

HANDBUCH ZUR SEPTUAGINTA
HANDBOOK OF THE SEPTUAGINT

LXX.H ^{BAND}
^{VOLUME} 5

Hans Ausloos / Bénédicte Lemmelijn (Hg./eds.)

Die Theologie
der Septuaginta

Theology of
the Septuagint





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LXX.H

Herausgegeben von
Martin Karrer,
Wolfgang Kraus und
Siegfried Kreuzer

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Inhaltsverzeichnis

Vorwort zum <i>Handbuch zur Septuaginta/Handbook of the Septuagint</i>	15
Preface	17
I. Theology or not? That's the question.	
Is there such a thing as ›the theology of the Septuagint‹?	19
HANS AUSLOOS & BÉNÉDICTE LEMMELIJN	
1. Prolegomena: the Septuagint in a changing panorama	19
2. Towards a theology of the Septuagint?	23
3. Some complicating factors	24
3.1. The name ›Septuagint‹	24
3.2. The author(s) and translator(s)?	25
3.3. Which text of the Septuagint?	26
3.4. The sequence of books in ›the Septuagint‹	28
4. Which trail to follow: How do we discover the theology of the Septuagint?	29
4.1. The background: The theology of the Septuagint as a translational reality	30
4.2. The main principle: marking identity and particularity, emphasizing differences?	32
4.3. One step further: Interpreting differences, searching for their origin	35
5. Hidden theology? Nuancing the main principle	38
5.1. A different theology without differing texts	39
5.2. Distinguishing a theology of the Septuagint from a theological interpretation of the Septuagint	42
6. Ten commandments guiding the study of the Septuagint's theology	43
II. Der eine Gott und sein Verständnis	
Pentateuch	47
EMANUEL TOV	
1. Background	47
2. Equivalents of divine names in the Pentateuch	47
2.1. אֱלֹהִים (^ʾ ēlohîm)	47
2.2. יְהוָה (JHWH)	48
2.3. אֲדֹנָי (^ʾ adonāy)	52
2.4. צֹר (šûr)	52
2.5. אֱלֹהֵי אֲשֶׁר אֱלֹהֵי (^ʾ ēhjaeh ^ʾ šær ^ʾ ēhjaeh)	52
2.6. שַׁדַּי (šaddaj)	53
3. Unusual translations: Variants, theology, or translation technique?	53
4. Theology?	56

Les Prophètes	59
ANNE-FRANÇOISE LOISEAU	
1. Isaïe	60
1.1. Les targoumismes	61
1.2. Les caractéristiques de Dieu dans la LXX d'Isaïe	64
1.3. Dieu et son peuple	65
1.4. La Loi	65
1.5. Les titres divins	66
1.6. Les autres dieux	67
2. Jérémie	67
2.1. Les targoumismes	68
2.2. Les caractéristiques de Dieu dans la LXX de Jérémie	70
2.3. Les titres divins	72
2.4. Les autres dieux	72
3. Les XII	73
3.1. Les targoumismes	73
3.2. Les caractéristiques de Dieu dans la LXX des XII	75
3.3. Les titres divins	76
3.4. Les autres dieux	77
4. Ézéchiël	77
4.1. Les targoumismes	78
4.2. Les caractéristiques de Dieu dans la LXX d'Ézéchiël	78
4.3. Les titres divins	79
4.4. Les autres dieux	79
5. Daniel	80
5.1. Les caractéristiques de Dieu dans la LXX de Daniel	80
5.2. Les titres divins	81
5.3. Les autres dieux	82
 Weisheitsschriften	 83
MARKUS WITTE	
1. Weisheit als Theologie	83
2. Theologien der Weisheitsbücher	85
2.1. Theologie im Spruch – Zum Gottesverständnis der Sprüche in der LXX	86
2.2. Theologie im Traktat – Zum Gottesverständnis Kohelets in der LXX	89
2.3. Theologie im Dialog – Zum Gottesverständnis des Hiobbuchs der LXX	90
2.4. Theologie im Lehrbuch – Zum Gottesverständnis des Sirachbuchs .	93
2.5. Theologie als Apologie und Paraklese – Zum Gottesverständnis der Weisheit Salomos	96

Historical books	99
ANDRÉS PIQUER OTERO	
1. Introduction – Themes from the Hebrew Bible	99
1.1. Early Yahwistic conceptions: The divine warrior	100
1.2. Traces of polytheistic elements	101
1.3. Deuteronomistic redaction	101
1.4. The Chronicler's work	102
2. Developments in the LXX	102
2.1. Divine onomastics	103
2.2. Theological euphemisms	104
2.3. Earlier strata of readings	105
3. Final remarks	107
Psalmen und Lieder	108
RALPH BRUCKER	
1. Der eine Gott und die Götter	108
2. Die Körperlichkeit Gottes	111
3. Gott als Beistand, Helfer und Beschützer	113
4. Ergebnisse	115
III. Das Gesetz Gottes	
Pentateuque	117
INNOCENT HIMBAZA	
1. La perspective de la LXX par sa terminologie spécifique	117
1.1. La terminologie de la LXX met en valeur la loi de Dieu	117
1.2. Le concept d'une règle inclusive est moins harmonisé que dans le TM	119
1.3. Νόμος déploie toute sa force inclusive dans le Deutéronome	120
1.4. L'équation «νόμος = Livre» est clairement absente de la LXX	121
1.5. Dans la LXX, les anges sont associés au don de la loi	122
1.6. La LXX intègre-t-elle mieux l'étranger à l'Alliance que le TM?	122
2. La loi de Dieu vue de l'intérieur des ensembles législatifs	124
2.1. Interprétation et applicabilité de la loi de Dieu	124
2.2. La LXX reflète une évolution de la loi de Dieu	125
2.3. La loi de Dieu est plus harmonisée dans la LXX que dans le TM	126
3. Synthèse	127
Prophets	128
HERRIE VAN ROOY	
1. Introduction	128
2. Isaiah	128
3. Jeremiah	130
4. Ezekiel	132

5. Minor Prophets	133
5.1. Hosea	133
5.2. Amos	134
5.3. Micah	134
5.4. Habakkuk	135
5.5. Zephaniah	135
5.6. Haggai	135
5.7. Zechariah	135
5.8. Malachi	136
6. Conclusion	136

Weisheit	137
FRANK UEBERSCHAER	

1. Das Buch der Sprüche/Proverbien	137
2. Das Buch Hiob	139
3. Das Buch Kohelet	140
4. Das Buch Jesus Sirach	140
5. Das Buch der Weisheit Salomos	145

Geschichtswerke	148
MARTIN MEISER	

1. Die Stilisierung von Gestalten der Geschichte Israels nach der Thora in frühjüdischer Literatur des dritten und zweiten Jh. v. Chr.	148
1.1. Chronikbücher und Komplex der Esra–Nehemia-Schriften	148
1.2. Spätere frühjüdische Literatur	150
2. Die Thora in der Septuaginta der älteren Geschichtswerke	150
2.1. Die Stilisierung von Gestalten der Geschichte Israels	150
2.1.1. <i>Gestalten aus dem Josuabuch</i>	150
2.1.2. <i>Gestalten aus dem Richterbuch</i>	151
2.1.3. <i>Gestalten aus dem Buch Ruth</i>	151
2.1.4. <i>Gestalten aus den Samuel- und Königsbüchern</i>	151
2.1.5. <i>Gestalten aus den Chronikbüchern und 1Esdras</i>	152
2.1.6. <i>Zusammenfassung</i>	152
2.2. Die Stilisierung von Institutionen nach der Thora in der Septuaginta	153
3. Die Thora in den jüngeren Geschichtswerken	153
3.1. Die Thora als <i>Identity marker</i> Israels	153
3.2. Die Stilisierung historischer Gestalten nach der Thora	155

Psalter	156
ALISON SALVESEN	

1. Introduction	156
2. Translation technique	156
3. Verbs used in association with God's Law	160

4. Law and related concepts	161
5. Antonyms?	161
IV. Kult und die Begegnung mit dem einen Gott in der Septuaginta . . .	165
CHRISTIAN A. EBERHART	
1. Einleitende Überlegungen	165
2. Zentrale Sachfelder	168
2.1. Theologie des Tempels, Tempelbau (theol. Vergleich mit griechischem und ägyptischem Tempel) . . .	168
2.2. Altar	178
2.3. »Truhe Gottes« und Hilasterion	180
2.4. Tempelkult und Opfervorstellungen	183
2.5. Feste und Wallfahrt	191
2.6. Kultpersonal am Heiligtum	194
2.7. Kult und persönliche Frömmigkeit, Auseinandersetzung mit den Mysterien	198
2.8. Himmlischer Kult	203
2.9. Heiligkeit und Reinheit	206
2.10 Auswirkungen der Diaspora-Situation: Metaphorisierung von Kultbegriffen	210
3. Der Kult in Schriftenkreisen/Entwicklungen	214
3.1. Pentateuch	214
3.2. Propheten	223
3.3. Weisheitsbücher	227
3.4. Geschichtswerke	231
3.5. Psalmen und Lieder	239
V. Die Prophetie und das Reden von Gott	243
EVANGELIA G. DAFNI	
1. Einleitende Überlegungen	243
1.1. Das Problem	243
1.2. Forschungsgeschichtliche Übersicht	245
2. Das Prophetieverständnis in der Septuaginta	249
2.1. Zentrale Wort- und Sachfelder	249
2.2. Mose als Prophet	251
2.3. Der Prophet des Herrn und die Propheten in Deuteronomium 18,9-22	258
2.3.1. Deut 18,9-12: Mantik, Zauberei, Totenbefragung	258
2.3.2. Ein Prophet wie Mose	258
3. Theologische Aspekte in den LXX-Prophetenbüchern	259
3.1. Hosea	259
3.1.1. Wahrer und falscher Geist der Prophetie	259
3.1.2. Das »Fleisch Gottes«	261
3.1.3. Erkenntnis Gottes	263

3.2.	Amos	266
3.2.1.	<i>Ein Diamant inmitten des Volkes Israel</i>	266
3.2.2.	<i>Der Herr als Pantokrator</i>	269
3.2.3.	<i>Der Gesalbte</i>	271
3.3.	Obadja	273
3.3.1.	<i>Die Rettung in Person</i>	273
3.3.2.	<i>Der Feuerbringer</i>	274
3.4.	Nahum	274
3.4.1.	<i>Die Offenbarung der Hypostasis</i>	274
3.5.	Habakuk	276
3.5.1.	<i>Gottesglauben</i>	276
3.5.2.	<i>Wahre und falsche Phantasie</i>	277
3.5.3.	<i>Offenbarung und Thronerhebung Gottes inmitten zweier Lebewesen</i>	278
3.5.4.	<i>Logos Gottes</i>	279
3.6.	Sacharja	279
3.6.1.	<i>Der Mann namens »Sonnenaufgang« als Priester und König</i>	279
3.7.	Maleachi	281
3.7.1.	<i>Gott und das Böse</i>	281
3.8.	Jesaja	282
3.8.1.	<i>Gottes Widersacher</i>	282
3.8.2.	<i>Jesaja-Apokalypse</i>	284
3.8.3.	<i>Der Gottessohn</i>	290
3.9.	Jeremia	292
3.9.1.	<i>Prophet und Geld</i>	292
3.9.2.	<i>Gottes Sein</i>	294
3.10.	Daniel	298
3.10.1.	<i>Die Weisheit Gottes und die Weisheit des Propheten</i>	298
3.10.2.	<i>Gottes Geheimnisse und Fürsorge</i>	300
4.	Ausblick	300
VI.	Man before God	301
	JOHANN COOK	
1.	Towards an anthropology of the Septuagint (Old Greek)	301
2.	Central themes	302
2.1.	Heart, Kidneys, Nose, Eyes and Ears	302
2.1.1.	<i>Heart</i>	302
2.1.2.	<i>Kidneys (νεφρός)</i>	303
2.1.3.	<i>Nous (νοῦς)</i>	303
2.1.4.	<i>Eyes</i>	303
2.1.5.	<i>Ears (οὖς)</i>	303
2.2.	Creation (man and contemporaries; power/highness of man)	303
2.3.	Encounter with God and damage because of guilt	305
2.4.	Death and finiteness	306
2.4.1.	<i>Job 14:13</i>	306

2.4.2. <i>Job</i> 14:14	307
2.4.3. <i>Job</i> 19:25-26	308
2.4.4. LXX <i>Job</i> 42:17a	309
2.5. Ethics and the righteousness of man	310
3. Anthropology in scribal circles/developments	311
3.1. Scribal activity in the Septuagint	311
3.2. Wisdom literature	313
3.2.1. <i>Proverbs</i>	313
3.2.1.1. <i>Proverbs</i> 2	313
3.2.1.2. The antithetical stance of LXX <i>Proverbs</i>	320
3.2.1.3. Conclusion	320
3.2.2. <i>The Septuagint of Job</i>	322
3.2.2.1. The historical, social and literary context of OG <i>Job</i>	322
3.2.2.2. <i>Job</i> 42 – The epilogue and the translator’s approach	324
a) The micro-level	324
b) The macro-level	325
3.2.2.3. Conclusions	334
VII. Weisheit und das Leben vor Gott	337
LUDGER SCHWIENHORST-SCHÖNBERGER	
1. Anzahl und Stellung der weisheitlichen Bücher im Septuaginta-Kanon	337
2. Datierung und Art der Übersetzungen	338
3. König Salomo als Patron der Weisheit	340
4. Erfahrungsweisheit und Offenbarungsweisheit	341
4.1. Von der Erfahrung zur geoffenbarten Einsicht	341
4.2. Von Agur zu Salomo: Vom Nichtwissen zum Offenbarungswissen	342
5. Das Gebet um Weisheit	344
6. Weisheit und Gerechtigkeit	344
7. Weisheit und Gottesfurcht	345
7.1. Sprichwörter	346
7.2. Kohelet	349
7.3. Sirach	350
7.4. Hiob	351
8. Weisheit und Gesetz	353
9. Weisheit und Glück	357
9.1. Zeitliche Zerdehnung	358
9.2. Differenzierung der Wahrnehmung	358
10. Das Leiden des Gerechten	360
10.1. Hiob	360
10.2. Weisheit Salomos	365
11. Weisheit und Skepsis	368
11.1. Kohelet	368
11.2. Sirach	369
11.3. Hiob 28	370

12. Universaler Anspruch	373
13. Die Weisheit als Schöpfungsmittlerin	374
13.1 Schöpfung durch Wort und Weisheit	374
13.2. Uranfängliche Begegnung zwischen Gott und der Weisheit nach Hiob 28	377
13.3. Das Verhältnis von JHWH und Weisheit nach Spr 8	378
13.4. Jüdische und christliche Rezeption	384
14. Frau Weisheit	384
14.1. Sprichwörter	384
14.2. Weisheit Salomos	385
15. Die Weisheit als Retterin und Erlöserin	385
16. Ausblick auf die neutestamentliche Rezeption	387
17. Der innere und der äußere Mensch	389
17.1. Zwei Schöpfungen (Gen 1-2)	389
17.2. Die Entdeckung des inneren Menschen	394
17.3. Die rechte Sorge um sich selbst	396
VIII. People and covenant	399
LARRY PERKINS	
1. Introduction: the concept of Israel	399
1.1. Political use of the concept	399
1.2. Theological use of the concept	400
1.3. Interaction between Judaism and Hellenism	401
1.4. Date and direction of influence	401
1.5. Methodological issues	402
2. Israel: people of God by covenant	405
3. Understanding Israel as the »People of God«	406
3.1. Pentateuch	406
3.2. Prophetic literature	422
3.3. Wisdom tradition	425
3.4. Historical literature	428
3.5. Narratives reflecting post-exilic contexts	430
3.6. Hymnic literature	435
4. Organization within Israel	436
4.1. Pentateuch	436
4.2. Prophetic literature	452
4.3. Wisdom literature	460
4.4. Historical literature	464
4.5. Narratives reflecting post-exilic contexts	467
4.6. Psalter	469
5. The people and the land	474
5.1. Pentateuch	474
5.2. Prophetic literature	476
5.3. Wisdom literature	480

5.4. Historical books	481
5.5. Psalms	481
6. Interactions in war and peace	482
6.1. Exodus and Deuteronomy	482
6.2. Prophetic literature	485
6.3. Historical books	486
6.4. Narratives reflecting post-exilic contexts	489
7. Encounters with other Peoples	492
7.1. Pentateuch	492
7.2. Prophetic literature	495
7.3. Wisdom literature	498
7.4. Psalms and Psalms of Solomon	499
8. Conclusions	500
IX. Verheißung: Die Zukunft angesichts Gottes	503
HOLGER GZELLA	
1. Einleitende Überlegungen	503
2. Zentrale Themen und ihre theologiegeschichtlichen Voraussetzungen . .	508
2.1. Tod, Auferstehung und Weltgericht	510
2.2. Das Kommen des Messias	520
3. Zukunftserwartungen in den verschiedenen Teilen der Septuaginta . . .	526
3.1. Pentateuch	526
3.2. Propheten	532
3.3. Weisheit	540
3.4. Geschichtswerke	544
3.5. Psalmen und Lieder	547
List of Abbreviations	555
Indexes	559
Authors	603

Vorwort zum Handbuch zur Septuaginta/ *Handbook of the Septuagint*

Das Handbuch zur Septuaginta will eine umfassende Darstellung der derzeitigen Forschungen um die Septuaginta geben. Es ist damit Hinführung zu den vielfältigen Fragen und Ergebnissen der Septuagintaforschung, Bilanz des aktuellen Standes und Grundlage für die weitere Forschung. Folgende Bände sind vorgesehen: Einleitung in die Septuaginta, Textgeschichte der Septuaginta, Sprache der Septuaginta, der historische Kontext der Septuaginta, Theologie der Septuaginta, Wirkungsgeschichte.

Die Planungen für das Handbuch entstanden auf dem Hintergrund von »Septuaginta Deutsch«. Schon die Übersetzung »Septuaginta Deutsch. Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung« (hg. von Wolfgang Kraus und Martin Karrer, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft 2009; ²2010) und die damit verbundenen Bände »Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen und Kommentare« (2 Bde. hg. von Martin Karrer und Wolfgang Kraus, 2011) waren international orientiert. In den Bänden des Handbuches spiegelt sich dieses Anliegen in der internationalen und interdisziplinären Zusammensetzung des Herausgeberkreises und der Autorenschaft.

Die Septuagintaforschung erlebt in jüngster Zeit eine eindrucksvolle Blüte. Ein Ausdruck dafür sind die zahlreichen Übersetzungsprojekte. Während zuvor nur zwei schon ältere englische Übersetzungen existierten, gibt es nun bzw. sind in Bearbeitung eine neue Übersetzung ins Englische, eine französische Übersetzung, die deutsche Übersetzung, aber auch eine Übersetzung ins Rumänische, ins Spanische, ins Italienische, ins Neuhebräische und Neugriechische sowie Übersetzungen in das Japanische und Koreanische.

Die Übersetzungen erleichtern den Zugang zur Septuaginta und fördern ihre Wahrnehmung nicht nur im Bereich der Theologie, sondern auch in anderen Fachgebieten wie etwa der Geschichte, der Judaistik, der Sprachwissenschaft oder der Übersetzungs- und der Editionswissenschaft. Zugleich ergeben sich immer wieder neue Fragestellungen. Die verschiedenen Teilbände des Handbuchs zur Septuaginta wollen hier die bisherigen Forschungen bündeln, neue Fragestellungen aufnehmen und sowohl Basis als auch Impuls für die weitere Forschung geben.

Nachdem im Jahr 2016 mit LXX.H 1, »Einleitung in die Septuaginta«, und LXX.H 3, »Die Sprache der Septuaginta / The Language of the Septuagint«, erschienen sind, wird hiermit LXX.H 5, »Die Theologie der Septuaginta / The Theology of the Septuagint«, vorgelegt.

Die Hauptherausgeber danken den Herausgebern der Bände, in diesem Fall Hans Ausloos, Louvain-la-Neuve, Bénédicte Lemmelijn, Leuven, und den zahlreichen Autorinnen und Autoren für ihre engagierte Arbeit und dem Gütersloher Verlagshaus für den Mut, dieses große Projekt auf den Weg zu bringen und zu realisieren.

Martin Karrer, Wolfgang Kraus und Siegfried Kreuzer

Preface

The present volume within the series *Handbuch zur Septuaginta* (LXX.H) does not aim at providing 'the' ultimate systematic and consistent theology of 'the' Septuagint. That would be a very uncritical endeavor, as will become clear already in the very first contribution to this volume. Nevertheless, the search for theological elements and accents within the Septuagint is a scholarly topic that gains more and more attention, and rightly so. In that respect, it is, of course, favorable to include it in the present Handbook series.

Taking the above described caution seriously, the present volume will be organized in the following way. For the case of workability, as well as in an attempt to cover the main theological issues in the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible (in their pluriformity and divergence), this book has centered its chapters around eight theological perspectives that will be studied against the background of the central question pertaining to the particular accents and elements in the Septuagint in that respect. At stake are: 1. The one and only God and the human understanding of this ultimate reality, 2. The divine Law, 3. The cult and the encounter with God, 4. Prophecy and its speaking about God, 5. Humans in the presence of God, 6. Wisdom reflecting life in the presence of God, 7. People and covenant, and finally 8. Reaching out for the promise of a future before God. These themes function as a point of departure.

However, these eight thematic entries will not be generally presented for the whole Septuagint as such. Rather, and in an attempt to meet the challenges formulated in the introductory contribution, the individual authors have discussed the items respectively on the basis of the different parts of the Septuagint. That means that all reflection will be presented on the basis of each theme in the Pentateuch, the Prophets, Wisdom literature, the Historical books and the Psalms. Within this context, the contributors also pay specific attention to particular books and pericopes.

Moreover, the attentive reader will notice that some of these chapters have been written by one and the same author, while others have been divided into five minor parts being written by five different authors. In this respect too, this book resembles the composition history of the Bible. It has taken quite some years to arrive at the book as it is presented at this moment. Scholars agreed to contribute, but canceled later on when the deadline was approaching. This, of course, implied that a new deadline had to be fixed because, foremost, new authors had to be addressed. This process repeated itself a number of times, to such an extent that the editors grew desperate if it were not that they could always appeal to the help and support of the series editors ... In the end, it was decided that the failing chapters would be divided in shorter subchapters by different authors. However, also in this new procedure, the pattern described above of new deadlines and new authors, repeated itself. Finally, nevertheless, the volume reached its complete form. And at the same time, initial contributions that had been sent in from the very first deadline on, have matured or were re-edited slightly by their authors.

Anyway, we sincerely hope that its current form presents a little bit of the rich biblical theology, that, precisely in its diversity, reflects the deep existential experience

of life itself. Anyway, like the biblical books, this collection of contributions has grown over time; it has been reworked and redacted and let's hope that it likewise enjoyed some inspiration that might become yours in turn ...

Hans Ausloos

Bénédicte Lemmelijn

I. Theology or not? That's the question. Is there such a thing as 'the theology of the Septuagint'?

HANS AUSLOOS & BÉNÉDICTE LEMMELIJN

1. Prolegomena: the Septuagint in a changing panorama

Basing ourselves on 'actual facts' – evident in the number of publications, conferences and congresses –, there can hardly be any doubt that the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, the so-called Septuagint, has gained a lot of scholarly attention in our time.¹ The study of its origin, its importance, its reception history, its translation techniques, as well as its own literary characteristics are at the front of research today. This Greek translation, originally created by Jewish scholars within a Hellenistic context,² has surpassed the borders of its historical situation to a large extent. Indeed, the Septuagint later became the primary textual source for the New Testament authors, thereby turning into one of the founding texts of Christianity too.³

1. The present introductory contribution to this volume has been inspired by former articles by the authors, and, in particular by, H. AUSLOOS, "Sept défis posés à une théologie de la Septante" in: L. C. JONKER / G. R. KOTZÉ / C. M. MAIER (eds.), *Congress Volume IOSOT Stellenbosch 2016* (SVT 177), Leiden / Boston, MA 2017, 228-250. With respect to the broader context, reference can be made also to B. LEMMELIJN, "Textual Criticism" in: A. SALVESEN / M. LAW (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, Oxford (in press); B. LEMMELIJN, "Influence of a So-Called P-redaction in the 'Major Expansions' of Exod 7-11? Finding Oneself at the Crossroads of Textual and Literary Criticism" in: A. PIQUER OTERO / P. TORIJANO MORALES (eds.), *Textual Criticism and Dead Sea Scrolls Studies in Honour of Julio Trebolle Barrera: Florilegium Complutense* (JSJS 157), Leiden / Boston, MA 2012, 203-222 as well as to B. LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence: An 'Empirical' Entry to the Literary Composition of the Text" in: R. F. PERSON / R. REZETKO, *Empirical Models Challenging Biblical Criticism* (SBL AIL), Atlanta, GA 2016, 129-164.
2. With regard to the context in which the Septuagint has developed, and the reasons why at all such an enterprise would have been initiated, see J. M. DINES, *The Septuagint* (UBW), London 2004, 47-62. S. KREUZER; "Origin and Development of the Septuagint in the Context of Alexandrian and Early Jewish Culture and Learning" in: idem, *The Bible in Greek*, SBL SCS 63, Atlanta 2015, 3-31.
3. Moreover, in the Orthodox Churches, the Greek translation as such is considered to be 'Sacred Scripture'. See, in this context, the argument to use the Septuagint as the 'Christian Bible', by M. MÜLLER, "The Septuagint as the Bible of the New Testament Church. Some Reflections" *SJOT* 7 (1993), 194-207 and idem., *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (JSOT SS 206), Sheffield 1996. For the use of the Septuagint in the Orthodox church service see the list of Scripture readings "Lesungen in den Orthodoxen Gottesdiensten" in: W. KRAUS / M. KARRER (eds.), *Septuaginta Deutsch*, Stuttgart 2010, 1495-1501.

And even from a mere scientific point of view, the Septuagint is actually a highly important extant textual witness. Being the most ancient translation of the Hebrew Bible, it provides us with a lot of information on the development of the biblical text in a period in which the so-called *textus receptus* of the biblical books did not even exist yet. Moreover, from a material point of view,⁴ the Septuagint is still the oldest complete text of the Old Testament. Contrary to the most complete manuscript of the Hebrew text dating from the 11th century, there are Greek complete codices from the 4th (Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) and 5th (Alexandrinus) century. Until the discoveries of the Judaean Desert, the Greek manuscripts, even if they were sometimes fragmentary, were far more ancient witnesses of the Old Testament text than any of the Hebrew extant textual witnesses.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding its major importance on different levels, it was mostly not until the beginning of the 20th century that the Septuagint has been valorized. The scholarly interest in the study of the Septuagint has become very clear in recent decennia, and especially when one considers the several translation projects that have been launched in which the ancient Greek text has been rendered into different modern languages, each project having its own accents and approach. In this respect, reference can be made to the ongoing French project of “La Bible d’Alexandrie”, the finalized “New English Translation of the Septuagint” (2004), “Septuaginta Deutsch” (2004), “La Biblia Griega Septuaginta” (2008-2013), as well as “La Bibbia dei Settanta” (2012-2016), all publications of recent years.⁵

Precisely within the context of these translation projects, the question on the so-called ‘theology of the Septuagint’ has also gained growing attention. Even more, the answer to this question has become largely relevant, not only in terms of the proper situation of the Septuagint in its original context but equally with respect to later interpretations that have developed in the course of the reception history of this Greek text, and also within the development of systematic theology and ecclesial doctrines. Within recent Septuagint scholarship, one can clearly discern interest in what are called ‘exegetical elements’ in the Septuagint,⁶ or ‘theological and/or ideological tendencies’ in the translation.⁷

4. See in this respect, also B. LEMMELIJN, “Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence,” 129-164.
5. See on the particular and distinctive approaches of these translations, especially: H. AUSLOOS / J. COOK / F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ / B. LEMMELIJN / M. VERVENNE (eds.), *Translating a Translation: The LXX and its Modern Translations in the Context of Early Judaism* (BETL 213), Leuven / Paris / Dudley, MA 2008.
6. See, for example, E. Tov, “Theologically Motivated Exegesis Embedded in the Septuagint” in: idem., *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (SVT 72), Leiden 1999, 257-269.
7. Recently, Johann Cook who used the term ‘ideology’ quite frequently. See, for example, J. COOK, “‘Theological/Ideological’ Tendenz in the Septuagint – LXX Proverbs: A Case Study” in: F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ / M. VERVENNE (eds.), *Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (BETL 192), Leuven / Paris / Dudley, MA 2005, 65-79, esp. 65. See equally J. COOK, “Ideology and Translation Technique – Two Sides of the Same Coin?” in: R. SOLLAMO / S. SIPILÄ (eds.), *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (SESJ 82), Göttingen / Helsinki 2001, 195-210. For a succinct discussion on the

Nevertheless, the interest in a particular theology within the Septuagint is not entirely new. It has its origins already at the beginning of the 19th century.⁸ However, a real start of the more systematic and theoretical way of reflection on the possibility of discerning and defining a/the theology of the Septuagint has been made since the 1960's.⁹ Already in 1962, Joseph Ziegler mentioned the urgent need to gain insight in the theology of the Septuagint.¹⁰ Only a few years later, in 1968, the Leuven scholar Jozef Coppens regretted to have not yet disposed of any systematic theology of the Septuagint, which would allow scholars to evaluate the development of ideas and hopes in the Jewish milieu in which it had come into existence.¹¹

Longing for this kind of systematic theology is one thing. Reaching it, however, is another. Soon enough, scholars grew conscious of the fact that the composition of such a systematic theology of the Septuagint was not without serious methodological challenges. In this respect, the methodological reflection on this matter also grew quickly. As it is clear in Coppens' desire, mentioned above, one seemed to take for granted that 'the' Septuagint could inform us on the evolution of the ideas of 'the' Hebrew text. This supposition was, of course, linked to the idea that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible had only begun after the latter had been literarily finalized. This presupposition, however, has turned out to be far too simplistic, in view of the scriptural findings of the Judean Desert and the implications thereof on our understanding of the textual development of the biblical texts. Instead of one single finalized Hebrew text at the origin of the textual transmission (including translation), it has

terminology, see idem., "Interpreting the Septuagint – Exegesis, Theology and/or *Religionsgeschichte*" in: W. KRAUS / M. KARRER / M. MEISER (eds.), *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Theologien und Einflüsse* (WUNT 252), Tübingen 2010, 590-606, esp. 593-595. See also most recently, J. COOK, "Interpreting the Septuagint" in: L. C. JONKER / G. R. KOTZÉ / C. M. MAIER (eds.), *Congress volume IOSOT Stellenbosch 2016* (SVT 177), Leiden / Boston, MA 2017, 1-22, esp. 12-15 and J. COOK, "A Theology of the Septuagint" *OTE* 30 (2017), 265-282.

8. See, for example, Z. FRANKEL, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, Leipzig 1841 and idem., *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik*, Leipzig 1851. Frankel used the expression 'religious exegesis'. For a historical survey, see also M. RÖSEL, "Eine Theologie der Septuaginta? Präzisierungen und Pointierungen" in: F. UEBERSCHAEER / T. WAGNER / J. M. ROBKER (eds.), *Theologie und Textgeschichte. Septuaginta und Masoretischer Text als Äußerungen theologischer Reflexion* (WUNT 407), Tübingen, 2018, 25-43. See equally E. G. DAFNI, "Theologie der Sprache der Septuaginta" *TZ* 58 (2002), 315-328, esp. 316-318 and idem., "Σάραξ μου ἐκ αὐτῶν (LXX-Hosea ix 12). Zur Theologie der Sprache der Septuaginta" *VT* 51 (2001), 336-353.
9. Notwithstanding the earlier and clearly critical contribution to this question by I. L. SEELIGMANN, "Problems and Perspectives in Modern Septuagint Research" in: idem., *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies* (FAT 40), Tübingen 2004, 21-80, esp. 72-76 (which is an English translation of a Dutch contribution: idem., "Problemen en perspectieven in het moderne Septuaginta Onderzoek" *EOL* 7 [1940], 359-90, 763-766).
10. J. ZIEGLER, *Die Septuaginta. Erbe und Auftrag. Festvortrag, gehalten beim 380. Stiftungsfest, der Julius-Maximilians-Universität zu Würzburg am 11. Mai 1962* (WUR 33), Würzburg 1962, 28: "[...] damit endlich auch einmal eine längst ersehnte Theologie der Septuaginta geschrieben werden kann".
11. J. COPPENS, *Le Messianisme royal: Ses origines, son développement, son accomplissement* (LD 54), Paris 1968, 119.

become clear that one should rather accept a textual plurality and pluriformity, resulting in a completely different synergic view on the formerly distinguished phases of production and transmission of the texts.¹² And this in turn has led into a completely different view on the relationship between the formerly separated respective domains of literary and redaction criticism (regarding the literary production) on the one hand and textual criticism (regarding the textual transmission) on the other.¹³ Entirely parallel, moreover, it changed the understanding of the activities of redactors/authors on the one hand and copyists/scribes on the other.¹⁴ Within this radically altered textual landscape, the Septuagint has played an important role and the aim of its study has equally changed.¹⁵ Indeed, against the said background, it has become clear that the Septuagint could allow us to discover textual forms of a biblical text much older than and sometimes independently different from the one transmitted in the so-called standard text of the Masoretic text.¹⁶

Following this, the importance of a more adequate understanding of the theology of the Septuagint became undeniable. However, the question how to reach that aim and the awareness of the factors complicating that enterprise became more and more pertinent. In this respect, one could, with Johann Cook, even speak of 'maximalists' and 'minimalists'.¹⁷ Both groups of scholars seem to agree that the composition of a

12. See (among others) J. TREBOLLE BARRERA, *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible*, Leiden / Cologne / New York, NY 1998, 370; 390 as well as idem., "A Combined Textual and Literary Criticism Analysis: Editorial Traces in Joshua and Judges" in: H. AUSLOOS / B. LEMMELIJN / M. VERVENNE (eds.), *Florilegium Lovaniense: Studies in Septuagint and Textual Criticism in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (BETL 224), Leuven / Paris / Dudley, MA 2008, 437-463.
13. See also B. LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called 'Plagues Narrative' in Exodus 7,14-11,10* (OTS 56), Leiden / Boston, MA 2009, passim, esp. 3-7; 197-207. However, see also already in 1998: B. LEMMELIJN, "The So-Called 'Major Expansions' in SamP, 4QpaleoExod^m and 4QExod^j Exod 7:14-11:10. On the Edge between Textual Criticism and Literary Criticism" in: B. TAYLOR (ed.), *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies – Oslo 1998* (SBL SCS 51), Atlanta, GA 2001, 429-439.
14. See especially, and for a comprehensive presentation of this matter, LEMMELIJN, "Influence of a So-Called P-redaction in the 'Major Expansions' of Exod 7-11?" 203-222 as well as LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 129-164.
15. See in this respect especially B. LEMMELIJN, "Textual Criticism" in: A. SALVESEN / M. LAW (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, Oxford (in press) or B. LEMMELIJN, "Η σημασία τῆς Μεταφράσεως τῶν Ο' ἐν ὅψει τοῦ μεταβαλλομένου πανοράματος τῆς Κριτικῆς τοῦ Κειμένου [The Significance of the Septuagint in a Changing Text-Critical Panorama]" *VTeH* 3 (2016), 1-21. See also, based thereon: B. LEMMELIJN, "Op zoek naar de oorspronkelijke tekst" *Schrift* 275 47.1 (2015), 10-15; B. LEMMELIJN, "Tekstkritiek en de 'Hebreeuwse tekst' van het Oude Testament" *MAW* 35 (2016), 15-24 and B. LEMMELIJN, "A la recherche du texte de la Bible Hébraïque" *Homme Nouveau Hors Série* 34 (2019), 21-28.
16. On the contribution of the study of the Septuagint to the discussion on a so-called 'Urtext' or 'original text', see, by way of introduction, E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research: Completely Revised and Expanded Third Edition*, Winona Lake, IN 2015, 201-223.
17. J. COOK, "Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint" in: A. LEMAIRE (ed.), *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007* (SVT 133), Leiden 2009, 621-640. Cook situates Martin Rösel and Joachim Shaper among the 'maximalists', while he perceives Albert Pietersma and Raija

Septuagint theology is possible, but they do not agree on the methodology needed to attain this aim. Other scholars more fundamentally doubt the possibility at all of the systematic presentation of the theology of the Septuagint.¹⁸

Against this background, this introductory contribution to a volume dedicated to 'the theology of the Septuagint' – and in the context of what has been said above, this might seem a tricky enterprise – focuses on a number of methodological concerns, indeed, which have to be taken into account when talking about a theology of the Septuagint, let alone 'the' theology of 'the' Septuagint ...

2. Towards a theology of the Septuagint?

If one would simply imagine the process of the translation of the Septuagint, being the Greek version of Sacred Scripture for Hellenistic Jews, it is quite clear that this process itself implies a considerable degree of interpretation. It is simply impossible to produce a purely mechanical one-to-one rendering of a Hebrew text into a Greek one, even if one tries or would aim at such a text. Each language, and thus each translation, implies a cultural background, a 'world of ideas', a certain perception of reality within a particular socio-historical background. Thus, even if the translators of the Septuagint would have aimed at this kind of a 'neutral' rendering of the Bible into Greek (*quod non*), the said culture, perceptive world and ideas of Hellenism, as well as the grammatical and idiomatic implications of the Greek language, would have demanded at least some degree of interpretation. And since we talk about theological texts, this implies theological interpretation: in other words, some theology or exegesis. Indeed, if a given Septuagint translator has aimed at producing a Greek Bible text, it would have been important to not only translate the biblical wording, but also to make its theology understandable. And doing so implies the actualization, adaptation and maybe even explanation of aspects from the source text into the context of the new audience.¹⁹ Just to refer to one example, one could think of Lev 24,16, in which the Hebrew text requires the death penalty for anyone blaspheming God's name, whereas the Septuagint mentions the same with respect to even pronouncing it. This most probably reflects the later – contemporary to the translators – Jewish practice not to pronounce the divine name.

Sollamo as 'minimalists', although he does not explicitly indicate what he means exactly by the said terms.

18. See, in this respect, for example, M. CIMOSA, "È possibile scrivere una 'teologia' della Bibbia Greca (LXX)?" in: R. FABRIS (ed.), *Initium sapientiae: Scritti in onore di Franco Festorazzi nel suo 70° compleanno* (SRivB 36), Bologna 2000, 51-64. See also the caveats expressed by A. DOUGLAS, "Limitations to Writing a Theology of the Septuagint" JSCS 45 (2012), 104-117.
19. See in this respect, for example, also W. KRAUS, "Contemporary Translations of the Septuagint: Problems and Perspectives" in: W. KRAUS / G. WOODEN (eds.), *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (SBL SCS 53), Atlanta, GA 2006, 63-83, esp. 78: "The LXX is in the first instance a translation, but it is more. The translators wanted to mediate between the tradition and the contemporary situation. This includes modifications and updates."

Just as redactors have actualized and altered versions of the biblical books – cf. e. g. to the development of the Hebrew book of Isaiah with its clearly distinct layers revealing different historical backgrounds and distinctive theological concerns –, so did copyists and scribes, and so did translators.²⁰ As indicated above, the fact that texts had been transmitted before they had literarily been finalized (if they have ever been intentionally),²¹ implies that this process also integrates changing theological reflection. Very similarly, traces of these activities can also be found in the work of translators.²² They handle the text in a similar way: they reproduce and transmit the text, be it into another language.

Thus, the question to be answered primarily should not be: Can we compose a modern systematically formulated theology of the Septuagint, but rather, how and where do we detect and explore the theological accents in the Septuagint? The Septuagint is *ipso facto* part of the development of Jewish (and Christian) reflection and theology, of biblical thinking within a new and altered context, but intrinsically integrated in the textual and theological development of the biblical books. Perhaps it would be better to speak of the ‘implicit theology’ of the Septuagint. One cannot find it in methodological and modern-like consistent exposés, but rather implicitly in and through Greek concepts, Greek cultural ideas and Greek words and expressions already supplied by the language itself. Scholars should develop a sensitivity to this reality in order to properly understand the theology in the Septuagint. Only then, with an open and explorative mind, one could perhaps even discover more explicit theological accents thereof.

Nevertheless, the main obstacle to reach this aim situates itself on the methodological level. In what follows, some of the main complicating factors will be described and illustrated.

3. Some complicating factors

If scholars aim at discussing the theology in the Septuagint, some fundamental issues should seriously be taken into account.

3.1. The name ‘Septuagint’

Today, the name ‘Septuagint’ is used in many different ways. However, at its origin, it indicated only the Greek translation of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, quite generally accepted as being realized in Alexandria in the 3rd Century BCE.²³ Neverthe-

20. See LEMMELIJN, “Influence of a So-Called P-redaction in the ‘Major Expansions’ of Exod 7-11?” 203-222 and B. LEMMELIJN, “Textual Criticism,” (in press) or B. LEMMELIJN, “Ἡ σημασία τῆς Μεταφράσεως τῶν Ὁ” [*The Significance of the Septuagint in a Changing Text-Critical Panorama*],” 1-21.

21. See in this respect, for example, E. BLUM, “Gibt es die Endgestalt des Pentateuch?” in: J. A. EMERTON *et al.* (eds.), *Congress Volume Leuven 1989* (SVT 43), Leiden 1991, 46-57.

22. See in this respect, for example, H. DEBEL, “Greek ‘Variant Literary Editions’ to the Hebrew Bible?” *JSJ* 41 (2010), 161-190.

23. With regard to the *communis opinio* on when, by whom and how the five books of the Torah

less, the name 'Septuagint' includes the complete Greek Old Testament in our days. This means thus not only the Greek Pentateuch, but also the Greek translation of the other books of the Hebrew Bible, as well as several additions to the books of Esther, Job, Psalms, Daniel and Jeremiah. Moreover, the term is also used for the books that have not been translated at all from Hebrew, but which have been composed immediately in Greek (the so-called deuterocanonical books, such as the Book of Wisdom). Finally, the name 'Septuagint' also encompasses the books that have been originally written in Hebrew and have been translated in Greek, but which have not been integrated in the Jewish canon, such as the Wisdom of Jesus Sirach.

Consequently, if one talks about the theology of the Septuagint, it is important to know which sense of the term one is discussing. And this is all the more true if one tries answering specific questions concerning, e.g. the view of the Septuagint on messianism, on life after death, on retribution ... The respective answers to these kinds of questions undoubtedly depend on the selection of books that one considers as constitutive of "the Septuagint". Thus, it is not possible to discuss 'the theology of the Septuagint', if one does not define what specifically is meant by that term.

3.2. The author(s) and translator(s)?

In the same vein, the following is perhaps even more important. There is a striking analogy to the fact that we don't know the exact authors/redactors of the different books of the Hebrew Bible. If one aims to discuss the theology of the Septuagint, it is important to know that the *communis opinio* regarding the Septuagint is that every single book has been translated by a different translator,²⁴ even if some indications could suggest that a few books would be the exception to the rule. This could have been the case with the books of Proverbs and Job, on which there is dispute as to whether they have been translated by a single translator or not.²⁵ Thus, methodologically speaking, it is highly important and even necessary to distinguish between the different books of the Septuagint when speaking about its 'theology'. And this is, more-

have been translated, see, among others, G. DORIVAL, "Les origines de la Septante: la traduction en grec des cinq livres de la Torah" in: M. HARL / G. DORIVAL / O. MUNNICH (eds.), *La Bible grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien* (ICA), Paris 1988, 55-66. Equally, see A. VAN DER KOOIJ, "The Septuagint of the Pentateuch" in: idem. / J. COOK (eds.), *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and their Books in the Septuagint Version* (CBET 68), Leuven, 2012, 15-62.

24. See, for example, J. COOK, "Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint," 636: "The individual book should act as a guideline as to how 'LXX theologies' should be formulated. As a *sine qua non* I suggest that the diversity of each LXX book should be honoured". See equally T. RÖMER / J.-D. MACCHI, *Guide de la Bible hébraïque: La critique textuelle dans la Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Labor et Fides 194), Genève 1994, 55: "Chaque livre a son histoire, sa propre qualité de traduction, ses tendances, présuppositions et problèmes qui doivent être évalués soigneusement de cas en cas".

25. See in this respect B. LEMMELIJN, "The Greek Rendering of Hebrew Hapax Legomena in LXX Proverbs and Job: a Clue to the Question of a Single Translator?" in: K. DE TROYER / T. M. LAW / M. LILJESTRÖM (eds.), *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaes* (CBET 72), Leuven 2014, 133-150 in which a discussion of the current views on this topic has also been presented.

over, completely analogous to any attempt of constructing 'the' theology of the (Hebrew) Old Testament. Already G. von Rad indicated that the Old Testament books are so different from each other, both in background and in structure and argumentation, that they too reveal no one single 'theology', but different and diverging 'theologies'.²⁶

Moreover, a further nuance should be made. Even if one generally accepts that every Septuagint book has been translated by a respective translator, it has been observed that books which seem to have been translated first (such as the Pentateuch) may have influenced later translators (which is, however, not the same as what Rösel indicates as a "gemeinsame(s) Entstehungsmilieu").²⁷ To offer some examples, one could refer to the Greek version of Exod 15:3 – in which Hebrew יהוה איש מלחמה (YHWH is a man of war) has been rendered by κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους (The Lord is a crusher of wars) – that could be the origin of this very formula in Isa 42: 13. Whereas the expression is identical in Hebrew (YHWH is compared to "a man of war" – כאיש מלחמות), the Septuagint translates, similarly to Exod 15:3, stating that God "crushes the wars" (συντρίψει πόλεμον).²⁸ A similar case can be found in the book of Judith, written in Greek, in which God is presented as a God who is the "crusher of wars" (9:7: κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους; 16:2: θεὸς συντρίβων πολέμους κύριος). Thus, even though one should take into account that each book has its own translator, one cannot neglect the fact that former translations could have influenced later ones.²⁹ Notwithstanding this fact, one should, however, not exaggerate this phenomenon.

3.3. Which text of the Septuagint?

As already pointed out above, the Hebrew textual landscape offers a horizon of multiple and pluriform textual witnesses. There is no such thing as 'the' biblical text (any more). In a very similar vein, it is also a misunderstanding to talk about 'the' Septuagint. 'The' Septuagint does not exist. What we actually have at hand are the manuscripts (plural) of a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. That is why it is important to ask if any reconstruction of an eclectic text that would claim to present 'the original Septuagint'³⁰ – something that one would call the 'Old Greek' today –, is at any rate accessible or desirable?

Indeed, this would presuppose that, at its origin, there was a single Greek original

26. See G. VON RAD, "Offene Fragen im Umkreis einer Theologie des Alten Testaments" in idem., *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament*, vol. 2 (TBü 48), München 1973, 289-312, esp. 291: "Problematisch wird uns unter diesem Aspekt die Vorstellung von der Einheit des Alten Testaments insofern, weil das Alte Testament nicht nur eine, sondern ein Anzahl von Theologien enthält, die sowohl in ihrer Struktur wie in der Art ihrer Argumentation weit voneinander divergieren."

27. M. RÖSEL, "Eine Theologie der Septuaginta. Präzisierungen und Pointierungen", 29.

28. See B. SCHMITZ, "Κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους – 'The Lord who crushes wars' (Exod 15:3LXX): The Formative Importance of the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1-18LXX) for the Book of Judith" *JSCS* 47 (2014), 5-16.

29. See E. TOV, "The Impact of the Septuagint Translation of the Torah on the Translation of the Other Books" in: idem., *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (SVT 72), Leiden 1999, 183-194.

30. See parallelly in this respect also B. LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the*

translation, something parallel to the idea of the Hebrew 'Urtext', which most scholars have given up after the exploration of the Dead Sea scrolls.³¹ Very much in analogy to the discussion between the positions of Paul de Lagarde and Paul Kahle in the early 20th Century³² – postulating a single 'Urtext' or rather a multiplicity of 'Vulgärtexte' at the beginnings of the development of the Hebrew Bible –, one could ask the same question regarding the Septuagint.³³ Did there exist a single Septuagint version at some point or rather, already from the beginning, a multiplicity of manuscripts and texts? And consequently, should we reconstruct an 'Old Greek' like we have aimed at reconstructing the Hebrew "Urtext" (and some still do), or do we accept a multiplicity and pluriformity of texts on the Greek level equally as we now do for the Hebrew? The answer to this question undoubtedly changes the problems for the search of a 'theology of the Septuagint'.³⁴

Moreover, if one would accept some kind of an Urtext for the Septuagint, being the 'Old Greek', one should seriously take into account the fact that we only have a historically and accidentally preserved number of manuscripts of the Greek translation of the Bible. It is, therefore, only on the basis of that fortuitous collection of preserved manuscripts that we can formulate any theology of the Septuagint. This implies that lost manuscripts might have contained other elements, which also could alter our idea on 'the' Septuagint's theology.

We only refer to one example. The Babylonian Talmud teaches scholars that, despite the corpus of numerous extant manuscripts, our knowledge of the textual witnesses is ultimately quite limited. Indeed, the Talmud refers to several texts in which an apparent difference between the Greek and the Hebrew version is present.³⁵ This is, e.g., the case in Gen 1:26. Following the Hebrew text, God says: נַעֲשֶׂה אָדָם ("let us make the human"). According to the Talmud, the Greek version of this verse reads: ποιήσω

So-Called 'Plagues Narrative' in Exodus 7,14-11,10 (OTS 56), Leiden / Boston, MA 2009, 18-19; 96-98; 215-216.

31. See, however, R. HENDEL, *Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible* (TCS 10), Atlanta, GA 2016. For a critical note to Hendel's 'reconstruction' of the Hebrew Urtext of Gen 4,8, see H. AUSLOOS, "Caïn a-t-il dit quelque chose? Une analyse de Genèse 4,8" in: idem / D. LUCIANI (eds.), *Temporalité et intrigue. Hommage à André Wénin* (BETL 296), Leuven 2018, 9-21.
32. With regard to a more detailed discussion of the positions of Kahle and De Lagarde, see E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible: Third Edition, Revised and Expanded*, Minneapolis, MN 2012, 169-174.
33. See B. LEMMELIJN, "Textual Criticism," (in press) and based on the latter contribution also B. LEMMELIJN, "Η σημασία της Μεταφράσεως τῶν Ο' [The Significance of the Septuagint in a Changing Text-Critical Panorama]," 1-21.
34. See also J. COOK, "Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint," 636: "Such a theology can only be formulated in conjunction with the Old Greek text". And moreover, even if one would accept the idea of an original 'Old Greek', it is not known to us. See, in this respect, equally J. JOOSTEN, "Exegesis in the Septuagint of Hosea" in: idem, *Collected Studies on the Septuagint: From Language to Interpretation and Beyond* (FAT 83), Tübingen 2012, 123-145, esp. 124-125. And moreover, the Hebrew *Vorlage* used by the LXX translators is not factually known to us either.
35. In this respect, see E. Tov, "The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning the 'Alterations' Inserted into the Greek Pentateuch and their Relation to the Original Text of the LXX" in: idem, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (SVT 72), Leiden 1999, 1-20.

ἄνθρωπον (“I will make the human”). Instead of a first person plural, the translation would thus present a first person singular. A similar case can be observed in the story of the tower of Babel in which, according to the Talmud, the Greek version would have rendered a plural form נִרְדָּה וְנִבְלָה (“let us go down”) in Gen 11:7 by a singular verb form (in Tov’s reconstruction: δεῦτε καὶ καταβάς συγγέω, “let me go down”).³⁶ Now, although the Talmud clearly demonstrates that these variants were present in the Septuagint tradition, we do not have one single Greek manuscript attesting these particular variants (the text known to us reads: καταβάντες συγγέωμεν). Nevertheless, this does not at all imply that the contributor to the Talmud would not have known Greek manuscripts of that kind.

Anyway, it is clear that these variants between the Hebrew and the Greek texts confront us with theologically significant differences. In the Hebrew version, it is perfectly possible to conceive God as representing multiple ‘persons’, while this interpretation is not possible in the Greek translation. However, it always stays very difficult to discern whether it would have been the translator of these particular manuscripts or rather the Hebrew *Vorlage* thereof in which the variants developed.³⁷ To use the aforementioned example of Gen 1:26, we cannot be certain if the reading of a singular verb was introduced by a Greek translator, by a scribe thereafter within the Greek tradition, or by the scribe of the Hebrew *Vorlage* which the translator was using.

3.4. The sequence of books in ‘the Septuagint’

And if all that seemed already difficult, there is even more to ponder when talking about a theology of ‘the Septuagint’. Even from the ‘canonical’ point of view – be that of course a much later stage in the transmission of the text –, the sequence of the books can certainly have an impact on the way we perceive the ‘theology’ of the Septuagint. In this respect, the following observation by J. Lust is helpful.³⁸

Whereas the Hebrew Bible consists of three parts – the Law (*Torah*), the Prophets (*Neviim*) and the Writings (*Ketuvim*) –, the sequence of the books in them is different. In the Hebrew canon, it seems that the idea of divine revelation is at the front: the word of God is given through the Law. After Moses, the prophets have taken up the role to proclaim that divine word, especially in their role as mediators between the Law and the people. The third part, the Writings, could then be considered as the human answer to the divine word. The Greek canon, however, focuses rather on a ‘historical’ perspective, even if the textual evidence presents several ‘canons’, in which the order of the biblical books varies.³⁹ The first part seems to focus on the ‘history’ of Israel, from

36. Tov, “The Rabbinic Tradition,” 11.

37. See also J. JOOSTEN, “Une théologie de la Septante? Réflexions méthodologiques sur la version grecque” *RTP* 132 (2000), 31-46, esp. 34: “L’analyse de la théologie de la Septante s’en tiendra-t-elle aux dires du texte, ou tentera-t-elle de retracer, au-delà du texte, les idées et les convictions du traducteurs? La distinction n’est pas saugrenue”.

38. See J. LUST, “De Septuaginta: de Bijbel van de Christenen?” *Collationes* 21 (1991), 231-249, esp. 235-236. We summarize his view in the following paragraph.

39. See, in this respect, also H.-J. FABRY, “The Biblical Canon and Beyond: Theological and Historical Context of the Codices of Alexandria” in: J. COOK / H.-J. STIPP (eds.), *Text-Critical and Hermeneutical Studies in the Septuagint* (SVT 157), Leiden 2012, 21-34, esp. 23: “We know noth-

the creation until the era of the Maccabees. The second part encompasses the Psalms and Wisdom literature, in which the actual life of Israel in the present is at stake. And finally, the prophetic literature – which has been interpreted as foretelling prediction, especially within Christian thinking – would then be more oriented towards the future.

Notwithstanding the complexity of obtaining an adequate understanding of the concept of the 'Septuagint', as evoked in what preceded, one could, of course, try to research a particular theology of the Septuagint. However, this quest is certainly complicated and can only be launched when taking into account the aspects discussed above. Only against that background could one take the next step: how and in what way can we discover and explore the theology of the Septuagint, or rather, as stated above, the 'implicit' theology or still differently, the 'theological accents' in the Septuagint?

4. Which trail to follow:

How do we discover the theology of the Septuagint?

Before launching into the quest of discovering and describing an eventual (implicit) theology of the Septuagint, even on the slightest level of particular theological accents, it is important to become conscious of the point of departure that one takes. This question pertains to the way we read the Septuagint.

Of course, one could read the Septuagint in its own right. And this has actually been done, both in ecclesial as well as in academic spheres. The Greek orthodox churches use the Septuagint simply as their Bible, and they read it as such without any need whatsoever to trace back its Hebrew *Vorlage*. Also, in the academic world, the Septuagint is sometimes studied as a self-reliant document from the Jewish communities of Alexandria in Hellenistic times. Within classical philological and historical studies, the Septuagint is studied in both linguistic and cultural terms. And this stance can also be observed within scholarly projects, e. g., within the premises of the French translation project, already mentioned above, 'La Bible d'Alexandrie'. The latter project focuses on the Greek text as it stands and analyses, moreover, the way in which this Greek text has been perceived and interpreted in tradition, more particularly within the writings of the Church fathers who often refer to the wording of the Septuagint. In addition, one can recently even see the so-called synchronic literary methods of biblical exegesis, such as narrative criticism or even hermeneutical approaches, being applied directly to the text of the Septuagint, without any reference to a preceding Hebrew text.⁴⁰

ing about any discussions or decisions about the arrangement of the biblical books". See also DOUGLAS, "Limitations to Writing a Theology of the Septuagint," esp. 106-111.

40. Discussing this matter, see, for example, the critical stance of T. A. W. VAN DER LOUW, "A Narratological Approach to the Septuagint?" ZAW 125 (2013), 551-565, esp. 565: "In my view, a narratological approach to the LXX is not impossible, as long as we realize its limited potential."

Nevertheless, even if this way of reading and interpreting the Septuagint or using it to develop knowledge of Hellenistic Greek and its culture could be valuable as such, and even if the Septuagint as such has indeed been an important source for Christianity,⁴¹ in which indeed the Church fathers have used and interpreted it within the context of developing a Christian theology, it would be a serious methodological mistake to neglect the fact that after all, or better, before all, the Septuagint is factually a translation, at least for those books that have been translated from Hebrew.⁴²

Therefore, as we have already stated above, searching for particular theological elements in the Septuagint requires first recognizing its translation character, discerning what was present in its Hebrew *Vorlage*, and how that *Vorlage* was rendered into Greek. In other words, being conscious of the fact that we are dealing with a translation, implies already that we should make sure to be well aware of the fact that translation is in any case always interpretation. And particularly if we are talking about a theological text, like the Septuagint, it seems inevitably that there will be theology for us to find.

The question is rather which theology comes from the translator and which was already present in the Hebrew source text? It is only this question that leads us to the eventual recovery of particular theological accents in the Septuagint.⁴³ To answer this question, however, one needs to understand, with as much accuracy as possible, the way in which the Septuagint translators have handled their *Vorlage*. In other words, one must first understand their translation techniques and/or their translational attitude and intentions. It is this issue that we will discuss in the following paragraphs.

4.1. The background:

The theology of the Septuagint as a translational reality

As we already pointed out above (section 2), every translation implies interpretation. A translation of a theological text thus equally implies theological interpretation. Therefore, if one aims at reaching out for the 'theology' of the Septuagint, the first element to take into account is the way in which the translator has interpreted his source text. In the words of Jan Joosten: "For the exegesis of the Septuagint is not first and foremost to be viewed as a function of its being a religious document of Hellenistic

41. On this see M. KARRER, "Der Septuaginta-Text im frühen Christentum, in: S. KREUZER (ed.), *Einleitung in die Septuaginta* (LXX.H1), Gütersloh 2015, 663-677, and W. KRAUS, "Die Bedeutung der Septuagintazitate im Neuen Testament auf dem Hintergrund der alttestamentlichen Textgeschichte" in: KREUZER (ed.), *Einleitung*, 678-695 (English translations in S. KREUZER (ed.), *Introduction to the Septuagint*, Waco, 2019 [in press]).

42. See E. Tov, "Die Septuaginta in ihrem theologischen und traditionsgeschichtlichen Verhältnis zur hebräischen Bibel" in: M. KLOPFENSTEIN et al. (eds.), *Mitte der Schrift? Ein jüdisch-christliches Gespräch* (JeC 11), Bern 1987, 237-265, esp. 238: "Bei unserer Diskussion über die LXX dürfen wir nie vergessen, dass die LXX eine Übersetzung ist. Diese Tatsache sollte uns bei der Untersuchung jeder Einzelheit bewusst sein."

43. For some reflections and examples on this subject see also S. KREUZER, "Textgeschichte und Theologie" in: F. UEBERSCHÄER / T. WAGNER / J. M. ROBKER (eds.), *Theologie und Textgeschichte* (WUNT 407), Stuttgart, 2018, 1-24, esp. 3-10.

Judaism, but of its being a translation".⁴⁴ Or in the words of Johann Cook, one could confirm: "What is clear to me is that 'theology' or 'ideology' for that matter, is to be located in the way any given translator in fact renders his parent text".⁴⁵ Indeed, and evidently, as has been said above, the source text that has been translated by the Greek translators was a theological/ideological text. So, that implies naturally that the Greek translation thereof is equally theological/ideological.

Nevertheless, one should not exaggerate. Even if the interpretative aspect of translation can never be disregarded in the process of translation – which is already clear in the Greek terminology in which ἐρμηνεύω has a double meaning, that of 'to translate from one language into another' as well as 'to interpret' – one should simultaneously nuance this principle. Generally speaking, the primary intention of a translator is to render his source text as faithfully as possible. He will do his utmost best to transfer the ideas of his source text – in this case, the Hebrew Bible and its theologies – into another language. That is ultimately the reason why any translation is made: to provide valuable thoughts into another language to make them accessible for a wider audience. The idea is to render faithfully – even if that requires some adaptation, both linguistically as well as sometimes conceptually and culturally –, not to present the translator's own writings ...

Offering a concrete example, one could refer to the obviously theological text of Exod 20:2. In the Masoretic text, God addresses the Israelites in the following words: אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים ("I am YHWH your God who has made you leave the land of Egypt, the house of slavery"). In Greek, one reads: Ἐγὼ εἰμι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, ὅστις ἐξήγαγόν σε ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας ("I am the Lord, your God, who has made you leave Egypt, the house of slavery"). If one compares the Masoretic text to the Septuagint, one observes that the Greek translation is virtually identical to the Hebrew text, which most probably can be considered as its *Vorlage*. The theology in both versions is identical, even if there are, of course, some differences on the grammatical level. Nevertheless, these differences are simply the inherent result of the process of translation of a Hebrew text into a Greek one.⁴⁶ In Greek, the verb εἰμι is needed to express the nominal sentence of the Hebrew. Furthermore, the Hebrew system of pronominal suffixes does not exist in Greek: there is often no other possibility than rendering one Hebrew word in its different segments (אֱלֹהֶיךָ; הוֹצֵאתִיךָ) by different Greek words (ὁ θεός σου – notice, moreover, the quantitative 'plus' of the definite article in Greek –; ἐξήγαγόν σε). Furthermore, and as is always the case in the Septuagint, the name of God (the tetragrammaton) has been 'translated' by the substantive κύριος. The *hifil* הוֹצֵאתִיךָ has been rendered by an aorist and the unchangeable relative pronoun (אֲשֶׁר) has been translated by the Greek pronoun ὅστις. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding these differences, the Masoretic text

44. JOOSTEN, "Exegesis in the Septuagint of Hosea," 123.

45. J. COOK, "Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint," 622.

46. See A. AEJMELEUS, "Übersetzungstechnik und theologische Interpretation. Zur Methodik der Septuaginta-Forschung" in: E. ZENGER (ed.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter. Sprachliche und theologische Aspekte* (HBS 32), Freiburg 2001, 3-18, esp. 11: "Von theologischer Interpretation kann keine Rede sein, wenn der Übersetzer Wort für Wort übersetzt und dabei Standardäquivalente verwendet."

and the Septuagint's rendering are identical on the theological level. Thus, even if this Greek text is clearly theological, it does not show us any interesting clues with regard to a theology of the Septuagint.

The question at stake pertains thus to the way in which, apart from the evident theological character of the Septuagint being a translation of a theological source text, particular elements of theological thinking and interpretation can be traced.

4.2. The main principle:

marking identity and particularity, emphasizing differences?

If we think, in general, about the way that individual people, as well as cultures and societies, express their identity and particularity, they often do so by emphasizing that which makes them different from others. Would it not be almost natural then to look at the aspects in which the Septuagint differs from the Hebrew text when searching for its particular theological accents? In other words, can we find the particular theology of the Septuagint mainly in passages in which it significantly differs from the Hebrew text?

And indeed, one can observe that scholars explicitly point to that methodological trail. "Ce qui intéresse, c'est ce qui change dans la traduction par rapport à la source: les ajouts de sens, et les soustractions, les infléchissements et les transformations [...]", as Joosten states. And a little further, he emphasizes: "Là où la traduction diverge de façon sensible du texte original, dans un passage aux implications théologiques, on peut espérer toucher du doigt la théologie propre du traducteur".⁴⁷ Also Cook insists on this criterion, when he posits: "It is exactly in the differences between the source text and the target text that interpretation takes place. This interpretation could be understood as exegesis or theology".⁴⁸ In a similar vein, Evangelia Dafni writes: "Theologie der Septuaginta ist m. E. die aus den Unterschieden zwischen dem Masoretischen Text und der Septuaginta wirklich herausgenommene Theologie und nicht die in den gemeinsamen Punkten beider Textformen feststellbare Theologie, die gleichsam das theologische Erbe des ganzen Alten Testaments ausmacht. Die Punkte, wo beide Textformen voneinander abweichen, sind zuweilen charakteristisch für ein anderes oder auch ein neues Verständnis".⁴⁹ And to echo a final voice, Anneli Aejmelaeus has also insisted on this perspective: "Die Erforschung der Theologie der Septuaginta konzentriert sich also auf Textstellen, an denen die Formulierung des Übersetzers auf eine theologisch interessante Weise von der genauen lexikalischen oder formalen Wiedergabe seiner *Vorlage* abweicht".⁵⁰

As such, this runs parallel to the idea within the study of the Septuagint's translation technique, that it is not the 'literal' word-to-word translating that teaches us something about the particularities of a certain Septuagint translator, but rather those

47. JOOSTEN, "Une théologie de la Septante?" 33.

48. COOK, "Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint," 622.

49. DAFNI, "Theologie der Sprache der Septuaginta," 327.

50. A. AEJMELEAUS, "Von Sprache zur Theologie. Methodologische Überlegungen zur Theologie der Septuaginta" in: M. KNIBB (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195), Leuven 2006, 21-48, esp. 30.

aspects that deviate from that 'easy technique',⁵¹ in showing something special, be it the way he strives for a more idiomatic Greek text or the manner in which he tries to make his text more understandable for his audience when dealing with difficult semantic and/or theological situations. That is also why, in the development of translation technical studies on the Septuagint, the focus has gradually changed from studying its 'literalness', be it in its specific aspects, to rather studying its 'freedom' in different ways, and relating that to so-called 'faithfulness' but, reaching beyond that, also to his linguistic and literary 'creativity'.⁵² This creativity can be clear indeed on the level of the language, but equally in terms of theological originality (through aspects of re-actualisation, new conceptualization etc.), in which the activity of a translator resembles that of an author/redactor.⁵³ In this respect, the recent 'content- and context-related criteriology in the qualitative characterization of the Septuagint translation', developed at the Louvain CSSTC's,⁵⁴ demonstrates itself capable of indeed tracing back the 'creativity' of particular translators,⁵⁵ thereby finding out in what way they handle their *Vorlage* with regard to specific content-related aspects and where and in which way they take their own stance.

Turning back to the scholars' desire, mentioned above, to find meaningful differences in theologically relevant passages, one observes that 'theological' differences are sometimes very clear. By way of illustration, one could refer to Isa 6:10 and 9:5. In the first passage, according to the Masoretic text, God commands Isaiah, in the context of

51. With respect to the expression 'easy technique', see J. BARR, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (MSU 15), Göttingen 1979, 300. Concerning the statement itself, see especially the discussion of the approach by the so-called Finnish school in LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 112-113: "While the fact that every Septuagint translation can be characterised in general terms as more or less literal cannot be denied, the Finnish scholars argue that it is precisely the deviations from this literal manner of working in favour of a more free, idiomatic Greek usage that expose the difference between individual translators and at the same time illuminate the particular characteristics of each individual translator."
52. See B. LEMMELIJN, "Two Methodological Trails in Recent Studies on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint" in: R. SOLLAMO / S. SIPILÄ (eds.), *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (SESJ 62), Helsinki 2001, 43-63; LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 108-129; LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 144-147; H. AUSLOOS / B. LEMMELIJN, "Faithful Creativity Torn Between Freedom and Literalness in the Septuagint's Translations" *JNSL* 40 (2014), 53-69.
53. See LEMMELIJN, "Influence of a So-Called P-redaction in the 'Major Expansions' of Exod 7-11?" 203-222, esp. 221.
54. B. LEMMELIJN / H. AUSLOOS, "Septuagint Studies in Louvain" in: K. SPRONK (ed.), *The Present State of Old Testament Studies in the Low Countries: A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap* (OTS 69), Leiden 2016, 144-158; H. AUSLOOS / B. LEMMELIJN, "Content Related Criteria in Characterising the LXX Translation Technique" in: W. KRAUS / M. KARRER / M. MEISER (ed.), *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse* (WUNT 252), Tübingen 2010, 357-376; H. AUSLOOS / B. LEMMELIJN / V. KABERGS, "The Study of Aetiological Wordplay as a Content-Related Criterion in the Characterisation of LXX Translation Technique" in: S. KREUZER / M. MEISER / M. SIGISMUND (eds.), *Die Septuaginta – Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte* (WUNT 286), Tübingen 2012, 273-294; LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 124-125; LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 144-147.
55. AUSLOOS / LEMMELIJN, "Faithful Creativity," 53-69.

his vocational vision: "Make fat the heart of this people (הִפִּיל – *hifil*), make their ears heavy (הִכְבִּד – *hifil*), glue their eyes (הִשֵּׁעַ – *hifil*), so that it will not see with its eyes, nor hear with its ears, so that its heart will not understand and it will not be able to convert and be healed". This text is quite hard, giving the impression that it is God himself who prevents the Israelites from converting. The version of the Septuagint is obviously different: "The heart of this people is hardened (ἐπαχύνθη – passive aorist), they hear in a deaf way (βαρέως ἤκουσαν – active aorist), and they have closed their eyes (ἐκάλυψαν – active aorist), for fear that their eyes would see, that their ears would hear, that their heart would understand and that they would convert to me and that I would heal them." In the Septuagint translation, the Israelites themselves are responsible for their own obstinacy, the prophet only observes it.⁵⁶ Another difference can be observed in Isa 9:5, a verse regarding the coming of a new king: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders and he is named: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace". In the Septuagint, one reads: "A child has been born to us, a son given to us; the principality rests on his shoulder, and he is called by this name: angel of wise advice. For I will bring peace to the princes/rulers (ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄξω εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας)". Whereas the first part of the verse seems to have been translated quite literally, the Septuagint differs rather strongly from the Masoretic text in the second half of the verse. Without entering into details, it seems that the royal child is considered to bring peace in the Masoretic text, whereas in the Septuagint, it is God himself who provides peace.⁵⁷

Anyway, one thing that is obvious is that the analysis of differences between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint should be exclusively done on the level of the text itself. The literary text, indeed, is the only available entrance to an analysis of the theology of the Septuagint. Aejmelaeus expresses it adequately when she states: "Wenn es sich aber um Theologie der Septuaginta-Übersetzung handelt, sind ihre sprachlichen Äusserungen alles, was wir haben. Es geschieht ausschliesslich durch die Sprache, durch die Formulierung des griechischen Übersetzungstextes, dass wir überhaupt etwas von den theologischen oder religiösen Überzeugungen der Übersetzer erfahren oder spüren können".⁵⁸

Nevertheless, even if one would agree that the 'theology' of the Septuagint can only be discovered when focusing on the differences regarding the Hebrew text, it is of utmost importance to stay cautious. Observing a difference is one thing, interpreting takes another step further. Therefore, in interpreting differences, one should be prudent not to jump to rash conclusions without solid grounds.

56. See, with respect to the interpretation of this verse, C. A. EVANS, *To See and Not Perceive: Isaiah 6,9-10 in Early Jewish and Christian Interpretation* (JSOT SS 64), Sheffield 1989, 61-68.

57. A. VAN DER KOOIJ, "Wie heisst der Messias? Zu Jes 9,5 in den alten griechischen Versionen" in: C. BULTMANN / W. DIETRICH / C. LEVIN (eds.), *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments. Beiträge zur Biblischen Hermeneutik. Festschrift für Rudolph Smend zum 70. Geburtstag*, Göttingen 2002, 156-169. This verse demonstrates, moreover, that it seems impossible to consider the Septuagint as such as more 'messianic' than the Masoretic text. On messianism in the Septuagint, see especially J. LUST (edited by K. HAUSPIE), *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays*, Leuven 2004. For an example of a probable anti-messianic development in the Masoretic text (Amos 4:13) see KREUZER, "Origin and Development," 27-28.

58. AEJMELEAUS, "Von Sprache zur Theologie," 21.

4.3. One step further:

Interpreting differences, searching for their origin

Quite similar to the methodological steps of a text-critical study, in which the first step is to observe and collect, thereafter to describe and select and only ultimately to evaluate the text-relevant variants in the extant texts,⁵⁹ the search for a theology in the Septuagint works in much the same way. Even if we agree that theological elements or accents can be found on the basis of differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text (or *in extensu* all other Hebrew textual witnesses), then, of course, we factually did only collect, observe and describe. The conclusion as to whether the variant includes particular exegesis by the Septuagint translator can only be reached on the basis of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, one should be able to say whether the (theological) variant under study finds its origin in the work of the translator effectively. Indeed, even if a variant is theological, this does not necessarily imply that it stems from the translational activity. It is equally possible that the origin of this difference is to be situated on the level of the *Vorlage* of the Greek text. Discerning the distinction between the *Vorlage* and the translator is a very difficult question, but highly important and even indispensable to reach well-founded conclusions on the particular theology of the Septuagint.⁶⁰

Again, one could refer to an example showing a variant between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint in Gen 2:2. In the Masoretic text, God completed his creational work on the seventh day (בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי). In the Septuagint, he does so on the sixth day (ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἕκτῃ). One can observe a clear difference between the two textual witnesses, and moreover, it is a difference that undoubtedly entails some theological relevance. In Judaism, to stop working is equally still working, which is not allowed on the “seventh day”. Thus, it seems hardly possible that God himself would not respect his own commandments. The question, however, is to find out at what level the text has been ‘changed’. From the perspective of the Hebrew text, the reading of the seventh day seems to be the original. However, the fact that the Samaritan Pentateuch equally reads the “sixth day” (בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁשִׁי), provides the scholar with a Hebrew reading which conforms to the Septuagint’s, and demonstrates thereby that it is likely that this reading had been known in Hebrew in the Jewish tradition,⁶¹ thereby implying that the

59. See LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 22-27; LEMMELIJN, “Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence,” 132-151 and B. LEMMELIJN, “What Are We Looking for in Doing Text-Critical Research?” *JNSL* 23 (1997) 69-80.

60. See, for example, DAFNI, “Theologie der Sprache der Septuaginta,” 323 who speaks of “scheinbaren Miss- bzw. Fehldeutungen der Vorlage” and “Annahme einer anderen Vorlage als den Masoretischen Text”; DOUGLAS, “Limitations to Writing a Theology of the Septuagint,” 112. See equally AEJMELEUS, “Von Sprache zur Theologie,” 26-27: “Es geht nicht darum, dass die Septuaginta zum Werkzeug der Textkritik degradiert werden soll, auch nicht darum, dass alle abweichenden Aussagen auf eine abweichende Vorlage zurückgeführt werden sollen, sondern einfach darum, dass die Fälle erkannt werden, wo die Vorlage in Wirklichkeit anders als der MT gelaute hat, damit nicht dem Übersetzer zugeschrieben wird, wofür er nicht verantwortlich ist, und auch damit kein falsches Bild von der Arbeitsweise des Übersetzers geschaffen wird.”

61. See equally the Talmudic tradition in this respect: E. Tov, “The Rabbinic Tradition Concerning

Greek variant is not particular nor original in the Septuagint.⁶² In this case, the existence of a Hebrew variant confirming the Greek one suggests a different *Vorlage*.

However, one does not always have concurring Hebrew variants at one's disposal when tracing the origin of Greek variants. Even if the preceding example was quite clear in the suggestion of a different *Vorlage*, it is indeed not always as simple to evaluate whether the difference is situated on the level of the *Vorlage* or, on the contrary, whether it has been the translator who has changed the text. This evaluative judgment is a very difficult matter, in which several parameters should be taken into account. Let us illustrate this problem again with an example, namely Deut 11:13.

In this verse, being part of Moses' speech, he addresses the Israelites, according to the Masoretic text, with the following words: "If you obey my commandments that I prescribe to you today ...". From the perspective of the content of the text, this verse presents a problem, certainly if one reads it in the context of the rest of the book of Deuteronomy: the commandments that Moses gives to the Israelites are not his, but God's. In the book of Deuteronomy, the word *מצוה* always refers to the divine commandments. And the usage of the suffixes confirms this: when Moses speaks, he speaks about "his commandments"; when God speaks, he mentions "my commandments"; when the Israelites talk to God, they speak of "your commandments". That is why it is very strange that in Deut 11:13, the Hebrew text gives the impression that Moses does not speak of the divine commandments, but of his own. In the Septuagint, this theological problem has disappeared: Moses speaks according to the theology of Deuteronomy of the divine commandments ("his commandments" – τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ). Does this variant testify to a theological alteration produced by the Septuagint? Even if this would theoretically be possible, one should also take into account that the consonants *ʾ* and *י* are often interchanged by error: the Masoretic text reads *מצוהי*, while a retroversion of the Greek text would result in *מצוהי* (as in Deut 7:9; 8:2; 27:10).

In this respect, Rösel has argued that the fact that a difference should be attributed to the *Vorlage* does not imply that this difference is irrelevant from a theological point of view.⁶³ However, if Rösel is correct, this would mean that one would no longer be talking about a theology particular to the Septuagint, but rather of a theological accent that the Septuagint shares with other extant Hebrew textual witnesses.

Finally, except for having concurring Hebrew textual variants in non-Masoretic texts at hand that provide evidence of a different *Vorlage*, the distinction between variants from a different *Vorlage* and those introduced by the translator can be deduced in one other way: through careful study of the translation techniques.⁶⁴ That is, the way in

the 'Alterations' Inserted into the Greek Pentateuch and their Relation to the Original Text of the LXX" *JSJ* 15 (1984), 65-89.

62. See Tov, "Die Septuaginta in ihrem theologischen und traditionsgeschichtlichen Verhältnis," 260-261. Unfortunately, there is no extant fragment from the Dead Sea scrolls that could confirm the existence of this variant in the pre- or proto-Masoretic texts.

63. RÖSEL, "Eine Theologie der Septuaginta. Präzisierungen und Pointierungen," 34.

64. With respect to the importance of the analysis of the translation technique with a view to the discussion of the theology of the Septuagint, see R. SOLLAMO, "Translation Technique as a Method" in: H. AUSLOOS et al. (eds.), *Translating a Translation* (BETL 213), Leiden 2008, 35-41, esp. 41: "As for a methodology, the study of translation technique is the *conditio sine qua non* for a theology of the Septuagint translators. Emphasis of the translation technique does

which the particular translators handled their *Vorlage* and their observable and demonstrable attitudes toward their source texts can provide the scholar with some factors of probability in deciding on the origin of a variant.⁶⁵ In this respect, the development of the study of translation technique in the last decades, and as described above, has nuanced the formerly rather intuitive labels that scholars gave to the different books of the Septuagint, in terms of either literal and slavish or free and random. Literalness has been studied in its different aspects, and freedom has also been studied from different qualitative perspectives, whether that be on the basis of language and grammar or on the basis of more content- and context-related criteria.⁶⁶ In this way, far more nuanced characterizations have been suggested, and labels have been nuanced in terms of faithfulness and creativity, tracing the originality of particular translators in specific aspects.⁶⁷ As said above, only a painstaking characterization of the translation technique in the specific books of the Septuagint can provide the scholar with some 'probability' when evaluating the Greek variants. Simply put, if a specific translation is generally very close to its *Vorlage*, and if, in that context, it suddenly shows a larger plus, then, it is hardly imaginable that the translator was the one to insert it. Rather, he has indeed probably relied on a different *Vorlage*.

Moreover, besides the question of the origin of the Greek 'theological' variant differing from the Masoretic text (as a hypothetical placeholder for the supposed *Vorlage*), there is another factor to take into consideration. The fact that the Septuagint would testify of another theology does not imply automatically that this theological reading would *ipso facto* be younger, reflecting a later stage in the development of the text. Even if the Hebrew text has been considered as a 'holy text', this 'confessional' character has no relevance at all in the context of a scientific analysis of the text. One should therefore be careful not to provide a privileged position to one or another text. Even if one demonstrates that a difference between the Hebrew and the Greek text does not result from an error, thus being intentional in Greek, this does not mean automatically that it is the translator who was responsible for the differing theology. It is always possible that the Septuagint confronts us to a textual variant which is more original than the one we know in Hebrew, and that it might have been a copyist/scribe

not imply denying the existence or the possibility of the existence of a theology of the Septuagint or an individual translator, but it makes the study of it more complicated and compels it to rely on solid argumentation." See equally F. AUSTERMAN, "ἀνομιὰ im Septuaginta-Psalter. Ein Beitrag zum Verhältnis von Übersetzungsweise und Theologie" in: R. SOLLAMO / S. SIPILÄ (eds.), *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (SESJ 62), Helsinki 2001, 99-138.

65. See Lemmeliijn, *A Plague of Texts*, 18-20; 96-107; LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 144-148.

66. See LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 124-125; AUSLOOS / LEMMELIJN, "Content Related Criteria," 357-376; AUSLOOS / LEMMELIJN / KABERGS, "The Study of Aetiological Wordplay as a Content-Related Criterion," 273-294; LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 144-147.

67. See LEMMELIJN, "Two Methodological Trails," 43-63, LEMMELIJN, *A Plague of Texts*, 108-129; LEMMELIJN, "Text-Critically Studying the Biblical Manuscript Evidence," 144-147; AUSLOOS / LEMMELIJN, "Faithful Creativity," 53-69.

within the Hebrew textual transmission that has altered (whether or not intentionally) his original text. Or maybe, but this is still another issue, it would be better to speak of a 'redactor' in such cases.⁶⁸

In this respect, the case of the book of Jeremiah is well known. Even if, during several decades, scholars have thought that the Greek translator had shortened the Hebrew text of Jeremiah, nowadays, and thanks to the study of the textual material of the Dead Sea scrolls (again providing parallel material in Hebrew), it is quite generally accepted that the Septuagint of Jeremiah has transmitted a more original text of this book. Or, to give another example, one could refer to Judg 9:46. In the Masoretic text, one reads that the inhabitants of Sichem "went into the fortified part of the house of the god Berith" (אל צריח בית אל ברית). In the Greek text of Judges A (the eclectic text that Rahlfs has composed on the basis of Codex Alexandrinus; the B-text presents the text of Codex Vaticanus), one reads: εἰς τὸ ὀχύρωμα οἴκου τοῦ Βααλ διαθήκης. Was it the Greek translator that changed the formula אל ברית ('el b^erît) to Βααλ διαθήκης (בעל ברית, ba'al b^erît)? Did the translator (or his *Vorlage*) aim at harmonizing with Judg 8:33 and 9:4, as Paul Harlé suggests?⁶⁹ Or is the Greek A-text (βάαλ) rather a textual witness of a more original variant that has been changed into אל (cf. the B-text, presenting the Codex Vaticanus reading βαιθηλβεριθ) on the basis of theological motives, as Natalio Fernández Marcos proposes?⁷⁰ Whatever may be the case, this example demonstrates in a clear way that one needs to be cautious not to link Greek variants too easily to a different theology of the translator.

5. Hidden theology? Nuancing the main principle

Even if the main rule, described above, according to which a particular theology of the Septuagint would be discovered through the exploration of important variants, is quite generally confirmed, one needs to nuance this guideline. In a challenging article, Emanuel Tov asked the following pertinent question: Did the Septuagint translators always understand their Hebrew Text?⁷¹ The contribution opens by stating that the (correct)

68. On the overlap between textual criticism and literary criticism, and as a result also the change of view on the activities of copyists/scribes on the one hand and authors/redactors on the other, see LEMMELIJN, "Influence of a So-Called P-redaction in the 'Major Expansions' of Exod 7-11?" 203-222. See equally H. AUSLOOS, "Literary Criticism and Textual Criticism in Judg 6:1-14 in Light of 4QJudg^a" *OTE* 27 (2014), 358-376.

69. P. HARLÉ / T. ROQUEPLO, *Les Juges* (BdA 7), Paris 1999, 174: "AL remplace El par Baal sous l'influence de 8, 33 et 9, 14 (*sic*)".

70. N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, *Judges* (BHQ 7), Stuttgart 2011, 80: "The form βάαλ is probably an ancient reading preserved in G and La (*Bahel*; see v. 4 and 8:33), before it was corrected to אל in M for theological motives, as can be appreciated, given the many other biblical attempts to polemicize against Baal. Since this is a clear case of theological correction in M, the reading of G is preferable."

71. E. Tov, "Did the Septuagint Translators Always Understand Their Hebrew Text?" in: idem, *The Greek and Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (SVT 72), Leiden 1999, 203-218.

interpretation of a biblical text is an abstract concept. Indeed, a modern translator is often confronted by words and expressions which he simply does not understand. Sometimes, there is no other choice except conjecture. The situation of the translators of the Septuagint was similar. In their *Vorlage*, they have undoubtedly been challenged by words which they did not know or which looked strange to them. Consequently, it is unsurprising that one sometimes finds conjectures in the Septuagint. Tov distinguishes several types thereof: the Septuagint translator can leave the unknown word untranslated; he can try to find out the meaning on the basis of the context; he could try to manipulate the text; or he could attempt to trace back the etymology of the Hebrew word and invent a meaning based thereon.

5.1. A different theology without differing texts

As such, this is a normal aspect of linguistic reality. However, and against this very background, there is yet another complication to consider when addressing the issue of the theology of the Septuagint. The interpretation that the Septuagint (correctly or incorrectly) has given to a difficult Hebrew text has sometimes become the general norm for the interpretation of the (still difficult) Hebrew text. However, in this case, one does not even question whether this translation of the Hebrew, which is based on the trial-and-error-interpretation that the Septuagint has given of a difficult Hebrew text, is also the most adequate one.⁷² Two examples may suffice to illustrate the implications of this procedure: 1 Kings 19:12 and Gen 1:2.

The text of 1 Kings 19:12 narrates the stay of the prophet Elijah at Horeb.⁷³ When Elijah stays in a cavern that night, a word of God comes to him: the prophet has to leave the cavern in order to see in which way God will reveal himself. Next, the pericope reports a theophany. First, there is a strong wind, eroding mountains and breaking rocks. However, God is not in the wind. After the wind, there is an earthquake, but God is neither therein. Thereafter, there is a fire, but God is not in the fire either. Finally, after the wind, the earthquake and the fire, God manifests himself in a קול דממה דקה. Generally speaking, this Hebrew expression is interpreted as silence,⁷⁴ and one often uses it in pastoral terms to explain that the biblical God is a God of tenderness and calm, contrary to Baal who is a god of thunderstorms.

If one compares the Hebrew text to the Septuagint translation, it seems at first sight that the translator has well understood the Hebrew text, since he translates it by φωνὴ αὔρας λεπτῆς (the whispering of a light breath). At least, that would be the

72. With regard to this problematic issue, see H. AUSLOOS, "Hapax Legomena, the Septuagint, and Hebrew Lexicography" in: M. K. H. PETERS (ed.), *XIV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies – Helsinki 2010* (SBL SCS 59), Atlanta, GA 2013, 291–300.

73. See H. AUSLOOS, "Beyond Maximalism and Minimalism: The Theophany in 1 Kings 19:11–12 and the Theology of the Septuagint" in: E. G. DAFNI (ed.), *Gottesschau – Gotteserkenntnis. Studien zur Theologie der Septuaginta*, vol. 1 (WUNT 387), Tübingen 2017, 29–39.

74. See, for example, the English translations of 'a still small voice' (KJV), 'a still small voice' (RSV) and 'a sound of sheer silence' (NRSV).