it was rejected and a later Greek translation attributed to Theodotion was used instead. Many of the quotations of the Old Testament in the New are from the Septuagint, or even early revisions of it, and as a result may differ from the Masoretic Text. The differences range from superficial to significant. The existence of differences in the text and different Greek translations does not appear problematic for the strong claim made by Jesus and the Apostles concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures.

INFLUENCE OF THE GREEK BIBLE IN GENERAL

Two approaches will be used to demonstrate the main thesis, i.e. that the Greek Bible is the Great Code for the Humanities. First, a syllogism can establish the point in broad and sweeping terms by showing the debt owed by our civilization in the West to the Bible in general, and by demonstrating that the Greek version of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures was the chief instrument and source for this impact on the humanities. This might be displayed as follows:

Syllogism

1. Humanities in Western civilisation are indebted to the Bible.
2. During the largest part of the past two thousand years, the dominant form of the Bible is the Greek Version.
3. Humanities in Western civilisation are indebted to the Greek Bible.

Recently a brief publication from *Kairos Journal* entitled “Legatees of a Great Inheritance: How the Judeo-Christian Tradition Has Shaped the West” provided a summary of facts illustrating the first point in areas such as the arts:⁶

⁶ What follows is adapted from “Legatees of a Great Inheritance: How the Judeo-Christian Tradition Has Shaped the West,” *Kairos Journal Booklet* (2008),

The Arts

The canon of Western civilization includes such incomparable literary figures and practitioners of the arts as Rembrandt, Shakespeare, Mendelssohn, and Tolstoy. It is a tradition rich in media and genres. Often Judeo-Christian convictions were the inspiration for achievement. Furthermore, people of faith provided the freedom for non-believers to work their craft. These two factors together have been the seedbed for a flowering of artistic culture such as the world has never seen.

Painting and Sculpture

Painting and sculpture have been mainstays in worship centers—from illuminated manuscripts (Book of Kells) to Byzantine icons; from Giotto's murals in the Arena Chapel in Padova to the Vatican Bernini colonnade; from the stained glass of Notre Dame and Sainte-Chapelle to the Marc Chagall windows in the Hadassah-Hebrew University synagogue. Then, beyond the walls of churches and synagogues, the visual arts have flourished in many forms. The European Renaissance gave the world Botticelli and Raphael in the South, Breughel and Dürer in the North. And who can count the various artistic "isms," such as Neoclassicism, Romanticism, Impressionism, and Cubism, emerging in subsequent centuries.

Architecture

The West is home to Gothic, Romanesque, Baroque, Neo-classical, Italianate, Spanish mission, Colonial, Prairie, Federal, Art Deco, Bauhaus, PostModern, and Expressionist architecture. It has given the world the Hagia Sophia, the Spanish Steps, the Ponte Vecchio, the Eiffel Tower, Versailles, and the Royal Albert Hall.

Music

Christianity alone has contributed the oratorio, cantata, hymn, gospel song, requiem mass, Negro spiritual, and Gregorian chant. It has

birthed Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," Handel's "Messiah," and Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God."

Western orchestras abound, with music scored for a wealth of finely engineered instruments, from violin to trumpet to oboe. National arts commissions and private patrons underwrite the performance of symphonies, operas, and folk song festivals. Popular music of every sort issues from Western recording studios. Some of it is original, some of it internationally eclectic. But inceptive or hybrid, the production is Western and the audience is worldwide.

Fiction

From the early days of Cervantes (*Don Quixote*) and Defoe (*Robinson Crusoe*), through the days of Dumas (*The Three Musketeers*), Dickens (*Oliver Twist*), and Austen (*Pride and Prejudice*), to the modern work of Orwell (1984) and Hemingway (*The Old Man and the Sea*), the novel has been a mainstay of Western civilization.

Theatre

The theatre has enjoyed unparalleled vitality in the West, with its West End, repertory, summer stock, and touring companies. The names of venues (the Globe in London; the Abbey in Dublin), playwrights (England's Shakespeare; Norway's Ibsen; Russia's Chekov), and dramas (*Tartuffe*; *The Cherry Orchard*) are legendary.

Film

Western films are the gold standard, dominating theaters from Jakarta to Nairobi. Notable is the contribution of Eastern European Jews and their progeny, who founded America's great companies (MGM, Fox, Paramount, Columbia, etc.) and of Italians of Catholic tradition (Fellini, Bertolucci, Zeffirelli, etc.). Europe is dotted with historic studios (Shepperton and Ealing in England, Cinecittà in Italy, Pathé in France) and influential film festivals (Venice, Cannes, Berlin).

Comedy

Comedy rates special notice because it flourishes in free societies of the West. Indeed, the work of satirists, comedians, cartoonists, parodists, caricaturists, clowns, and jesters is a vital check on absurdity, hypocrisy, pomposity, and tyranny. Judaism has been particularly

fruitful in this connection, providing the West with many of its comedic luminaries.

Creativity and Diversity

This is not to gainsay the wonderful contributions of Islamic art. As Sir Ernst Gombrich puts it in his classic *The Story of Art*, Muslim artisans “created the most subtle lacework ornamentation known as arabesques,” and he observed, “It is an unforgettable experience to walk through the courtyards and halls of the Alhambra and to admire the inexhaustible variety of these decorative patterns.” But Muslim theology, whether through disdain for sacred music, figurative depictions, (aniconism), or dissenting expression, has limited creativity and diversity, hallmarks of Western civilisation.

These are illustrations of areas in the Arts that have been deeply shaped by the Judeo-Christian heritage. Only a few considerations are necessary to demonstrate Part Two of the Syllogism, i.e. that the form of the Bible that was the means and source of shaping our heritage was the Greek Version.

It is now widely accepted that Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek were all used in Palestine in the First Century C.E. The question as to whether a particular individual or region or town was bilingual or even trilingual is debated.⁷ Outside of Palestine, the Jews of the Diaspora, for the most part, spoke Greek and used the Greek Version of their Sacred Writings. An excellent example of this is Philo of Alexandria (c. 20 B.C.E. – 40 C.E.). Additional evidence can be found in the use of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament. The Council in Jerusalem in Acts 15 is a case in point—appeal to the Greek version of the Jewish Scriptures settled the matter. We must remember that the Christian Church began as a sect within Judaism.

⁷ See esp. G. H. R. Horsley, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, Vol. 5 (Macquarie University: The Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, 1989), 19-26.

TEXTS AND VERSIONS USED BY THE EARLY CHURCH

In 1983 Archer and Chirichigno produced an overview of the citations of the Jewish Scriptures in the New Testament.⁸ Although this work is dated, it does give a helpful picture of the biblical texts used by the Early Church. The authors used categories to describe quotations as follows:

(1) Quotations in the New Testament from the Septuagint when it closely follows our present Hebrew Masoretic Text – 268.

(2) Quotations in the New Testament following the wording of the Septuagint even when it deviates somewhat from our present Masoretic Text – 294.

(3) Quotations in the New Testament closer to MT than to the LXX – 33.

(4) Quotations in the New Testament adhering closely to the LXX against our present Masoretic Text – 22.

(5) Quotations in the New Testament where the New Testament writer appears to have taken liberties in quoting the Old Testament – 13.

It is not hard to see from this short survey that the LXX played an important and significant role in terms of the use of the Old Testament in the New.⁹

Influence of the Septuagint in Jewish Communities

The influence of the Septuagint among Jewish communities continued well into the Middle Ages. Since the Christian Church adopted the Septuagint as Scripture and attempted to demonstrate the claim that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah in Christian-Jewish dialogue based upon this version, several Jewish revisions of the Septuagint were produced in the first two centuries C.E. in an attempt to bring this version into closer alignment with the Hebrew Text and current rabbinic teaching. The main Jewish revisions of the Septuagint are attributed to Theodotion, Aquila, and Symmachus. For the most

⁸ Gleason L. Archer and G. C. Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament: A Complete Survey* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983).

⁹ See further Karen H. Jobes, "When God Spoke Greek: The Place of the Greek Bible in Evangelical Scholarship," *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 16.2 (2006): 221.

part, these versions were revisions of the original Greek Translation and not brand new translations. Abraham Wasserstein and his son, David J. Wasserstein, in a recent work, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* trace the influence of the Septuagint, whether directly or indirectly via the Jewish Revisors, among Jewish communities well into the Middle Ages.

At a Conference on the Greek Bible in Byzantine Judaism held in July, 2007 at Cambridge University, I presented an analysis of a fragment of Ecclesiastes from the Genizah in the Old Jewish Synagogue in Cairo, Egypt.¹⁰ This document contains a Greek version of Ecclesiastes written in Hebrew Script. The text is derived from the Septuagint, but updated to reflect the grammar and lexicon of Byzantine Greek and dates to about 1000 C.E. It provides a clear witness to the abiding influence of the Septuagint among Jews in the medieval period.

Influence of the Septuagint in Christian Communities

We have already noted that the Christian Church adopted almost immediately the Greek Version of the Christian Old Testament. Breakdown in relations between Christians and Jews early on meant that the Christian Church was separated from the Semitic sources of its Scriptures as well as from the Jewish background against which they are properly understood. The only important leaders in the Christian Church who could in any measure read the Hebrew Text up to the time of the Renaissance and Reformation were Origen and Jerome.

Not only did the Apostles of the New Testament cite the Hebrew Scriptures from the Greek Version, but the Septuagint exercised a great influence on their grammar and vocabulary just as the King James Version influenced the jargon of Christians in the Twentieth Century. Sidney Jellicoe, a leading scholar of the Septuagint in the third quarter of the last century did not overstate when he claimed: "He who would *read* the NT must know *Koiné*; but he who would *understand* the NT must know the LXX" (emphasis original).¹¹ This can especially be seen in the writings of Luke, who in terms of text contributed more to the New Testament than Paul. For example, in the so-called "Parable of the Good Samaritan" (Luke 10) Jesus asks who was a neighbour to the man who

¹⁰ Peter J. Gentry, "The Greek Genizah Fragment of Ecclesiastes and its Relation to Earlier Greek Versions." In *Festschrift for John Lee*, edited by James K. Aitken and Trevor Evans. Forthcoming.

¹¹ Sidney Jellicoe, "Septuagint Studies in the Current Century," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 199.

fell among thieves. An expert in the Torah answers: “the one who did ‘mercy’ with him.” The expression is as strange in Greek as it is in English, but derives via the Septuagint from a Hebrew expression “do *hesed*” for performing acts which fulfill obligations of loyalty and love in a covenant relationship.

Concerning the use of the Septuagint in the Christian Church, Karen Jobes rightly states:

...it was the Greek OT, not the Hebrew, together with the Greek NT that was the Bible for much of the Christian church for fifteen hundred years—either directly in its Greek form or in one of the nine early translations made from the Greek into other languages, such as the Old Latin read by Augustine. In those first crucial four centuries of the church, it was primarily the Greek OT, not the Hebrew, over which the councils deliberated the great doctrines on which our Christian faith rests today. According to Pelikan, Origen was probably the first and perhaps the only ante-Nicene father to study Hebrew, and then only to verify and correct the Greek text used by the church.¹²

And Jaroslav Pelikan writes,

it seems safe to propose the generalization that, except for converts from Judaism, it was not until the biblical humanists and the Reformers of the sixteenth century that a knowledge of Hebrew became standard equipment for Christian expositors of the Old Testament. Most of Christian doctrine developed in a church *uninformed by any knowledge of the original text of the Hebrew Bible* [emphasis mine].¹³

John Sawyer concludes similarly:

Despite the efforts of a few Hebrew scholars down the ages and their claims to be concerned, like St Jerome, with the original Hebrew, it was the Greek Bible that has been most influential in

¹² Karen H. Jobes, “When God Spoke Greek: The Place of the Greek Bible in Evangelical Scholarship,” 221.

¹³ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. Vol. 1: *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), 21.

the history of Christianity and indirectly in the history of western culture.¹⁴

The Greek Bible continued as the central text in the Eastern Roman Empire and Byzantium until the Fifteenth Century. Moreover, the Bible of the Orthodox Church in Russia is derived from the Septuagint and the Orthodox Church maintained closer ties with Greece than Western Europe. Increasingly, in the West, the dominant language was Latin. Although Jerome produced a translation of the Bible in Latin directly from the Hebrew during the years 390-406, the Old Latin Translation made from the Septuagint continued to be used for a long time and was not quickly replaced by the Vulgate. Augustine mentioned in a letter to Jerome in 403 that a bishop in Oea (Tripoli) had caused a disturbance when he used Jerome's new version instead of the Old Latin.¹⁵ The word *cucurbita* for gourd in Hebrew (*qiqqayon*) had been replaced by *hedera* (ivy). When the lector read the text, the congregation shouted out that the correct word was *cucurbita*.

Augustine's intellectual influence in the West has been immense. Crucial to his epistemology in the area of philosophy is the statement "I believe that I might understand." This is derived from the Old Latin of Isaiah 7:9 where the translation is based on the Septuagint and this meaning cannot be derived from the Hebrew Text. This famous phrase from the Old Latin Bible continued to be quoted by Anselm, Abelard, and many others as the foundation of epistemology, an area of philosophy that is the foundation of many disciplines in the humanities and sciences.

The Old Latin persisted the longest in monasteries in Ireland. The influence of Irish Monks in the intellectual tradition in Europe is enormous, particularly through centres of learning like Lindisfarne in England, a daughter monastery of Iona established by Columba, and St. Gallen in Switzerland, founded by the Irish monk Gallus in the missionary movement beyond Ireland and England led by Columbanus.¹⁶ The humanities in the West, then, before 1500 owe much to the Greek Bible.

¹⁴ John F. A. Sawyer, *Sacred Languages and Sacred Texts* (London/New York: Routledge, 1999), 94.

¹⁵ *Epist. Hieronymi* 104,5 and 112,22; *C.S.E.L.* 55 (ed. I. Hillberg), 241, 392, *PL* 22, 833 § 5, 903 § 22; *Comm. In Jonam Prophetam* 4,6; *PL* 25 1202C – 1204B.

¹⁶ See Kurt Aland, *A History of Christianity. Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Threshold of the Reformation* (trans. James L. Schaaf; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 238-242.

Influence of the Greek Bible in Particular

The second approach to demonstrate the main thesis, i.e. that the Greek Bible is the Great Code for the Humanities, is to consider individual disciplines in the humanities and illustrate in particular the bearing that the Greek Bible has on that discipline.

TEXTUAL CRITICISM AND THE HISTORY OF
THE TEXT OF JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES

The Septuagint is one of the earliest and most significant witnesses to the text of the Hebrew Bible. The oldest **complete** manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible date to c. 1000 C.E. The Greek Pentateuch was translated early in the Third Century B.C.E. To the extent that the translation can be used to determine the parent text from which it was translated, we have a much older testimony to the text of the Hebrew Bible. The parent text of the Septuagint would also pre-date the Dead Sea Scrolls and contains more important variants than the Dead Sea Scrolls as a textual witness.

When considering large-scale differences between various witnesses to the text, Emanuel Tov affirms:

The list of biblical Qumran texts attesting to early redactional stages different from MT LXX S T V is thus rather limited... Consequently, according to this understanding, in addition to MT, the LXX remains the major source for recognizing different literary stages (early and late) of the Hebrew Bible.¹⁷

Three examples are sufficient to show that sometimes the Masoretic Text is superior, and at other times, the parent text of the Greek Bible is superior.

¹⁷ Emanuel Tov, "The Nature of the Large-Scale Differences Between the LXX and MT S T V, Compared with Similar Evidence in Other Sources," in *The Earliest Text of the Hebrew Bible: The Relationship between the Masoretic Text and the Hebrew Base of the Septuagint Reconsidered*, ed. Adrian Schenker (SCS 52; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 2003), 137.

ZECH 1:21[2:4]

MT 1:21

וַיָּבֵאוּ אֵלָהּ לְהַחֲרִיד אֹתָם

לְיָדוֹת אֲתֵּקְרִנּוֹת הַגּוֹיִם ...

LXX 2:4¹⁸καὶ εἰσιῆλθον οὗτοι τοῦ ὀξῦναι
αὐτὰεἰς χεῖρας αὐτῶν τὰ τέσσαρα
κέρατα

And these came to terrify them
by casting down the horns of
the nations...

And these came to sharpen
them—the four horns—into
their hands.

The rendering in the LXX is based upon reading יְהַחֲרִיד from דָּד ‘be sharp’ and is due to the confusion easily made between *dalet* and *resh*. He also vocalised יָדוֹת ‘hands’ and supplied a possessive pronoun rather than the Piel Bound Infinitive of יָדָה that we find in MT. The number four is supplied from the context. The text offered by the LXX is obviously inferior and can be easily shown to be a secondary development from the text in MT by common errors in textual transmission. At the same time, it is clear that in reality it witnesses to the same text transmitted in MT and is not a witness to a different textual tradition.

Two examples are drawn from Isaiah, where Barthélemy and the Committee of the Hebrew Old Testament Text Project sponsored by the United Bible Societies propose that the parent text represented by the LXX is superior and the text of MT secondary. The first example is Isaiah 19:10. Verses 9 and 10 in MT and v. 10a in LXX provide the context, followed by the analysis of the committee designated by CTAT (*Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*). The sources for the relevant witnesses are cited last.

¹⁸ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Duodecim Prophetæ* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 13; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1943, 1967).

ISA 19:10

MT

LXX¹⁹

[9] וּבִשּׁוּ עֲבָדֵי כְּשֵׁתִים שְׂרִיקוֹת

וְאֲרָגִים חוֹרֵי:

[10] וְהָיוּ שְׂתֵתֶיהָ מְדַכָּאִים

καὶ ἔσονται οἱ διαζόμενοι
αὐτὰ ἐν ὀδύνη

כָּל-עֹשֵׂי שֶׁכֶר אֲגָמִי-נַפֵּשׁ:

Those who work with combed
flax will despair,
as well as those who weave
white fabric;

And her foundations will be
dejected;

all her wage-earners are people
who are like murky pools.

And those weaving (set the
warp in the loom) them will be
in pain

CTAT: 19,10 cor שְׂתֵתֶיהָ [C] 1Q^a 4Q^b G T // assim Ps 11,3: M שְׂתֵתֶיהָ /
exeg: Th Aq(?) V / deform-int: g t / constr: S

MT

שְׂתֵתֶיהָ

1Q^a

שׁוֹתֵתִיהָ

1Q^b

שׁוֹתֵתִיהָ

4Q^b

שׁוֹתֵתִיהָ

LXX

οἱ διαζόμενοι αὐτὰ

¹⁹ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939, 1967).

Targ בַּיְתֵי־שָׁתֵי מָחָא (ms Urbinates 1; 1st/2nd Rabbinic Bible)

The excellent analysis and discussion of Barthélemy in *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament* and de Waard's *Handbook on Isaiah* need only be summarised here.²⁰ The rendering in the Septuagint is based upon a Hebrew Text in which the consonants are identical to our later Masoretic Text, but a different vocalisation is used: MT read *šātōtehā* (her foundations) while the Septuagint Translator read *šōt^etehā* (those weaving it).

While the vocalisation of 1Q^b is unknown, the plene spelling of 1Q^a and 4Q^b clearly support the rendering in the LXX and Targum.

The Dead Sea Scrolls, LXX and Targum have preserved the original text at this point. The rarer verb שָׁתַּה, 'to weave' is also the harder reading. The vocalisation behind the Dead Sea Scrolls, LXX and Targum was lost early. The renderings in the Syriac, Latin Vulgate, and Jewish Revisors are based on construing the form from the more commonly known root שָׁתַּה, 'to drink'. The MT seems to have correlated the text with Ps 11:3, the only other occurrence of the noun שֵׁט, 'foundation':

כִּי הַשְׁתּוֹת יִהְרָסוּן צָדִיק מֵה־פָּעַל

For the foundations are being demolished
What did/(will?) the righteous do?

Another example, taken from Isa 53:8, concerns the consonantal text and not just a difference in vocalisation. The relevant sources are cited followed by the summary analysis of CTAT:

ISA 53:8

MT מִפְּשַׁע עַמִּי נִגַּע לְמוֹ

²⁰ Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 2, Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en coopération avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 139-141, and Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (Textual Criticism and the Translator 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 85-86.

1Q ^{a(c)}	מפשמע נוגגו למ
1Q ^b	מפשמע נגגו למ
4Q ^d	מפשמע נוגגו למ
LXX	ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον ²¹
Aq	ἀπὸ ἀθεσίας λαοῦ μου ἦψατο αὐτῶν
Sym	διὰ τὴν ἀδικίαν τοῦ λαοῦ μου πληγὴ αὐτοῖς
Theod	ἀπὸ ἀθεσίας τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἦψατο αὐτῶν
MT	because of the transgression of my people, the blow was <u>his/theirs</u>
LXX	because of the sins of my people he was led <u>to death</u>

CTAT: 53,8B cor תמלִּגְגַּ [C] G // err-graph: 1Q^a(corr) למ נוגגו →
 harm-int: M 1Q^b 4Q^d Sym; למִּגְגַּ, ThAq V S T: clav למִּגְגַּ / lacun:
 1Q^a*

תמלִּגְגַּ	lammāwet	to death
למִּגְגַּ	lāmô	to them / to him?

The best handling of the problem is by Barthélemy in *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*.²² It seems that the parent text of the

²¹ The text of the LXX as well as those of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion are all cited from Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum, 14; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939, 1967).

²² Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique Textuelle de l'Ancien Testament*, 2, Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations. Rapport final du Comité pour l'analyse textuelle de l'Ancien Testament hébreu institué par l'Alliance Biblique Universelle, établi en coopération avec Alexander R. Hulst, Norbert Lohfink, William D. McHardy, H. Peter Rüger, coéditeur, James A. Sanders, coéditeur (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 50/2. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986), 397-399, and Jan de Waard, *A Handbook on Isaiah* (Textual Criticism and the Translator 1; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1997), 194-195.

Septuagint Translator had לָמוֹת, i.e. “to death.” The *taw* was lost by accidental mutilation at the end of the line. The translator also read a passive form of the verb as is also attested by the corrector of 1Q^a. Once the *taw* was lost, the remaining letters were read in the Masoretic Text as *lāmô* and the consonants for the verb vocalised as a noun: “the blow was to them.” This text is problematic since evidence is slim to show that the suffix can mean “to him” as many modern scholars interpret the text. Thus, while not all critics are persuaded,²³ the difference in LXX is probably due to a different Hebrew parent text which preserves the original reading.

Differences, therefore, between the LXX and other witnesses to the text which are genuine textual variants should be evaluated on a case by case basis and one should not prefer *a priori* either the LXX or the MT.

HEBREW AND SEMITIC LANGUAGES

The Septuagint plays an important role in investigation of the history of Hebrew in all aspects of the language: accent system, phonology, morphology, syntax, and lexicology.

History of Accents in Hebrew

The Masoretic Text of the Jewish/Hebrew Scriptures records not only consonants and vowels but also an accent system. The accents mark stressed syllables and show how the text was chanted in the synagogue. They can also show a syntactic understanding of the text when different options are possible. A number of biblical texts from the Dead Sea Scrolls use spaces between words that correspond to the later division of the text into verses and in some instances, also division of verses into smaller sense units as marked by the accent system. Most manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls use spaces only for word division. Some of the earliest manuscripts of the Septuagint, however,

²³ Ekblad acknowledges the possibility that the parent text of the LXX had לָמוֹת, but argues that since neither ἡχθῆ nor any form of ἄγω matches לָמוֹת anywhere in the LXX, the Greek translator may have mistaken לָמוֹת as the perfect of לָמוֹת. This is not probable either as an error of hearing or sight and overlooks the fact that the rendering in v. 9 is inspired by that in v. 7. See Eugene Robert Ekblad, Jr., *Isaiah's Servant Poems According to the Septuagint: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 235-36 and nn. 278-279.

have spaces between words which correspond not only to the division into verses, but also into smaller units as specified by the accent system.²⁴ I mention Papyrus Fouad inv. 266 from Egypt and dating to 50 B.C.E. This manuscript of Deuteronomy employs spaces in the Greek Text that correspond to the so-called closed and open sections and paragraphs marked by the Masoretes. Even more significant is John Rylands Papyrus 458 in Manchester, England dating to the Second Century B.C.E. This papyrus contains fragments of Deuteronomy 23-28. It employs spaces that correspond precisely to the phrase division within verses indicated by the accent system in Hebrew. It is, therefore, manuscripts of the Septuagint that provide the oldest evidence for the accent system in Hebrew.

Historical Phonology and Polyphony

From the Tenth Century B.C.E. to the Fifth Century B.C.E. Hebrew was written using the Canaanite or Phoenician script. From around the Fifth Century B.C.E. onwards, the Assyrian or Aramaic Square script was used. These scripts attempt to represent the spoken form of the language using approximately 22 symbols. A question in the history of phonology is this: did any cases exist where a symbol represented more than one sound? The best evidence for this question lies in the Greek Pentateuch, the Septuagint in the narrowest sense of the term. When the Torah or Pentateuch was translated into Greek, names as a general rule were transliterated rather than translated, that is, they were represented letter for letter by using letters of the Greek Alphabet for letters of the Hebrew Alphabet. A consistent approach to transliteration used by the translators allows us to gain insight into the sounds represented by the writing system. The cases of *heth* and *ayin* are instructive.²⁵

When Classical Hebrew is taught today, normally the symbol *heth* is described to represent a voiceless uvular fricative or spirant—a consonant produced by restricting the back of the mouth before the uvula to a hole so small that friction results as the air passes through.

²⁴ See E. J. Revell, "The Oldest Evidence for the Hebrew Accent System," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library* 54 (1971): 214-222.

²⁵ J. Blau, *On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew* (Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Proceedings Vol. 6, No. 2; Jerusalem: Ahva Press, 1982) and J. W. Wevers, "Heth in Classical Hebrew," in *Essays on the Ancient Semitic World* edited by J. W. Wevers and D. B. Redford (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 101-112.

The sound is comparable to the 'ch' in the German word *Bach*. Nonetheless, names normally spelled with the letter *heth* in the later Masoretic Text are spelled either by Greek χ or by zero:

חֶשְׁבֹן > Εσεβων

hešbôn > *Esebôn*

חָרָן > Χαρραν

haran > *Charran*

Although debated at first, scholars appear satisfied that this shows that two different sounds inherited by Hebrew from Proto-Semitic were consistently being represented by the one symbol. One was a voiceless uvular fricative and the other was a voiceless pharyngeal fricative.

Another example is the symbol 'ayin normally described in grammars of Hebrew as representing a voiced pharyngeal. Again consistent patterns in the transliteration of names in the Greek Pentateuch show this symbol sometimes spelled with a Greek γ or with a vowel or zero:

בַּלְעָם > Βαλααμ

bil 'am > *Balaam*

עֲמֹרָה > Γομορρας

'amorâ > *gomorras*

Once more, scholars have concluded that in one case the symbol represented a voiced pharyngeal and at other times a voiced uvular. The latter sound is represented by a separate symbol in Arabic and Ugaritic called a *ğayin*. The one symbol represented two separate sounds which were preserved in speech at the time of the translation of the Greek Pentateuch. What is interesting is that these distinctions in the transliteration of names in the Greek Pentateuch are not maintained in

the transliteration of names in the books of the Former Prophets and Writings made no doubt about a hundred years later. This demonstrates that the distinctions between voiced uvular and pharyngeal and between voiceless uvular and pharyngeal were lost among native speakers around this time. Thus for questions of historical phonology, the Greek Bible is actually an important source for issues that cannot be resolved from the evidence of the Hebrew Bible since the Masoretic Text is later.

Historical Morphology

Also relevant to the history of the Hebrew language is Origen's Hexapla. Sometime around 240 a church father named Origen prepared an edition of the Christian Old Testament in six columns. Although debated, scholars generally believe the First Column contained the Hebrew Text and the Second Column a transliteration in Greek of the Hebrew Text. The Second Column would have aided the reading of the First Column since vocalisation of the text was not yet recorded as in the later Masoretic Tradition. Column Five contained the Septuagint, the earliest Greek translation of the Jewish Scriptures, and columns Three, Four and Six offered Jewish revisions of the original Greek Translation attributed to Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion. This project stretched the nascent development of the codex and may have required as many as forty codices of 400 folios each.²⁶

Origen's massive work did not survive except in copies of which only fragments are extant today. The remains of the Second Column are of particular interest for the history of the Hebrew language. As an illustration we may consider the development of a type of noun called Segholate Nouns. These are nouns of two syllables, always accented on the first syllable, and both syllables usually a short 'e' as in *bed*. Grammarians diagram the development of such nouns as follows when the main vowel is originally 'a':

CaCCu >	CaCC >	CáCeC >	CéCeC
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In the earliest stage, the nouns had the structure consonant, vowel, consonant, consonant, 'u'. Later, a change occurred in patterns of stress in the language and final short vowels were lost leading to a syllable

²⁶ See Anthony Grafton and Megan Williams, *Christianity and the Transformation of the Book: Origen, Eusebius, and the Library of Caesarea* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006), 105.

ending in two consonants. This problem was later alleviated by introducing an anaptyctic or helping vowel, a seghol or short 'e'. Finally, the first vowel was assimilated to the helping vowel. The last stage is what we find in the Masoretic Text. The second stage is what we find in the fragments of Origen's Hexapla:²⁷

Spelling in Masoretic Text	Spelling in Second Column
'éres (אֶרֶס)	ars αρς
géber (גַּבְרָה)	gabr γαβρ

Thus the textual tradition of the Septuagint is critical for determining the history of morphology in Classical Hebrew.

SEMANTIC HISTORY

The Greek Bible also contains data relevant for the history of the meaning of certain words in Hebrew. Sometimes the equivalents for Hebrew words are not based on their meaning in Standard Biblical Hebrew but rather their meaning in Post-biblical Hebrew or Aramaic.

Interpretation Based on Meaning in Post-Biblical Hebrew or Aramaic

EXOD 12:22

MT

וּלְקַחְתֶּם אֶגְדַּת אֲזוּב

וְטַבַּלְתֶּם בַּדָּם אֶשְׂרֵי-בֶסֶר

LXX²⁸

λήμψεσθε δὲ δεσμὴν ὑσσώπου

καὶ βάψαντες ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ
παρὰ τὴν θύραν

²⁷ E. Brønno, *Studien Über Hebräische Morphologie und Vokalismus* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1943), 125.

²⁸ John Wm. Wevers, ed., *Exodus* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum, 2.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1991).

וְהִגַּתְּ אֶל־הַמַּשְׁקָה

καὶ θίξετε τῆς φλιᾶς

וְאֶל־שְׁתֵּי הַמְּזוּזוֹת מִן־הַדָּם

καὶ ἐπ' ἀμφοτέρων τῶν σταθμῶν
ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος, ὃ ἐστὶν παρὰ τὴν
θύραν·

אֶשֶׁר בַּסֶּף

And you shall take a bunch of
hyssop
and dip [it] in the blood in the
basin

And you shall take a bundle of hyssop
and dipping from the blood beside
the door

and touch [it] to the lintel

and you shall touch the lintel

and to the two door-posts from
the blood in the basin.

and on both door-posts from the
blood which is beside the door.

Hebrew has homonymous nouns יָבֵה = 'basin' and יָבֵה = 'sill, threshold'.²⁹ Akkadian has both nouns, too, but not in homonymous form.³⁰ Aramaic, however, only has יָבֵה = 'sill, threshold', while Phoenician only has יָבֵה = 'basin'.³¹ Only the Aramaic noun was known to the Exodus Translator, and guided by the context, he made the best sense he could with that meaning. Nonetheless, the point is that the Greek testifies to the same parent text as in MT.

Jan Joosten's excellent work on Aramaising renderings in the LXX reveals that several issues may be involved at the same time. Consider the following examples:³²

²⁹ L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. M. E. J. Richardson, 5 vols.; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994-2000), s.v. I יָבֵה and II יָבֵה .

³⁰ In Akkadian *s/šappu(m)* is 'basin' and *sippu(m)* is 'doorpost', see W. von Soden, *Akkadisches Handwörterbuch* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965-1985), 1027, 1049, 1175.

³¹ See J. Hoftijzer and K. Jongeling, *Dictionary of the Northwest Semitic Inscriptions* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 796-797 and Charles R. Krahmalkov, *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 347.

³² Drawn from Jan Joosten, "On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint," in *Hamlet on a Hill: Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor*

JER 31[38]:13

MT - Jer 31:13

LXX - Jer 38:13³³

אָז תִּשְׂמַח בְּתוֹלָהּ בְּמַחֹל

τότε χαρήσονται
παρθένοι ἐν συναγωγῇ
νεανίσκων,

וּבְחָרִים וּזְקֵנִים יַחְדָּו

καὶ πρεσβῦται
χαρήσονται.

Then maidens will rejoice with
dancing,
and young and old men together.

The virgins will rejoice
in the gathering of
young men,
and old men will
rejoice.

Joosten notes that the Greek translation reflects a 3 m. pl. of the Aramaic verb כּדּה “to rejoice” instead of the adverb יַחְדָּו ‘together’ in MT.³⁴ Exegetes debate whether the rendering in the Septuagint reflects the intended meaning of the Hebrew text or diverges from it. Joosten points out that the idiomatic use of the adverb ‘together’ fits usage elsewhere in Jeremiah.³⁵ We do not need, however, to resolve the debate to see that the Greek translator had the same consonantal text as is preserved in MT. The issue of different vocalisation will be taken up shortly.

T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday, eds. M. F. J. Baasten and W. Th. Van Peursen (Leuven: Peeters, 2003), 587-600.

³³ Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Ieremias, Baruch, Threni, Epistula Ieremiae* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957, 1976).

³⁴ Jan Joosten, “On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint,” 589.

³⁵ E.g. Jer 13:14 and cf. 6:12, 21; 31:8; 48:7(Q); 49:3. See Jan Joosten, “On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint,” 589-590 and n. 11.

PS 60[59]:10

MT - Ps 60:10

מוֹאֵב סִיר רְחֻצִי

Moab is my washbasinLXX - Ps 59:10³⁶

Μωαβ λέβητος τῆς ἐλπίδος μου

Moab is the cauldron of my hope

The Hebrew root רחץ 'to wash' is correctly rendered by νίπτομαι in Ps 26[25]:6, 58[57]:11 and 73[72]:13. Here in Ps 60 the rendering by ἐλπίς 'hope' is based on the Aramaic meaning of this root.³⁷ In 1912 M. Flashar argued that the Greek translation was based on theological considerations since the translator hesitated to speak of God as having a washbasin.³⁸ Thus the Greek is based on the same Hebrew text that we have in MT, but the apparent divergence is based both on Aramaic influence as well as exegetical issues.³⁹

Translation Reflecting Interpretive Traditions

The rendering in Psalm 60 is explained not only by factors in the lexical and semantic history of the Hebrew Language but also by exegetical issues. Since all translation involves interpretation, the Greek Bible is, in effect, the earliest commentary on the Hebrew Text. What kind of interpretive tradition or traditions are reflected in the Greek Translation?

Translation Reflecting Early Rabbinic Interpretation

This question leads to the next point. Since the Septuagint was produced during the time of Second Temple Judaism, it represents a

³⁶ Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Psalmi cum Odis* (Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum 10; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1931, 1967).

³⁷ See M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic*, 2nd ed. (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2002), s.v. רחץ. The observation was also noted in Franz Wutz, *Die Transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 151.

³⁸ M. Flashar, "Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter," *ZAW* 32 (1912): 241-268, esp. 251.

³⁹ See also Jan Joosten, "The Septuagint as a Source of Information on Egyptian Aramaic in the Hellenistic Period," in *Aramaic in its Historical and Linguistic Setting* edited by Holger Gzella and Margaretha L. Folmer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2008), 93-105.

key witness to the thought and worldview of Second Temple Judaism. A major problem in using sources like the Aramaic Targums or Jewish sources like the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Midrashim to determine the character and nature of early Judaism is that one cannot frequently distinguish materials that represent the situation before the Fall of Jerusalem when Judaism was variegated from those after the Fall of Jerusalem when one sect within Judaism dominated and formed the origins of rabbinic Judaism. Yet it is possible at times to connect interpretive renderings in the Greek Bible with later rabbinic tradition and show earlier stages of this rabbinic tradition.

MIC 5:[6]7

MT - Mic 5:7

בְּטַל מֵאֵת יְהוָה

כְּרִבְיָיִם עַל־יַעֲשׂוּב

As dew from the Lord,
as showers upon the grass

LXX – Mic 5:6

ὡς δρόσος παρὰ κυρίου πίπτουσα

καὶ ὡς ἄρνες ἐπὶ ἄγρωστιν

As dew falling from the Lord
and as lambs upon the field grass

Although at first glance the rendering of רִבְיָיִם by ἄρνες seems to indicate a possible divergence between the parent text of LXX and MT, again, in certain dialects of Palestine at a later time רביב had the meaning 'lamb'.⁴⁰ We are certain, then, that the parent text of LXX is the same as that represented by MT. Yet what motivated this translation? The language of Mic 5:6 immediately recalls that of Deut 32:2:

יַעֲרוֹף בְּמָטָר לְקַחֵי תֵל בְּטַל אִמְרָתִי: MT

כְּשִׁעִירִים עַל־דָּשָׂא וְכְרִבְיָיִם עַל־יַעֲשׂוּב

May my teaching drop like the rain;

may my speech drip like the dew,

⁴⁰ See F. Schulthess, *Lexicon Syropalaestinum* (Berlin, 1903), 188.

Like drizzle upon the vegetation,

like showers upon the grass.

As Jan Joosten has shown,⁴¹ an early interpretation of Deut 32:2 preserved in *Sifre Deuteronomy* (Pisqa 306)⁴² and also the Samaritan Targum construes רביבים as lambs. By way of illustration, the Samaritan Targum reads:

כצפירים עלוי יאר וכטלין עלוי עסב⁴³

like goats upon the verdure and like lambs upon the grass⁴⁴

Thus the rendering of LXX in Micah 5:6 is an Aramaising rendering, but one that is based upon an intertextual link or what might be called the midrashic principle of *Gezerah shawah*.⁴⁵ Many apparent divergences between the LXX and MT are, in fact, interpretive renderings based on

⁴¹ Jan Joosten, "L'Ondée et les Moutons: La Septante de Michée 5,6 et l'Exégèse Juive Traditionnelle, *Revue des études juives* 162 (2003): 357-363.

⁴² Joosten cites *Sifre on Deuteronomy* as follows:

כשעירים עלוי דשא — כשאדם הולך ללמוד תורה תחילה אינו יודע מה לעשות והיא קשה עליו כשעיר עד ששונה שני ספרים או שני סדרים ואחר כך נמשכת

והיא קשה עליו כשעיר עד ששונה שני ספרים או שני סדרים ואחר כך נמשכת (Jan Joosten, "L'Ondée et les Moutons," 362). It should be noted that the words כשעיר עלוי קשה והיא are relegated to the apparatus in the edition of Finkelstein, see L. Finkelstein, *Sifre on Deuteronomy* (Berlin, 1939; reprint, New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2001), 339. On this text, R. Hammer notes, "This homily is best read as a continuation of the one above. It refers to both parts of the verse and interprets *šā'ir* as a demon, and *rabiḇ* as a pet animal: when you begin to study, Torah is so difficult that it attacks you like a demon; after you learn a little, it becomes as tame as a pet ewe that follows after you" (Reuven Hammer, *Sifre: A Tannaitic Commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy* (New Haven: Yale, 1986), 492, n. 41). ā. ś.

⁴³ Cited according to A. Tal, *The Samaritan Targum of the Pentateuch*, Part II (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1981). The reading וכטלין is based upon MS E for which MS J has וכטביים and MS V has וכרביבין. English translation is mine.

⁴⁴ Translation mine.

⁴⁵ On *Gezerah shawah* see David Instone Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 30; Tübingen: Mohr, 1992), 17-18.

intertextual links and do not provide support for a different Hebrew parent text.

Linguistics: Bilingualism and Translation Theory

Within the field of linguistics, areas impacted by the Greek Bible in particular are bilingualism and translation theory. The Septuagint is probably the earliest known large-scale translation. A recent exploration is a monograph by Alexis Léonas, *L'Aube des Traducteurs*.⁴⁶ An area of linguistics has been pioneered especially by Gideon Toury called Descriptive Translation Studies. This is briefly summarised by A. Pietersma as follows:

According to Toury, all translations are facts of their respective recipient cultures and as such can best be studied by a target-oriented approach. That is to say, not only are they called into being by a felt need in a specific cultural environment, but, as such, they are intrinsically endowed with three inter-dependent aspects designed to meet the cultural need that evoked them. Translators can thus be said to be working in the interest of the target culture regardless of what kind of product they produce. The (logically) first of the three inter-dependent aspects or foci that Toury identifies he labels “function,” by which he has in mind not so much the actual use to which a translation is put, but rather the systemic slot it is designed to fill within the recipient culture or subculture. That is to say: what sort of text is it, and to what extent does it cater to the norms of the target system and is thus “acceptable” to its host culture? Is it “acceptable,” for example, as a literary or a non-literary production? Is it seen to be a philosophical text or a non-philosophical text, a text in prose or in poetry, romance or history, designed to function bilingually or monolingually? In short, “function” (or “position”) signifies a translation’s cultural slot and the prospective use for which it has been designed...

The second aspect Toury calls “product,” by which he means the textual linguistic makeup of the translated text, that is to say, the network of relationships introduced by the translator; in other words, what is studied in discourse analysis.

⁴⁶ Alexis Léonas, *L'Aube des Traducteurs. De l'hébreu au grec: traducteurs et lecteurs de la Bible des Septante (III^e s. av. J.-C. – IV^e s. apr. J.-C.)* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 2007).

Concretely, one may think here of the target text as a cultural entity.

The third aspect Toury terms “process,” that is to say, the strategies by which a translation is derived from its source text. Consequently, it includes the relationships that hold the target text and the source text together. Here Septuagintalists might think of “translation technique” since its focus, as noted above, is precisely that of target-source equation and hence the process by which the target text is derived from its source.⁴⁷

Apart from *The Letter of Aristeas* almost no propaganda has survived about the translations. We must develop and utilise approaches like Descriptive Translation Studies to determine the function of the translations, the intended meaning of the translators, and assess the reception history of the translations. Such studies on the body of translations known as the Septuagint reveal and uncover a debate amongst different groups in Second Temple Judaism. Results affect not only linguistics and translation theory but also as sociological analysis of competing cultural heritages. This is highly instructive for our society. During the last fifty years, various groups in North America have had heated debates over modern translations of the Bible and are engaged in culture wars. One calls to mind the famous line from George Santayana: “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” Most of these debates over approaches to translation as well as the associated culture wars repeat much of what occurred in the Second and First Centuries B.C.E. with no knowledge of the role of the Greek Bible.

One case in the culture war between faithfulness to the Jewish Heritage and the advance of Hellenistic Culture that is ironic is 2 Maccabees. In terms of the history of the Greek Language, this is one of the finest examples of Atticistic Reaction to the Koiné, yet the author would want to side with those faithful to the Jewish Tradition unsullied by advocates of Hellenism.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Albert Pietersma, “LXX and DTS: A New Archimedean Point for Septuagint Studies?” *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 39 (2006): 9.

⁴⁸ Geoffrey Horrocks, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers* (London and New York: Longman, 1997), 51.

Classics

Classical Studies may also benefit from the Greek Bible. The texts included in the Septuagint and the New Testament form a huge portion of the extant literature in Greek from the Hellenistic Period. Although some work has been done on grammar and lexicography for the Septuagint, an accurate assessment must await the completion of critical and reliable editions. Nonetheless, this body of texts is critical for description of developments in phonology, morphology, syntax and discourse grammar from the end of the Classical Period to the beginning of the Byzantine Period. In order to describe where the trajectory of developments in Classical Greek are going one must be able to see clearly where they went. Only then can one spot a *Tendenz* in the early process of change towards the end of the Classical Period. As one example, the diminutive is on the rise in the Hellenistic Period. This may affect how one assesses its semantic value in the late Classical Period.

History

Historians might argue that events in a minor province in the Roman Empire or Hellenistic World such as Palestine had little significance for the larger world. Nonetheless, the events there from 250 B.C.E. — 150 C.E. shaped both Jews and Christians and through them the disciplines of the humanities were given their foundations and direction. The major source for this historically, and in philosophic and religious terms is the Greek Bible, and in particular, the Septuagint.⁴⁹

Literature

Ben Edwin Perry, in his important work on *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins*, describes the importance of the novel in literature and the forerunners to it in the Greek and Roman world as follows:

⁴⁹ A standard work is Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* (New York: Atheneum, 1975). Strangely, François Chamoux, *Hellenistic Civilization* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1981, 2003), only refers once to the Septuagint.

Today the novel is well recognized as a literary form and so familiar as such, in spite of its many varieties and the many uses to which it is put, that no one is likely to confuse it with other genres. It has become the principal medium of literary expression, enlisting in its service as practitioners authors from the lowest to the highest. It has come to include every kind of entertainment or interpretation of society and human experience, ranging from what is profoundly philosophic or sublimely poetic to what is inane, vulgar, or merely sensational, thereby embracing what, in earlier and more disciplined ages, would normally have been cast into such various literary forms as tragedy, comedy, and mime, history, biography, epic, essay, satire, dialogue, elegy, etc., or circulated orally for amusement with no pretense to being art and therefore never written down. But this epic-like universality of the novel is something relatively new in the Western world—in a strict sense, no older than Balzac. In Graeco-Roman antiquity, on the other hand, as also in the time of Shakespeare, what we call novels or romances were far more restricted in the range of their substance, quality and pretension than they are today.⁵⁰

Perry was breaking ground to analyse the ancient novellae and romances and discuss these as precursors to the modern novel. From the deuterocanonical works, Judith and Tobit are fine examples of this genre. They were popular reading among both Jews and Christians and have had some influence on the development of the novel.

CONCLUSION

We have considered both in general terms and in a few of the particulars how the Greek Bible has a bearing on the humanities studied in the university today. Much more is involved than just the study of the Bible or the study of Greek. The Greek Bible has a bearing on the foundations of many disciplines and may justify the title of the “Great Code” as study of the Greek Bible is necessary to understand and advance other areas of study.

⁵⁰ Ben Edwin Perry, *The Ancient Romances: A Literary-Historical Account of Their Origins* (Sather Classical Lectures 37; Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), 4.