Towards a "Theology of the Septuagint"[1]

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This paper is intended to ask just one very basic question: Can a book be written on the theology of the Septuagint? The answer will be as simple as the question: Yes, it can be written. But since I am fully aware of the scholarly debates concerning this and related questions, I will try to clarify things in the following way: first, I will ask what "Theology of the Septuagint" can mean; secondly, I will discuss some texts and topics that show characteristic theological and anthropological distinctions between the Hebrew and the Greek Scriptures; and finally, I will briefly outline *how* in my view such a work can be written. It should be added that the topics can only be sketched very roughly to give a preliminary, overall impression.

1. What Does "Theology of the Septuagint" Mean?

Beginning with the work of Zacharias Frankel in 1841 and culminating in Deissmann's *Hellenisierung des semitischen Monotheismus* there have been several attempts to determine the content and range of specific ideas in the Septuagint.[2] Some of the observations of these early scholars are still very valuable because of their vast knowledge of both Greek authors and Jewish traditions. Especially in Germany this kind of research has been burdened by the work of Georg Bertram, who was very close to the national-socialistic party and to the theology of the "German Christians/*Deutsche Christen*." He tried to demonstrate that there was a characteristic Septuagint-piety ("*Septuaginta-Frömmigkeit*" in German).[3] This theology of the Septuagint should be seen,

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[1] Throughout this article, "Theology of the Septuagint" will refer to a book devoted to theology in the Septuagint.

[2] Zacharias Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta* (Leipzig: Vogel, 1841); and idem, *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermene*utik (Leipzig: Vogel, 1851); Gustav A. Deissmann, *Die Hellenisierung des semitischen Monotheismus* (NJahrb; Leipzig: B. Teubner, 1903), 162–77.

[3] Cf. *inter alia* Georg Bertram, "Septuaginta-Frömmigkeit," *RGG* 5:1707–9; idem, "Praeparatio evangelica in der Septuaginta," *VT* 7 (1957): 225–49; and idem, "Zur begrifflichen Prägung des Schöpferglaubens im Griechischen Alten Testament," in *Wort,*

according to him, as *praeparatio euangelica*, by which he meant that the foundation of the New Testament is to be found not in the Jewish-Semitic Hebrew Bible but in the more enlightened Greek Bible. One should add that the famous Paul de Lagarde held similar views.[4]

It should be stated that the work of Bertram is still very influential, because he contributed thirty-seven articles to Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, which has also been translated into English.[5] In these articles he tried to show how the meaning of keywords used in the New Testament was shaped by the LXX. Unfortunately scholars who are not familiar with LXX matters still use these articles under the impression that through them they gain access to the Septuagint and its theology.

There are serious methodological problems with these earlier attempts to determine a theology of the Septuagint. The most significant is that usually the Septuagint was viewed as a unity without considering that the individual books have been translated by different people at different times not only in Alexandria but also elsewhere.[6] So a first conclusion can be drawn: a "Theology of the Septuagint" cannot be based on the leveling of differences among the individual books or the specific profiles of the translators for the sake of a common edifice of ideas.

In recent years there has been a growing interest in clarifying the theological positions of individual translations of the Jewish Greek Scriptures by going beyond the level of text criticism or text history. Many important details can be found, for example, in the "Notes" of John Wevers on the books of the Pentateuch, in Arie van der Kooij's significant contributions to the understanding

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Lied und Gottesspruch: Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler (ed. J. Schreiner; FB 1; Würzburg: Echter, 1972), 21–30. Cf. also the remarks by Nikolaus Walter in "Die griechische Übersetzung der 'Schriften' Israels und die christliche 'Septuaginta' als Forschungs- und als Übersetzungsgegenstand," in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta; Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel* (BWA(N)T 153, Stuttgart: Kohlammer, 2001): 83–84.

[4] Cf. Robert Hanhart, "Paul Anton de Lagarde und seine Kritik an der Theologie," in *Studien zur Septuaginta und zum hellenistischen Judentum* (ed. R. Hanhart and R. G. Kratz; FAT 24; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 248–80.

[5] Cf. e.g., *TDNT*: παιδεύω κ.τ.λ., 5:596–625; στενός κ.τ.λ., 7:604–8; στερεός 7:609–14; and ὕβρις κ.τ.λ., 8:295–307.

[6] Here the pioneering book by Isac L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* (trans. E. van Loo; Mededelingen en verhandelingen 9; Leiden: Brill, 1948) should be mentioned. Cf. also idem, "Problems and Perspectives in Modern Septuagint Research," *Text* 15 (1990): 162–232. Very helpful summaries and charts concerning the date and localization of the individual books of the LXX can by found in: Gilles Dorival, Marguerite Harl, and Olivier Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante: Du Judaisme Hellénistique au Christianisme Ancien* (2d ed.; Initiations au Christianisme Ancien; Paris: Cerf, 1994), 92–111.

of the Greek Isaiah, and in Johann Cook's work on the Greek Proverbs.[7] Currently the translation generating the most debate is that of the book of Psalms, which in recent years has seen the publication of three volumes of collected essays, Joachim Schaper's published dissertation and the reactions to it, and most recently the fine study of Holger Gzella, again on eschatology and anthropology in Psalms.[8] A much greater number of scholars could be named, but the studies mentioned suffice for the following statement: The search for theological concepts is now at the level of the individual book. This is good news after the long time of concentration on text-critical questions, nevertheless it is regrettable, because only occasionally are there comparisons of the exegetical or hermeneutical concepts of the individual books.[9] The need for a synthesis seems not to be very high, although it could strengthen the results for one book if one could find similar ideas in others. So I come to my next conclusion: a treatise on the theology of the Septuagint should be more than a collection of unrelated studies on some or all of the books, it needs unifying

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[7] John W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SBLSCS 30; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990); idem, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1993); idem, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995); idem, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (SBLSCS 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998); and idem, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SBLSCS 44; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997). Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches: Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35; Freiburg: Universitätsverlag Freiburg, 1981); and idem, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision* (VTSup 71; Leiden: Brill, 1998). Johann Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs?; Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (VTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1997); and idem, "The ideology of Septuagint Proverbs," in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998* (ed. B. A. Taylor; SBLSCS 51; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 463–79.

[8] Anneli Aejmelaeus and Udo Quast, eds., *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen* (MSU 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); Erich Zenger, ed., *Der Septuaginta-Psalter: Sprachliche und theologische Aspekte* (Herders biblische Studien 32; Freiburg: Herder, 2001); Robert J. V. Hiebert, Claude E. Cox, and Peter J. Gentry, eds., *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (JSOTSup 332; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001). Joachim Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 2. Reihe 76; Tübingen: Mohr, 1995). See the following, more negative reviews: Albert Pietersma, *BO* 54 (1997): 185–90; Melvin K. H. Peters, *JBL* 116 (1997): 350–52; idem, *RBL*, n.p. [cited 16 January 2003]. Online: http://www.bookreviews.org.; Eberhard Bons, *RevScRel* 71 (1997): 257–58. But see also the positive statements by Folker Siegert, *TLZ* 122 (1997): 39–41; and Pieter van der Horst, *JSJ* 28 (1997): 123–24. Holger Gzella, *Lebenszeit und Ewigkeit: Studien zur Eschatologie und Anthropologie des Septuaginta-Psalters* (BBB 134; Berlin: Philo, 2002).

[9] A first attempt can be found in Martin Rösel, "Theo-logie der griechischen Bibel: Zur Wiedergabe der Gottesaussagen im LXX-Pentateuch," *VT* 48 (1998): 49–62.

elements such as theological topics. One reason for this requirement is that even the earliest readers understood "the Scripture" (ἡ γραφή) as a unity not as a mere collection of separate books.

Thirdly, something obvious should be stated: a "Theology of the Septuagint" should not simply repeat what is usually dealt with in a "Theology of the Hebrew Bible." The characteristic feature of such a project would be a comparative approach. It would highlight the differences between the versions or the theological developments from one to the other.[10] Thus a "Theology of the Septuagint" would be a substantial enhancement of our understanding of the theology of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. This has some important implications:

a) A "Theology of the Septuagint" could serve to close the gap between the Christian Old Testament and New Testament, and the gap between the Jewish Scriptures and writers such as Demetrius, Aristeas, Josephus, and Philo. One could object that such a gap does not exist because we have so many writings from the last three centuries B.C.E., which are now enhanced by the scrolls found at Qumran. But generally speaking, these writings are not Bible or Holy Writings, because they held a lower level of authority. For early Jewish and Christian authors the books of the LXX were their Scripture, therefore scholars have to determine the theology of that Scripture.[11]

b) A "Theology of the Septuagint" would, therefore, form an important part of the history of religion (German: *Religionsgeschichte*) of the Hebrew Bible and of a Biblical Theology as well. In the LXX one can see certain theological developments that later shape the understanding of the whole Bible. It may suffice to mention the growing David tradition in Psalms, the "Solomonization" of Proverbs, or the extended νόμος theology in both of the aforementioned books.[12] The LXX is an indispensable part of the history of reception of the Hebrew Bible, therefore it should be discussed when dealing with the theology

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[10] Cf. Jan Joosten, "Une théologie de la Septante?: Réflexions méthodologiques sur l'interprétation de la version grecque," *RTP* 132 (2000): 31–46, who speaks of an "approche compareé" (p. 33).

[11] Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (JSOTSup 206; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996). Cf. also Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (trans. R. Deines; OTS; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002), which is simply a translation of Hengel's contribution to Martin Hengel and Anna Maria Schwemer, eds., *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (WUNT 72; Tübingen: Mohr, 1994). I use the singular 'Scripture' here to emphasize the meaning of a Holy Writing or canon. I am fully aware of the problems of this use, but I have the impression that the plural makes things even more complicated.

[12] Cf. Martin Kleer, *'Der liebliche Sänger der Psalmen Israels': Untersuchungen zu David als Dichter und Beter der Psalmen* (BBB 108; Bodenheim: Philo, 1996); David-Marc D'Hamonville, *Les Proverbes* (La Bible d'Alexandrie 17; Paris: Cerf, 2000), 34, and 78–85.

of those Scriptures. If—to mention but one example—Brevard Childs is writing a "Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testament" and hardly ever makes mention of the LXX, it is obvious that his results are at the very least incomplete; one could also say that neglecting the LXX is a somewhat unhistorical approach.[13] But on the other side it should also be stated that LXX scholarship itself is part of the problem, because only recently have we begun to offer "invitations to the Septuagint" in order to ease the access for other scholars.[14]

This leads to the next question: Who needs such a "Theology of the Septuagint", or what purpose should it serve? The answer to this question is very simple: All scholars who are interested in the meaning of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament in Hellenistic times need such a book and will use it, as they are using Hengel's *Judentum und Hellenismus*, or Schürer-Vermes, or Bousset-Gressmann.[15] As I said earlier, a "Theology of the Septuagint" should serve to give an impression of where, in which texts, how, and why the Greek Scriptures differ from the Hebrew, and on what topics it makes a difference whether the LXX or the Hebrew Bible were used. Well known examples are the actualization of prophecies in the LXX of Isaiah and the question of resurrection in Job.

I am fully aware of the problems associated with these premises, because scholars are still in the process of detecting those changes, of assigning them to either the *Vorlage*, the translator, or later transmitters, or to readers. Nevertheless, I think that at least some outlines of a "Theology of the Septuagint" can be drawn, and therefore I turn to the next section.

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[13] Brevard S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993). Note the subtitle "Theological Reflections on the Christian Bible," which makes Child's approach even more problematic, because until the time of the Reformation the Christian Bible was almost never the Hebrew Bible. But see, for example, James Barr, *The Concept of Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective* (London: SCM, 1999), 576: "The Septuagint has paramount importance for our purpose, since, at least in many places, it was the form of the ancient Jewish scriptures that lay before the early Christians."

[14] See Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000). The harsh critique of this book by Barr is too concentrated on text-critical issues and seems not to be justified in my view. James Barr, *RBL*, n.p. [cited 16 January 2003]. Online: http://www.bookreviews.org.

[15] Martin Hengel, *Judentum und Hellenismus: Studien zu ihrer Begegnung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung Palästinas bis zur Mitte des 2. Jh. v. Chr* (2d ed.; WUNT 10; Tübingen: Mohr, 1973); Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C.–A.D. 135)* (revised and edited by G. Vermes et al.; 3 vols.; English ed.; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986); and Wilhelm Bousset and Hugo Gressmann, *Die Religion des Judentums im späthellenistischen Zeitalter* (forward by E. Lohse; 4th ed.; HNT 21; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1966).

2. Theological and Anthropological Differences between the Hebrew and the Jewish Greek Scriptures

First, it is important to note that the translators of the Hebrew-Aramaic texts were fully aware that they were translating Scriptures in the sense of authoritative religious writings. This led to significant consequences, namely harmonizations of the text, the avoidance of contradictions, and explanations of one text by another.[16] Numerous examples can be given for these observations; it may suffice to refer to the additions and harmonizations in the account of the creation in Gen 1, or the flood story in Gen 6–8, or to the theological solution of the Cain and Abel problem in Gen 4.[17]

Moreover, even the translation technique used by the translators can express a characteristic view of Scripture, as Jan Joosten has rightly pointed out. It is a commonplace in LXX scholarship that the translation of the Pentateuch is less literal than most of the subsequent books, although even these five translations differ to some extent among themselves. The later translations that follow their *Vorlage* more closely are the result of a more highly developed theology of Scripture or theology of the word of God. To state it another way, the translators' opinions that the texts they were producing were comprehensible—even if the Greek they were writing was hardly understandable—reveals a specific dynamic theology of Scripture that distinguishes these translators or revisers from translators, authors, or re-writers like the translator of Job into Greek, or from Demetrius, Aristobulus, or later writers like Josephus and Philo.[18]

Although further comparative examinations are needed, I would roughly distinguish two major groups of translators and their hermeneutics: those who relied on their belief that the word of God was effective even if readers could not understand it; and those who believed that the human intellect has a dignity of its own, so that corrections might be in order, if they served to improve the persuasiveness of the Scriptures. The first position led the textual history of the Septuagint to the different stages of revisions and retranslations—and the Hebrew Text to its pre-Masoretic standardization—the second can be seen in attempts at rewriting the Scriptures, cf., *inter alia*, the book of *Jubilees*, the reworked Pentateuch from Qumran, or the *Genesis Apocryphon*.[19]

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[16] On harmonizations, see Joosten, "Une théologie de la Septante?," 44–46.

[17] Cf. Martin Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung: Studien zur Genesis-Septuaginta* (BZAW 223; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1994), 100–114; and Jobes and Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 212.

[18] This argument is based on Joosten, "Une théologie de la Septante?," 42–44.

[19] Cf. Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (trans. W. G. E. Watson; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 109–54, for an excellent treatment of the problem of the revisions. Very comprehensive overviews of the Qumran materials can be found in James C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*

Another important aspect of an implicit theology is the use of κύριος, "Lord," for the Tetragram.[20] Scholars generally agree on the point that this equivalent was used beginning with the earliest known Greek translations. By using κύριος in an absolute way—without a depending genitive—the translations were stating that the God of Israel is the Lord of everything, not one θεός among many θεοί, but ὁ θεός, "God."[21] Moreover, there are certain instances where distinctions are made between the real God and the foreign Gods. Num 25:2, where אלהים, "God," was translated by εἴδωλον, "idol," serves as an example, because it clearly refers to the gods of the Moabites; in Gen 31:19–35 Rachel's תרפים, "household gods," are again labeled as εἴδωλα. Thus the Septuagint shows that monotheism had developed, and by means of the Greek language the translators were able to avoid the ambiguity of the form אלהים by distinguishing singular and plural forms or by using different equivalents.

Interestingly enough, one can also see that there is a tendency towards a more systematic understanding of what κύριος means, because as early as in Genesis we can see that κύριος is used for the friendly, merciful portrayals of God, while θεός is used for the powerful actions. This can be seen in Gen 13:10 where יהוה destroyed Sodom, while the Greek version states that ὁ θεός did it. In Gen 38:7 it was ὁ θεός who killed Er, the firstborn of Judah, and in Gen 6:6–7 it was ὁ θεός who decided to bring the flood; but the Hebrew text has the Tetragram in all these instances.[22] Thus we can conclude that a tradition later on attested by Philo and even later by the Rabbis is already shaping in the third century belief that the use of κύριος and θεός has a theological significance of its own.[23]

Moreover, we can see that the theological consciousness about the names and designations of God developed over time. In the earlier translations, such as

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(Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 34–70, and in the articles in J. C. VanderKam and L. H. Schiffman, eds., *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[20] "Implicit theology" means the theology of the community that formed the belief of the translator and that person's own overall theological framework as well.

[21] Robert Hanhart, "Die Bedeutung der Septuaginta für die Definition des 'hellenistischen Judentums,'" in *Studien zur Septuaginta und zum hellenistischen Judentum* (ed. R. Hanhart and R. G. Kratz; FAT 24; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 75; and cf. Martin Rösel, *Adonaj, warum Gott "Herr" genannt wird* (FAT 29; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 5–7.

[22] Similar phenomena can be seen in Exod 3:18; 10:11; 16:7–9. Cf. Martin Rösel, "Die Übersetzung der Gottesbezeichnungen in der Genesis-Septuaginta," in *Ernten, was man sät* (ed. D. R. Daniels, U. Gleßmer, and Martin Rösel; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1991), 376.

[23] On the different positions of Philo and the Rabbis, cf. N. A. Dahl and A. F. Segal, "Philo and the Rabbis on the Name of God," *JSJ* 9 (1978): 1–28.

in Genesis, the name שדי was translated by ὁ θεός σου/μου, "your/my God" (17:1; 28:3);[24] in Exod 6:3 its translation with θεὸς ὢν αὐτῶν, "being their God," was derived from the famous ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, "I am the one who is," in Exod 3:14. But in later books the pentateuchal pattern was not followed. Instead we can find translations such as παντοκράτωρ, "Almighty" (Job 5:17; 33:4); ἐπουράνιος, "heavenly" (Ps 68:15); θεὸς τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, "God of the heaven" (Ps 91:1); or ὁ ἱκανός, "Mighty one" (Ruth 1:20–21; Job 21:15).[25] All these equivalents serve to emphasize the power of the God of Israel, who was no longer called by a name that could make this God comparable to pagan gods; שדי became the universal ruler.

The same is true for the translation of יהוה צבאות by the "Lord of hosts." Again, one can see different attempts to deal with this designation: in 1 Kingdoms and Isaiah the transcription σαβαώθ is predominant; in 2 and 3 Kingdoms as well as Psalms we find κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων, "Lord of the powers"[26]; In 2 Kingdoms, in the Greek 1 and 2 Chronicles, and in the Dodekapropheton one can also find παντοκράτωρ, "Almighty."[27] I would fully subscribe to the results of Cécile Dogniez, who has stated that we can see an evolution of the conception of God from a more mythic imagery to the universalistic idea of a Παντοκράτωρ or Κοσμοκράτωρ.

From a methodological perspective it should be stated that these results come from a twofold comparative approach to the task of Septuagint theology: the comparison between the Hebrew and the Greek text on the one hand, and the comparison of the individual translations on the other. Thus one can easily see that it does not suffice to confine the work to individual books of the Greek Scriptures.

This view is supported by the evidence of the increasing importance of the "name-of-God theology" in the Septuagint. There are several instances where we can see a specific reverencing of the divine name: according to Exod 34:14 the Lord is a jealous God and "Jealous" is his name. In the Greek version "Jealous" is not the name of the Lord, but the unspeakable name is in itself

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[24] Rösel, "Die Übersetzung der Gottesbezeichnungen in der Genesis-Septuaginta," 373.

[25] Cf. Georg Bertram, "Zur Prägung der biblischen Gottesvorstellung in der griechischen Übersetzung des Alten Testaments: Die Wiedergabe von *schadad* und *schaddaj* im Griechischen," *WO* 2 (1954–1959): 502–13 on the LXX; W. Reiß, "Zur Deutung von אל שדי in der rabbinischen Literatur," *FJB* 3 (1975): 65–75 on the rabbinic literature.

[26] For σαβαώθ, cf. 1 Kgdms 1:3, 11; Isa 1:9, 24. For κύριος τῶν δυνάμεων, cf. 2 Kgdms 5:10; 6:2; 3 Kgdms 2:5; 18:15; Pss 24:10; 46:8.

[27] 2 Kgdms 5:10; 7:27; 1 Chr 11:9; 17:7; Hos 12:6; Amos 3:13; Nah 2:14. On the translation of יהוה צבאות cf. Cécile Dogniez, "Le Dieu des armées dans le Dodekapropheton: Quelques remarques sur une initiative de traduction," in *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (ed. B. A. Taylor; SBLSCS 45; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 19–36.

jealous. This is confirmed by the famous text Lev 24:16, because here in the Hebrew Bible "One who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death," in the LXX even the "one who is *naming* the Holy name should die the death."

The distance between God and the world was increasing, and this can also be seen in the so-called anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek Scriptures. Since Charles Fritsch's theory from 1943 this problem has often been discussed, and there are a number of studies contradicting and supporting Fritsch.[28] The truth is somewhere in the middle, as often is the case. One cannot say that the translators have generally avoided every notion that could be understood as anthropomorphism. As an example: in Numbers the expression על־פי יהוה, "by the mouth of God," was avoided, and instead διὰ φωνῆς κυρίου, "by the voice/sound of God," was used as a translation (cf. 3:16, 39). That this is clearly the result of a theological consideration can be seen in cases where על־פי אהרן, "by the mouth of Aaron," (or the like) had to be translated, because there κατὰ στόμα Ααρων was used (4:27). The translator did not avoid the idea of a voice of God only that God had a mouth. Distinctions like these can be seen often, such as at Exod 19:3 where Moses was not going up to God (ומשה עלה אל־האלהים) but rather to the mountain of God (καὶ Μωυσῆς ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ).[29]

The translators of the Psalms sometimes dealt in a very intelligent way with the problem, such as at 17(16):15 where in the Hebrew version the praying person would be able to see God's face (אני בצדק אחזה פניך) while in the LXX that person would be seen (= judged) by God (ἐγὼ ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ ὀφθήσομαι τῷ προσώπῳ σου; note also the interesting translation of תמונה with δόξα at the end of the verse). Although a type of anthropomorphism is still present, the meaning of the verse has been changed considerably. On the other side there are clear avoidances of metaphorical ideas, such as God being a rock (צור; cf. Ps 18:3, 47).[30] While it is not clear why some designations were avoided and others not, there is definitely a kind of theology of the translators; they had an idea of what could be said about God and what not. This could even include the more

[28] Charles T. Fritsch, *The Anti-Anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (POT 10; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943); Anthony T. Hanson, "The treatment in the LXX of the theme of seeing God," in *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992), 557–68; Staffan Olofsson, *God is My Rock: A Study of Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis in the Septuagint* (ConBOT 31; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1990), 17–39; Arthur Soffer, "The treatment of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Psalms," *HUCA* 28 (1957): 85–107. Cf. the latest collection of arguments concerning this problem in Folker Siegert, *Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament: Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (MJSt 9; Münster: LIT, 2001), 247–50.

[29] Cf. also Exod 33:11; Num 12:8.

[30] Olofsson, *God is My Rock*, 35–45.

expanded angelology and demonology that is found in the LXX, as Adrian Schenker has pointed out for the LXX of Psalms; something that was already found in Exod 4:24 where it was not the Lord who wanted to kill Moses but an ἄγγελος κυρίου.[31]

The partial avoidance of anthropomorphisms has consequences for the anthropology of the LXX, because the distance between God and humans is emphasized. This can also be seen in Num 23:19 where the impression is avoided that God and humans can be compared. Instead of לא איש אל, "God is not a human being," in the Greek Scriptures one reads οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωπος ὁ θεός, "God is not *as* a human being."

To sum up these observations about references to God: it is obvious that the Greek Bible read as a whole, and in its parts, display an image of God different from its Hebrew counterpart. To exaggerate the depiction: the God of the Septuagint is the θεὸς τῆς οἰκουμένης, "the God of the inhabited earth" (cf. Ps 23[22]:1), while the God of the Hebrew Bible is the אלהי ישראל, "God of Israel." It is obvious that the translators have strengthened a tendency that was present in the Hebrew Bible from the days of Deutero-Isaiah, but that now affects the majority of the texts, as is the case with the Greek Scriptures.[32]

I will now only touch on other topics that have one thing in common, that they are found in more than one book of the Septuagint. One extremely important focus is the vocabulary of cult and worship; here one can refer to the work of Suzann Daniel.[33] The striking observation is that the translators used neologisms to separate the true cult of Israel from pagan cults. This culminates in the distinction of the newly created θυσιαστήριον, "offering place," from the common βωμός, "altar." Using this specific vocabulary the translators were able to express their own interpretation of details of the biblical texts. For a striking example one could look at Num 23:1 where Balaam is building a (pagan) βωμός, although מזבח is usually translated by θυσιαστήριον in the LXX of Numbers. The same can be seen in Josh 22:10ff., where the tribes Reuben, Gad, and Half-Manasseh are also building a (pagan) βωμός. The same distinction is made in the first book of Maccabees (1:47; 5:58) and in prophetic books as well (Hos 10:8;

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[31] Adrian Schenker, "Götter und Engel im Septuaginta-Psalter: Text- und religionsgeschichtliche Ergebnisse aus drei textkritischen Untersuchungen," in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter: Sprachliche und theologische Aspekte* (ed. E. Zenger; HBS 32; Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 185–95.

[32] Matthias Albani, *Der eine Gott und die himmlischen Heerscharen: Zur Begründung des Monotheismus bei Deuterojesaja im Horizont der Astralisierung des Gottesverständnisses im Alten Orient* (ABG 1; Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000).

[33] Suzann Daniel, *Recherches sur le Vocabulaire du Culte dans la Septante* (EeC 61; Paris: C. Klincksieck, 1966).

Amos 7:9).[34] Moreover, the positive designation for the altar, θυσιαστήριον, is related to ἱλαστήριον, "atonement place," which translates כפרת , "mercy seat" (Exod 25:17, cf. esp. Ezek 43:20; Amos 9:1), so that even from a linguistic point-of-view the cult is a unit. Again we have to note that already the use or non-use of standard equivalents can imply a theological point of view.

One could also comment on the problem of messianism as a common feature of several books of the LXX beginning from Gen 49.[35] Special mention should be made to the well-known translation ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ καὶ κυριεύσει ἐθνῶν πολλῶν, "A man will come from his seed and he will rule over many nations," in Num 24:7 for יזל־מים מדליו וזרעו במים רבים, "Water shall flow from his buckets, and his seed shall have abundant water" (cf. also the use of ἄνθρωπος for שבט in Num 24:17), but it may suffice to refer to the fine paper of Heinz-Josef Fabry in this volume (pp. 193– 205).

Another important topic is the strengthening of eschatology even in books like the Psalms or the Greek Job with its clear references to resurrection and a future life of the just.[36] Furthermore, mention should be made of the Greek Proverbs, because it shows a clear tendency to bring νόμος and wisdom into line (cf. Prov 9:10) and to promote an educational ideal that is based on σύνεσις, "intelligence," and παιδεία, "instruction."[37] Again, this specific theology is not restricted to only one book, because we have very prominent texts in the Psalms revealing very similar ideas, cf. the famous δράξασθε παιδείας in Ps 2:12 for the difficult Hebrew נשקו־בר, "kiss his feet/the son."[38] Another important argument for a more eschatological understanding in Psalms can be derived from the εἰς τὸ

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[34] But, βωμός is used in the usual Greek sense in 2 Macc 2:19; 13:8.

[35] Martin Rösel, "Die Interpretation von Genesis 49 in der Septuaginta," *BN* 79 (1995): 54–70.

[36] For the Psalms, see the detailed analysis of Gzella, *Lebenszeit und Ewigkeit*, especially sections 3.3 and 3.4. See also Stefan Seiler, "Theologische Konzepte in der Septuaginta: Das theologische Profil von 1 Chr 16:8ff. LXX im Vergleich mit Ps 104, 95; 105 LXX," in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter*, 197–217; Holger Gzella, "Das Kalb und das Einhorn, Endzeittheophanie und Messianismus in der Septuaginta-Fassung von Ps 29(28)," in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter*, 257–90; and Joachim Schaper, "Die Renaissance der Mythologie im hellenistischen Judentum und der Septuaginta-Psalter," in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter*, 171–83. As for the Greek Job see the different positions of Donald H. Gard, "The concept of the future life according to the Greek translator of the Book of Job," *JBL* 73 (1954): 137–43; and Natalio Fernández Marcos, "The Septuagint reading of the Book of Job," in *The Book of Job* (ed. W. A. M. Beuken; BETL 114; Louvain: Peeters, 1994), 251–66.

[37] See e.g., Prov 10:17; 16:17, where παιδεία is used even without a Hebrew equivalent. For an overall estimation see Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs*, 328–31 (as a summary of his exegesis), and also d'Hamonville, *Les Proverbes*, 84–87.

[38] Cf. Peter C. Craigie, *Psalms 1–50* (WBC 19; Waco: Word, 1983), 64, for the text-critical problem of Ps 2:12.

τέλος / εἰς συνέσεως superscriptions of several psalms [30(31):1; 52(51):1], as I have argued elsewhere.[39] Even if attempts to prove this interpretation wrong were to succeed, the fact that these superscriptions have been understood eschatologically by early readers remains.[40] Moreover, the same concept of eschatological understanding seems to lie behind the well-known translation ἐὰν μὴ πιστεύσητε οὐδὲ μὴ συνῆτε for the Hebrew אם לא תאמינו כי לא תאמנו in Isa 7:9.[41] It is also important to note that the idea of David being a prophet was very prominent at that time. It may suffice to call attention to the famous passage in the "Compositions of David" in 11Q5 XXVII.1ff.: "All these (psalms) he spoke through (the spirit of) prophecy which was given to him from the Most High."[42] Thus the more eschatological translation of the LXX fits perfectly into the hermeneutical framework of that time, and I cannot see why this understanding cannot be attributed to the translator as well.

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[39] Martin Rösel, "Die Psalmüberschriften des Septuagintapsalters," in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter: Sprachliche und theologische Aspekte* (ed. E. Zenger; HBS 32; Freiburg: Herder, 2001), 125–48.

[40] Albert Pietersma (in this volume pp. 33–45, esp. pp. 40–44) has tried to demonstrate that there was no theological intention behind the εἰς τὸ τέλος / εἰς συνέσεως superscriptions in the Greek Psalter. Because of the nature of this paper it is not possible to respond in detail, but a brief response may be in order. It is obvious that Prof. Pietersma's approach and differ at the very point that Pietersma calls a "linguistic heresy," because he is focussing on the single word as the bearer of the meaning, while I would always include the immediate context of the word in question to determine its meaning. As for his argument concerning the εἰς τὸ τέλος superscriptions, his observation that in non-philosophical Classical and Hellenistic literature τέλος has no eschatological meaning proves almost nothing, because the LXX of Psalms should be seen within the range of Jewish Hellenism of that time; with Pietersma's argument one could also say that keywords like κύριος, νόμος, or χριστός do not have theological meanings, because such meanings are not attested in that same body of literature. Moreover, Pietersma leaves open the question of what the τέλος is to which the translator is alluding—the characteristic use of the article in these superscriptions is in my view pointing to a certain τέλος. Obviously the translator must have had something specific in mind, otherwise he would not have added εἰς τὸ τέλος to the superscription of Ps 30(29), which is a psalm that is connected with the ἐγκαινισμοῦ τοῦ οἴκου τῷ Δαυιδ, "the dedication of the temple," which in my opinion obviously points to the events of the Maccabean revolt. To be fair, Pietersma confirms that readers could gain the impression that these superscriptions have an eschatological meaning; the point of difference is whether this is a phenomenon of translation or of reception.

[41] For a detailed analysis of the whole chapter of Isa 7, see Martin Rösel, "Die Jungfrauengeburt des endzeitlichen Immanuel: Jesaja 7 in der Übersetzung der Septuaginta," *JBTH* 6 (1991): 135–51.

[42] Translation from Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, eds., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997–1998), 1179.

One could also refer to the different anthropologies of several books, beginning with Gen 1:26 and the translation ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ' εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν, which involves a considerable change in the idea of humans being the image of God.[43] Moreover, it is very obvious that the Greek text of Gen 1 and 2 can best be understood as reflecting the platonic account of creation in the dialogue "Timaios," ideas like these may also lie behind the contrast of πνεῦμα and σάρξ in Gen 6:3.[44]

The examples I have presented in this section can be seen as evidence that the translators had their own theological and hermeneutical ideas, which affected their translations. Many more examples have been noted elsewhere, and in my view it is worthwhile to collect them and to arrange them in a systematic way to give an impression of where there are differences between Septuagint theology and Hebrew Bible theology. Even if we cannot be sure in every instance whether the translator, the *Vorlage* used, or a later redactor is responsible for these theological characteristics, it has to be stated that they are in the Greek text and therefore belong to the history of reception of the Septuagint.

3. How Can a "Theology of the Septuagint" Be Written?

Finally, I would like to briefly sketch some elements of such a "Theology of the Septuagint." As stated earlier, such a work should be more than a collection of excerpts of separate studies on some or all of the books of the Greek Scriptures. But an important basic part of such a study has to be an overview of the individual books, so that readers can get an impression of the different approaches to the task of translation stemming from different times and milieus. This part could also serve as a kind of *Religionsgeschichte* of the LXX connecting the individual books with what is known about the theological and hermeneutical developments of the specific time and place, when and where the translation took place.

As a second step I would determine several themes and topics that can be traced through the canon, such as "designations and imagery of God," "God and foreign Gods," "Israel and the nations," "humanity and its fate," "νόμος and ethics." Here I would not only present the "highlights," as I did in the second section of this paper, but I would also show where the Hebrew text was translated without obvious changes. This serves to meet the criterion of the

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[43] Cf. Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung*, 48–50; Walter Groß, "Gen 1:26, 27; 9:6—Statue oder Ebenbild Gottes? Aufgabe und Würde des Menschen nach dem hebräischen und dem griechischen Wortlaut," *JBTH* 15 (2000): 11–38.

[44] Rösel, *Übersetzung als Vollendung der Auslegung*, 147–50; for the comparison with the Platonic *Tim*. §§ 72–87.

twofold comparative approach mentioned earlier. Moreover, it is a significant fact of Septuagint theology, because even if it is basically the same concept as in the Hebrew Bible, it sounds different in Greek and it can cause different reactions when read by those who are not familiar with the Hebrew tradition. This would also be the place to deal with semantic and linguistic definitions of several keywords such as ψυχή, νόμος, δικαιοσύνη and ἀδικία, σύνεσις, and their cognates.

Thirdly, I would also try to comment on the implicit theology of later revisions.[45] For example, if we have New Testament quotations from *kaige*-Theodotion (e.g., from Daniel) it would be necessary to determine whether or not there are specific differences between the OG and later revisions. Discerning those differences could also give us clues to where readers may have had the impression that the older translation was not a valid reproduction of the biblical text—which eventually led to further revisions.

Needless to say, in the end there should be a summary, which could open the view to the history of reception of the LXX by asking how later readers such as Jewish or Christian writers did perceive the profile or theology of the Greek Scriptures. Thus the perspectives of "amont/upstream," meaning a focus on the ideas of the translators, and "aval/downstream," meaning a focus on readers of the translations and the reception history of the translations, would finally come together.[46]

I am fully aware that these considerations are very preliminary and that a project like this cannot be accomplished quickly—perhaps not even by a single scholar. But I am confident that in the near future our knowledge about the LXX will be dramatically expanded because of the three important projects in North America, in France, and in Germany. Maybe after their completion then the time will be ripe for a "Theology of the Septuagint."

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[45] Cf. e.g., in this volume the papers of Claudia Bergmann, pp. 207–23, Beate Ego, pp. 371–78, and Siegfried Kreuzer, pp. 225–37, on the theological relevance of revisions.

[46] For a discussion of these perspectives see Helmut Utzschneider, "Auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text: Überlegungen zum wissenschaftlichen Standort einer Übersetzung der Septuaginta ins Deutsche," in *Im Brennpunkt*, 14–27, and his contribution to this collection, pp. 273–92. See also, the contribution by Wolfgang Kraus, pp. 63–83. After having submitted this paper to the editors, the following articles dealing with the question of a theology of the Septuagint came to my attention: Evangelia G. Dafni, "Theologie der Sprache der Septuaginta," *TZ* 58 (2002): 315–28; Mario Cimosa, "É possibile scrivere una 'teologia' della Bibbia Greca (LXX)?," in *Initium Sapientiae: Scritti in onore di Franco Festorazzi nel suo 70. compleanno* (ed. R. Fabris; Supplementi alla Rivista biblica 36; Bologna: EDB, 2000), 51–64. Although there are some minor differences concerning assumptions and results, which cannot be discussed here, it is interesting to realize that the topic is obviously *en vogue.*