

**Surviving by the Book: the Greek Bible and Jewish Identity in the Ancient
Mediterranean Diaspora**

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The Septuagint was the first major translation in Western culture. The conversion of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, was a new departure for which new tools had to be forged. The size of the initial project alone, the rendering of the first five books of the Bible, the ‘books of Moses’, made it a very large enterprise already at an early stage of its creation, and the rest of the biblical books, the other three quarters of the Bible, were to follow. The significance of this achievement was far-reaching: without a Greek Bible, European history would have been entirely different – no Western Jewish diaspora and no Christianity. However, nothing is straightforward about this seemingly simple statement. The translation is in reality a massive collection of translations, and a collection with vague and variable limits.¹ Even the name ‘Septuagint’ is a coinage which emerged when the translation was in Christian hands, and it is a misnomer. We do not know who the translators were, although it is wholly clear that they were scholarly Jews who knew both Greek and Hebrew well, and that they were quite numerous, spread over time and probably over place too. We have some idea, but not nearly enough, about what was done with the texts: Sabbath readings are perfectly well attested but beyond that, it is mostly guesswork. Parallels are hard to come by. Translations in the ancient world, while fulfilling many of the same social functions as in the modern world, naturally operated in very different circumstances and with different traditions behind them. And last but not least these are translations of a very special type of texts. The Hebrew original texts were

holy books, and the translation was supremely important, in some sense also holy for its users. But the connotations of holiness and sanctity changed through time, and we cannot assume that these are just the same for those who cared for the books then as in later Judaism.

The core constituency for the translations was Greek-speaking Jews (including converts and perhaps also sympathizers with Judaism), inhabiting, mainly, the Greek cities of the eastern Mediterranean. That itself is a most elusive world, often not well-documented. It is true that the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures is commonly associated with Alexandria, the city which epitomizes Hellenistic Judaism for us and the translation indeed began there: its foundation myth, the legend of Aristeas, presents itself as quintessentially Alexandrian, fixed in the topography of the city. But the stage for our story is far larger, extending wherever Jews engaged with the Greek language. Some of the translated books beyond the Torah (the five books of Moses that make up the Pentateuch) may not have emanated from Alexandria at all and may have been translated by scholars in other centres. This was, in short, the Bible of the Jewish diaspora over half a millennium at least, and in some areas much longer than that. And yet the history of that diaspora is told without them. We are fortunate if the Greek Bible receives a passing mention there; usually, it is an invisible presence. Here, it will occupy centre stage.

For all that, there is much to be said about the significance of the translation in its own time and about its role over a very long period. We can look at what was written about and around it. We can devise different techniques for assessing the engagement of the translators with the worlds to which they belonged. We can look inside and consider how, through their interpretations of delicate or controversial matters, the translations

might express the way translators and readers perceived their situation in the world and defined themselves. We can think about their choice of translation language, and that is what I propose to do here.

Peter Fraser has reminded us that the Septuagint translation of the Jewish Torah forms a larger bulk of Alexandrian Greek literature than any other single item”.² Moreover, the translation language – sometimes so perplexing – in which the Septuagint is couched, embodies more of the common post-classical Greek language, the ‘koine’, than perhaps any other body of texts.³ That the first great translation of the West was made at all owes as much to the particular role of Greek as the dominant language in the world of its making as to the particular role of the Bible among the people who used it. The simple fact is that the Septuagint is also part and parcel of the history of Greek culture, if within that culture we allow their proper place to the minority groups that shared in it. The standpoint might be that proposed by Bowman and Woolf. Commenting upon ‘the privileged role accorded, in general histories and syllabuses, to Greeks and Romans, as opposed to Etruscans, Carthaginians, Egyptians, Semites and others’, they say that ‘an authoritative critique and genealogy of the notion of a Classical world, along the lines of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, is still awaited’.⁴

In the Septuagint, then, we can observe the evolution of Judaism in relation to the dominant culture and to successive imperial powers. These developments emerge in the origins and nature of the entire enterprise; in the language of the Septuagint; in the content of the corpus as a whole, especially when the additional material of the ‘apocrypha’ and various kinds of small apparently deliberate changes to the Hebrew original are taken into account; and, of course, in the uses to which the texts were put.

This largely successful adaptation was achieved more by quiet subversion of norms and of impositions than by forms of collaboration.

Scholars studying Hellenistic Jewish communities in the cities of the Greek East concluded some thirty years ago that, far from being the isolated, inward-looking entities of earlier stereotype and caricature, these Jews (and Judaizers), though they had their difficulties, could function as members of the cities in which they lived. From there, some have moved on, correctly I believe, to an even newer appreciation of the potential limits of integration and of the cost of preserving a communal identity. Thus, from focusing on these Jews exclusively as practitioners of accommodation, we are now better placed to consider the methods available to them for expressing resistance, subversion or at least reserve. Theory, too, has made a difference to the questions we can ask and the hypothetical answers we give, and I have derived useful models from recent writing on bilingualism and translation theory; on book cultures and textuality; on ethnic strategies and hybridity; and on the weapons and hidden transcripts of the weak.

It is in these terms that I shall seek to present and to explain the remarkable and distinctive idiom of the translations. An explanation is called for, since this superficially awkward translation language was able to remain more or less a fixture through the centuries — even if we allow for variation among different translators. We can admit that some of these unknown masters could even enjoy occasional linguistic flourishes, such as alliteration or chiasmus; they might exploit metrical effects; they perhaps mitigated repetition with variety in the choice of Greek equivalent for a single Hebrew word; or at the very least they occasionally replaced *kai* with *de*.⁵

Septuagint language, I suggest, encapsulates the paradox of its successive

communities, poised between two worlds. It represents a resolution of two powerful drives, the pull of acculturation and the anxiety of cultural annihilation.

It was the Alexandrian first instalment,⁶ whatever its extent, that forged a lasting method for putting biblical Hebrew into Greek, in effect, the invention of the translation language. The essence of any translation lies in the choice of translation technique. The translators made a cultural choice of what is in broad terms (allowing for individual variations) a word-for-word procedure – in Cicero’s often repeated phrase, a rendering that works ‘verbum e verbo’, in contrast to the alternative which he calls ‘sensus de sensu’, ‘sense out of sense’, in pursuit of a ‘dynamic equivalence’ which captures the force of what was said rather than the precise structure.⁷ In modern technical terms, the Septuagint translation displays an unusually high level of interference from the source language.⁸ In simple, if imprecise language, it tends to be ‘literal’ rather than ‘free’.⁹

The translation becomes a matter of course by those habituated to its idiosyncracies; but it can be trying to read, sometimes obscure and occasionally unintelligible to those accustomed to literary Greek, be it classical or Hellenistic.¹⁰ Reference to scripture, referring to both Old and New Testaments, as composed in ‘barbarian-speak’ (*barbaraphōnos*) was something of a commonplace in patristic writers.¹¹ For them, of course, the abandonment of the meretricious falsity of rhetoric was a source of pride. Origen had earlier told the pagan critic Celsus how important it was that the apostles ‘had no power of speaking or of giving an ordered narrative by the standards of Greek dialectical or rhetorical arts which convinced their hearers’; and he also cited Paul’s pronouncement that ‘my word and my preaching were not in persuasive words of men’s wisdom’.¹² Septuagint Greek was through the centuries treated

dismissively, judged simply a debased and horrid form of the language. Wilamowitz's criticism of the 'abscheulichen Septuagintagriechisch' ('appalling Septuagint Greek') appears extraordinary today.¹³ The label 'semitisms', or 'Hebraisms' often carried with it to a degree the implication of solecism, a confusion of languages, a display of ignorance — the touchstone, indeed, of what was once seen as the ineradicable un-Greekness of the Septuagint and of its aspiring community.¹⁴ Scholarship is now more receptive. Many of these 'hebraisms' represent a phenomenon perfectly familiar to linguists, that of the 'calque', where a translated word or phrase reproduces in the target language the form and structure of its equivalent in the source language. To take a notable example, the Greek *eirēnē* (peace) takes on the senses of Hebrew *shalom*, and thus can 'mean' also 'prosperity', 'health', 'welfare' or even 'news about'. The results can be remarkable, as in the topsy-turvy use of *eirēnē* (peace) at LXX 2 Kingdoms 11.7: *erōtaō eis eirēnēn tou polemou*, 'I ask after the peace of the war', means, quite comically, 'I ask how the war is going'. Here a calque which has become wholly stereotypic operates as a mechanical equivalent in a context where its use could not be less appropriate. Another phenomenon, this time in the sphere of syntax, merits a closer look because it takes us to the heart of the translators' technique. It is well-known that paired Greek words are regularly deployed to represent the distinctive biblical Hebrew doubling of the verb in the so-called *qatal qatol* formation: Here an infinitive absolute precedes the finite verb, more or less as a matter of course, where the simple finite verb already conveys the essential sense. There are three different ways in which this characteristic formation is replicated in Greek; one way or another, the Greek is moulded to meet the Hebrew. Thackeray's *Grammar* supplies us with some nice statistics. Just twice in the entire Bible, we find an

exact equivalent to the Greek construction, with startlingly non-Greek effect. But generally, one of several linguistically acceptable types of companion is supplied for the translated verb, which sometimes appears quite redundant or sometimes seems to intensify the sense of the main verb.¹⁵ The additional word, while it cannot grammatically mirror the Hebrew, still serves to ensure that a highly distinctive feature of the original expression is not lost. One technique is the addition of a noun cognate in derivation or at least of related meaning, which might be a dative (Thackeray counted two hundred instances) or might (occasionally) be in the accusative case. Alternatively, a cognate present or aorist participle precedes the finite verb (also some two hundred instances). Sometimes, an adverb is used. There are occasional examples of other devices, but the construction is hardly ever ignored altogether in translation. As we would expect, there is variation in the preferred type of rendering from book to book of the Septuagint, but also inconsistency within books.¹⁶ An example is the rendering of the Hebrew $\text{אִם־שָׁמַעְתָּ עֲשֵׂה־לְךָ־אָזְנוֹתַי}$ ‘if you will hear’ or ‘if you will obey’ in Greek as $\alpha\upsilon\kappa\omicron\sigma\eta\tau\epsilon$, ‘if with a hearing you will hear’.¹⁷ Although, as Conybeare and Stock put it, ‘here the genius of the Hebrew and of the Greek language coincides’, for the usages are ‘legitimate’ in Greek, the sheer frequency of the occurrence and the high visibility of some of the redundancies impress upon the Greek reader that something untoward is afoot.

Both internal and external evidence (including the style of the *Letter of Aristeas* itself) prove beyond any doubt that Greek could be written well enough in the translators’ milieu. Indeed they had enough knowledge of Greek and specifically the common (*koiné*) Greek of the period to have been capable of choosing a more sophisticated Greek idiom,

had they wished to, and to have done things otherwise than they did. Henry St John Thackeray, a master-linguist, appreciated this over a century ago, and new studies continue to provide confirmation of the translators' underlying competence.¹⁸ Suffice it to quote Mark Janse's, conclusion to an in-depth analysis of the translators' syntactical peculiarities: 'if they [the translators] were able to deal with such subtleties as Wackernagel's Law, we must we must assume that they were native speakers of the Egyptian koine [common speech].'¹⁹ Trevor Evans investigated in great detail the translators' handling of Greek verbs and he successfully dismissed the simplification that Septuagint syntax is no more than Hebrew syntax transferred to Greek: the tendency is to 'pragmatic functional agreement' much more than to 'mechanical translation equivalents'.²⁰ Striking examples of erstwhile 'septuagintisms', proven as *koinē* usage from documentary evidence, have emerged from decades of study of the vast corpus of papyri extracted from the sands of Egypt. Modern scholarship rests upon the vigorously-expressed insights of Adolf Deissmann, whose research centred on the language of the New Testament but extended back to the Septuagint. He jolted both classical and biblical scholars in the early part of the twentieth century into understanding that the newly opened-up world of the papyri, together with inscriptions and later Greek literary texts, were a new window open wide into the language of the Greek scriptures and a great resource for understanding them, and that at the same time those scriptures were themselves 'one of the most important documents of Egyptian Greek.'²¹ Examples on the level of vocabulary, especially technical and semi-technical words, or those drawn from everyday life, especially animal-rearing and work in the fields, were numerous: *aphesis* for an irrigation channel, *genēma* for the produce of the land, are just two common

instances.²² But the formation of words and syntactical constructions were also thus illuminated. In other ways too, the variety and complexities of *koine* itself, whose range of surviving material runs the gamut from technical literature to conversation, have come to be better understood.²³ And yet none of this provided a full explanation of what is going on in the Septuagint language.

By way of illustration of how the translation language ‘reads’, we can do no better than to take what is perhaps the Pentateuch’s most signal moment the revelation of the Divine Name to Moses in a face-to-face encounter at the burning bush. In the footnote below, the text of Exodus 3.15, a verse from God’s numinous utterance is given in the Greek version followed by the Hebrew and then by the English translation from the new *NETS* version.²⁴ While the Greek translator more or less rises to the occasion, he does so by exploiting rather than abandoning the characteristics of Septuagint diction. Exodus, we may note, is classified among those books in the Septuagint which are translated with relatively more freedom, but that ‘relatively must be underscored, and it can be seen that this freedom, in the linguistic sphere at least, has very severe limits.’²⁵ A fair selection of noteworthy Septuagintal devices emerge clearly even in this short passage. The rendering of the Divine Name as *kurios*, ‘Lord’, without the definite article, is the normal practice of the Exodus translator (or translators) as of most others. The names of the patriarchs appear in their Hebrew forms as indeclinable Greek proper nouns. There is a characteristic absence of connecting words between ‘God of your fathers’ and ‘God of Abraam’. Then the names of the patriarchs are connected by repeated ‘ands’ (*kai...kai*).²⁶ Highly distinctive Greek phraseology conveys something of the rich Hebrew conceptualization of eternity, with the stereotypic adjective *aiōnion* rendering the

Hebrew *le-olam*, ‘for ever’ (literally, ‘for the world’)²⁷ and this is directly followed by the opaque and un-Greek but resonant combination which the English word-for-word version gives as ‘[a memorial] of generations to generations’. That represents the pithy Hebrew expression *le-dor va-dor*, ‘to generation and generation’, a case where the Greek by no means replicates its Hebrew predecessor word-by-word but rather evokes it through a slightly different, yet also peculiar, Greek expression. The effect of it all is to highlight this central phrase and its surrounding sentence, and thus to alert the reader to what lies behind it – a Hebrew biblical concept of very particular resonance and significance. The translator hit it off and some of his devices are exploited in abundance through the corpus.

So no one could suggest that we are here dealing with ordinary Greek in any of its registers. Septuagint Greek is unique and altogether more peculiar. It is scarcely believable that the word-for-word technique was adopted primarily because of the inhibitions or the limitations of its translators, who, it has been suggested, found it easier to render basic unit after basic unit a text which at moments they often could not fully understand. To invent an artificial language in order to cover up the difficulty of solving the odd knotty problem in the Hebrew text would be to crack nuts with a sledge hammer.²⁸ The complexity of this language seems to emerge more or less fully-formed in the translations of the pentateuchal books, even though there is variation between them and their production may well have been in stages. This is a powerful argument that the language was deliberately created and consciously maintained. In short, not only may we conceive of something which we can legitimately call a Septuagint ‘translation language’, but we can identify this as a set of general tendencies which runs across and unifies

translators of diverse practice and taste.²⁹

Benjamin Wright tackles the meaning of the translation style by way of the famous preface composed by Ben Sira's grandson, who made a Greek book (known as Sirach or by its Latin name, Ecclesiasticus) out of his grandfather's Hebrew work. Remarkably, he begins his work by identifying himself and talking about what he did. This conscientious grandson apologizes that a translation from the Hebrew into another language cannot carry equal power (*isodunamai*) with the original, and especially so when it comes to the translations of 'the law, the prophets and the other books'. Wright takes the point of this statement to be not that the translations fall short of the Hebrew in terms of the meaning conveyed, but rather that they lack the full force and impact carried by the original.³⁰ Yet the style of the preface itself, Wright goes on to argue, shows the grandson to be a writer who can give his Greek prose precisely those qualities — when he chooses. The conclusion must therefore be that a big difference was perceived to exist between a free composition, like the preface, and the text itself, which was constrained by the need to draw extensively on pentateuchal and prophetic expressions and ideas,³¹ and which may itself have sought a biblical authority. For the latter, the Septuagintal translation language, broadly speaking, was appropriate. If Wright is correct, the adoption of the language was indeed a matter of choice. In an extensive body of literature, intended for intensive use and for multiple purposes such awkwardness would not seem to be advantageous to its users, let alone impressive to the world outside. Excluding sheer incompetence, various explanations on the socio-linguistic level present themselves to explain the reasons for the choice and thus to define the character of Septuagint 'translation Greek'.

One idea which has finally been consigned to the scrapheap of history deserves mention if only for the allure it once held: that the Jewish Greek Bible translation represents the not-very-elevated everyday communication of Alexandrian Jews, a sort of pidgin language that somehow accorded with an irreducible ‘Semititic’ essence. H.B. Swete had little doubt about the matter when, in 1900, he explained the background to the Greek Bible in a handbook which was to hold the field for many years: ‘the translators were men of Semitic descent with, therefore, innately Semitic habits of thought. ‘They wrote Greek as they doubtless spoke it.’ He had worked this out even more precisely: ‘the Greek which the Jews of Alexandria learned to speak was neither the literary language employed by the scholars of the Museum, nor the artificial imitation of it affected by Hellenistic writers...It was based on the patois of the Alexandrian streets and market — a mixture, as we may suppose, of the ancient spoken tongue of Hellas with elements gathered from Macedonia, Asia Minor, Egypt and Libya.’ While no doubt offered in a very different spirit, this fanciful notion has a little in common with that figment of the eighteenth and nineteenth century anti-Semitic imagination exposed by Sander Gilman, a degenerate Jewish patois whose exponents, if not fenced off, might debase the true German expression.³²

But if the translation language was a matter of collective choice, we must still ask, why *this* language? It is one thing tentatively to suggest that the ‘feel’ of the Hebrew is evoked by it, another to indicate how this happens through the chosen translation technique. I suggest that one way in which this purposeful choice makes an impact on the modern reader is on the auditory level, and this will have been very much more marked in the ancient context. The profound dependence of biblical verse and prose on the

aesthetics of sound, the ‘oral register’, in the Hebrew Bible has been explored by Susan Niditch,³³ and linked to the position of the biblical authors at the intersection of oral and scribal cultures. Arie van der Kooij identifies reading aloud, *anagnosis*, as an essential element in the method of interpretation practiced in Jewish scribal circles.³⁴ None of this is not to deny that scripture’s main mode of transmission among Jews, at any rate since the Persian period, was via texts written by scribes.³⁵ Martin Jaffee ascribes to the rabbis a process of ‘re-oralization’ of a culture that had come to make heavy use of the written text.³⁶ Interestingly, the rabbinic appellation for the Bible in its entirety, *mikra*, comes from a root meaning ‘to cry out, call, summon’; the noun appears frequently in the Bible to describe a convocation of the people for the primary purpose of hearing a reading. This contrasts with terms such as ‘Bible’ (from *ta biblia* – books) or the English ‘scripture’ which of course means ‘writing’. For most people most of the time through most of antiquity, the Bible was a heard text. Large tracts of the Bible could only have been known to many through memorization: Jewish rates of literacy may well not have been much different from those in the wider population, and it is even argued by Catherine Hezser that they were on the low side of the norm for Graeco-Roman societies.³⁷ The literacy of many was in any case limited or partial.³⁸ For everyone, including the highly literate, there were major difficulties in unrolling and keeping open with both hands a scroll of sufficient size to contain even a single biblical book (as would have been the norm). The general absence of verse dividers and even word division made reading very slow: there are some signs of their appearance towards the end of the Second Temple period BCE.³⁹ As if all that were not enough, the production of scrolls whether from woven and glued papyrus or from animal skins, and even the manufacture of ink,

involved lengthy and costly processes.⁴⁰ Thus, outside the liturgical context citation from memory was essential for scholars before the era of the great mediaeval Jewish codices. In this respect, Jewish readers and writers were in the same position as all other Graeco-Roman intellectuals. Feats of memory which to us seem extraordinary were probably not uncommon. The epitomator who turned Jason of Cyrene's five volume book into 2 Maccabees says that he is offering convenience, *eukopia*, to those who wish to commit the whole of the history to memory.⁴¹ It is suspected that Paul knew very large portions of the Greek Bible by heart.⁴² All this implies a relationship through sound.

A modern poet, John Hollander, writing from the perspective of the King James version's English, captures so well a modern English reader's impression of the Hebrew Bible's 'song' as to deserve a substantial quotation:

The verse of the Hebrew Bible is
strange; the meter in Psalms
and Proverbs perplexes.
It is not a matter of numbers, no
counting of beats or syllables.
Its song is a music of matching, its
rhythm a kind of paralleling.
One half-line makes an assertion;
the other part paraphrases it;
sometimes a third part
will vary it.
An abstract statement meets with
its example, yes, the way a wind
runs through the tree's moving
leaves.
One river's water is heard on
another's shore; so did this
Hebrew verse form carry across
into English.⁴³

Probably the first thing one notices about Septuagint Greek is the unremitting chime of an accumulation of phrases or clauses tied together by the connective 'and', *kai*

(representing biblical Hebrew's basic paratactic structure, with *kai* representing *ve-*). We saw a small example from this in the sample passage from Exodus 3. In Greek, the replacement of at least some of these strings by combinations of subordinate and main clause would be expected. As Anneli Aejmelaeus points out,⁴⁴ the reader divines by intuition that something is going on. In fact, that process is more complicated than is immediately apparent, for she is able to show that in reality 'it is not the degree of parataxis that matters', since non-Septuagint Greek can also be highly paratactic. What is special about the Septuagint is its concomitant extremely sparing use of the Greek particle *de* and scarcity of participial constructions, which take the translation a good deal further away from the flow of any normal Greek.

Together with this feature come other audible effects evocative of biblical Hebrew, some of which were present in my example.⁴⁵ Repetition serves to attract attention, as do linguistic irregularities, so when these features are combined in the translators' reproduction of the Hebrew infinitive-absolute-plus verb construction, the hearer will attend.⁴⁶ More than one method is used to address this aspect of the biblical language.⁴⁷ On a few occasions, the translation (Greek verb plus adverb) is just a normal Greek construction which renders the meaning adequately. But mostly, special devices are called into play. In two instances (out of the entire Hebrew Bible) a close Greek equivalent actually appears, with a notable triple instance at Jeremiah 44.25 (LXX 51.25): "And doing we shall do"...and holding fast you held fast...and doing you did".⁴⁸ The most common solutions found by the translators are less 'literal' than the Jeremiah type, but they still stretch Greek usage. We would describe them as idiosyncratic outside the Septuagint context: 'with theft I stole'; 'with witness he witnessed'; 'with stones he will

be stoned'; 'with blessings you will bless'; returning I will come'; 'blessing I will bless you'.⁴⁹ Finally, a surprisingly persistent aural impact is made by what is linguistically a relatively trivial feature: both prose and verse are characterized by the ubiquity of those redundant possessive pronouns.⁵⁰

It has been from time to time observed that homophony, similar sound, is an occasional reason for the choice of a particular Greek equivalent.⁵¹ So, for example, in two places, *(kata)skēnoun* is adopted for speaking of God choosing to 'settle' the people in the Land, rendering the Hebrew *shakhan*.⁵² The process is especially interesting where the matching of meanings is defective, as when *tokh*, 'oppression', is rendered as *tokos*, usury.⁵³ The effect is usually through the matching of consonants, and it is indubitably aural. But the clear and indisputable instances are not numerous enough to allow us to make a great deal of a phenomenon which, in any case, could only have affected those who anyway knew the Hebrew scriptures rather well.

But we have seen enough to be sure that, while the actual sound of the Greek sentences may not exactly replicate the Hebrew, reminiscent rhythms ring out through it. It is a question often of prominent and audible patterns which function as stand-ins for their Hebrew counterparts. The translators manage to fulfill Walter Benjamin's requirement that 'a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of significance, thus making the original and the translation recognizable fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel'.⁵⁴

The most common account of these characteristics of Septuagint Greek is in terms of the sanctity of the source text: sacred writings, it is assumed, ought to show that they

stand apart; the language in which they were originally expressed is crucial to their exact sense, or to their deepest meaning; religious language should be wooden and incantatory. Similarly, it might be pointed out, it is not uncommon for law to be expressed in archaic formulae. But when it comes to the Bible in Judaism, explanations even more sweeping than these have beckoned, and they are indeed seductive. No less a figure than Philo of Alexandria encourages this understanding of the relationship between original and translation. As part of his promotion of the Septuagint in the *Life of Moses*, and adjacent to the passage where he describes its origins and the festival in its honour,⁵⁵ he explains that the Hebrew to Greek wording stand in a one-to-one correspondence. While the Greek language in particular has many ways of expressing the same idea, when it came to the Jewish law, the Greek terms chosen by the translators matched exactly the Hebrew they stood for, as though in logic or dialectic. This, for Philo, demonstrates them to have been not interpreters (*hermēneis*), but hierophants and prophets, in contact with the entirely pure spirit of Moses. Admittedly, Philo is a witness who belongs, if not exactly to the Septuagint's original milieu then to a society in the direct line of descent from it, and one still focused very much on the translations. However, his conclusion merely reveals the transcendental level on which Philo's explanation is here operating. He fortifies, with the argument from language, his own philosophical reading of the inspired character of scripture, whether Hebrew or Greek, and also of the equality of the Greek with the Hebrew. The correspondence theory was simply not intended to function as a realistic description of the Torah translation's texture. An element of the miraculous is included in its very formulation by Philo.

The philosopher's assertion could scarcely be seen as valid on the empirical level.

Indeed, the evidence reveals the very opposite to be the case: the same Hebrew term, far from having only one natural equivalent, is to be found rendered in two or more different ways even within the same book. It is not unknown even within the same verse. A notable case is the important biblical word *ger*, roughly speaking a ‘resident stranger’. In the Septuagint this is understood as including converts to the Jewish community and it is therefore crucial. In the book of Exodus alone, three different Greek renderings appear: *proselutos* (most often), but also twice *paroikos* (a settler, Ex. 2.22 and 18.3), and on one occasion an untranslated reproduction of the Hebrew term, *geioras*.⁵⁶

Harry Orlinsky⁵⁷ drew a tight connection between the Aristeas narrator’s underlying biblical typologies, the phraseology of the description of the community leaders’ acceptance of the translation — which he takes to represent immediate canonization by Alexandrian Jewry and, before long, by the entire diaspora — and the ‘word-for-word equivalence’ method of the outcome, the Greek Torah. From the standpoint of some linguists, too, the Septuagint is readily invoked to serve as a classic example of translation from a ‘sacred text’, with the special respect for the source, and therefore for the idiom of the source language, that this can imply:⁵⁸ not only was scripture the word of God, but exegesis could become seriously problematic where a rendering was a little loose. Thus, Janse constructs his analysis of Septuagint language on precisely this interpretative basis, resting, like Orlinsky, on a high concept of sanctity and especially upon rhetorical utterances about the translation’s marvellous precision and perfection, where nothing was either added or subtracted from the original, from which *Aristeas* derives considerable leverage.⁵⁹ It is salutary to remind ourselves that Josephus said exactly the same about his biblical *Antiquities*, which is in fact a very freely

reworked paraphrase, allowing itself both additions and subtractions.⁶⁰ The claim of not adding or subtracting was a commonplace, a formulaic seal of approval. Janse's analysis of the language can stand, but under the rubric of a much revised explanation which takes a broader view of the meaning and purposes of the translation.

There is much to be gained in detaching ourselves from that mindset which puts the Bible in the special category of sacred, or indeed ultra-sacred text; in viewing it as a book, or set of books, not wholly incomparable with others, and Hebrew as a language located in the same sphere others.⁶¹ Even the term *lashon hakodesh*, which is an earlier name for the language than 'Hebrew', can mean simply 'the language used in dealing with holy things'. This is not to deny to either of these a share in the attributes of holiness. But it is crucial that in this period of formative Judaism, neither the extent nor the implication of a unified holiness ideology have yet crystallized. With regard to texts as physical entities, their primary sanctity lies in their inclusion of the Name of God; and the early papyri show concern over this by their range of strategies for dealing with the writing of the Name. My point is that biblical texts function in Jewish societies in a variety of ways — perhaps indeed, the range is even greater precisely because of scripture's pre-eminent position. To explain Septuagint language as simply the natural way of translating a holy book is to close down the discussion far too soon.

But what of Hebrew in our period? Throughout the Graeco-Roman era, the Hebrew language, both spoken and written, had a demonstrable ethno-religious significance for the Jews, in Palestine at least. There losing the language was understood as an irreversible process: the road to complete assimilation, to ethnic extinction. In many a weak community over the ages, the process has indeed been just this. Nehemiah had

feared for the little settlement of returnees in Jerusalem, singling out loss of their native language as a consequence of the forbidden marriages he was attacking: ‘I saw that some Jews had married women Ashdodite, Ammonite and Moabite women. Half the children spoke Ashdodite and they could not speak the language of the Judaeans (*yehudith*) but the languages of the different peoples’.⁶² Heller-Roazen’s unusual study of the forgetting of languages evokes Jewish anxiety in one other particular time and place, mediaeval Spain. In the twelfth-century, some people apparently felt that using alien Arabic versification systems to write Hebrew poetry would spell the death of the holy language. It is telling, as we shall shortly see, that concern was centred specifically on the transmutation of sound and rhythm and that an essential element of the contemporary Hebrew language was felt to reside in its natural versification. Later, in fourteenth-century Jewish Provence, being deprived of Hebrew was described as tantamount to exile.⁶³

In a detailed review of the written and spoken uses of the Hebrew language (in its late classical form) during the Second Temple era, David Goodblatt shows how the role of Hebrew in the construction of Jewish identities enabled it to hold its own against Aramaic. While Seth Schwartz traced a ‘*talismanic*’ role for the language back to the Maccabean period, Goodblatt follows this role further back into the Persian era.⁶⁴ The Qumran documents perhaps from the mid-third century BCE incorporate archaic linguistic features, notably the palaeo-Hebrew script employed in a few scrolls, and also some renderings of the tetragrammaton (divine name) that avoid the more usual current ‘Assyrian’ (square) letters.⁶⁵ This script is also resurrected in the coins of the Hasmoneans and on those of both revolts in Palestine. The letters of Bar Kokhba, the leader of the second of those revolts, surprised their discoverers by including more Hebrew than would

ever have been expected.⁶⁶ In the Second Book of Maccabees, which concerns events in Palestine but is itself an abridgement of a work written by a diaspora author, the Jewish martyrs who resist the Hellenizing persecutor Antiochus are several times explicitly said to be speaking in their ‘ancestral language’, more likely referring to Hebrew than to Aramaic.⁶⁷ For Josephus, language is part of Jewish identity, both positively and negatively; the choice of language for particular purposes can matter, even if his undifferentiated use of the term *hebraisti* (in Hebrew) does not allow us to judge which of the two closely-related languages he has in mind at any moment, Hebrew or the Aramaic of Jerusalem and Galilee.⁶⁸

In succeeding generations, Hebrew was a functioning and indeed developing elite language, promoted, as a language of scholarship, to the elevated status of ‘holy tongue’ among the rabbis of Palestine.⁶⁹ According to a widely cited dictum of Rabbi Me’ir, speaking in the ‘holy tongue’ ranked with residence in the holy land and recital of the *shema* morning and evening in assuring a person’s place in the world to come.⁷⁰ The history of the Hebrew language is a continuum, with the intermediate forms of Mishnaic Hebrew developing as a largely written variety out of late Biblical Hebrew, in circumstances not entirely clear to us. As for spoken Hebrew, a strong body of opinion now holds that it was in daily use alongside Aramaic during the Second Temple period in Palestine.⁷¹ In any event, even in periods of complete cessation of its use in speech, Hebrew has been fostered as a living *written* language, for personal as well as public communication among the learned, and at times for secular purposes too. Biblical Hebrew, be it noted, is largely intelligible to users of later Hebrew (including the contemporary language) in spite of a great expansion of vocabulary and of syntactical

development.

Yet Alexandria was not Judaea. On the common assumption that Hebrew was altogether forgotten in Alexandrian Jewry within a very few generations, the proposition that Septuagint translation style continued for any length of time as a route to retaining a stake in the traditional Hebrew language would be difficult to sustain. But is this a valid proposition? Many languages do indeed give way and die in the face of stronger forces that are able to engulf them. In our world, the tragedy is occurring on a daily basis. A spoken language may be lost to a family group within a generation, certainly within two. Yet languages can also resist cultural pressure and language retention, partial or complete, can be understood as part of a strategy for maintaining, or re-asserting group identity, whether used as a daily means of communication or whether carrying some sort of iconic status. As Goodblatt puts it, ‘for people who identified as Jews Hebrew was always “their language” in some sense’.⁷² And we have nowhere near enough evidence to declare that Hebrew just vanished for the great Alexandrian community in Second Temple times. A few scholars have cautiously stood back from this assumption.⁷³ And on investigation, the evidence for the disappearance of the Hebrew language in the face of Greek is not as strong as might be supposed. On the southern border of fifth-century Egypt under Persian rule, the Jewish members of the military garrison on the island of Elephantine used Aramaic as their spoken and written language, for both official and informal purposes. Hebrew had been still alive in the last years of the kingdom of Judah, yet no Hebrew has been found among the Elephantine documents. This seems worrying. But Elephantine is not the appropriate model for us. The uniformity of this military group, and the linguistic affinity of Aramaic to Hebrew both serve to differentiate this

case from that of Ptolemaic Alexandria.⁷⁴ In addition, the particular character of the three archives found at Elephantine (one family dossier and two sets of communal records) limits the significance of the findings. It is worth emphasizing that the editor of the documents, Bezalel Porten, concludes that the absence of positive evidence for the use of Hebrew is by no means proof that the language was forgotten at Elephantine.

Can we obtain any guidance from a case closer to home, that of the philosopher and expounder of scripture Philo, as well-educated Jew as one might find in Alexandria, albeit one who flourished nearly three centuries after the dramatic date of *Aristeas*? He deserves our momentary attention because of the interest which has long been shown in the question of his knowledge or ignorance of Hebrew. Samuel Sandmel set out the parameters of the problem in 1978, and they have not changed much. Most of the discussion revolves around the six hundred and fifty one etymologies which Philo employs as an exegetical tool. While working somewhat in the fashion of the Stoic allegorizers, he relies for the most part not on Greek but on Hebrew meanings: Jerusalem means 'vision of peace', 'Jordan' means 'descent', Judah means 'praise to the Lord', Benjamin means 'son of days', Eliezer means 'God is my helper', Laban means 'white'. On the one hand, a considerable knowledge of Hebrew would be required were they to be fresh-minted, for most of these meanings cannot be extracted from the Septuagint. On the other hand, critics point to a number of apparent errors and indeed a few of Philo's explanations are totally impenetrable.⁷⁵ Yet both positions lose their significance if Philo's etymologizing was not his independent work. Whether or not he knew Hebrew, he might reasonably have availed himself of a scholarly aid by way of a pre-prepared name list (*onomastikon*) or of some kind of glossary (*notarikon*), of the kind later

absorbed into Jerome's book of interpretations of Hebrew names. Scholars have long been aware of papyri which attest to the existence of such aids, though these need not be contemporary with Philo, and they do not overlap substantially with Philo.. Moreover, conclusive proof of Philo's use of them is still lacking.⁷⁶

A parallel argument concerning the linguistic background to Targum, the interpretive Aramaic renderings of the synagogue readings from Torah and prophets, helps us grasp that the need for scripture in Greek does not presuppose its general unintelligibility in Hebrew. During the rabbinic period the Targum was recited by a *meturgeman* (translator) of lower status than the main reader, verse by verse (or three verses by three verses in the case of the prophetic readings) after the original. Their origins appear to go back considerably earlier. While the Targumim are conventionally supposed to have been made for synagogue-goers without Hebrew, Steven Fraade shows how the two voices will have functioned in counterpoint as a bilingual text. The Aramaic never substituted for the Hebrew, and the audience had to be attentive to both. Rabbinic texts further suggest that written Targum may have been involved in private study and in the weekly preparation of the weekly reading, presuming the student's knowledge of both languages and his ability to move freely between the two. This pedagogic practice would in itself have served to strengthen literary bilingualism.⁷⁷ The parallel is highly suggestive, even if it is derived from a Semitic language environment and from a Jewish milieu in which the spread of rabbinic influence was on the way to making Hebrew, the language of holiness, the primary vehicle of literary production and scholarly exchange, not to mention the vehicle of their own claim to pre-eminence.⁷⁸

A few scholars have given some thought to the possibility that there existed a

degree of bilingualism in Alexandrian Jewry. Notably among them was Chaim Rabin.⁷⁹ Bilingualism does not, of course, necessarily imply *equal* control of both languages: one may be far better known than the other: in this case, this would be Greek. Nor does bilingualism imply similar functions for the two languages – many bilingual situations are ‘diglossic’, where each language has its own function, in a hierarchy.⁸⁰ It is reasonable, indeed, to posit the existence of a measure of trilinguality among Greek-speaking Jews, with Aramaic, the middle eastern *lingua franca* over so many centuries, constantly in the background.⁸¹

Could an internal imperative, then, have dictated this unexpected way of ‘going Greek’? I suggest that the very character of this special language in itself served from the beginning as a means of self-identifying with a primary ethnic indicator, the language of the *patria*, and self-distancing from Alexandrian society. Absorption into the world of Greek expression was a fact which the ‘consumers’ of the translation pragmatically took on board but around which they also drew lines. In other words, Septuagint language in its nature, with its deliberate mirroring of Hebrew balance, syntactic patterns and semantic structures (even where there is not a one-to-one equivalence) reflects a kind of recalcitrance, a reluctance to accede totally to a Hellenizing ‘project’, which by the same token could not be ignored. Cultural appropriation went only so far. This contrasts with the ‘dissimilation’ – emphasizing of differences – which Sacha Stern sees as characteristic of the early rabbis, who markedly avoided overt cultural appropriation.⁸² What is involved in the Hellenistic diaspora is a response to linguistic imperialism which promotes language maintenance not in opposition to, but within acculturation. Their special Greek, by respecting the source language of the text serves as an assertion of

identity and of the value of tradition for the text's owners. Naomi Seidman speaks of a later Jewish literal translation, that of Aquila, as a 'form of resistance, an overturning of the Greek values he also mirrors...an attempt to trace a Jewish-Greek space, manipulating...Greek to Jewish advantage.'⁸³ This overtly post-colonial assessment has turned out to be singularly apt for the original Alexandrian translation too. Septuagint Greek might have been explicable in other terms – primitive translation technique, respect for the sanctity of the source version, or the educational need for a 'crib'. It can be shown that none of these interpretations offers by itself a satisfactory account.

Since a translation, like any other cultural artefact, is a product of its society or societies, it is reasonable to seek an explanation of the Septuagint translation language in these terms. As a type, the translation falls not within the category which 'domesticates' the source text to the new language but rather within that of so-called 'foreignizing' translations – a term applicable even where the source language is also in some sense the translators' own. Translators who adopt this latter approach express a respectful awareness of the ultimately unbridgeable distance between two cultures. They do this through their unwillingness to compromise more than is absolutely unavoidable the structures and forms of the source language in favour of a successful acclimatization to the target language. In advocating 'foreignizing' as against 'transparent' translation in a modern context, Lawrence Venuti's history of translation strikes a blow against what he calls the 'ethnic violence' of the process. The 'foreignizing' solution to the dilemma of translation gained attractiveness at the coming of modern nationalism in the Romantic period, with its emphasis on the vital link between the spirit of the nation and the nation's inherited (or supposedly inherited) language. While Schleiermacher is the thinker

primarily associated with these ideas, the complexities of an imaginary satiric dialogue of 1798 by Schlegel will most aptly illustrate the point.⁸⁴ When the Frenchman in this dialogue invokes the precedent of Hellenic cultural imperialism, the German speaker, surprisingly, does not entirely gainsay him. It is inconceivable for him to remove the Greeks, the very model of perfection, from their pedestal. The chosen model could not be more to our purpose. We see how the issues can be retrojected without difficulty into the pre-modern world. In Classical antiquity, the Greeks ‘domesticated’ and absorbed the foreign just as the Frenchman in the dialogue wants to do (with striking contemporary resonance). The counterpart is what interests us: for a subject ethnic group which holds language as a key marker of identity, and for whom translation is none the less a necessity, ‘foreignization’ is self-protection.⁸⁵ The Romantic view of the nation is not a prerequisite for this dynamic to operate.

The modern history of translation is littered with experiments in fidelity that have sunk under the weight of their own unintelligibility whatever their theoretical interest.⁸⁶ Walter Benjamin, in his short, much-quoted, but extremely complex essay ‘the Task of the Translator’, conjured up the theoretical construct of an ideal translation which adhered totally to the parent syntax. For him the perfect prototype was to be found precisely, and exclusively in an interlinear version of the scriptures.⁸⁷ But the ideal was, he declared, also an impossibility.

The Septuagint translators occupy a distinguished place in the line of seekers-for-the-impossible. Their product was far beyond a mechanical school text. But neither was it a doctrinaire exercise. The translation language they forged worked and survived because it did a job. Inscribed within the language itself is an assertion of communal

independence which made it possible for the translations to serve as vehicle for quiet cultural resistance.

I have framed in this manner our encounter with Septuagint language because it serves to emphasize the point I wish to make, that we see the sense in this creation when we view it as part of a constellation of choices. These choices can be related to the situation in which the Jews found themselves in Alexandria. They dealt effectively with the challenge. Recourse to a technique that was knowingly, and constructively, Hebraized paid homage to Hebrew in the very process of ‘going Greek’, each of them crucial elements in the constructed identity of an Alexandrian Jew. It is indeed paradoxical that, while the acquisition of an important translation might seem *prima facie* to be destructive to the survival of the original text and of the source language, the process may in fact work positively.

Notes to Introduction

¹ This is explained below, pp.0.

² Fraser 1972: 687ff.

³ See now Lee 1983 and Evans 2001. Quote from Evans forthcoming.

⁴ Bowman and Woolf: introduction: 14.

⁵ For the problems and controversies surrounding the interpretation of Septuagint language, with invaluable bibliographical guidance down to 1988, see Harl in Dorival,

Harl, and Munnich 1988: 223-66. For more recent discussions reviewed, see Fernández Marcos 2000: 3-17. Brief summary by a Greek philologist in Horrocks 1997: 57-9. For a controversial attempt at a full quantitative analysis, Walser 2001.

⁶ On this question, see above, Chap.2, p.000

⁷ Cicero, *De optimo genere oratorum* 14. The application of this Roman insight to biblical translation is explored in Brock 1979; Wright 2003; Troxel 2008.

⁸ Interference, is defined as ‘foreign arrangements of semantic and syntactic structures’ by Langslow 2002: 42. For earlier scholarship on the Hebrew-Greek interference, see Horsley 1989: 6-7.

⁹ On different types of literalism and the limitations of the term, Barr 1979. For an attempt to establish a quantifiable set of criteria for measuring the relative literalism of Septuagint units, based on distinctive uses of certain particles, conjunctions, prepositions and possessive pronouns, see Tov 1999: 219-37.

¹⁰ Swete’s Septuagint introduction (2nd edition, 1914) has a short account of Septuagint syntax. The best analysis remains Thackeray 1909. A more modern account is Olofsson 1990. There are valuable chapters on lexicography and translation technique in Tov 1999, especially chapters 6-9. For short case studies with lucid comment, Janse 2002. See also the works cited in n.11 below.

¹¹ Janse 2002: 341-2 cites Isidorus of Pelusium (*PG* 78.1080-1), Basil of Caesarea (*PG* 32.1084) and Theodoret (*PG* 83.945).

¹² Origen *Contra Celsum* 1.62. transl. Chadwick; I Cor. 2.4-5.

¹³ Quoted in *BGS*: 259.

¹⁴ LEH 2003: introduction: ix introduce the apparently derogatory term ‘translationisms’.

The extended discussion in Thackeray 1909: 25-55 is, however, unjudgmental. On the Hebraisms, see also Gehman 1951.

¹⁵ This is sometimes known as the *figura etymologica*. See Thackeray 1908; Thackeray 1909: 47-50; Conybeare and Stock 1988: 56-57, 60-61; Tov 1999: 247-256. Philological analysis in Evans 2001: 128-30 with further bibliography in n.19. The use of predicative aorist participles in the Greek Pentateuch is also discussed in Walser 2001: 36-38, 151-2.

¹⁶ This emerges clearly from the interesting analysis and tabulations of Tov 1999: 247-256.

¹⁷ Ex. 23.22, and not infrequently elsewhere. The *NETS* translation arguably adds more than is warranted to the original with ‘if by paying attention you listen to my voice’.

¹⁸ Thackeray 1909; Aejmelaeus 1993; Lee 1983; Evans 2001.

¹⁹ Janse 2002: 381. Wackernagel’s law, whose correct operation is detected by Janse in Septuagint Deuteronomy and Isaiah, concerns word order in a sentence.

²⁰ Evans 2001, and see especially p.132 for this description.

²¹ Quotation from Deissmann 1903: 70; see also Deissmann 1927. Contemporaneous, and working on similar principles, Thumb 1901. The most important modern scholar to follow through along these lines has been John Lee. See Lee 1983; and also Lee 2003, where the earlier investigation is revisited. For a succinct re-assessment by a modern papyrologist, see Montevecchi 1999: 121-33.

²² Deissmann 1903: 98-100; 109-110.

²³ Horrocks 1997 offers an up to date and authoritative account.

²¹ LXX text Rahlfs-Hanhart; Hebrew *BHS*; English *NETS*.

²⁹ See Harl 1988: 231-3. The point is conceded even by Aejmelaeus (1993 and 2001) who has done much to map that diversity.

³⁰ Wright 2003[1]: 11-20 and Wright 2003[2]; See Sir. Prol. 20.

³¹ See Aitken 1999 for some ways in which Ben Sira develops Genesis and Isaiah especially.

³² Gilman 1986, covering both pre-and post-Enlightenment versions of the motif. On notions that Jews were incapable of authentic German expression, see also Seidman 2006: 153-98.

³³ Niditch 1996.

³⁴ See the remarks made in the Introduction, p.000 on the role of orality even in the transmission of what was a written text par excellence. Cf. van der Kooij and van der Toorn (eds) 1998: 219-22.

³⁵ On the scribes of the Persian period, see Schaper 1999. On the consistent importance of writing in the Jewish conception of scripture from at least the fifth century BCE, Sawyer 1999: 50-58.

³⁶ Jaffee 2001: 17. And see also Alexander 2003.

³⁷ Hezser 2001 is a comprehensive investigation of Jewish literacy in this period.

³⁸ This is a central argument in Harris's study (1989), and see especially pp.5-21. For the resulting debate, see Hezser 2001: 18-26.

³⁹ There are some traces of them in the Minor Prophets Scroll: see Kraft 2003.

⁴⁰ See Roberts 1983, and, for the Jewish milieu, Haran 1983 and Haran 1985.

⁴¹ 2 Macc, 2.25.

⁴² So Wagner 2002: 20-8.

⁴³ Hollander 2001: 26, quoted in Bloom 2007: 22.

⁴⁴ Aejmelaeus 1982 is a book-length study of Septuagint parataxis.

⁴⁵ See above, p.000 and p.000.

⁴⁶ For this feature, see above, pp.000.

⁴⁷ The following analysis and examples are derived mainly from Tov 1999: 247-56.

⁴⁸ In this verse, too, the impression is enhanced by the intertwined rendering of two Greek verbs beside their respective cognate nouns (*homologiai* and *spondai*).

⁴⁹ Gen 40.15; 43.3; Num. 23.11; Gen 18.10; 22.17. Thus the two types of solution are: either, verb plus (usually cognate) noun; or, even more oddly, Greek participle followed by finite verb of the same Greek noun.

⁵⁰ They represent the Hebrew possessive suffix.

⁵¹ Examples, analysis and a critique of earlier studies in Tov 1999: 165-82. Cf. Barr 1985.

⁵² Num. 14.30; Psalm 37 (36).3.

⁵³ Psalm 55(54): 12 and Psalm 72(71): 14.

⁵⁴ Benjamin transl. by Zohn 1968: 78.

⁵⁵ Philo, *Life of Moses* 2.38-40. See Chap.1, p.000.

⁵⁶ Ex.12.19. Cf. Isa.14.1, arguably influenced by Exodus. For the variation in these words, see Barr 2003: 527 with Tov 1999: 175. On the general point, *BGS*, 231.

⁵⁷ Orlinsky 1975.

⁵⁸ So Brock 1992: 311-2, drawing on Jerome's description of his own faithfulness as 'interprese' rather than 'expositor' of sacred text in the preface to the writings of Dionysius, and the implied allusions in that to dicta of Cicero and Horace.

⁵⁹ Janse 2002.

⁶⁰ See Chap.7, p.000. Josephus' version of the Aristeas legend interestingly seems to allow the need for an element of intervention and correction to the translation precisely in order to preserve its quality for ever: *AJ* 12.108-9. On this ambiguous sentence, see Brock 1992: 309.

⁶¹ See also Chap.6, pp.000. Cf. the arguments in Wright 2003[1]: 22-4. Pertinent comments by Dines 2004: 124-8. Sawyer 1999 focuses on the sacred text as a distinct category of writing, yet by no means all the material he brings under this heading is religious in the obvious sense.

⁶² Nehemiah 13.23-4 (my translation). LXX 2 Esdras 23.24 has the Jews just speaking the 'language of Azotus', not mentioning, as does MT, the languages of the other peoples. LXX may be the older reading: the extra phrase looks like a gloss, tacked on to the end of the Hebrew sentence, an odd positioning unfortunately concealed in standard translations. Which language is here referred to Ashdodite is not clear, though the survival of a Philistine dialect is conceivable.

⁶³ Heller-Roazen 2005: 45-51. The concerns are extracted from Judah Ha-Levi's dialogue *Kuzari* and from the sharp criticisms in the responses of Menahem ben Saruq's disciples to the grammarian Dunash ben Labrat. Joseph Caspi spoke of language loss as exile in Provence.

⁶⁴ Goodblatt 2006: 49-70; Schwartz 1995. Carr 2005 shows effectively how the Hebrew language remained the 'key symbol of indigenous culture', but oversimplifies in understanding the culture to be 'anti-Hellenistic'.

⁶⁵ Campbell 1999.

⁶⁶ In brief, Alexander 1999: 73-5. For a longer overview of the role of Hebrew in the period, Sáenz-Badillos 1993: 112-21.

⁶⁷ Van Henten 1999.

⁶⁸ See the discussion in Rajak 2002, Appx 1: 230-2.

⁶⁹ Alexander 1999.

⁷⁰ Sifre Deuteronomy 333, Finkelstein p.383, and parallel texts.

⁷¹ So Sáenz-Badillos 1993; Bar Asher 1998; Alexander 1999.

⁷² Goodblatt 2006: 69.

⁷³ Treu 1973; Hengel 1974: 62; 101; Kasher 1985: 5.

⁷⁴ Porten 1968: 33, n.27.

⁷⁵ For a full analytical study, see Grabbe 1983.

⁷⁶ See, by contrast, Rokeah 1968, who argues that POxy.36.2745, a fragment of a list of eighteen Hebrew biblical names beginning with the letter ‘i’ with their meanings explained etymologically in Greek, itself probably written in the early Christian era, not only reflects a Hellenistic compilation based on the Septuagint, but represents precisely the material that Philo used. Several blatant misinterpretations stand out even among the few surviving entries, suggesting to Rokeah failures of Hebrew understanding. On the onomastika and the three main papyri, see Grabbe 15-18; 102-8 and (for sample texts) 239-42. The specific connection with Philo is tenuous. The attempted proof by Yehoshua Amir (translated by Grabbe 1983: 233-5) of Philo’s dependence on a source through inconsistency in his spelling of the Greek word *perittos/perissos* is intriguing but but by no means clinches the matter, at least until the possibility is excluded that the variation is a mere scribal phenomenon.

⁷⁷ Fraade 2006 [2]. On the delivery of Targum in the synagogues, see also Alexander 1985.

⁷⁸ On this process, see Alexander 1999 and de Lange 1999. And cf. pp.000.

⁷⁹ Rabin 1968. Horbury 1994: 17 envisages ‘a small scale knowledge of Hebrew in connection with the Bible and prayer’, increasing in late antiquity. See also Vergote 1938; Silva 1980; Baumgarten 2002; and remarks by Lust, Eynikel, and Hauspie 2003: introduction: x.

⁸⁰ For definitions, Adams 2003: 3-8.

⁸¹ On the survival of Aramaic in Ptolemaic Alexandria see Horbury 1994. Fraade 1992 discusses the multilingual world of Jewish Palestine as the background to Targum, and especially the survival of Hebrew alongside Aramaic. See Le Déaut 1984: 164-5, with further references in nn.86 and 87, and Joosten 2003 for the possible influence of Aramaic on particular Septuagint renderings, something which Jerome had already noticed.

⁸² S. Stern 1994: 174-98.

⁸³ Seidman 2006: 123. For Aquila, see Chap.9, pp.000.

⁸⁴ Translation of Schlegel 1798, quoted by Venuti (1995: 108) to whose summary of these ideas I am indebted.

⁸⁵ This is not to say that ‘foreignizing’ could not equally be part of an imperialist project. For the German Romantic nationalists, translations that were especially true to the original could, paradoxically, potentially bring the whole world’s goods into the German ambit. See Venuti 1995: 109-17.

⁸⁶ An astonishing example is a modernist, supposedly homophonic and completely unintelligible Catullus done by the Zukovskys and commented on by Venuti 1995: 214-24. More important, but also because of its extensive commentary, was Nabokov's 'literal' Eugene Onegin, of which the author wrote: 'to my ideal of literalism I have sacrificed everything (elegance, euphony, clarity, good taste and even grammar.' See Steiner 1975: 315, and Barnstone 1990: 48-9, who points out that, this exercise apart, Nabokov was a prolific and effective translator.

⁸⁷ Benjamin, in transl. by H. Zohn 1968: 82; published in Venuti ed: 2000: 23. The often-cited original, 'Die Aufgabe des Übersetzers' was published by Benjamin in Heidelberg in 1923 as an introduction to the German translation of Baudelaire's *Tableaux Parisiens*. The translation by Zohn, ironically enough, sometimes distorts the meaning of the original. For an exposition which takes account of the many twists in Benjamin's thinking, see Barnstone 1990: 240-59.