

The Septuagint between Judaism and Christianity

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1. *Background*

The Septuagint is or was sacred for Jews and Christians alike and the present study deals with both the Jewish and Christian aspects of that translation, trying to define what is Jewish and what is Christian. At one time, the Greek translation was considered to be inspired Scripture by both Jews and Christians, but now it is sacred only for the Eastern Orthodox Church, while it still has an important, though not canonical, position within Christianity. Of course, the Septuagint is not the only Scripture text claimed by more than one religious group. The *Hebrew Bible* or Old Testament is Holy Writ for Jews and Christians alike,¹ and the Syriac Peshitta is shared by several closely related religious groups, the Arameans, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Maronites, and Melkites.² On the other hand, the Samaritans do not share their sacred writings with any other group.

The Septuagint is a special case. A statement referring to the Septuagint as both Jewish and Christian would be imprecise, since the LXX was never both Jewish and Christian at the same time. The translation started off as a Jewish enterprise, and was accepted by the early Christians when they were still a group within Judaism. From that time onwards, when the Jews had already abandoned the LXX, Christianity held on to the LXX as Scripture until the time of the Vulgate when that version became determinative for the Church some time after its creation. The canonical approach of the Roman-Catholic Church is determined by the medieval manuscripts of the Vulgate, which accepted the inclusion of most deuterocanonical inspired apocryphal books, while omitting other ones, and thus differing in some details from the canon of the LXX.³ The Reformation brought about a return to the combined canonical approach of inspired Hebrew Scripture and the “outside books” of the Apocrypha as included in the LXX. At

¹ All modern Christian translations, except for those of the Orthodox Church, are based on the Masoretic Text, with a sprinkling of readings from the other versions.

² See the edition by G. Lamsa, *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts* (22nd edition; Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers, 1981). If the Peshitta ever had a status in Judaism it was in the distant past; presently it is known only as a Christian source.

³ For example, the Vulgate lacks Psalm 151, it combines Baruch and the Epistle of Jeremiah as “Baruch,” and it omits 1 Esdras and 3–4 Maccabees.

an earlier stage Judaism had changed its approach towards the Jewish-Greek translation, when the Jews turned their back to the LXX in the pre-Christian period, and to an even greater extent after the rise of Christianity. Already in the first century BCE it was realized that the Greek translation did not reflect the Hebrew Bible current in Palestine, that is, the text that later became the Masoretic Text (MT) and at that time, the process of revision of the LXX, also named the Old Greek (OG) towards the proto-Masoretic Text started to take shape.

In the first century of the Common Era, when the NT writers quoted the earlier Scripture, they used the wording of the LXX. That was a natural development since the NT was written in Greek, and under normal circumstances its authors would quote from earlier Scripture written in the same language.⁴

At the same time, as a result of abandoning the Jewish-Greek translation by Jews in the first centuries CE, that translation was held in contempt in its own environment in spite of its being a Jewish biblical version.⁵ As the reason for the contempt, the post-Talmudic tractate *Soferim* states:

מעשה בחמשה זקנים שכתבו לתלמי המלך את התורה יוונית והיה אותו היום קשה לישראל כיום
שנעשה בו העגל שלא הייתה התורה יכולה להתרגם כל צרכה

It happened once that five elders wrote the Torah for King Ptolemy in Greek, and that day was as ominous for Israel as the day on which the golden calf was made,⁶ since the Torah could not be accurately translated (*Sof.* 1.7).⁷

[[According to this tradition, the Torah, like the Koran, is untranslatable, and only the Hebrew source text should be considered binding. At the same time, this argument was not used for the Aramaic Targumim. In many ways, the exegetical deviations from MT in some Targumim were much greater than those in the LXX, but they were considered in-house products of the Rabbis, for which rabbinic literature often used the phrase *במתרגמינן*,

⁴ Thus M. Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (JSOTSup 206; Copenhagen International Seminar 1; Sheffield, Eng.: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996) 98: “To Paul and other New Testament authors, it <the LXX> appears to have been the obvious choice.”

⁵ See E. Tov, “The Evaluation of the Greek Scripture Translations in Rabbinic Sources,” in id., *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran—Collected Essays* (TSAJ 121; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 365–77; A. Schenker, “Pourquoi le Judaïsme s’est-il désintéressé de la Septante au début de notre ère?” in *Les dernières rédactions du Pentateuque, de l’Hexateuque et de l’Enneateuque* (ed. T. Römer and K. Schmid; BETL 203; Leuven/Paris/Dudley, MA: University Press/Peeters, 2007) 255–68.

⁶ The translation of the Torah “for King Ptolemy” is described as idolatry, probably because it was made for a heathen. Furthermore, the strong condemnation of the translation stands in great contrast to the annual festivities instituted for the same translation according to the Epistle of Aristeas, § 180.

⁷ The latter part of this statement in the post-Talmudic tractate removed two crucial words from the earlier dictum of *y. Meg.* 1:11 (71c) *שאינ התורה יכולה להתרגם כל צרכה אלא יוונית* (the Torah could be accurately translated only in Greek).

“we translate.”⁸ Jewish discontent with the LXX⁹ went as far as prompting the institution of a day of mourning for that translation, an enterprise that was, at least according to tradition, initiated by the High Priest Eleazar himself. The instruction of the *Megillat Ta’anit Batra* to fast on the 8th of Tevet,¹⁰ which was canceled in the Middle Ages, reminded religious Jews of the distortions of Hebrew Scripture by the ancient Greek translators.]]

New Greek translations adapted the OG translation to the Hebrew text then current in Palestine and because of their correcting nature these translations are usually named “revisions.”¹¹ Whether or not rabbinic Judaism *officially* rejected the LXX is unclear, but it was definitely disregarded¹² since the rabbis did not quote from it. It should be admitted, however, that the other versions are not quoted much either; there are only a few references to Aquila in rabbinic literature (not in the Bab. Talmud) and to Targum Onkelos and Jonathan in the later rabbinic literature¹³ (not in the literature of the Tannaim). From the end of the first century CE onwards, the LXX ceased to be influential in Judaism.¹⁴

2. The LXX as a Jewish translation

⁸ E.g. *b. Shabb.* 10b (Deut 7:9); 64a (Num 31:50); *Gittin* 68b (Lev 11:13).

⁹ Because of the contempt for the Seventy-Two translators, they are described in rabbinic literature as misrepresenting the content of the Hebrew Torah in 10–18 details. The list itself is fanciful and unrealistic, but it shows that rabbinic Judaism felt the need to indicate that the LXX actually misrepresented Hebrew Scripture. See Tov, “Evaluation”. This description is not shared by G. Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmi—Untersuchungen zum Übersetzungsverständnis in der jüdisch-hellenistischen und rabbinischen Literatur* (TSAJ 41; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1994) 16–18.

¹⁰ See Tov, “Evaluation,” 366.

¹¹ The main revisions known are those of *kaige*-Th (an anonymous revision, named *kaige*, probably produced at the beginning of the first century BCE and continued by Theodotion towards the end of the first century CE), Aquila (active around 125 CE), and Symmachus (end of the second century CE). Origen included these revisions in his monumental six-column edition of Hebrew and Greek Scripture in the middle of the third century CE. Our understanding of the relation between these versions and the OG is much indebted to the revolutionary study of D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d’Aquila. Première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophète trouvés dans le Désert de Juda, précédée d’une étude sur les traductions et recensions grecques de la Bible réalisées au premier siècle de notre ère sous l’influence du rabbinat palestinien* (VTSup 10; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963).

¹² On the other hand, Veltri suggested that when the rabbinic traditions are properly analyzed, they do not provide evidence for such an approach. See Veltri, *Eine Tora*, passim (see *Konklusion*, 215–9).

¹³ Some evidence has been collected by E. Z. Melamed, *Bible Commentators* (Heb.; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1975) 1.141–3. Other evidence, less clearly visible because it is at variance with Targum Jonathan on the Prophets, has been collected by M. H. Goshen-Gottstein, *Fragments of Lost Targumim* (Heb.; 2 vols.; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1983, 1989). See also H. Sysling, “Three Harsh Prophets—A Targumic *Tosefta* to *Parashat Korah*,” *Aramaic Studies* 2 (2004) 223–42 (224, n. 7).

¹⁴ At the literary level, one of the last signs of the influence of the LXX was its central position in the writings of Josephus at the end of the first century CE.

The Jewish origin of the LXX is described in the Epistle of Aristeas, rabbinic literature, and various additional sources. For example, an early source like the Epistle of Aristeas stressed the fact that the High Priest, Eleazar, who sent scrolls from Jerusalem to Egypt to be translated, guided the translation.¹⁵ Such was also the message of rabbinic literature, in which, however, the High Priest is not mentioned. The Jewish nature of the LXX is reflected in its terminology and exegesis.¹⁶ Several Hebrew words were preserved in the LXX in their Hebrew or Aramaic form (at the time of the translation, Aramaic was more commonly spoken by Jews than Hebrew). Some Hebraized Greek words in the LXX probably reflect Aramaic forms, such as *σάββατα* (שבתה) and *Πασχα* (פסחה). The Greek Torah reflects neologisms in the Greek language that are meant to represent some of the special Jewish customs or terms, such as the names of the festivals (see above), and Jewish concepts (e.g. *גר* – *γειώρας*) for which no words existed in the Greek language. Thus, *ὄλοκαύτωμα* (“whole-burnt offering”) was probably coined to reflect the special meaning of the *עולה* offering, and *ἁγιαστήριον* was meant to reflect *מקדש*. Further, the translators tried to differentiate between the Jewish and non-Jewish use of some central religious words. Thus, the Greek Torah made a distinction between two types of “altar” (*מזבח*), a Jewish one rendered *θυσιαστήριον*, and a pagan altar rendered *βωμός*.¹⁷ The translators also preferred to use *εἶδωλον* for *אל(הים)* rather than *θεός* when referring to a non-Jewish God.

Jewish exegesis is visible wherever a special interpretation of the LXX is paralleled by rabbinic literature.¹⁸ Such exegesis reveals the Palestinian background of some of the Pentateuch translators. For example, the “second tithe” in the LXX of Deut 26:12 (MT

¹⁵ § 310–11. The various sources of this tradition, mainly Christian, have been collected by P. Wendland, *Aristeae ad Philocratem Epistula cum ceteris de origine versionis LXX interpretum testimoniis* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900); H. St. J. Thackeray, *The Letter of Aristeas, Translated with an Appendix of Ancient Evidence on the Origin of the Septuagint* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1918).

¹⁶ See my study “Studies in the Vocabulary of the Septuagint: The Relation between Vocabulary and Translation Technique,” *Tarbiz* 47 (1978) 120–38 (Heb. with Eng. summ.).

¹⁷ The Aramaic Targumim likewise distinguished between the Jewish *מזבחה* and the pagan *אגריא* (literally “heap of stones”). See P. Churgin, “The Targum and the Septuagint,” *AJSL* 50 (1993) 4165 (I owe this reference to J. Joosten).

¹⁸ For examples relating to the Torah, see Z. Frankel, *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig: Barth, 1851); J. Fürst, “Spüren der palästinisch-jüdischen Schriftdeutung und Sagen in der Übersetzung der LXX,” *Semitic Studies in Memory of Rev. Dr. Alexander Kohut* (ed. G. A. Kohut; Berlin: S. Calvary, 1897) 152–66; L. Priejs, *Jüdische Tradition in der Septuaginta* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1948); S. Safrai, “Halakha,” in *The Literature of the Sages*, CRINT, Section Two (ed. S. Safrai; Assen-Maastricht/Philadelphia: Fortress Press/Van Gorcum, 1987) 3.137–9. Priejs, *Jüdische Tradition*, xiii and 105 mentions additional literature published before 1948 on rabbinic exegesis.

שְׁנַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂר, “the year of the tithe,” read as שְׁנַת הַמַּעֲשֵׂר, as if, “second, the tithe”) represents the rabbinic term מַעֲשֵׂר שֵׁנִי (“second tithe”). Aptowitz¹⁹ and Prijs²⁰ also provide examples for the post-Pentateuchal books, but the evidence is not impressive.

The LXX translation was a Jewish venture, created for Jews and probably also for Gentiles. The Greek Torah served as the base for the philosophical-exegetical works of Philo and the historical-exegetical writings of Josephus. This translation was probably used in Alexandria by Jews in their weekly ceremonial reading from the first century BCE onwards.²¹ Philo refers to this custom in Alexandria²² and 4 Macc 18:10-18, possibly written in Egypt in the first century CE, alludes to the reading of the Law together with reflections taken from the Prophets, Psalms, and Proverbs.

The Jewish background of the Greek translation of the Torah is well established, while that of the post-Pentateuchal books is not, although this assumption is almost certainly correct. We have little doubt that Jews translated these books in the third and second pre-Christian centuries. There probably were no Gentiles in Egypt or elsewhere who would have had the skills to make such a transcultural translation, or an incentive to do so.²³

3. *The LXX and the NT*

The LXX lost its central position in Judaism from the first century CE onwards (see § 1). Subsequently, this process was accelerated when that translation was used as the official source for Scripture in the writings of early Christianity. The Christians accepted the LXX as such, generally without changing its wording (see § b below). At the same time, they inserted some changes in external features of Scripture: Christian scribes invented

¹⁹ V. Aptowitz, “Rabbinische Parallelen und Aufschlüsse zu Septuaginta und Vulgata, I. Die Bücher Samuelis,” *ZAW* 29 (1909) 241–52.

²⁰ Prijs, *Jüdische Tradition*, especially relating to Psalms and Proverbs.

²¹ Early papyri of the Pentateuch from Egypt (P.Ryl. Gk. 458 [200–150 BCE] and P.Fouad 266a-c [1st century BCE]) show that the Greek translation was known in various parts of the country, but they do not necessarily prove use in religious gatherings. On the other hand, M. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung. Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW 223; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994) 256 does not believe that the Torah was read publicly in Greek in the pre-Christian centuries.

²² Philo, *Prob.* 81–82: “They use these laws <those of the Torah> to learn from at all times, but especially each seventh day, since the seventh day is regarded as sacred. On that day they abstain from other work and betake themselves to the sacred places which are called synagogues ...Then one of them takes the books and reads.” See further Philo, *Hypoth.* 7:13; *Moses* 2:215. The existence of Greek Torah scrolls is also referred to in *m. Meg.* 1.8; 2.1 and *t. Meg.* 4.13. See further A. and D. Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) 11–12.

²³ See my study “Reflections on the Septuagint with Special Attention Paid to the Post-Pentateuchal Translations,” forthcoming.

the codex instead of the scroll²⁴ and they introduced abbreviations for the *nomina sacra* (ΚΣ, ΘΣ, ΧΣ etc.).²⁵ Furthermore, Christian scribes sometimes added introductory and concluding comments to books as well as marginal notes, such as the identification in codex S of the supposed speakers in Canticles.²⁶ That these identifications are Christian can be learned from the fact that in Cant 1:7 the figure of Jesus has been included, probably by the scribe of S and not by his Greek *Vorlage*.²⁷

a. Influence of the LXX on the NT

The LXX influenced the NT at various levels because early Christianity adopted the LXX as its Scripture. Expressing himself in theological terms, Bertram stated that the LXX was a *praeparatio evangelica* for the NT, and in this regard Bertram followed in the footsteps of several Church Fathers.²⁸ The influence of the LXX is visible in the areas of the language, terminology, and theological foundations of the NT, as well as in its manifold quotations.

²⁴ For the tabulated data, see my monograph *Scribal Practices and Approaches Reflected in the Texts Found in the Judean Desert* (STDJ 54; Leiden/Boston: E. J. Brill, 2004) Appendix 5. I quote from p. 303: “A major though not exclusive criterion for the Jewish nature of a text is the writing in scrolls ... (see already C. H. Roberts, “The Christian Book and the Greek Papyri,” *JTS* 50 [1949] 155–68, especially 157–8). The Christian nature of Scripture texts can usually be detected by their inscription in codex form ... and their use of abbreviated forms of the divine names. ... See further R. A. Kraft, “The ‘Textual Mechanics’ of Early Jewish LXX/OG Papyri and Fragments,” in *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (ed. S. McKendrick and O. A. O’Sullivan; London: British Library and Oak Knoll Press in association with The Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities, 2003) 51–72.

²⁵ See Tov, *Scribal Practices*, *ibid.* Hengel, *Septuagint*, 41 suggests that the real distinction is between the use of κύριος in Christian codices and paleo-Hebrew Tetragrammata in Jewish scrolls. However, the use of paleo-Hebrew for the divine names (or square script in the case of P. Fouad 266b 848 of Deuteronomy) may be a sign of early revisional activity and not of Jewish sources in general. Note further that 4QpapLXXLev^b uses ΙΑΩ. On the *nomina sacra*, see L. Traube, *Versuch einer Geschichte der christlicher Kürzung* (Munich, 1907; repr. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1967); A.H.R.E. Paap, *Nomina Sacra in the Greek Papyri of the First Five Centuries A.D.: The Sources and Some Deductions* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1959); K. Treu, “Die Bedeutung des Griechischen für die Juden im römischen Reich,” *Kairos* 15 (1973) 123–44.

²⁶ See R. A. Kraft, “Christian Transmission of Greek Jewish Scriptures: A Methodological Probe,” in *Paganisme, Judaïsme, Christianisme: Influences et affrontements dans le Monde Antique (Mélanges M. Simon)* (ed. A. Benoit et al.; Paris: De Boccard, 1978) 207–26 (210, notes 13, 14), also: <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/other/journals/kraftpub/Transmission%20of%20Gk-Jewish%20Scriptures>.

²⁷ See the detailed analysis by J. C. Treat, *Lost Keys: Text and Interpretation in Old Greek Song of Songs and Its Earliest Manuscript Witnesses*, Ph.D. Diss.; University of Pennsylvania, 1996) 379 (also available in <http://philae.sas.upenn.edu/~jtreat/song/sinai.html>). By comparing the rubrics of codex S with those of Old Latin parallels, Treat establishes that the Christian references were lacking in S’s sources (pp. 481–90).

²⁸ G. Bertram, “Praeparatio evangelica in der Septuaginta,” *VT* 7 (1967) 225–49 (249): “Vielmehr hat die Septuaginta unwillkürlich und ohne bewusste Arbeit der Übersetzer und Ausleger, ohne die Tätigkeit der Schriftgelehrten, die Voraussetzungen geschaffen für die Verbreitung der Botschaft des Neuen Testaments in der griechisch sprechenden Welt.” For a discussion of this view in the Church Fathers, see D. K. Kranz, LC, “*Vetera et Nova*”—*Zum inspirierten Status der Septuaginta aus Vergangenheit und Gegenwart, Excerpta ex Dissertatione ad Doctoratum in Theologia et Scientiis Patristicis* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 2007) 113–7.

Language. The authors of the NT were influenced by Semitic diction in general²⁹ and by the language of the LXX specifically.³⁰ They thus absorbed the special phrases³¹ and vocabulary of that version. Of the typical LXX words and usages that were introduced in their new meaning in the NT, we mention: ἀδελφός (fellow man), δόξα (honor, glory),³² ἔθνη (other nations beside Israel), ἐπισκέπτομαι (to pay attention to), ἐρωτάω εἰς εἰρήνην (ask after [a person's] health = greet, salute).³³ Note further the following “Jewish” words mentioned in § 2: ὀλοκαύτωμα (whole-burnt offering), θυσιαστήριον (altar), προσήλυτος (proselyte), πατριάρχης (patriarch). In this category Turner³⁴ includes words that are attested for the first time in the LXX, but were not necessarily coined by the translators, such as ἀγαθωσύνη (mainly equaling טובה) and αἴνεσις (mainly equaling תהלה).

In other cases, the level of influence is more subtle. Thus, before the time of the LXX ἐξομολογέομαι was used mainly as “to confess,” and in this sense it was used in the LXX as a translation equivalent of הרה, “to confess.” However, the Hebrew verb denotes not only “to confess,” but also “to thank,” and several LXX translators who did not recognize the latter meaning, Hebraistically rendered both meanings of הרה with a single verb, ἐξομολογέομαι. This non-Greek use of ἐξομολογέομαι in the LXX as “to thank” was not natural in the Greek language, resulting from the artificial nature of the translation language. The verb, together with the related noun ἐξομολόγησις, became part and parcel of the NT language and early Christian literature, e.g. Matt 11:25 ... ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν, Ἐξομολογοῦμαί σοι, πάτερ κύριε του οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς = Luk 10:21. These new meanings in the Greek language directly derived from the LXX and Hebrew Scripture.³⁵

²⁹ See, for example, W. F. D. Sparks, “The Semitisms of St. Luke’s Gospel,” *JTS* 44 (1943) 129–38.

³⁰ See especially H. A. A. Kennedy, *Sources of New Testament Greek or the Influence of the Septuagint on the Vocabulary of the New Testament* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1895); N. Turner, “Jewish and Christian Influence on New Testament Vocabulary,” *NT* 16 (1974) 149–60; M. Harl in M. Harl, G. Dorival, and O. Munnich, *La Bible grecque des Septante—Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (Paris: CERF, 1988) 280–81 (with bibliography).

³¹ See for example M. Johannesson, “Das biblische καὶ ἐγένετο und seine Geschichte,” *Zeitschrift für die vergleichende Sprachforschung* 53 (1926) 161–212; idem, “Das biblische καὶ ἰδοὺ in der Erzählung samt seiner hebräischen Vorlage,” *ibid.* 66 (1939) 145–95; 67 (1940) 30–84.

³² Cf. especially L. H. Brockington, “The Greek Translator of Isaiah and His Interest in δόξα,” *VT* 1 (1951) 23–32.

³³ Cf. H. St. J. Thackeray, “A Study in the Parable of the Two Kings,” *JTS* 14 (1912–1913) 389–99 on Luke 14:31.

³⁴ Turner, “Jewish and Christian Influence.”

³⁵ For a detailed analysis, see my study “Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings,” *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 109–28.

Likewise, the choice of σάρξ as the main equivalent of בשר was natural because of their similar meanings. However, the Greek word was used also for בשר when denoting “body” and even in the phrase כל בשר — “all living beings.”

*Terminology.*³⁶ As an extension of the use of the LXX language in the NT, several LXX words became technical terms in the NT. Thus, χριστός, originally a Greek rendering of משיח (“the anointed”) became the central name of Christ. Likewise, Κύριος, used as a title for Christ, is Septuagintal. This divine epithet derives directly from the LXX, but Case suggested that the NT authors distinguished between the real God (θεός) and the appellation of Jesus, stressing “his heavenly authority over the community in the spiritual sphere.”³⁷ The various aspects in the description of the δόξα of God in the NT are based on the LXX, especially in the book of Isaiah.³⁸ ἄγγελος became “angel” in the LXX, and εὐαγγέλιον (2 Sam 4:10) became “gospel.”

*Theological foundations.*³⁹ Quotations from the LXX in the NT are meant to prove that the message of Hebrew Scripture (mediated through its Greek translation) is being fulfilled in the new writings.⁴⁰ From the point of view of the NT, Hebrew Scripture as a whole is thus considered prophetic writing. Some of these quotations pertain to the NT’s theological foundations, which are based on the exact wording of the LXX. Thus, the idea of the Messiah’s birth to a παρθένος (Matt 1:23 and the parallel story in Luk 1:31, but not in Luk 2:7) is based on an idiosyncratic equivalent in the LXX of Isa 7:14 “Behold, a virgin shall conceive . . .” (MT speaks of an עלמה, a “young woman”). The LXX and NT texts are more or less identical: Isa 7:14 ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις (= Luk 1:31; Matt: καλέσουσιν) τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Εμμανουηλ (Luk 1:31: Ἰησοῦν and thus also Matt 1:21). In a way, it is not easy to prove the dependence of Matthew and Luke on the LXX of Isaiah, since most of their translation equivalents in this verse are common LXX renderings, but the use of

³⁶ See R. T. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids, MI/Cambridge, UK: Eerdmans, 2003) 146–8.

³⁷ Thus S. J. Case, “ΚΥΡΙΟΣ as a Title for Christ,” *JBL* 26 (1907) 151–61 (160). See further Harl in *La Bible grecque*, 283–4.

³⁸ See Brockington, “The Greek Translator.”

³⁹ See McLay, *Use of the Septuagint*, 159–70.

⁴⁰ Note the frequently used formula such as in Matt 1:22 τούτο δὲ ὅλον γέγονεν ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος — All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet (RSV). For the central status of the earlier Scripture for the new religion, see John 1:45, 5:46; 1 Cor. 15:3.

παρθένος leaves no doubt that they quoted from the LXX as found in the uncial manuscripts.⁴¹ The LXX's equivalent is the more unusual in Isaiah as it is used in the context of childbirth, and it remains unclear why it was chosen. The LXX either reflects a contextual theological tendency in Isaiah, as claimed by Rösel,⁴² or its linguistic exegesis resembles that of the Greek translation of Gen 24:43.⁴³ In either case, the equivalent used by the Greek translator is understandable within its translation environment, but the influence of this innocent translation equivalent was to be of major importance for the new religion. Likewise, the special interpretation of the LXX version of the servant of the Lord as an eschatological savior in Isa 52:14–53:14, that was to be viewed later as Christological, was already foreshadowed in additional pre-Christian sources, among them Qumran fragments, as demonstrated by Hengel.⁴⁴

Quotations from the LXX in the NT. The main source of influence of the LXX on the NT is through its manifold quotations, especially from Isaiah, Psalms, and the Pentateuch,⁴⁵ directly influencing the language and terminology of the NT as discussed above. The quotations appearing in the NT elaborate on the Scripture text in different ways. When focusing on text-critical issues, we first have to deduct from the various differences between the quoted texts and the OG all cases of free quotation and editorial changes by the NT authors, such as illustrated in detail by Koch for the Pauline Epistles.⁴⁶

⁴¹ In later times, this verse was to become one of the key arguments for the contention that the Jews falsified Scripture, see especially Justin Martyr, *Dialogue* 43:3-8, 66:2-4, 68:9, 71:3, 84:1; *Apologia* 1.33:1, 4-6. Justin defends the reading παρθένος, while rejecting the “Jewish” rendering νεάνις (= Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) that, according to him, was doctored.

⁴² M. Rösel, “Die Jungfrauengeburt des endzeitlichen Immanuel,” *JBTh* 6 (1991) 135–51. Rösel claims that this rendering does not reflect an isolated case of exegesis, but that all of Isaiah 7 in the LXX is colored by special salvation exegesis, and that in this detail the translator imitated the virgin birth of the Goddess Aion in Greek mythology.

⁴³ In Genesis, עַלְמָה is likewise rendered by παρθένος, but that equivalent depends on explicit statements in the context. In v 16, Rebekah is described as both a נַעֲרָה (girl) and a בְּתוּלָה (virgin), while the LXX uses only one equivalent for both words in that verse (παρθένος). When we come to v 43, the LXX makes a shortcut, and even though the text speaks about a young woman (עַלְמָה), the translator remembered the words used for Rebekah in v 16, and therefore calls the young woman who would address Abraham's servant a παρθένος. It is not impossible, but probably a little far-fetched, to assume that the Greek translator was actually influenced by Genesis. For the influence of the Greek Pentateuch on the later Greek versions, see my study “The Impact of the LXX Translation of the Pentateuch on the Translation of the Other Books,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible*, 183–94.

⁴⁴ M. Hengel, “Zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Jes 53 in vorchristlicher Zeit,” in *Der leidende Gottesknecht, Jesaja 53 und seine Wirkungsgeschichte* (ed. B. Janowski and P. Stuhlmacher; FAT 14; Tübingen, J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1996) 49–91.

⁴⁵ See Swete, *Introduction*, 381–405; J. de Waard, *A Comparative Study of the OT Text in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the New Testament* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965); M. Harl in *La Bible grecque*, 269–88; N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context—Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (tr. W. G. E. Watson; Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000) 323–32; McLay, *Use of the Septuagint*, 148–58; J. M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004) 142–4. See further the studies mentioned below and the many studies listed in *A Classified Bibliography of the Septuagint* (ed. S. Brock et al.; ALGHJ 6; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973) 53–7; C. Dogniez, *Bibliography of the Septuagint = Bibliographie de la Septante 1970–1993* (VTSup 60; Leiden/New York: E. J. Brill, 1995) 73–82.

⁴⁶ D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums. Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHTh 69; Tübingen: Mohr, 1986) 102–98.

The remaining differences may be subjected to text-critical discussion, to be analyzed together with the agreements with the OG. The following questions will be posed:

1. Which NT compositions are closest to the OG translation in their quotations?
2. In the case of agreements of the quotations with the OG, can we pinpoint a specific LXX manuscript tradition that is closer to the text quoted in the NT than the other LXX manuscripts?
3. Can we point to specific textual features (especially OG traditions versus early revisions) of the individual OT books as quoted in the NT?

LXX specialists are interested in the following questions that are also important for NT studies:

a. How should the relation between the quotation and the various representatives of Greek Scripture be determined? In such an analysis standard LXX equivalents, such as $\gamma\alpha\rho = \gamma\hat{\eta}$ should be disregarded,⁴⁷ while unusual and idiosyncratic equivalents should be the basis for deciding on closeness between textual sources.

b. Remarkably often the text quoted in the NT reflects the main LXX uncials, although we have no statistics for the NT as a whole. Closest to the wording of the OG are probably the citations in the Gospel of John,⁴⁸ Luke-Acts,⁴⁹ and the Catholic Epistles as well as individual quotations in the other books.

c. The text of these quotations is often close to codex A of the LXX or, more generally, Alexandrian witnesses.⁵⁰ Here, too, we have no exact statistics.

d. Many NT quotations differing from the LXX are closer to MT than to the LXX *ad loc.* This situation is recognized especially when the LXX *ad loc.* differs from MT because of its different Hebrew *Vorlage* or its free translation character. In the case of the free translation of the LXX of Isaiah, we can rather easily recognize these relations. In such cases we can often identify the versions that are quoted in the NT, especially the

⁴⁷ This point is made by M. J. J. Menken, *Matthew's Bible—The Old Testament Text of the Evangelist* (BETL 173; Leuven/Paris/Dudley: University Press/Peeters, 2004) 23.

⁴⁸ See M. J. J. Menken, *Old Testament Quotations in the Fourth Gospel—Studies in Textual Form* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 15; Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996).

⁴⁹ See in the present volume C. R. Holladaay, "Luke's Use of the LXX in Acts: A Review of the Debate and a Look at Acts 1:15-26"; A. M. Schwemer, "Lukas als Kenner der Septuaginta und die Rede des Stephanus (Apg 7,2-53)."

⁵⁰ W. Staerk, "Die alttestamentliche Citate bei den Schriftstellern des Neuen Testaments," *ZWT* 35 (1892) 461–85; 36 (1893) 70–98; 38 (1895) 218–30; Swete, *Introduction*, 395, 403 (both: codex A); K. J. Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews," *NTS* 11 (1965) 303–25 (manuscripts A and B); D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 48–57 (Alexandrian witnesses in the case of Isaiah, codices F and A in the Pentateuch).

revision of *kaige*-Th preceding the writing of the NT books. This version revised the OG towards a literal representation of the Hebrew text then current in Israel (the proto-Masoretic text), and later continued as the medieval MT. This line of research was initiated by Barthélemy within the realm of LXX studies,⁵¹ and was continued within NT studies by such scholars as Dietrich-Alex Koch, Menken, and Wilk.⁵² It is now clear that Matthew and Paul often quoted from *kaige*-Th and other revisions of the OG.⁵³ There is no reason to assume that Matthew or Paul themselves produced these literal translations, because the agreements between the quotations and known revisions such as *kaige*-Th are too obvious.⁵⁴

A well-known example of a quotation is the one from Isa 25:8 in 1 Cor 15:54 quoting not the LXX (κατέπιεν ὁ θανατός ἰσχύσας = MT לִנְצַח הַמוֹת בְּלַע), but *kaige*-Th, κατεπόθη ὁ θανατός εἰς ὕλκος. The quotation reflects a variant reading of MT's vocalization בְּלַע (he devoured) as בָּלַע (was devoured), as well as a different etymological understanding of לִנְצַח.

I have no exact statistical information as to which manuscript tradition prevailed in the quotations, that of the OG or of the revisions, but it seems that the OG was quoted in most writings of the NT,⁵⁵ and that the use of the LXX revision by Matthew and Paul, pertains to a minority of the quotations. The use of the OT in the Apocalypse of John is *sui generis*.⁵⁶

e. It remains intriguing that Paul used both the OG version and the *kaige*-Th revision for the same biblical book (Isaiah), apparently under the same conditions, and in the same

⁵¹ Barthélemy, *Devanciers*.

⁵² Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*; Menken, *Matthew's Bible*; F. Wilk, "The Letters of Paul as Witnesses to and for the Septuagint Text," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. W. Kraus and R. G. Wooden; SCS 53; Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 2005) 253–71.

⁵³ For example, Wilk, "The Letters of Paul," 264: "In twenty-one quotations ... Each time the Greek version seems to have been reworked to align it with the Hebrew text. Each time, again, this version concurs more or less with one of the translations done by Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion." Koch provides different statistics (see n. 57).

⁵⁴ This point is made by Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, 280 and passim.

⁵⁵ Thus D. S. New, *Old Testament Quotations in the Synoptic Gospels and the Two-Document Hypothesis* (SCS 37; Atlanta, GA, 1993) 122–23; Thomas, "Old Testament Citations."

⁵⁶ The Apocalypse is close to the LXX in most of its quotations that contain some idiosyncratic LXX renderings. See G. K. Beale, "A Reconsideration of the Text of Daniel in the Apocalypse," *Bib* 67 (1986) 539–43. See also L. P. Trudinger, "Some Observations Concerning the Text of the Old Testament in the Book of Revelation," *JTS* 17 (1966) 82–88 who stresses that the Apocalypse often reflects the Theodotion text of Daniel. See further the insightful paper of H. Lichtenberger, "Das Alte Testament in der Offenbarung des Johannes" in this volume.

Epistles (Romans, 1 Corinthians).⁵⁷ Paul likewise quotes from revisional texts in 1 Kings (3 Reigns) and Job,⁵⁸ but he quotes more frequently from the OG.⁵⁹ It seems to me that Paul quoted from different versions concurrently or possibly he revised some of his own writings according to different LXX manuscripts.⁶⁰

The case of Matthew's Bible is similar and different at the same time. Matthew reflects both the OG and an early revision, but these two sources probably derived from different layers of Matthew's compositional process. The quotations from the OG (such as Matt 3:3 // Mark 1:3 = Isa 40:3 LXX) in Mark and Luke derived from Mark and Q (Luke), and Matthew altered them only slightly, as shown by Menken.⁶¹ At the same time, the ten fulfillment prophecies in Matthew⁶² reflect a revised Greek text such as *kaige*-Th, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, and the Psalms. According to Menken, this was Matthew's Bible that he must have known when he composed his Gospel in the last decades of the first century CE; on the other hand, the quotations from the LXX reflect Matthew's sources. Matthew himself thus did not use two different types of the Greek Bible, but he adhered to the Greek revised Bible text.⁶³

f. The use of different Greek versions by the same authors reflects the textual situation in Palestine of that time, as known from the finds from the Judean Desert. From the first century BCE onwards there was an ever-growing discomfort with the OG version because of its deviations from the Hebrew text then current in Palestine. Our major source of information for this development is the Minor Prophets Scroll from Nahal Hever from the first century BCE reflecting the *kaige*-Th revision. Barthélemy characterized this revision as *Les devanciers d'Aquila*, describing it as "*précédée d'une étude sur les traductions et recensions grecques de la Bible réalisées au premier siècle de*

⁵⁷ The OG is reflected, among other things, in Isa 10:22 (Rom 9:27); 29:14 (1 Cor 1:19); 29:16 (Rom 9:20); 40:13 (Rom 11:34); 45:23 (Rom 14:11); 52:5 (Rom 2:24); 59:7 (Rom 3:15); 65:1-2 (Rom 10:20-21). Revisional texts are reflected in the following verses (for a thorough analysis, see Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 59-83, who lists all the verses mentioned here): Isa 8:14 (Rom 9:33); 25:8 (1 Cor 15:54); 28:11 (1 Cor. 14:21); 52:7 (Rom 10:15).

⁵⁸ 1 Kings 19:10 (Rom 11:3), 19:18 (Rom 11:4); Job 5:13 (1 Cor 3:19), 41:3 (Rom 11:35).

⁵⁹ For some examples, see Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge*, 51-57.

⁶⁰ This is one of the options mentioned by Wilk, "Letters," 267: "... either Paul's citations originated from at least three different versions of the Septuagint, or its revision toward the Hebrew had not been carried out consistently."

⁶¹ Menken, *Matthew's Bible*.

⁶² Matth 1:22-23 = Isa 7:14; 2:15 = Hos 11:1; 2:17-18 = Jer 31:15; 2:23 = Judg 13:5, 7; 4:14-16 = Isa 8:23-9:1; 8:17 = Isa 53:4; 12:17-21 = Isa 42:1-4; 13:35 = Ps 78:2; 21:4-5 = Zech 9:9; 27:9-10 = Zech 11:13.

⁶³ Menken, *Matthew's Bible*, passim, and summary in pp. 280-83.

notre ère sous l'influence du rabbinat palestinien.” In the same Judean Desert we found other Greek fragments, at Qumran, this time reflecting the OG version, probably even closer to the OG than the text of our main uncials.⁶⁴ Some of these Greek fragments are earlier than the Naḥal Hever scroll of the Minor Prophets (between the end of the 2nd century BCE to the beginning of the 1st century CE). These Greek fragments, found at different localities in the Judean Desert, thus reflect different socio-religious conditions paralleled by the Hebrew texts found in these localities. Both the Hebrew and Greek texts from Qumran reflect a community that practiced openness at the textual level and was not tied down to MT, while the other Judean Desert sites represent Jewish nationalistic circles that adhered only to the proto-rabbinic (proto-Masoretic) text in Hebrew and the Jewish revisions of the LXX towards that Hebrew text.⁶⁵

b. *Christian Corrections in the LXX Manuscripts?*

While the early remains of Greek Scripture are undoubtedly Jewish, the great majority of these sources are Christian.⁶⁶ It is often claimed, on both a popular⁶⁷ and scholarly level, that the early Christians tampered with the text of the LXX in order to adapt it to their views. If such a process took place it would be understandable, since Christianity was in the very peculiar situation of being based on a Jewish source, the LXX. As parallels, one may invoke theological tampering with the text of NT manuscripts in the wake of doctrinal controversies, as described by Ehrman.⁶⁸ However, in the area of Hebrew Scripture and its translations, such tampering with the text is surprisingly rare. As far as we know, the Qumran biblical scrolls contain no sectarian readings,⁶⁹ which is remarkable

⁶⁴ See my study “The Greek Biblical Texts from the Judean Desert,” *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran*, 339–64.

⁶⁵ *Idib.*

⁶⁶ A large section of the monograph by N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context—Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2000) is named “The Septuagint in Christian Tradition” (pp. 191–301).

⁶⁷ L. Greenspoon, “‘Reclaiming’ the Septuagint for Jews and Judaism,” in *Scripture in Transition, Essays on the Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (ed. A. Voitila and J. Jokiranta; JSJSup 126; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2008) 661–70.

⁶⁸ B. D. Ehrman, *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture—The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the New Testament* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁶⁹ Thus G. J. Brooke, “E Pluribus Unum—Textual Variety and Definitive Interpretation in the Qumran Scrolls,” in *The Dead Sea Scrolls in Their Historical Context* (ed. T. H. Lim et al.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000) 107–19; *idem*, “Deuteronomy 5–6 in the Phylacteries from Qumran Cave 4,” in *Emanuel, Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Emanuel Tov* (ed. S. M. Paul, R. A. Kraft, L. H. Schiffman, and W. W. Fields, with the assistance of E. Ben-David; VTSup 94; Leiden/Boston: E. J.

in view of the fact that sectarian Qumran scribes probably copied one-third of these scrolls.⁷⁰ The evidence for Pharisaic reworking of MT is very limited, except for the MT of Samuel.⁷¹ By the same token, after the initial sectarian creation of the SP, subsequent scribes did not add sectarian readings.⁷²

Christian tampering with the manuscripts of the LXX is evidenced only sporadically, and Kraft rightly claims: “Judging from available printed editions, the preserved Greek MSS and the versions derived from the Greek contain very few passages of unmistakably Christian intent—that is, ‘Christian glosses or interpolations’.”⁷³ Swete went one step further when saying that it is “improbable that the Greek O.T. was willfully interpolated by Christians, or that, if they attempted this, the existing text has been affected by it to any appreciable extent ... but apart from these, the Septuagint, during the first two centuries after Christ, suffered little from Christian hands beyond errors of transcription.”⁷⁴ At the same time, there undoubtedly are Christian changes and interpolations in the manuscripts, but such changes are negligible. Rahlfs, Ziegler, Seeligmann, and Kraft provided examples of Christian corrections in some early LXX manuscripts, and Seeligmann and Kraft analyzed these examples at length, but the evidence is scant.⁷⁵

Different types of interference may be recognized, among them some variants that are mere apparent changes. A few examples follow.

Brill, 2003) 57–70; E. Ulrich, “The Absence of ‘Sectarian Variants’ in the Jewish Scriptural Scrolls Found at Qumran,” in *The Bible as Book—The Hebrew Bible and the Judaean Desert Discoveries* (ed. E. D. Herbert and E. Tov; London: British Library & Oak Knoll Press in association with The Scriptorium: Center for Christian Antiquities, 2002) 179–95. On the other hand, two scholars believe that such sectarian readings are embedded in the text: A. van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches, Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35; Freiburg/Göttingen: Universitätsverlag/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981) 95–6; P. Pulikottil, *Transmission of Biblical Texts in Qumran—The Case of the Large Isaiah Scroll IQIsa^a* (JSOTSup 34; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). This discussion does not cover possible sectarian readings in the biblical text quoted in the *pesharim*, but these also are very rare. See my study “The Biblical Texts from the Judaean Desert—An Overview and Analysis of the Published Texts,” in *Hebrew Bible, Greek Bible, and Qumran*, 128–54 (137).

⁷⁰ Tov, *Scribal Practices*, 261–73.

⁷¹ For some data and bibliography, see my *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2d rev. ed.; Minneapolis and Assen: Fortress Press/Royal Van Gorcum, 2001) 266, n. 37.

⁷² This view has been confirmed by S. Schorch (October 2008).

⁷³ Kraft, “Christian Transmission,” 207–26 (210).

⁷⁴ H. B. Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (2d ed.; Cambridge: University Press, 1914) 479.

⁷⁵ A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Göttingensis editum* (2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) 30–32 (LXX Ps 13:2; 95:10; 50:9; 37:14; 49:6); J. Ziegler, *Isaias, Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) 100; I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah—A Discussion of Its Problems* (Leiden: Brill, 1948; re-edited as *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies* [ed. R. Hanhart and H. Spiekermann; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004]) 24–30; Kraft, “Christian Transmission.”

i. *Changes in LXX manuscripts based on quotations from the LXX in the NT*
(selection)

Ps 40 (LXX 39):7 לִי אָזְנוֹיִם כְּרִיֵּת לִי (but you have given me an open ear [NRSV]) – ὠτία δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι (but ears you fashioned for me [NETS]⁷⁶). ὠτία is the reading of Rahlfs, for which he quotes the minority evidence of La^g⁷⁷ and the Psalterium Gallicanum, while manuscripts BSA read σῶμα for which cf. Hebrews 10:5-6 where our verse is quoted as σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι (ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας) (NRSV: but a body you have prepared for me; [in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure]). The reading in Hebrews thus found its way into the main manuscript tradition of the LXX.⁷⁸

In Ps 14 (LXX 13):3, all the LXX manuscripts (except for A and the Lucianic tradition) add a long section containing parts of the LXX text of Ps 5:10; 140 (LXX 139):4; 9:28; Isa 59:7-8; Ps 36 (LXX 35):2. The source for this addition is an anthology of LXX verses in Rom 3:13-18, among them Ps 14 (LXX 13):10, in which Paul refers to the sin of all humans.⁷⁹

ii. *Christian changes* (selection)⁸⁰

Ps 96 (LXX 95):10 “Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigned!’ “ According to Justin Martyr,⁸¹ the Jews removed the words “from the wood” (that is, from the cross)⁸² from the end of the verse. However, it is more likely that these words reflect an early Christian addition, now preserved only in the upper- and western Egyptian Greek manuscripts as well as in the Sahidic and Bohairic translations.

Isa 53:12 After this verse, the last one in the chapter, the margin of manuscript 86 and the Sahidic translation add the following remark “they pursued and persecuted <him>;

⁷⁶ NETS, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title* (ed. A. Pietersma and B. G. Wright; Oxford, 2007).

⁷⁷ Manuscript St.-Germain-des-Près of the *Vetus Latina*.

⁷⁸ Alternatively, σῶμα was the original reading of the LXX, as suggested by H. W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Hermeneia; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1989) 274. According to Attridge, the LXX reading is an “interpretive paraphrase” of MT, but that possibility is rather unlikely for this literal translation unit.

⁷⁹ The Rahlfs edition presents this section in the text itself in parenthesis, but in my view it should have been relayed to the apparatus since Rahlfs himself dubbed this text a “Christian addition.”

⁸⁰ Further examples are mentioned by Hengel, *Septuagint*, 31–3. In these cases, the Church Fathers accused their Jewish opponents of falsifying their Scriptures.

⁸¹ *Dialogue*, 73:1-2.

⁸² For details, see A. Rahlfs, *Psalms*, 31. For an analysis, see Kraft, “Christian Transmission,” 216.

they seized him and the Lord forgave them.” Isaiah 53 is a central proof text for Christianity, and therefore the addition in this chapter of Christian remarks was to be expected.

iii. *Seemingly Christian changes*

Not all readings that look like Christian changes ought to be considered intentional, as some may have been created by coincidental mistakes or may reflect other textual factors. Kraft provided several examples of small alterations in manuscripts that can be viewed as Christian changes, but they are more likely transcription errors. His examples are subdivided into passages that include the term *χριστός*, references to the sufferings and crucifixion of Jesus, and the importing of NT passages into LXX manuscripts. For example, in Isa 45:1 MT “Thus says the Lord to his anointed one, Cyrus,” most manuscripts of the LXX read οὕτως λέγει κύριος τῷ χριστῷ μου Κύρω (to Cyrus), and it was natural that a reading Κυρίω (to the Lord) would develop.⁸³ This was indeed the case for some Greek manuscripts known to Jerome.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Barnabas XII.11 uses this reading together with Ps 110 (LXX 109):1 (a literal translation of MT, εἶπεν ὁ κύριος τῷ κυρίῳ μου) as Messianic prooftexts.

The addition to the main LXX text of Ezek 16:4, ἐν ὕδατι οὐκ ἐλούσθης, of τοῦ χριστοῦ μου in codex A is not Christian, as surmised by Seeligmann,⁸⁵ but these words reflect a Hebrew variant לַמִּשְׁעִי for לַמִּשְׁחִי of MT, not otherwise represented in the LXX, as mentioned by Ziegler.⁸⁶

Christian changes are found in all sources, and usually not in the main manuscripts. Obviously, the decision whether or not something reflects a Christian change is a matter of interpretation. Liebmann and Seeligmann recognize such changes even in several readings that are found in *all* LXX manuscripts,⁸⁷ such as the addition τῷ ἀγαπητῷ σου to the text of MT in Isa 26:17 LXX. According to these scholars, this presumed Christian gloss replaced all earlier copies of the text. The same explanation was applied to the plus

⁸³ This is an unlikely reading in the context, as it appears after κύριος.

⁸⁴ For details, see Ziegler, *Isaias*, 100.

⁸⁵ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 25.

⁸⁶ J. Ziegler, *Ezechiel, Septuaginta, Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Litterarum Göttingensis editum* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977) 146. The reading of codex A, often Hexaplaric, runs parallel to the reading of Aquila and Theodotion εἰς σωτηρίαν.

⁸⁷ E. Liebmann, “Der Text zu Jesaja 24–27,” *ZAW* 22 (1902) 1–56 (51–55); Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 26.

of the LXX in 27:4 τοῖνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα ὅσα συνέταξε. Κατακέκαυμαι. Beyond the analysis of Liebmann, Seeligmann recognized Christian interpolations and changes in the combined evidence of all Greek manuscripts in additional verses (Isa 43:10; 53:4; 60:6). Thus in Isa 60:6, in the description of presents from Sheba, the words הַגְּלוֹרִיּוֹת הַיְהוָה “and the glories of the Lord,” was rendered by the LXX as τὸ σωτήριον κυρίου,” the salvation of the Lord.” According to Seeligmann, this passage, mentioning the bringing of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, might easily remind an early Christian reader of the Magi, “who had come from the East to offer gold, and frankincense, and myrrh to the newborn Saviour.”⁸⁸ This picture indeed occurs in Matt 2:11 without the word “salvation” and “saviour,” but Seeligmann is quick to add that “in early Christian literature, Matth. 2.11 is repeatedly associated with Ps. 72.10 and Is. 60.6.” He also adds that τὸ σωτήριον is used in Luke 2:30 for the birth of Jesus. All these examples of possible Christian changes in the LXX are very unlikely, in my view, because by necessity they must have been inserted in the one copy from which all our manuscripts derived. In one case Seeligmann ascribes this copy to the second century CE.⁸⁹ By that time already too many copies of the LXX would have been circulating so that at least some unaltered readings would have been preserved for posterity.

4. *Inspired Status of the LXX*

Sacred Scripture is conceived of as having been written by God or by divinely inspired authors, while translations need not be divinely inspired. Whether or not the LXX translators were divinely inspired is not an issue to be analyzed in a scholarly discussion, and ultimately is a matter of belief.⁹⁰ A tradition of divine inspiration for a translation would only develop if one believed it to be as authoritative as Scripture itself, or even

⁸⁸ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 28.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁹⁰ The inspiration of the LXX is treated especially in French and Italian monographs; see Dogniez, *Bibliography*, 25, e.g. P. Benoit, “La Septante est-elle inspirée?,” in *Vom Wort des Lebens. Festschrift für Max Meinertz zur Vollendung des 70. Lebensjahres* (ed. N. Adler; Münster: Aschendorff’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1951) 41-49 (= *Exégèse et Théologie* [4 vols.; Paris: Cerf, 1961] 1. 3-12); id., “L’inspiration des Septante d’après les Pères,” in *L’homme devant Dieu. Mélanges offerts au père Henri de Lubac* (Theologie 56-58; Paris: Aubier, 1963) 1.169-87. Beyond the literature mentioned there and below, see A. M. Dubarle, “Note conjointe sur l’inspiration de la Septante,” *RSPT* 49 (1965) 221-9; M. Harl in *La Bible grecque*, 294-5 (with bibliography); Kranz, “*Vetera et Nova.*”

more so. The story of the miraculous creation of the translation of the Seventy in Jewish sources⁹¹ involves divine intervention, but not necessarily divine inspiration, as it would be hard to believe that Jews, knowing that the Greek translation differs from the Hebrew text, would give more credence to the Greek translation than to its Hebrew source. They believed that the source is more trustworthy than the translation, but Alexandrian Jews had to resort to a translation because of their lack of knowledge of Hebrew. Only if these Jews were unaware of the differences between the Hebrew and Greek, the trustworthiness of the source would not be affected if one believed in the inspired status of the translation. Such an awareness is reflected in Philo's description of the translators. In *Vit. Mos.* II 37, Philo describes the translators as "they, like men inspired (ἐνθουσιῶντες), prophesied, not one saying one thing and another another, but every one of them employed the self-same nouns and verbs, as if some unseen prompter had suggested all their language to them." Possibly also the author of the Epistle of Aristeas considered the LXX to be Holy Scripture. Orlinsky⁹² suggested that the phrase used in § 308,⁹³ "to read aloud," carries the intention of public acceptance of the LXX as Holy Writ, as this phrase is also used in MT with relation to the Book of the Covenant, the book found in the temple at the time of Josiah, and the reading of the Torah in the time of Nehemiah.⁹⁴

In Christianity, a concept of inspiration developed, since the new religion was based on the LXX to the exclusion of Hebrew Scripture.⁹⁵ Had such a view not been nurtured, some Christians could have resorted to the Hebrew rather than Greek Scripture in cases of discrepancy between texts, undermining the authority of Christianity. Therefore, already at an early stage, the belief developed that the translation was divinely inspired and infallible and hence the way was open for several Church Fathers to claim that the

⁹¹ The story of the miraculous creation of the translation (thirty-six pairs of translators working in separate cells yet producing identical renderings in seventy-two days) is first represented in the Jewish-Hellenistic *Epistle of Aristeas*, § 301–7 and expanded in later sources, especially Epiphanius, *On Weights and Measures* (fourth century CE).

⁹² H. M. Orlinsky, "The Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators," *HUCA* 46 (1975) 89–114.

⁹³ "When the work was completed, Demetrius collected together the Jewish population in the place where the translation had been made, and read it over to all, in the presence of the translators, who met with a great reception also from the people, because of the great benefits which they had conferred upon them."

⁹⁴ Exod 24:3-7; 2 Kgs 23:1-3; Neh 8:1-6.

⁹⁵ According to Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend*, 68–9, "[t]he most powerful argument used by the Christian Church in favour of the inspiration of the Greek Bible is based on a story fashioned in the workshop of rabbinic *aggada*." However, I believe that the doctrine of the divine inspiration originated within Christianity itself.

LXX reflected the words of God more precisely than the Hebrew Bible.⁹⁶ They provided several arguments for this view, all at the level of belief, such as the translation being a *praeparatio evangelica*, the claim that the LXX fits the NT better than Hebrew Scripture, the belief that the LXX reflects the divine revelation better than Hebrew Scripture, and the view that the Holy Spirit guided the Seventy translators.⁹⁷ Christianity held on to the sacred status of the LXX until that version was superseded by the Vulgate translation, several centuries after that translation was produced by Jerome around 400 CE. However, also afterwards, the LXX was held in high esteem within Christianity, and it is still considered the main source for the Old Testament within the Russian and Greek Orthodox churches, the former through its Old Slavonic translation.

The doctrine of inspiration was a necessity, since otherwise the NT would have had no authoritative source for its central ideas such as the virgin birth in Matt 1:23, based on the LXX of Isa 7:14. At the same time, within the church there was much confusion, as best formulated by Hengel:⁹⁸

“Teachers of the church after Justin faced a number of open problems fundamentally beyond solution: the claim of the authority of the Seventy for the whole Christian Old Testament, whose contents still varied; the fact that the Greek collection of books itself contained portions of texts and whole books that do not appear in the Jewish canon and thus were not covered by the translation legend at all, while other works appear to be abbreviated in comparison to the Hebrew original; and, finally, the existence of competing Greek text traditions whose contradictions could only be masked, but not removed, by the charge of falsification.”

Against this background, the preparation of the Hexapla by Origen was supposed to bring some clarity in a confused situation because it enabled the internal comparison of the Greek versions as well as their comparison with the Hebrew text. At a later stage, Jerome brought about the decrease of the influence of the LXX by producing a new Bible version based on the Hebrew text, although he, too, constantly referred to the LXX.

The importance of the LXX to Christianity was so pervasive that in modern times Müller attempted to revive the centrality of that version for the western world, because it is closer to the text used by early Christians than Hebrew Scripture, which is the base for

⁹⁶ See Hengel, *Septuagint*, 26–50.

⁹⁷ For a description, see Kranz, “*Vetera et Nova*.”

⁹⁸ Hengel, *Septuagint*, 36.

almost all modern translations.⁹⁹ He argued that the final form of MT was fixed *after* the beginning of Christianity, and should therefore not be used in a church environment, not even in modern translations.¹⁰⁰ This is a sensible solution, albeit highly impractical because the Greek text used by early Christians cannot be reconstructed. Besides, if Müller's view were activated, the church should opt for both the OG version and its Jewish revisions since both were used by NT authors (above, § 3a)

In conclusion, in this study we tried to unravel the complicated web of relations between the Jewish and Christian aspects of the LXX by focusing separately on its Jewish background, the roots of the NT in the Greek versions of Hebrew Scripture, the influence of these versions on the NT, the adoption of the LXX by Christianity, and possible Christian corrections in the LXX manuscripts. We left aside matters of canon.

⁹⁹ Müller, *The First Bible*, 113–23 (“The Septuagint: An Alternative to *Biblia Hebraica*?”).

¹⁰⁰ This view is also shared by B. S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) 89: “Why should the Christian church be committed in any way to the authority of the Masoretic text when its development extended long after the inception of the church and was carried on within a rabbinic tradition?”