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# Authoritative Texts and Reception History

*Aspects and Approaches*

*Edited by*

Dan Batovici  
Kristin De Troyer



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## Contents

### Introduction 1

*Dan Batovici*

### PART 1

#### *Old Testament / Hebrew Bible*

### The Bible and the Crocodile: An Exercise in Balancing Translation Technique and Text-Critical Data 11

*Kristin De Troyer*

### Reading the Septuagint: The Hermeneutical Problem of a Translated Text 20

*Benjamin J.M. Johnson*

### The Not Not-Inglorious Death of Samson 41

*Kerry Lee*

### No Gods Made with Hands: Pauline Idol Polemics 52

*Rebekah M. Devine*

### PART 2

#### *Pseudepigrapha & Dead Sea Scrolls*

### Quotations from Lost Books in the Hebrew Bible: A New Translation and Introduction 65

*James R. Davila*

### The Reception of *Isaiah 40:15* in *Liber antiquitatem biblicarum*, *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* 94

*Albertina Oegema*

### After the Order of Melchizedek: Royal Themes and Melchizedek Traditions Applied to Jesus by the Author of Hebrews 112

*David J. Larsen*

**The Reception of the Jobraham Narratives in Jewish Thought** 124  
*Nicholas Ellis*

**Jesus and the Jewish Diviner: The Use and Misuse of 4Q242** 141  
*Beniamin Pascut*

**PART 3**

***New Testament***

**Scripture and God's Authority: Case Studies and Further Questions** 157  
*N.T. Wright*

**Elective Affinity: Second Peter's Reception of Paul** 167  
*Martin G. Ruf*

***Poiesis, Aesthesis, and Catharsis: The Aesthetic Experience of Reading "the Day of the Lord" with the Fathers*** 184  
*Andrew Talbert*

**The Reception of Paul's Understanding of Resurrection and Eschatology in the Epistle to Rheginos: Faithful Paulinism, or Further Development?** 199  
*Frederik S. Mulder* ■ subtitle added, ok?

**Nicetas of Heraclea's Catena on John's Gospel: How Many Manuscripts are There?** 216  
*Michael A. Clark*

**PART 4**

***Early Christianity***

**The Promise and Threat of "Reception", with Reference to Patristic Interpretation of Texts in Hebrews and Ephesians** 227  
*Mark W. Elliott*

**Between Ritual and Moral Purity: Early Christian Views on Dietary Laws** 243  
*Moshe Blidstein*

CONTENTS

VII

**The Greek Patristic Reception of the Sibylline Oracles** 260  
*Madalina Toca*

**The Early Christian Martyrdom Narratives: Narrative Features,  
Intertextuality and the Authoritative Texts Behind** 278  
*Marijana Vuković*

**The Ascension Spectacle: Lukan Narrative in Its Reception** 296  
*Justin A. Mihoc*

**Augustine's *Enarrationes* and the Final Form of the Psalter** 310  
*Kevin Haley*

**Epilogue: Future Prospects in Reception History** 320  
*Dan Batovici*

**Index** 000

# Reading the Septuagint: The Hermeneutical Problem of a Translated Text

*Benjamin J.M. Johnson*

## 1 Introduction: The Importance of the Septuagint

The Greek Jewish Scriptures, known generally as the Septuagint (LXX),<sup>1</sup> are an important witness to the early reception of the Hebrew Bible. But how should we, in the twenty-first century, receive and approach these Greek versions of the Jewish Scriptures? We could receive them as an important witness to an early form of the Hebrew Bible, an important cache of early textual variants.<sup>2</sup> Or, in light of the fact that all translation is to some degree interpretation, and the LXX is no exception, we could receive this version as an interesting and early interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>3</sup> Finally, we could study early Jewish and Christian reception of the LXX and receive it as a foundational document of these early religious communities.<sup>4</sup> All of these strategies for receiving and approaching the LXX are legitimate and have been fruitfully utilized by scholars. However, this study of the LXX *for the purposes of* textual criticism, understanding ancient Judaism and Christianity, etc., has left it somewhat on

<sup>1</sup> Properly speaking, the term Septuagint should refer only to the original translation of the Torah probably sometime in the 3rd century BCE. We will follow the standard practice of using the term Septuagint to refer to the entirety of the Greek Jewish Scriptures that came to be collected together. On the term Septuagint see the helpful survey of Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Septuagint: The Bible of Hellenistic Judaism,” in *The Canon Debate* (ed. L.M. McDonald and J.A. Sanders; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2002), 68–72.

<sup>2</sup> See e.g., the discussions in Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (Boston / Leiden: Brill, 2001), 67–84 and Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (revised and enlarged second edition; JBS 8; Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1997).

<sup>3</sup> E.g., see Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2000), 93–101; and John William Wevers, “The Interpretative Character and Significance of the Septuagint Version,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (Vol. 1; ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996): 84–107.

<sup>4</sup> See e.g., Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2002); Fernández Marcos, *Septuagint in Context*, 305–362; Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (UBW; London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 63–79.

the periphery of biblical studies. But the LXX is an important document in its own right,<sup>5</sup> with its own distinct *Wirkungsgeschichte*. It deserves its day in court. It deserves to be read and interpreted not simply in service to other disciplines but on its own, as we would interpret compositional biblical literature.

The recent translation projects of the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS), *Septuaginta Deutsch* (LXX.D) and *La Bible d'Alexandrie* (BA) are evidence that the Septuagint is beginning to receive more of its due attention. My interest in this essay is how we, in the twenty-first century, should appropriately and responsibly read and interpret the LXX as a document in its own right. Since the three modern translation projects have begun to probe this methodological question, we will begin by surveying their approaches to the translation of the LXX. We will then propose our preferred method for reading the LXX as its own distinct communicative act. We will conclude by offering an example of this method by giving a reading of 1 Reigns 16:1–13.

It must be noted at the outset that it is not my intention to critique these three translation projects as such. For the purposes of translation, the principles laid out by each project are valid in their own right. In this paper we are examining their usefulness in septuagintal interpretation. That is, we are judging how useful the various existing approaches to the LXX are when carried forward from translation to interpretation.

## 2 The Nature of the LXX as a Translated Text: Views and Approaches

Let us begin with a very simple fact: the Septuagint is a translated text. This seemingly simple and uncontroversial statement has far reaching implications for how one approaches the study of the LXX. For example, it has sometimes been said that there are two basic ways to approach the LXX: upstream (*amont*) and downstream (*aval*).<sup>6</sup> In the upstream approach one is most interested in the relationship between the LXX and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, so issues of translation technique and the text-critical value of the LXX come to the fore. In the downstream approach one is more interested in the LXX as it came to be received as “an autonomous work detached from its parent text,”<sup>7</sup> so that issues

<sup>5</sup> Wevers, “Interpretative Character,” 95.

<sup>6</sup> Marguerite Harl, “Traduire et Septante en Français: Pourquoi et Comment?” in *La Langue Japhet: Quinze Études sur la Septante et le Grec des Chrétiens* (ed. M. Harl; Paris: Cerf, 1992), 33–42.

<sup>7</sup> Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36: “oeuvre autonome, détachée de son modèle.”



of the reception of the LXX are emphasized. This metaphor has been utilized to characterize the three modern translation projects of the Septuagint. So that NETS is understood to represent the upstream approach, BA the downstream approach and LXX.D as “on level.”<sup>8</sup>

Though this upstream–downstream metaphor may be useful in depicting the differing angles of approach to the LXX by the three translation projects, it does lend itself toward being a misrepresentation of each.<sup>9</sup> I suggest that it may be more helpful to use a metaphor borrowed from Paul Ricoeur to differentiate between the world behind the text, the world of the text and the world in front of the text.<sup>10</sup> Though this metaphor has been explicated in different ways, I propose the following: The world *behind the text* can roughly be equated with the historical and referential reality that gave rise to the text. This includes such things as historical referent, historical situation, and authorial (or in our case translational) intent. This is often equated with author-oriented hermeneutics.<sup>11</sup> In this world, the priority of interpretive information is found in that which gave rise to the text. The world *of the text* can be equated with the world that is created by the text’s own self-referentiality. This is often equated with structural analysis, or a text-oriented hermeneutic.<sup>12</sup> That is, the priority

8 Helmet Utzschneider, “Auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text: Überlegungen zum wissenschaftlichen Standort einer Übersetzung der Septuaginta ins Deutsche,” in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bible* (BWANT 153; ed. H.-J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 11–50, here, 16–19. He characterized LXX.D as “auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text”—at eye level with the text. Wolfgang Kraus, “Contemporary Translations of the Septuagint: Problems and Perspectives,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. W. Kraus and R.G. Wooden; SBLSCS 53; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 68, presents this as “the text in its present outlook.”

9 Cf. the careful discussion of Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 63–83, who notes that this characterization is “only part of the truth” (68).

10 Ricoeur’s discussions regarding this line of thinking about texts can be seen in Paul Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (ed. and trans. John B. Thompson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 131–144; and idem. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 80–88. One of the most helpful appropriations of this metaphor for biblical interpretation is Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (second ed.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999).

11 E.g., E.D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1967).

12 E.g., Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hermeneutics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

of interpretive information is that which is contained in the text itself without reference to other entities. The world *in front of the text* can be equated with the world of the reader. This is sometimes equated with a reader-oriented hermeneutic. However, this should not be understood simply as what the reader brings to a text, but also should include the world that the text projects.<sup>13</sup> Any text, but especially a biblical text, exerts pressure on its readers that coerces them to come to grips with its subject matter.<sup>14</sup> So it is more than just the reader's perspective; it includes the text's *Wirkungsgeschichte*.<sup>15</sup>

What we mean by this metaphor will become clearer as we look at the different translational models of the three projects. In essence, though, this metaphor can be used in the following way to describe the three LXX translation projects. All three are interested in the world of the text. This is their starting point. The difference lies in their emphasis. The BA project is primarily interested in the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text. The NETS project is primarily interested in the relationship between the world behind the text and the world of the text. The LXX.D project tries to walk a mediating path by staying rooted in the world of the text while also looking both ways and keeping an eye on the world behind the text *and* the world in front of the text.

It is my contention that the LXX represents its own distinct communicative act, so that interpreting it requires understanding what was accomplished in that communicative act. The complexity in a translational communicative act is that it is communicating a previously written communicative act. Thus it needs to be treated as both *text* and *translation* if we are to come to grips fully with the LXX as a communicative act. When it comes to interpreting the LXX, I find it helpful to borrow Boyd-Taylor's proposal that the LXX should be interpreted based on two axioms:

- 13 This is in fact Ricoeur's emphasis on interpretation: "The sense of a text is not behind the text, but in front of it ... What has to be understood is not the initial situation of discourse, but what points towards a possible world, thanks to the non-ostensive reference of the text. Understanding has less than ever to do with the author and his situations. It has to grasp the world-propositions opened up by reference to the text" (*Interpretation Theory*, 87). This is briefly and helpfully explored in Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 167–169.
- 14 This language of pressure and coercion comes from Brevard S. Childs, "Toward a Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *ProEccl* 6/1 (1997): 16–26. See also C. Kavin Rowe, "Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics," *ProEccl* 11/3 (2002): 295–312.
- 15 This concept is most often associated with Hans-Georg Gadamer. See his, *Truth and Method* (sec. rev. ed.; trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall; London: T&T Clark, 2004, rep. 2012).

Axiom 1: The basis of exegesis is the text *qua* translation.

Axiom 2: The basis of exegesis is the translation *qua* text.<sup>16</sup>

As I understand these two axioms, they intend to communicate 1) that interpretation of the Septuagint cannot be properly carried out unless its character as translational literature is taken into account, and 2) that interpretation of the Septuagint must be interpretation of the text itself. These two axioms capture the dual nature of the Septuagint as a *translated text*. An approach to the text that only holds one of these two axioms will be out of balance. These two axioms are meant to be held in dialectic tension so that Axiom 1 is a check on Axiom 2 and vice versa. As we examine these modern approaches to the Septuagint, we will evaluate how they meet these two important axioms for septuagintal interpretation.

**a**      *The World in Front of the Text: La Bible d'Alexandrie (BA)*

By saying that BA is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text I mean to capture the operating principle of BA that states that the LXX is “an autonomous work detached from its parent text.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, in principle, BA is not interested in the relationship between the LXX and its *Vorlage* but rather is primarily (perhaps solely?) interested ~~with~~ the Greek text as Greek text, and not the Greek text as translation.<sup>18</sup> Put another way, the hermeneutical approach promoted by the

16 Cameron Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines: The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies* (BTS 8; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 431–436 (here, 432).

17 Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36: “oeuvre autonome, détachée de son modèle.” Or put differently, in this view the LXX is “a literary work in the full sense of the term” (Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36, “un oeuvre littéraire au sens plein du term”). Elsewhere, Harl writes, “We are convinced that every act of translating results in a text which receives a new life within the domain of the translation language” (Marguerite Harl, “La Bible d'Alexandrie I. Translation Principles,” in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* [SBLSCS 51; ed. B.A. Taylor; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001], 184).

18 Harl, “Translation Principles,” 186, writes “the criterion for determining the words in the LXX is not the meaning of their counterparts in Hebrew. It is their meaning in the Koinè, or more precisely, the sense they acquire in the context of LXX sentences, according to the use the translators make of them.” Though cf. the procedure of Jan Joosten, a contributor to BA, who includes the Hebrew *Vorlage* as one of the three factors that go into understanding the meaning of a Greek word in the LXX. It is third in importance after normal Koine usage and the LXX context, but it is still considered a viable source for determining meaning in an

BA project is akin to a reader-oriented hermeneutic, whereby the primary locus of meaning is focused on the act of reading, not primarily the act of writing.<sup>19</sup>

If the task at hand is the interpretation of the Septuagint as a version of Scripture in its own right, then the principles set out by BA have much to commend themselves. This, however, is only half the story. As we have said, the LXX is a *translated* text, for that reason the Hebrew *Vorlage* should not be neglected when interpreting it, even if we agree on giving primacy to the translated text. If interpreting the LXX is a matter of understanding it as a communicative act then reference to the communicative agent, in this case the translator, is necessary. Thus, what the translator has accomplished in rendering the Hebrew text into Greek is part of understanding the textual act that is the LXX.

By way of analogy, let me suggest that interpreting the Septuagint, a translated text, is analogous to interpreting a composite text like we have in parts of the Hebrew Bible. It is commonly suggested that parts of the Hebrew Bible present a text that has been stitched together from underlying sources. One way of interpreting such a text would be to prioritize the text as text, but also take seriously the text as an artistically composite entity, situating any reading of the text within the literary growth of the book.<sup>20</sup> It is my suggestion that the interpretation of a translated text should follow a similar strategy. While prioritizing the translated text is certainly of primary importance, to neglect the source behind the text, especially in difficult instances that can often be illuminated by reference to the source text, seems misguided.<sup>21</sup> The fact that the Septuagint is translational literature means that it is not compositional litera-

LXX text ("Source-Language Oriented Remarks on the Lexicography of the Greek Versions of the Bible," *ETL* 81/1 [2005]: 152–164).

- 19 E.g. Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (repr. ed.; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), esp. 3–46; and Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), esp. 167–173.
- 20 See for example, Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 163–192. For a specific example of this approach see R.W.L. Moberly, "The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah," *VT* 38/3 (1988): 302–323.
- 21 Cf. Natalio Fernández Marcos, who agrees that the LXX was originally intended to be an independent literary work yet still thinks that the modern scholar is remiss to fail to make use of the Hebrew when interpreting the LXX ("Reactions to the Panel on Modern Translations," in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* [ed. B.A. Taylor; SBLSCS 51; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001], 239–240).

ture.<sup>22</sup> To treat translational literature as if it were compositional literature is to confuse the categories of communication. For a translator, who is tasked with communicating an existing source text, does not have the same techniques available to him as an original author does.<sup>23</sup>

In sum, while I agree with the approach of BA in giving priority to the Greek text as text, it is methodologically insufficient to ignore the source text when interpreting the Septuagint.<sup>24</sup> In terms of the two axioms, following BA's approach would be helpful in treating the translation *as text*, but its emphasis may lead to a neglect of the text *as translation*.

**b**        *The World Behind the Text: A New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)*

By characterizing the NETS approach as primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world behind the text, I mean to say that their emphasis is on the LXX and its relationship to its *Vorlage*.<sup>25</sup> The NETS project approaches the LXX by way of its interlinear paradigm, which describes the LXX translation as being best conceptualized as “a Greek ‘inter-linear’ translation of a Hebrew original.”<sup>26</sup> Upon careful examination of the text-linguistic

22 This is the major point of contention of the NETS paradigm. See e.g., Cameron Boyd-Taylor, “In a Mirror, Dimly: Reading the Septuagint as a Document of Its Times,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, (ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden; SBLSCS 53; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 15–17.

23 See Cameron Boyd-Taylor, “A Place in the Sun: The Interpretative Significance of LXX-Psalm 18:5c,” *BIOCS* 31 (1998): 72, “Literary composition and literary translation are distinct socio-linguistic activities, with distinct methods and aims, and the hermeneutics of the former can seldom be applied to the latter.”

24 It must be noted, however, that when one reads the volumes of BA, it is evident that they contain a wealth of information about the relationship between the Septuagint and its source text. Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 68–69, suggests that there has been a shift in the BA project from its original conception to its current practices.

25 Cf. Pietersma, “NETS and the ‘Upstream–Downstream’ Metaphor,” 233–234, critiques the upstream–downstream metaphor for implying that NETS is not interested in the LXX text but only in its *Vorlage*. That is not my intent with my “behind the text” metaphor.

26 Albert Pietersma, “A New English Translation of the Septuagint,” in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* (SBLSCS 51; ed. B.A. Taylor; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001), 219. The principles for the NETS program were first most fully set out by Albert Pietersma, “A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint,” in *Bible and Computer*

character<sup>27</sup> of the LXX it is concluded that it is characterized by a high degree of dependence upon and tolerates a high degree of interference from its source text. From this Boyd-Taylor concludes that the LXX “was likely targeted for an ancillary role, one subservient to the study of the source text.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, it was meant to bring the reader to the source text (the Hebrew Bible) rather than bringing the source text to the reader.<sup>29</sup> Because of this, the NETS paradigm becomes one which finds the primary locus of interpretation in the relationship between the LXX and its source text, since the Septuagint was originally intended to function in this way.

How does this approach work in the actual practice? The strength of this approach is that it is an excellent method for interpreting the LXX in light of axiom 1, interpreting the text as translation.<sup>30</sup> However, in emphasizing axiom

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(ed. Johann Cook; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 337–364. Since then the most comprehensive presentation and defense of the interlinear paradigm is Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, esp. 89–111. A good summary of the principles behind the interlinear paradigm can be seen in Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, “To the Reader of Nets,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), xii–xx.

27 The terminology of text-linguistic character or constitutive character is borrowed by Boyd-Taylor and Pietersma from Descriptive Translation Studies. Boyd-Taylor defines constitutive character this way: “When a translated text is considered with respect to the historical enterprise which gave rise to it, its originating *Sitz im Leben*, it becomes readily apparent that the verbal character of the document will to some extent reflect the socio-linguistic practices proper to the larger cultural undertaking of which it was a part. We might call this aspect of the text its constitutive character” (Boyd-Taylor, “A Place in the Sun,” 73). See also Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, 35–37.

28 Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, 40.

29 See Albert Pietersma, “Septuagintal Exegesis and the Superscriptions of the Greek Psalter,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller, Jr.; Boston / Leiden: Brill, 2005) 443–475, esp. 445–447; and Benjamin G. Wright, 111, “Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, the Septuagint and Their Audiences,” *JSJ* 34/1 (2003): 1–27, esp. 24–25. Though he never expressed it in terms of an interlinear paradigm Sebastian Brock made a similar claim almost forty years ago (“The Phenomenon of the Septuagint,” *OtSt* [1972]: 17). Cf. Takamitsu Muraoka, “Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography With Special Reference to the So-called Interlinear Model,” in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontext, Lebenswelten* (WUNT 219; ed. Martin Kasser and Wolfgang Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 222–223, on the use and misuse of this Brock statement by the proponents of the interlinear paradigm.

30 Even critics of the interlinear paradigm note that the character of the LXX is indeed literal and done on a largely word based translation approach so that “if weren’t for the problem of the direction of writing, the Greek version could indeed easily be aligned between the

1, the interlinear paradigm neglects, at least in principle, axiom 2, interpreting the translation as text.<sup>31</sup> Put another way, the hermeneutical approach of proponents of the NETS project is one akin to an author-oriented hermeneutic.<sup>32</sup> The general difficulties of an author-oriented hermeneutic have been frequently noted.<sup>33</sup> In the Septuagint, an author-oriented hermeneutic is complicated by the fact that it is a translator-oriented hermeneutic. The process of translation further complicates the communicative act so that determining intention of the translator is very difficult.<sup>34</sup> Because the proponents of the interlinear paradigm view the constitutive character of the LXX as one half of an interlinear text, the only interpretive information is found in differences between the LXX and its source text.<sup>35</sup> Thus, the actual communicative act,

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lines of the Hebrew source text" (Jan Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm' in Septuagintal Studies," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo* [JSJSupp 126; ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta; Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2008], 168).

- 31 However, Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor would argue that the interlinear paradigm does read the LXX according to axiom 2, interpreting the text as text. But their understanding of the text *as text* is tied up with their view of the LXX as an interlinear. Thus, for them, to interpret the text as it was intended is to interpret the text as one half of a Greek-Hebrew diglot. In my view, the approach of Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor is too narrow for the purposes of interpretation if we view the Septuagint as its own communicative act. As I understand the role of reading and interpreting the LXX, what Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor propose is the interpretation of the translators' transformations of their source text not their full communicative act. See Boyd-Taylor, "*Reading Between the Lines*," 431-38; and idem., "A Place in the Sun," 71-75. Cf. Pietersma, "Text-Production and Text-Reception," 500-501. For further criticisms of this view see Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm,'" and Muraoka, "Recent Discussions."
- 32 E.g., Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, esp. 24-67. For an appropriation and theological adaptation of this approach utilizing Speech-Act theory see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 201-280.
- 33 Most famously by W.M. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3-18. See also Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation."
- 34 See Aejmelaeus, "Translation Technique," esp. 68-69.
- 35 According to Boyd-Taylor, "where the constitutive norm of isomorphism is suspended, there (and only there) do we have an invitation to interpret the text" (*Reading Between the Lines*, 437). Cf. also Albert Pietersma, "Text-Production and Text-Reception: Psalm 8 in Greek," in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontext, Lebenswelten* (WUNT 219; ed. Martin Kasser and Wolfgang Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 487-501; and idem., "Hermeneutics and a Translated Text" (paper read at Katholieke Universiteit on the occasion of the

viewed as the text as a whole, is neglected on the principle that the text *qua* text is intended to bring readers back to the source not to bring the source to the readers. As a principle of interpretation this seems inadequate. I see no reason why the interpretation of the LXX should be limited to interpreting it in light of its *Vorlage*, for as much as it is a *translation* it is also a *text*.

**c      *Looking Both Ways: Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)***

Proponents of LXX.D have labelled their approach as “on level.”<sup>36</sup> I am more inclined to view it as an approach which “looks both ways.” If the approach of BA is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text, and the approach of NETS is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world behind the text, LXX.D tries to look both ways.

There are two factors that form the basis of this approach. The first is that the LXX is for the most part a word based translation of a Hebrew text. The second is that the *Sitz im Leben* of the translators, their theology, their literary sensitivity, and even their inexperience, all influence the product that is the LXX.<sup>37</sup> So, like those in the NETS approach, the proponents of LXX.D agree that the Septuagint “cannot be seen in isolation from its Hebrew *Vorlage*.” However, they do not go so far as regarding the Septuagint as crib to bring the Greek reader to the Hebrew text rather than the Hebrew text to the Greek reader.<sup>38</sup> Similarly, like the approach of BA, proponents of LXX.D view the LXX as a “literary work” that “stands on its own” but, unlike the BA approach they try to do justice to the fact that it is a translation “dependent on a Hebrew original.”<sup>39</sup> Thus, the proponents of the LXX.D approach seek to take a mediating position that is based on a mediating view of the nature of the LXX.<sup>40</sup>

farewell to Professor Dr. Johan Lust, Leiden, 9 December 2005), 1–7, available online: <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/> (accessed 30 September, 2011).

36 E.g., Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 70.

37 See Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 66–67; cf. idem. “*Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)*: The Value of a German Translation of the Septuagint,” in “*Translation is Required*” *The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect* (SBLSCS; ed. Robert J.V. Hiebert; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 247.

38 Kraus, “*Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)*,” 247 (including quotation).

39 Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 83.

40 Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 70, writes, “I would say that the original translators of the LXX wanted to mediate between the tradition [of the Hebrew text] and the contemporary situation [of the translation]. This includes a relation to the *Vorlage* as well as the possibility of conscious modifications and attempts to bring things up-to-date. That is to



The major criticism of this “on level” approach is that in trying to walk this mediating path it “does not effectively keep separate the text as produced and the text as received.”<sup>41</sup> This critique is most keenly felt if one accepts the view that the LXX as produced was originally intended to function as a “crib” to bring the Greek reader to the Hebrew text. For if this is the case then the text as produced (a crib to bring the reader to the Hebrew) is very different from the text as received (sacred Scripture in its own right). Does this mean that the German project confuses categories or is there a way to utilize both the world behind the text and the world in front of the text in the act of interpreting the Septuagint? I propose that understanding that the Septuagint is a communicative act suggests the most fruitful way forward for interpreting the Septuagint and is complementary to the approach of LXX.D.

#### d *The Septuagint as a Communicative Act*

I propose to view the LXX as its own communicative act that intended to communicate the Hebrew Scriptures into the linguistic, cultural, and religious register of Hellenistic Judaism.<sup>42</sup> The LXX is a written act of communication and demands to be treated as such. In referring to the Septuagint as a written act of communication I am borrowing from Speech-Act Theory which argues that speaking, or in this case writing (or even translating!), is also doing.<sup>43</sup> When one speaks or writes one is also doing a number of acts. Speech-Act Theory has its own distinct, and often variegated, terminology for these acts but these are usually broken down into locutionary (propositional content), illocutionary (nature of the act of speaking<sup>44</sup>) and perlocutionary (effect of

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say our primary perspective is neither *amont* nor *aval* but is to translate ‘auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text’—the text in its present outlook.” See also Utzschneider, “Auf Augenhöhe mit Dem Text,” 20; and Siegfried Kreuzer, “A German Translation of the Septuagint,” *BIOscs* 34 (2001): 43.

41 Benjamin G. Wright, “The Septuagint and Its Modern Translators,” in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 111. For more explanation of the difference between text production and text reception from a proponent of the “upstream” approach see Pietersma, “Text-Production and Text-Reception.”

42 This definition is intentionally broad enough to encompass most theories of LXX origins. For a recent survey of the various theories of LXX origins see Dines, *The Septuagint*, 47–61.

43 Speech Act Theory was pioneered by J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

44 Though the language of force or energy is often used in describing illocutionary acts it seems more helpful to this non-specialist to speak of the illocution of the speech-act as

the speech-act) acts. It is in discerning this act that meaning is to be found.<sup>45</sup> The implication of recognizing that both spoken and written discourse are communicative acts is that it necessarily brings with it a level of involvement from both the author and reader.<sup>46</sup> Speech-Act Theory provides a rationale for a hermeneutic that is not purely author-based, nor purely reader-based. Instead, recognizing texts as Speech-Acts implies that the meaning of a text cannot be separated from either the author (or translator) or the reader.

The Septuagint, however, is not simply a written act. It is, more specifically, a written act communicating a previously written act. In a recent article, Randall Gauthier has provided one of the first methodologically thorough attempts to present a hermeneutic for interpreting the Septuagint as a text in its own right. Gauthier borrows from cognitive theory, and suggests that the Septuagint can be described as a higher order act of communication which is seeking to communicate a first order act of communication (Hebrew *Vorlage*).<sup>47</sup>

Whether or not we adopt Gauthier's terminology, his ideas are quite complementary to the approach proposed here and in the LXX.D project.<sup>48</sup> He writes,

Lest we fall into the trap of merely describing an LXX text *in the process of being translated*, on the one hand, or regarding it as a *first-order act of communication* (i.e. a *composition*), on the other, it would appear methodologically incumbent on the modern exegete to consider both source and target as acts of textual communication *in conjunction*.<sup>49</sup>

If we take the LXX translation seriously as its own act of communication, then the approaches described by LXX.D and Gauthier commend themselves. The translators are not authors in the sense that they are composing a text, but

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the kind or classification of the speech in view. It is helpful to see some of the different classifications of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations, assertive declarations. For summaries see Eugene Botha, "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Neot* 41/2 (2007): 277–278; and Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 50–58.

45 According to Vanhoozer, "meaning is a three-dimensional communicative action, with a form and matter (propositional content), energy and trajectory (illocutionary force), and a teleology or final purpose (perlocutionary effect)" (*Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 218).

46 The hermeneutical approach of self-involvement is the major contribution of Briggs, *Words in Action*, esp. 147–182.

47 Randall X. Gauthier, "Toward an LXX Hermeneutic," *JNSL* 35/1 (2009): 45–74, esp. 67–69.

48 Gauthier specifically notes that his approach is complementary to the approach in LXX.D (*Ibid.*, 68).

49 *Ibid.*, 68, italics original.

they are the communicating agents of the textual act that is the LXX. Thus, if interpreting the LXX is understanding the communicative act, then paying attention to the LXX *as translation* is invaluable for the interpretive enterprise. However, the actual communicative act is the text itself; as such the primary focus for interpretation must be the LXX *as text*. Thus, this approach seeks to read the LXX in light of both of the two axioms we have mentioned.

Interpreting the LXX as a distinct communicative act seeks to give priority to the world of the text but also seeks to hold the world behind the text and the world in front of the text in dialectical tension. The world behind gives emphasis to the origins of the text and reminds the reader that this text is a *translated* text. The world in front gives emphasis to the text and its own *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and reminds the reader that this text is a translated *text*. Neither NETS nor BA are wrong in their approaches, but for the purposes of interpreting the LXX they strike this reader as too limited. One should look both ways when crossing the road of septuagintal interpretation. However, lest we get lost in theory, we will now briefly explore this method by offering a reading of 1 Reigns 16:1–13.

### 3 Reading 1 Reigns 16:1–13

1 Reigns 16 begins by following immediately on the rejection of Saul in 1 Reigns 15, even using the same words for Saul’s rejection, ἐξουθενώ (16:1; 15:23, 26), and Samuel’s mourning, πενθέω (16:1; 15:35).

16:1

וְגִּי	וַיִּתְּרַם	וְלִמָּוֶת	עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל
κάγω	ἐξουθενώκα	αὐτὸν μὴ	Βασιλεύειν ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ

The phrase κάγω ἐξουθενώκα αὐτὸν μὴ Βασιλεύειν ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ, would likely sound slightly odd to Greek ears.<sup>50</sup> NETS, for example, renders the phrase as “And it

<sup>50</sup> The Greek word ἐξουθενώ apparently derives from οὐδεὶς (see Henry St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1909], 104–105), and probably connotes something like “to consider as nothing” or “to set at naught” or “to disdain, scorn” (see *LSJ*; *LEH*). This is

is I that have set him at naught not to be king over Israel.” This captures the awkwardness of the Greek. What does it mean to “be set at naught” or “despised” and now not be king over Israel? On the one hand, as we mentioned, the use of ἐξουθενώ clearly recalls Saul’s rejection (15:23, 26), but the meaning of the phrase remains opaque. When we look at the Hebrew it becomes clear that when the translator of 1 Reigns uses ἐξουθενώ, they are exclusively translating דָּאַן (“to refuse, reject”). This is different from the practice of LXX Pentateuch, which uses ἀπειθέω “to refuse, to disobey” (3×) and ὑπεροράω “to disregard, despise” (2×). For some reason the translators of 1 Reigns saw ἐξουθενώ as an appropriate translation for דָּאַן, and they stuck to it exclusively.<sup>51</sup> The only reason I can see for these translational decisions is a particular reading of the contexts within which 1 Samuel uses דָּאַן. The theme of rejection is very important in 1 Samuel. The translators seem to have interpreted this idea of rejection very negatively and used the description of “despised” (ἐξουθενώ) to render the act of rejection. Thus, the people did not just “reject” the Lord, they “despised” him (8:7). Saul did not just “reject” the word of the Lord, he “despised” it (15:23, 26). Here is a case where being attentive to the translators’ *Vorlage* not only helps explain an odd and difficult Greek formulation, but highlights a significant theme that the translators have developed in their translational choices.

The Lord then tells Samuel to go to Bethlehem, because he has seen (ὄράω) a king for himself there amongst the sons of Jesse (16:1). The theme of “seeing,” especially the verb ὄράω, will become a key theme in this narrative, as we will have cause to see.<sup>52</sup>

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not a common word in Greek usage, though a Greek reader would certainly be able to understand it. Plutarch appears to use ἐξουθενίζω, a similar verbalization of οὐδεὶς (*Parallel Minora* 308e, 310c). Thus it seems clear that the word would be understandable but unusual.

- 51 This is known as stereotyping. See Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 20–23. Though scholars often suggest caution in reading too much into a translational choice that is a stereotype, the significance of the contexts of the “rejection” scenes and the fact that the practice differs from the Greek Pentateuch, suggests that this stereotyped rendering is quite intentional.
- 52 The theme of “seeing,” especially the word הָרָא, has been frequently noted in the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 16, but how the Greek text has used and adapted this theme has not been so far been explored. See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 98–100; Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 185–187; Diana Vikander Edelman, *King Saul in the Historiography of Judah* (JSOTSupp 121; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 112–123; and J. Randall Short, *The Surprising Election and Confirmation of King David* (Harvard Theological Studies 63; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 135–144, 146–148.

Samuel requires a little convincing but eventually goes to Bethlehem. Upon his arrival the elders of the town come to greet him but they are distraught (ἐξίστημι) at his coming. The use of ἐξίστημι, which is defined as “to become astonished, amazed, stunned,”<sup>53</sup> requires further analysis. Are the elders merely surprised or are they actually afraid at Samuel’s arrival? This is a case where paying attention to the world behind the text and the world of the text help confirm what is being communicated. A look at the world behind the text shows that 1 Reigns predominantly uses ἐξίστημι to translate דרר, which means “to tremble,” but can mean by extension “fear” or “astonishment,” (*HALOT*) and at least once it is used to translate תתח, which means “to be shattered, filled with terror, or dismayed” (*HALOT*). The semantic overlap of these words suggests that it is the context of “astonishment” or “fear” that led to this translation choice.<sup>54</sup> Close attention to the world of the text shows that in contexts where fear is expected (e.g., 1 Rgns. 4:13) or when used in conjunction with φοβέω (e.g., 1 Rgns. 17:11), the translator regularly uses ἐξίστημι to suggest fear or distress in the narrative. Thus, we imagine that when the elders come to greet Samuel in 16:4 it is in a spirit of significant distress, noted especially by their question, “do you come in peace, O Seer (ὁ βλέπων)?”<sup>55</sup>

Samuel soothes the elders’ concerns, telling them that he comes in peace in order to sacrifice to the Lord. He then invites them to the sacrifice, saying “sanctify yourselves and rejoice with me today.” The OG here differs from the MT, which says “sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.”

16:5

וְשִׁקְתֶּהּ	מִתְנַבֵּא	יְהִי	חַבְבֶּיךָ
ἀγιάσθητε	καὶ εὐφρανθήτε	μετ’ ἐμοῦ	σήμερον

It is difficult to say which reading may have been original. A number of scholars prefer the OG reading to the MT, suggesting that perhaps the ambiguous OG reading left the reader wondering why the elders were told to sanctify them-

53 T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 252.

54 See Bernard Taylor, “The NETS Translation of 1 Reigns: Lexical Issues,” *BIOCS* 36 (2003): 82.

55 The use of the title “seer,” which is an LXX plus (though present in 4QSam<sup>b</sup>), harkens back to chapter 9, the only other place to use the title, and reminds the reader of Saul’s anointing by Samuel.

selves. Thus, the MT's reading was introduced to explain this difficulty by inviting the elders to the sacrifice.<sup>56</sup> If this is the case it is another instance where an interpreter viewing the narrative from behind the text would find no interpretive interest, because the translator was not the one producing the variant, but rather those rendering the MT. But if our interest is the translation as a communicative act, then it is of interpretive interest and should be incorporated into one's reading of the narrative.

The word εὐφραίνω ("rejoice") is relatively rare in 1 Reigns<sup>57</sup> and in the present context causes the reader to recall the beginning of Hannah's song: "My heart was made firm in the Lord; my horn (κέρας) was exalted in my god; my mouth was made wide against enemies; I rejoiced (εὐφραίνω) in your deliverance" (1 Rgns. 2:1).<sup>58</sup> The setting of our text in ch. 16 where Samuel has taken up his horn (κέρας) to anoint (χρίω) the future king (βασιλεύς), all key words from Hannah's song, now further recalls the song of Hannah by having Samuel tell the elders of the city to rejoice (εὐφραίνω) with him. The reading of the OG adds one more element that recalls the joyful and triumphant song of Hannah. This suggests to the reader that *this* anointed one is going to be the one we have been waiting for.<sup>59</sup>

Samuel then goes to Jesse in order to meet his sons. As soon as Samuel lays eyes on Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, he is convinced that this is the Lord's anointed. The Lord responds to Samuel's exclamation. This response contains the densest

56 Ralph W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: From the Septuagint to Qumran* (Old Testament Series; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974), 74–75. McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 274; and Smith, *Samuel*, 146, also support the OG reading. The editors of 4QSam<sup>b</sup>, follow the Greek and reconstruct this text as ~~והקדשו ושמחו~~ ~~אתכם~~ ~~היום~~ ~~בפני~~ ~~יהוה~~ ~~אלהינו~~ ~~היום~~, "sanctify yourselves and rejoice with me today" (Frank Moore Cross, et. al. *Qumran Cave 4: XII: 1–2 Samuel* [DJD 17; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 226, 228).

57 The other scenes where this word is used are the peoples' rejoicing at the return of the ark (6:13), and the rejoicing of the people of Jabesh-Gilead at their deliverance from Nahash (11:9, 15).

58 The end of Hannah's song also has numerous ties with our text: "He gives strength to our kings (βασιλευσιν ἡμῶν) and will exalt the horn (κέρας) of his anointed (χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ)." Among the many variant readings found in the song of Hannah, the most significant for our purpose is the reading of the plural "our kings" (βασιλευσιν ἡμῶν) in OG against the singular "his king" (למלכו) in MT. On the textual issues of this text see Theodore J. Lewis, "The Textual History of the Song of Hannah: 1 Samuel 11 1–10," *VT* 44/1 (1994): 18–46; and McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 68–71, both of whom view the OG reading as secondary. In either reading v. 10 gives the song a monarchic setting and so connects with our text.

59 On this theme of the expected chosen one in 1 Samuel see Benjamin J.M. Johnson, "The Heart of Yhwh's Chosen One in 1 Samuel," *JBL* 131/3 (2012): 455–466.

use of the key theme of “seeing” in the narrative. The Lord says to Samuel, “Do not look (ἐπιβλέψῃς) upon his appearance (ὄψιν) nor to his great stature, for I have scorned him, for not as humankind looks (ἐμβλέπεται) does God see (ὄψεται), for humankind sees (ὄψεται) into the face, but God sees (ὄψεται) into the heart” (1 Rgns. 16:7).

This is one instance where interpreting the Greek text is aided by paying attention to how the translator is manipulating his Hebrew source text. If we are simply reading the Greek text as a compositional narrative we may assume that the narrative is simply playing on the key theme of “seeing” by oscillating back and forth between two words for seeing—ὄράω and βλέπω. When we look at how the translators are handling their *Vorlage*, we get a slightly different picture:

Seeing in 1 Reigns 16:7

אל־תִּבַּט	Μὴ ἐπιβλέψῃς
כִּי לֹא אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה הָאָדָם	ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἐμβλέπεται ἄνθρωπος
–	ὄψεται ὁ θεός
כִּי הָאָדָם יִרְאֶה לְעֵינָיו	ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ὄψεται εἰς πρόσωπον
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לְלֵבָב	ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὄψεται εἰς καρδίαν

Of the seven uses of ראה in 1 Samuel 16, Reigns translates all but one with ὄράω.<sup>60</sup> When the Hebrew varies its vocabulary in 16:7 and uses נבט instead of ראה, the Greek follows suit and translates נבט with ἐπιβλέπω instead of ὄράω. However, in the second half of v. 7 the Greek varies from ὄράω to ἐμβλέπω when the Hebrew continues to use ראה.<sup>61</sup> How do we explain this variation? The occasional stylistic use of lexical variation in portions of the LXX has been noted before in other contexts.<sup>62</sup> However, in the present context there is also evidence of this lexical variation being used as an intentional literary device.

60 It also translates מראה (“appearance”), from the same root as ראה, with ὄψις, from the same root as ὄράω in 16:7.

61 Though Frank Moore Cross, “The Oldest Manuscripts From Qumran,” *JBL* 74 (1955): 166, notes that 4QSam<sup>b</sup> could have read כִּי לֹא כִּי אֲשֶׁר יִבִּיט הָאָדָם following the OG. The text of 4QSam<sup>b</sup> is not extant here, so this is conjecture based solely on the Greek text.

62 Nechama Leider, “Assimilation and Dissimilation Techniques in the LXX of the Book of Balaam,” *Textus* 12 (1985): 79–95, discusses this phenomenon as “dissimilation.” Though Leider’s classification of “dissimilation” does not exactly fit what we see in the translation

The two uses of a form of βλέπω in 1 Reigns 16 are the only two instances where a verb of seeing is negated (Μή ἐπιβλέψῃς, οὐχ ὡς ἐμβλέψεται). Furthermore, both instances of a form of βλέπω are used in a negative context.<sup>63</sup> Samuel is reprimanded and told not to look (טַבַּח) at Eliab's appearance. Then the Lord tells Samuel that he does not see as humankind sees (הִאֵר). The translator's varying use of ὁράω and βλέπω further emphasizes this difference between inferior human seeing and superior divine seeing.

This is an instance where one of the key aspects of the narrative is further clarified and emphasized by observing how the translator is varying from his *Vorlage*. In this case interpreting the text as *translation* adds to the interpretation of the translation as *text* and the reader has a better perception of what is accomplished in this communicative act.

After Eliab is rejected, Samuel tells Jesse to bring the rest of his sons before him. He does so and each is declared to be “not chosen” (οὐκ ἐξελέξατο). Three times the narrative repeats this refrain: not chosen, not chosen, not chosen. The reader's anticipation is piqued. Who then, we must ask, *is* chosen? A last son, the small one, is left. He is sent for, and he appears before our eyes in detailed description. He is a ruddy and he is beautiful of eyes (either he has pretty eyes, or he's pretty to look at), but in the Greek he is more than that, he is “good in appearance *to the Lord*” (ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει Κυρίῳ).

16:12a

אִי־הָיָה	יָנִי־מְרִאָה	מֵעַיִן הַיָּהוָה	אֵי־בִיטִי	—
καὶ οὗτος	πυρράκης	μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν	καὶ ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει	Κυρίῳ

The presence of “to the Lord” in the OG is understood by most commentators to be a pious insertion on the part of a scribe or translator in order to make the description of this last son fit with the statement about the Lord not looking upon appearances but looking upon the heart in v. 7.<sup>64</sup> It strikes me as just

of הִאֵר in 1 Reigns 16, it does show that the technique of lexical variation was available to the translator.

63 Even the reference to Samuel as ὁ βλέπων (“the Seer”) could be construed negatively, because the reference to Samuel as “the Seer,” increases the irony that he fails to see rightly.

64 So Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *1 and 11 Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1964), 138–139; H.J. Stoebe, *Das Erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT; Stuttgart: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1973), 302; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 275; and Lyle Eslinger,



as likely that a pious scribe or translator would remove this reference to the Lord because it appears to make the Lord's choice of David to be on the basis of looks, something expressly denied just a few verses before. Again, this is an instance where it is difficult to say whether this variant is the product of the translator's *Vorlage* or pious exegesis, so that if our purpose in reading this text is simply discerning the translator's view we must be very cautious in what we say. However, if we are reading the narrative to understand the text itself, then we can say that in the current form of the Greek text this variation functions to qualify David's depiction. He is not just good in appearance; he is good in appearance *to the Lord*.

The Lord now tells Samuel to arise and anoint David. The reader has not yet been introduced to David. He simply appears on the scene as if we already know him, which the implied reader surely does.

The Lord does not merely command Samuel to anoint David; he gives a reason for it. He tells Samuel that "this one is good" (οὗτος ἀγαθός ἐστιν).

16:12b

קום	מְשִׁיחֵהוּ	כִּי־זֶה	–	הוּא
Ἀνάστα	καὶ χρίσον τὸν Δαυεὶδ	ὅτι οὗτος	ἀγαθός	ἐστιν

David was previously described as "good of appearance to the Lord" but now he is labelled unambiguously as good. It seems important to this narrative that David be judged as good. He is good in appearance to the Lord (16:12a), he is, by inference, good of heart, and he is just good (16:12b). This is more pronounced in the OG than in the MT. In the MT the Lord simply tells Samuel that "this is he" (זֶה הוּא). The OG version, as a text of its own, whether by exegesis or differing *Vorlage* further emphasizes David's "goodness."

The first half of ch. 16 then ends with Samuel anointing David and the spirit of the Lord rushing upon David (v. 13). The exact phrase "and the spirit of the Lord came upon David" (καὶ πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἐπὶ Δαυεὶδ) is used of Saul (1 Rgns. 11:6, predicted in 10:6). However, the description of David has one further element, the spirit of the Lord comes upon him from that day and onward (ἀπὸ

"A Change of Heart: 1 Samuel 16," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009), 357, n. 23.

τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἐπάνω), subtly reminding the reader that David's story does not end in the Lord's abandonment as Saul's story does.<sup>65</sup>

#### 4 Conclusion: Hermeneutics and a Translated Text

Let us conclude as we began, by stating a simple fact: the LXX is a translated text. This simple fact influences everything we do with this document. It must never be forgotten that the LXX is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible but it must also never be forgotten that it is a literary product of ancient Judaism. These two facts ought to be held in tandem when interpreting the LXX.

The LXX is an important document for a myriad of reasons. One of those reasons is that it is an example of how at least some early Jews received and represented their sacred scriptures into Greek. As the late Septuagint specialist John Wevers wrote, the LXX “is a humanistic document of interest by and for itself .... It is not just a source for interesting emendations, but gives us an insight into the faith and attitudes of Alexandrian Jewry of the third century BCE.”<sup>66</sup> As Kraus argues, the LXX “is a work that is dependent on a Hebrew original (*Vorlage*) but nevertheless stands on its own.”<sup>67</sup> If we can take these various aspects of the LXX seriously and approach the text as a text and as a translation, then we can begin to develop a hermeneutic that is appropriate for this translational text.

Interpreting a text is a difficult task, even more so a *translated* text, even more so a translation of a *sacred* text, even more so a translation of a sacred text that became a sacred text in its own right. But if we approach it, as we have argued here, as its own communicative act, as a text that is both a translation and a literary text in its own right, and allow these two aspects to stand dialectically side by side, then perhaps we are on the right track towards appropriately receiving this text as a translated text. I conclude with a quote from Albert Pietersma: “As to hermeneutics of translated literature—the fields

65 So Smith, *Samuel*, 147; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 162. Though Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, 423, argues that too much has been made of the sporadic vs. permanent nature of these two instances of an anointing of the spirit.

66 Wevers, “Interpretative Character and Significance of the Septuagint,” 95. Wevers made this point explicitly with reference to the Greek Pentateuch, but I believe it can, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the whole LXX.

67 Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 83.