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HANDBUCH ZUR SEPTUAGINTA
HANDBOOK OF THE SEPTUAGINT

LXX.H

Herausgegeben von
Martin Karrer,
Wolfgang Kraus und
Siegfried Kreuzer

HANDBUCH ZUR SEPTUAGINTA
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Eberhard Bons / Jan Joosten (Hg./eds.)

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der Septuaginta

The Language of
the Septuagint

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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 zu Beginn des Jahres 2016 mit LXX.H 1, »Einleitung in die Septuaginta«, der erste Band erschienen ist, wird hiermit LXX.H 3, »Sprache der Septuaginta / Language of the Septuagint«, vorgelegt.

Die Hauptherausgeber danken den Herausgebern der Bände, in diesem Fall Eberhard Bons, Straßburg, und Jan Joosten, Oxford, 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 Greek language used in the Septuagint elicited comments and debate already in Antiquity. Some ancient authors, such as Philo, praise it to high heaven, while others voice criticism, discretely (e. g. the translator of Ben Sira) or openly (e. g. Celsus). In the modern period it was commonly held that the language of the Septuagint represented some form of dialect, a Judaized Greek or, in a more theological mode: a type of Greek especially prepared for the expression of the Gospel. More recently, characterizations of this type have given way to the observation that Septuagint Greek is in actual fact extraordinarily diverse. The corpus contains books translated literally, books translated more freely, and books written from the start in Greek. The stylistic register of the different books varies between a rather good literary *Koine* and an almost vulgar level of language. Texts from the third century BCE rub shoulders with texts from later periods, some of them as late perhaps as the second century CE. In spite of this diversity, however, a family relationship can be recognized among the different Septuagint books in regard to their language. A measure of distinctness of this language must in any case be recognized because of the linguistic influence of the Septuagint on later writings: the notion of “Septuagintisms” in New Testament Greek or in other ancient writings indicates that the Septuagint origin of certain expressions leaps to the eye.

The language of the Septuagint is a complex field of research, a field in motion with a constant supply of new data (e. g. papyri, inscriptions) and the development of new approaches. For all these reasons, it may appear daunting. It is nevertheless of interest to all Septuagint scholars, for no textual interpretation is possible without correct linguistic analysis. The present volume is designed as an introduction for non-specialists to the state of the art in linguistic research on the Septuagint.

The first section seeks to define the notion of “Septuagint Greek” through a consideration of the history of research and an exploration of different dimensions of diversity that need to be taken into account in any approach to the subject.

The second section situates Septuagint Greek in its language-historical context, which is that of the *Koine*: Hellenistic Greek as a world language. In comparison to classical Greek, a number of developments, in both grammar and vocabulary, have to be taken into account, although the literary language also shows a measure of continuity with classical texts, particularly Homer. Features that characterize *Koine* Greek naturally turn up in the Septuagint, and should not be considered distinctive of “biblical Greek”.

Most of the books of the Septuagint are translations from Hebrew or Aramaic, consequently the translation process and the way it affected the language of the Septuagint is investigated in the third section.

The fourth section inquires to what extent it is possible to recognize local and cultural influences in Septuagint Greek. Most of the corpus must have been created in Egypt, as is demonstrated by linguistic features, but some books may have a Palestinian background. The question of the Jewish sociolect is also explored in this section.

The fifth and sixth sections consider areas of language where the Septuagint is generally agreed to show distinctive features: vocabulary, and style. The section on

style presents a number of general characteristics of the Septuagint, but also discusses a number of specific writings whose style sets them apart from the rest of the corpus.

Finally, section seven explores how the Greek of the Septuagint influenced the Greek of the New Testament.

No effort has been made to harmonize different approaches elaborated in the individual chapters, or to present a unified picture. The dynamics of the debate are more instructive than a mere enumeration of assured results, which in any case are few in number. Some overlap between the various chapters has been tolerated on the view that complex issues (e. g. the question of “Hebraisms”) deserve to be presented in different perspectives. The plurality of scientific languages, German, English and French, was maintained on the same principle.

We are grateful first and foremost to the authors of the individual chapters. It has been a privilege for us to work with such distinguished scholars. Preparing the manuscript has been a long and exacting process, but we think it was worth the wait. Thanks are due also to our research groups (EA 4377 and EA 4378) at the University of Strasbourg, to the University of Oxford, and to the “Septuaginta Deutsch” project, all of which supported the editorial process at various points. We also thank the publishing house “Gütersloher Verlagshaus”, particularly Mr Diedrich Steen and Ms Tanja Scheifele. Jason Dean, Séverin Schneider and Matthew Albanese took on specific editorial tasks, such as copy-editing and producing the indexes. Prof. Hans Schmoll went through the Greek quotations and checked the accentuation. To them too go our thanks.

Jan Joosten
Eberhard Bons

I Prolegomena

1. History of Scholarship on the Language of the Septuagint

STANLEY E. PORTER

1. Introduction

The history of scholarship on the nature of the Greek of the Septuagint is very similar to the history of scholarship on the Greek of the New Testament, for a number of reasons. These include the use of Greek in the Septuagint and in the New Testament as a result of the Hellenistic conquest of the Mediterranean world by Alexander the Great, the use of a form of Attic Greek (sometimes called Great Attic) by Alexander and his successors as an administrative language, the unified Mediterranean region (and beyond) created by the Hellenistic empires and later Rome that enabled widespread communication, and the need for a lingua franca to linguistically unify this expanding and diverse multi-cultural and multi-lingual region, as well as others. There are also a variety of factors that differentiate the Greek of the Septuagint from the Greek of the New Testament. These factors include the facts that the Septuagint is mostly, though not entirely, a translated document, the Septuagint has a (debatable) number of acknowledged Semitisms because of its Hebrew substrate, the divergent translation types found in the varying books (and even within books) create linguistic diversity, knowledge of this translational and creative process is obscure so that those involved and their levels of linguistic competence are unknown, the status of the Septuagint as a sacred text was different from that of the New Testament at its inception, the Septuagint was produced over a much lengthier period of time than the writing of the New Testament (even for skeptics regarding its extent of composition), the Septuagint was the product of a diverse translational and writing process that occurred in a different and developing set of linguistic contexts than the New Testament, the relationship of prestige to non-prestige languages within the diverse cultures differed (e.g. Egypt vs. Palestine or the northern Mediterranean), the multi-lingual context of the Septuagint, in terms of both its translators/writers and its readers, varied from that of the New Testament (even if they perhaps overlapped), and the uses of the Septuagint were different from those of the New Testament, among others.¹ These factors enter into discussion of the question concerning the nature of the Greek of both the New Testament and Septuagint, but are especially important for discussing the Septuagint as a translated religious text.

As a result, it is rightly acknowledged that, like the New Testament, the Septuagint emerged out of a complex multi-lingual milieu over a period of time to be used by

1. Many of these factors are mentioned—though rarely in systematic fashion—in introductions to the Septuagint. For some of the linguistic issues, see S. E. PORTER, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (Studies in Biblical Greek 1), New York, NY 1989, 111-156.

those for whom Greek was sometimes, if not often, not their primary language. Unlike the New Testament, however, it contained both translated documents and those originally written in Greek, to be used in a wide variety of especially religious contexts as sacred texts. Therefore, it is important to trace the history of the discussion of views of the Greek of the Septuagint in its own right, even if the topics and some of the approaches and people involved are similar to those of the New Testament debate.

2. Periods in the Study of the Greek of the Septuagint

The history of debate over the Greek of the New Testament goes back to the sixteenth century. Two early debates were those between the Greek purists and Hebraists and between the sacred and common Greek advocates.² The Hebraists won out in their short-lived battle in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries because of the noteworthy differences of New Testament from Classical Greek, and then the advocates of a form of sacred or Holy Ghost Greek came strongly into the fore, as these features were more widely recognized and discussed. These debates then became more focused in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the discovery of the documentary Greek papyri in Egypt, especially with the work of Adolf Deissmann and James Hope Moulton.³ The history of debate over the nature of the Greek of the Septuagint is much more recent. An early work was Friedrich W. Sturz's on the Alexandrian dialect,⁴ but fuller accounts did not begin to be written until roughly the mid nineteenth century. This history of discussion can be divided into the following rough major periods: Semitic Greek, Hellenistic/Koine Greek, Hebrew/Jewish Greek, and revival of the Koine Greek hypothesis, with the last two being coterminous, even if the Koine Greek hypothesis is still prevalent.

2.1 Semitic Greek Hypothesis

At the time that the discussions of the Greek of the New Testament as a sacred language (Holy Ghost Greek) were on-going, discussion of what was sometimes called Biblical Greek (including the New Testament and the Septuagint) and then especially

2. These debates are recounted in G. B. WINER, *A Treatise on the Grammar of New Testament Greek* (translated by W. F. Moulton, third edition), Edinburgh 1882, 12-41; G. B. WINER, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Sprachidioms* (edited by P. W. Schmiedel), part 1, Göttingen 1894, 4-30; J. W. VOELZ, "The Language of the New Testament" in: W. HAASE (ed.), *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt*, II.25.2, Berlin 1984, 893-977, especially 894-906; and S. WONG, "The Nature of the Greek of the New Testament—Its Past and Present" *Scriptura* 32 (1900), 1-27. Cf. also G. FRIEDRICH, "Pre-History of the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament" in: G. KITTEL / G. FRIEDRICH (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley), vol. 10, Grand Rapids, MI 1976, 613-661.
3. This debate is traced in some detail in PORTER, *Verbal Aspect*, 112-117 and S. E. PORTER, "Introduction" in: S. E. PORTER (ed.), *The Language of the New Testament: Classic Essays* (JSNTSup 60), Sheffield 1991, 11-38, along with supporting essays.
4. F. W. STURZ, *De Dialecto Alexandrina*, Leipzig, 1784 (expanded to *De dialecto Macedonica et Alexandrina*, Leipzig 1808).

the Greek of the Septuagint emerged in its own right. Because of numerous recognizable differences between the Greek of the classical authors of several centuries earlier than the Greek of the New Testament (and even the Septuagint), as well as broad similarities between them, there came to be a characterization of Biblical Greek as its own distinct type of Greek. This theory developed in part as a reaction against those who, noting the differences between Classical and Septuagint Greek, denigrated the latter as in some way sub-standard. One of the first such studies of a distinct Biblical Greek, though limited to the Pentateuch, was by the German scholar Heinrich (H. G. J.) Thiersch. Although he makes some limited use of early papyri,⁵ Thiersch systematically examines the Greek of the Pentateuch and compares it to Attic Greek. He identifies numerous Hebraisms, which he attributes to the fact that they reflect the Hebraic genius and were appropriate language for divine revelation. His volume is for the most part a chronicling of the perceived non-Attic uses in the Pentateuch.⁶ In many ways similar, Zechariah Frankel offers a short grammar of Hebrew in the Septuagint. He classifies and gives representative examples of how various Hebrew constructions are manifested in the Septuagint, including nouns, pronouns, verbs, and particles.⁷ Eduard Reuss calls this distinct Greek the “Hellenistic Idiom,” by which he means “the Greek language which the Jews settled in foreign lands learned to understand and speak, or which met them in Palestine itself.” The Hellenistic idiom was used outside of day to day conversation: “Whatever lay without this sphere [of daily conversation], especially religious ideas, and in general whatever was directly connected with the spirit of the Orient, was rather translated literally, with reference to thought, without regard to Greek usage, and the construction was sometimes modeled very strikingly after Shemitic syntax.”⁸ Although Reuss offers a brief and accurate summary of the development of the Greek language, and appreciates that conversation

5. And is commended for this by Adolf Deissmann. See A. DEISSMANN, *Light from the Ancient East: The New Testament Illustrated by Recently Discovered Texts of the Graeco-Roman World* (translated by L. R. M. Strachan, fourth edition), London 1927 (1910), 48 (translation of *Licht vom Osten: Das Neue Testament und die neuentdeckten Texte der hellenistisch-römischen Welt* (fourth edition), Tübingen 1923 [1908]).
6. H. G. J. THIERSCH, *De Pentateuchi versione Alexandrina libri tres*, Erlangen 1841, 52, cf. 65-188, for detailed comparisons.
7. Z. FRANKEL, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta* (Historisch-kritische Studien zu der Septuaginta), Leipzig 1841, 132-163, followed by a section on hermeneutics and exegesis of the Septuagint (163-203). Emanuel Tov calls this year, 1841, and the work of Thiersch and Frankel, the beginning of the modern “study of translation technique.” See E. Tov, “The Nature and Study of the Translation Technique of the LXX in the Past and Present” in: C. E. Cox (ed.), *VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Jerusalem, 1986* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 23), Atlanta, GA 1987, 342.
8. E. REUSS, *History of the Sacred Scriptures of the New Testament* (translated by E. L. Houghton), Edinburgh 1884, 34, cf. 30-40, (translation of the fourth German edition of 1842). This is similar to what is found in E. REUSS, “Hellenistisches Idiom” in: J. J. HERZOG / D. G. T. PLITT (eds.), *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (second edition), vol. 5, Leipzig 1879, 741-749. Adolf Deissmann claims that such a distinction regarding Greek was not found in linguistic circles, but only in theological ones, apart from G. MEYER, *Griechische Grammatik*, (Indogermanische Grammatiken 3, third edition), Leipzig 1896, 26. See A. DEISSMANN, “Hellenistic Greek with Special Consideration of the Greek Bible” in: PORTER, *Language of the New*

might be different from writing, he clearly has no category for the Greek of the Septuagint (or New Testament) within this development, except to give it its own label.

The Semitic Greek hypothesis was more widely promoted in one of the first monographs on the topic of Biblical Greek by Edwin Hatch. In his book, the first essay of which is devoted to the value and use of the Septuagint, Hatch recognizes that there are many similarities between Attic Greek and Biblical Greek, but also that there are many differences. These are caused by a variety of factors, such as the lapse of time between the two language types, the Septuagint being a collection of books, the different social locations, and the Septuagint's translational characteristics. As a result, Hatch concludes that the individual books "afford clear internal evidence that their writers, in most cases, were men whose thoughts were cast in a Semitic and not in a Hellenic mould."⁹ He thus continues, "Biblical Greek is thus a language which stands by itself," reflective of a "Semitic mind."¹⁰ There are therefore numerous instances in which knowledge of specific examples of language use in the Septuagint enable interpreters to understand the Greek New Testament (which is Greek of the same type), including both new words and especially words already known but used in different ways.

In a work focused upon the New Testament, but with an extensive introduction to the broader topic, Joseph Viteau provides one of the fullest expositions of the hypothesis that Biblical Greek is a unique form of Semitic Greek.¹¹ Viteau begins by surveying the history of Greek, dependent upon the work of the lexicographer Evangelinus Apostolides Sophocles.¹² He especially notes that Greek was not indigenous to Egypt (or Asia Minor), but that Jews of the Diaspora generally adopted the language of their environment as their spoken or colloquial language, as opposed to learning a literary language. This language is called "langue judéo-grecque, langue grecque hébraïsante, grec hébraïsant,"¹³ as represented in the Septuagint. As Viteau states, "La langue *judéo-grecque* ou *grec hébraïsant* est le grec post-classique, modifié dans sa couleur générale par l'hébreu et l'araméen, et mélangé d'hébraïsmes et d'aramaïsmes."¹⁴

This position came to represent the general tenor of belief regarding the Greek of the Septuagint for the nineteenth and even into the twentieth centuries, and was still maintained in a number of works, even after the discovery and appreciation of the Greek documentary papyri. Two of these worth mentioning are the grammar of the Septuagint written by F. C. Conybeare and St. George Stock and the handbook to the Septuagint by Richard Rusden Ottley.

In an introduction to the original publication of the grammar by Conybeare and Stock, deleted from some subsequent reprints, they want to accept that the Greek of the Septuagint is Alexandrian in nature, but also that it is Biblical Greek because of the

Testament, 39 (translation of "Hellenistisches Griechisch" in: A. HAUCK [ed.], *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* [third edition], vol. 7, Leipzig 1899, 627-639).

9. E. HATCH, *Essays in Biblical Greek*, Oxford 1889, 10, cf. 1-35.
10. HATCH, *Biblical Greek*, 11.
11. J. VITEAU, *Étude sur le grec du Nouveau Testament*, Paris 1893.
12. E. A. SOPHOCLES, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods from B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100*, Boston, MA 1870.
13. VITEAU, *Étude*, vi (in italics in the original).
14. VITEAU, *Étude*, xxii (emphasis in the original).

significant number of non-Hellenic Semitisms (many more than in Josephus). Conybeare and Stock go so far as to refer to the “uncompromising Hebraism of the Septuagint,” and attribute this feature “to the reverence felt by the translators for the Sacred Text.”¹⁵ However, they also note that the Greek seems to be puerile or perhaps even, on numerous occasions, not understood by those translating it. The short and often reprinted grammar reflects this orientation at numerous places where Hebraisms are noted.¹⁶ Ottley positions his work in a similar way—recognizing the convincing work of Deissmann and Moulton (see below) regarding the Greek of the New Testament and non-translation Greek (especially not wishing to denigrate Koine Greek) but also wishing to emphasize the Hebraic elements in the translation Greek of the Septuagint. In fact, Ottley spends much of his chapter on the language and style of the Septuagint defining his position in opposition to that of Deissmann and Moulton. As a result, he wishes to re-establish that those features explained by Moulton are still to be regarded as Semitisms: e.g. the relative pronoun with following redundant pronoun, *προστειθέναι* as an auxiliary indicating repeated action, the syntax of a verb with cognate object, a participle used for a finite verb, uses of *ἐν*, *πᾶς* + negative as “none,” and other phrases.¹⁷

The Semitic Greek position holds that, even though written in Greek form, there is a distinctive Jewish Greek, possibly created under divine guidance for revelatory purposes, that is distinguished by particular linguistic constructions. These constructions are foreign to Greek but directly dependent upon Hebrew. This position has had a continued residual influence upon study of the Greek Bible, especially the Septuagint, to the point that even works that accept the force of later research (see the next section) continue to promote it in varying ways.¹⁸

2.2 Hellenistic/Koine Greek Hypothesis

Around the year 1895, scholarship on the language of the Septuagint took a significant change in direction. In light of the discoveries of numerous documentary papyri in Egypt, a number of scholars began to argue that the form of Greek used in the Septuagint (along with that of the New Testament, though not as translation Greek) was remarkably syntactically similar to the Greek of the papyri, and that what had been

15. F. C. CONYBEARE / ST. G. STOCK, *Selections from the Septuagint According to the Text of Swete*, Boston, MA 1905, 22-23, especially 23, for quotations (the entire introduction is on pages 1-24).

16. CONYBEARE / STOCK, *Selections*, 25-100.

17. R. R. OTTLEY, *A Handbook to the Septuagint*, London 1920, 163 (see the entire chapter, pages 159-178). For a summary of research on these constructions, see PORTER, *Verbal Aspect*, 119-141.

18. See, for example, B. F. ATKINSON, *The Greek Language*, London 1931, 273-275, where he says many of the phrases in the Septuagint “were totally foreign to Greek minds” (274). This position is also maintained because of its presence in works on the New Testament. A distinct form of Jewish Greek was proposed by Friedrich Blass in the first edition of his grammar (*Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, Göttingen 1896, 4-5) and this position is also maintained in the well-known English translation (F. BLASS / A. DEBRUNNER, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* [translated by R. W. Funk], Chicago, IL 1963, 3-4) and is still found in the latest edition (F. BLASS / A. DEBRUNNER, *Grammatik des neutestamentlichen Griechisch* [seventeenth edition edited by F. Rehkopf], Göttingen 1990, 4-6).

considered anomalous uses of Greek vocabulary could be explained by their similar use in these same papyri. Prior to the discovery of the papyri and the tangible evidence that they provided, there had been occasional arguments made by a number of scholars that Koine Greek was actually Attic Greek as it had been modified after the time of Alexander by its use throughout the Greco-Roman world. In his introduction to his translation of Georg Winer's grammar, Edward Masson accounts for the Hebraisms within the Septuagint within the context of its being Koine Greek used in a way to preserve the "force and beauty" of the "inspired" original text.¹⁹ Similarly, J. B. Lightfoot delivered lectures in 1863, in which he (rightly) conjectured that Greek words thought to have fallen from use were still part of the "common speech," as would have been discovered if "letters that ordinary people wrote to each other" had been known.²⁰

The discovery of these very letters prompted a thorough re-examination of the koine language, including that of the Septuagint. This reformulation argued that Koine Greek was a developed form of the Attic-Greek based language spread abroad by Alexander in his conquests,²¹ that it constituted a single dialect even if it had regional variations, and that, though there may have been some Semitic influence, it was recognizably Greek, as the evidence of the extra-biblical Greek, especially the documentary papyri, abundantly demonstrated.

There are two major figures who argued most strongly for this position and influenced a large number of other scholars. The first major proponent was Adolf Deissmann. First in his *Bible Studies* (published in German in 1895 and 1897), and then later in his *Light from the Ancient East* (1908), as well as in a number of other works, Deissmann was the first to make widely known the importance of the then recently-discovered Egyptian documentary papyri, as well as other sources such as inscriptions. Deissmann argued against especially the Biblical Greek hypothesis noted above, contending that the Greek of the Septuagint (along with the New Testament) was part of the body of Egyptian and popular Greek of the Greco-Roman period. Deissmann preferred the term Hellenistic Greek to describe this Greek that was used from 300 BCE to 500/600 CE. Deissmann recognized the place of the Septuagint as a translated document, but he nevertheless discounted any form of Semitic Greek as being a spoken or written language. He admitted that there were Semitic or Hebraic elements in the Septuagint, and that the morphology and phonology had been affected. Nevertheless, he contended that the syntax was Hellenistic and not Semitic. Deissmann's work was for the most part devoted to investigation of lexicographical items, where he maintained that

19. E. MASSON, "Translator's Prolegomena" in: G. B. WINER, *A Grammar of the New Testament Diction*, (sixth edition), Edinburgh 1866, vii. See J. R. HARRIS, "The So-Called Biblical Greek" *The Expository Times* 25 (1913), 54-55.

20. Cited in J. H. MOULTON, *Prolegomena*, vol. 1 of his *A Grammar of New Testament Greek* (third edition), Edinburgh 1908 (1906), 242 (a note added to the second edition). See also J. WELLSHAUSEN, *Einleitung in die drei ersten Evangelien*, Berlin 1905, 9, who sees an idiomatic Greek used by the Gospel writers.

21. See J. BLOMQUIST, "The Nature of Post-Classical (Hellenistic) Greek" in: C. C. CARAGOUNIS (ed.), *Greek: A Language in Evolution. Essays in Honour of Antonios N. Jannaris*, Hildesheim 2010, 139-152, especially 139, where he selects the word "expansion" to describe what happened to Greek during the Hellenistic period.

given lexical items could generally be paralleled in abundance in the Hellenistic Greek of the papyri and inscriptions.²²

James Hope Moulton has the distinction of having done the most work to apply Deissmann's theories regarding Koine (or Hellenistic) Greek to syntax, as well as being concerned with lexis. Moulton wrote a number of articles in the *Classical Review* and *The Expositor*, and his work culminated in his *Prolegomena* to his grammar of New Testament Greek.²³ The development of Moulton's ideas under the influence of the papyrological evidence is reflected in the fact that, in the first edition of 1895 of his elementary New Testament Greek grammar, he refers to Hellenistic Greek as "Hebraic Greek, colloquial Greek, and late Greek."²⁴ By the second edition of 1903, this Greek is "common Greek, colloquial Greek, and late Greek."²⁵ As he explains in his *Prolegomena*, the use of Greek by Jews, especially in a bilingual environment, made more prominent constructions that otherwise would have remained comparatively infrequent. Examples include paratactic use of $\kappa\alpha\iota$, various uses of prepositions such as $\epsilon\nu$, types of periphrasis, and use of various pronouns, among others. What we find in the Septuagint, Moulton thinks, is instances of "abnormal Greek produced by the effort of Greek-speaking men to translate the already obsolete and imperfectly understood Hebrew,"

22. A. DEISSMANN, *Bibelstudien: Beiträge, zumeist aus den Papyri und Inschriften, zur Geschichte der Sprache, des Schrifttums und der Religion des hellenistischen Judentums und des Urchristentums*, Marburg 1895; *Neue Bibelstudien: Sprachgeschichtliche Beiträge, zumeist aus den Papyri und Inschriften, zur Erklärung des Neuen Testaments*, Marburg 1897, translated together as *Bible Studies: Contributions Chiefly from Papyri and Inscriptions to the History of the Language, the Literature, and the Religion of Hellenistic Judaism and Primitive Christianity* (translated by A. Grieve, second edition), Edinburgh 1909 (1901); *Licht vom Osten* (1908)/*Light from the Ancient East* (1910), which went through several editions, the fourth being published in 1923 (German)/1927 (English). Cf. also "Hellenistic Greek" (above note 8); *The Philology of the Greek Bible: Its Present and Future* (translated by L. R. M. Strachan), London 1908; and *Die Urgeschichte des Christentums im Lichte der Sprachforschung*, Tübingen 1910; among others.
23. J. H. MOULTON, "New Lights on Biblical Greek" *The Biblical World* 19 (1902), 190-196; "Grammatical Notes from the Papyri" *Classical Review* 15 (1901), 31-38, 434-442; 18 (1904), 106-112, 151-155; "Notes from the Papyri" *The Expositor Sixth Series* 3 (1901), 271-282; 7 (1903), 104-121; 8 (1903), 423-439; "Characteristics of New Testament Greek" *The Expositor Sixth Series* 9 (1904), 67-75, 215-225, 310-320, 359-368, 461-472; 10 (1904), 124-134, 168-174, 276-283, 353-364, 440-450; with many examples finding their way into his (and George Milligan's) *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-Literary Sources*, London 1914-1929; *Prolegomena*, especially 1-41 (re-issued in a German edition, *Einleitung in die Sprache des Neuen Testaments*, Heidelberg 1911); cf. *The Science of Language and the Study of the New Testament* (Inaugural Lecture), Manchester 1906; "Language of the New Testament" in: J. HASTINGS (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible*, Edinburgh 1909, 528-530; "New Testament Greek in the Light of Modern Discovery" in: H. B. SWETE (ed.), *Essays on Some Biblical Questions of the Day: By Members of the University of Cambridge*, London 1909, 461-505 (reprint in: PORTER, *Language of the New Testament*, 60-97); *From Egyptian Rubbish Heaps*, London 1916; and "The Language of the New Testament" in: A. S. PEAKE (ed.), *A Commentary on the Bible* (with Supplement by A. J. Grieve), London 1919, 591-593.
24. J. H. MOULTON, *An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek*, London 1895, 2 (emphasis in the original).
25. J. H. MOULTON, *An Introduction to the Study of New Testament Greek* (second edition), London 1903, 2 (emphasis in the original).

but such instances did not influence or have a lasting effect on the Greek language as a whole.²⁶ Whereas there probably were some differences in the Greek of the time, insofar as differences in pronunciation are concerned, there was not significant difference in the written varieties, as evidenced by letters being sent throughout the Roman Empire, so as to justify calling them dialects.²⁷

Deissmann and Moulton were followed in their findings by numerous other scholars.²⁸ The works of some of these scholars can be conveniently divided into three major groups of writings: general works on Koine Greek, those specifically on the Septuagint, and Septuagint grammars.

The first category of general works on Koine Greek includes works by such scholars as H. A. A. Kennedy and Albert Thumb. In 1895, Kennedy published a book on the sources of the New Testament, in particular the Septuagint as a source for the New Testament vocabulary.²⁹ This book, which began from the standpoint of Hatch, ended up at very different conclusions. Kennedy traces the history and development of the Greek language, from the Attic of Xenophon through the influence of Alexander upon the use and spread of Greek to its use in the Septuagint. He examines the Greek of Egypt in relation to the common or colloquial Greek of the time, and especially examines the vocabulary of the Septuagint and that of the New Testament. He concludes that the Septuagint “is the first entire group of writings composed in the colloquial

26. MOULTON, *Prolegomena*, 13.

27. This does not mean that there are not differences between written and spoken (H. PAUL, *Prinzipien der Sprachgeschichte* [fourth edition], Halle 1909, 33-89) or literary and non-literary language. See DEISSMANN, “Hellenistic Greek,” 43. Both Moulton and Deissmann reject the notion of dialects within Hellenistic or Koine Greek (that is, broadly phonologically, morphologically and even syntactically differing varieties of the language). Cf. K. DIETRICH, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der griechischen Sprache von der hellenistischen Zeit bis zum 10. Jahrhundert nach Christus* (Byzantinisches Archiv 1), Leipzig 1898, 306 ff., who differentiated dialects in Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece.

28. One of the responses to the Deissmann and Moulton hypothesis was to note that the Greek of Alexandria had already come under some kind of Semitic or other influence. Those who argued for Semitic, primarily Hebrew, influence because of the large Jewish population in Egypt include: OTTLEY, *Handbook*, 165; G. DALMAN, *The Words of Jesus: Considered in the Light of Post-Biblical Jewish Writings and the Aramaic Language* (translated by D. M. Kay), Edinburgh 1902, 17; J. C. JAMES, *The Language of Palestine and Adjacent Regions*, Edinburgh 1920, 57-75; and C. F. BURNEY, *The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, Oxford 1922, 5-6; cf. also those below arguing for the Jewish Greek hypothesis. Others argued for the influence of Egyptian Coptic. These include: L.-T. LEFORT, “Pour une grammaire des LXX” *Le Muséon* 41 (1928), 152-160; J. VERGOTE, “Grec Biblique” in: L. PIROT (ed.), *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, vol. 3, Paris 1938, columns 1320-1369, especially columns 1353-1360; F. T. GIGNAC, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, vol. 1, Milan 1976, 46-48; F. T. GIGNAC, “The Language of the Non-Literary Greek Papyri” in: D. H. SAMUEL (ed.), *Proceedings of the Twelfth International Congress of Papyrology* (American Studies in Papyrology 7), Toronto 1970, 139-152; and F. T. GIGNAC, “The Papyri and the Greek Language” *Yale Classical Studies* 28 (1985), 155-165. These hypotheses had already been addressed by Thumb and Moulton. See also S.-T. TEODORSSON, *The Phonology of Ptolemaic Koine* (Studia Graeca et Latina Gothoburgensia 36), Gothenburg 1977, 25-35.

29. H. A. A. KENNEDY, *Sources of New Testament Greek, or The Influence of the Septuagint on the Vocabulary of the New Testament*, Edinburgh 1895.

language of everyday life.” He admits that there are “Semitic characteristics,” but these are directly attributable to its being a literal translation from Hebrew. In this sense, it occupies a mediating position of reflecting Koine Greek and the original, while also creating a technical vocabulary necessary for the subject matter. This vocabulary had an influence upon the Greek of the New Testament, but “must not be exaggerated,” as the New Testament reached a “higher plane.”³⁰ T. K. Abbott, writing in 1891, had already arrived at somewhat similar conclusions regarding the relationship of the vocabulary of the New Testament to that of the Septuagint.³¹

In what remains as one of the most important books written on the Greek of the Hellenistic period, Albert Thumb offered a thorough examination that has in many ways never been equaled.³² Many, if not most, of Thumb’s conclusions match those of Deissmann and Moulton, in that he sees Koine Greek as the “natural development” of Attic Greek into an essentially dialectless language, or at least one that did not evidence the continued existence of the earlier classical dialects. Thumb also, however, emphasizes several other characteristics of the language. He believes that the languages with which Koine Greek came into contact, apart possibly from instances of some vocabulary items, did not have an influence upon the language. He further believes that there were local but not systematic variations in Koine Greek. In fact, he posits that, if one knew sufficiently well the local characteristics, one could identify the place of origin of a given Greek text. He further believes that knowledge of modern Greek, in that sense forming a trajectory of Greek development, could aid in understanding linguistic phenomena of an earlier period.³³ The Greek of the Septuagint, Thumb argues, was a local variety of koine, although it also reflects the fact that it was a translated document. In any case, it was not a special or particular kind of Jewish Greek. In fact, only in the Septuagint (not the New Testament) are features of Hebrew syntax identifiable, but even here numerous supposed instances can be accounted for as instances of Koine Greek.

The second category of monographs dedicated to the Septuagint includes the introduction by Henry Barclay Swete. At the time that he wrote, there was no grammar dedicated to the Greek of the Septuagint (see the category below).³⁴ As a result, Swete

30. See KENNEDY, *Sources*, 164, for a useful summary of his findings (and the source of the quotations).

31. T. K. ABBOTT, *Essays, Chiefly on the Original Texts of the Old and New Testaments*, London 1891, 65-109, on New Testament lexicography, especially 67.

32. A. THUMB, *Die griechische Sprache im Zeitalter des Hellenismus: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Beurteilung der Κοινή*, Straßburg 1901; cf. also A. THUMB, “Hellenistic and Biblical Greek” in: J. HASTINGS (ed.), *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, vol. 1, Edinburgh 1915, 551-560. See also F. BÜCHSEL, “Die griechische Sprache der Juden in der Zeit der Septuaginta und des Neuen Testaments” *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 60 (1944), 132-149.

33. Thumb’s interest in modern Greek is reflected in the fact that he wrote a grammar of it. See A. THUMB, *Handbook of the Modern Greek Vernacular: Grammar, Texts, Glossary* (translated by S. Angus), Edinburgh 1912. See also A. THUMB, “On the Value of the Modern Greek for the Study of Ancient Greek” *Classical Quarterly* 8 (1914), 181-205.

34. H. B. SWETE, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, Cambridge 1902, 19-20. The revised edition of 1914 by R. R. Ottley is essentially the same, with the addition of a few footnotes with reference to later secondary literature, especially Thackeray’s grammar (see below).

to some extent is feeling his way through the subject. Consequently, he ends up being somewhat caught between two different views of the Greek of the Septuagint (and may well not belong fully in this category). On the one hand, he recognizes the history of discussion of the Greek of the Septuagint. He summarizes the views expressed in the standard grammars of New Testament Greek, and recognizes the (then) recent work of Deissmann in regard to the documentary papyri. On the other hand, Swete also wishes to recognize some of what he perceives to be the unique characteristics of the Septuagint.³⁵ As a result, he sees the common Greek of Alexandria as a “mongrel patois,” the Alexandrian dialect, made up of elements of many of the earlier Greek dialects. However, he also recognizes that “[n]o monument of the Alexandrian ‘dialect’ remains, unless we may seek it in the earlier books of the Alexandrian Greek Bible.”³⁶ He sees this dialect as best represented in both the Septuagint and the New Testament, as forms of “colloquial Greek” used in Alexandria and Palestine.³⁷ This language was what was used by the translators of the Septuagint, as a type of local dialect. He especially sees evidence of this in the new meanings that are given to various lexical items under Hebraic influence.

The third category includes the Septuagint grammars of Robert Helbing and Henry St. John Thackeray (though neither of them is a complete grammar of the Septuagint), and the grammar of Félix-Marie Abel.³⁸

The first of these volumes to appear, at least in part, was the first part of the grammar by Robert Helbing, on phonology and morphology, in 1907. The second part, on the syntax of cases and the verb, appeared in 1928. Neither together constitutes a complete grammar. Despite this, Helbing describes the Septuagint as a special source for Koine Greek and places it in the midst of the original works of what he characterizes as vulgar Greek. After surveying previous research, he acknowledges the great work of Deissmann in relating the language of the New Testament and the Septuagint to the papyri and inscriptions, as well as to Hellenistic literature. Because of Deissmann’s work, the language of the Greek Bible was removed from the isolation in which it had been located for decades, and shown to be written by common people in the language of their time, Koine Greek. Helbing recognizes that the Septuagint is, first, a translation from Hebrew, and then, second, a Koine Greek document. As for the first, following Thumb, he sees the supposed Hebraisms as understandable within the Hellenistic Greek of the time. As for the second, he places it within the developments that

35. This position comes out more strongly in his commentary on Revelation. See H. B. SWETE, *The Apocalypse of St John*, London 1906, cxx, note 1.

36. SWETE, *Introduction*, 292.

37. SWETE, *Introduction*, 293.

38. R. HELBING, *Grammatik der Septuaginta: Laut- und Wortlehre*, Göttingen 1907; R. HELBING, *Die Kasussyntax der Verba bei den Septuaginta: Ein Beitrag zur Hebraismenfrage und zur Syntax der Κοινή*, Göttingen 1928; H. St. J. THACKERAY, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek according to the Septuagint*, vol. 1: *Introduction, Orthography and Accidence*, Cambridge 1909; F.-M. ABEL, *Grammaire du Grec Biblique suivie d’un choix de papyrus* (Étude Biblique), Paris 1927. For a short review of these works, in the context of other syntactical works on the language of the Septuagint, see R. SOLLAMO, “Prolegomena to the Syntax of the Septuagint” in: R. SOLLAMO / S. SIPILÄ (eds.), *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation of the Septuagint*, Helsinki/Göttingen 2001, 23-41, especially 27.

occurred from the time of Alexander the Great.³⁹ His second volume continues with a similar perspective, while entering into discussion of Hebraic features.

Soon after the appearance of Helbing's grammar, in 1909, Henry St. John Thackeray published the first volume of his grammar of the Septuagint on matters of introduction, orthography, and accident (in other words, with much the same scope as Helbing's first volume). Despite not writing a complete syntax of Septuagint Greek—note, however, that he does include a brief syntax within his discussion of Koine Greek—Thackeray's volume is more valuable than Helbing's because of the introduction, which includes a discussion of Koine Greek as the "basis" of Septuagint Greek and an extensive treatment of Semitisms (the introduction also contains Thackeray's valuable assessment of the types of translational styles found in the Septuagint). Thackeray argues that the "Septuagint, considered as a whole, is the most extensive work which we possess written in the vernacular of the *κοινή* or Hellenistic language, and is therefore of primary importance for a study of later Greek, and the main function of a grammar of LXX Greek is to serve as a contribution to the larger subject, the grammar of the *κοινή*."⁴⁰ He attributes this view to the knowledge gained through study of the Egyptian papyri. While recognizing that the Septuagint, as a translated document, "has naturally a Semitic coloring," he downplays its significance because of the appearance in the papyri of similar features.⁴¹ Instead, he paints a picture of the Greek of the time that relies heavily upon the views of Thumb regarding the general development and description of Koine Greek, and Moulton regarding the question of Semitisms. Thackeray's discussion of Semitisms includes extended treatment of individual elements where he attempts to show that they are paralleled by extra-biblical examples. A similar position was argued for by Jean Psichari, who wrote a lengthy article from the Koine Greek perspective, describing the Greek of the Septuagint.⁴²

Abel's grammar is not specifically of the Septuagint, but is of Biblical Greek as illustrated by examples from the papyri, and liberally illustrated with references from the Septuagint. The formulation of the work itself evidences its approach. From the outset, Abel characterizes Koine Greek as the development of Greek following on from Alexander, based upon Attic, and replacing the ancient dialects (he disputes an Alexandrian dialect). He minimizes the influence of local dialects, and follows Thumb, Thackeray, and Moulton regarding Semitisms in the Septuagint.⁴³

From the earliest twentieth century to the present, there have been a number of histories of the Greek language written that tend to follow the koine hypothesis regarding the Greek of the Septuagint.⁴⁴ Procope Costas says that both "the Septuagint

39. HELBING, *Grammatik*, i-v.

40. THACKERAY, *Grammar*, 16.

41. THACKERAY, *Grammar*, 16.

42. J. PSICHARI, "Sur le Grec de la Septante" *Revue des études juives* 5 (1908), 161-208. See also H. PERNOT, "Observations sur la langue de la Septante" *Revue des études grecques* 42 (1929), 411-425.

43. ABEL, *Grammaire*, xvii-xl.

44. Among those writing in dictionaries, see E. C. COLWELL, "Greek Language" in: G. A. BUTTRICK (ed.), *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. 2, Nashville, TN 1962, 479-487, especially 484-485.

and the New Testament are monuments of the vernacular *Koine* constituting, with Epictetus, the most important literary sources of our knowledge of the popular language of the period,” although he nuances this position in regard to linguistic registers.⁴⁵ Robert Browning lists the Septuagint as one of the five major sources for our knowledge of Koine Greek.⁴⁶ More cautious in recognizing Semitisms, though accounting for them in light of the sacred nature of the Old Testament, is L. R. Palmer.⁴⁷ Geoffrey Horrocks states that the “Greek translation of the Old Testament [...] constitutes one of our most important examples of surviving ‘vernacular’ literature of the period,” following the work of Thackeray.⁴⁸ F. R. Adrados seems to hold to a similar position, while recognizing debate over Hebraisms and Semitisms.⁴⁹ Finally, Nicholas de Lange rejects any notion of a “distinct Jewish dialect of Greek,” and places Septuagint Greek (especially of the Pentateuch) within the ambit of authors “with a perfectly sound command of Greek.”⁵⁰

The Hellenistic/Koine Greek position holds that Hellenistic Greek was the natural result of linguistic development and was essentially a single variety used throughout the Mediterranean world of the time. The Greek of the Septuagint, not to be seen as a unitary entity, was a form of translational Greek but remained recognizably a type of Koine Greek, which can be demonstrated through comparison of significant examples, whereby supposed instances of Semitic influence can for the most part be seen as enhancements of constructions already found in Koine Greek.⁵¹

2.3 Hebraic/Jewish Greek Hypothesis

Despite the strength of opinion that swept through Hellenistic Greek studies in the first part of the twentieth century and that came to dominate the first half of the century, there was for some the residual issue that the Greek of the Septuagint was in particular and definable ways different from the Greek of other koine authors, even when the issue of translation was taken into account. In some circles, this resulted in a

45. P. S. COSTAS, *An Outline of the History of the Greek Language with Particular Emphasis on the Koine and the Subsequent Periods*, Chicago, IL 1937 (reprint Chicago, IL 1997), 41-71, here 55.

46. R. BROWNING, *Medieval and Modern Greek*, London 1969, 30. Cf. his “Von der Koine bis zu den Anfängen des modernen Griechisch” in: H.-G. NESSELRATH (ed.), *Einleitung in die griechische Philologie*, Stuttgart 1997, 156-168.

47. L. R. PALMER, *The Greek Language*, London 1980 (reprint London 1995), 196.

48. G. HORROCKS, *Greek: A History of the Language and its Speakers*, London 1999, 56-59, here 56.

49. F. R. ADRADOS, *A History of the Greek Language: From Its Origins to the Present* (translation Francisca Rojas del Canto), Leiden 2005 (1999), 186-187.

50. N. DE LANGE, “Jewish Greek” in: A.-F. CHRISTIDIS (ed.), *A History of Ancient Greek: From the Beginnings to Late Antiquity*, Cambridge 2007 (2001), 638-645, here 640. Cf. C. H. GEORGE, “Jewish and Christian Greek” in: E. J. BAKKER (ed.), *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, Oxford 2010, 167-180, who emphasizes Semitic interference.

51. See PORTER, *Verbal Aspect*, 118, where he distinguishes between direct translation, intervention, and enhancement, arguing that only intervention can be considered a Semitism. This distinction is similar to the one found in J. H. MOULTON / W. F. HOWARD, *Accidence and Word-Formation*, vol. 2 of J. H. MOULTON, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Edinburgh 1929, 16.

re-evaluation of the Koine Greek hypothesis and the re-assertion of the Septuagint as a form of Hebraic or Jewish Greek. Advocates of this position argued that this Jewish Greek was found not only in the Septuagint, but possibly in other ancient documents written in Greek by Jewish authors (including the New Testament)—to the point of positing, at least by some, a particular type of Jewish Greek dialect.

The two major early proponents of this view were Henry Gehman and Nigel Turner, followed also by Matthew Black. More recently, they have been succeeded for the most part, though with their own emphases and variations, by the Finnish school of Septuagint studies and Georg Walser.

In 1951, Gehman published a relatively short article on what he called the “Hebraic Character of Septuagint Greek.”⁵² Gehman begins from the premise that the “object of a translator obviously is to render a document clearly into the vernacular.”⁵³ While acknowledging that Septuagint Greek is Koine Greek, he also notes that there are difficulties in reading the Greek without using the Hebrew and that it differs from the koine at various points. Although not wanting to re-introduce the idea of a “Jewish-Greek jargon,” Gehman does wish to dispute Thackeray and speak of a “Jewish-Greek, which was in use in the synagogues and in religious circles.” To illustrate his point, he marshals examples from Septuagint Greek: paratactic *καί*, other types of clauses, uses of the article (e.g. indicating the direct object), use of the preposition *ἐν* and other prepositions, the participle for the infinitive absolute, use of *προστίθημι* and other similar expressions, various explicatives, and some other phrases. However, he then goes on to cite fifteen Greek words that are “adapted to OT usage.” He concludes that “it is clear that LXX Greek has numerous cases of grammar and vocabulary which are Hebraic,” and that this language “would have caused trouble to a Greek who was not acquainted with the psychology of the Hebrew language, its idioms, and its construction.” This is because “the translators had no intention of making a book to be used for textual studies.” However, “we may suppose that its language made sense to Greek-speaking Jews.” Gehman repeats that he does not want to claim that there was “a Jewish-Greek jargon, but there was a Greek with a pronounced Semitic cast that was used and understood in religious circles. If the LXX made sense to Hellenistic Jews, we may infer that there was a Jewish Greek which was understood apart from the Hebrew language.”⁵⁴

Gehman was soon followed by Nigel Turner. Whereas Gehman focused almost exclusively upon the Septuagint, Turner dealt with both the Septuagint and, even more so, the New Testament. Turner wrote a short article on what he called the “unique character of Biblical Greek” in response to the first two of Gehman’s *Vetus Testamentum* articles. In this article, Turner cites as examples placement of *ἐνεκα* and use of *πᾶς* and a substantive, purporting to show that Septuagint usage deviates statistically

52. H. S. GEHMAN, “The Hebraic Character of Septuagint Greek” *Vetus Testamentum* 1 (1951), 81-90 (reprint in: PORTER, *Language of the New Testament*, 163-173—from which I quote). A similar opinion is expressed in H. S. GEHMAN, “Hebraisms of the Old Greek Version of Genesis,” *Vetus Testamentum* 3 (1953), 141-148; and in H. S. GEHMAN, “Ἄγλος in the Septuagint, and its Relation to the Hebrew Original” *Vetus Testamentum* 4 (1954), 337-348.

53. GEHMAN, “Hebraic Character,” 163.

54. GEHMAN, “Hebraic Character,” 172-173.

from extra-biblical Greek usage.⁵⁵ He cites occasional instances of Septuagint usage in others of his works, though the bulk of them is devoted to the Greek New Testament.⁵⁶

There is very little new in the arguments of Gehman or Turner.⁵⁷ The evidence that they cite as evidence of the distinctive character of Biblical Greek was already acknowledged, examined, and explained by Deissmann, Moulton, Thumb, and others. This is especially true with regard to the Septuagint. Whatever one may think of the discussion regarding the Greek of the New Testament, these scholars had already admitted the fact that the Septuagint was a translation and that, as a translation of Hebrew, it contained constructions that in some way reflected the substrate Hebrew language. The major difference seems to be the overall linguistic framework in which the evidence is placed. Deissmann, Moulton, Thumb, and others took their entry point as the Greek language and traced a trajectory in the development of Greek from classical to post-classical times. They then located the Greek of the Septuagint (as well as that of the New Testament) in relation to this trajectory. Post-classical Greek in its widely used form, the koine, became the type of Greek of which the Greek of the Septuagint was a translational variety. For Gehman and Turner, however, their point of departure appears to have been the Hebrew Bible, or perhaps the Jewish synagogue. Rather than beginning with continuity and inclusion, they stressed discontinuity and separation. They desired to treat Biblical Greek, in particular Septuagint Greek, as a linguistic attempt in Greek to capture the Hebrew Bible. The result was a non-idiomatic Greek created for religious purposes.⁵⁸

55. N. TURNER, "The Unique Character of Biblical Greek" *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955), 208-213.
56. Those with some significant reference to the Septuagint include: "The 'Testament of Abraham': Problems in Biblical Greek" *New Testament Studies* 1 (1954-1955), 219-223; "The Relation of Luke I and II to Hebraic Sources and to the Rest of Luke-Acts" *New Testament Studies* 2 (1955-1956), 100-109; "The Language of the New Testament" in: M. BLACK / H. H. ROWLEY (eds.), *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, London 1963, 576-579; "Jewish and Christian Influence in the New Testament Vocabulary" *Novum Testamentum* 16 (1974), 149-160; *Syntax*, vol. 3 of J. H. MOULTON, *A Grammar of New Testament Greek*, Edinburgh 1963, especially 2-9; "Second Thoughts. VII. Papyrus Finds" *The Expository Times* 76 (1964-1965), 44-48; "The Language of Jesus and His Disciples" in his *Grammatical Insights into the New Testament*, Edinburgh 1965, 174-188 (reprint in: PORTER, *Language of the New Testament*, 174-190); and *Christian Words*, Edinburgh 1981. In this regard, Turner and Gehman are followed by D. HILL, *Greek Words with Hebrew Meanings* (SNTS Monograph Series 5), Cambridge 1967, especially 16; cf. also E. TOV, "Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings" in: T. MURAOKA (ed.), *Melbourne Symposium on Septuagint Lexicography* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 28), Atlanta, GA 1990, 83-126.
57. In much discussion, the issues raised here are automatically transferred over to issues regarding the translation of the Septuagint itself. This does not necessarily follow, as was ably indicated by Chaim Rabin in "The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint" *Textus* 6 (1968), 1-26, especially 25. For an examination of the study of translation technique, see Tov, "Nature and Study," 337-359.
58. I cannot help but notice that there are similarities between the perspective of Gehman and others and the Biblical Theology movement, especially the distinctive Hebraic mentality. See B. S. CHILDS, *Biblical Theology in Crisis*, Philadelphia, PA 1970, 13-50. To a great extent, this was what James Barr objected to in his *The Semantics of Biblical Language*, Oxford 1961. Despite Barr's criticism, there are those who continue to defend the Semitic mind and the work found in Kittel and Friedrich's *Theological Dictionary*, even for Septuagint studies.

This viewpoint, nevertheless, has gained momentum during the second half of the last century and into this century. Matthew Black, who devoted most of his efforts to discussing Semitisms in the Greek New Testament,⁵⁹ clearly inclined toward this position. When examining the biblical languages, he notes instances where the papyri cannot account for biblical usage that is to be reckoned in light of “the fundamentally Semitic ways of thought, impressed on language and idiom.”⁶⁰ He cites Turner, Gehman, and Klaus Beyer⁶¹ as advocates for such a position. He concludes that there was a “Jews’ Greek” found in the Septuagint and spoken in the synagogue as a type of Koine Greek: “this language, like the Hebrew of the Old Testament which molded it, was a language apart from the beginning; biblical Greek is a peculiar language, the language of a peculiar people.”⁶²

From the 1960s to the present, there has been significant work on the Septuagint done in Finland by a number of scholars, to the point of there being an identifiable Finnish school of Septuagint studies. Their work often focuses upon particular syntactical phenomena (e.g. a particular conjunction or tense-form). In fact, to a large extent their work is on translation technique, rather than the question of the Greek language itself, although they seem to draw such implications from their work.⁶³ Whereas those within this school do not go so far as to identify a particular Jewish Greek, they *are* convinced that the Greek of the Septuagint cannot be explained simply by comparison with Koine Greek, in particular regarding its Hebraisms. These Hebraisms loom large in the discussion by the Finnish scholars, as if their major agenda is to attempt to refute the Koine Greek hypothesis by means of accumulating individual examples. Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen cautions about the difficulties of the “hebräische Hintergrund,” which makes it extremely difficult to compare books of the Septuagint to those written in non-biblical Greek.⁶⁴ In fact, he summarizes the situation in this way: “Die

59. See M. BLACK, *An Aramaic Approach to the Gospels and Acts* (third edition), Oxford 1967 (1946).

60. M. BLACK, “The Biblical Languages” in: P. R. ACKROYD / C. F. EVANS (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 1, *From the Beginnings to Jerome*, Cambridge 1970, 1-11, here 8. See also his “Second Thoughts. IX. The Semitic Element in the New Testament” *The Expository Times* 77 (1965-1966), 20-23, with similar language.

61. See K. BEYER, *Semitische Syntax im Neuen Testament* (second edition), vol. 1, Göttingen 1968.

62. BLACK, “Biblical Languages,” 11 (similarly his “Second Thoughts,” 23), citing TURNER, *Syntax*, 9: “[...] the strongly Semitic character of Biblical Greek, and therefore its remarkable unity within itself, do seem to me to have contemporary significance at a time when many are finding their way back to the Bible as a living book and perhaps are pondering afresh the old question of a ‘Holy Ghost Language.’” These comments, besides reflecting the Biblical Theology movement, are also suspect in terms of linguistic determinism.

63. See R. SOLLAMO, “Translation Technique as a Method” in: H. AUSLOOS et al. (eds.), *Translating a Translation: The LXX and Its Modern Translations in the Context of Early Judaism* (BETL 213), Leuven 2008, 35-41, especially 35. I question whether Sollamo is correct in stating that “in order to be able to write a syntax of the Septuagint, it is necessary to study first the translation technique followed by the translators in rendering different syntactic items and phenomena of the source language” (p. 35). This contradicts the notion of language as system.

64. I. SOISALON-SOININEN, *Die Infinitive in der Septuaginta* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae B 132,1), Helsinki 1965, 7-15 (reprint “Einleitung,” in his *Studien zur Septuaginta-Syntax: Zu seinem 70. Geburtstag am 4. Juni 1987* [edited by A. Aejmelaeus and R. Sollamo, Suomalai-

Sprache der Septuaginta ist in ziemlich großem Maße Hebräisch mit griechischen Wörtern.”⁶⁵ Raija Sollamo states that, “[a]t times, however, evidence from the Koine is inadequate in deciding whether an expression or a construction is Hebraistic or not.” As a result, “where no Greek parallel is available I regard the LXX expression as Hebraistic,” although she recognizes that new discoveries in the papyri might change this situation.⁶⁶ Recently, Anssi Voitila has made a number of studies of the Greek tense-forms, in an attempt to establish the relationship between Hebrew and Greek usage. He contends that there are sufficient examples—although he rejects the simple use of statistical analysis—to argue that there is both an unpredictable relationship between Hebrew and Greek usage and that the resulting Greek usage, contrary to scholars such as James Barr,⁶⁷ is not idiomatic Greek. He characterizes the results as reflecting a “stereotyping tendency.” He has done such studies on the present, the imperfect, and the perfect tense-forms. His analysis seems to be based primarily upon a time-based conception of both the Hebrew and the Greek verbal systems.⁶⁸ This posi-

sen Tiedeakatemian Toimituksia Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae B 237], Helsinki 1987, 11-18, here 12).

65. I. SOISALON-SOININEN, “Methodologische Fragen der Erforschung der Septuaginta-Syntax” in: COX, *VI Congress*, 425-444 (reprint in: *Studien zur Septuaginta-Syntax*, 40-52, here 42). See also his “Zurück zur Hebraismenfrage” in: D. FRAENKEL / U. QUAST / J. W. WEVERS (eds.), *Studien zur Septuaginta—Robert Hanhart zu Ehren: Aus Anlass seines 65. Geburtstages* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen Philologisch-historische Klasse dritte Folge 190, Mitteilungen des Septuagint-Unternehmens [MSU] 20), Göttingen 1990, 35-51. This view is similar to that of D. TABACHOVITZ, *Die Septuaginta und das Neue Testament: Stilstudien*, Lund 1956.
66. R. SOLLAMO, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 19), Helsinki 1979, 4 and 5. See also A. AEJMEAEUS, *Parataxis in the Septuagint: A Study of the Renderings of the Hebrew Coordinate Clauses in the Greek Pentateuch* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 31), Helsinki 1982, 1. Cf. A. AEJMEAEUS, *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators: Collected Essays* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 50, revised edition), Leuven 2007 and R. SOLLAMO, “Why Translation Technique and Literalness Again? The Renderings of the Infinitive Absolute in the Septuagint of Jeremiah” in: M. NISSINEN (ed.), *Congress Volume Helsinki 2010* (VTSup 148), Leiden 2012, 1-20; among other articles. However, Sollamo seems to take a step back from this position and acknowledge the koine hypothesis in R. SOLLAMO, *Repetition of the Possessive Pronouns in the Septuagint* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 40), Atlanta, GA 1995, 2-3; and “The Koine Background for the Repetition and Non-Repetition of the Possessive Pronoun in Co-Ordinate Items” in: FRAENKEL / QUAST / WEVERS, *Studien zur Septuaginta*, 52-63.
67. J. BARR, “Translators’ Handling of Verb Tense in Semantically Ambiguous Contexts” in: COX, *VI Congress*, 381-403.
68. See A. VOITILA, “La Technique de traduction du Yiqtol (l’imparfait hébreu) dans l’Histoire du Joseph grecque (Gen 37,39-50)” in: C. E. COX (ed.), *VII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, Leuven, 1989 (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 31), Atlanta, GA 1991, 223-237; “Some Remarks on the Perfect Indicative in the LXX” *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 26 (1993), 11-16; “What the Translation of Tenses Tells About the Septuagint Translators” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 10.2 (1996), 183-196; “The Translator of the Greek Numbers,” in: B. A. TAYLOR (ed.), *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*, Cambridge,

tion has been maintained by a number of other Septuagint scholars as well, including others influenced by the Finnish perspective.⁶⁹

A very detailed study using a variety of statistical methods has been performed by Georg Walser.⁷⁰ Walser is not necessarily attempting to revitalize the Jewish-Greek hypothesis as it was promoted by Gehman and Turner. Nevertheless, he does argue that there was a variety of Greek that was heavily influenced by the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch and that was used, as one of several varieties of Greek, within the synagogue.⁷¹ Walser's study is distinguished from most others, especially those that preceded him and attempted to defend various types of Semitic Greek, by the rigor of his methodology. He first defines two categories of documents for study: those

1995 (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 45), Atlanta, GA 1997, 109-121; *Présent et imparfait de l'indicatif dans le pentateuque grec: Une étude sur la syntaxe de traduction* (Publications de la société d'exégèse de Finlande 79), Helsinki/Göttingen 2001; "The Perfect Indicative in the Greek Pentateuch and the Hebrew Qatal" *Studia Orientalia* 99 (2004), 415-423; "La Septante: un document linguistique de la koiné grecque antique?" in: P. LE MOIGNE (ed.), *L'apport de la septante aux études sur l'antiquité: Actes du colloque de Strasbourg 8-9 novembre 2002*, Paris 2005, 17-35. Besides the problem with the time-based view of the tense-forms (which Voitila recognizes not all would agree with for Hebrew), there are other major problems in his work (e. g. characterizing systemic linguistics as a type of transformational generative grammar in Voitila, *Présent*, vi and note 7).

69. See, for example, R. A. MARTIN, "Some Syntactical Criteria of Translation Greek" *Vetus Testamentum* 10 (1960), 295-310; J. LUST, "Introduction" in LEH, vol. 1, i-xv, especially viii-ix; J. LUST, "Syntax and Translation Greek" *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 77 (2001), 395-401; and, apparently, J. JOOSTEN, "The Vocabulary of the Septuagint and its Historical Context" and "Le Vocabulaire de la Septante et la Question du Sociolecte des Juifs Alexandrins: Le Cas du Verbe εὐλογέω, 'Bénir'" in: J. JOOSTEN / E. BONS (eds.), *Septuagint Vocabulary: Pre-History, Usage, Reception* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies, 58), Atlanta, GA 2011, 1-11 and 13-23.
70. G. WALSER, *The Greek of the Ancient Synagogue: An Investigation on the Greek of the Septuagint, Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* (Studia Graeca et Latina Lundensia 8), Stockholm 2001. This work is summarized in G. WALSER, "The Greek of the Ancient Synagogue" in: B. OLSSON / M. ZETTERHOLM (eds.), *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins until 200 C.E.: Papers Presented at an International Conference at Lund University, October 14-17, 2001* (Coniectanea Biblica New Testament 39), Stockholm 2003, 260-276. See also G. WALSER, "A Peculiar Word-Order Rule for the Septuagint and for Cognate Texts" in: B. A. TAYLOR (ed.), *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 51), Atlanta, GA 2001, 499-511; "Die Wortfolge der Septuaginta" in: M. KARRER / W. KRAUS (with M. MEISER) (eds.), *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.-23. Juli 2006* (WUNT 219), Tübingen 2008, 258-266.
71. Walser shows the influence of a Scandinavian interest in the synagogue as the linguistic center of Jewish usage of Greek (as well as the synagogue being important for this view of Septuagint Greek). See A. WIFSTRAND, "Stylistic Problems in the Epistles of James and Peter" *Studia Theologica* 1 (1947), 170-182 (reprint in: A. WIFSTRAND, *Epochs and Styles: Selected Writings on the New Testament, Greek Language and Greek Culture in the Post-Classical Era* [edited by L. Rydbeck and S. E. Porter, translated by Denis Searby, WUNT 179], Tübingen 2005, 46-58); cf. also A. WIFSTRAND, "Lukas och Septuaginta" *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 16 (1940), 243-262 (translated as "Luke and the Septuagint" in: WIFSTRAND, *Epochs and Styles*, 28-45); and OLSSON / ZETTERHOLM, *Ancient Synagogue*, which contains five essays on language (including the one by Walser noted above).

connected with the synagogue and those not. He then performs a number of syntactical studies of this corpus of material. As he points out, rather than starting with later Greek and attempting to account for it in relation to the Pentateuch, he begins with the Pentateuch as his norm, and then compares all of the other Greek in his corpus with it. As a result, he concludes that “the language of the Pentateuch served as some kind of a model for subsequent texts written in the same genre as the Pentateuch, intended for a similar audience and dealing with the same subject-matter. This peculiar ‘Pentateuchal’ variety of Greek was used within the context of the synagogue side by side with other varieties in use in the Greek-speaking world at the time of the ancient synagogue.”⁷² He accounts for the differences in use of these varieties on the basis of diglossia, in which, in a polyglossic environment, there are varieties of high and low dialects. His use of modern linguistic categories is a step forward in the discussion, although there are possible other explanations of his evidence, which, despite its corpus construction, has limitations.⁷³

The Hebraic hypothesis holds that a blending of Greek and Hebrew is a linguistically recognizable phenomenon that occurred in Egypt beginning in the third century BCE, and that clear instances of such a combination can be detected in the documents available and can only be adequately explained by such a theory.

2.4 Revival of the Koine Greek Hypothesis

In 1980, there was a revival of the Koine Greek hypothesis. In one sense, this was not a revival, in that many had continued to hold to the Koine Greek hypothesis, as is evidenced in the histories of Greek written throughout last century. Nevertheless, there was an increase in scholarly justification of the traditional Deissmann and Moulton perspective, but along new lines of defense. This revival is characterized by recognition of features of Semitic syntax and vocabulary in the Greek of the Septuagint, but within the framework of it being a translated document within the wider world of Koine or Hellenistic Greek. This period is also marked by an increased attention to framing the discussion in modern linguistic terms.

In 1980, in *Biblica*, Moisés Silva published an article on bilingualism in which he directly addressed the issues raised by Jean Vergote in opposition to the Deissmann hypothesis.⁷⁴ Silva characterizes the strong difference of opinion between Vergote and Thumb over the influence of native Semitic languages on users as a failure to distinguish between two fundamental linguistic concepts, *langue* (or language) and *parole* (or speech).⁷⁵ He believes that the issues involved are many and complex (he lists

72. WALSER, *Greek*, 173.

73. S. WAHLGREN, “The Languages of the Synagogue: An Evaluation” in: OLSSON / ZETTERHOLM, *Ancient Synagogue*, 298-302.

74. M. SILVA, “Bilingualism and the Character of Palestinian Greek” *Biblica* 61 (1980), 198-219 (reprint in: PORTER, *Language of the New Testament*, 205-226). See also M. SILVA, “New Lexical Semitisms?” *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 69 (1978), 253-257; M. SILVA, *Biblical Words and their Meaning: An Introduction to Lexical Semantics*, Grand Rapids, MI 1983, especially 53-73; M. SILVA / K. H. JOBES, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, Grand Rapids, MI 2000, 105-118.

75. These are fundamental concepts in modern linguistics, usually attributed to Ferdinand de

twelve of them), and he determines to set some of them straight. Silva also believes that Deissmann and his followers had not been fairly represented, and that many of the responses to him—such as Vergote’s appeal to the influence of Egyptian languages on the papyri (more currently made by Gignac),⁷⁶ the Scandinavian synagogue argument, and the Jewish Greek hypothesis—had already been adequately addressed or can be addressed through modern linguistics. This includes especially a refined notion of dialect and realization of issues surrounding bilingualism. In addressing the situation of Alexandrian bilingualism, Silva directly responds to Gehman, disputing his approach and his findings. For example, he rejects Gehman’s characterization of “Septuagint Greek” as a unified entity and the idea that only reference to Hebrew can resolve particular linguistic issues. Most of all, he rejects the idea of any kind of a transitional language between Hebrew and Greek on the basis of Alexandrian bilingualism. For Silva, this all finds resolution in the concepts of *langue* and *parole*. He believes that much of the discussion, especially by those who argue for a Semitic Greek hypothesis, is of style, or *parole*, whereas Deissmann and Moulton were concerned with *langue*, that is the grammar of the language.⁷⁷

A number of works have continued to develop this perspective. I will discuss them under the categories of monographs, general studies, and grammatical works.

In a thorough assessment of the Jewish Greek hypothesis, originally finished in 1970 but only published in 1983, John A. L. Lee finds the Deissmann and Thackeray view sound.⁷⁸ He believes that there has been no adequate response to the appearance of Semitic Greek only in translations (it would be interesting to hear his response to Walser’s work) and confusion over Hebraisms and Aramaisms (they tend to be lumped together).

In 1989, I surveyed the various positions, including an analysis of the major proposals for Semitisms in the Greek Bible (applying my view of verbal aspect in a number of instances).⁷⁹ I respond to Gehman’s hypothesis by questioning both whether the object of a translator is to render the source text into the vernacular and whether the Septuagint translators always even understood their original text. Rather than positing a Jewish Greek, as do Gehman and others, I believe that such is a non sequitur and that

Saussure. See F. DE SAUSSURE, *Course in General Linguistics* (edited by C. Bally and A. Sechehaye, with A. Reidlinger, translated by W. Baskin), London 1959, 7-17.

76. GIGNAC, *Grammar*, vol. 1, 46-48.

77. He is followed, to a large extent (although at places he appears to be confused over issues, such as appealing to Wifstrand), by S. OLOFFSON, *The LXX Version: A Guide to the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (Coniectanea Biblica Old Testament 30), Stockholm 1990, 33-40.

78. J. A. L. LEE, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 14), Chico, CA 1983, 11-19. Cf., however, J. JOOSTEN / P. J. TOMSON (eds.), *Voces Biblicae: Septuagint Greek and its Significance for the New Testament* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 49), Leuven 2007, especially vii-viii. Lee has a study within this volume (“Εξ αποστέλλω,” 99-113), but not all of the essays are written from this perspective.

79. PORTER, *Verbal Aspect*, 113-156, especially 145-147, 154-155. See also S. E. PORTER, “The Functional Distribution of Koine Greek in First-Century Palestine” in: S. E. PORTER (ed.), *Diglossia and Other Topics in New Testament Linguistics* (JSNTSup 193), Sheffield 2000, 53-78 (and other essays in this volume). Cf. also J. FRÖSÉN, *Prolegomena to a Study of the Greek Language in the First Centuries A.D.: The Problem of Koiné and Atticism*, Helsinki 1974.

we must recognize, as did Deissmann, Thackeray, and others, that there are common linguistic elements of even translation Greek.⁸⁰ Drawing upon sociolinguistics, I contend that there has been a failure to define “dialect” or “language,” to the extent that significant irregularities lead some to identify a unique dialect or language. I instead differentiate between code and text (somewhat similar to Silva’s use of *langue* and *parole*). Deissmann identifies the Septuagint, as well as the Greek of the New Testament, as sharing the code of Koine Greek, even though there may be various manifestations of this code in a variety of texts, such as the Septuagint, on the basis of such factors as register variance. I further note that within the environment of Alexandrian multilingualism, the prestige language was Koine Greek, as the lingua franca of the dominant political and economic powers. In such a linguistic environment, even though lexical transfer might occur from the secondary (Hebrew) to the primary (Greek) language to fill particular religious-terminological needs, syntactical linguistic interference would move from the primary to the secondary language, as is evidenced in development of the Hebrew language.⁸¹

At the same time, in 1989, Greg Horsley published a direct rebuttal of the Jewish Greek hypothesis, entitled “The Fiction of ‘Jewish Greek.’”⁸² Directly focused upon the work of Turner and Steven Thompson,⁸³ Horsley takes a linguistic approach by discussing the nature of bilingualism, including such issues as interference, diglossia, code-switching, and dialect. He then applies these to the languages of the first century, especially in Palestine, where he distinguishes between preferred and first languages, primary and secondary bilingualism, and receptive and productive bilingualism. On the basis of these categories, he examines the notion of Semitisms, and concludes that “the edifice of Jewish Greek lacks foundation in reality, neither does it have any cogent linguistic framework.”⁸⁴

Most current introductions to the Septuagint that discuss the matter of language generally conclude with some form of the Deissmann and Moulton koine hypothesis—often summarized in terms of the original formulation rather than appropriating more recent linguistic analysis of the issue. In a brief treatment more concerned with bibliography than detailed analysis, Sidney Jellicoe overall endorses the koine hypothesis, but makes clear that he wishes to avoid what he believes are its extremes.⁸⁵ As a

80. Porter follows J. W. OLLEY, *“Righteousness” in the Septuagint of Isaiah: A Contextual Study* (Septuagint and Cognate Studies 8), Missoula, MT 1979, 11.

81. See C. RABIN, “Hebrew and Aramaic in the First Century” in: S. SAFRAI / M. STERN (eds.), *Compendia Rerum Judaicarum ad Novum Testamentum*, Section I, *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. 2, Assen 1976, 1007-1039, here 1024.

82. G. H. R. HORSLEY, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. 5, *Linguistic Essays*, Sydney 1989, 5-40, with extensive bibliographical (though often incomplete) references. See also G. H. R. HORSLEY, “Divergent Views on the Nature of the Greek of the Bible” *Biblica* 65 (1984), 393-403.

83. S. THOMPSON, *The Apocalypse and Semitic Syntax* (SNTS Monograph Series 52), Cambridge 1985. For a direct response to Thompson, see S. E. PORTER, “The Language of the Apocalypse in Recent Discussion” *New Testament Studies* 35.4 (1989), 582-603, who also surveys proposals regarding the Greek of Revelation.

84. HORSLEY, *New Documents*, 40.

85. S. JELICOE, *The Septuagint and Modern Study*, Oxford 1968, 329-337; cf. C. F. D. MOULE, *An*

result, he includes a qualified endorsement of the contribution of James Barr in limiting some of the extremes found in the Jewish-Greek hypothesis. Much better is the chapter on the language of the Septuagint in *La Bible grecque des Septante* written by Marguerite Harl, Gilles Dorival, and Olivier Munnich. This full discussion has two concise pages (plus bibliography) on the nature of the Greek of the Septuagint. The authors say that Deissmann caused a “véritable révolution,” and essentially support his position—recognizing that in the course of the century scholars have identified lexical and syntactical Semitisms but that there is no Jewish Greek.⁸⁶ Julio Trebolle Barrera takes a very similar position, stating the findings of others.⁸⁷ Natalio Fernández Marcos offers one of the best summaries of the debate regarding the Greek of the Septuagint, starting from the early church and moving to the relatively recent past—although he includes the discussion of the Greek of the New Testament within his survey and thus somewhat obscures some of the distinct issues for the Septuagint. Nevertheless, he concludes that Deissmann’s proposal moved discussion of the language of the Septuagint beyond the earlier Purist/Hebraist days, even if more work remains to be done. He identifies this work as recognizing that we know relatively little about the koine, appreciating the role of bilingualism within the koine environment, and noting the need to move beyond discussion of Jewish Greek.⁸⁸ Finally, Jennifer Dines provides a useful summary of the issues. She acknowledges the importance of the Koine Greek hypothesis, but also recognizes that “there is still considerable disagreement as to how far Hebrew idiom has affected LXX Greek,” with some arguing for its influence being “all-pervasive” and others that it is relatively infrequent—and that this is an issue that will continue to be discussed.⁸⁹

It has often been noted that Septuagint studies suffers from the lack of a dedicated grammar of the Greek of the Septuagint. Even though several have been started (noted above), no major one has been completed. The situation persists. However, in recent years, there have been a number of grammatical studies dedicated to the Greek of the Septuagint, especially the question of its relation to non-biblical Greek and possible Semitic influence. In his introduction to the Septuagint that includes a section on grammar, Mario Cimosà, even though he wishes to see God speak through the Septuagint, also sees him using Koine Greek. His short conspectus of Septuagint grammar is based on Conybeare and Stock and Thackeray.⁹⁰ Lino Cignelli and Rosario Pierrì simply accept the koine hypothesis in their brief concordance of the syntax of the Septua-

Idiom Book of New Testament Greek (second edition), Cambridge 1959, 3-4, a statement made on the basis of no evidence.

86. M. HARL / G. DORIVAL / O. MUNNICH, *La Bible grecque des Septante: Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*, Paris 1988, 223-266, especially 233-235.
87. J. TREBOLLE BARRERA, *The Jewish Bible and the Christian Bible: An Introduction to the History of the Bible* (translated by W. G. E. Watson), Leiden/Grand Rapids, MI 1998 (1993), 71-72 (with Deissmann’s name misspelled here and on page 302).
88. N. FERNÁNDEZ MARCOS, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (translated by W. G. E. Watson), Leiden 2000, 3-17.
89. J. M. DINES, *The Septuagint* (edited by M. A. Knibb), London 2004, 110-115, citing 114.
90. M. CIMOSA, *Guida allo Studio della Bibbia Greca (LXX): Storia – Lingua – Testi*, Rome 1995, 72-74.

gint.⁹¹ Whereas these two works attempt to discuss the breadth of the Septuagint language, Trevor Evans is more narrowly concerned with the verbal syntax of the Septuagint Pentateuch.⁹² In his summary of the character of Septuagint Greek, Evans states: “Over the last century it has become possible, in the light of the newly discovered evidence of Greek papyri coupled with methodological advances, to demonstrate more and more clearly in various respects the affinities of LXX Greek with the contemporary Koine vernacular of Egypt. This has led in large measure to a resolution of the old dispute.”⁹³ Whether he is entirely accurate in his final statement is beside the point and to some extent belied by this study, but his position is clear. As a result of his analysis of the verbal systems of both Hebrew and Greek in the Pentateuch, he concludes: “The method of translation adequately explains the Hebraistic case of the LXX. It is unnecessary to propose the existence of a special Jewish Greek dialect to explain the abnormalities. Nevertheless, the notion of Jewish Greek continues to find its advocates, especially in the broader sphere of biblical Greek studies. The present work will supply further clear evidence of ordinary Koine characteristics in the translation Greek of the LXX.”⁹⁴ After examining the Greek and Hebrew verbal systems (he takes a binary aspectual view of each, but without obvious iconicity), Evans examines how the two systems match up regarding the Greek perfect, the optative mood, the imperfect and aorist indicatives, and periphrastic tense-forms. He concludes that his findings contradict the “LXX syntax equals Hebrew syntax” perspective for the Pentateuch.⁹⁵

3. Conclusion

There will no doubt be continuing discussion of the Greek of the Septuagint. At this point, there are two major orientations to the nature of its Greek: the revived form of the Koine Greek hypothesis and the modified form of the Jewish Greek hypothesis. The first begins with Koine Greek as its basis but admits that there are Semitisms due to the translational nature of the Septuagint. The other, even if recognizing that the Greek of the Hellenistic world, and even possibly of the Septuagint, was the koine, emphasizes the Hebraic elements of syntax and lexis. However, in their latest manifestations, in many (though not all) instances, these views are more a difference in perspective and approach than one of major substance. One approaches the issues from the standpoint of a Greek orientation and the other from a Semitic one. In many specific instances, they tend to converge around recognizable instances of Hebraic influence upon phenomena of the translation. This is not always the case, however, as some

91. L. CIGNELLI / R. PIERRI, *Sintassi di Greco Biblico (LXX e NT)* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Analecta 61), Jerusalem 2003.

92. T. V. EVANS, *Verbal Syntax in the Greek Pentateuch: Natural Greek Usage and Hebrew Interference*, Oxford 2001. See also “The Comparative Optative: A Homeric Reminiscence in the Greek Pentateuch?” *Vetus Testamentum* 49.4 (1999), 487-504 and “Approaches to the Language of the Septuagint” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 56.1 (2005), 25-33.

93. EVANS, *Verbal Syntax*, 4.

94. EVANS, *Verbal Syntax*, 4.

95. EVANS, *Verbal Syntax*, 259. I note that Evans’s own characterization of Greek is not without its problems, especially its bi-aspectuality.

of those who argue for the koine hypothesis maintain the independence of Septuagint Greek, at least in its Pentateuchal form, from Hebraic interference. The difference in perspective remains, and tends to determine how the evidence is interpreted.

As we have also seen, a remaining desideratum is a full and complete grammar of the Septuagint, although this is admittedly not without problems, as the Septuagint is a collection of translated, for the most part, and some original Greek works. The collection was written and compiled over a period of time and reflects different translational techniques. The above survey indicates the course of discussion of the issue, including whether the emphasis of such a grammar will be upon that of the substrate Hebrew or the Greek text itself. There has, nevertheless, been a general trend towards a more linguistic approach to the issue of the Greek of the Septuagint. The earliest discussions were limited in their comparative Greek material, and tended to use theological categories, such as a particular kind of Jewish Greek or Holy Ghost Greek, to describe the Greek that they saw. They did this as a way of explaining its distinct differences from Classical Greek. Because it made available a set of comparable Greek texts, the discovery of the documentary papyri opened up new categories of thought, forcing scholars to re-conceptualize the development of the Greek language and the relationship of the Greek of the Septuagint, even if as a translated work, to it. In this sense, there is a retrogressive thrust to the rejuvenation of the Jewish Greek hypothesis. This movement tends to focus upon the differences between the Greek Septuagint and other varieties of Greek, often concentrating upon particular grammatical phenomena. The revival of the Koine Greek hypothesis has shifted the ground again, in that it has taken a much more linguistically oriented approach. Utilizing work done in sociolinguistics and other areas, there is now a consideration of such constraints as bilingualism, dialect and idiolect, *langue* and *parole*, code and text, diglossia and code-switching, register, and prestige languages, as well as recognizing the most recent categories for discussion of the language, such as verbal aspect. Future studies that attempt to move the discussion forward will need to frame their analyses in these terms.

Issues still to consider in this discussion include the following. There must be an increased awareness of the nature, breadth, and depth of the questions in the debate. Those who have led the revival of the Koine Greek hypothesis appear to have grasped this more fully than many of those promoting the Jewish Greek hypothesis. The questions are complex and involve more than simply the opposition between Greek and Hebrew. Proponents of the Jewish Greek hypothesis must also shed some of the residual theological baggage that associates language with a particular mindset. The second issue is the need for a more nuanced and sophisticated view of language. As a result, it is not enough any more simply to cite a particular linguistic phenomenon, without taking into account the language system and linguistic milieu in which it is used. This means that there must be a greater recognition of how the question of the nature of Septuagint Greek in relation to Hebrew must be seen as part of a larger question of what constitutes a language, a variety, a dialect, and a register. There is a wealth of discussion of these issues outside of biblical studies that could offer insights into this fundamental debate. The third and final issue is that of determining what counts for evidence and what constitutes the basic questions that are being answered. At various times in the on-going debate, the proponents seem to be at cross-purposes to each other. Sometimes they seem to be waging a proxy battle over the relationship

between Judaism and Christianity. At other times, they seem to be engaged in a subtle dispute over cultural superiority. In only a relatively few instances does it appear that the proponents are actually discussing a linguistic issue on the basis of explicit linguistic criteria. The nature of the Greek of the Septuagint is first and foremost a linguistic question—whatever other issues may be involved or surround the debate. Future study needs to engage the question at that level, even if some of the conclusions are not those that would be welcome because of anticipated adverse results.

2. Die Diversität des Griechischen in der Septuaginta

PETER PRESTEL

Das Textkorpus, das wir heute unter LXX verstehen, hat eine etwa 300jährige Entstehungszeit, es vereinigt in sich verschiedene Textgattungen und –sorten, es erfährt schon in der Entstehungszeit verschiedene Revisionen, die zu divergierenden Parallel-Versionen geführt haben, es enthält aus dem Hebräischen (oder Aramäischen) übersetzte Texte, die auf vom Masoretischen Text abweichenden Vorlagen beruhen können, und es enthält original auf Griechisch verfasste Texte; auch einige der übersetzten Texte enthalten original griechische Zusätze. Diese komplizierte Entstehungs- und Überlieferungsgeschichte muss zu Diversität in der Sprachform innerhalb des Korpus führen. In diesem Beitrag sollen solche Diversitäten benannt werden; da diese im Einzelnen aber fast zahllos sind und sich doch typisch wiederholen, sollen vor allem auch der Typ und die Faktoren aufgezeigt werden, die zu solchen Diversitäten führen. Und da sich Diversität nur vor Konstanz abhebt, sollen auch die Konstanten sichtbar werden, die es durchaus durch das Textkorpus hindurch gibt. Abgesehen wird hier von textkritischen Fragen, die die ausgangssprachliche Vorlage betreffen.

Der fundamentalste Faktor ist die Grundunterscheidung in Texte, die original griechisch verfasst wurden (insbesondere 2-4Makk und Weish), und solche, die aus dem Hebräischen übersetzt wurden – das ist die überwiegende Mehrzahl. Da Übersetzung nun sehr unterschiedlich vorgenommen werden kann, das Verhältnis zwischen Ausgangs- und Zielsprache sehr unterschiedlich variiert werden kann, wird es in diesem Beitrag auch – allgemein und konkret – um Fragen der Übersetzungstechnik und um verschiedene Übersetzungstypen gehen, und um die Frage von Übersetzung in der hellenistisch-römischen Antike überhaupt: In der Übersetzungstechnik ist einer der Hauptfaktoren für Diversität *innerhalb* der übersetzten Texte zu finden, durch den Vergleich mit anderer antiker Übersetzungspraxis zeigt sich *nach außen* die Besonderheit des Übersetzungstyps, der für die LXX insgesamt gilt.

Eine anschauliche Hinführung in das Thema kann der Sirach-Prolog bieten: Er stellt eine »beispiellose« Besonderheit in der LXX dar¹, die einzige Stelle, wo ein LXX-Übersetzer sich explizit über die Übersetzung und deren Problematik äußert: Er ist – griechisch verfasst – der Weisheitsschrift vorangestellt, die zwischen 190 und 175 vom jüdischen Weisheitslehrer Jesus Sirach, dem »Großvater«, in hebräischer Sprache in Jerusalem verfasst wurde und zwischen 132 und 117 vom »Enkel« in Alexandria ins Griechische übersetzt wird. Wir haben also hier die Grundopposition: griechisch verfasst vs. übersetzt in einer Schrift, und eine Reflexion auf diesen Übersetzungsprozess.

1. C. WAGNER, *Die Septuaginta-Hapaxlegomena im Buch Jesus Sirach. Untersuchungen zu Wortwahl und Wortbildung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des textkritischen und übersetzungstechnischen Aspekts*, Berlin 1999, 22.

1. Sirachprolog I: Griechische und hebräische Kultur: Originales Griechisch vs. übersetztes Griechisch

Interessant ist für unseren Zusammenhang zweierlei: Was der Übersetzer im Prolog sagt, vor allem aber, was er sprachlich tut, also wie er das sagt, was er sagt. In dieser Kombination liegt für unser Thema eine der wesentlichen Botschaften des Prologs.

Zunächst zu dem, was er sagt:

1. Die vorliegenden Schriften, der Pentateuch, die Propheten und die übrigen Schriften machen die *jüdische παιδεία* und *σοφία* aus. Durch ihr Studium entsteht Verständnis und Gelehrsamkeit; da diese Gelehrsamkeit zur Weitergabe in Wort und Schrift auffordert, hat der Großvater, ein jüdischer Weisheitslehrer, aus genauer Kenntnis dieses Schrifttums selbst eine eigene Schrift in hebräischer Sprache verfasst und den bestehenden Schriften hinzugefügt; er steht also in einer Tradition und verfolgt dabei einen bestimmten erzieherischen Zweck: Ein gesetzestreu, an der Tora orientiertes² Leben soll durch Belehrung befördert werden (V. 1-14).
 2. Die Bitte des Enkels an die Adressaten, evtl. (ziel-)sprachlichen Mängeln (*λέξις*³) seiner *Übersetzung* dieser Schrift mit Nachsicht zu begegnen. Es ist viel Mühe und Übersetzungskunst aufgewendet worden. Aber: Die Übersetzung stößt auf ein zentrales Problem: Ausgangs- und Zielsprache verfügen nicht über denselben Code – so könnte man *ἰσοδυναμεῖ* (V. 21) im Bezug auf Syntax wie Semantik auffassen. Es scheint also für griechisch Sprechende Befremdlichkeiten zu geben, man könnte sagen: Diversitäten im griechischen zielsprachlichen Duktus, der durch die Übersetzung bedingt ist. Und darüber hinaus: Schon im hebräischen Original weisen die kanonischen Schriften selbst erhebliche Unterschiede auf. Es gibt also schon im Original ausgangssprachlich Diversität, ohne dass diese hier näher bestimmt würde; sie scheint aber in einen – wenn auch etwas unklaren, eher apologetischen – Bezug zu den zielsprachlichen Divergenzen gesetzt zu sein⁴ (V. 15-26).
 3. Der Enkel gibt eine genauere Zeit-, Orts- und Adressatenangabe seiner Übersetzungsarbeit: In Alexandria zwischen 132-117; Adressat sind die Juden in der *παροικία*. Er betont erneut die viele Mühe und Kenntnis, die er seinerseits auf die Übersetzung verwandt hat, andererseits auch die hohe Bildungsaffinität und das diesbezügliche Interesse in seiner Zielgruppe in Alexandria. Er verspricht sich, in Aufnahme der Intention des Großvaters, einen großen erzieherischen Nutzen für
2. WAGNER, *Hapaxlegomena*, 123.
 3. WAGNER, *Hapaxlegomena*, 118: *λέξις* meint im engeren Sinn einzelne Ausdrücke oder Redewendungen, im weiteren Sinn die stilistisch-literarische Gestaltung überhaupt. Hier wird der Plural auf das erstere verweisen.
 4. Schwierig die Deutung von *ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λεγόμενα* (V. 22 und 26). Die Übersetzung in W. KRAUS / M. KARRER, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung*, Stuttgart 2010, 1091 deutet beide Vorkommen unterschiedlich, den zweiten kaum richtig. Der Bezug in V. 26 von *λεγόμενα* als Acc.Graec. (»in Bezug auf das in ihnen Gesagte«) mit der Einengung auf die Inhaltsseite scheint mir nicht korrekt. Man müsste es beides Mal auf die hebräische Fassung beziehen: »wenn es bei sich gesagt ist«, d. h. nicht in einer Übersetzung (*ἐτέρων γλωσσῶν*). Man würde also auch in V. 26 verstehen wie in V. 22: »auf Hebräisch gesagt, verfasst«. Richtig F. SIEGERT, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9), Münster 2001, 34.

diese Zielgruppe: Ein gesetzes- d. h. Tora-treuer Lebenswandel wird durch die jetzt möglich gewordene Lektüre der Schrift des »Großvaters« befördert (V. 27-36).

Die wesentlichen Punkte der Aussage sind für uns: Inhalt und Bezug der Schrift, die Aussagen zur Übersetzungsproblematik und zur Zielgruppe. Hier sind wichtige Konstituenten der Pragmatik einer Übersetzung genannt, also der Textverwendung.

Zur Sprachhandlung, der Form, in der diese Aussagen gebracht sind:

Der Übersetzer zieht hier alle Register der griechischen literarischen Sprache und Kunstprosa seiner Zeit. Die drei Aussagen sind auf drei weitausgreifende Blöcke verteilt, deren erster und letzter nur aus einem einzigen Satz bestehen, also jeweils eine komplexe Periode bilden. Viele Partizipialkonstruktionen, variiert mit Hypotaxe, viele Parallelismen und ein Chiasmus (V. 7-11), Homoioteleuton, Isokolie, Prosarhythmus⁵, eine sorgfältige Wort- und Satzverknüpfung durch Adjunktionen, geradezu virtuose syntaktische Konstruktionen mit der *Attractio Relativi* in V. 18-21 und der sehr komplexen Infinitivkonstruktion in V. 33-36, dazu im semantischen Bereich eine hohe Verdichtung der Felder durch sorgfältige Rekurrenz (Bildung, Weisheit, Anstrengung, gesetzestreuendes Leben). Eine Passage wie für das Lehrbuch der literarischen (asianischen⁶) Kunstprosa wie auch der Rhetorik: Der Autor bewegt sich hier souverän innerhalb der gattungsspezifischen Proömiums-Topik – Bescheidenheits- und gleichzeitig Schwierigkeitstopos, *captatio benevolentiae*, Bezug auf die eigene Person wie den Text, dem der Prolog vorangestellt ist⁷ – wie der dafür vorgesehenen Stilebene, dem für ein Proömium empfohlenen *genus medium*.

Wenn wir beide Informationsebenen, die sachliche wie die stilistisch-formale, zusammennehmen, können wir einige Grundzüge feststellen, die uns an das Thema der Diversität innerhalb der LXX insgesamt vorbereitend heranführen und sich dort als Faktoren von Diversität ausziehen lassen:

Der Übersetzer gibt eine Information über seine griechische *παιδεία*; dies tut er durch die gewählte elaborierte Form; er zeigt seine Fertigkeit in der griechischen Sprache, der Zielsprache seiner Übersetzung und in der griechischen formalen *παιδεία*. Inhaltlich gibt er in dieser Form einen Ausblick auf jüdische *παιδεία*; diese wird er in einer Übersetzung darbieten, die offensichtlich trotz der erwiesenen Kompetenz und trotz aller Mühe zielsprachliche Probleme aufweist, also stark von dem elaborierten Griechisch differiert, das er im Prolog schreibt und dessen er fähig ist. Ein modernes Urteil über den sprachlichen Charakter des übersetzten Textes lautet denn auch: »The

5. Das von RAHLFS in seiner LXX-Ausgabe Bd. II, 377 im Apparat gekennzeichnete *poetische* Metron des Hexameters wird von SIEGERT, *Hebräische Bibel*, 181 zurückgewiesen. Siegerts dortige Ausführungen sind leicht modifiziert wiederabgedruckt in M. KARRER / W. KRAUS (Hg.), *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen und Kommentare*, Stuttgart 2011, Bd. I, 53-64.

6. Zum sog. Asianismus als dem auf Einfachheit und Klarheit bedachten Attizismus entgegengesetzte Stilrichtung E. NORDEN, *Antike Kunstprosa*, Leipzig/Berlin 1909 (Nachdruck Darmstadt 1974), Bd. I, 126-147. Vergleichbar mit diesem Prolog, wenn auch stilistisch nicht so raffiniert, ist der Prolog 2Makk 19-32, wo V. 19-28 aus drei langen Perioden bestehen; dort überwiegen Parallelismen. Asianisch ist dann vor allem 4Makk.

7. WAGNER, *Hapaxlegomena*, 25; S. KREUZER, »Der Prolog des Buches Ben Sira (Weisheit des Jesus Sirach) im Horizont seiner Gattung – Ein Vergleich mit dem Euagoras des Isokrates« in: J.-F. ECKHOLDT / M. SIGISMUND / S. SIGISMUND (Hg.), *Geschehen und Gedächtnis. Die hellenistische Welt und ihre Wirkung* (Festschrift für W. Orth), Berlin 2009, 135-160.

translation, by contrast, is executed in a more or less stilted translationese that is often at pains to repeat certain formal aspects of the Hebrew very closely – matters such as word order ...»⁸. Der Übersetzer zeigt also im Prolog, was er eigentlich zielsprachlich kann und er zeigt, auf was er verzichtet: Er begibt sich seiner elaborierten Sprache, seiner literarischen Virtuosität, seiner griechischen formalen *παιδεία*, weil er übersetzt⁹. Griechische formale Kultur und Literatur tritt hinter eine Übersetzung zurück, in der die jüdische *παιδεία* dargeboten wird und offensichtlich dargeboten werden muss. Der Autor bewegt sich in zwei Welten, der griechischen literarisch-formalen Kultur und der hebräischen inhaltlichen Kultur und trennt sie durch unterschiedliches sprachliches Handeln. Was er verbindet, ist jüdische Lehre mit jüdischer Adressatengruppe; dies tut er mit einer Übersetzung, die offensichtlich die Ausgangssprache nicht vergessen lässt, sondern durch eine gewisse Sperrigkeit auf sie verweist und sie so auch in der Zielsprache bewahrt. Hier lässt sich also eine enge Bindung der jüdischen *παιδεία* an die Sprache, in der sie ursprünglich verfasst ist, konstatieren; sie wird in einer ausgangssprachlichen Übersetzung wiedergegeben und damit in einer sprachlichen Bindung; die Form ist »unfrei« gegenüber einer freien griechischen Komposition. Die griechische Sprache schlägt die Brücke zwischen jüdischer Lehre und jüdischem Adressatenkreis, hält aber die griechische literarische Kultur offensichtlich fern. Diese Paradoxie, die der Kontrast zwischen dem Sirachprolog und der Sirach-Übersetzung vermittelt, gilt im Prinzip für die gesamte übersetzte LXX.

2. Übersetzungspraxis in der griechisch-römischen Antike: Eine andere Pragmatik: Varianz- vs. Invarianzforderung

Ein kleiner Exkurs über die Übersetzungspraxis in der Antike wird die spezifische Pragmatik der LXX-Übersetzung – gebildet durch die Faktoren, die im Sirachprolog aufgeführt sind: Ausgangstext, Zielsprache, Adressatenkreis, Übersetzung als Mittlung und mittelnder Übersetzer – und ihre singuläre Besonderheit in ihrem historischen Kontext verdeutlichen. Wir werden dabei kontrastiv ein anderes Verhältnis zwischen Ausgangssprache und Ausgangskultur auf der einen und Zielsprache und Zielkultur auf der anderen Seite finden, als sie stellvertretend für die LXX im Sirachprolog erscheint.

Die Besonderheit der LXX-Übersetzung besteht in zwei Hinsichten, nämlich *dass* übersetzt wurde, und *wie* übersetzt wurde.

Die Bedeutung des für uns nicht ungewöhnlichen Sachverhaltes einer Übersetzung in eine andere Sprache liegt vor allem in der Zielsprache begründet: Dass Texte

8. B. G. WRIGHT III, »Why a prologue? Ben Sira's Grandson and his Greek Translation« in: S. M. PAUL / R. A. KRAFT / E. BEN-DAVID / L. H. SCHIFFMAN / W. W. FIELDS, *Emanuel. Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls. In Honor of Emanuel Tov* (VTS 94), Leiden 2003, 637-638. Zu Besonderheiten der Sirach-Übersetzung, vor allem unter dem Aspekt des Wortschatzes vgl. WAGNER, *Hapaxlegomena*.
9. In dem nicht übersetzten, griechisch verfassten Buch Weish stellt sich die Frage paradoxerweise umgekehrt: Dort scheint ein gebildeter Autor in einem natürlich-griechischen Text absichtlich auf die gleichzeitig demonstrierte sprachlich-kulturelle Bildung zu verzichten und teilweise zu schreiben, *als ob* er übersetzte.

in der griechisch-römischen Antike ins *Griechische* übersetzt wurden, ist außerordentlich ungewöhnlich. Man hat in der Antike auch übersetzt, aber normalerweise nicht ins Griechische; die griechische Sprache und Kultur ist nicht die nehmende, sondern die gebende¹⁰. Wenn man das griechische Publikum erreichen wollte, schrieb man original griechisch in einem der literarisch-rhetorisch zur Verfügung stehenden Register – Beispiele sind Berossos mit seiner babylonischen, Manetho mit seiner ägyptischen und schließlich Flavius Josephus mit seiner jüdischen Geschichte, auch wenn man dazu, wie Josephus in seiner Anfangszeit, vielleicht eine Art Redakteur brauchte. Allein die Tatsache also, dass ein Text ins Griechische übersetzt wurde, sagt etwas über die Pragmatik der LXX-Übersetzung aus.

Die Römer haben viel und früh *aus* dem Griechischen übersetzt. Allerdings würde man diese Übersetzungen nach heutigen Maßstäben nicht als Übersetzung bezeichnen, sondern als freie Bearbeitung. Übersetzung in Rom speist sich aus zwei Interessen und bewegt sich zwischen zwei Polen¹¹: Die griechische Ausgangssprache und -kultur ist objektiv höher entwickelt, es wird durch Übersetzung versucht, die eigene Sprache zu befördern und Anschluss an die höhere Kultur und Sprache zu finden. Es gibt keine Gleichzeitigkeit oder Ebenbürtigkeit der beiden Sprachen und Kulturen. Es liegt eine vertikale »Übersetzung« vor – primär als *descensus* von oben nach unten, von einer höher eingeschätzten und von den objektiven Gegebenheiten wie Vokabular, Syntax und Stilistik her differenzierter ausgebildeten Sprache nach unten in eine Volkssprache, die dadurch entwickelt, erweitert, differenziert, kultiviert wurde, oder umgekehrt als *ascensus* von einer Volkssprache nach oben in die Kultursprache, dies vor allem später aus den Volkssprachen ins Lateinische, aber eben in der Antike nicht ins Griechische. Die vertikale Übersetzung ist so konstitutiv für die Ausbildung der römischen Literatursprache und Literatur wie auch später für die der modernen Nationalsprachen und -literaturen. Man hat diese vertikale Übersetzung lange Zeit für die einzig kunstvolle und lohnende Form des Übersetzens gehalten. Der kunstvolle Übersetzer soll, wie Cervantes sagt, nicht wie einer sein, der nur ein Papier vom anderen abschreibt¹².

Der andere Pol ist die so genannte *aemulatio*, die konkurrierende und auf Überbietung angelegte Nachbildung des Ausgangstextes in der »Übersetzung«. Das führt zu einer Amplifikation oder Reduktion des Ausgangstextes in vielerlei Hinsicht. Als Invariante des Ausgangstextes wird oft nur das nackte Handlungs- oder Faktengerüst respektiert. Diese Art der übersetzenden Bearbeitung gilt heute als Intertextualität. In Rom sind es Äußerungen eines Kulturpatriotismus, der sich aus einem gewissen Nachholbedürfnis und der vertikalen Situation gegenüber der griechischen Kultur speist. Die beiden Pole der römischen Übersetzung – Kultivierung der eigenen Sprache und schöpferische Überbietung des Originals – liegen also auf der Achse der Kon-

10. H. St. J. THACKERAY, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek*, Cambridge 1909 (Nachdruck Hildesheim 1987), 21.

11. Die folgenden Ausführungen stützen sich auf A. SEELE, *Römische Übersetzer. Nöte, Freiheiten, Absichten. Verfahren des literarischen Übersetzens in der griechisch-römischen Antike*, Darmstadt 1995, und J. ALBRECHT, *Literarische Übersetzung. Geschichte – Theorie – Kulturelle Wirkung*, Darmstadt 1998.

12. ALBRECHT, *Literarische Übersetzung*, 143.

kurrenz einer weniger entwickelten Zielsprache und Zielkultur mit einer höher entwickelten Ausgangssprache und Ausgangskultur. Charakteristisch für den in Rom ausgebildeten Übersetzungstyp ist somit: Kollektiv stehen Bedürfnisse der Zielsprache und -kultur eindeutig im Vordergrund, individuell die Bedürfnisse des Übersetzers selbst. Es geht um sein Künstlertum, seine Kreativität, seinen Rang als Literat, nicht als Dolmetscher. Das am wenigsten Interessante und geradezu Hemmende ist aus diesem Blickwinkel eine zu enge Bindung an den Ausgangstext und seinen genauen Wortlaut.

Es tritt etwas hinzu, das diesen Typ der einbürgernden oder, wie Nietzsche sagt¹³, erobernden Übersetzung in Rom begleitet und vielleicht auch befördert: Es ist der in gebildeten Kreisen übliche Bilingualismus. Das Zielpublikum konnte griechische Texte ohne weiteres im Original lesen; Kenntnis des Originals konnte vorausgesetzt werden, war zumindest möglich. Das entlastet den Übersetzer von einer Informationspflicht und schafft Raum für seine künstlerische Freiheit der Bearbeitung. Vor diesem Hintergrund werden signifikante Unterschiede in der Pragmatik der LXX-Übersetzung deutlich, die das Entstehen eines ganz anderen Übersetzungstyps bedingen oder zumindest befördern: Denn hier liegt zum ersten Mal, soweit wir wissen, ein Übersetzungstyp vor, der dem modernen Übersetzungs-Ideal, seit dem 18. Jh. und von Schleiermacher formuliert¹⁴, entspricht: Invariante ist nicht wie in Rom, oder später bei Josephus, der das Alte Testament frei nacherzählt, das nackte Handlungs- oder Faktengerüst, sondern der Wortlaut, sogar die Wortstellung, manchmal sogar die Wortzahl. Damit ist eine Bedingung in hohem Maße erfüllt, die ein moderner Übersetzungstheoretiker als konstitutiv für »Übersetzung« postuliert zur Unterscheidung von »Bearbeitung«: Eine Übersetzung beruht auf aufgestellten *Invarianzforderungen*, d. h. sie orientiert sich textintern an Merkmalen der Ausgangssprache, die Bearbeitung beruht hingegen auf *Varianzforderungen* gegenüber der Ausgangssprache mit einer stärkeren Berücksichtigung textexterner Aspekte¹⁵.

Diese »moderne« Auffassung von Übersetzung, die die LXX-Übersetzer entwickeln, lässt sich auch an der anderen Ausrichtung der gerade beschriebenen Achse der Konkurrenz von Kulturen und ihrer Sprachen beschreiben: Es gibt kein objektives Bedürfnis der griechischen Zielsprache nach Differenzierung und Kultivierung durch eine Übersetzung aus dem Hebräischen. Die griechische Sprache ist morphologisch, syntaktisch, lexikalisch reich differenziert; ebenso ist eine griechische Literatursprache in allen Varianten und Gattungen voll entwickelt. Insofern ist eher verwunderlich, dass in der LXX-Übersetzung die römische Übersetzungsrichtung nicht umgekehrt wird: nämlich als *ascensus* von unten nach oben in die existente Literatursprache. Aber das ist bezeichnenderweise verweigert, wie der Sirachprolog zeigt: Die Übersetzung erfolgt von unten nach unten, unter der Literatursprache hindurch¹⁶. Man benutzt

13. Zitiert bei ALBRECHT, *Literarische Übersetzung*, 154.

14. ALBRECHT, *Literarische Übersetzung*, bes. 74.

15. ALBRECHT, *Literarische Übersetzung*, 267.

16. J. JOOSTEN, »Rhetorical Ornamentation in the Septuagint: The case of grammatical variation« in: E. BONS / TH. J. KRAUS (Hg.), *Et sapienter et eloquenter. Studies on Rhetorical and Stylistic Features of the Septuagint*, Göttingen 2011, 11-22, bes. 13-14 unterschätzt m. E. die Übersetzer, wenn er ihnen die Fähigkeit zu einem besseren Griechisch abspricht und daran zweifelt, dass sie ausgerechnet den hochprestigehaltigen Text unter dem literarischen Standard übersetzen

die Koine und damit eine unpräzise, syntaktisch und stilistisch eher reduzierte nicht-literarische Umgangs- und z. T. Fachsprache, die selbst nicht viel Körper entfaltet¹⁷. Die Übersetzungsrichtung ist nicht vertikal, sondern horizontal.

Diese Verweigerung lässt weitere Rückschlüsse auf die Pragmatik zu: Es ist nicht die eigene literarische Ambition, die diese Übersetzung antreibt. Und: Der Adressat kann nicht der griechische Literatur- und Bildungsbetrieb sein, dann hätte man virtuos geschrieben und frei bearbeitet wie Josephus in seinen *Antiquitates*. Es kann nur eine jüdische Adressatengruppe sein, die jüdische Gemeinde in Alexandria, die der Sirachprolog ja benennt. Damit ist die römische Situation verändert: Die Übersetzung der LXX verlässt zwar die Ausgangssprache, das Hebräische, das in Alexandria nicht verstanden wird – es gibt vermutlich kaum Bilingualismus – und das offensichtlich nicht als Identifikationsfaktor für die jüdische Ethnie dient, aber sie verlässt nicht die hebräische Ausgangskultur. Zwar ist jede Übersetzung in gewisser Weise interkulturell, aber man kann vielleicht doch etwas zugespitzt sagen: Hier findet vergleichsweise eher eine *interlinguale* denn eine *interkulturelle* Operation statt. Man kann vermutlich einen Schritt weitergehen: Absicht der Übersetzung ist wahrscheinlich gerade die Bewahrung und vielleicht auch Erneuerung der hebräischen Kultur, um in der dominanten Umgebung einen identitätsstiftenden Stabilisator zu besitzen. Anders als in Rom existiert der Wettbewerbsdruck nicht gegenüber der Kultur des Ausgangstextes, wo ja die eigene jüdische Identität herkommt, wohl aber existiert vermutlich ein Abgrenzungsdruck gegenüber der Kultur, deren Sprache man spricht. Wo die Römer aus Kulturpatriotismus die Texte verändern und damit die Varianzforderung konstituieren, bedingt der jüdische Religionspatriotismus eine Bewahrung des Textes in der Übersetzung: Hier wird die Invarianzforderung konstituiert. Die möglichst genaue Abbildung des hebräischen Textes in die griechische Sprache bildet die identitätsstiftende Grenze zur griechischen Kultur, der Bewahrung der jüdischen *πατρίδα*. Wo die Römer versuchen, sich durch freie Bearbeitung und Überbietung von der Ausgangskultur abzugrenzen, versuchen die Juden durch Verweigerung der literarischen Standards der Zielsprache, durch Unterbietung der griechischen Literatursprache und durch enge Bindung an den Ausgangstext die Ausgangskultur zu konservieren. Es entsteht so soziolinguistisch betrachtet eine Art In-Group-Effekt¹⁸; man hat auch von Soziolekt gesprochen¹⁹.

hätten wollen, wenn sie es denn besser gekonnt hätten. Es gibt in der aufgezeigten Pragmatik gute Gründe dafür, und dass zumindest manche es auch besser gekonnt hätten, zeigt z. B. der Sirach-Prolog.

17. THACKERAY, *Grammar*, 16 nennt als Charakteristika eine erhebliche Erweiterung des Vokabulars und Tendenz zu simplification, uniformity, lucidity (21), unter Vernachlässigung des literarischen Stils, wobei es auch in der Koine eine literarische Sprache gibt, z. B. Polybius und Josephus, die allerdings in der übersetzten LXX nicht verwendet ist. SIEGERT, *Hebräische Bibel*, 143 bezeichnet die Koine als »modern in dem Sinne, dass ein großes Vokabular kombiniert wird mit einer umso einfacheren Syntax«, »das »Erfolgsrezept« aller heutigen Weltsprachen, am meisten des Englischen«. Zur Koine vgl. auch K. USENER, »Zur Sprache der Septuaginta« in: *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen*, Bd. I, 40-51.

18. SIEGERT, *Hebräische Bibel*, 186 und USENER, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen*, Bd. I, 63.

19. USENER, *Septuaginta Deutsch. Erläuterungen*, Bd. I, 51 verwendet diesen Begriff. Allerdings ist die Sprache der LXX-Übersetzung kaum die gesprochene Sprache der Juden; man sollte eher

