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Accompanying Scripture: Hebrew-Greek Translation in Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Authors

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Summary

The thesis studies the Septuagint translation philosophy in the Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian authors using the comparative method. The main research question is whether the *Letter of Aristeas*, Aristobulus, Philo, Josephus, prologue to Ben Sira, colophon to Greek Esther, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Clement of Alexandria share any common features or in terms of how they perceive the Septuagint translation. The investigation is done according to the three criteria: *possibility*, *divine inspiration*, and *preciseness* of the translated text.

The study reveals that none of the authors opposed the very *possibility* to translate the Law into Greek, although Ben Sira's prologue and Josephus treated it as a secondary text. As for *divine inspiration*, it is referred to by each author except the authors of the prologue, the colophon, and Josephus. The clearest examples are Philo and Irenaeus, who mention a miraculous event. Moreover, there is a clear shift in notions from divine inspiration to zeal and arduous work of the translators. Considering *preciseness*, the Septuagint was highly esteemed by its first propagators and the Church Fathers. On the other hand, Ben Sira's prologue introduces the idea of the *unequal influence* of a Greek text on the reader, implicitly, embedded in Josephus.

Overall, the texts under discussion form two categories: those that support the translation and those that show a cautious attitude. Among the Jewish Hellenistic authors, there is also a geographic parallel, as the Alexandrian authors regard the translation more positively than those from Palestine.

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My initial interest in the Septuagint dates to 2014, when I was trying to find a reliable Bible translation into Ukrainian containing all the books of the Slavonic canon. Basic googling and teenage curiosity led me to reading *The Septuagint in Context* by Natalio Fernández Marcos, a fascinating book that apparently has changed my entire life. I also contacted the author for some advice on how to become a Septuagint scholar. Another life-changing event was my attendance of the International Conference on the Septuagint in Wuppertal in 2016. That is how the story began.

The idea of this thesis arose from my paper *Can the Sacred Be Translated?* written for the course on religious diversity in the Graeco-Roman world with Arjen Bakker and Ahmad Al-Jallad and was inspired by a quotation from Dries De Crom's article in the *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*.

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Contents

Summary	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	7
Chapter 1. Translation philosophy of the Septuagint in the Letter of Aristeas, Aristobulus, Philo and Josephus	14
The Letter of Aristeas.....	14
Aristobulus	20
Philo of Alexandria.....	22
Flavius Josephus	28
Chapter 2. Translation philosophy in biblical paratexts: Prologue to Ben Sira and Colophon to Greek Esther	32
Prologue to Ben Sira	32
Colophon to Greek Esther.....	41
Chapter 3. Septuagint translation philosophy in Early Christianity: Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria.....	44
Justin Martyr	44
Irenaeus of Lyon	49
Clement of Alexandria.....	52
Chapter 4. Terminology of translation.....	57
Terms with multiple uses	57
Terms used by a single author	60
Conclusions	66
Bibliography.....	68
Appendix	84

Introduction

The third century BC was a milestone in the ancient history of translation. In this period, two prominent events occurred, the first Roman translation by Livius Andronicus,¹ and the Septuagint (LXX),² the first translation of the Hebrew Bible into another language, namely Greek. The latter has played a crucial role in the reception and development of the biblical text. It is widely quoted in the New Testament and patristic commentaries, and has served as a source of numerous ancient and modern translations. The Septuagint is foundational for the Christian reception of the Bible, as Greek-speaking early Christians employed it in their rituals and private readings. Consequently, the earliest manuscripts containing the entire Christian Bible, such as codices *Sinaiticus* or *Vaticanus*, contain it as their initial part. On the other hand, it retained a certain authority among the Greek-speaking Jews until the Middle Ages.³

Despite its constant use in the Christian East, the Septuagint was somewhat overlooked in the post-Jerome, Western Christianity. However, Septuagint studies witnessed significant revivals in 16th, 17th, and 19th

¹ Siobhan McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation: Surpassing the Source*, vol. 14 of *Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies* (New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 39-60; Sebastian Brock. "Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 20, no. 1 (2004): 69–87.

² In this thesis, under the term *Septuagint*, I understand Greek translation of the Torah (Pentateuch). For the other books, the term 'Old Greek' will be applied.

³ Mainstream Jewish authors of that periods often treated the Septuagint either positively or neutrally. See details in: Giuseppe Veltri, "The Septuagint in Disgrace: Some Notes on the Stories on Ptolemy in Rabbinic and Medieval Judaism," in *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions Studies in Their Use in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, ed. Nicholas de Lange, Julia G. Krivoruchko, and Cameron Boyd-Taylor, vol. 23 of *Texts and Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Judaism* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 142-154.

centuries.⁴ A new stage of research began after the discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls in 1947, as some of the scrolls contain Hebrew texts, which represent Old Greek rather than Masoretic readings. Nevertheless, the Septuagint did not appear out of nowhere. Several texts attest both the translation story proper and the notions surrounding it. Furthermore, different versions of the Old Greek text exist, which review, or even retranslate, the Septuagint text.⁵ Texts such as the *Letter of Aristeas* have created a deep-rooted basis for later understanding of the background of the Septuagint.

However, writings *about* the Septuagint were underestimated in academia for a lengthy period. Although in recent decades, they have attracted renewed scholarly attention. One of the first scholars to study the Septuagint translation philosophy regarding the *Letter of Aristeas* was Harry M. Orlinsky. He published an article in 1975, arguing that the aim of Aristeas was to prove the canonisation of the Septuagint by linking it to the previous canonisation stories. He also claimed that the message and language of the Septuagint was clear for a contemporary Alexandrian Jew.⁶ Tessa Rajak, after defending her dissertation on Josephus in 1974, studies the Josephus attitude to the Septuagint but also devotes her scholarly effort to other related texts.⁷ She also

⁴ See details in: Scott Mandelbrote, “Chapter 2. The History of Septuagint Studies. Early Modern Western Europe,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint. First Edition*, ed. Alison Salvesen and Timothy M. Law (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 33-51.

⁵ See chapters 30-35 in *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 2021 or an overview in Natalio Fernández Marcos, “Non Placet Septuaginta: Revisions and New Greek Versions of the Bible in Byzantium,” in *Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions Studies*, 39-50.

⁶ Harry M. Orlinsky, “The Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators.” *Hebrew Union College Annual* 46 (1975): 89–114.

⁷ E.g., Tessa Rajak, “Philo’s Knowledge of Hebrew: The Meaning of the Etymologies.,” in *The Jewish-Greek Tradition in Antiquity and the Byzantine Empire*, ed. James K. Aitken and James Carleton Paget (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 173-187. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511736223.016.

attempted to settle the Septuagint translation and its subsequent tradition into a broader geographical context, providing examples from Rome and Mesopotamia.⁸ Benjamin G. Wright wrote an all-encompassing commentary on Aristeas, in which he analyses the text from linguistic, historical, and narratological perspectives.⁹ He also extensively researches Ben Sira, having devoted some effort to its prologue.¹⁰ Sylvie Honigman links the Septuagint, and consequently Aristeas, to the city of Alexandria and introduces it into the Alexandrian literature,¹¹ a category that can be applied to most of the sources under scrutiny. Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein employ a more descriptive approach to the topic. It is the only study, which introduces Aristobulus to the Septuagint discussion.¹² Dries De Crom has dedicated several papers to the Hellenistic Jewish metatexts and their language.¹³ The only extensive paper on the colophon to Greek Esther was written by Elias Bickerman, who, however, did not contextualise it as part of the translation

⁸ Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁹ Benjamin G. Wright, *The Letter of Aristeas: "Aristeas to Philocrates" or "On the Translation of the Law of the Jews"* (Berlin, München, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015).

¹⁰ Benjamin G. Wright III "Translation Greek in Sirach in Light of the Grandson's Prologue," in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 73–94.

¹¹ Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the "Letter of Aristeas."* (London: Routledge, 2003). Honigman claims, that it is more beneficial not to construct a separate 'Judaean-Hellenistic literature' but to include Aristeas and other similar texts to the overall Alexandrian literature. Thus, she proposes to label the texts geographically rather than culturally (See: Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 147).

¹² Abraham Wasserstein and David J. Wasserstein. *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

¹³ See for example: Dries De Crom, "A Polysystemic Perspective on Ancient Hebrew-Greek Translation," *Journal of Ancient Judaism* 11, 2 (2020): 163-199; Dries De Crom, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Authority of the Septuagint", *Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha* 17, no. 2 (2008): 141–60; Dries De Crom, "Chapter 8. The Letter of Aristeas," in *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 121-134.

process.¹⁴ The translation story in Early Church Fathers was briefly discussed by Wasserstein and Wasserstein,¹⁵ Martin Hengel,¹⁶ and Mogens Müller;¹⁷ although this topic still requires a more thorough investigation.

Texts, which tell about the Septuagint translation, reveal remarkable details of the very process from various perspectives. They also attest an initial acknowledgement of the newly translated text and stages of its acceptance in the contemporary Jewish and Early Christian society.

The research question of this thesis runs as follows: is it possible to find common features regarding the perception of the Septuagint translation philosophy between the *Letter of Aristeas*, Prologue to Ben Sira, Colophon to Greek Esther, selected passages from Philo and Josephus, fragments from Aristobulus, and particular Early Christian Fathers (Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Clement of Alexandria)? Under the term *translation philosophy*, in this research, I understand the views of each author on the possibility of the translation, its divine inspiration¹⁸ and preciseness. The research also encompasses translation terminology, as the terms used play a crucial role in determining one's attitude towards a subject and are often overlooked in the scholarly thought. This research will help to reveal understudied issues in the

¹⁴ Elias J. Bickerman, "The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63, no. 4 (1944): 339-362.

¹⁵ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 99-109.

¹⁶ Martin Hengel and Roland Deines, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon*, translated by Mark E. Biddle (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 25-41.

¹⁷ Mogens Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, vol. 206 of *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series*, Vol 1 of *Copenhagen International Seminar* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 68-76.

¹⁸ In this category, I include the inspiration proper and divinely inspired miracles happened during the translation process.

Septuagint translation and facilitate placing it into a broader context of Graeco-Roman multilingualism. Establishing a common Greek translation terminology can be beneficial for Classical studies, as it reveals certain stages in development of the Greek language.

The methodology of the thesis is a comparative research, aimed to find the common and the different in the texts under scrutiny. I analyse each author separately in their own context and conditions, and try to establish common features among them in terms of their assessment of the Septuagint translation philosophy.¹⁹ I also adopt the terminology of Gerard Genette, who distinguishes between metatexts and paratexts. A *metatext* “unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it.”²⁰ *Paratexts* include prefaces, footnotes, remarks etc., which provide a certain setting to a text, to which they are added.²¹

The range of sources, selected for this study, is restricted to Hellenistic Jewish and Early Christian Greek texts from the third century BC to the early third century AD that describe the process of the Hebrew-Greek biblical translation. The research encompasses all the extant mentions of the translation process within the selected period.²² This dating is chosen because

¹⁹ This methodological decision was inspired by Charles Tilly’s *encompassing comparison* (See: Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. Russell Sage Foundation 75th Anniversary Series [New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984], 83, 125), although I do not always faithfully follow his ideas.

²⁰ Genette, Gérard. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky, vol. 8 of *Stages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 4.

²¹ Genette, *Palimpsests*, 3.

²² Two other Early Christian accounts on the Septuagint translation exist, which are not mentioned in this thesis. One is written by Tertullian and very closely retells the Aristeas’s story in Latin, the other one

the third century is the earliest possible *terminus a quo* of the translation story, and since the Early Christian authors under scrutiny represent the initial stage of the development of the Christian movement,²³ highly influenced by the Hellenistic Judaism. Moreover, translation philosophy of the Septuagint in the Early Christian writings is an underresearched field, to which there are only a few entries devoted. Therefore, it requires a more thorough analysis, as such texts provide a possibility to trace any potential similarities or intertraditional shifts, which could have emerged within the Early Christian movement. Adopting the terminology of Genette as discussed above, I consider Hellenistic Jewish writings to be *metatexts* regarding the Septuagint. The Ben Sira prologue and colophon to Greek Esther should be treated as its *paratexts*; and Early Christian works as *metatexts* either regarding their Jewish Hellenistic predecessors or an oral tradition surrounding the translation story. This categorisation of the texts also shapes the proposed division into chapters.

Sources designated for the first chapter include the *Letter of Aristeas* as the most representative text, preserved fragments from Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Aristobulus, and passages from Philo's *De vita Mosis* (*On the Life of Moses*) and Josephus's *Antiquitates judaicae* (*Jewish Antiquities*) and *Contra Apionem* (*Against Apion*), which render the translation story from their own perspective. In the second chapter, I will analyse two *paratexts*, which are included in the Old Greek Bible, namely, the prologue to Ben Sira, and the colophon to Greek Esther. The third chapter discusses the translation

by Pseudo-Justin, despite its interest, cannot be dated properly. Some other minor references to the existence of the translation but not its process were also omitted.

²³ Also called pre-Nicaean, taking the Nicaean (First Ecumenical) Council in AD 325 as its *terminus ad quem*.

philosophy in Early Christian Fathers, namely Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Clement of Alexandria. The last chapter analyses the terminology of translation used by all the authors under scrutiny. The study ends with some concluding remarks summarising the research.

Chapter 1

Translation philosophy of the Septuagint in the Letter of Aristeas, Aristobulus, Philo and Josephus

In this chapter, I will discuss the translation philosophy in the Jewish Hellenistic metatexts that describe the story of the Septuagint translation: the *Letter of Aristeas*, fragments from philosopher Aristobulus, selected works of Philo of Alexandria (*De vita Mosis* and *De opificio mundi*) and Flavius Josephus (*Antiquitates judaicae* and *Contra Apionem*).

The Letter of Aristeas

Although, it is impossible to undoubtedly state that Aristeas was chronologically the first in the selection under discussion, it is certainly the most representative text that deals with the process of the Septuagint translation. The *Letter of Aristeas*, written in the late third or early second century BC, is one of the crucial sources in Septuagint studies, from which many later sources on the topic derive.²⁴ The pseudepigraphic multi-genre²⁵ book (διήγησις) is ascribed to a certain Aristeas, a Hellenistic Alexandrian official, who informs his friend Philocrates on a mission carried by seventy-two Israelite elders (six from each Israelite tribe) to translate the Law of Moses into

²⁴ See details in: Orlinsky, “Septuagint as Holy Writ”; Fernandez Marcos, *Septuagint in Context*, 35-52; Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*; Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 19-26; Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*; Erich S. Gruen, “19. The Letter of Aristeas and the Cultural Context of the Septuagint,” in *The Construct of Identity in Hellenistic Judaism: Essays on Early Jewish Literature and History* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2016), 413-436; De Crom, “Letter of Aristeas”.

²⁵ On genre of Aristeas see: Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 13-25; Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 43-51; or Adams, Sean A. *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors: Negotiating Literary Culture in the Greco-Roman Era* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2020), 119-134.

Greek. The translation was ordered and endorsed by King Ptolemy II Philadelphus, the ruler of the Ptolemaic Egypt. According to the existing scholarly consensus, it was created as an apology of translation rather than merely offering a description.²⁶

The text begins with a brief report on the Library of Alexandria and King Ptolemy's desire to enlarge it. Then, the King proclaims the liberation of Jewish slaves supposedly driven to Egypt by the King's father to facilitate communication with the Jews. After Ptolemy exchanged letters with the Jewish High Priest Eleazar, the Egyptian embassy arrives to Jerusalem with royal presents²⁷ and accompanies specifically chosen seventy-two²⁸ to Alexandria, where they are received by the King and honoured by several symposia. Only after the last symposium the translation process begins, after which the elders are praised and sent back to Jerusalem.

Although, the aim of the *Letter* is mentioned already in the third paragraph, an explicit mention of the need, reason and aims of the Law translation is stated in the report by Demetrius of Phalerum (§29-32) and in the following letter by King Ptolemy to high priest Eleazar (§35-40),²⁹ whereas

²⁶ Fernández Marcos, *Septuagint in Context*, 43.

²⁷ During this visit, the guests query Eleazar regarding the Jewish dietary rules, which he summarises and justifies in Greek. Wright argues that it is a pre-translation before the main process (See: Benjamin Wright, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Place of the Septuagint in Alexandrian Judaism," in *Alexandria: Hub of the Hellenistic World*, ed. Benjamin Schliesser et al., vol. 460 of *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament* [Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2021], 236 or Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 277-278).

²⁸ Peculiarly, the names of only seventy-one are mentioned in §47-50.

²⁹ These paragraphs to be discussed in detail later.

the discussion of the translation process starts upon the elders' arrival to Alexandria (§176).

The King's double prostration before the original Hebrew scrolls in §177 and before the translated texts in §317³⁰ forms an *inclusio* of the translation account. The Greek word *προσκυνέω* means to *adore*, *venerate*, or *prostrate before something*, and is used predominately in a religious setting.³¹ This provides a possibility to stress the King's prostration as an act of spiritual devotion rather than bare admiration³². After the first *προσκύνησις*, Ptolemy invites the elders to seven subsequent symposia and questions them on diverse topics. Peculiarly, the King asks, how to maintain his domain, inquires on various moral and philosophical issues (friendship, love, patriotism etc.), but none of his queries relate to their mission, translation theories or other similar issues and they have no connection to the main assignment of the sages.

The author devotes barely a sentence (§302) to the translation process proper and stresses its purely philological and undivine character. Each of the sages would work separately and convene to compare their versions and decide on the final text. Wright argues that such practices were common in Alexandrian scholarship and thus familiar to a broader audience.³³

³⁰ In §179, Aristeas states, that Ptolemy venerated the scrolls and not the God of Israel, whom they represent. Wright argues, that worshipping eastern gods was a common practice among Hellenistic rulers, although worshipping writings seems odd (see: Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 318). Gruen suggests that this episode is a mockery on the King and a parody (see: Gruen, "Letter of Aristeas," 428), although I do not find his argument convincing.

³¹ Franco Montanari, Ivan Garofalo, and Daniela Manetti, *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, ed. Madeleine Goh et al. (Leiden-Bristol: Brill, 2018), 1818-1819.

³² Wright suggests that it is a prostration before the words of God as a substitution of a prostration before God only possible in Jerusalem (Wright, "Letter of Aristeas and the Place of the Septuagint," 235).

³³ Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 435-436. Similarly, Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric scholarship*, 46-47.

Nevertheless, Aristeas never stresses this link explicitly and abstains from providing any explicit comparison with the non-Jewish world.³⁴ The *Letter* remains silent on the views and techniques of the elders, limiting the story to a laconic note, “[a]nd they accomplished it”³⁵ (§302). The author, however, devotes more space to the conditions and provisions of the elders. Nevertheless, he stresses the constant ritual purity of the sages (§306), which enables additional divine recognition.

The following paragraphs, which reveal the process of recognition of the Septuagint as Scripture are of more importance, as they show the link between the newly translated text and its Hebrew source. Sylvie Honigman suggests, that behind Aristeas’s storyline lies a specific narrative, aimed to show the divinely inspired status of the new translation, which she calls the “Exodus paradigm.”³⁶ According to Honigman, the liberation of Jewish slaves from the Ptolemaic Egyptian captivity (§12-27) and selection of the elders to translate the Law (§46-50) should be regarded as preliminary events parallel to the Mosaic liberation of the Jews and the selection of the elders in the wilderness³⁷ as a prelude to the Sinai revelation of the Law. Consequently, the Septuagint translation is viewed as a new Sinai event, when both people and ethnic leaders approve the text.³⁸ A similar idea had been previously proposed by Harry Orlinsky, who links reading aloud the newly translated Greek Law in presence

³⁴ Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 318.

³⁵ Greek: οἱ δὲ ἐπετέλουν.

³⁶ Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric scholarship*, 53.

³⁷ In Exodus 24, seventy (but not seventy-two!) elders accompanied Moses on his way to Sinai. Wright stresses the Exodus parallel even more opposing Ptolemy and the Pharaoh of Exodus (Wright, “Letter of Aristeas and the Place of the Septuagint,” 237).

³⁸ Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric scholarship*, 53-59.

of the entire *πλῆθος* (§308-311) to similar events in Exodus 24:3-7, 2 Kings 23:1-3 and Nehemiah 8:1-6; especially praising the elders as sages or public representatives, present in all three passages.³⁹ Both scholars note similar points that show Aristeas trying to equalise the Septuagint translation with the original revelation of the Torah. Equating both events thus provides a basis for acknowledgement of the translation among the Jews as identical in every sense to the Hebrew text.

Peculiarly, not only linguistic professionalism of the elders is crucial for Aristeas, but their personal traits and morality.⁴⁰ This notion was crucial for the author (and, presumably, his audience), enough to state that the translation was made *ὁσίως* (in a holy, pious, pure, just way),⁴¹ thus with every reverence to the divine.⁴² So the author supposes that a morally pure translation can only be made by morally (and ritually) pure specialists. Emphasising the morality of the translators provided an additional background for the recognition of the Septuagint as a holy text produced by morally pure people, and another argument to prove its God-related origin.

As can be grasped from the text, Aristeas promotes literal translation. The Septuagint according to him (§310), “has been made well, piously and

³⁹ Orlinsky, “Septuagint as Holy Writ,” 94-103.

⁴⁰ E.g., §121: “Thus, Eleazar selected excellent men who excelled in education, inasmuch as indeed they were the product of parents of high distinction (*ἅτε δὴ γονέων τετευχότας ἐνδόξων*). These had not only acquired skill in the literature of the Judeans, but also not incidentally they had given heed to preparation in Greek literature.” See also §46 and king’s praises during the Symposia. More on the ethics and moral issues in Aristeas see Dries De Crom, “Letter of Aristeas and Authority of the Septuagint.”

⁴¹ Aristeas §310; Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1495.

⁴² Remarkably, the adjective, from which this adverb derives may denote “established *or* permitted by divine *or* natural law” (Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1495), which suggests a possible contextual meaning of *ὁσίως* as “according to the divine/natural law” (see further section on Philo).

accurately in every respect.”⁴³ Thus, it should render the Hebrew text precisely and remain undistorted for further generations. In short, Aristeas’s translation process is performed by highly skilled elderly sages, who equally know Hebrew and Greek on a quiet, secluded island, literally, and in a typical Alexandrian comparative manner. In addition, although Aristeas recognises textual comparison, he still treats the overall translation process as a revelatory event rather than arduous work.

The Septuagint was not the first translation of an Eastern text into Greek, as there are several legal bilingual texts.⁴⁴ However, what was revolutionary was the translation of the entire text without abridging it, as was common in the ancient world.⁴⁵ Certainly innovative was the stress on preciseness, as ancient authors often treat their source texts relatively freely. Sebastian Brock contrasts verbatim biblical and Christian translations with freer Roman ones.⁴⁶ Such distinguishing was established already by Livius Andronicus, who freely rendered Homer’s *Odyssey* into Latin, changing both the story and versification. Unlike the Septuagint translators, Roman ones often put their characters into a Roman setting creating an entirely new narrative based on an existing storyline.⁴⁷ As a guaranty of the preciseness, the

⁴³ Greek: καλῶς καὶ ὁσίως διηρμήνευται καὶ κατὰ πᾶν ἠκριβωμένως.

⁴⁴ Brock. “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity,” 71.

⁴⁵ See Elias J. Bickerman, *The Jews in the Greek Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1988), 104. See pages 13-25 of the same book on the history of early Graeco-Jewish contacts. Examples of abridged translations include Livius Andronicus’s translation of *Odyssey* or Berossus’s compilation of various Babylonian sources.

⁴⁶ Brock. “Aspects of Translation Technique in Antiquity,” 69-87

⁴⁷ McElduff, *Roman theories of translation*, 43-44.

Jews in Aristeas *seal* the translation with a curse to keep it intact from any alterations and distortions.⁴⁸

Aristobulus

Aristobulus is one of the most obscure, yet peculiar figures in Hellenistic Alexandrian Jewry.⁴⁹ He probably lived in Alexandria during the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor and was a Peripatetic philosopher of priestly descent. He is possibly identical to Aristobulus mentioned in 2 Mac 1:10. Anatolius, one of the Christian authors, who quote Aristobulus, identifies him as one of the Septuagint translators.⁵⁰ Aristobulus composed his works, possibly titled *Περὶ τῶν ὀνομαζομένων ὡς Θεοῦ μέλων* and *Βασιλεῖ Πτολεμαίῳ προσπεφωνεμένα*,⁵¹ circa 176-170 BC in a form of a dialogue with the King, and supposedly dedicated it to then ten-year-old Ptolemy VI Philometor. His work has only been preserved in fragments, mainly from Clement of Alexandria and Eusebius of Caesarea,

⁴⁸ One can compare this remark with Deuteronomy 4:2, although there the commandments and not their text are stressed. The negative impact of textual distortions of the Law is exemplified in later paragraphs, which tell the story of Theonomous and Theodektes. See the section on Philo and Chapter 3 on the issue of changes in the Septuagint.

⁴⁹ Earlier research suggests Aristobulus as the earliest source on the Septuagint translation (Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, 101-102 or Erling Hammershaimb, Norbert Meisner, and Werner Georg Kümmel, "Einleitung," in *Das Martyrium Jesajas. Aristeasbrief*, vol. II: Unterweisung in erzählender Form, Lieferung 1 [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1973], pp. 39); whereas more modern scholars suggest Aristeas as the prototype (Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 32-33), or remain cautious to delve into further assumptions (Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 29; Carl R. Holladay, trans. *Aristobulus*, vol. 3 of *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors. Texts and Translations*, 39 [Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1995], 74-75). The type of relation between the two also remains debatable (Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 29-30; Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric scholarship*, 90). Several scholars also suggest, that Aristobulus could have been a later Christian forgery (Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 30-32). In this thesis, I accept Aristobulus as an existent Hellenistic Jewish author, whose dating remains under debate and is beyond the scope of my work.

⁵⁰ Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 130-131.

⁵¹ Titles quoted by Eusebius in *Praeparatio Evangelica* 10.1 and 11.3.

and he was probably one of Josephus's sources.⁵² However, the fragments should be treated with precaution, as we remain ignorant on how faithfully Christian authors quoted their source.

In the extant writings, he praises Demetrius of Phalerum as the chief maintainer of the Septuagint translation project and refers to Plato as an imitator of Moses. Aristobulus is scrutinised in the paper as a possible contemporary of Aristeas and one of the earliest readers of the Greek version of the Torah. However, a question remains unanswered, whether Aristobulus predates the *Letter of Aristeas*⁵³ and whether they depend on each other.

Eusebius in *Praeparatio Evangelica* (8.10.2) quotes Aristobulus's compel to the King, "I want to urge you to accept the interpretations [translations] in their 'natural' sense."⁵⁴ The author's attitude to the translation in these fragment is embedded in the adverb φυσικῶς signifying "by nature, naturally", in later literature – "essentially" or even "magically," or, in philosophy, "according to the laws of nature."⁵⁵ In my view, such a choice of vocabulary shows that Aristobulus does pay certain attention to nature as a philosophical concept.

In addition, Eusebius, in the same fragment quoted above, attests that Aristobulus recognised two dimensions of the Law, literal and metaphorical.⁵⁶

⁵² Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 63-64, 72-75.

⁵³ Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 158-159.

⁵⁴ Greek: παρακαλέσαι δὲ σὲ βούλομαι πρὸς τὸ φυσικῶς λαμβάνειν τὰς εκδοχάς, emphasis by the editor. See Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 136-137.

⁵⁵ E.g., Aristotle, *Physics* 198a, 23: καὶ εἰς πάσας ἀνάγων τὸ διὰ τί ἀποδώσει φυσικῶς; Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 2321.

⁵⁶ Eusebius quotes two instances, "For what our lawgiver Moses wishes to say, he does so at many levels, using words that appear to have other referents (I mean, to things that can be seen); yet in doing so he actually speaks about 'natural' conditions and structures of a higher order" (Greek: πολλαχῶς γὰρ ὁ βούλεται λέγειν ὁ νομοθέτης ἡμῶν Μωσῆς ἐφ' ἑτέρων πραγμάτων λόγους ποιούμενος (λέγω δὲ τῶν κατὰ τὴν

For Aristobulus, it means the superiority of Moses over other lawgivers and philosophers. Fragmentary mentions do not allow to conclude more on the issue, however the idea of the twofold meaning of the Law is embedded in later writings, beginning from Philo. The preciseness, or other features of the translation are not mentioned in the extant fragments.

Philo of Alexandria

Philo lived and worked in Alexandria in the late first century BC and early first century AD.⁵⁷ He is a renowned Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, whose views were inspired by Stoicism and Platonic philosophy, and one of the earliest exegetes of the Bible. His aim was to uncover the Hebrew Bible for the contemporary Greek-speaking audience. Philo developed his own philosophical and linguistic views based on both Greek and biblical ideas. Among others, he committed a two-volume work *De vita Mosis*, which can be categorised as both rewritten Scripture and a Greek βίος (biography).⁵⁸ There, he embedded a

ἐπιφάνειαν), φυσικὰς διαθέσεις ἀπαγγέλλει καὶ μεγάλων πραγμάτων κατασκευὰς [*Praeparatio Evangelica* 8.10.3; Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 136-137]) and, “Thus, quite appropriately has the lawgiver spoken metaphorically in an expanded sense in saying that the accomplishments of God are his hands.” (Greek: διόπερ καλῶς ὁ νομοθέτης ἐπὶ τὸ μεγαλεῖον μετηγήνοχε, λέγων τὰς συντελείας χεῖρας εἶναι θεοῦ [*Praeparatio Evangelica* 8.10.9; Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 138-139]).

⁵⁷ See: Adam Kamesar, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Philo*. Cambridge Companions to Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. doi:10.1017/CCOL978052186090; David Winston, “Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory,” in *Heirs of the Septuagint: Philo, Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity: Festschrift for Earle Hilgert*, vol. 230 of *Brown Judaic Studies*, vol. 3 of *The Studia Philonica Annual*, ed. David T. Runia, David Winston, and David M. Hay (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1991), 109-125; ; John W. Martens, “Philo and the Law,” in *One God, One Law: Philo of Alexandria on the Mosaic and Greco-Roman Law*, vol. 2 of *Studies in Philo of Alexandria and Mediterranean Antiquity* (Boston-Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003), 83-101; Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 35-45; Sarah J. K. Pearce, “Chapter 27. Philo and the Septuagint,” in *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 405-419.

⁵⁸ Adams, *Greek Genres and Jewish Authors*, 277-283.

passage on its translation into Greek. Philo does not reiterate Aristeas but introduces his own version of the story. For example, in his narrative he identifies the exact location of the translation process (2.35) and mentions an annual commemoration of the event (2.41).⁵⁹ Thus, the relation between the two texts seems unclear.⁶⁰

For Philo, the Torah of Moses is nothing but the written form of the law of nature,⁶¹ which no one can supersede or grasp in its entirety:

*In celebrating the beauty of the thoughts contained in this creation account, no one, whether writing poetry or prose, can do them true justice. They transcend both speech and hearing, for they are greater and more august than what can be adapted to the instruments of a mortal being.*⁶²

The law of nature for Philo remains unwritten and transcendent, it was created by God and has no other higher authority, “the cosmos is in harmony with the law and the law with the cosmos.”⁶³ Moses therefore is not only the lawgiver (νομοθέτης), but himself the King and the ensouled law (νόμος ἔμψυχος).⁶⁴ The relation between the two types of law remains a question of debate. On the one

⁵⁹ Bickerman believed in the historicity of the feast (Elias J. Bickerman, “The Septuagint as a Translation,” *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 28 [1959]: 1–39. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3622445>), although it is most probably a Philo’s invention to stress the role of the translation.

⁶⁰ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 37-38; Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 3; Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 6; Francis Borchartd, “The LXX Myth and the Rise of Textual Fixity,” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 43, no 1 (2012), 16.

⁶¹ Hindy Najman, *Past Renewals* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 110-113. This idea creates a possible link with Aristobulus.

⁶² Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 4, quoted from: David T. Runia, trans. *Philo of Alexandria, On the Creation of the Cosmos According to Moses*, vol. 1 of *Philo of Alexandria Commentary Series* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 47. Greek: τὸ μὲν οὖν κάλλος τῶν νοημάτων τῆς κοσμοποιίας οὐδεις οὔτε ποιητῆς οὔτε λογογράφος ἀξίως ἂν ὑμῆσαι δύναιτο· καὶ γὰρ ἢ λόγον καὶ ἀκοὴν ὑπερβάλλει μείζω καὶ σεμνότερα ὄντα ἢ ὡς θνητοῦ τινος ὄργανοις ἐναρμοσθῆναι.

⁶³ Greek: ὡς καὶ τοῦ κόσμου τῷ νόμῳ καὶ τοῦ νόμου τῷ κόσμῳ συνάδοντος. Philo, *De opificio mundi*, §3.

⁶⁴ See: *De vita Mosis* 2.1-4.

hand, the law of nature is embedded in the realm of the divine and thus is higher, whereas on the other, the Torah (whose status of a particular national law remains lower, than that of the nature)⁶⁵ is its written form, the only form available to the humankind.⁶⁶ The aforementioned explicitly proves the role and status of Mosaic Law within Philo's own views. Therefore, the translation of the Law into another language seems exceptional.

In the Philonic version of the story, the notion of equality and mutual interchangeability of the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Scripture is reflected more explicitly than in the previously described ones. The following passage is peculiar enough to quote it entirely as the most explicit declaration of Philo's views on the Septuagint and its relation to the source text:

For, just as in geometry and logic, so it seems to me, the sense indicated does not admit of variety in the expression which remains unchanged in its original form, so these writers, as it clearly appears, arrived at a wording which corresponded with the matter, and alone, or better than any other, would bring out clearly what was meant. The clearest proof of this is that, if Chaldeans have learned Greek, or Greeks Chaldean, and read both versions, the Chaldean and the translation, they regard them with awe and reverence as sisters, or – rather one and the same, both in matter and words, and speak of the authors not as translators but as prophets and priests of the mysteries, whose sincerity and singleness of thought has enabled them to go hand in hand with the purest of spirits, the spirit of Moses.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Although the correspondence between the Torah and the Law of nature in Philo is under a severe debate.

⁶⁶ A summary of discussion on the Torah in Philo with references: John W. Martens, "Philo and the Law," 83-101. See also: Hindy Najman, *Past Renewals*, 91, 97, 103-105.

⁶⁷ Philo, *De vita Mosis* 2.39-40. Greek text: ὃν γὰρ τρόπον, οἴμαι, ἐν γεωμετρία καὶ διαλεκτικῇ τὰ σημαινόμενα ποικιλίαν ἑρμηνείας οὐκ ἀνέχεται, μένει δ' ἀμετάβλητος ἢ ἐξ ἀρχῆς τεθεῖσα, τὸν αὐτὸν ὡς ἔοικε τρόπον καὶ οὗτοι συντρέχοντα τοῖς πράγμασιν ὀνόματα ἐξεῦρον, ἅπερ δὴ μόνα ἢ μάλιστα τρανώσειν ἐμελλεν ἐμφαντικῶς τὰ

In this passage, Philo states that, as in geometry or logics, no alteration or distortion is possible in the Septuagint translation. He also appeals to both texts as sisters or two variants of the same, where every Greek word corresponds to a Hebrew one.⁶⁸

It remains debatable, whether Philo himself was able to read Hebrew and compare the two texts, which differ sometimes significantly enough to contradict his point.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, he developed his own theory of language,⁷⁰ based on Stoic and Platonic views (and possibly on Aristobulus).⁷¹ According to his theory, the inner sense is crucial, rather than the letters and words. Therefore, Philo probably meant, that the differences between actual Hebrew and Greek texts do not alter the *mystical* text of the Law.⁷²

δηλούμενα. σαφέστατη δὲ τοῦδε πίστις· ἐὰν τε Χαλδαῖοι τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν γλῶτταν ἐὰν τε Ἕλληνας τὴν Χαλδαίων ἀναδιδαχθῶσι καὶ ἀμφοτέραις ταῖς γραφαῖς ἐντύχῳσι, τῇ τε Χαλδαϊκῇ καὶ τῇ ἑρμηνευθείσῃ, καθάπερ ἀδελφὰς μᾶλλον δ' ὡς μίαν καὶ τὴν αὐτὴν ἐν τε τοῖς πράγμασι καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι τεθήησιν καὶ προσκυνούσιν, οὐχ ἑρμηνέας ἐκείνους ἀλλ' ἱεροφάντας καὶ προφήτας προσαγορεύοντες, οἷς ἐξεγένετο συνδραμεῖν λογισμοῖς εἰλικρινέσι τῷ Μωυσέως καθαρωτάτῳ πνεύματι. Translations of Philo and Josephus are taken from the respective Loeb editions, unless other is specified.

⁶⁸ See also: Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 139-140.

⁶⁹ E. g. Benjamin Wright argues that Philo did not know Hebrew (see: Benjamin Wright, *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction* [Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2008], 312-313), whereas Tessa Rajak proves the opposite (see: Tessa Rajak, "Philo's Knowledge of Hebrew," 173-187).

⁷⁰ According to Philo, human language is imperfect and is a mere copy (*mimesis*) of the divine act of creation and divine language as such. The latter is perfect, free from any restrictions or grammar and fully interlegible. Human language is thus an intermediate between the higher and the lower realms and one of human's means of knowledge (See: David Robertson, *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria: Theories of Language from Philo to Plotinus* [London: Routledge. Taylor & Francis Group, 2008], 16, 22-26; Maren R. Niehoff, "What Is in a Name? Philo's Mystical Philosophy of Language." *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2, no. 3 [1995]: 221-223, 251.). Niehoff elaborates even further discussing Philonic allegories of *mimesis* of the divine language as water, light, or seal (Niehoff, "What Is in a Name?," 227-250).

⁷¹ See the previous section.

⁷² Supposedly, its meaning as the law of nature. For the theory see: Winston, "Aspects of Philo's Linguistic Theory," 109-125. Winston cites (p. 118) Plato to support his claim regarding Philo's passage under scrutiny, which I will extend here for the sake of better exemplification, "So perhaps the man who knows about names considers their value and is not confused if some letter is added, transposed, or subtracted or even if the force of the name is expressed in entirely different letters. So, for instance, in the names we

Of crucial importance to Philo, and peculiar in terms of his attitude to the Septuagint translation, are the conditions of the process. Although, unlike Aristeas, his narrative lacks any official recognition of the Septuagint, he points to two vital issues regarding the translation background: the setting of the process and the divine element in the story.

Philo puts his translators into the primordial setting, thus repeating not the Sinai event like Aristeas, but the very creation of the world, and creation of the natural law.⁷³ The elders were sitting “in seclusion with none present save the elements of nature, earth, water, air, heaven, the genesis of which was to be the first theme of their sacred revelation”.⁷⁴ With this line, Philo embeds the Greek pre-Socratic idea of four essential elements into the translation narrative. Greek philosophers from Empedocles have subsequently believed that the world consists of four primordial elements. This early theory was later developed by Plato, one of Philo’s *philosophy teachers*⁷⁵ and supposedly was adopted from him. The fact that the elements were present in the moment of the world’s creation and later in the creation of the Septuagint equates the latter

were just discussing, Astyanax and Hector, none of the letters is the same, except *t*, but nevertheless they have the same meaning (Greek: οὕτω δὲ ἴσως καὶ ὁ ἐπιστάμενος περὶ ὀνομάτων τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῶν σκοπεῖ, καὶ οὐκ ἐκπλήττεται εἴ τι πρόσκειται γράμμα ἢ μετάκειται ἢ ἀφήρηται, ἢ καὶ ἐν ἄλλοις παντάπασιν γράμμασιν ἐστὶν ἢ τοῦ ὀνόματος δύναμις. ὥσπερ ὁ νυν δὴ ἐλέγομεν, Ἀστυάναξ τε καὶ Ἐκτωρ οὐδὲν τῶν αὐτῶν γραμμάτων ἔχει πλὴν τοῦ τ, ἀλλ’ ὅμως ταῦτόν σημαίνει. Thus, crucial for both Plato and Philo as a Platonist is the meaning, not the word proper.

⁷³ Hindy Najman and Benjamin G. Wright, “Perfecting Translation: The Greek Scriptures in Philo of Alexandria” in *Sibyls, Scriptures, and Scrolls* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 900.

⁷⁴ De vita Mosis 2.37. Greek: ἐν ἀποκρύφῳ καὶ μηδενὸς παρόντος ὅτι μὴ τῶν τῆς φύσεως μερῶν, γῆς ὕδατος ἀέρος οὐρανοῦ, περὶ ὧν πρῶτον τῆς γενέσεως ἔμελλον ἱεροφαντήσιν.

⁷⁵ A detailed account on the Platonic idea of the elements see in: David Macauley, “Chapter 4. Plato’s Chora-Graphy of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water,” in *Elemental Philosophy Earth, Air, Fire, and Water as Environmental Ideas* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 143-172.

event to the former. Thus, the translators work in the paradisaal setting of the creation, which is pure and not yet distorted by sins.⁷⁶

Furthermore, Philo introduces an explicit divine interference into his Septuagint creation narrative. He calls the translators ἐνθουσιῶντες (inspired [by God], passionate, 2.38) and ἱεροφάντας καὶ προφήτας (initiators of the mysteries and prophets, 2.40). Divine inspiration or possession by a deity (ἐνθουσιασμός) was a part of Greek cults of Dionysus and Apollo. It was believed that a person acts as a *broadcaster* of god's actions and words. Plato in *Ion* (533e-534c) distinguished prophetic (Apollonian) ἐνθουσιασμός⁷⁷ contrary to Dionysian madness.⁷⁸ He also states that ἐνθουσιασμός is characteristic for poets.⁷⁹ Therefore, Philo again adopts Platonic views and embeds them in his writings. Thereby, he also equates the Septuagint translators to the Greek poets esteemed in the classical society.

Overall, Philo shares the notion of exactness with Aristeas, and expresses it most explicitly among the three authors discussed so far. Furthermore, he clearly stresses divine interference in the translation process and links it to the Platonic philosophical theories.

⁷⁶ Cf. §308 of Aristeas, where the translators perform ritual handwashing.

⁷⁷ More on the ἐνθουσιασμός and its role in Greek philosophy see: Walter Burkert and John Raffan, "8.1 Enthousiasmos," in *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1985), 109-111.

⁷⁸ Examples of Dionysian madness see e.g., in Euripides's *Bacchae*.

⁷⁹ Javier Aguirre, "'Téchne' and 'Enthousiasmós' in Plato's Critique of Poetry," *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* 72, no. 1 (2016): 190-194. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43816280>.

Flavius Josephus

Flavius Josephus was a Palestinian Jewish nobleman and a military officer, who lived in the first century AD.⁸⁰ During the Jewish war, he surrendered and spent the rest of his life writing in an Italian villa. The context and writings of Josephus differ from those of the previous three authors. First, Josephus was born in Jerusalem to a priestly family, thus he has no connection to the Alexandrian Jewry and most probably to its discussions on the Septuagint. Furthermore, his target audience are Romans, whom he aims to familiarise with Jewish people and their history, and with whom he debates in writing on the rights and status of the Jews. Although, his own biography is ambiguous, Josephus has been perceived as one of the most crucial extra-biblical accounts on the event described in Jewish Scriptures. He mentions the Septuagint translation account thrice in his writings.

In his 20-volume collection *Antiquitates judaicae*, Josephus retells the Scripture, expanding it with various stories related to the topic. In his twelfth book, he modifies the Aristeas story, devoting paragraphs 103-109 to the translation process proper.

As for his attitude towards translation, Josephus follows Aristeas in terms of preciseness stating (12.104), that the elders were, “(work[ing]) as ambitiously and painstakingly as possible to make the translation accurate.”⁸¹ Notwithstanding that Josephus mentions the solemn reading of acknowledgement (12.107-108), he merely retells the original story than

⁸⁰ See: Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 45-50; Rajak, *Translation and Survival*, 35-35; Tessa Rajak, “Chapter 28. Josephus and the Septuagint,” in *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint*, 421-433.

⁸¹ Greek: φιλοτίμως και φιλοπόνως ἀκριβῆ τὴν ἐρμηνείαν ποιούμενοι.

represents any original views. However, living in a Roman surrounding, which by the time of his life had developed a strong linguistic and literary tradition, Josephus treats the translation process more professionally. Wasserstein and Wasserstein stress the words φιλοτίμως και φιλοπόνως (ambitiously and painstakingly, 12.104) contrasting them to the Philonic⁸² idea of divine intercession.⁸³ Furthermore, after the solemn reading no oath is pronounced, to not distort the text, but a request is made (12.109):

*[I]f anyone saw any further addition made to the text of the Law or anything omitted from it, he should examine it and make it known and correct it; in this they acted wisely, that what had once been judged good might remain for ever.*⁸⁴

Wasserstein and Wasserstein here again point out Josephus's understanding, that the transcription process might lead to mistakes in later manuscripts, which should be corrected.⁸⁵ Sebastian Brock assumes that this remark shows Josephus's positive attitude on revisions of the Septuagint as a contrary to Philo's [and Aristeas's] negative perception of any alterations.⁸⁶

In the studied account, Josephus provides more details to his previous remark on the Septuagint translation made in the beginning of the first book.⁸⁷ In the latter, he says, that "the second of the Ptolemies" desired to have the

⁸² Although I would consider this notion embedded already in Aristeas.

⁸³ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 49.

⁸⁴ Greek: εἴ τις ἢ περισσόν τι προσγεγραμμένον ὁρᾷ τῷ νόμῳ ἢ λείπον, πάλιν ἐπισκοποῦντα τοῦτο καὶ ποιοῦντα φανερόν διορθοῦν, σωφρόνως τοῦτο πράττοντες, ἵνα τὸ κριθὲν ἀπαξ ἔχειν καλῶς εἰς αἰεὶ διαμένῃ.

⁸⁵ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 48.

⁸⁶ Sebastian Brock, "To Revise or Not to Revise: Attitudes to Jewish Biblical Translation," in *Septuagint, Scrolls, and Cognate Writings: Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and Its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings* (Manchester, 1990), ed. George J. Brooke and Barnabas Lindars, vol. 33 of *Society of Biblical Literature, Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 308-309.

⁸⁷ *Antiquitates* 1.10-13.

Jewish Law translated in his library, and Eleazar eagerly sent him the books out of the custom not to hide the good things. Interestingly, here Josephus notes, that it was only the Law translated, whereas most of the other books still remained unknown to foreigners at that time.⁸⁸ Furthermore, there he does not mention Demetrius, Aristeas or any other commissioners except the two state leaders. This may possibly mean that already in his time, there was an opinion that more books beyond the Torah were translated by the elders.⁸⁹

In his tractate *Contra Apionem*, Josephus again mentions the Septuagint translation, which he considers an initiative of Ptolemy, intended for the Greeks rather than the Jews (2.45).⁹⁰ Here, he keeps his view on preciseness of the translation⁹¹ and praises the elders, Demetrius of Phalerum, Aristeas and a certain Andreas, whose identity remains obscure (2.46). Overall, no evolution can be traced in Josephus's attitude to the translation in both works. The only difference is the initiator, Demetrius of Phalerum in the *Antiquitates* 12.12-16 versus Ptolemy personally in the *Antiquitates* 1.10-13 and *Contra Apionem*.

His cautious attitude towards everything Greek and exclusion of any mention of the translation's divine inspiration (except the King's veneration of

⁸⁸ *Antiquitates* 1.12: For even he failed to obtain all our records: it was only the portion containing the Law which was delivered to him by those who were sent to Alexandria to interpret it (οὐδὲ γὰρ πᾶσαν ἐκεῖνος ἔφθη λαβεῖν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν, ἀλλ' αὐτὰ μόνα τὰ τοῦ νόμου παρέδοσαν οἱ πεμφθέντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξήγησιν εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν).

⁸⁹ This opinion was later maintained by Christian authors from Justin onwards (see Chapter 3 and Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 95-131).

⁹⁰ Cf. with *Antiquitates* 12.12-26, where the same notion is expressed.

⁹¹ 2, 46: καὶ τοῦ γραφῆναι ταῦτα καλῶς (and to write them [the Septuagint] well/Loeb: and, to ensure accuracy in transcription).

the translation) suggests, that Josephus perceives the Septuagint as entirely human and culturally Greek.⁹²

Overall, Aristeas, Aristobulus, and Philo clearly differ from Josephus in terms of their perception of the Septuagint. Whereas the former favoured the translation and propagated its usage, Josephus treats it as beneficial only for the Greeks. Aristeas and Philo also stress on the Septuagint as the only precise Greek version, which does not need any further editorial work, whereas Josephus argues that it may be corrected by its future readers. Furthermore, he expands the notions of zeal and notorious work of the translators, only marginally mentioned by Aristeas,⁹³ opposing it to the perception of the translation process as a revelatory act evident in Aristeas and Philo.

⁹² Josephus's *Contra Apionem* explicitly states inferiority of the Greek culture. Thus, in 1, 44-46 he criticises the Greeks for lack of a scripture. He also considers Greek philosophy an imitation of the Law, a notion he shares with his Hellenistic Alexandrian predecessors (See: 2.108, 257, 281-286).

⁹³ In my view, both Aristeas and Josephus mention divine inspiration and arduous effort. However, the former emphasises inspiration as a primary notion, whereas the latter stresses work.

Chapter 2

Translation philosophy in biblical paratexts: Prologue to Ben Sira and Colophon to Greek Esther

This chapter studies two peculiar descriptions of the translation process included in the biblical text, a prologue, and a colophon. They bear witness to either the translator personally or a contemporary anonymous author close to the time of the translation. Additionally, paratexts, i.e., prologues, colophons, marginal remarks, titles etc, are crucial to study the transmission of (biblical) texts, which in this case is related to the translation process.

Prologue to Ben Sira

The prologue to the Greek translation of the originally Hebrew book of Ben Sira (otherwise known as Wisdom of Sirach, Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus), was added to the main text to introduce its translation into Greek. It was written by the author's grandson (as its author identifies himself), who translated the work from Hebrew into Greek, and is dated around 117 BC.⁹⁴ I will study the prologue from two viewpoints, its attitude to translation as such and to the translation of Ben Sira proper. The text is divided into three sections, corresponding to three Ancient Greek periods (compound-complex sentences). The first section is dedicated to the wisdom literature and its role in education, as well as to the original author of the book, Jesus ben Sira. The second period

⁹⁴ Benjamin Wright, "Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, the Septuagint and their Audiences," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 34, 1 (2003): 12, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/157006303321043138>.

is an apology of the translation and is of the foremost interest in context of this thesis. The last paragraph mentions the actual translation process and motifs of the translator.

Most scholars do not doubt the originality of the prologue, except Paul Kahle and George Kilpatrick. They point out, that the prologue is missing from some Old Latin and Greek manuscripts; and Ecclesiasticus Codex 248 contains another introduction, distinct from the one under discussion.⁹⁵ However, in this research, I will treat the prologue as an original part of the Greek Ben Sira, written by its translator.⁹⁶

The most crucial and debatable point in understanding translation in the prologue under study is the following paragraph:

[F]or what was originally expressed in Hebrew does not have the same force when it is in fact rendered in another language. And not only in this case, but also in the case of the Law itself and the Prophets and the rest of the books the difference is not small when these are expressed in their own language.⁹⁷

As can be seen, the author clearly treats Hebrew language as superior to any other. The rarely used verb *ισοδυναμέω*, used by the grandson has recently become an object of a discussion. The verb proper is a compound of the

⁹⁵ Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 217. This second prologue can be found in: Hart, *Ecclesiasticus*, XVIII. The text describes, how the author gathered and studied Jewish wisdom and has no relation to the translation process.

⁹⁶ I doubt the identity of its author as a “grandson” of the author, since the word *πάππος*, translated as *grandfather* has a more general connotation of *ancestor, forbearer* (See: Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1541). Nevertheless, for the sake of consistency, I will refer to the prologue author as *grandson*.

⁹⁷ English text of Sirach from: Benjamin G. Wright, trans., “Sirach.,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, trans. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), 719. Greek: οὐ γὰρ ἰσοδυναμεῖ αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς ἑβραϊστὶ λεγόμενα καὶ ὅταν μεταχθῆ εἰς ἑτέραν γλῶσσαν. οὐ μόνον δὲ ταῦτα, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ νόμος καὶ αἱ προφητεῖαι καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ τῶν βιβλίων οὐ μικρὰν ἔχει τὴν διαφορὰν ἐν ἑαυτοῖς λεγόμενα. Quoted from: Ziegler, *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach*, 124-125.

adjective ἴσος (equal, balanced) and δύναμις (power, strength). It can be traced back to the times of Aeschylus with the meanings: *to have equal power* or *to be equivalent*.⁹⁸ This quite direct meaning is applied in most of the translations⁹⁹ and in the early scholarship on the issue.¹⁰⁰

In his book from 1994, Giuseppe Veltri, stated that the verb under scrutiny has no relation to the modern semantic theories and signifies *untranslatability* (*Unübersetzbarkeit*) of Hebrew as a sacred language. However, he links those views to later ideas from *Corpus Hermeticum*, Iamblichus, or Origen.¹⁰¹ A broader discussion on ἰσοδυναμέω was launched in Benjamin Wright's article,¹⁰² in which he emphasised, that the verb means *to [not] have the same rhetorical¹⁰³ power or force*.¹⁰⁴ In 2006, Veltri revised his views and suggested, that ἰσοδυναμέω only refers to the oral recitation, rather than a certain written text.¹⁰⁵ He provides contextual examples from Philo and Polybius, concluding:

⁹⁸ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 987. See further discussion on its meaning in Dries De Crom, "Translation Equivalence in the Prologue to Greek Ben Sirach," *XIII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Ljubljana, 2007*, n o. 55 (2008): 99-111.

⁹⁹ See notes in De Crom, "Translation equivalence," 99-100. Additionally, it worth mentioning: не рівнодіює и силъ ѿмѣткѣ (because they do not have equal force) in the Slavonic Elizabeth Bible (1751). Interestingly, despite the fact, that Sirach is known in the Slavonic-speaking world since the eleventh century (additionally, there are unconfirmed witnesses of even earlier translations), and the first survived full translation dates to the fourteenth century, it is only in the 1751 edition, that the prologue was translated. On pre-1751 Slavonic translations of Ben Sira see Aleksandr Vladimirovič Sizikov, "The Wisdom of Ben Sira in Slavic and Russian Translations," *Rocznik Teologiczny*, no. 63 (3/2021) (2021): pp. 773-813. Cf. with "не рівносільний" (not of equal force) in the first Ukrainian translation of the prologue (1963).

¹⁰⁰ E.g., Hart, *Ecclesiasticus*, 268 writes "not equivalent."

¹⁰¹ Giuseppe Veltri, *Eine Tora für den König Talmai: Untersuchungen zum Übersetzungsverständnis in der Jüdisch-Hellenistischen und Rabbinischen Literatur*, vol. 41 of *Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994), 142-145.

¹⁰² Wright, "Access to the Source," 1-27.

¹⁰³ Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁴ Wright, "Access to the Source," 17. He later repeated the same idea in Wright, *Praise Israel*, 263.

¹⁰⁵ Giuseppe Veltri, "(De)Canonization in the Making: the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sira," in *Libraries, Translations, and 'Canonic' Texts: The Septuagint, Aquila, and Ben Sira in the Jewish and Christian*

In all these examples, the expression “to have equal force” means linguistically the perfect semantic and meta-semantic consonance between two different things. “To not have the same force” means, on the contrary, to be simply antonyms and hence for translation praxis fully unsuitable because it suggests the wrong meaning.¹⁰⁶

According to Veltri, the problem lies in the geographical dimension, as Alexandrian Jewry will never possess the perfect Palestinian wisdom.¹⁰⁷

In 2007, Theo A. W. van der Louw, posed critique on Wright’s theses and, with reference once again to Iamblichus, suggested that δύναμις might be rendered as *meaning*. Thus, he translates ἰσοδυναμέω as “to have the same meaning,” providing an example from Philo’s *De migratione Abrahami* 205.¹⁰⁸ Dries De Crom, imposed a more argumentative critique on both Veltri and Wright, discussing the use of ἰσοδυναμέω by various authors between the fourth century BC and second century AD.¹⁰⁹ He did not suggest any particular contextual reading of the verb but summarised all the meanings in two categories: general sense (*be equal*) or *terminus technicus* in astrology or grammar (denoting linguistic interchangeability or synonymy).¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, as De Crom’s study shows, only a few instances in Berossus and Polybius are comparable to the one in the prologue. He states, “that even the

Traditions, vol. 109 of *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2006), 197-198.

¹⁰⁶ Veltri, “(De)Canonization in the Making,” 201. The prologue overall emphasises the role of the reader (See: Hart, *Ecclesiasticus*, 268 or the theories of Benjamin Wright discussed in this chapter).

¹⁰⁷ Veltri, “(De)Canonization in the Making,” 201.

¹⁰⁸ Greek: Εικότως· καλεῖται γὰρ ἐκ λήθης, τὸ δὲ ἰσοδυναμοῦν ἔστι πρᾶγμα ἀναμνήσει (And rightly so, for he is called “saved from oblivion,” which has the same meaning as “remembering” (van der Louw’s translation). Fitly is he younger, for his name means “from forgetfulness,” and that is a thing equivalent to “recalling to mind” [Loeb translation]). See: Theo A. W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*, vol. 47 of *Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology* (Leuven: Peters, 2007), 33-34, 47-48.

¹⁰⁹ De Crom, “Translation Equivalence,” 103-110.

¹¹⁰ Dries De Crom, “Translation Equivalence,” 110.

very specialized, grammatical sense of the word is still a far cry from the concept of translation equivalence as it is understood by the modern mind.”¹¹¹ Wright, van der Louw, and De Crom were challenged by James Aitken, who argued that they pay too much attention to one verb (a warning made already by Hart),¹¹² and the entire section should be read as a rhetorical humiliation of the translator rather than his real concern or apology.¹¹³ Throughout the article, Aitken provides examples of literary techniques, used by the grandson, which, in his opinion, disprove any possible complaints regarding the translation quality. The same idea of rhetorical humiliation as a sign of laudability and skilfulness of the translator is shared by Siegfried Kreuzer. He also opposed Wright and compared the Ben Sira prologue to the one in Isocrates’s *Evagoras*.¹¹⁴ Wright in his two subsequent papers,¹¹⁵ suggested and later justified, that the Ben Sira translator had imposed a new meaning to his *ἰσοδυναμέω*. According to Wright, the verb means “to [not] have the same *rhetorical* or *aesthetic effect*”¹¹⁶ on the reader.¹¹⁷

Overall, there are not enough instances of inter-cultural or interlingual usage of *ἰσοδυναμέω* to somehow prove Wright’s conclusions. Even selected

¹¹¹ Dries De Crom, “Translation Equivalence,” 111.

¹¹² Hart, *Ecclesiasticus*, 268.

¹¹³ James Aitken, “The Literary Attainment of the Translator of Greek Sirach,” in *The Texts and Versions of the Book of Ben Sira* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2011), 107-108. doi: https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004207189_007.

¹¹⁴ Siegfried Kreuzer, “‘Object of Great Care’: The Prologue to the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach, in the Context of Its Genre,” in *The Bible in Greek: Translation, Transmission, and Theology of the Septuagint*, vol. 63 of *Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015), 94-109.

¹¹⁵ Wright, “Translation Greek in Sirach,” 73-94 (interestingly, in the same volume with Aitken’s critique) and Benjamin G. III Wright, “ἰσοδυναμέω and Translation into Greek in Sirach.” *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 52, 4-5 (2020): 500-521, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/15700631-BJA10023>.

¹¹⁶ Cursive by Wright.

¹¹⁷ Wright, “Translation Greek in Sirach,” 79-80, 82, 88 or Wright, “ἰσοδυναμέω and Translation into Greek,” 518.

passages in Berossus and Polybius were considered not significant enough to fully prove the theory.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, a similar rendering is suggested by Takamitsu Muraoka in his dictionary, “*to be equivalent to or capable of producing the same effect as sth else.*”¹¹⁹

Regarding the other theories, I disagree with Veltri’s range of authors, as the idea of Hebrew as a sacred language cannot yet be explicitly traced in writings under discussion. Nor can I concur with his example of Philo’s *De plantatione* 152,¹²⁰ since, although it is relatively close chronologically to the grandson’s time, Philo discusses synonymy within a language and has no relation to translation proper. On the other hand, later authors such as Dioscorides Pedanius, suggest a rendering like the one proposed by Wright but referring to medication.¹²¹

In conclusion, the root *δυναμ-* in *ισοδυναμέω* certainly denotes some effect or better *influence* on the reader, which I understand as the extent of text perception. However, the question remains unanswered regarding the kind of this influence. This issue becomes especially true, when discussed in light of

¹¹⁸ Wright, “*Ισοδυναμέω* and Translation into Greek,” 507-512 based on De Crom, “Translation Equivalence,” 103-110.

¹¹⁹ Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain Paris-Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2009), 342. Cursive by Muraoka.

¹²⁰ Greek: ἄλλαι δ’ εἰσὶ προσήσεις διάφοροι κατὰ σημειομένου ἐνὸς ὡς ἰός, οἰστός, βέλος— τὸ γὰρ διὰ τῆς τόξου νευρᾶς ἐπὶ τὸν σκοπὸν ἀφιέμενον πάντα ταῦτα λέγεται (There are other names which are different though one thing is meant by them, as “arrow,” “shaft,” “dart”; for the thing discharged at the mark from the string of the bow is called by all these names).

¹²¹ *De materia medica* 1.170.1: σχῖνος δένδρον γνώριμον, στυπτικὸν ὄλον· καὶ γὰρ ὁ καρπὸς αὐτῆς καὶ τὸ φύλλον καὶ ὁ φλοιὸς τῶν κλάδων καὶ τῆς ρίζης ἰσοδυναμεῖ (Mastich is as a well-known tree, entirely astringent; also, because its fruit, and leaf, and husk of its branches and root have the same medical efficacy – translation mine). Cf. Galenic titles “Περὶ τῆς τῶν καθαιρόντων φαρμάκων δυνάμεως” or “Περὶ κράσεως καὶ δυνάμεως τῶν ἀπλῶν φαρμάκων.” See also Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 558, 987. In patristic literature, root *ισοδυναμ-* seems to be linked to the notion of *divine power* rather than *effect of efficacy* (see Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 676).

the grandson's extension of his claim regarding inequality to "the Law, the Prophets and the other books," thus, most probably, to the entire Old Greek collection known to him.¹²²

The entire section, where the verb under scrutiny is mentioned, requires more detailed attention, as it opposes the notions discussed in the first chapter. The translator, rhetorically or not, explicitly states, that his Greek copy is less influential (effective, powerful etc.), than his grandfather's original. He might expect some criticism even considering, that his work is intended for the Alexandrian Jewry mostly unfamiliar with Hebrew. On the one hand, he consciously chooses lower style *Hebraistic* Greek for the translation (unlike for the prologue) to harmonise it with a rather literal translation of the Septuagint. On the other, he still worries, that his idea would not be understood by his target audience.¹²³ Nevertheless, he never explicitly states his own attitude to the preciseness of the translation. The grandson does acknowledge the lesser effect or influence of the translation but regarding the idea of preciseness, we can only have an *argumentum e silentio*. Having compared the discussion on *ἰσοδυναμέω* with Aristeas, I suggest that the translator clearly does not have the same attitude to the translation. If his translation οὐ[χ] ... ἰσοδυναμεῖ the original, it can neither be a precise copy nor a sisterly representation of the

¹²² See: Wright, "Access to the Source," 18 or Wright, *Praise Israel*, 264. Although, the exact set of the books translated by the grandson's time remains unknown.

¹²³ Wright, "Access to the Source," 17-20; Wright, *Praise Israel*, 263-266; Francis Borchardt, "Prologue of Sirach (Ben Sira) and the Question of Canon," in *Sacra Scriptura How "Non-Canonical" Texts Functioned in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. James H. Charlesworth and Lee Martin McDonald, vol. 20 of *Jewish and Christian Texts Series in Contexts and Related Studies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 69; van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 48; Wright, "ἰσοδυναμέω and Translation into Greek," 519.

same text. And so he thinks of the Septuagint, as the following line of his arguments reveals.¹²⁴

Furthermore, nowhere in his prologue does the grandson state any divine interference or assistance in his work. On the contrary, he emphasises his own zeal and effort:

*I myself too made it a most compulsory task to bring some speed and industry to the translating of this tome, meanwhile having contributed much sleeplessness and skill, with the aim of bringing the book to completion and to publish it also for those living abroad if they wish to become learned.*¹²⁵

Explicit mention of labour accomplished to create the translation is contrary to the previously mentioned authors, except Josephus. Kreuzer argues that the quotation above means the opposite and is intended to praise the translator and reveal his devotion to the challenge, which he imposed on himself. As for the book of Ben Sira proper, he adds, the grandson did not merely translate it into Greek, but interpreted his ancestor's wisdom.¹²⁶ Overall, neither God, nor the King nor any other authority except the prologue author is mentioned, therefore, it is his effort alone, which led to accomplishing the translation.

Most peculiar lemma used in the prologue with connection to the translator's zeal is the adverb φιλοπόνως, also applied by Josephus. It has been

¹²⁴ On the contrary, Wright, "Access to the Source," 15 sees no "criticism of the Jewish-Greek scriptures at all." See also Kreuzer, "Object of Great Care," 96-97.

¹²⁵ Greek: ἀναγκαιότατον ἐθέμην αὐτὸς προσενέγκασθαι τινα σπουδὴν καὶ φιλοπονίαν τοῦ μεθερμηνεῦσαι τήνδε τὴν βίβλον, πολλὴν ἀγρυπνίαν καὶ ἐπιστήμην προσενεγκάμενος ἐν τῷ διαστήματι τοῦ χρόνου πρὸς τὸ ἐπὶ πέρας ἀγαγόντα τὸ βιβλίον ἐκδόσθαι καὶ τοῖς ἐν τῇ παροικίᾳ βουλομένοις φιλομαθεῖν

¹²⁶ Kreuzer, "Object of Great Care," 96, 104-105. Similarly, Kreuzer supposed, that "οὐ μικρᾶς παιδείας ἀφόμοιον," mentioned in the prologue is not a collection of books, as is usually understood but traditional wisdom of the Egyptians, which the grandson discovered with a surprise (Kreuzer, "Object of Great Care," 103, 107).

known in the Greek literature since the fifth century and used denoting *diligently* or *with great industriousness*. The word is linked to the idea of *philoponia* (*industriousness* or literally, *love of work*), one of the key sport terms¹²⁷ also applied in philosophy.¹²⁸ Besides, the notion of arduous work contrasts the idea of ἐνθουσιασμός (prophetic madness), employed by Philo and later notions of inspiration witnessed in Irenaeus.¹²⁹ Thus, the grandson perceives translation linguistically rather than revelatory, considering only professionalism and zeal. A translation is thus evaluated as nothing but a result of hard and laborious work. Such vocabulary choice serves as an additional witness, that the translators' contribution (and not only that of Ptolemy or of the God) is recognised and praised at the time of the Ben Sira translation and later.¹³⁰

Kreuzer points to another notable distinction between the prologue to Ben Sira, and the authors discussed above, a lack of divine, royal or any other kind of authorisation of the translation.¹³¹ This and the previous points lead to another question, whether the grandson perceives Sirach as a scriptural author. Research on this issue might provide us with a more elaborate reply to the grandson's attitude to his own work. As for zeal or inspiration of the seventy-two Septuagint translators proper, the prologue does not mention either point.

¹²⁷ Nigel B Crowther, "Euexia, Eutaxia, Philoponia: Three Contests of the Greek Gymnasium," *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik* 85 (1991): 301–4. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20187430>.

¹²⁸ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 2286.

¹²⁹ See Chapter 3.

¹³⁰ However, although most scholars agree, that Greek Ben Sira has a later dating, than Aristeas, Kahle argues, that the prologue was written before Aristeas had its effect in the contemporary society (See: Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 218). Nevertheless, his conclusions do not have much evidence and are built on his own theory of multiple early translations.

¹³¹ Kreuzer, "Object of Great Care," 96.

Here I cannot conclude further than pointing out that “the Law, the Prophets and the other books,” despite no conviction in the precise selection of books, were certainly of some authority to the Ben Sira translator both originally and, to a lesser extent, in Greek.

Colophon to Greek Esther

Another peculiar example of a paratext included in the Greek biblical corpus is the colophon to Greek Esther. It is only present in the Old Greek version and absent from so-called Alpha-text of the book. In general, colophon is a short remark containing essential information about a manuscript, such as its origins, content, or scribe. It was common at the Hellenistic period to pen such colophons as a bibliographic reference.¹³² The colophon under study runs as follows:

In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus – who said he was a priest, – and Levitas, and Ptolemy his son deposited the preceding Letter of Purim, which they said really exists and had been translated by Lysimachus [son of] Ptolemy, [a member] of the Jerusalem community.¹³³

¹³² Bickerman, “Colophon,” 339–362.

¹³³ Translation proposed by Elias Bickerman (Bickerman, “Colophon,” 362). Alternatively, Karen Jobes renders the text as follows: In the fourth year of the reign of Ptolemy and Cleopatra, Dositheus, who said he was a priest and a Leuite, and Ptolemy his son brought the above letter about Phourai, which they said existed, and Lysimachus son of Ptolemy one of those in Ierusalem translated it (See: Karen H. Jobes, trans., “Esther.,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, trans. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G Wright (Oxford: Oxford University Press, USA, 2007), 440). Greek: “Ἐτους τετάρτου βασιλεύοντος Πτολεμαίου καὶ Κλεοπάτρας εἰσήνεγκε Δοσίθεος, ὃς ἔφη εἶναι ἱερεὺς καὶ Λευίτης, καὶ Πτολεμαῖος ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ τὴν προκειμένην ἐπιστολὴν τῶν Φουραί, ἣν ἔφασαν εἶναι καὶ ἡρμηνευκέναι Λυσίμαχον Πτολεμαίου τῶν ἐν Ἱερουσαλήμ.

The exact dating of the Esther colophon remains debatable, as there are three pairs of kings with the same names in three varying periods. However, I agree with Bickerman's argumentation, based on extra-biblical Ptolemaic sources, regarding years 78-77 BC as the most reliable date.¹³⁴ Bickerman argues, that the colophon is a genuine note to a Greek translation of the Hebrew book of Esther made by certain Lysimachus (who, according to Bickerman, also emended the text with deuterocanonical additions) and brought to Alexandria by a group of people led by Dositheus.¹³⁵ According to both Bickerman and Jobs, the colophon also verified the work as coming from a genuine and authoritative Hebrew source.¹³⁶ This view was challenged by Claudine Cavalier, who claimed, that the colophon to Greek Esther was not a colophon proper, but the last verse of the book, aimed to promote Purim.¹³⁷ However, her claim is based mostly on indirect data. For example, she calls the definition of Esther as a *letter* "assez étonnante de la part d'un bibliothécaire"¹³⁸ or assumes *letter* to be a plausible original title.¹³⁹ However, texts, such as the *Letter of Aristeas* are also far from the epistolary canons, although known as letters. Furthermore, the very word ἐπιστολή might also bear the meaning *message* or *instruction*.¹⁴⁰ Therefore, as Esther is indeed an encouraging instruction, which

¹³⁴ Bickerman, "Colophon," 347. Other possible date, doubted for the first time by Bickerman is 114-113 years BC based on the historical studies. Creation of the translation in 48-47 BC, under the renowned queen Cleopatra VII seems highly unlikely.

¹³⁵ Bickerman, "Colophon," 348-355.

¹³⁶ Bickerman, "Colophon," 354; Jobs, trans., "Esther," 440.

¹³⁷ Claudine Cavalier, "Le «Colophon» d'Esther," *Revue Biblique* (1946-) 110, no. 2 (2003): 172-175.

¹³⁸ Quite astonishing for a librarian (Cavalier, "Le «Colophon»," 172).

¹³⁹ Cavalier, "Le «Colophon»," 172. Nevertheless, later in the article she argues the original "letter of Phourai" is different from what we know today as Greek Esther (Cavalier, "Le «Colophon»," 176).

¹⁴⁰ See e.g.: Aeschylus, *Persae* 783: *καὶ μνημονεύει τὰς ἐμὰς ἐπιστολάς* (and he has not kept my instructions in mind) or several instances in Herodotus (Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 793).

propagates the Purim celebration, it may be called an ἐπιστολή. Hence, the phrase ἐπιστολὴν τῶν Φρουραί may be rendered as not only as *letter of Phrourai* but as *message* or *instruction regarding Phrourai*. In addition, there is no direct evidence about the original title of the book. These factors make Cavalier's conclusion less convincing. Thus, I agree with Bickerman's idea that the Esther colophon as a part of an authoritative ancient manuscript, although no other external evidence may prove his conclusions on the historicity of the characters mentioned in the text.

However, the colophon does not reveal much about the translation philosophy of its authors except the very fact of the translation of Esther. The only factor that may be pointed out is that Esther is the only book, of which we have the name of its (alleged) translator. This might mean, that by the time of the colophon creation the notion of a painstaking translation process was dominant consequently continuing the idea expressed in the prologue to Ben Sira. Accordingly, with specifying the name of the translator, his effort was recognised and commemorated.

In conclusion, in addition to the fact that both texts are paratexts in relation to the Septuagint, they also share certain admiration towards translators as painstaking labourers and not priests or sages, Thus, they can be linked to the similar notions in the writings by Josephus, discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, the prologue to Ben Sira introduces the idea of *unequal influence* of the translated text in comparison to the Hebrew original. Thus, it treats the translated text as secondary, again being echoed by Josephus.

Chapter 3

Septuagint translation philosophy in Early Christianity: Justin, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria

Throughout its early history, Christianity was considerably concerned with the Scripture and its different understanding in the Church and among the Jews. In the New Testament, most of the Old Testament quotations followed the Septuagint, which soon gained its authority as the primary Old Testament version among the Greek-speaking Christians and the *Vorlage* for several other versions. In this chapter, I will investigate the understanding of the Septuagint translation process in the earliest Christian authors who mentioned the story, comparing them with the Jewish authors researched previously.

Justin Martyr

Justin¹⁴¹ was an apologist and martyr who became the first Christian philosopher, significantly influenced by Plato. He lived in different cities around the Roman Empire in the first half of the second century. Most of his works were lost, except the two *Apologiae* (Apologies) and the *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* (*Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*). In his works, Justin aims to defend the newly emerged Christian faith against the pagans and the Jews, trying to emphasise its descendance from earlier traditions.

¹⁴¹ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 98-100; David E. Aune, "Justin Martyr's Use of the Old Testament," *Bulletin of the Evangelical Theological Society* 9, no. 4 (1966): 179-197; David Rokeah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews*, vol. 5 of *Jewish and Christian Perspectives series* (Leiden-Köln-Boston: Brill, 2002); Hengel, *Septuagint*, 26-35; Müller, *First Bible*, 68-72.

Justin Martyr was the first Christian author to mention the Septuagint translation story explicitly.¹⁴² He is also the first to mention the textual problems of the various Greek versions of the Hebrew Scriptures, which he ascribed to Jewish alterations aimed to hide the role of Jesus as Messiah.¹⁴³

There is a scholarly agreement on the point that Justin did not know any Hebrew and perceived the Septuagint without any relation to the source text.¹⁴⁴ Furthermore, he approached the Old Testament as a part of Christian Scripture that prophecies about Christ.¹⁴⁵ According to Justin, the Law of Moses is thus a national law, as opposed to the universal and more progressive Christian Law, the new covenant.¹⁴⁶

Justin mentions the Septuagint translation in two instances, in the *Apologia prima* (*First Apology*) 31:2-5 and *Dialogus* 71:1-2. The story represented in the *Apologia* modifies the legend with two significant details, emphasised by Wasserstein and Wasserstein.¹⁴⁷ Firstly, Justin introduces a two-fold embassy from King Ptolemy to Israel, first to request the Law, which was sent in Hebrew, and second to invite people (ἀνθρώπους) competent to translate it into Greek. Secondly, Justin substitutes Eleazar the Archpriest with Herod, the

¹⁴² Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 98; Edmon L. Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture in Patristic Biblical Theory: Canon, Language, Text*, vol. 144 of *Vigiliae Christianae, Supplements* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 94.

¹⁴³ See: Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 79, 143, 175-176. Although, this claim lacks historical proofs, Justin's general attitude towards the Jews was rather friendly. Furthermore, he considered Hebrew Bible a common basis for an intertraditional dialogue (See: David Rokeah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews*, 7-11).

¹⁴⁴ David E. Aune, "Justin Martyr's Use of The Old Testament," 182; Rokeah, *Justin Martyr and the Jews*, 20-21.

¹⁴⁵ See: *Dialogus* 29:2; 71-73. Also, in Aune, "Justin Martyr's Use," 180.

¹⁴⁶ See: *Dialogus* 11:2; 71:1-2. Furthermore, Justin opposes direct meaning of the Scripture and its inner spiritual sense, a notion developed by later allegorists.

¹⁴⁷ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 98-100.

(in)famous Jewish King. There are several plausible reasons for this shift. The author probably intended to introduce a figure related to Christianity into a typically Jewish narrative, or even to vindicate Herod.¹⁴⁸ Additionally, it could have been a mistake of either Justin personally or a later scribe.¹⁴⁹

Another interesting distinction is the replacement of the prototype for the translation. For Justin, it is not the Law of Moses which is translated but “the prophecies” (τῶν προφητεῶν).¹⁵⁰ The translation story is preceded by a short remark, saying that the kings of Judea were collecting and writing down the prophecies, “as they were pronounced, while they were prophesied, in their own Hebrew tongue.”¹⁵¹ Thus, the translation story parallels this remark, as now Ptolemy, a Greek King, cares to translate those prophecies into his own language.¹⁵² To exemplify the story, Justin’s narrative after the translation story continues with several prophecies about Jesus as the Messiah from Moses onwards.

Wasserstein and Wasserstein argue that the reason for substitution of the Torah with the prophecies is the availability of the entire Old Greek corpus

¹⁴⁸ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 99.

¹⁴⁹ Mariya Horyacha, ed. *Early Church Fathers: Anthology*, vol. 1 of Christian Origins. Sources (Lviv: Ukrainian Catholic University Press, 2015), 352.

¹⁵⁰ *Apologia* 31:2, where Justin does not mention neither Moses nor the Law at all. In this thesis, the original text by Justin is quoted from: Justin Martyr, *Sancti Iustini Martyris Apologiae pro Christianis*, trans. Miroslav Marcovich, vol. 38 of *Patristische Texten und Studien* (Berlin-New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2005); The translations: *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* from St. Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, ed. Thomas P. Halton and Michael Slusser, trans. Thomas B. Falls, vol. 3 of *Selections from the Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2003); *Apologia prima* from Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 98-99 or my own.

¹⁵¹ *Apologia* 31.1. Greek: ὡς ἐλέχθησαν ὅτε προεφητεύοντο, τῆ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν Ἑβραϊδὶ φωνῆτῆ ἰδίᾳ αὐτῶν Ἑβραϊδὶ φωνῆ.

¹⁵² Justin is also the first among the studied authors not to mention Demetrius of Phalerum or any other royal assistants.

to Justin and his contemporaries.¹⁵³ However, another plausible explanation might be the varying scope of Hellenistic Jewish and Christian authors. For the former, the pivotal part of the Scripture is the Law of Moses, the Torah, whereas for the latter it is the Christological interpretation of the Old Testament texts in general. Additionally, in the *Apologia*, Justin does not specify the number of the elders, although he does so in the *Dialogus* 71.4. It is in his writings, that the number is first reduced to seventy instead of the original seventy-two.¹⁵⁴ Here, I agree with Wasserstein and Wasserstein, who stress the insignificance of numbers for Justin.¹⁵⁵ The insignificance provides an additional witness to the author's attitude to the Hebrew Scripture as the prototype of the Christian revelation, for which the numerical symbolism of this story is less substantial.¹⁵⁶

The translation process proper is described in merely one sentence: "This [the translation] was done and the books remained with the Egyptians and are there to this day {just as they are everywhere with all the Judeans}."¹⁵⁷ From this brief note, nothing can be inferred regarding Justin's understanding of the translation and his assessment of its characteristics. Interestingly, he still believed in the existence of the Septuagint originals in his own time.

¹⁵³ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 100.

¹⁵⁴ The number seventy was first mentioned by Josephus in *Jewish Antiquities* 12.57, although he refers to seventy-two a few lines earlier (12.56). Justin, however, is the first author to only mention seventy translators. This, and some common terms (see the following chapter) might witness a certain connection between the two that, however, cannot be proven with conviction. Generally, it is merely possible to undoubtedly determine Justin's exact source(s) of the translation story.

¹⁵⁵ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 100.

¹⁵⁶ See e.g., *Dialogus* 34.1, where the Law of Moses is explicitly equated to the new Law.

¹⁵⁷ Greek: [καὶ τούτου γενομένου ἔμειναν αἱ βιβλοὶ καὶ παρ' Αἰγυπτίοις μέχρι τοῦ δεῦρο καὶ πανταχοῦ παρὰ πᾶσιν εἰσὶν Ἰουδαίσις.

In *Dialogus* 71.1-2, Justin criticises all the other translators or editors besides the standard Old Greek text for erasing any prophecies regarding Jesus as the future Messiah.¹⁵⁸ There, he refers to the original translation as being rendered *καλῶς* (well, rightly),¹⁵⁹ which in this context might mean *precisely* or at least *more precisely than the versions Justin is criticising*. Edmon Gallagher points out that it is not the Hebrew original and the Septuagint that differ, but the Septuagint and various other Greek versions.¹⁶⁰

Justin Martyr does not insert any divine or miraculous element to his story, although he explicitly considers the Bible as a divinely inspired text. In the *Apologia* 31.1; 44.1-2; and 47.1, Justin mentions the (holy) prophetic spirit (τὸ [ἅγιον] προφητικὸν πνεῦμα), which inspires the prophets, and *Dialogus* 34.2; 73.2 and 74.2 refers to the Holy Spirit (τὸ πνεῦμα [τὸ] ἅγιον), which inspires the Psalms and David as their author.¹⁶¹ Moreover, he never distinguishes the original and the translated text. For Justin, the inspired is not the text as a linguistic phenomenon, but its message about Messiah Jesus. Overall, Justin, despite noticing and imposing critique on the differences between the Christian and the Jewish versions of the Old Testament, evaluates the Septuagint translation not from a linguistic or legal points of view, as did the Hellenistic Jewish authors, but from a Christocentric one¹⁶². As David Aune rightly says,

¹⁵⁸ Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 175-176

¹⁵⁹ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1027.

¹⁶⁰ Gallagher, *Hebrew Scripture*, 177-178.

¹⁶¹ The idea of an inspiring prophetic spirit is present already in Kings and Chronicles, in the story of the Ramoth Galaad campaign. See more details in Marko Dorosh, "Verbalization of Concept πνεῦμα in the Septuagint Version of Kingdoms and Paralipomenon," *BIMCO Journal. Abstract Book of the Congress BIMCO, 2021*, 2021, 125.

¹⁶² See more on the Messianism in Justin with more examples provided in Michaël N. van der Meer, "Messianisme in de Septuaginta," *Zijt Gij Het Die Komen Zou? Over Messiasverwachting*, 2010, 27-34.

he “accepted the Septuagint without question and also without any reference to the Hebrew original.”¹⁶³

Irenaeus of Lyon

Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon¹⁶⁴ is a Christian martyr of the second century, originating from Asia Minor. He was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, who was elected as a bishop of Lugdunum (Lyon) and became one of the most prominent Christian apologists.

In his five-volume work *Adversus omnes haereseis* (Against all heresies), written under the influence of Justin’s unpreserved tractate of the same title,¹⁶⁵ he criticises and condemns as unorthodox (heretic) various [Gnostic] Christian groups. In the third book of the tractate, Irenaeus mentions the Septuagint translation story in the context of criticising the reading *young woman* (*νεανίσκη*/adolescentula)¹⁶⁶ in Isaiah 7:14, as an example of what he considers a wrong and anti-Christian translation circulating in his time.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶³ Aune, “Justin Martyr's Use of The Old Testament,” 182. Additionally, Mogens Müller insists, that the Septuagint for Justin was “a purely Greek achievement” (Müller, *First Bible*, 72).

¹⁶⁴ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 101-103; Hengel, *Septuagint*, 38-40; Müller, *First Bible*, 72-75.

¹⁶⁵ Robert M. Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons. The Early Church Fathers* (London: Routledge, 1997), 8

¹⁶⁶ The tractate *Adversus omnes haereseis* has survived only in a Latin translation from the third or early fourth century (Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 5). The translation account, however, has survived in both Greek and Latin. The Greek version derives from the quotation in Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica* 5.8). I will quote the Greek version as the primary referring to some Latin terms, which might be of interest. Text from Irenaeus of Lyon, *Sancti Irenaei Episcopi Lugdunensis Libros Quinque Adversus Haereses*, ed. W. Wigan Harvey, S.T.B., vol. 2 (Cantabrigiae: Typis Academicis, 1857). Translation from Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 101 or mine.

¹⁶⁷ *Adversus haereseis* 3.23. Martin Hengel (Hengel, *Septuagint*, 38) says about the Irenaeus’s version of the story, “the most significant interpretation of the legend of the origin of the LXX, however, is that of Irenaeus..., who influenced Clement of Alexandria and the whole church tradition after him.”

In the account of Irenaeus, Ptolemy son of Lagus (Ptolemy I Soter) initiates the translation process on advice by Demetrius of Phalerum. His story also shows a certain dependence on Philo, although it is hard to state any precise connection between the two without a further research.¹⁶⁸ Nonetheless, both authors very briefly refer to Ptolemy's trial of the elders, described extensively in Aristeas, and to the miraculous similarity of all the translations.¹⁶⁹ On the other hand, he mentions Ptolemy Soter,¹⁷⁰ whereas Philo explicitly refers to Philadelphus.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, Irenaeus again mentions seventy translators,¹⁷² when Philo lacks the number.

Nevertheless, Irenaeus shares the two most crucial Philonic features of the translation: preciseness and divine inspiration. He mentions that the separate translations:

[H]ad all expressed the same things by the same phrases and the same words from beginning to end insomuch that even the Gentiles who were present perceived that the Scriptures had been translated through the inspiration of God,¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Philonic works were undoubtedly circulating in Alexandria and known to the Fathers related to the city (such as Clement, Origen or Athenagoras of Athens) but his popularity outside Egypt is limited, so it is hard to determine Irenaeus's familiarity with his works (See: David T. Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers: A Collection of Papers*, vol. 32 of *Vigiliae Christianae. Supplements* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995] or Robertson, *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria*). What can be ascertained, are the striking similarities between the two versions of the translation story.

¹⁶⁹ *De vita Mosis* 2.33 and *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1.

¹⁷⁰ *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1.

¹⁷¹ *De vita Mosis* 2.29-30.

¹⁷² *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1.

¹⁷³ *Adversus haereses* 3.24.1, Greek: τῶν πάντων τὰ αὐτὰ ταῖς αὐταῖς λέξεσιν καὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὀνόμασιν ἀναγορευσάντων ἀπ' ἀρχῆς μέχρι τέλους, ὥστε καὶ τὰ παρόντα ἔθνη γινῶναι ὅτι κατ' ἐπίνοιαν τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσιν ἐρμηνευμένοι αἱ γραφαί. Similarly, in *Adversus haereses* 3.24.2: When with such truthfulness and God's grace, the Scriptures were translated... (Latin: *Cum tanta igitur veritate et gratia Dei interpretatae sint. Scripturae...*). He goes on even further saying, that the same Spirit had inspired the prophets and the Seventy (*Adversus haereses* 3.25.1), "For it was one and the self-same Spirit of God, who in the prophets proclaimed what and in what manner should be the coming of the Lord and in the elders interpreted well

thus, explicitly combining both notions in the translators' work. In this passage, Irenaeus very closely repeats Philo's saying, "they [the readers] regard them [the Hebrew and Greek versions of the Law] with awe and reverence as sisters, or – rather one and the same, both in matter and words."¹⁷⁴

Irenaeus then compares the Septuagint to works of Ezra, who being inspired by God¹⁷⁵ precisely restored the lost Mosaic Law after the Babylonian Exile,¹⁷⁶ again following Philo. However, similarly to Justin, Irenaeus perceives the Septuagint as a prophecy about Jesus as the Son of God.¹⁷⁷ He points out, that the translation predates Jesus and the Christians, and thus cannot be a forgery unlike the versions created by those he calls *vere inpudorati et audaces* (truly shameless and audacious ones), referring to the later Jewish translators. Thus, both Justin and Irenaeus treat the Septuagint as the most trustworthy and uncorrupted Greek version of the Scripture. Furthermore, based on his limited acquaintance with Hebrew, Irenaeus considered the entire Torah a Christian book.¹⁷⁸ Irenaeus also is the only author to emphasise the role of Egypt, as a place, which keeps the true Scripture¹⁷⁹ as it had kept Jacob and his house before, and infant Jesus from Herod later, thus additionally linking the

what had been well prophesied" (Latin: *Unus enim et idem spiritus Dei*, qui in prophetis quidem præconavit, quis et qualis esset adventus Domini, in Senioribus autem interpretatus est bene quæ bene prophetata fuerant).

¹⁷⁴ Philo, *De vita Mosis* 2.40.

¹⁷⁵ To denote God's action, the author uses ἐνεπνεύσεν/inspiravit.

¹⁷⁶ *Adversus haereseis* 3.24.1.

¹⁷⁷ *Adversus haereseis* 3.24.2: the Scriptures were translated, from which God prepared and formed our faith in His Son (Latin: interpretatae sint. Scripturae, ex quibus præparavit et reformavit Deus fidem nostrum, quæ in Filium ejus est).

¹⁷⁸ On Irenaeus's knowledge of Hebrew see: Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons*, 21-22.

¹⁷⁹ Again, similarly to Justin, he believes in existence of the original translated manuscripts in contemporary Alexandria.

translation story to both the Torah and the New Testament.¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless, Martin Hengel goes too far, saying, that Irenaeus possibly regarded the Septuagint “as superior to the Hebrew text.”¹⁸¹ The passage under scrutiny suggests, that he merely follows the notion of two sisterly texts without any references to their hierarchy.

Clement of Alexandria

Clement of Alexandria¹⁸² was a Christian philosopher, who lived in the second and early third centuries in Alexandria and a teacher of Origen. He wrote three major apologetic works known under their Latin names *Protrepticus*, *Paedagogus* and *Stromata* (*Stromateis*) in which he connects the Greek philosophical tradition to the Christian teachings and thus, tries to promote Christianity among the learned Greeks. Clement also shows his familiarity with Classical Greek culture and philosophy. He contributes to several language-related issues, including the translation process under study, in his *Stromata*, the last book of the trilogy.

In *Stromata*, Clement, following Philo and Josephus, shows that Greek philosophy derives from the barbarian, and that Christianity being rooted in the ancient Jewish tradition, is the only “true philosophy.”¹⁸³ Philosophy,

¹⁸⁰ *Adversus haereses* 3.24.2.

¹⁸¹ Hengel, *Septuagint*, 39.

¹⁸² Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 103-104; Hengel, *Septuagint*, 40; Müller, *First Bible*, 75; Johanna Louise van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo in the Stromateis: An Early Christian Reshaping of a Jewish Model*, vol. 3 of *Vigiliae Christianae. Supplements* (Leiden-New York-København-Köln: E.J. Brill, 1988).

¹⁸³ See: *Stromata* 1.18.90.1. For Clement, Greek philosophy does contain certain traces of the truth (*Stromata* 1.19.91-93) but is at any rate in a lower position in comparison to the Christian theology.

according to Clement, was thus a Greek analogy of the Jewish Law.¹⁸⁴ Among his reflections, Clement also reveals certain knowledge of linguistic theory. Thus, he recognises barbaric languages as more ancient (thus more authoritative), than Greek and even declares prayers in barbaric languages more powerful, than in Greek.¹⁸⁵

Clement situates the Septuagint translation story between a list of various chronologies circulating among his contemporaries and a retelling of the Moses's life. For Clement, the translation project is a King's undertaking maintained by Demetrius of Phalerum. He does not mention any Jewish character or city but emphasises that both Egypt and Judaea were under the Macedonian rule.¹⁸⁶ Uniquely, Clement the first among the studied authors

¹⁸⁴ *Stromata* 1.5.28.3: because it [philosophy] had led the Greek [people (ἔθνος)] to Christ, as the Law did with the Jews [ἐπαιδαγωγῶγει γὰρ καὶ αὐτὴ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ὡς ὁ νόμος τοὺς Ἑβραίους εἰς Χριστόν]. Translation of Clement is mostly mine or from Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 103

¹⁸⁵ *Stromata* 1.21.143.6: Concerning the prayers, people acknowledge them as more powerful (ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰς εὐχὰς ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι δυνατῶ). Furthermore, Clement recognises seventy-five languages of seventy-five peoples existing in his contemporary world. He refers to five Greek dialects (Attic, Doric, Aeonic, Aeolic and the Koine) and distinguishes the Greek διάλεκτοι and barbaric γλώσσαι (*Stromata*: 1.21.142.4: The Greeks say, that there are five dialects among them: Attic, Ionic, Doric and the fifth, koine. Barbaric tongues, as they are numerous, are called not dialects but languages [φασὶ δὲ οἱ Ἕλληνας διαλέκτους εἶναι τὰς παρὰ σφίσι ε', Ἀτθίδα, Ἰάδα, Δωρίδα, Αἰολίδα καὶ πέμπτην τὴν κοινήν, ἀπεριλήπτους δὲ οὖσας τὰς βαρβάρων φωνὰς μηδὲ διαλέκτους, ἀλλὰ γλώσσας λέγεσθαι]). He also acknowledges the Pauline concept of intelligibility of all the existing words (Clement quotes 1 Cor 14:9-11 verbatim in *Stromata* 1.16.78.1.) together with their possible polysemy (See: *Stromata* 6.10.82.3). Clement considers speaking as a work (ἔργον) linked to the divine Logos (Robertson, *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria*, 32. He also follows the Philonic notion on speech as the main part of the creation process. On that and overall linguistic terminology he uses, see: pages 33-36.). Moreover, Clement concedes with the Platonic idea of divine language and his comparison of human languages and animal sounds (*Stromata* 1.21.142-143) as well as the Philonic notion of a lower status of human tongues in comparison with the divine (Robertson, *Word and Meaning in Ancient Alexandria*, 40.).

¹⁸⁶ Irenaeus also mentions the Macedonians but does not emphasise this fact as much as Clement does (*Adversus haereseis* 3.21.1).

expresses uncertainty regarding the identity of Ptolemy mentioned in the story, doubting between Ptolemy son of Lagus or his son Ptolemy Philadelphus.¹⁸⁷

Concerning the translation process proper, Clement mentions seventy elders¹⁸⁸ with enough competence in Greek, who brought the Scripture to Alexandria and translated it each separately. No other details regarding the translation conditions or setting are mentioned. However, Clement follows Philo¹⁸⁹ introducing the comparison of translations and their God-inspired uniformity.¹⁹⁰ Here, I concur with Wasserstein and Wasserstein, who say, that the miracle, “serves merely to point up the operation of the will and the inspiration of God in the translation of God’s prophecy”.¹⁹¹ Clement also, following Philo (and Aristobulus?) recognises two dimensions of the Scripture:

¹⁸⁷ Aristeas does not specify the King, it is only the indirect data, that supposes Philadelphus, nor does Aristobulus (according to the extant fragments). However, Philo mentions Philadelphus explicitly (*De vita Mosis* 2.29) and Josephus refers to “the second of the Ptolemies” (*Jewish Antiquities* 1.10) also meaning Philadelphus. On the contrary, Irenaeus refers to Ptolemy son of Lagus (*Adversus haereses* 3.21.2, see above). Thus, by the time of Clement two varying traditions existed, none of which he considered fully reliable.

¹⁸⁸ Again, unlike the Aristeas tradition.

¹⁸⁹ Unlike Justin, who most probably was not acquainted with the Philonic corpus, Clement undoubtedly knew and even quoted Philo (See: Runia, *Philo and the Church Fathers*, 54-55.). Furthermore, he relies on Philo in his retelling of Moses’s life, placed directly after the translation story (See: Johanna Louise van den Hoek, *Clement of Alexandria and His Use of Philo*). Thus, at least two sources of his story may be traced: Philo, Aristobulus the Peripatetic (whom he quotes in 1.22.150.1-3). He also shares certain notions with Justin (such as a different number of translators and an extension of the text under scrutiny to the “writings of the Law and the Prophets” [1.22.148.1: τὰς γραφὰς τὰς τε τοῦ νόμου καὶ τὰς προφητικὰς; cf. Justin and the Ben Sira prologue]) and Josephus (see below). However, nothing shows his familiarity with Aristeas proper.

¹⁹⁰ *Stromata* 1.22.149.3: And surely it was not strange that the inspiration of God who had given the prophecy operated to make of the translation also as it were a Greek prophecy (οὐ δὴ ξένον ἐπιπνοίᾳ θεοῦ τοῦ τὴν προφητείαν δεδωκότος καὶ τὴν ἐρμηνείαν οἰοεὶ Ἑλληνικὴν προφητείαν ἐνεργεῖσθαι).

¹⁹¹ Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend of the Septuagint*, 104.

literal (words, dictions) and spiritual (thoughts), saying that the translation was equal in both.¹⁹²

Furthermore, Clement stresses the role of Demetrius of Phalerum,¹⁹³ and implicitly his effort. Unlike other authors, where Demetrius is a secondary character and a mere supervisor of the project, in Clements' he is one of the actors. His zeal is emphasised by the adverb ἀκριβῶς meaning “diligently, attentively, exactly, to perfection.”¹⁹⁴ Thus, the context also indirectly displays, that the Hebrew Scriptures too were translated according to the original. However, the benefactors of these translations are Greeks, or more precisely Greek philosophers, who would now access the Jewish wisdom.¹⁹⁵ Although Clement devotes more effort to language-related issues, he again perceives the Law as a preparatory tool, and is rather inattentive to its role in the Jewish belief and legal system.

To sum up, all the three authors perceive the Septuagint as the only precisely translated and divinely inspired Greek version of Scripture. Since

¹⁹² *Stromata* 1.22.149.2: all the translations when compared conspired together both in thought and diction (αἱ πᾶσαι ἐρμηνεῖαι συναντιβληθεῖσαι καὶ τὰς διανοίας καὶ τὰς λέξεις)

¹⁹³ Cf. with Josephus, who calls Demetrius “distinguished in education among his contemporaries” (*Against Apion* 2.46; τὸν μὲν παιδείᾳ τῶν καθ' ἑαυτῶν διαφέροντα, Loeb: the most learned man of his time). This might point to certain authority, which Demetrius gained in the beginning of the common era.

¹⁹⁴ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 75. *Stromata* 1.22.148.2: [while] Demetrius of Phalerum was diligently maintaining issues related to the translation (Δημητρίου τοῦ Φαληρέως καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἐρμηνείαν ἀκριβῶς πραγματευσαμένου).

¹⁹⁵ *Stromata* 1.7.38.3-4: For that reason, the Scripture had been translated into Greek language, so that they never could impose an excuse of ignorance, as they are able to listen to what is ours, if only they wish (διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ Ἑλλήνων φωνῇ ἡρμηνεύθησαν αἱ γραφαί, ὡς μὴ πρόφασιν ἀγνοίας προβάλλεσθαι δυνηθῆναι ποτε αὐτούς, οἷους τε ὄντας ἐπακοῦσαι καὶ τῶν παρ' ἡμῖν, ἣν μόνον ἐβελήσωσιν). Additionally, Clement twice in the translation account refers to Macedonians as the rulers of that time. Cf. with Josephus, who also undermines the Greek philosophy and regards the King as the main benefactor of the translation.

none of them was able to read the Hebrew original, they all treated the Septuagint as their main scriptural source. All of them viewed it from a Christocentric viewpoint and understood it not as (just) the Law of Moses, but as a collection of prophecies about Jesus Christ. Moreover, the Fathers show certain parallels with their Hellenistic Jewish predecessors, especially with Philo.

Chapter 4

Terminology of translation

This research on the translation philosophy involves an analysis of the terms related to translation in the works of the selected authors. A language often contains multiple lemmata with the same or similar meaning, and an author always has free choice of vocabulary. Preference of a term can often reveal, how a particular author perceives the issue they discuss.¹⁹⁶

Terms with multiple uses

The authors under scrutiny, except Justin Martyr¹⁹⁷, when discussing the Septuagint apply various nouns and (compound) verbs with the root ἐρμην-¹⁹⁸ (ἐρμηνεία, ἐρμηνεύω, ἐρμηνεύς, διερμηνεύω, μεθερμηνεύω). The root proper is of a pre-Greek, possibly Anatolian origin¹⁹⁹ and is used in Greek, from the time of Pindar (6-5 centuries BC) in relation to *interpretation* or *explanation*.²⁰⁰ Herodotus was presumably the first to use the term ἐρμηνεύς denoting a

¹⁹⁶ See details in: Ronald Carter, *Vocabulary: Applied Linguistic Perspectives* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 113 and its references.

¹⁹⁷ See Appendix for a more visual illustration on the usage of particular terms by particular authors.

¹⁹⁸ Benjamin Wright proposes terms ἐρμην- group and γραφ- group. See: Benjamin G. Wright III, “Transcribing, Translating, and Interpreting in the Letter of Aristeas: on the Nature of the Septuagint,” in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo*, ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta, vol. 126 of *Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 148.

¹⁹⁹ Beekes, Paul R. S., and Lucien van Beek, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1 (10) of Leiden Indo-European Etymological Dictionary Series (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2016), 462.

²⁰⁰ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 822. Pindar writes (O.2.85): ἐς δὲ τὸ πᾶν ἐρμάνέων χατίζει (but for the whole subject, they need interpreters).

translator (dragoman)²⁰¹ from one language into another.²⁰² The later derivatives ἐρμηνεύω and ἐρμηνεία share the same range of meanings related to *interpretation, explanation, or expression*.²⁰³ The compound verb διερμηνεύω in passive might mean *to signify*,²⁰⁴ and obtains the meaning *to translate* mostly in Hellenistic Jewish texts (including Aristeas, Aristobulus and Philo). Another compound verb with ἐρμην-, μεθερμηνεύω is used mostly in passive, meaning specifically *to interpret or translate*. The earliest written witness of this usage belongs to Greek historian Ctesias (as quoted by Diodorus of Sicily), who lived in 5-4 centuries BC.²⁰⁵ It is widely employed by various Hellenistic authors (including Aristeas, Josephus and Esther colophon), New Testament Gospel of John,²⁰⁶ and later Irenaeus.

All authors, except Justin and the Esther colophon, use ἐρμηνεία and ἐρμηνεύω with reference to translation, however Josephus uses it elsewhere in *Antiquities*, not in his Aristeas retelling. Aristeas, Philo and Josephus also apply the noun ἐρμηνεύς. Furthermore, Aristeas, Aristobulus and Philo use

²⁰¹ A Turkish word of Arabic origin. Dragomans were official diplomatic interpreters in the Ottoman Empire, Persia, or Arabia. The term, however, is applied to denote similar professionals in various historical settings. Scholars have noted a similarity between the *dragomans* and the Septuagint translators, assuming that the Seventy might have inherited the dragoman model for their work. Thus, Bickerman compares certain Septuagint terms with those of Hellenistic dragomans (Bickerman, *Jews in the Greek Age*, 111). See also Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric scholarship*, 106-108 and a detailed analysis of the role of ancient ἐρμηνεῖς and their relation to dragomans in Wright, *Praise Israel*, 197-212.

²⁰² Herodotus, *Histories* 2.125: καὶ ὡς ἐμὲ εὖ μεμνησθαι τὰ ὃ ἐρμηνεύς μοι ἐπιλεγόμενος τὰ γράμματα ἔφη (and so far, as I well remember, the interpreter [translator] when he read me the writing said). Additionally, Wright argues this meaning to be represented already in Plato and Aeschylus (Wright, *Praise Israel*, 202).

²⁰³ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 822. Montanari claims, that *translation* is a Hellenistic meaning of ἐρμηνεία and provides Philo as an example.

²⁰⁴ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 525. See also 2 Mac 1:36: νεφθαρ, ὃ διερμηνεύεται καθαρισμός. However, in this verse, I would say, “[which] is translated,” similarly to Jn 9:7.

²⁰⁵ Ctesias, Fragment 1b (Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica* 2.3): ἐπὶ τὸν τάφον ἐπιγράψαι τὸ συγγραφὴν μὲν ὑπ’ ἐκείνου βαρβαρικῶς, μεθερμηνευθὲν δὲ ὕστερον ὑπὸ τινος Ἑλλήνος (it was composed by him in a foreign language but was afterwards translated by a Greek).

²⁰⁶ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1297.

διερμηνεύω, whereas Josephus, Esther colophon and Clement employ μεθερμηνεύω, most probably borrowed from Aristeas.

Two other lemmata, shared only between Aristeas and Josephus are μεταγράφω and μεταγραφή, which derive from γράφω (*to write*) and γραφή (*writing*) respectively.²⁰⁷ The verb μεταγράφω signifies *to transcribe, copy, or alter* a text and has been used with meaning *to translate* from the time of Thucydides.²⁰⁸ Its derivative μεταγραφή obtained the meaning *translation* only in the Hellenistic period.²⁰⁹

Among the authors, discussed above, only Josephus and Justin use the verb μεταβάλλω (μεταβάλλομαι). Generally, its meaning in Greek concerns *change, alteration, transformation, or substitution*.²¹⁰ It only obtained the meaning *to be translated* in the Early Roman period and retained it in later writings both in active and passive voices.²¹¹ In patristic works, it might also denote *to copy or plagiarize*.²¹²

Both Josephus and Justin use the noun ἐξήγησις, first used in the lyric poetry by Simonides. It is a derivative from the verb ἐξηγέομαι, used solely by Justin. The latter was first applied by Homer. It is a compound from the verb

²⁰⁷ See more on vocabulary similarities between Aristeas and Josephus in Henry G. Meecham, *The Letter of Aristeas: A Linguistic Study with Special Reference to the Greek Bible*, edited by H. St. J. Thackeray, vol. 241 of *Publications of the University of Manchester* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1935), 330-332.

²⁰⁸ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponesian War* 4.50: οἱ Ἀθηναῖοι τὰς μὲν ἐπιστολάς μεταγραφαιψάμενοι ἐκ τῶν Ἀσσυρίων γραμμάτων ἀνέγνωσαν (the Athenians caused his letters to be transcribed [Montanari: *translated*] from the Assyrian characters and read them). See also Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1324.

²⁰⁹ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1324. Montanari attests Josephus as an example. However, since Aristeas is undoubtedly older, his usage of the word with this meaning is primary.

²¹⁰ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1323.

²¹¹ Evangelinus Apostolides Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, Memorial Edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1914), 748.

²¹² Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1323.

ἡγέομαι meaning *to guide, lead, preside*,²¹³ with the prefix ἐξ-. In addition to sharing the meaning *to guide, lead* with the main verb, ἐξηγέομαι might also signify *to explain, report* or even *to interpret*.²¹⁴ The noun ἐξήγησις generally follows the semantics of the verb, although in Josephus and Justin it means not merely *interpretation* but *translation*.²¹⁵

Terms used by a single author

Several terms are unique for each of the authors. The most peculiar term used for translation is σεσήμανται in Aristeas §30. Already Zacharias Frankel in the middle of the nineteenth century argued, that it could have referred to a translation,²¹⁶ most probably made before the Aristeas's Septuagint. This led to the famous hypothesis by Paul Kahle, who developed his certainty in existence of previous translations based on rendering of σημαίνω as *to translate*²¹⁷. On the other hand, Henry Meecham, who published his work slightly before Kahle, supposed the rendering *committed to writing*.²¹⁸ Later scholars assumed the meaning *write* or *mark with signs*.²¹⁹ Benjamin Wright, based on his analysis of the meanings of σημαίνω in other paragraphs of Aristeas, agrees with the

²¹³ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 902-903.

²¹⁴ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 723-724.

²¹⁵ Jewish Antiquities 1.12: it was only the portion containing the Law which was delivered to him by those who were sent to Alexandria to interpret it [for translation of it] (ἀλλ' αὐτὰ μόνα τὰ τοῦ νόμου παρέδοσαν οἱ πεμφθέντες ἐπὶ τὴν ἐξήγησιν εἰς τὴν Ἀλεξάνδρειαν).

²¹⁶ Zacharias Frankel, *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta. Historisch-Kritische Studien zu der Septuaginta, Nebst Beiträgen zu den Targumim*, vol. 1 of *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta*, edition 1 (Leipzig: F.C.W. Vogel, 1841), 24: “[d]ieses σεσήμανται z) ist für eine Uebersetzung sehr passend.“

²¹⁷ Paul Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza. Second edition. Schweich Lectures* (1941. Oxford: Blackwell, 1959), 209-214.

²¹⁸ Meecham, *Letter of Aristeas*, 201.

²¹⁹ See the whole discussion in Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 145-149.

point, that the verb cannot be related to any previous biblical scholarship.²²⁰ Regarding *σεσήμανται*, I find the argumentation of Mogens Müller the most convincing. He links it to carelessly written Hebrew manuscripts, which were in possession of the Alexandrian Jewry before the elders arrived with their own scrolls.²²¹ In §314–316, Aristeas refers to careless translations by Theopompus and Theodektes, which thus logically derive from earlier (carelessly written?) Hebrew sources. Peculiarly, in a fragment quoted by Clement of Alexandria, Aristobulus also refers to the previously existing translations of the Exodus story and the Law (the legal part of the Pentateuch?), which, in his opinion, were known to Plato.²²²

Aristobulus, according to the fragment rendered by Eusebius,²²³ uses the noun *ἐκδοχή* (*interpretation*),²²⁴ which derives from the verb *ἐκδέχομαι* (*receive, interject, comprehend*).²²⁵ The noun is used in expressions *ἐκδοχὴν ποιεῖσθαι* or *ἐκδοχὴν λαμβανεῖν* both meaning to understand or comprehend [an

²²⁰ Wright, *Letter of Aristeas*, 145-149. See also Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1908-1909.

²²¹ Mogens Müller, “Hebraica Sive Graeca Veritas: The Jewish Bible at the Time of the New Testament and the Christian Bible,” *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 3, no. 2 (1989): 60-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09018328908584920>.

²²² Clement of Alexandria *Stromata* 1.22.150.2-3 And before Demetrius, before the dominion of Alexander {and} the Persians, others had translated accounts of the events surrounding the exodus from Egypt of the Hebrews, our countrymen, and the disclosure to them of all the things that had happened as well as their domination of the land, and the detailed account of the entire law (διηρημένεται δὲ πρὸ Δημητρίου ὑφ' ἐτέρων, πρὸ τῆς Ἀλεξάνδρου καὶ Περσῶν ἐπικρατήσεως, τὰ τε κατὰ τὴν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐξαγωγὴν τῶν Ἑβραίων τῶν ἡμετέρων πολιτῶν καὶ ἡ τῶν γεγονότων ἀπάντων αὐτοῖς ἐπιφάνεια καὶ κράτησις τῆς χώρας καὶ τῆς ὅλης νομοθεσίας ἐπεξήγησις). Text and translation from Holladay, *Aristobulus*, 152-155. Probably, these are the same accounts mentioned in Aristeas §314-316.

²²³ *Praeparatio Evangelica* 8.10.376b.

²²⁴ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 626.

²²⁵ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 626.

interpretation],²²⁶ with the latter being used by Aristobulus regarding the newly translated Septuagint.²²⁷

Philo uses two peculiar terms, which contextually mean *to translate*: μεταρμόζω and μεταφράζω. The former derives from ἀρμόζω (*to fit, to correspond, to join* etc.),²²⁸ and in context under study means *to translate*²²⁹. Nevertheless, its main rendering is either *change, transform* or *correct*, or corresponds with the meanings of ἀρμόζω.²³⁰ The meaning *to translate* remains marginal and can only be traced within a restricted range of authors.²³¹ The latter verb has an explicit relation to translation meaning *to paraphrase, translate* or *interpret*. Peculiarly, the meaning *to translate* was first attested in two contemporary authors, Josephus²³² and Plutarch.²³³

The verb μετάγω is represented only in the Ben Sira prologue. It is mostly used in Hellenistic writings with the meaning *to transfer* or even *to stir*. The former sense might apply transition from one place to another (with witnesses including the *Letter of Aristeas*) or more broadly shifting from one context to another.²³⁴ Even in Sir 10:8, which is supposed to be translated by

²²⁶ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 628.

²²⁷ See the respective section of Chapter 1 for details.

²²⁸ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 300.

²²⁹ *De vita Mosis* 2.31: ὁ δὲ τοιοῦτος ζῆλον καὶ πόθον λαβὼν τῆς νομοθεσίας ἡμῶν εἰς Ἑλλάδα γλῶτταν τὴν Χαλδαϊκὴν μεταρμόζεσθαι διανοεῖτο.

²³⁰ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1296-1297.

²³¹ See: George W. H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961), 837.

²³² Josephus uses it e.g., in Ant. 9.14 or 10.5.6 or in *Against Apion* but not in his retelling of Aristeas.

²³³ Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1332.

²³⁴ Hypocrates, *Decorum* 1.5: Διὸ δὲ ἀναλαμβάνοντα τούτων τῶν προειρημένων ἕκαστα, μετάγειν τὴν σοφίην ἐς τὴν ἰητρικὴν καὶ τὴν ἰητρικὴν ἐς τὴν σοφίην (Wherefore resume each of the points mentioned, and transplant wisdom into medicine and medicine into wisdom).

the prologue author, the verb under study is used meaning *to transfer*.²³⁵ In all likelihood, at least according to the extant sources, the meaning *to translate* was not attested before the grandson used it.²³⁶ However, this meaning was attested in the later Christian patristics.²³⁷ Generally, *μετάγω* seems more peculiar, as it employs the notion of changing the (cultural) context of the text, which is now transferred (transplanted, deported) to another linguistic setting. The same idea is shared by Medieval Latin term *translatio*, from which the English word derives.²³⁸

Irenaeus employs *μεθερμηνεύω*,²³⁹ *ἐρμηνεύω* and *ἐρμηνεία*, all of which were discussed above. However, as already mentioned, his *Adversus omnes haereseis* was preserved in Greek only partially, whereas there is a full Latin translation. The Latin rendering of those words is peculiar. Both *μεθερμηνεύω* and *ἐρμηνεύω* are rendered as *interpretari* and *ἐρμηνεία* as *interpretatio*. The verb *interpretari* is a term of its own value in the ancient translation studies. It plays a significant role in Cicero's translation theory, which is foundational for the later conceptions.²⁴⁰ In the Ciceronic corpus, the verb denotes precise literal translation contrasting it to imitation. Cicero was not personally in favour of

²³⁵ Greek: βασιλεία ἀπὸ ἔθνους εἰς ἔθνος μετάγεται διὰ ἀδικίας καὶ ὕβρεις καὶ χρήματα (Dominion is transferred from nation to nation on account of injustice and insolence and money, NETS).

²³⁶ See: Montanari, *Brill Dictionary*, 1324; Sophocles, *Greek Lexicon*, 748; Muraoka, *Lexicon of the Septuagint*, 453.

²³⁷ Lampe, *Patristic Greek Lexicon*, 851.

²³⁸ "Translātō," Perseus Project. Charlton T. Lewis, Charles Short, A Latin Dictionary, accessed April 5, 2022, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry>.

²³⁹ Not in the translation story proper but in the previous chapter.

²⁴⁰ Cicero is regarded as one of the founders of Western translation theory, both a theorist and a practitioner of translation. Cicero treated translation as a competition between the translator and the original author and opted for saving translator's own voice in the process, thus for rather free translation techniques (See details in: McElduff, *Roman theories of translation*, 96-121).

this technique, as it disallows the translator to show his own literary abilities.²⁴¹ Furthermore, Quintilian explicitly opposes *interpretari* to *paraphrasi* and *vertere* as a lower and higher levels of translation quality.²⁴² Thus, the Latin translator of Irenaeus by his choice of terminology emphasises that the translation should be rather direct and faithfully represent the Hebrew original. Presumably, the term ἐρμηνεύω also means *to translate precisely*, however, this assumption needs further research.

Concerning the relation between terminology and attitude to translation, I presume, that Louis H. Feldman's conclusion on translation terminology in Josephus can be extended to a certain extent to all the authors. Concluding on Josephus's understanding of the Septuagint, Feldman states:

[H]e [Josephus] conceived of his task as not merely translating but also interpreting the Scriptures, and therefore he did not conceive of himself as adding or subtracting anything if he continued the Septuagint's tradition of liberal clarification.²⁴³

Overall, the choice of terminology only partially supports previously discussed views on the preciseness of the Septuagint translation expressed in works under scrutiny. Terms used most (those with ἐρμην- or γραφ-) widely have the connotation of *explanation* or *writing*, therefore making the reader grasp the precise meaning, either direct or revelatory. Moreover, terms with the prefix

²⁴¹ McElduff, *Roman theories of translation*, 108-109.

²⁴² Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory* 1.9.2: First they should break up the verses, then closely translate them with different words, and then translate in a bolder paraphrase (*Versus primo solvere, mox mutatis verbis interpretari, tum paraphrasi audacius vertere*). Text and translation from McElduff, *Roman theories of translation*, 166.

²⁴³ Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible*, vol. 27 of *Hellenistic Culture and Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 46. See the entire discussion on pages 44-46 of the book.

μετ- have the connotation of *change* or *alteration* thus acknowledging, that any translation employs a change of the respective original.²⁴⁴ Authors could have chosen a particular lemma according to their own perceptions on translation (less or more precise). However, even those authors who put an emphasis on preciseness still occasionally use verbs with *μετα-*. A plausible reason for that is that the prefix *μετα-* might have lost the implication of change during its development within the Greek language.

²⁴⁴ Furthermore, main Latin terms applied for translation process, *converto* and *exprimo* are related to *change*, *turning* overthrowing also suggesting an indirect conversion²⁴⁴ (See: McElduff, *Roman theories of translation*, 42-43).

Conclusions

This thesis is a comparative study aimed to find common features in the *Letter of Aristeas*, Prologue to Ben Sira, Colophon to Greek Esther, particular passages from Philo and Josephus, fragments from Aristobulus, and designated Ante-Nicene Fathers (namely, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, and Clement of Alexandria) in terms on how they perceive the Septuagint translation philosophy. The study encompasses analysis of both general attitude of each author towards the translation and the terminology they use.

In the beginning of this thesis, I highlighted three points, which I tried to assess throughout the research: possibility, divine inspiration, and preciseness. Let me, as a reliance, now conclude using these points.

None of the authors under scrutiny stated anything against the very *possibility* of translating the Hebrew Scriptures into a foreign language. However, Josephus and Ben Sira's grandson explicitly refer to the Greek translation as to a secondary text of a lower significance. On the other hand, Philo, and the Christian authors, who either do not know Hebrew (Justin, Clement) or have a limited level (Irenaeus, Philo?), treat the Greek version as *the Bible* and their main source of biblical expertise.

In terms of *divine inspiration*, all the authors except Aristobulus, Josephus and the paratexts (the prologue and the colophon), by some means, refer to it. Furthermore, Philo and Irenaeus refer to a miraculous divine intercession in the translation. Aristeas, although does not mention any miracles explicitly, also acknowledges the revelatory significance of the translation. However, there is a clear shift from a revelatory to a linguistic

perception of the translation. From the notions of divinely inspired sisterly texts or two versions of the same, expressed in Aristeas and Philo, the scope of the authors under scrutiny moves to arduous work and zeal of the translators in Ben Sira's prologue and later in Josephus (and implicitly the colophon to Greek Esther). The early idea was revived by Irenaeus, who was most probably inspired by Philo. However, Clement explicitly, and Justin implicitly, state the idea of challenging work and knowledgeability of the elders. However, although they do not postulate it unequivocally in the sections under study, they both consider the Bible (which for them meant its Greek version) as divinely inspired.

The notion of *preciseness* seems ambiguous. First, none of the authors under research call the Septuagint, or Greek Bible in general, imprecise, or corrupted. However, the extent of preciseness noticeably differs. Whilst Aristeas and Philo argue that the Septuagint is exactly the same as its Hebrew original, Ben Sira's grandson and Josephus stress its secondary nature. Thus, the grandson introduces the idea of *unequal influence* of Greek when comparing to Hebrew. Josephus does not reveal these views explicitly, but rather, his cautious attitude to the translation and the Greek culture as such can still be concluded from his works. As for the Christian authors, they all contrasted the precisely translated Septuagint as the only true Greek Bible to other versions, which alter the original to hide what they considered as prophecies about Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God. The study of terminology reveals that even those authors, who explicitly refer to preciseness may occasionally use terms, which might have connotation of change.

Peculiarly, the most widely used terms have the connotation of *explanation* or *interpretation* of the Scriptures to the non-Hebrew speaking audience.

The survey also makes it possible to assume a need not only to propagate but also to defend the Septuagint translation. Certainly, Aristeas, Aristobulus Philo, and the Church Fathers favoured the translation and even upheld it as the only true opposing any distortions. On the contrary, Josephus and Ben Sira's grandson were cautious towards the Septuagint and Hebrew-Greek translation in general. For the Hellenistic Jewish authors, a geographical parallel can also be traced: Alexandrian authors (Aristeas, Aristobulus and Philo) esteemed the translation, whereas the Palestinian ones (the grandson and Josephus, both born and raised in Palestine) contradicted. As for the intertraditional differences, the Christian authors under study understand the translated text as a collection of prophecies about Jesus Christ rather than the Mosaic Law. Thus, they emphasise the Christological interpretation of the Old Testament simultaneously underscoring its *Jewishness*. Interestingly, Justin and Clement concur with Josephus on point, that the beneficiaries of the translation are the Gentiles, rather than the Jews. Several noteworthy parallels found between Justin and Josephus as well as Irenaeus and Philo require more detailed research before any dependence can be concluded.

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Appendix

Terminology of Translation Tables

Terms with the root *έρμην-*

Term Author	<i>έρμηνεία</i>	<i>έρμηνεύω</i>	<i>έρμηνεύς</i>	<i>διερμηνεύω</i>	<i>μεθερμηνεύω</i>
Aristeas	+	+	+	+	+
Aristobulus	+	+		+	
Philo	+	+	+	+	
Josephus			+		
Ben Sira prologue	+	+			
Colophon to Greek Esther					+
Justin					
Irenaeus	+	+			
Clement	+	+			+

Other terms with multiple uses

Term Author	<i>Μεταγράφω</i>	<i>μεταγραφή</i>	<i>μεταβάλλω</i>	<i>ἐξήγησις</i>
Aristeas	+	+		
Aristobulus				
Philo				
Josephus	+	+	+	+
Ben Sira prologue				
Colophon to Greek Esther				
Justin			+	+
Irenaeus				
Clement				

Terms with single use

Term Author	σεσήμαντα ι	ἐκδοχ ή	μεθαρμόζ ω	Μεταφράζ ω	μετάγ ω	ἐξηγέομα ι
Aristeas	+					
Aristobulus		+				
Philo			+			
Josephus				+		
Ben Sira prologue					+	
Colophon to Greek Esther						
Justin						+
Irenaeus						
Clement						