

CHAPTER 1

What is 'the Septuagint'?

Writing in the first century ce, the Jewish author Philo of Alexandria described the Mosaic Scriptures in Greek as a 'good gift' from Jews to the Greek-speaking world (*De Vita Mosis* 2.41). In our own time, the Septuagint (LXX), the first sustained translation of Semitic sacred texts into an Indo-European language, has been called a 'phenomenon' (Brock 1972: 11). Both linguistically and culturally, the LXX is a remarkable achievement of Hellenistic Judaism, with subsequent impact on early Christianity, and is of major importance for biblical and other studies today. Before we explore some of these areas, it will be helpful to consider what is meant by 'the Septuagint' in order to avoid confusion in subsequent discussions.

Terminology

The term 'Septuagint' is surprisingly slippery. It is derived from Latin *septuaginta*, meaning 'seventy'; the standard abbreviation, LXX, is the numerical Latin equivalent. As a title, *Septuaginta* is abbreviated from *interpretatio septuaginta virorum* ('the translation by the seventy men') or similar expressions. The Greek equivalent, found in manuscripts from the fourth century ce onwards, is *kata tous hebdomēkonta*, 'according to the seventy', or similar. It is a kind of shorthand, reflecting early legends about seventy or, more properly, seventy-two original translators of the Pentateuch. The stories are preserved in a Hellenistic Jewish work, the pseudepigraphical *Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates* (*Ep. Arist.*) and in other early sources, both Jewish and Christian (see Chapter 2). Although the traditions do occur in rabbinic Jewish sources (see Orinsky 1989: 537–8; Veltri 1994), the great majority of references to 'the Seventy' occur in Christian writers. The earliest are in Irenaeus (*Against Heresies* 3.21.3) and Tertullian (*Apology* 18) in the second century ce. In the fourth century, Augustine (*City of God* 18.42) quotes 'Septuaginta' as the usual term (Swete 1914: 9–10).

Scope of the term in antiquity

When the earliest Jewish sources refer to the Greek translations, they apparently mean only the five books attributed to Moses (Tov 1988: 163). Christian authors, however, from Justin in the second century ce and onwards, refer to the work of the Seventy as covering any or all of the books of the Bible in Greek which were accepted by Christians. The earliest comprehensive manuscripts, from the fourth and fifth centuries ce, indicate that 'the Septuagint' embraces all the books of the Hebrew canon. In addition, each manuscript has its own selection of apocryphal and pseudepigraphical works, variously inserted among the canonical books, showing that different Christian communities still had different preferences. So 'Septuagint' may cover different contents when it refers to particular manuscripts.

Scope of the term in contemporary usage: 'Septuagint' and/or 'Old Greek'?

Nowadays, 'Septuagint' is used in a variety of ways. (1) It sometimes refers to the Greek version of a particular book (e.g. 'Septuagint Psalms', 'the Septuagint of Jonah') as distinct from either the corresponding Hebrew book or, in some cases, alternative ancient Greek versions. In the case of Daniel, for instance, the 'Septuagint' version has to be distinguished from that of 'Theodotion', which was in more common use. (2) In some books, particularly parts of Judges and Samuel-Kings, it is clear that our oldest manuscripts have transmitted revised forms of the original translation. 'Septuagint' here is sometimes used loosely for the whole manuscript tradition,

sometimes more correctly for the original material only. (3) Sometimes it is used very broadly, as in ‘Septuagint studies’, or ‘printed editions of the Septuagint’ (individual authors and editors will make it clear whether or not the apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books are included).

Some scholars prefer to use the term ‘Old Greek (OG)’ instead of ‘Septuagint’ for the earliest stage that can be reconstructed for any book. ‘Septuagint’ or ‘LXX’ is then kept for the subsequent stages of textual transmission. Sometimes the term ‘Proto-Septuagint’ is used for the hypothetical reconstructed originals, but more often it is the modern critical editions that are presented as ‘the Septuagint’ (e.g. Rahlfs 1935 or the Göttingen Septuagint). Some scholars have tried to keep distinctions clear (see e.g. Peters 1992: 1093–4; Tov 1997: xiii, 237), but not all are so punctilious.

There is, in fact, no agreed code of practice, and terminology must be checked against the usage of any given scholar (although they may not always be consistent). Green-spoon’s protest against an unnecessary proliferation of definitions is timely (1987: 21–9). It is tempting to settle, as he does, for a simple division between ‘OG’ for the earliest stratum, and ‘LXX’ for the rest. But, as will become clear, recovering this earliest stratum is problematic. In this book, ‘LXX’ will be used as the all-embracing term; its scope will be specified where necessary.

Primary sources: manuscripts and editions

Most LXX users today rely on the printed critical editions. But these are the outcome of collating vast numbers of manuscripts. As will be seen in Chapter 5, the history of the LXX’s early transmission has made it extremely difficult to recover the original form of the text; indeed in some places it may have been irretrievably lost. The major problems began in the late-third century ce, in the wake of Origen’s work (see Chapter 5, p. 102). This means that any pre-Origenic manuscripts, however fragmentary, are of great importance, especially when they come from a Jewish milieu. But because revision of the LXX began at least as far back as the first century bce, even pre-Origenic material has to be examined with great care (the Washington Papyrus of the Minor Prophets from the third century ce, for example, has been partially adjusted to the standard Hebrew). The earliest evidence is Jewish, and comes from both Palestine and Egypt. This will be surveyed, very briefly, before the early Christian witnesses are considered.

The earliest Jewish manuscripts

(1) *From the Judaean desert.* So far, the earliest Greek biblical texts that we possess have been found among the Dead Sea Scrolls. They consist of fragments of Deuteronomy (4Q122, Deut. 11:4), Leviticus (4Q119, Lev. 26:2–16), Exodus (7Q1, Exod. 28:4–7) and *The Letter of Jeremiah* (7Q2), all dated to the second century bce. Some of these already show signs of revision. It appears to have been of two kinds. Some alterations are intended, apparently, to improve the Greek style (e.g. 7Q2), while others apparently aim to bring the Greek into conformity with a Hebrew text resembling the later Masoretic Text (MT, e.g. 7Q1).

Further fragments of the Pentateuch date from the first century bce or ce (e.g. 4Q120, Lev. 2–5; 4Q121, Num. 3:30–4:14; the latter shows signs of literary revision). From the late-first century bce comes a fragmentary, but very important, scroll of the Minor Prophets (8HevXIIgr) which has been lightly but idiosyncratically revised against the emerging ‘standard’ Hebrew; it forms part of what has come to be called the *kaige* revision (see below, Chapter 5, pp. 81–4). Further fragments include parts of other prophetic and historical books.

The discovery among the Dead Sea Scrolls of substantial fragments of the LXX, even in a revised form, is some indication of the early spread of the translations and of their use by at least some Greek-speaking Palestinian Jews. It is particularly striking that the Minor Prophets scroll was found in a cave associated with the doomed revolt against the Romans in 132–35 ce of the Jewish leader, Simon Bar Kokhba. That Greek, as well as Hebrew and Aramaic, was a medium of communication even for ultra-nationalist Jews is reinforced by the discovery of despatches written in Greek by Bar Kokhba himself (Porter 2000a: 58–9; Yadin *et al.* 2002: 49–63).

(2) *From Egypt.* Important early papyrus witnesses to the LXX, in the geographical area where much of the translating is thought to have taken place, include substantial amounts of Deuteronomy (963, 957, 847, 848; the numbers assigned to the papyri are based on the list published by Rahlfs 1914). There are also small portions of

Job (P.Oxyrh.3522) and Genesis (942). These are all datable to the second or first century bce or the first century ce. They thus cover the same period as the Judaean finds (Kenyon 1975: 31). Material of this age is certainly Jewish. In addition to their textual importance (similar revisional touches are found as in the Qumran fragments), some papyri are significant for cultural reasons. Papyrus 957, for instance, which preserves about twenty verses of Deuteronomy 23–8, was found, together with other literary fragments (including parts of the *Iliad*) as mummy cartonnage. This raises interesting questions about the circulation and preservation of biblical texts at that time (the papyrus is currently dated to the second century bce). How did a carefully written biblical scroll end up in this situation (in a later period an antiquated sacred writing would have been stored in a special room called a genizah)? Do we have evidence here of non-Jewish access to Jewish Scriptures? Or proof that Jews could be at home with classical Greek literature? There is not enough evidence to make any answers certain; the questions are, however, important (see further Roberts 1936: 11–32).

Once we reach the end of the first century ce, Greek biblical papyri are more likely to be of Christian origin (see below, Chapters 4 and 5). Some fragments, however, containing portions of Genesis (905, 907) and Psalms (2110) and dated to the second to fourth centuries ce, may be Jewish. If this were certain, it would be valuable evidence for continued Jewish use of the LXX (research into this is being carried out, for example, by R.A. Kraft). Interesting, too, is the fact that at least two of these papyri are in codex form, while a late-third-century fragment of Genesis 2–3 (907) is not only in codex form but written on parchment, not papyrus (Bogaert 1985: 199). These and other considerations bring into question the common assumption that use of the codex was an exclusively Christian development.

The earliest Christian manuscripts

Late-first- and even second-century ce papyri could be either Christian or Jewish and identifying them as one or the other can be problematic. Furthermore, the dating of papyri is not always certain. From the third century ce onwards, however, Greek biblical texts are most likely to be Christian. One of the most important pre-Origenic papyri, 967, from the late-second or early-third century ce, is a codex containing parts of Ezekiel, Esther and, very exceptionally, the LXX form of Daniel.

These and other remains, on parchment as well as papyrus, and in both scroll and codex form, antedate the first extant complete Bibles which date only from the fourth and fifth centuries. They help to fill in some of the gaps in our knowledge before Christianity became established as the official religion of the Empire in the mid-fourth century.

The first Bibles (the major uncials). The first Bibles containing both the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) are manuscript codices written in uncial, or majuscule, script (i.e. using capital letters). The three earliest are Codex Vaticanus (B), Codex Sinaiticus (S, or Ⲛ) and Codex Alexandrinus (A).

1. *Vaticanus*, from the fourth century ce, is foundational, for most books, as a prime textual witness to the original LXX. The manuscript has accidentally lost much of Genesis but is otherwise complete for the OT. It is relatively free from major revision (though not in Isaiah or Judges), which is why it is usually taken as the default text for editions based on one particular manuscript.
2. *Sinaiticus*, also fourth century ce, unfortunately survives only in part, and lacks most of the Pentateuch and the historical books. Where extant, it is often a reasonably reliable witness to an unrevised LXX.
3. *Alexandrinus*, fifth century ce, is very nearly complete. It is idiosyncratic, and marked by revisions, but it is often an important witness to very early readings; for instance, it offers the most reliable text for Isaiah.

Other manuscripts. These three manuscripts are supplemented by many other important uncials, and by a great number of cursive, or minuscule, manuscripts (i.e. written in small letters). The cursives range in date from the ninth century ce until the advent of printing and are by far the more numerous. They are generally given less weight in the task of trying to restore the text of the LXX, but sometimes they preserve ancient readings; each

manuscript must be weighed on its merits.

In order therefore to produce a reliable text of the LXX, as near to the original translation as possible, the textual editor must consider many kinds of evidence, from the pre-Christian papyri to the late medieval cursives.

Printed editions

Early editions. Several developments that contributed to modern practice occurred in the period following the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. The Reformation led to a renewed emphasis on the Hebrew Bible. Where the inerrancy of Scripture was an issue, it was clearly essential to know that texts translated into the vernacular were reliable. With the suspicion that some readings in the Hebrew Bible might be inaccurate, interest in the LXX revived, this time as a tool for establishing the Hebrew text through the sifting and evaluating of different manuscripts. Ironically, this was the very opposite of Origen's concern in the third century ce, to adjust the LXX to the Hebrew text.

With the Renaissance came a revival of interest in the LXX, mainly antiquarian, and the collection of manuscripts began in the Vatican, in other centres of learning and in private collections. The invention of printing led to the production not just of the first Hebrew and vernacular Bibles, but also of the first great polyglots: the Complutensian (Alcalá, Spain, 1514–17, published 1520), the Aldine (Venice, 1519/20) and the Sixtine (Rome, 1587), which all included texts of the LXX. Here, it became clear that choices had to be made in the use of manuscripts, though at first it was probably a matter of what was locally available. But in the case of the Sixtine there was a deliberate decision to use Vaticanus, whenever possible, as being the most reliable source. As the importance of Vaticanus became apparent to textual critics, the Sixtine became the most widely used edition. This practice lasted until the advent of the first critical editions, beginning with Grabe's, published between 1707 and 1720 and based on Alexandrinus. It culminated with the great edition of Holmes and Parsons, published between 1798 and 1827 and based on Vaticanus, which had very full critical apparatuses. It was at this time also that the apocryphal books began to be grouped together at the end of Bibles, a radical departure from earlier practice. In the Holmes Parsons edition of 1827, for instance, they were published last, as Volume V.

Modern editions. Modern critical editions are of two kinds, 'diplomatic' or 'reconstructed'.

1. *Diplomatic editions.* These print the text of one particular manuscript (usually Vaticanus), and present evidence from other witnesses (manuscripts, patristic quotations, etc.) in a critical apparatus, so that readers can do their own textual criticism. Swete's edition of 1887–94 is an example. The so-called 'Larger Cambridge Septuagint' of Brooke, McLean and Thackeray (1906–40) adopted this method; this edition is still widely used by scholars, especially for books not yet covered by the Göttingen Septuagint (see Jobes and Silva 2000: 72, n. 2).

2. *Reconstructed editions.* These print a text already corrected by the editor to give what seems to be the best reading for each disputed case; the evidence is supplied in the apparatus so that the reader can assess and, if need be, reject the reading chosen. Rahlfs (1935) and the Göttingen Septuagint adopt this method (see Jobes and Silva 2000: 75, 313–14). A reconstructed text is sometimes called 'eclectic'. The term is misleading because normally a default text is still used, and the alterations are the result of meticulous textual criticism (including emendations), not just patching together readings from different manuscripts. It is true, however, that the critically restored text does not correspond to any one extant manuscript; the critical apparatuses are, therefore, an essential feature.

Scholars differ as to which of the two types of critical text—the diplomatic or the reconstructed—is preferable, but in practice most use the reconstructed texts, where these are available, since, at least for the time being, they are the best approximations to the presumed original translations.

Secondary sources: the Christian versions

As well as the manuscript evidence, there are other sources for establishing the LXX's identity at the beginning of its history. Of these, possible quotations in early Jewish writings, in the NT and in other early Christian literature are of prime importance; they will be considered in Chapter 7. Another important source, the 'versions' (that is, early translations of the LXX into other languages), will be briefly considered here (some Jewish revisions or retranslations from the Hebrew, also called 'versions', will be discussed in Chapter 5).

From the second century ce onwards the Greek LXX, now established as the Christian Bible, itself needed to be translated for readers who did not know Greek. The earliest of these translations are the Old Latin version (OL, also known as the *Vetus Latina*, VL), from North Africa and Italy, and the Coptic versions from Egypt. They are of particular value in reflecting a state of the Greek text sometimes nearer the presumed original than the major manuscripts. For information on all the other early versions, see 'Further reading' at the end of this chapter.

The Old Latin

Although in the Hellenistic period Greek was the *lingua franca* of the Mediterranean world, the expansion of the Roman Empire led to the diffusion of Latin as well (and the northwestern limits—parts of Gaul, for instance—were never predominantly Greek-speaking). Outside Italy the North African churches, especially Carthage, used Latin. From the mid-second century ce onwards, Christian writers, beginning with Tertullian (c. 160–220) and Cyprian of Carthage (200–258), were using Latin versions of the LXX. As the OL is already marked in places by signs of revisional activity, these versions must have been made earlier in the second century, if not before this. The citations in these early writers, as well as the manuscript evidence itself (from the fifth century ce onwards in both an African and a European textual form) point to a complex history that is difficult to unravel, especially as the manuscript evidence is often incomplete or has not yet been critically edited.

The OL versions are important in several ways. They are witnesses to an early need for vernacular Scriptures. They give modern scholars some access to the text of the LXX before it had undergone systematic revision. They are translations made directly from the Greek, without much concern to make adjustments against the Hebrew. And they were made a century before Origen's systematic revision resulted in the obscuring of earlier forms of the Greek text. Eventually the Latin Vulgate, based on Jerome's translations from the Hebrew, replaced the OL for most books of the Bible. The Vulgate Psalms, however, are a revision, by Jerome, of the earlier OL version, and the OL survives substantially in apocryphal works for which Jerome had no Hebrew original (Wisdom, Sirach, Baruch and Maccabees). Where the text of the OL can be established, it is of great value for indicating ancient readings sometimes different from both the mainstream LXX witnesses and the MT.

The Coptic

These Egyptian versions go back to the third century ce, a time when Christianity is presumed to have spread from cosmopolitan Greek-speaking cities like Alexandria, where the LXX had probably originated, into more rural areas. Here, Coptic (the word is a corruption of 'Egyptian', from Greek *Aiguptios*, Swete 1914: 105) was spoken in a number of dialects, especially Sahidic, Bohairic and Akhmimic. The translations were written in an uncial script based on Greek, and contained many Greek loan words. Translation into Coptic may have begun in the second century, but the earliest evidence comes from the late-third-century Papyrus Bodmer 6, and from clues in later Egyptian Christian literature. The Sahidic and the later Bohairic versions are independent translations from the LXX (the Akhmimic is a version of the Sahidic). The Minor Prophets in the Sahidic version presuppose a revised form of the LXX similar in places to that of 8HevXIIgr (see above, p. 4) and known from at least the late-first century bce (see Bogaert 1993: 632–3; Fernández Marcos 2000: 347–50).

The content of the Septuagint

As well as witnessing to the text of the LXX, the early uncials show how the biblical collections were arranged, and which books they contained. While texts were copied onto individual papyrus rolls, we can hardly talk about canonical order for biblical books. Evidence for grouping and sequence comes from discussions in authors such as Josephus (*Apion* 1.39–42), Melito of Sardis and Origen (in Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiae* (HE) 4.26.14; 6.25.2). But once the codex came into general use, choices had to be made as to which book should be permanently bound

next to which. The earliest Christian Bibles suggest a different understanding of the interrelationship between the books from that reflected in Jewish writings (complete Hebrew Bibles appear only in the ninth and tenth centuries ce). They also reveal differences among the Christian churches. These point to varying perceptions of what counted as a scriptural book, making it unlikely that there was ever a single 'Alexandrian (i.e. Septuagint) Canon' as such.

Differences between Hebrew and Greek order

(1) *Torah/Pentateuch*. There never seems to have been any deviation in the order of the five books attributed to Moses in either Hebrew or Greek, and they always come first. This points to the antiquity and high status of the collection.

(2) *Hebrew arrangement of other books*. Jewish sources designate as 'Former Prophets' the books of Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings, and as 'Latter Prophets' Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the Minor Prophets (though not always in that order). The rest of the Hebrew canonical books are grouped together as 'The Writings'; Hebrew manuscripts display some variation in the order.

(3) *Greek arrangement of other books*. The Greek Bibles seem to reflect an understanding of the 'Former Prophets' as histories and often associate other apparently historical works with them. Hence, Ruth is usually placed between Judges and 1 Samuel. 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings are called 1 and 2 Kingdoms (or Reigns) and 3 and 4 Kingdoms (Reigns) respectively. 4 Kingdoms is sometimes followed immediately by 1 and 2 Chronicles (Paraleipomenōn, the books of 'things left over') and often by 1 and 2 Esdras (1 Esdras is a pseudepigraphical work only included in some manuscripts; 2 Esdras corresponds to the Hebrew books of Ezra and Nehemiah). Some manuscripts also include at this point one or more of the four books of Maccabees. Esther is often accompanied by Judith and Tobit. Then, instead of moving to the prophetic books, some manuscripts have a large section containing all the remaining books found in the Hebrew 'Writings' with, usually, several of the other apocryphal books, especially Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. This arrangement seems to be by reason of the poetic or (especially) the sapiential nature of the books. The Christian character of 'the LXX' in the complete Bible is shown by the frequent addition, after the Psalms, of a collection of 'Odes', including NT as well as OT liturgical 'canticles'. There is, however, much variation in order. Although there were early debates about the canonicity of various books, the manuscripts—as already noted—do not separate apocryphal and pseudepigraphical books from canonical ones (Swete 1914: 201 gives the placings in B, S and A, cf. p. 6). The prophetic corpus in the Christian Bibles differs from that of Hebrew Bibles in placing Daniel with the three major prophets, usually after Ezekiel, though sometimes before (perhaps with a chronological concern, cf. Ezek. 14:14, 20; see Bogaert 1993: 646). Lamentations follows Jeremiah; and the first six of the twelve Minor Prophets are in the order Hosea, Amos, Micah, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah (8HevXIIgr follows the Hebrew order). Hebrew Bibles seem to put the prophets from Hosea to Micah in supposed chronological order, while the Greek, at least in Vaticanus, has a descending order of length. The whole corpus is sometimes arranged in a different order from that usual in modern Bibles. The Minor Prophets, for instance, sometimes precede the other prophetic books. Apocryphal Greek material also appears, attached to the books of Jeremiah (Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah) and of Daniel (Song of the Three Young Men, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon).

The individual books of the Septuagint

Each of the translations and original compositions that eventually constituted the Greek Bible has its own history and character. In this final section we will look, inevitably briefly and selectively, at all the individual books (except *Wisdom of Solomon* and *Psalms of Solomon*), to situate their particular interest for Septuagint study. This sometimes primarily concerns their textual character and history, including their relationship, where appropriate, with their Hebrew counterparts, sometimes other major areas of translational, exegetical or cultural interest. The books are presented in the order found in Rahlfs 1935, that is, with the apocryphal works integrated.

The Pentateuch

1. *Genesis*. It is widely assumed that this was the first book to be translated into Greek; this is very likely, although there is no absolute external proof (it is already assumed by Philo, *De Vita Mosis* 2.37; see below, Chapter 4, p. 67). Genesis has therefore attracted a great deal of scholarly attention. The translation contains many interesting linguistic and exegetical solutions to challenges and difficulties in the Hebrew, as the translator strives to create something for which there is no exact precedent. He—the pronoun is doubtless appropriate (see de Troyer 1997: 333)—evidently aims to translate the Hebrew accurately. The text he is using is very similar to (though not always identical with) the later MT; it was, of course, unvocalized. He produces a Greek which is sometimes elegant and idiomatic, sometimes apparently influenced by Hebrew expressions and syntax. His practice is not always consistent, but this is understandable in someone who is, perhaps, feeling his way step by step. A detailed exegesis of 4:1–8 is given in Jobes and Silva (2000: 206–15).

2. *Exodus*. This translator is often quite adventurous in rendering the Hebrew; his translational style shows he is not the same as the Genesis translator. There are no major differences from the MT except in chapters 35–40 (the second tabernacle account), which are shorter in the LXX and partly in a different order. There is no consensus as to how this has come about. It could be the result of differences in the translator's Hebrew text. Or it may be the work of a different translator. Or the same translator may have chosen to depart from the original for interpretational reasons (see Wade 2003). There are many other points of exegetical interest throughout the book. Chapters 12–23, for instance, have been shown to have points of interpretation in common with some early rabbinic traditions (Büchner 1997).

3. *Leviticus*. This translator (different again) displays variety in the way he renders recurring Hebrew expressions, while remaining close to the original; he creates new idioms where necessary, especially when finding Greek equivalents for the technical cultic terms in which the book abounds.

4. *Numbers*. This translator has a less varied style and is usually fairly literal (especially where syntax is concerned), though he too sometimes translates rather freely, especially with regard to lexical choices. For cultic items, however, he often follows apparently established conventions. Unlike the previous translators, he does not take much account of the wider context, that is, his choices are determined by the immediate words to be translated, without cross-referencing (for a striking example of this feature in Genesis, see below, Chapter 6, p. 123).

5. *Deuteronomy*. The translator here is more aware of context, bringing different passages into line with each other. He is concerned with halakic matters (that is, with the correct observance of the law). Sometimes he appears to 'update' his translation. In 23:18, for instance, he apparently adds initiation into the Greek mysteries to the list of forbidden practices. He too translates rather literally and his Greek is less polished and innovative than that, say, of the Genesis or Exodus translators. Other interesting passages include 6:4, where the *Shema* is preceded by an echo of 4:45 (perhaps associating 6:4 with the Decalogue), and 32:43 (the end of the Song of Moses). This has expansions similar to 4Q31 (4QDeut^d; see Fernández Marcos 2000: 73; Dogniez and Harl 1992:320, 340–1). These and other fragments found at Qumran point to the existence of other forms of the Hebrew text similar to those used by the translator.

6. *Summary*. Apart from the evidence it provides for different translators for each of the five books, LXX Pentateuch is significant for the influence which its vocabulary and translational style can be seen to have had on many other books. And if the Pentateuch was indeed the first part of the Hebrew Scriptures to be translated, it is also important for what it reveals of the theological and cultural milieu in which it arose.

The historical books

1. *Joshua*. This book well illustrates the effect of revisions on the manuscript tradition. The two main manuscripts, Vaticanus and Alexandrinus, are so different in 15:21b–62; 18:22–19:45 (passages concerning the territories of Judah, Benjamin and Simeon) that Rahlfs (1935) prints both versions. Some Hebrew manuscripts from Qumran reveal a text similar to that used by the translator, and often reflected in Vaticanus. The LXX omits 20:4–6 (on the cities of refuge), but adds several lines at the end of the book

(24:33a–b), taken from various parts of Judges, apparently making a deliberate link with that book.

2. *Judges*. This book too witnesses to a very complex textual history; Rahlfs (1935) prints the text of both Vaticanus and Alexandrinus throughout. Neither manuscript reveals an unrevised form of the LXX, although each preserves some original elements. The text of Alexandrinus is marked by Origen's hexaplaric revision, while Vaticanus here witnesses to an earlier type of Hebraizing revision known as *kaige*. The so-called Antiochian manuscripts (or Antiochene; also known as Lucianic, see below, Chapter 5, p. 103) and the OL are probably the best witnesses to the original LXX of Judges.

3. *Ruth*. This book seems to have *kaige* features too as part of the original translation. For that reason it is considered one of the later translations, dated to the first century bce/ce. But it is not always classed with the most literal translations and some recent work has detected signs of a more contextually motivated approach to the translation (see Wade 2000: 73–4).

4. *1–4 Kingdoms (Samuel-Kings)*. As with Judges, the textual history is extremely complicated. Its importance lies particularly in the part it has played in the identification of a distinctive Antiochian text-type. In places it is likely that the Hebrew version used by the translators differed in content and arrangement, as well as actual wording, from the MT; the discovery at Qumran of 4Q51 (4QSam^a) has confirmed the existence of this kind of text for 1–2 Kingdoms. In some places the LXX is longer than the MT, in others shorter, especially in 1 Kingdoms 17–18 (David and Goliath). In 1 Kingdoms 2 (the Song of Anna), the LXX omits vv. 8–9a, then adds verses modelled on Jeremiah 9:22–3. 3 and 4 Kingdoms diverge significantly from the MT, especially in the sections on Solomon, Jeroboam and Ahab, where there are some major expansions known as 'miscellanies'. These mainly consist of material that has been rearranged from elsewhere in the books, and they may reflect the translator's own exegetical reworkings. Among them are two contradictory résumés of the accession of Jeroboam (3 Kingdoms 12), perhaps reflecting two traditions about the schism, only one of which appears in the MT.

5. *1–2 Paraleipomenōn (1–2 Chronicles)*. There are a few significant pluses and minuses, but no radical differences from the MT. Of major interest is the 'free' translational style which suggests a Jewish translator at home in the Greek world (on 'literal' and 'free' translations, see below, Chapter 6, pp. 119–21).

6. *1 and 2 Esdras*. 1 Esdras is interesting for its content. It combines rather free and elegant translation of parts of Hebrew Ezra and Nehemiah with a narrative, otherwise unknown, set in the court of Darius, King of Persia (3:1–5:6). Similarities have been seen with the vocabulary and style of LXX Daniel. 2 Esdras has sometimes been linked to the translator of Paraleipomenōn, but this is unlikely as 2 Esdras is much more literal in style. If, as seems probable, 1 Esdras came first, 2 Esdras may have been a deliberate attempt to produce a translation closer to a Hebrew text like that of the MT. But the relationship between 1 and 2 Esdras is far from clear.

7. *Esther*. The text has survived in two distinct forms, LXX and Alpha Text (AT, or L). There is much debate about the relationship between the two, which both have additions (A–F) not found in the MT. Possibly the OL represents a form of the text older than either the LXX or the AT; at any rate, it has distinctive elements including, some have thought, the playing-down of the anti-Gentile sentiments that appear in some of the additions. Among other interesting features, the additions mention God, famously not named in the MT of Esther. It is not clear whether they have been translated from lost Semitic originals or composed directly in Greek. In genre, Greek Esther has been likened to the romantic 'novels' which were popular in the Hellenistic period (Boyd-Taylor 1997; Wills 2002: 27–30). An exegesis of 5:1–2 with Addition D is given by Jobes and Silva (2000: 227–35).

8. *Judith*. Like 1 Esdras, this book has been associated in style with LXX Daniel. The OL sometimes witnesses to a form of the text not found in the Greek manuscripts.

9. *Tobit*. Like Esther, Tobit circulated in more than one form. The two most important forms are known as G^I and G^{II}. G^{II} is the earlier, reflected in manuscripts of Tobit in Hebrew found at Qumran. It is G^I, however, that occurs in most LXX manuscripts; it is shorter and seems to be an early revision of G^{II}, which is found only in Sinaiticus and OL. It may have become more popular than the earlier version because of its improved literary qualities.

10. *1–4 Maccabees*. Each book is a separate work, with its own character. 1 Maccabees is a translation,

though the source-text has not survived for comparison. 2 Maccabees is a Greek composition, an abridged version of an originally longer work, now lost. 3 Maccabees, a racy, popular story (about the Jews in Egypt rather than the Maccabees in Palestine), has a Greek style probably closer to the vernacular of Egypt, with some unusual vocabulary (this is 'normalized' against Septuagintal usage in Antiochian texts). 4 Maccabees, a philosophical and paraenetic work, is more literary in its language and style.

The sapiential books

1. *Psalms*. This was a very influential book, much quoted in the NT and subsequent Christian writings. Some psalms are divided differently from the MT, resulting in different numbering from 9 to 147 (MT 10–148), and there is an additional Psalm 151, quite different from the others; a similar Hebrew version has been found at Qumran. There are a number of additional or expanded headings. Some of these are liturgical, but most are historicizing, especially about David. Some scholars think that the 'historical' expansions are subsequent to the original translation. On the whole, the translator follows his source-text closely. The translation is thought by some to have influenced later Hebraizing translations and revisions in other books. Some scholars, however, demonstrate that the translation is less literalistic than often thought and that it contains many interpretational elements as well as stylistic devices that reveal a sophisticated rather than a mechanical approach to translation.

2. *Proverbs*. Textually, there are a number of substantial pluses over against the MT. These mostly come from elsewhere in the LXX and there is debate about whether they are the work of the translator or reflect an already adapted Hebrew text. Some touches, unlikely to have been found in a Hebrew source-text, may even point to a non-biblical origin (compare, for instance, 6:8a and Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* 622B; see Jobes and Silva 2000: 304). Chapters 24–9 have been rearranged, probably by the translator himself. LXX Proverbs stands out for its translational style, which is often free and paraphrastic. But although the translator contemporizes and even occasionally uses Greek poetic forms, his theological outlook has been identified as traditional, even conservative, a very interesting combination (see Cook 1997: 318–19; 2001).

3. *Ecclesiastes (Qoheleth)*; *Song of Songs*. These two books are so literal in their translational style that, like Ruth, they have been associated with the Hebraizing *kaige* group of the first century bce/ce. LXX Ecclesiastes has, in fact, sometimes been attributed to the early-second century ce Jewish translator Aquila, whose consistently literal translation is very distinctive (see below, Chapter 5, pp. 87–9). Although the book surely belongs to that line of development, direct authorship by Aquila is now thought unlikely. It is probable that, as with Ruth, more careful analysis of stylistic and contextual features will show that there are subtleties, so far unnoticed, to the translation of both Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs.

4. *Job*. The LXX is shorter than the MT by 389 verses, though there are interesting midrashic additions at the end (42:17a–e). Debates continue as to whether the translator used a shorter Hebrew version, such as is now attested at Qumran, or whether he abridged the work himself to make it more palatable to a cultured audience, perhaps non-Jewish as well as Jewish, and to tone down some of Job's more shocking outbursts. He was clearly a cultured man himself, and renders the difficult Hebrew in a free and sometimes elegant Greek style.

5. *Sirach (Ben Sira/Ecclesiasticus)*. The book is a translation of a Hebrew composition. A unique feature is a Greek prologue which allows both the original work and its translation to be dated with some certainty. It also establishes the translator as the author's grandson, thus providing the only autobiographical evidence we have for the identity and circumstances of a translator (though even here he remains anonymous). This prologue is of great interest for the translator's views on the difficulties of translation, for the evidence it provides of the range of biblical books by then translated into Greek, and for its Greek style, more literary than the book itself which is said to emulate a 'Septuagintal' style (i.e. with many features close to Hebrew syntax and idiom). Chapters 30:25–33:16a and 33:16b–36:10 have been reversed—probably accidentally—in all extant manuscripts (the amount of text affected shows that the faulty copy must have been in codex form; Bogaert 1993: 628). The original order has been preserved by the OL, as has been confirmed by the discovery of Hebrew manuscripts of parts of Ben Sira. The possibility of comparing Greek and Hebrew versions occurs only rarely in the case of the apocryphal

books, although, in this case, the textual history of both traditions is immensely complicated and not yet completely clear.

The prophetic books

1. *The Minor Prophets (Hosea-Malachi)*. The first six books are in a different order (above, p. 13) but otherwise the Hebrew original seems to have been close to, though not identical with, the MT. Five manuscripts do, however, attest a different version of Habakkuk 3 closer to that of the Jewish translator, Symmachus (Harl, Dorival and Munnich 1988: 100, 180. LXX Hab. 3 itself diverges more than chapters 1–2 from the Hebrew of the MT, 1988: 301). It seems likely that one person, or group, translated the entire scroll. The source-text is followed closely, but intelligently, usually in competent Greek. There are many points of exegetical and theological interest within these apparently literal translations which repay careful study.

2. *Isaiah*. This translator is very distinctive. He renders a text closely resembling the MT, but with considerable freedom. There seems to be some historical updating in places, presumably to show the translator's own generation that the prophecies apply to them (cf. Seeligmann 1948: 4, 82, 109), though the obscurity of much of the original may have played its part too. Examples of reinterpretation have been found in 1:26 (Jerusalem as 'metropolis'; Seeligmann 1948: 113–14), in chapter 14 (Assyria a cipher for Antiochus IV Epiphanes? Seeligmann 1948: 83–4; Bogaert 1993: 636), in 19:18 (a favourable allusion to the Oniad temple at Leontopolis? Seeligmann 1948: 68), and in 23:10 (a mention of Carthage, though different conclusions are drawn as to the significance; Harl, Dorival and Munnich 1988: 94–5); and there are other similar passages. Like LXX Psalms, LXX Isaiah had a great impact on the NT. LXX Isa. 6:9–10, for example, which softens the shock of the Hebrew, is put to apologetic use in Acts 28:27 (see Chapter 7, pp. 143–4). The so-called 'Servant Songs', which Christian writers apply to Christ, are given a collective sense in the LXX. For an exegesis of 52:13–53:12, see Jobes and Silva (2000: 215–27).

3. *Jeremiah*. Textual questions dominate the study of LXX Jeremiah. The LXX is 2,700 words shorter than the MT; 4Q71 (4QJer^b) confirms the existence of a shorter Hebrew text-form which presumably served as the translator's model. This hypothesis now seems more likely than the main alternative one, that the translator(s) deliberately abbreviated a longer Hebrew text similar to the MT (see Soderlund 1985: 11–13 for outlines). There is continuing debate as to which of the Hebrew editions was the earlier; the balance is probably in favour of the shorter form. As well as the difference in length, LXX Jeremiah has the 'Oracles Against the Nations' (MT 46–51) in a different place, and their internal ordering is different too. The LXX seems to stress the role of Baruch, whereas the MT focuses more exclusively on Jeremiah himself. Another focus of interest is on the number of translators: some think there were two, or even three (one of whom may have been the same as the translator of the Minor Prophets), others that there was only one whose work was partially revised, to mention only the two most influential hypotheses. Like Daniel, Jeremiah has attracted additional material written, or surviving, only in Greek (Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah).

4. *Ezekiel*. There are a number of differences in the content and order of some chapters. The discovery in 1931 of Papyrus 967 has helped clarify some of the issues, though others remain unclear, and some new problems have been created, especially the significance of 967's lack of 36:1–28a (the 'new heart' passage; also missing in one OL manuscript). The translator of the Minor Prophets may have had a hand in parts of Ezekiel too, though criteria for identifying different translators and for grouping translations are under review generally.

5. *Daniel*. Like Judges, Esther, Tobit and 1 and 2 Esdras, this is a 'double text', which eventually circulated in two distinct forms, the LXX and a version attributed to 'Theodotion' (Th). The latter, closer to the MT, ousted the LXX from all extant witnesses except one eleventh-century hexaplaric cursive (88), the seventh-century Syro-Hexaplar, and Papyrus 967. Rahlfs (1935) prints both versions. Papyrus 967 is the main witness to the original (pre-hexaplaric) LXX. Its arrangement of chapters 1–12 in the order 1–4; 7; 8; 5; 6; 9–12 produces a more logical regnal sequence and may go back to the original translation. The LXX is longer overall than the MT, though it has minuses too. The style, especially in chapters 4–6, is lively and paraphrastic (see, for instance, the accounts of the fiery furnace and of Nebuchadnezzar's madness). The

relationship of the two versions to each other and to the MT is much debated (see further on 'Theodotion' in Chapter 5, pp. 84–7). The Greek additions to Daniel (Song of the Three Young Men, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon) made a great impact on later Christian exegesis, art and literature.

Summary

At the beginning of this chapter the question was asked, 'what is the LXX?' Attempts at definition have revealed a complex historical and textual reality and have shown the importance of distinguishing between the original translations and the manuscripts and editions in which these have come down to us. Taking 'Septuagint' in its broadest sense, we have looked at some of the features of the earliest Greek Bibles and of the individual books contained in them. We have seen how 'the LXX', understood as collections of sacred texts both like and unlike their Hebrew counterparts, has been transmitted through the centuries in manuscripts and printed editions. The next two chapters will investigate the historical origins of the first translations. As this investigation largely involves hypotheses of various kinds, it is important, at the start, not to lose sight of what, at the material level, the LXX 'is': a vast, diverse corpus of religious texts in Greek. Just how difficult it is to discern within this corpus the authentic features of the first translations will become evident as we proceed.

Further reading

For an extensive general introduction to supplement that of Jobes and Silva (2000), the handbook compiled by M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich in 1988 to accompany the first volumes of the BA is highly recommended. Useful shorter introductions include: Schürer (1986); Tov (1988); Peters (1992); Bogaert (1993). For more detailed information, Swete (1914), although dated in some respects, still contains much material not found in the later introductions. Knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin is, however, presupposed; there are no translations or transliterations. Jellicoe (1968) continues Swete's work and is also a valuable resource. On the primary sources and their history, see Swete (1914: 122–94); Jellicoe (1968: 1–25, 176–242, 269–313); Kenyon (1975); Metzger (1981); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 129–36); Jobes and Silva (2000: 57–63). For the development of the codex, see Roberts (1970: 55–60). On the versions, see Swete (1914: 87–121); Jellicoe (1968: 243–68); Kenyon (1975: 53–9); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 136–40); Fernández Marcos (2000: 346–61). Jobes and Silva (2000: 278–80) raise some methodological and text-critical questions. On the LXX and the Dead Sea Scrolls, see Klein (1974:11–26); Greenspoon (1998: 101–27); Jobes and Silva (2000: 169–71). For questions of content and order, see Swete (1914: 200–2); Ackroyd and Evans (1970: 136–8, 140–2); for the Apocrypha, Goodman (2001: 618–19). For further details on the individual books, see Swete (1914: 231–88); Jellicoe (1968: 272–300, especially the manuscript history); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 173–82); most recently Bogaert (1993: 577–650). For detailed bibliographies, consult Brock, Fritsch and Jellicoe (1973); Dogniez (1995). On the 'double texts', see Fernández Marcos (2000: 88–101). Jennifer M. Dines and Michael A. Knibb, *The Septuagint* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 1.

Language and Style

Introduction

The previous chapter has shown the complexity of the early history of the LXX as used by both Jews and Christians. This complexity throws into relief the massive task of the Göttingen editors, and others, who try to disentangle the manuscript tradition in order to establish, for each book, the earliest probable form of the text. This chapter considers another crucial area for establishing and understanding the text: the nature of the Greek used and the working methods employed by the translators.

For the books of the Hebrew canon there are texts for comparison, though in no case can we be certain that the translator's source-text was exactly the same as the MT; in some cases, Jeremiah for instance, it was evidently very different. For some of the apocryphal books, notably Sirach and Tobit, Hebrew or Aramaic exemplars have been at least partially recovered. For others, Judith for instance, or 1 Maccabees, a Semitic original seems likely, though none is extant. It is not always easy, however, to establish a book's style as being that of a translation from a Semitic original: Craven, for example, wonders whether Judith could not have been deliberately written 'in elegant hebraised Greek' (1983: 5). Other books, including 2, 3 and 4 Maccabees and the Wisdom of Solomon, were composed in Greek, in various different styles (for Wisdom, see Horbury 2001: 652; for Maccabees, Dimant 1987). When we talk about the Greek of the LXX, we have to take into account these different categories.

A broadly unifying feature is that both authors and translators employ the 'Koine' or 'common' (i.e. 'shared') Greek of the Hellenistic age. This ensures a certain homogeneity but, as with any body of literature produced over at least two centuries, there are many variations in linguistic usage and style. This is true even for the translated books, where each translator has his own way of expressing his source-text in Greek through lexical, grammatical and syntactic choices, his own 'translation technique'. In this respect, it is important to situate the LXX within current debates on 'vernacular' and 'literary' Koine, and to be aware that not all contemporary writers define 'Koine' in the same way. The importance of analysing each translator's 'technique', or style, will also be discussed, and this will lead to an investigation of whether translations express exegetical and theological ideas different from those in the source-text and, if so, how. The questions touched on in this chapter are fully and brilliantly discussed by Fernández Marcos (2000: 3–31).

The Septuagint and Koine Greek

Koine differs in various respects from the earlier 'classical' Greek associated principally with Attic, the form of the language spoken and written in and around Athens. Ancient Greece, geographically and historically, resisted unification, and its language consisted of a number of distinct, though related, dialects. For a while in the fifth century bce, Athens was dominant, both historically and culturally, and most (though not all) of the literature equated with the great age of classical Greece was written in Attic. During the period of the Athenian Empire, and in its aftermath, Attic was widely used in trade and other international relationships; in the process, some of its distinctive features began to disappear, although, in any case, there would have been differences between everyday and literary speech. Elements from other Greek dialects prevailed, archaic words and expressions, including Homeric ones, reappeared. Some grammatical forms (the dual, for instance, and the optative) changed, simplified, and eventually all but vanished, in the normal way in which living languages evolve with time and circumstance.

Some changes appear already in the fourth-century writings of well-travelled Athenians like Xenophon and Aristotle. Then, in the wake of Alexander's conquests in the late-fourth century, this 'common' Greek became the *lingua franca* not only of the Mediterranean Basin and the Aegean, but also of much of the ancient Near East, including Egypt and Palestine. Greeks settled overseas in even greater numbers than before, and the common language not only facilitated trade and communication, but also helped to further Alexander's vision of a

universal Greek culture. Even when the short-lived Empire broke up after Alexander's early death in 323 bce, the Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Antigonid dynasties, between whom it was divided, were all of Macedonian Greek origin. So the linguistic situation did not change and Koine continued to be the expression of a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic civilization.

Koine was also increasingly spoken by non-Greeks. At first, we may suppose, it was acquired as a second language for practical reasons, but before long it will have become the first language for many, including Jews. It is a language increasingly well known to us from inscriptions (decrees, dedications, memorials) and papyri (letters, documents), especially, in the latter case, from Egypt. It is also the language of much of the LXX (and later of the NT). Study of the inscriptions and papyri has shown how much the LXX reflects the common language.

Koine, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, must not, however, be equated simply with colloquial, vernacular language. It was also used in a more polished way (even some of the papyri and inscriptions display a consciously elegant style). In Egypt under the early Ptolemies, in the third and second centuries particularly, there was a new flowering of Greek thought and writing; it was centred on Alexandria, but other renowned cities like Athens, Pergamum and Cyrene were also involved. The result was a corpus of Hellenistic Greek literature, both poetry and prose, which is now the object of increasingly appreciative study.

Among the writers of the second century bce were a number of distinguished Jewish authors, who wrote in various genres. It is as part of this cultural flowering that we should probably understand some of the more 'literary' LXX translations (Proverbs, for instance, or Job). At the same time, the study, in Hellenistic schools, of earlier Greek literature showed up the differences in style with works written in Koine. From at least the first century bce, there was a conscious move, in some literary circles, to revive the supposedly 'pure' Attic dialect used by the great authors of fifth-century Athens. There were also debates, extending into subsequent centuries, between proponents of Attic and those who defended the use of other forms of the language. This too has left its mark on the history of the LXX, where 'Atticizing' revisions occur from the time of the earliest extant remains as well as in the Lucianic Recension (see above, Chapter 5, p. 104).

In modern times too, the Greek of the LXX has been tried and found wanting. Swete is typical in calling it 'clumsy' (of the prologue to Sirach), 'a mongrel patois' (of the Greek spoken in Alexandria and perhaps reflected in the Pentateuch), and 'uncouth' (1914: 20, 292, 370). He appreciates the 'simple style' of the Pentateuch and the achievements of the authors of the Wisdom of Solomon and 2–4 Maccabees (1914: 312). Concerning the syntax of the translated books, however, he was so struck by the Semitic character, that he considered the LXX as not really Greek at all: 'the translators ... are almost indifferent to idiom, and seem to have no sense of rhythm' (1914: 299). Many of these judgements, which were once widely accepted, are now being revised, though there is still much debate about the nature and extent of Semitic influence on the LXX's syntax. It is worth dwelling on the reactions of the older biblical scholars (classical scholars, on the whole, did not engage with the LXX) because they demonstrate how much their own cultural conditioning affected their responses. Immersed from their earliest years in a classical education, and taught to take the fifth-century bce Greek authors as their benchmark, they could scarcely help being shocked by the LXX, a product of the Hellenistic age which itself was hardly thought worthy of study.

Their discomfort is not an exclusively modern phenomenon, as we have just seen in the matter of Atticizing. As well as the textual evidence for stylistic improvement, we also find Christian apologists already in antiquity defending the rough simplicity and old-fashioned language of the Bible (in Old and New Testaments alike) against the contempt of opponents with more sophisticated literary tastes. The third century ce was another moment of classical revival, within which must be set Origen's answer (c. 248 ce) to the earlier treatise of the non-Christian Celsus on *True Doctrine* (c. 180 ce). Celsus had sneered at the Apostles as a bunch of tax-collectors and sailors. Origen's reply defends the efficacy of their uneducated speech for preaching the gospel, along lines already used by Paul (possibly against a similar background; *Against Celsus* 1.62; cf. 1 Cor. 2:1–4?). There may be a hint of similar criticisms in the second-century ce apologist Theophilus of Antioch's comment that all the 'prophets' (that is, the biblical authors) were 'illiterate and shepherds and uneducated', *agrammatoi kai poimenes kai idiōtai* (*Ad Autolycom* 2.35; translation by Grant 1970). Swete suggested that Hellenistic Jewish writers deliberately paraphrased their biblical quotations in order to conceal the 'uncouth phraseology of the Greek Bible' (1914: 370), but this is unlikely. It is true that the preference for Attic forms over those of Koine affected vocabulary, verb endings and other features, as Pelletier has shown in the case of Josephus's updating of *Ep.*

Arist. (1988: 106), but other apparent ‘liberties’ taken with the LXX have to be seen in the context of the normal way in which Greek (and Latin) authors deliberately disguised their sources (Spottorno has remarked on this in connection with Josephus, 1997: 382).

The Koine of the LXX is usually classed as colloquial or vernacular, as opposed to literary (though even Swete acknowledged in passing that there were some literary features present, and he forgets himself sufficiently to praise the LXX as ‘a monument of early Hellenistic Greek’; 1914: 295, 340). This classification, although basically correct, needs to be modified by examining each book for its particular features. The line between non-literary and literary language is not as clear as has been assumed, which makes examining the LXX for stylistic features (these are briefly listed by Aitken 1999: 29) an interesting development.

In another debate, influential for some time, it was argued, from the supposedly high incidence of Semitic features thought to permeate the LXX, that there was a special kind of ‘Jewish-Greek’, not only the result of written translation, but actually spoken by Jewish diaspora communities, especially in Egypt (it was assumed, questionably, that Jews mainly continued to speak Aramaic in Palestine). This theory has been largely (though not entirely) abandoned. From the ever-growing body of secular papyri, as well as of Jewish inscriptions in Greek, it becomes increasingly clear that the language of the LXX is fundamentally the same as that spoken (or at least, written) elsewhere, particularly its vocabulary (Lee 1983; 2003; Horsley 1989). Furthermore, in Egypt the undeniably Semitic character of many LXX expressions and constructions has been paralleled in non-Jewish papyri, especially from rural areas. Rather than suppose Jewish influence on the local brand of Greek, it has been argued that a Semitic flavour has come into Greek from the local Egyptian (Coptic) dialects (Vergote in Fernández Marcos 2000: 10. Brock 1972: 33–4 notes that this was already remarked on by Lefort in 1928). Scholars are more inclined to speak now of ‘translation Greek’, rather than of ‘Jewish’ or ‘synagogue’ Greek, though, even here, it must be realized that much of the vocabulary and syntax of the LXX is not unusual and the term must not be used indiscriminately (Aitken 1999: 26). The translators were bilingual, and the effect of such bilingualism, in both directions, is an area of fruitful investigation (Fernández Marcos 2000: 9–12).

If the Greek of the LXX is to be understood as denoting ‘a corpus not a language’ (Aitken 1999: 30), there is still considerable disagreement as to how far Hebrew idiom has affected LXX Greek (so-called ‘Hebrew interference’). Some (e.g. Swete 1914: 323; Lust in Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie 1992: viii–ix) think that Hebrew influence is all-pervasive, especially at the level of syntax. Others argue that, although the incidence (‘frequency’) of a few features is very marked, it is their repetition rather than their existence that creates the effect; the bulk of the LXX witnesses to a non-Semitized Greek (Evans 2001 argues this case with regard to verbal syntax in the Pentateuch). This is a controversial area, in which it is important that positions do not become polarized. Fernández Marcos has a prudent approach, following Rabin: ‘in general it can be stated that the biblical Greek adopted by the translators of the Pentateuch became a sort of sub-language which later translators or the authors of pseudepigrapha, if they were bilingual, imitated’ (2000: 24). Lust, although stressing Semitic features, admits that the LXX ‘displays a great variety in style and vocabulary’ (Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie 1992: ix). Abbott remarked on the significance of ‘frequency’ as early as 1891 (see Jobes and Silva 2000: 185).

The LXX is becoming increasingly valued as a witness to the literature of vernacular Hellenistic Greek. It constitutes the first oriental example of translation, a genre which became common only in the Roman period. Now that the Hellenistic age is no longer regarded as a kind of ‘also-ran’ in the study of Greek history and literature, reading the books of the LXX as Greek texts in their Hellenistic context can also appeal to readers and scholars beyond the disciplines of biblical studies. The LXX, in all the diversity of its individual parts and in whatever way its Greek usage is defined, belongs to, and emanates from, a flourishing Jewish culture, both in Palestine and the diaspora, which now finds its place within a wider body of literature.

The Septuagint’s first readers

Even if the LXX can be studied as a corpus of Hellenistic Greek texts, it originated and developed within specifically religious Judaeo-Christian contexts, which have given it a distinctive character. LXX scholars are, however, divided about its primary purpose: was it designed to give its first readers access to the Hebrew texts, or was it to replace the Hebrew altogether; that is, how was it meant to be read?

Two modern approaches

The question is highlighted by the approaches of two major modern translation projects: the French-based Bible d'Alexandrie (BA) and the American-based New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS). Each takes the language of the LXX seriously, and each has some problematic aspects.

(1) *La Bible d'Alexandrie*. The modern translators start from the conviction that the LXX is a collection of Greek texts intelligible as they stand. They have opted to translate each book in the way its first recipients might be assumed to have read it: first and foremost as a Hellenistic Greek text, understood without recourse to the Hebrew originals now beyond their reach (cf. Muraoka 2002a for the effects of this choice on lexicography; Jobes and Silva 2000: 261). How the texts were actually understood, if not from the very beginning, at least from not long afterwards, can be demonstrated from the writings of early Jewish and Christian authors who read their Scriptures in Greek.

There are two problems with this otherwise sound approach. One is that the earliest generations of readers, and their milieux, are largely unknown; there is a danger of equating them with the later Jewish and Christian writers who have left exegetical traces. The other is that the greater part of the LXX does consist of translations and, however much they may exist as autonomous works, they are marked by the form and content of their source-texts and invite comparison with them as an influence on translation.

(2) *NETS*. The NETS editors start from the opposite position. They insist that the LXX must be translated (and so accessed by modern readers) with the MT as chief 'control' because that is how the first translators worked. The translators' aim was to make the Hebrew text intelligible; the Greek translations were intended to be subservient to their Hebrew parent, a means to an end, and it was only later that they were read as texts in their own right (Pietersma 2001b: 219; Lust in Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie 1992: viii–xv discusses the implications for lexicography).

Some of the difficulties with this approach, and with the assumptions on which it rests, have already been pointed out in connection with the 'interlinear' hypothesis (above, Chapter 3, pp. 52–4). The chief objections are, first, that not enough is known about the circumstances in which the translations were made for a relationship of 'subservience' to the Hebrew to be certain and, second, that the literary features of the LXX suggest that the theory does not work as well as is claimed.

Summary

In practice, the editors of BA do not ignore the interface between Greek translation and Hebrew original (see Harl 1998: 33–4); nor are the early Christian commentators on the LXX unaware of the potential significance of the underlying Hebrew, however slight their grasp of it may have been. In their turn, the NETS translators do not ignore the sense of the Greek as it stands, even though they are convinced of the primary influence of the Hebrew (e.g. Büchner 2000: 92–3).

Achieving a balance, in a modern translation, between the impact of the texts in their new Greekness, and the effect of the gravitational pull of the Semitic originals, is a difficult and delicate operation, and one of great importance for modern readers.

Translation technique

Each translator had his own methods, preferences and peculiarities. Analysing these is an essential step towards understanding not only how a translation works linguistically, but also how the translator has understood and represented the meaning of the original. This is what is meant by 'translation technique'.

Looked at from a slightly different angle, it may also be understood as the way in which a text relates to its presumed source. Conventionally, we speak of 'the translators', and of course they existed; but—with the exception of Ben Sira's grandson (and just possibly the person named in the Esther colophon)—we know nothing about their identity. Their characteristics are reconstructed from the evidence of the critical texts, on the assumption that these are reliably close to the original translation (cf. Aejmelaeus 1991; 2001). Comparison between the LXX and the MT, as at least approximate equivalents, can show whether the translator sticks closely

to his presumed source, or renders it paraphrastically; how he habitually handles Hebrew grammar and syntax; what competence (or not) he has in either Hebrew or Greek (or both); what kind of lexical preferences he shows, and so on. In this way, one translator can be distinguished from another.

Study of translation technique also indicates places where a translator may have been interpreting or even altering his source-text. It therefore has not only linguistic but also exegetical and hermeneutical implications, and can also help towards establishing date, place and cultural milieu for different translations.

There are, however, some problematic aspects to this area of study.

1. 'Translation technique' is a modern term which has become part of the jargon of LXX scholars. Analysing it is an increasingly scientific affair, especially with the aid of computers which can quickly cover large areas of text, show up patterns and produce statistics. The results are often impressive. Some of the implications, however, need to be considered carefully to avoid misconceptions. For one thing, 'technique' suggests something consciously chosen and systematic. It is unlikely that the early translators worked like this; their method is likely to have been *ad hoc*, experimental, not always consistent (Aejmelaeus 1991), as they grappled with the challenges and difficulties of a task for which there were at first no models. Rather than 'technique', or even 'method' (cf. Jobes and Silva 2000: 114–15), 'practice', or 'style' might be more appropriate. Admittedly, these terms are less precise, but they better suggest that the characteristics of a translator are what we, the modern readers, deduce from any given text, even though the translator himself may have been unaware of them.

2. Even if the term 'translation technique' persists (as it surely will), the use of computer-generated evidence, being of its nature mechanical, must be handled with extreme care. Unless it is related to other features, especially context, it can produce too restricted a picture, especially where statistics from small text-samples are involved (cf. Wade 2000: 73; 2003: 115–16).

3. Another difficulty is that translation technique works by analysing the relationship between the Greek of the LXX and the Hebrew which it represents. But we do not know for certain the exact nature of either the original translation or the original source-text. For much of the time, it seems clear that a text very close to the MT (certainly for the consonants, often for the vocalization also) lies behind the reconstructed text of what we accept as 'the LXX' (that is, the current critical editions). Close comparisons are accordingly made between the LXX and the MT to determine the translator's procedure and style. Where there are no divergences this may be safe, but as soon as there are discrepancies, the question arises whether the translator had a different reading in his source-text, whether he made a mistake, or whether he had some reason for making a deliberate change. The translator's normal practice may suggest one or other solution, but there is no way of knowing whether he has not, on this occasion, done something different. The use of the MT as default is unavoidable, but risky, given the plurality of forms in which Hebrew texts circulated at least until the end of the first century ce.

'Literal' and 'free' translations

The most widespread approach to translational style, systematized by Barr (1979), is to identify it as either 'literal' or 'free' (see also Tov 1997: 17–29). By 'literal' is meant a close approximation to the (supposed) source-text, word for word, or phrase for phrase, and including grammatical and syntactical idioms and word order; this is called 'formal equivalence'. By 'free' is meant a style which is more paraphrastic and idiomatic, and which apparently aims to give the translator's understanding of the original rather than to reproduce it quantitatively; this is called 'dynamic equivalence'. In both cases, the labels 'literal' and 'free' relate to the MT, rather than to the Greek text as such; this creates a bias which is not always helpful. Also, they suggest a polarity which a number of scholars find undesirable. As the two translational styles play a part in ideological discussions about the translator's attitude to his source text, these reservations are important.

Much work has already been done to classify and quantify different books of the LXX under the two headings. In practice, they are not exact terms. 'Free' is self-evidently an imprecise description (which may include within itself instances of 'literal' renderings), but even the apparently more controllable 'literal' translation is open to different nuances (no attempt at a truly literal translation is known until Aquila; the apogee comes with a twelfth-century ce—or perhaps earlier—interlinear rendering of Jonah which sticks to Hebrew gender even when this

clashes with Greek usage; Brock 1972: 22; Fernández Marcos 2000: 177–8).

The books with the highest degree of formal equivalence include Ruth, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, that is, those associated with the Hebraizing *kaige* movement of the first century bce onwards, and which were probably (if our manuscripts really preserve the original translations) among the last to be translated. Psalms has often been classed as extremely literal, but recent study suggests that this needs modifying (see Schaper 1995: 31–3). Books exhibiting the greatest degree of dynamic equivalence include Job, Proverbs, Isaiah, Paraleipomenōn and LXX Daniel. Other books which are usually classed as ‘literal’ rather than ‘free’ – including the Pentateuch, the Minor Prophets and Jeremiah – demonstrate the inadequacies of the terminology. While evidently closely following a source-text very similar in its wording to the MT (the source-text of Jeremiah was most likely quantitatively different), these translations are often idiomatic and innovative, even if in small ways. See, for instance, Gen. 2:3; 8:4; 8:7 (with the comments of Wevers 1993: 21, 102, 104); Amos 3:5; 3:11; 6:5 (with qualifications; see Dines 1992: 307–8). Harlé and Pralon list some of the lexical innovations of the Leviticus translator (1988: 24–5), while Bons, Joosten and Kessler consider the special features of the Hosea translator (2002: 35–43, 44–6).

Rather than think in terms of either ‘literal’ or ‘free’, it is probably better to envisage a continuum running from extremely literal to extremely free renderings, with many intermediate stages and combinations, on which the different translations, or even different parts of the same translation, can be located (cf. Barr 1979; Wright 1987). On this kind of sliding scale a good number of the books come out somewhere in the middle. Aejmelaeus’s insistence that what we are talking about are features which modern scholars have spotted, analysed and organized into systems, rather than the deliberate intentions of the translators, is again to be stressed (1991: 27–8).

Identifying the translators

Translation technique is, however, an important means of identifying translators. Wevers (1991), for instance, has demonstrated that there were different translators for each of the books of the Pentateuch. Long before this, Thackeray discerned a single translator (or at least translational group) for the whole of the Minor Prophets; this translator was also responsible for large portions of Jeremiah and Ezekiel (1923: 28–39; much of this study, especially for the Minor Prophets, has stood the test of time). Tov (1976), however, working from a different hypothesis, has argued that LXX Jeremiah is the work of a single translator, which has been partially revised. Distinctive and persistent vocabulary usage, where, for instance, the translator had a choice between synonyms, is often a good clue. For example, of two synonymous words for ‘sword’, the translator of the Minor Prophets prefers *romphaia*, while the Isaiah translator regularly chooses *machaira*; there are also clear demarcations, throughout the LXX, in the renderings *ḥabaoth*, (*kurios*) *tōn dunameōn* and *pantokratōr* for Hebrew (*yhw̄h*) *šēbā’ōt*; between *Philistiim* and *allophuloi* for ‘Philistines’, and so on. Such translational ‘finger-printing’ can contribute to the broader perception of how closely, or not, the translator is keeping to his source-text.

The underlying presumption is that translators are consistent in their lexical and syntactical usage and that inconsistencies indicate either a different translator or a corrupt text. This assumption should be handled cautiously: too much regularity may be a sign not of a translator but of an editor or reviser. Inconsistency, it has been suggested, is the normal outcome of a single translator working for a considerable period of time and with a sizeable portion of text (see e.g. Gooding for parts of Exodus, in Wade 2000: 55). Brock remarks that inconsistency in the Pentateuch fits with the novelty of the enterprise (1972: 32). Inconsistency in minor stylistic features is, in fact, common experience. Common sense suggests that ancient translators had similar aberrations. It is perhaps a salutary thing to keep in mind when trying, for instance, to allocate portions within a book to more than one translator. Variations must be persistent and substantial to count.

Style and context

There are two areas of particular relevance to assessing translation technique. First, there is the phenomenon that Evans calls ‘stylistic flourishes’ (2001: 263; see above, Chapter 3, p. 54). The presence of elements such as word-play, repetition, chiasm, alliteration and so on, not strictly required by the source-text, suggests that some translators, at least, had an instinct for literary effect. This provokes serious questions about translators’ education and attitude to their cultural milieu. Much careful work remains to be done in this area, but it promises to be fruitful; we have already examined the example of Amos 1:3–2:6 (above, Chapter 3, pp. 55–6).

Secondly, there is the phenomenon that Tov calls ‘contextual exegesis’ (1997: 45–6). A sense of context is of far-reaching significance for understanding how translators worked and how they understood their texts. As with other features, there is much variation between translators. 1 Kingdoms, for instance, is a mainly contextual translation (Taylor 1997: 2); the Leviticus translator ‘loved to translate a recurring Hebrew collocation in various ways’ (Wevers 1991: 56); while the translator of Numbers works from the immediate and not the wider context (Voitila 1997: 120–1). Contextual translation shows up when a rendering seems to be affected by the immediate surroundings (sometimes triggered by cultural or theological considerations, or by textual difficulties or obscurities). Examples occur in, for example, Gen. 6:11 (*adikia*, ‘wrongdoing’, for *ḥāmās*, ‘violence’; see Wevers 1993: 82); Exod. 2:3 (the Egyptian word *thibis*, ‘reed-basket’, for *tēbā*, ‘container’; this contrasts with Gen. 6:14, where *tēbā* is rendered by *kibōtos*, ‘container’, ‘ark’). Further examples may be found in Tov 1997: 46–7; Hiebert 2000: 85–8. A context from the translator’s cultural setting may have influenced Exod. 22:27, where *theous*, ‘gods’, renders ^e*lōhîm*, whereas the immediate context requires ‘judges’. Büchner suggests that the translator is making a gracious gesture to his polytheistic milieu (1997: 416–17); the rendering, however, could be understood as automatic rather than contextual. This example shows how difficult it can be to define a translator’s intention. Even more interesting are places where the translator makes intertextual connections. A striking example occurs in Genesis (not noted by Wevers 1993). In 1:2, the verb used of the movement of the divine *pneuma/rū^aḥ* (‘wind’ or ‘spirit’) over the ‘abyss’ recurs in Gen. 7:18, of the *kibōtos* (the Ark) during the Flood:

LXX	MT
1.2 (<i>pneuma</i>) ... <i>epephereto</i> ‘bore onwards’	(<i>rū^aḥ</i>) ... <i>m^erahepet</i> ‘was hovering (?)’
7.18 (<i>kibōtos</i>) ... <i>epephereto</i> ‘bore onwards’	(<i>tēbā</i>) ... <i>hālak</i> ‘went’

In neither place is the Greek verb (used of a raft being ‘carried downstream’ in Herodotus, *Histories* 2.96) an obvious choice for the Hebrew (for the possible exegetical implications, see Harl 1986: 87, 135). A still wider intertextual connection is pointed out by Kreuzer (2001: 45), who shows how the translation of Deut. 26:5 may have been influenced by the narrative of Gen. 30–2. Deut. 26:5 reads ‘my father was leaving Syria (*Surian apebalen ho patēr mou*)’, whereas the MT has ‘my father was a wandering (or “perishing”) Aramaean (*‘^arammî ‘ōbēd ‘ābî*)’. But according to the narratives in Gen. 30–2, Jacob is a man of substance on his way home from Aram (Syria). The translator of Deut. 26:5 has apparently adjusted his version to the Genesis narrative. These examples (and many others could be added) suggest the making of deliberate connections between passages. Here, too, careful study is needed to identify this type of translational practice, which is also a form of exegesis, so as to better understand how the LXX can sometimes have interpretation built into its very fabric.

Attitudes towards source-texts

The kind of ‘translational exegesis’ just illustrated is relevant to the ongoing debate about translators’ attitudes towards their sources. Certainly, the translators were Jews, translating into Greek their nation’s holy books which, we may assume, possessed an aura of venerable tradition. The Mosaic books above all had become, with the help of those who expounded them, and through their use in worship, both a guide for life (*halakah*) and an authoritative history to shape views of past, present and future (*haggadah*). Early halakic and haggadic debates have left their marks on some translations (see e.g. Gooding 1976, on the ‘miscellanies’ in 3 Kingdoms; cf. above, Chapter 1, p. 17). Another factor to bear in mind is the diverse forms in which Hebrew texts were circulating in the third to first centuries bce, and even later. Additions and rewritings were still affecting them. In many cases, even if the translators thought they were rendering the words of Moses himself (or David, or Solomon, or the various prophets), these were texts still in the making, still bearing the marks of development or even controversy (see Garbini 1988: 133–50 for one—controversial—theory about the late completion of the Pentateuch). For all we know, too, the translators may themselves have been co-shapers of the Hebrew scrolls studied and copied in their particular communities. And attitudes to the new genre of translation itself may have

been very different from ours: 'what may appear as a translator's taking liberties with his text may have been quite appropriate to the expectations of the culture in which he worked' (Jobes and Silva 2000: 91–2). It may be relevant, too, to remember that at this time, in the translators' Greek educational culture, the almost-sacred Homeric texts were being intensively, critically and reverently studied.

This brings us to the question of 'canonicity' for the Hebrew texts. The translators' source-texts were certainly 'canonical' in the sense of being normative, authoritative and influential. During the period when most of the LXX was translated, however, it is anachronistic to think of them as 'canonical' in the modern sense of a fixed collection whose wording can be expounded but not changed. It is easy for later perceptions of the sacrosanctity of Scripture to be retrojected, but this should be resisted (cf. Harl 1993: 334). It is a tendency which has sometimes made debates about the translators' appreciation of the nature of their task unnecessarily heated.

The question is whether the translators felt free to adjust the consonantal text they had before them in the interests of their own exegetical and theological views, or whether their reverence for the text meant that they translated only what they found before them (or, in the case of a damaged or badly written scroll, what they thought they found). It is not really a choice between whether or not they held the texts to be 'holy writ' (cf. Orłinsky 1975), or at least it need not be presented in this way. What is at issue is how, for the translator, a living relationship with the sacred texts could be expressed. For the LXX scholar, it has to do, on the one hand, with making sense of the more literal forms of translation (why translate literally when paraphrases or rewritings were available as established genres?) and, on the other, of evaluating the significance of divergences of a potentially exegetical nature between the LXX and the MT.

Being able to describe a translator's normal practice is obviously important here, in order to eliminate what might look at first sight like an ideological change but which really belongs to a particular way of handling the Hebrew. In Deut. 32:10 in the MT, for instance, God is said to have guarded 'Jacob' as 'the apple of his eye'. The LXX omits the personal pronoun 'his', leaving the phrase indefinite. Some scholars have taken this as evidence of an anti-anthropomorphic bias on the part of the translator. It is, however, characteristic of this translator to drop personal pronouns when the point of reference is obvious, so the passage cannot be taken, on this argument alone, to reveal a theological stance (Jobes and Silva 2000: 117; see further Chapter 7, p. 132).

Translation technique is also important for identifying places where there really is a different focus from that of the MT. In the latter situation a decision first has to be taken as to whether the change is due to the translator and not already present in the source-text, and then, if it is, whether the change has been accidental or deliberate. To deny the likelihood of deliberate changes a priori risks inappropriately reading back into the time of the translators later Jewish and Christian beliefs about the inviolability of the biblical text. We do not have any external evidence for a reluctance on the part of the translators, out of piety, to adjust the Hebrew text; the internal evidence rather suggests the opposite. Philo, it may be recalled, believed in the inspired nature of the Law of Moses, even in its Greek form, but did not feel obliged to quote exactly. The issue continues to divide scholars; on LXX Genesis, for instance, Wevers (1993) and Rösel (1998) are both convinced of the translators' active role, in contrast with Hendel and Hanhart, who are more doubtful; see Brown (1999).

Modern scholars sometimes give the impression that the alternative to not altering the text of Scripture is promiscuous tampering with it to promote personal views. It must, however, be remembered that the translators were not operating in an individualistic vacuum but as members of communities. These communities will surely have spent much time pondering on, debating and expounding their Scriptures. Many of the apparent alterations of the Hebrew suggested by passages in the LXX will have been the result either of already established traditions, or of current 'rereadings', and not the invention of the translators, let alone their whim. Even at the lexical level, where the first translations appear to have set the agenda for subsequent books, much of the technical vocabulary is likely to have been forged before the first translations were made, even though the LXX may provide the earliest written evidence (see e.g. Harl 1986: 55 for *diathēkē*, 'testament', as equivalent of *b^érît*, 'covenant'; other standard vocabulary may also have been established by 'the generations which preceded' the translation of the Torah, Tov 1999: 184).

On the other hand, some translational solutions to textual difficulties or to hitherto unnoticed halakic anomalies, may have been the translators' own responses to the text before them; these could then have influenced interpretation within the community. What must be stressed is the seriousness with which any exegetical changes will have been made; in fact, the translator will most probably have thought that his occasional manoeuvring of

the text was in fact producing the correct meaning, especially where the Hebrew was obscure (Tov 1997: 169; cf. Aejmelaeus 1991: 25). Deviations from the source-text do not necessarily mean that the translator was not attempting to translate 'literally'.

The preceding discussion has assumed that, for whatever reason, the translator has been making a deliberate choice to be literal, because of the sacred nature of his text. But we should not, perhaps, press this too far. It is possible that translating 'literally' may not have resulted from so conscious a decision; it may simply have been the safest—and easiest—method for translators who were feeling their way into a strange new world. Formal equivalence is an obvious starting point for a translator, an 'easy technique' (Barr 1979: 50). If the practice of literal translation was experimental rather than ideological, it might help to explain why the translator of Genesis, supposing him to have been the first, exhibits right from the beginning of his work such a mixture of renderings, now mirroring the Hebrew exactly, now expressing the sense in accomplished and idiomatic Greek.

This brings us back to the question of what kind of text the translators thought they were translating and why they chose a particular approach. Aejmelaeus suggested, as we have seen (above, pp. 118–19), that such decisions may not have been thought out, or at least, we have no means of knowing what they had in mind (1991: 23–6). Brock, however, had earlier made a case for the translators' choosing between two models (1972: 17–20). The first model is that of word-for-word reproduction, such as existed for legal and administrative documents, where exactitude was essential. This kind of translation is known from Ptolemaic Egypt. Because the books attributed to Moses were regarded as a sacred law-code, Brock argues, the translators chose the method which would make them most accurately available. The second model is the literary one of reproducing the general sense of a text so as to make it palatable to readers in another language. The examples here, however, derive mainly from translations into Latin of Greek literary works (there is one Egyptian-Greek example, Brock 1972: 18–19). It is questionable whether the LXX translators made such a clear distinction, especially as the Pentateuch was not a legal document in the same way as those represented in the papyri (cf. above, Chapter 3, pp. 43–4). Added to this is the consideration, already mentioned, that not even the translation of the Pentateuch exhibits a purely or uniformly literal style. Translation technique, in any case, especially where it is categorized as 'literal' or 'free', should be distinguished from questions of ideology. If 'literal' translation is a sign of 'fidelity' to a sacred text, where does that leave the 'free' translator? Is he excluded from considering the text as sacred too? It is interesting that Cook (1995) finds the translator of Proverbs to be theologically 'conservative', however that may be defined (cf. further Cook 2001; Wade 2003: 227–32).

Conclusion

The work variously being done on the language of the LXX and on the translational styles and practices of the translators, shows how important it is for several different questions to be kept in view simultaneously. More needs to be done to locate the syntax, and especially the vocabulary, of the LXX's translated books within the whole corpus of Koine Greek, especially in papyri and inscriptions, and to compare the language of the books originally written in Greek with that of other Hellenistic authors. And the language itself needs to be related to the social and cultural context of those who used it.

The scope of translation technique needs to be broadened to include aspects of style and awareness of context. These are areas not easy to define and quantify, but they are important for creating a fuller and more nuanced picture of any text and of its relation to its presumed source-text. Some criticism has been voiced of the earlier, more narrowly 'scientific' approach in which textual phenomena are investigated without regard to their context (e.g. Schaper 1995: 21–2). But it is only possible now for scholars to work on both the linguistic and the semantic fronts because a great deal of necessary groundwork has paved the way for newer developments; neither approach can do without the other. Similarly, the opposite criticism—that some LXX scholars are being side-tracked from the more fundamental discipline of textual criticism by other kinds of even linguistic research, let alone by attempts to recover exegetical features, establish dating and so on—is too exclusivist (e.g. Pietersma 1985: 297; Jobes and Silva 2000: 276–7). Textual criticism is, of course, logically prior to all else, but it is unrealistic to think that there will ever be a stage at which all texts have been established and scholars can move to other concerns. Every branch of LXX study needs developing, and all disciplines need to contribute to, and learn from, one another (there are excellent observations here in Tov 1997: 11). The pluralistic character of the texts

themselves requires a plurality of research out of which, by trial and error, a gradual increase in knowledge and understanding may emerge.

Further reading

On Koine Greek and related issues, besides items already noted, Fernández Marcos (2000: 3–17) includes an important discussion of bilingualism; Jellicoe (1968: 314–37) updates Swete (1914: 289–314; this still contains much useful detail, despite its perspective from the norms of classical Greek); Harl (1986: 49–70) surveys lexical choices in LXX Genesis. See also Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 223–66); Harlé and Pralon (1988: 47–51; on the originality of the LXX in relation to ‘literary’ Koine); Jobes and Silva (2000: 114–17, largely following Tov); Brixhe (1993); Horrocks (1997: 56–9; for the place of the LXX in the history of the Greek language).

On translation technique and related issues, Aitken (1999: 26–7) usefully contrasts the approaches of Tov and Schaper; Beck (2000) attempts to show how translators handle narrative. See also Fernández Marcos (2000: 18–31, especially 22–6); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 230–3); Jobes and Silva (2000: 86–102); Swete (1914: 315–41; to be handled with care because of some out-dated assumptions, but often illuminating and informative); de Troyer (1997: 326–43, a penetrating and original discussion); Tov and Wright (1985, a computer-generated assessment of ‘literalness’).

For BA and NETS, see ‘Further reading’ at the end of Chapter 7.

Jennifer M. Dines and Michael A. Knibb, *The Septuagint* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 108.

CHAPTER 7

The Use of the Septuagint: from the Beginnings to the Present Day

It is obvious that the LXX differs from the MT in many respects. Do these differences mean that the LXX has a theological outlook distinct from that of the MT? What responses to the LXX can be detected in the earliest use made of the LXX by Jews and Christians? And why, apart from the needs of textual criticism, is it still worth while studying it as a text in its own right? These questions will be treated briefly in this final chapter.

Septuagint and Masoretic Text: interpreting the differences

Identifying distinctive theological elements

The LXX differs in many places from the MT: in word choice, in the order of verses or whole passages, in pluses and minuses both small and great, and in renderings that give a different sense from the Hebrew. What is not obvious is how to interpret the differences. Three approaches are worth considering.

1. A close comparison can be made between isolated verses where there are divergences, and conclusions drawn from them about the outlook of each passage. This can yield interesting results, but can be misleading if taken out of context.
2. More likely to yield sound results is the systematic exploration of a complete book, provided that all necessary areas are explored: textual criticism, translation technique, style and so on. Then one may get an idea of the theology of a particular book, which will not necessarily turn out to be the same as in

another.

3. A third approach is to look at themes, in order to identify attitudes over wider areas of text. Early attempts to do this include studies of the anti-anthropomorphism thought to be characteristic of the whole LXX. More recent study has shown how misleading such generalizations can be if they are based only on soundings, and do not emerge from the kind of rigorous checks just mentioned. In the case of anti-anthropomorphism, wider investigation has shown that in fact the translators do not systematically avoid anthropomorphic descriptions of God (Jobes and Silva 2000: 95; cf. Chapter 6, p. 126). Similarly, theories about developments in the LXX in the areas of messianism, resurrection and so on, have to be treated with care. But if thematic investigations are carried out with sufficient rigour, interesting cross-textual patterns may emerge, as has been demonstrated for the theme of divine omniscience (Joosten 2000). The well-founded observation that the avoidance, in almost all contexts, of 'rock' as a divine title must be deliberate seems to hold good (Olofsson 1990; but NB contrast 2 Kdgs 22:2 with Ps. 17(18):3).

What is needed is a system of checks and balances whereby both types of investigation—by book and by theme—can be corroborated against each other; in other words, both methods are necessary and to be encouraged. The outcome of both, so far, is to show that there is no one 'theology' of the LXX, any more than there is of the Hebrew Bible; rather, there is an interplay of different 'voices', some more and some less distinct. The difficult area of inner-Septuagintal interpretation—of where, and why, the translations preserve perspectives, ideas and theological viewpoints different from those of the MT—has to be approached with great caution. Differences between Greek and Hebrew have to be shown to be really deliberate, and not part of the translator's normal way of handling vocabulary or syntax (though, as we saw in the last chapter, 'translation technique' is seldom a purely mechanical exercise, but part and parcel of the translator's way of understanding the text semantically). With this proviso, it is obvious that in many places the LXX witnesses to adjustments of various kinds that reflect the outlook of the translator and his milieu, whether or not these were deliberate. Even if it is unclear whether a divergence between the LXX and the MT comes from the translator or from his source-text, a difference of interpretation between the two texts has significance. If nothing else, it shows that there were different streams of tradition, and if the LXX witnesses to some elements in interpretation which have not otherwise been preserved in Hebrew, it is a very important window onto a period of biblical interpretation before the MT emerged as dominant. Two examples demonstrate the part which an interest in interpretation may play, and the context in which such investigation needs to be done.

1. *Gen. 2:2*. The change here from 'seventh' to 'sixth' as the day on which God finished his work, makes it clear that God did no work on the Sabbath; this adjustment may already have existed in the translator's Hebrew scroll (made by whom, where and when?); or it may have been the result of halakic reaction to the traditional Hebrew within the translator's community; or it may have been an innovation by the translator himself. These uncertainties cause difficulties when the aim is to reconstruct the original text of either the LXX or the MT. But if the aim is to identify distinctive interpretations within the LXX that show up when a comparison is made with the MT, then interesting light may be shed on the exegetical (in this case, theological) concerns contained within the LXX itself, and which possibly point to the community that commissioned and used it.

2. *Amos 7:14*. Sometimes the translator was led by differences between Greek and Hebrew syntax to make a choice that, even if he was following his normal practice, may have involved prior exegetical decisions. In *Amos 7:14*, for example, the ambiguous Hebrew nominal clause, 'not a prophet I', *lō' -nābî' 'ānōkî*, is rendered in Greek as 'I was not a prophet', *ouk ēmēn prophētēs*, using a past tense, although a present would be equally possible from the point of view both of Hebrew usage and of context (Wolff 1977: 306; cf. Evans 2001: 86). The choice—which must be made by modern translators too—is significant for making sense of *Amos's* apologia and of the book's views on prophecy. But does it represent an exegetical or merely a linguistic decision? In the rest of the book, wherever the translator adds a finite verb in translating a nominal clause, he always observes sequence of tenses: when the aspect of the Hebrew main verb is open to past action, he uses the imperfect of *eimi* (2:8); where it is open to present or future, he uses the present (5:13, 18b; 7:2, 5; 9:7; and, significantly, 7:13). So, from the point of view of translational

practice, the past tense in 7:14 merely matches ‘and Amos replied’, *kai apekrithē Amos*. It gives nothing away about the translator’s own view, even though his rendering led to exegetical discussion later (see Dines 1992: 241–4). On the other hand, it is likely that such a key verse would have been debated and interpreted, so it is not unreasonable to think that the past tense also represents an exegetical decision (the choice of *eimi* instead of *ēmēn* following *apekrithē* would have been more obviously an exegetical choice over normal translational procedure; see Ziegler 1943: 199 for manuscripts which do in fact make this ‘correction’).

Modern commentators must therefore tread a tightrope in identifying and explaining interpretational material in the LXX. In any case, more often than not the LXX and the MT do not differ significantly, so that what the LXX ‘means’ appears to be the same as what the MT ‘means’, from the point of view of gaining insights into the attitudes of those responsible for the two texts. This needs to be kept in mind in modern exegesis of the LXX, where the temptation is to focus, in any given book, on the divergent material and to construct from that the beliefs of the translator and his world. But, ‘passages that were translated literally ... are of equal importance as free paraphrases; both represent fragments of the religious notions of the translator’ (Seeligmann 1948: 93). On the other hand, the LXX should not be read simply as the MT with aberrations; a sense different from that of the MT, in style and nuance if not in radical differences of thought, emerges from reading the Greek text as a whole, with all its minor variations.

Jewish and Christian reception history

Another approach to understanding the LXX is to look for interpretation in writings which use it, or depend on it. Interpretations may be of particular verses or passages or (mainly in Christian writings) of whole books. Through studying these, it is possible to begin assessing the contribution made by the LXX to the history of biblical interpretation, a contribution which is still much underexploited and undervalued. It is not possible, in such a short space, to do justice to this area of reception history, but a few pointers may be given.

The LXX took the place of the Hebrew Scriptures for Greek-speaking Jews in worship, study or private reflection. It was used by Christian writers too, whenever there was a need to call upon or expound the Jewish Scriptures which had been appropriated and absorbed as the Old Testament. Beyond the Judaeo-Christian matrix, and as yet little studied, Septuagintal echoes appear in popular semi-religious contexts like those of the magical papyri and of non-official inscriptions, and give a fascinating insight into a syncretistic hinterland where the Greek Scriptures circulated alongside other words of power (Fernández Marcos 2000: 267–8; Leonas 1999). There is an admiring reference to Gen. 1:3, 9–10 in the first-century (or possibly third-century) ce literary treatise *On the Sublime* by Pseudo-Longinus (if the passage in 9:9 is authentic; it is treated as such by Dorival 1987: 19–20; text in Grube 1991: 14), and there are more disparaging assessments from other pagans, such as Celsus in the second century ce. But otherwise the LXX reveals its existence firmly within the range of early Jewish and Christian religious literature.

Early Jewish interpretation

The first hints of the Greek translations in use appear in the fragmentary remains of Hellenistic Jewish writers (Demetrius, Eupolemus, Aristobulus, and others), in *Ep. Arist.* and other pseudepigrapha, in the Apocrypha, and in Philo and Josephus. The use of Scripture by Philo and Josephus has been extensively studied, but the situation with regard to the Hellenistic Jewish authors who preceded them is more difficult to determine. Apart from *Ep. Arist.*, these writings have survived only fragmentarily, which makes a complete picture impossible. Also, as we have seen for Aristobulus (above, Chapter 2, pp. 33–4), they are found inserted into Clement’s and Eusebius’s borrowings from Alexander Polyhistor. This means that they have to be located within a double context: that of their own original concerns and that of the use made of them by the later Christian writers (mainly, here, to back up arguments about Greek dependence on the writings of Moses); and as the portions available depended on what Polyhistor included, there is really a third context to reckon with too. Little has been done specifically on

the relationship of the fragments to the LXX (though Holladay 1983, 1995 has sporadic discussions). The main problem is that there are few straightforward quotations, the biblical references being mostly paraphrase or 'rewritten Bible' (cf. Chapter 4, p. 71). This often makes it difficult to know whether a given writer was referring to an actual Greek text, or whether he was alluding to ways in which biblical traditions circulated in general, presumably in Greek. A few examples will give an idea of this earliest Greek use of biblical material.

Hellenistic Jewish authors

Demetrius the Historian

Demetrius may have written during the reign of Ptolemy IV Philopator (221–204 bce) or slightly later (Fernández Marcos 2000: 261). What little survives is quoted in Clement, *Stromateis* 1.21.141; Eusebius, *PE* 9.21, 29, perhaps also 19, although, *pace* Holladay (1983: 59, 62–3), it is not clear that this section (Fragment 1, covering Gen. 22) contains quotations. He apparently retells the 'national history in a form more acceptable to ... pagan neighbours' (Swete 1914: 370) and in the process alludes to the subject matter of Gen. 22; 35:16; 25:6; Exod. 15:23–25; Num. 11:34–12:1 (Holladay 1983: 62–91). The stories are told in very brief outline and the allusions are woven seamlessly into the narrative, without any exegetical comment. There is no sign of a distinction between the words of Scripture and the words of the historian. Scripture is absorbed and re-presented rather than quoted, yet there are sufficiently close echoes to show that a written Greek text was known to him; some wording is closer to the LXX than to the MT (Fernández Marcos 2000: 261). The nature of these allusions is typical of the way in which 'quotations' are handled in other Hellenistic writers.

Eupolemus

He belongs to the mid-second century bce, if he is to be identified with the person mentioned in 1 Macc. 8:17; 2 Macc. 4:11 (Swete 1914: 370; Bartlett 1985: 57–8; Fernández Marcos 2000: 260). He is quoted by Clement, *Stromateis* 1.21, 130, 141; 1.23.153 and Eusebius, *PE* 9.17; 26.30–4, 39 (Holladay 1983: 112–56). The fragments belong to a sketch of Israel's history from Moses to Solomon, and focus particularly on prophecy and the building of the Temple. The claim to Jewish priority over Greek culture is made explicitly (*PE* 9.30). Although rewriting rather than quoting, it is clear that he is familiar with the Greek Pentateuch and with Joshua. It is less clear whether his account of Solomon's exchange of letters with Hiram depends on 2 Chron. 2:11–13. Swete assumes that it does (1914: 370), but Fernández Marcos doubts it (2000: 260); Bartlett's useful introduction and commentary on selected passages does not include any discussion of Eupolemus's use of the LXX. The story-line is closer to 2 Chronicles than to 1 Kings, but there are details of language and content (the dimensions of the Temple, for instance) that do not fit either. The intriguing detail that Solomon was twelve years old at his accession does not occur in the MT, and in the LXX's textual tradition only in the reading of Alexandrinus at 3 Kgdms 2:12. In 1 Chron. 22:5, 29:1, however, he is called 'child' or 'youth', *paidarion/neos*; (MT has *na'ar* both times) and according to Josephus, he was fourteen (*Ant.* 8.2, 211; cf. Bartlett 1985: 64, 66). This detail seems to indicate that, as well as written versions, Eupolemus made use of popular traditions which also surface here and there in other passages. This is true of other biblical rewritings and is important to bear in mind when we try to envisage what, at this stage, constituted 'Scripture' and how it was used. In a fragment of Aristeas the Historian, for instance, quoted by Eusebius (*PE* 9.25), references to the end and the beginning of LXX Job have been inserted into an account of Genesis 36 (Job 42:17b–c; 1:1, 3, in that order). The additional details about Job in LXX Job 42:17a–e testify to the existence of traditions which did not find their way into the MT. Pinpointing haggadic or midrashic material in the LXX, which sometimes surfaces only later in rabbinic literature, is an important contribution which LXX scholars can make to the history of biblical interpretation.

Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha

Apocrypha

The same situation exists as for the previous writers: where quotations may occur, the text often needs establishing. Specific passages are sometimes discussed, or at least mentioned, in the course of modern commentaries, for example the citation of Amos 8:10 in Tob. 2:6, which differs from the LXX in all the extant

versions and recensions (Otzen 2002: 22); similarly the adaptation of the same verse in 1 Macc. 9:41 (Bartlett 1998: 32), although Amos 8:10 itself may just be another version of a common saying. Occasionally modern authors discuss the use of Scripture. Bartlett, for instance, deals with the 'attitude to Scripture' of the author of 1 Maccabees, though he does not consider whether the citations and allusions show any sign of reflecting translational adjustments where the LXX is used to represent the (presumed) original Hebrew (1998: 31–3). Coggins touches on the role of the LXX in Sirach's use of 'Scripture' (1998: 62–3).

In fact, earlier books of the LXX may have provided more than just citations or allusions. Bartlett also notes that the Greek style of 1 Maccabees is that of 'the LXX', perhaps 'a deliberate attempt to associate the book with other writings accepted by the Jewish community' (1998: 19; cf. the supposedly 'Septuagintal' style of parts of Luke's Gospel; Johnson 1986: 201, 211; O'Fearghail 1989). The same may be true of *Ep. Arist.* and of Sirach; in the latter case, it has been observed that the translator adopts a 'Septuagintal' style quite different from the one he uses in his own prologue. This contrasts with the author of Wisdom, who knows the LXX but does not imitate its style (though see Horbury 2001: 652 for Semitic features). The question of what 'Septuagintal style' actually is needs addressing, given the LXX's lack of homogeneity; presumably, the more 'literal' features are what is meant.

Pseudepigrapha

Among the Greek pseudepigrapha, Sibylline Oracles 3 shows clear evidence of contact with the LXX. But here, as elsewhere, so much preliminary work is needed to define the relationship between biblical allusions and the text of the LXX that exegetical significance is difficult to establish (cf. Fernández Marcos 2000: 262). Swete gives several possible instances of contact, involving LXX Psalms and Isaiah (1914: 372). Charlesworth (1983; 1985) and Delamarter (2002) attempt to give full cross-references for the whole range of the pseudepigrapha; Charlesworth (2002: 3–4) discusses the nature of the citations, but without giving separate consideration to those in Greek. Bartlett's treatment again makes no mention of the LXX (1985: 35–55).

Philo and Josephus

The way in which these influential authors utilize their biblical material is too large and complex a field to deal with in detail here. The following paragraphs merely sketch their significance.

Philo

A list of Philo's exegetical works can be found in Swete (1914: 373). There is a brief discussion in Fernández Marcos (2000: 264–5, mainly concerned with the nature of the text) and a more extensive treatment in Borgen (1997; this discusses Philo's hermeneutical approaches and the different genres in which he expounds the Bible). Philo continues the practice of earlier Hellenistic writers of paraphrasing biblical texts (e.g. *De Opificio Mundi*; *De Abrahamo*; *De Decalogo*). This 'rewriting' of the Bible is a genre also found in Hebrew (e.g. *Jubilees*, the *Genesis Apocryphon*). Philo also gives verse-by-verse expositions of biblical books (e.g. *Legum Allegoriae*; *Quaestiones in Genesin/Exodum*; *De Gigantibus*). These are in effect commentaries, with explicit citations of the text; again this genre is found in Hebrew writings (e.g. some of the *peshar* texts from Qumran). Sometimes the meaning of the text is explained directly; but the 'Questions and Answers' form constitutes a distinctive sub-division which enjoyed a great vogue in later Christian writing. It enabled Philo, and his Christian heirs, to tackle difficult or controversial passages (see below, p. 145).

The literary forms and the technical language of exegesis which Philo used to express his highly individual and profoundly Jewish thought were not his inventions: they owed much to the practices of Hellenistic Greek commentators on Homer and on Greek philosophic and religious works. Philo, however, developed these rather succinct treatments into complete commentaries (Fernández Marcos 2000: 275). To the scholarly conventions of his time Philo also partly owed his preferred method of exegesis. The allegorical approach to the meaning of texts, which he found particularly congenial, had been developed centuries earlier in attempts to interpret the Greek myths, mainly as found in Homer, in such a way as to make palatable otherwise morally unacceptable passages (especially those involving the bad behaviour of the Olympian gods), and to safeguard 'the authority and prestige' of the poems (Simonetti 1994: 5). As far back as the sixth century bce, difficult passages had been explained in terms of natural or psychological phenomena, that is, allegorically. The method was developed

particularly by the Stoics, from the third century bce onwards, in philosophical contexts. 'At the beginning of the common era, this type of interpretation and its related terminology was widely used in scholarly circles and among people of literary and philosophical attainment' (Simonetti 1994: 6). Philo had, of course, Jewish predecessors who had made modest use of allegorical interpretations: Aristobulus and *Ep. Arist.* in particular. And Jewish tradition in the Hebrew Bible itself makes rudimentary use of this hermeneutical method in its various types of figurative writing (*mashal*).

In considering how the LXX is expounded by Philo, it is important to remember the scholarly origins of the allegorical and typological approaches to interpretation, with their intention to render hallowed texts comprehensible and morally acceptable to a later age. Philo had enormous influence on Christian writers like Origen and those associated with the so-called Alexandrian School. It is equally important to realize that Philo (and his successors) did not ignore literal or historical exegesis altogether. In fact, the simple designation 'literal' or 'allegorical' is usually too simplistic, and is certainly so for Philo (Borgen 1997: 284). But the identification of deeper meanings in the text beyond the obvious surface one, is certainly a marked feature of Philo's exegesis. In all his exegetical work, Philo uses the LXX as his source. He considers the Pentateuch to have the same authority as the Hebrew version (cf. Chapter 4, p. 64), and there is no reason to think that he does not regard the other books as authoritative too, even though he makes less use of them. With Philo, we have for the first time a sustained interpretation of the LXX, including the places where it differs from the Hebrew, but this is a resource that awaits further study.

Josephus

With Josephus the situation is more complicated, because he makes use of the Hebrew Bible as well as the LXX. His *Antiquities of the Jews* belongs to the well-established genre of 'rewritten Bible', but there are direct citations as well as paraphrases. Swete gives examples of places where there is contact with the LXX (1914: 376–9). Compared with Philo, Josephus prefers a more literal, down-to-earth type of exegesis. This too had a long after-life; many Christian exegetes adopted this approach (though in homilies, commentaries and 'question and answer' works, rather than in biblical paraphrases). Josephus can be seen as an ancestor of the so-called Antiochian School, with its emphasis on the plain sense of the text and its sober style. The two 'schools' – Alexandrian and Antiochian – are often juxtaposed. It is true that there was antagonism and rivalry (and bitter doctrinal disagreements) between different Christian churches, but this should not be exaggerated: neither 'school' practised one form of exegesis exclusively and many traditions were shared (Simonetti 1994: 67–8). Nor should Philo and Josephus be set up as rivals, with Philo at the start of a diaspora-based, Alexandrian tradition which then influenced Christian writers, and Josephus representing a Palestinian, proto-rabbinic approach. There was no absolute divide between diaspora and Palestinian ways of using Scripture, as the Dead Sea Scrolls have shown, and contacts were frequent at all times. What we have are two individual styles and preferences, each of which is important for understanding the part played by the LXX at the start of the Common Era.

Early Christian interpretation

Influence of the Septuagint on New Testament interpretation

Apart from its significance as a witness to textual plurality in the first century ce (see above, Chapter 5, p. 85), the NT is important in several ways for its use of 'the LXX' (understood as the whole range of textual forms in which the Greek Scriptures appear there). It is clear that for all NT authors the Greek texts constitute authentic and authoritative Scripture, and that for most of them they are their only source. It is striking that, despite the evidence within the NT of fierce controversy with various Jewish groups, the text-forms used are never an issue. This suggests that textual pluriformity became problematic only in the second century ce (see Ulrich 2000: 325). 'The LXX', in an NT context, refers therefore to a complex and non-homogeneous collection of sources.

As such, it provides proof-texts to back up arguments and in many instances it is reinterpreted to fit its new Christian usage. In particular, the Scriptures are all regarded as prophetic, and their contents are applied to the Christian story. As well as providing direct quotations and recognizable allusions, the LXX exercises a profound influence on vocabulary and style, though this varies from writer to writer and is not all-pervasive.

There are far-reaching implications to the realization that foundational Christian experience was articulated mainly in terms of the Greek biblical texts, and not directly the Hebrew ones. It is still normal to approach key theological ideas, such as covenant and redemption, by analysing the use of such terms in the MT. But it would be methodologically preferable to begin by examining the LXX and writings depending on it. Müller's 'plea' (1996) that the LXX should be used instead of the Hebrew Bible by Christians as the appropriate complement to the NT may be exaggerated, but it draws attention to important issues in the relationship between the NT authors and their biblical texts.

There are a number of up-to-date treatments both of the textual ramifications of NT quotations, and of the use made of the OT by NT writers; some are suggested at the end of this chapter. What will be briefly highlighted here is the distinctive effect that the LXX has sometimes had on NT authors in places where it differs from the MT. A few examples only can be given, but they demonstrate ways in which LXX readings provided NT authors with opportunities they would not have found in the Hebrew version alone.

1. *Isa. 6:9–10*. This difficult passage, which in the MT reads: 'make the mind of this people dull ...' etc., is rendered by the LXX: 'for this people's heart has grown dull ...' etc. The LXX perhaps avoids the scandal of God apparently wishing to prevent the people's repentance. In the closing words of Acts 28:27, Luke has Paul use this verse to account for the non-belief of the Jewish leaders in Rome and the justification of the Gentile mission. The handling of *Isa. 6:9–10* in the LXX and the NT is discussed by Evans (1989: 61–8, 81–135).

2. *Amos 9:12*. The nationalistic promise of MT *Amos 9:12* is used in Acts 15:17 in its universalizing LXX form to justify the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church. It is debatable whether this was the translator's intention (cf. Jobes and Silva 2000: 195; Dines 1992: 302–4), or the unwitting result of his (mis?) reading of the Hebrew (cf. Joosten 2000: 36–7).

3. *Hab. 2:3*. In the MT, this verse speaks of the vision (*hāzôn*, masculine) which will surely come (masculine verb forms). In the LXX, a distinction is made between the vision (*horasis*, feminine) and someone (*auton*, masculine) who must be waited for, and who will surely come (*erchomenos*, masculine). With the addition of a definite article, Heb. 10:37 further pinpoints this mysterious character as 'the one who is coming' (*ho erchomenos*) and is able to relate the prophecy to Christ's second coming.

4. *Gal. 3:15–18*. A different kind of possibility is provided by the LXX's stereotypical use of *diathēkē*, 'will', 'testament', for Hebrew *b^erit*, 'covenant', 'contract'. In Gal. 3:15–18, Paul plays on the double meaning (the specialized biblical one, and the normal Greek one): 'once a person's will (*diathēkē*) has been ratified, no one adds to it or annuls it [v. 15] ... My point is this, the law ... does not annul a covenant (*diathēkē*) previously ratified by God ... [v. 17]'.

Further examples may be found in Jobes and Silva (2000: 194–201); Dines (1990: 624).

Patristic use of the Septuagint

Exegetical use of the LXX continued beyond the NT and for as long as the LXX provided the main focus of attention, either directly in Greek or through the various versions, especially OL (see above, Chapter 1, pp. 9–11). Exposition of the Hebrew canon (and of the other books accepted by the Greek and Latin churches) played a central role from the very beginning.

As Christianity grew and diversified, the interpretation of key texts of Scripture became an issue both within Christianity (for instance, in controversies with Gnostics and other divergent individuals and groups who came to be regarded as heretics) and in encounters with Judaism. The part played by the interpretation of Scripture in all these controversies was crucial.

Polemical and apologetic writing, however, was only one aspect of the use of Scripture. The earliest evidence, from before the end of the first century ce, comes in pastoral contexts, with the letters of Clement of Rome and, in the early-second century, the Letter of Barnabas. A strongly pastoral and homiletic use of Scripture was to continue, marked particularly by typological interpretations, whereby key events, figures, objects and so on in the earlier Scriptures were seen as anticipations of analogous events in the life of Christ and the Church (the method, like allegory, has earlier roots; cf. 1 Cor. 10:4). There were also many expository works, using various literary

genres, for the instruction and edification of the faithful; brief summaries of books (*kephalaia*); full-scale commentaries; collections of 'Questions and Answers' on difficult passages; anthologies of thematic texts (*florilegia*), sometimes with extracts from commentaries added (*catenae*); and various others.

Early Christian writers followed certain basic principles. When the NT writings were definitively collected, both they and the earlier Scriptures were regarded as one unified corpus. The NT, however, was the point of departure for understanding the OT, and in instances of textual discordance the NT was always given precedence. For example, both the LXX and the MT of Amos 5:27 read: 'I will take you into exile *beyond Damascus*.' The NT, however, in Acts 7:43 has 'beyond *Babylon*' (emphases added). Although patently odd, this reading is upheld as correct, simply because it is in the NT and 'the first martyr could not have made a mistake' (Jerome, *In Amos*; for this and the remarks of other patristic writers, see Dines 1992: 173–4).

The OT was mainly understood as the story of God's preparation of the people who would receive Christ; all the Scriptures were regarded as divinely inspired and so prophetic. The prophetic nature of Scripture contributed to the belief that, as well as a literal meaning, there were also moral, typological and allegorical ones, and always, within every passage, a spiritual meaning and application which included the others (de Lange 1976: 83). Where writers differ is in their choice of method, in the emphasis they give to the literal meaning (which includes textual discussion), the typological meaning and the allegorical meaning (which often involves etymologizing), and in the combination of these different strands of interpretation. Origen, for instance, considered that the literal sense was for simple folk who could not follow explanations of a more demanding kind, while the real treasures of Scripture were to be found only through the more spiritual forms of exegesis. The Antiochian exegete Theodore of Mopsuestia, on the contrary, insisted that the first meaning of the OT lay within the history of Israel itself; he allowed only a very few verses to have a christological extension, although he acknowledged the typological sense of all the OT (Simonetti 1994: 69–74). Many authors, both Alexandrian and Antiochian, engaged in both kinds of exegesis, though usually emphasizing one over the other. Theodoret of Cyrrhus, for instance, although an Antiochian exegete, has a taste for allegory (Simonetti 1994: 74–6; Siquans 2002). Jerome, uniquely, attaches the literal, historical meaning to the Hebrew text, and the spiritual meaning(s) to the traditional LXX (Dines 1992: 23–4; 1998: 425).

The influence of the Septuagint on biblical interpretation

The nature and scope of patristic use of the Bible has been treated in several standard works (see 'Further reading'); as with the NT, I will simply give here a few examples of places where lexical choices, or material special to the LXX, have played a significant part in interpretation.

1. *Isa. 7:14*. For texts crucial to Jewish-Christian controversy, *Isa. 7:14* is one of the most obvious candidates. Here, the LXX's choice of *parthenos*, 'virgin', to render Hebrew *'almâ*, 'young woman', seemed to prove the miraculous nature of Christ's birth (it had already been used in *Matt. 1:23*). Jewish exegetes used versions with more neutral Greek renderings, such as *neanis* ('the Three'). Debates of this kind were instrumental in showing Christians that there were differences between the Hebrew and Greek texts and, even if they stuck staunchly to the LXX as inerrant, it was a contributing factor in the attempts of Origen and others to apply more rigorous checks on the text. What prompted the original choice of *parthenos* by the Isaiah translator in the mid-second century bce is impossible to tell; he may have drawn on existing Jewish exegetical tradition (Fernández Marcos 2000: 172, n. 81), or he may simply have wished to indicate that the girl was a virgin when she conceived.

2. *Prov. 8:22*. In this case, the lexical choice affected interpretation in an inner-Christian controversy. To describe the relationship of wisdom to God in creation, the MT uses an ambiguous verb, *qānan*, 'created' or 'acquired' or 'begot'; the LXX uses a creation verb, *ktizō*. Whatever the implications in the original translation, the text in Christian usage seemed to say clearly that divine Wisdom (now identified with Christ) had been created, not begotten. In the debates with Arius in the fourth and early-fifth centuries over the nature of the Son, this verse was used as a proof-text by those who argued for the subordinate status of the Son, while those who maintained that he was 'begotten' not 'created' had to be able to handle this Greek verse (the Hebrew would have left the argument open). For more on this controversy, see Simonetti 1994: 127–8.

3. *Amos 4:13*. The same verb played a part in the slightly later controversy over the status of the Holy Spirit. A key text here was *Amos 4:13*. The MT reads: 'For see, the one who ... creates wind (*bōrē' rū^ah*), reveals his thoughts (*mah-šēhō*) to mortals ...'. The LXX has, 'For see, I am he who ... creates wind (*ktizōn pneuma*) and proclaims to men his anointed (*christon autou*) ...'. The apparently clear reference to the second Person of the Trinity with *christon* (the translation presupposes a different division and vocalization of almost the same Hebrew consonants read more plausibly by the MT) made it natural to take *pneuma* as referring to the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, the sense seemed to be that the Holy Spirit was a creature. The verse figured prominently in disputes about the consubstantiality of the Spirit, even after the definition of the Council of Constantinople in 381 ce, until eventually contact with the Hebrew text made it clear that there was no reference to Christ there and that *pneuma* probably had its ordinary meaning of 'wind'. As with *Isa. 7:14*, it is difficult to know how to interpret the exegetical import of the original translation, which can be explained in terms of a misreading of the Hebrew consonantal text, but which may perhaps also be the outcome of contemporary eschatological interpretation. For further discussion, see Dines (1992: 152–6).

4. *Job 42:14*. A very different problem was encountered here, where the name of Job's third daughter, in Hebrew *keren-happûk*, 'horn of antimony' (or, 'pot of eye makeup'), is rendered as *Amaltheiās keras*, 'horn of Amaltheia' (the 'horn of plenty', associated in Greek mythology with the nymph who fed the infant Jupiter on goat's milk). Theodore of Mopsuestia was so shocked by this rendering that he concluded (on other grounds as well) that the author of *Job* must have been a pagan. For more details on this, and for other examples, see Dines (1990: 624).

Issues in the patristic use of the Septuagint

If the above examples seem rather desultory, it is because, in this area, 'the history of Christian exegesis has yet to be written' (Fernández Marcos 2000: 280). The amount of raw material waiting to be studied is vast and specialized. It needs, as Harl has said, co-operation between LXX scholars and patristic experts (1999: 193; she, of course, combines both areas of expertise). But there are difficulties to be overcome. Critical editions are needed for a great many patristic works before reliable translations can be made from the Greek or Latin. One of the major obstacles in the way of this essential work is that establishing the text of the LXX used by any given author is often difficult: with the Hellenistic Jewish writers, decisions must be taken about whether a passage is being paraphrased or quoted directly. In the latter case, the citation must be identified textually: is it a witness to the oldest form of the LXX? Or has it been affected by one of the recensions (Hexaplaric, Antiochian, etc.)? Or even 'normalized' against reworkings in the NT? This is a slow process, and it is understandable that some scholars are reluctant to utilize patristic evidence until the textual work has been accomplished. But Fernández Marcos is surely right to insist that '[i]t is absolutely necessary to work on two fronts: by the production of modern critical editions that will reduce the great textual anarchy present in the field, and by monographs that trace the history of exegesis through the various schools and writers' (2000: 285); Siquans (2002), on Theodoret of Cyrillus, provides one contribution. There are a number of reasons why this gargantuan task is so necessary.

1. The patristic writers reveal the effect of the LXX on the development of Christian thought during its first momentous centuries; to ignore or pass superficially over this period is to lose out on a whole rich world of biblical interpretation and risk having an impoverished understanding of some of the deepest roots that have fed into the modern world.

2. The writers of the first four to five hundred years ce were closer to the language and culture of the LXX itself than we are, despite the linguistic and historical changes that occurred as time passed and the Hellenistic Age passed into that of first the Roman and then the Byzantine Empire. The Christian writers who used the Greek Bible were, in the main, still Greek speakers themselves; Harl has made a case for taking more seriously than is often done their reactions to unusual or problematic words, or to readings which may be authentic but which are passed over by modern editors (1999: 196–200; cf. Leonas 2001: 393). Fernández Marcos, too, draws attention to the importance of patristic evidence, which is not always fully exploited in the Göttingen editions (2000: 258–9). As many scholars confidently assert that these editions are reliable reconstructions of the earliest form of the LXX, it is important to be aware of this

proviso. The editors may understandably feel that the patristic evidence is not yet sufficiently under control, but, as more reliable patristic texts become available, occasional adjustments to critical reconstruction of 'the LXX' may well become necessary.

3. The complete patristic commentaries show how whole books were understood in Greek by Greek-speaking exegetes (a prologue often indicates the author's grasp of the main argument, aim and continuity of a biblical book). Often, too, the arrangement into sections is of interest in showing how the text was understood long before the later Hebrew-based divisions. Comparisons between different commentaries on the same book (for instance, those of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrrhus and Cyril of Alexandria on the Minor Prophets, all written in the fourth or fifth century) point up exegetical differences, similarities, borrowings, shared traditions and other elements that shed light on the way the LXX functioned in the life of different churches.

This does not mean that everything in patristic writings is useful (cf. Harl 1999: 200; Fernández Marcos 2001: 239–40). These writings do show, however, that, provided we understand their hermeneutical and exegetical principles and methods, they have a serious contribution to make, both textually and for the history of interpretation. Despite the challenges they present, they should not (*pace* Jobes and Silva 2000: 204) be 'beyond the scope' of any new general survey of the LXX's history and influence.

Modern interest in the LXX

Today, LXX studies are flourishing, and on a number of fronts: textual, linguistic, exegetical and cultural (for a brief resumé of great clarity, see Harl 1988).

The Septuagint and textual criticism

Work continues, and will necessarily always continue, to establish as reliable a text of the LXX as possible, through assessing manuscript evidence, including any new material that may become available (papyri, inscriptions, etc.) and through evaluating readings both in other versions (OL, Coptic, etc.) and in secondary sources (e.g. patristic writings). Although we can never be completely certain that the earliest form of the translations has been recovered, we need to have the kind of thorough and reliable editions that the Göttingen editors provide. All other work depends on having a wide range of textual witnesses easily available through the critical apparatuses, so as to see where a given text has a simple history, and where there are complications or uncertainties.

The first task, then, is to establish the text of the LXX itself. But for some scholars the ultimate interest is the Hebrew Bible, and the LXX is studied as a potential aid to the textual criticism of the MT (e.g. Klein 1974; Tov 1997). This means assessing whether the Hebrew lying behind divergent readings of the LXX differed from the MT and, if so, whether it can be reconstructed by retranslating the LXX into Hebrew (retro-version). Translation technique and the other factors which might explain a divergent reading without positing a different source-text have, of course, to be considered. Evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls has, in some cases, proved that the LXX's source-text was indeed different (e.g. for Jeremiah, Job and 1–2 Kingdoms, where the differences are substantial; for Amos 1:3 and Gen 1:9, to mention just two minor examples). These finds make it credible that other divergences stem from the translators' scrolls, rather than their exegesis (though this is usually disputable) and that these too may contribute to the task of reconstructing forms of pre-Masoretic Hebrew. The textual critic then has to decide whether non-Masoretic readings in the LXX are witnesses to some alternative Hebrew version, or whether they preserve a more authentic reading against which the MT should be corrected. The presupposition here is that there was one original Hebrew form of each book which then gave rise to different 'recensions' (i.e. an *Urtext* model similar to that assumed for the LXX; cf. above, Chapter 3, pp. 58–9). Tov (1997) sets out the criteria and explores the evidence in a masterly way. This utilization of the LXX is entirely proper, although it belongs to the study of the Hebrew rather than the Greek Bible. It is only undesirable if it gives the impression that somehow the Hebrew Bible is more important *per se* than the Greek one, whereas, for reasons both textual, religious and cultural, the LXX has its own intrinsic value as an object of study.

Modern translations

There is an urgent need for good, up-to-date translations into modern languages: happily, a number of projects are under way. The French 'Bible d'Alexandrie' (BA) and the American 'New English Translation of the Septuagint' (NETS) are among the most important and have already been discussed (above, pp. 116–17). A new German translation is imminent, nearer to NETS than BA in its approach, but combining the insights of both (Kreuzer 2001). The 'Septuagint Commentary Series' (above, p. xvii) also promises a good balance. All these, but especially NETS and BA, point up different approaches to understanding the LXX in relation to its source-texts and its Greek readers, and how modern translations should reflect this relationship (the 'Septuagint Commentary Series' has a different focus; see above, p. 107).

Harl defines the aim of the BA as 'to offer as exact a translation of the Greek text of the LXX as possible' (2001: 181). The text is to be translated as a Hellenistic Jewish reader, and as a later Christian one, would have understood its Greek; the sense of the Hebrew original is not to be imposed on it. On the other hand, as the BA aims to give modern French readers a chance to encounter the LXX in the way in which it was first received, that is, as Scripture, some traditional vocabulary is retained (such as *seigneur* for *kurios* and *alliance* for *diathēkē*), a deliberately archaic style is sometimes sought and adjustments are made to what would otherwise sound too shockingly literal in French (Harl 1998: 35; 2001: 196–7). As the emphasis is on the early reception of the LXX as Scripture, coverage is given, through exegetical notes, to Jewish and (especially) Christian interpretation. For an evaluation and critique, see Fernández Marcos (2001: 238–40).

The goal of NETS is to create both 'a faithful translation of the LXX' and 'a tool for synoptic use with the NRSV for the study of the Greek and Hebrew Bible texts' (Pietersma 2001b: 217). The focus is on the relationship between the LXX and its Hebrew (and occasionally Aramaic) sources. The fundamental conviction is that the Greek versions were solely intended to render the Hebrew accessible. These were so influenced by Hebrew language and constructions that a modern translator is justified in rendering the Greek according to the meaning of the Hebrew, since this is what the translator intended (cf. above, Chapter 3, p. 52; Chapter 6, p. 116). For illuminating evaluation and critique, see van der Kooij (2001: 229–31) and Fernández Marcos (2001: 233–8). It will be disastrous if the two approaches become entrenched positions. It is true that they reflect two radically different perceptions of the origins of the LXX (neither of them verifiable for the moment) and of its nature as a text, but they also have much in common. Both take the Greek text seriously and aim to render it faithfully (they part company on modern translational method). And both give necessary help to modern readers who cannot manage the original Greek or Hebrew. Neither is without its problematic aspects: for NETS, the adjusting of the LXX to the NRSV, that is, essentially to the MT; for BA, the filtering of the LXX through 'readers' who belong to different times and places. Fernández Marcos suggests that we also need, for 'a biblically well-educated audience', a modern translation of the LXX as free-standing Jewish Hellenistic literature, which would prioritize neither Hebrew source-texts nor later reception (2001: 236–7). But even this neutral approach would not solve the problem of a necessary historical context in which to ground a translation, the missing Archimedean point for LXX origins.

The Septuagint as Christian Scripture

There is a growing appreciation in Christian biblical studies of the importance of the LXX for the NT, the Apocrypha and the early interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. It is also appreciated as a constituent element in patristic study and in the early history of biblical interpretation in both eastern and western churches. For some, there is also a hermeneutical interest in how to present and use the LXX in the context of contemporary church life and Bible study. Commentaries on individual books of the LXX are now a desideratum (cf. Pietersma and Wright 1998; the 'Septuagint Commentary Series', above, p. xvii).

The Septuagint as Jewish Scripture

The rediscovery of the LXX as the medium in which many Hellenistic (and later) Jews, both in Palestine and elsewhere, heard, read and knew the Law and the Prophets and the other books of their ancestors (cf. the prologue to Sirach), is proving fruitful for research. The LXX takes us back before the Christian era to the Jewish culture which gave it birth. The study of the LXX as a witness to the religious outlook of Greek-speaking Judaism

(in which already elements of later rabbinic *halakah* and *haggadah* can be discerned) is one which encourages the reconstruction of the historical circumstances (including date and place) of the translations themselves. To talk of ‘the LXX’ (in the sense of the modern edited texts) as ‘the Bible of Hellenistic Judaism’ could, however, be misleading. Evidence is accruing of how quickly alternative versions began to circulate, whether accidentally altered or deliberately revised or ‘corrected’. The existence of the latter category shows that ‘the LXX’ (in the sense of the original translations) was never universally accepted. It would be more accurate to talk about ‘the Bible in Greek’ (just as ‘the LXX’ as ‘the Bible of the Early Church’ needs to be analysed into the various text-forms and recensions used in the different churches).

The Septuagint and Hellenistic culture

One of the most promising new developments in LXX study is the interest shown in it by classical scholars and historians of the Hellenistic period. This accompanies a marked surge of interest in Hellenistic language, literature and culture in general. The older perception of the LXX as the Hebrew Bible rendered into a Greek which is clumsy (or worse) and heavily permeated by Semitisms, is changing as study of the language of the LXX goes hand in hand with a better understanding of Koine Greek itself. Clearer definitions of how to distinguish Semitisms from natural Greek usage suggest to some linguists that the LXX could be an important witness to a crucial period (the third and second centuries bce) in the development of Koine. But there is urgent need for critical tools: a complete grammar and a full lexicon of the LXX being two of the most obvious lacks (but see Boyd-Taylor 2001 for problems in lexicography due to lack of agreement—highlighted by the BA and NETS approaches—on the very nature of the Greek to be translated).

As literature, too, the LXX deserves examination and appreciation alongside the other remains of what was manifestly a time of brilliance and productivity for Jewish writers. Greater co-operation between biblical and classical scholars could result in exciting new insights on both sides. For as well as marking the beginning of a new phase in Judaism, with the traditional Hebrew Scriptures rendered into a new language, the LXX is, as far as we know, a new genre in Hellenistic Greek literature, the first sustained attempt to render the religious texts of a Semitic people into Greek: not just paraphrasing the essentials, as some of the other educated Jewish writers did, but representing them word by word, book by book, mostly in the common idiomatic language of everyday life, occasionally in something more obviously literary.

From whatever perspective we approach it, the LXX is surely an achievement which invites surprise, admiration and continuing study on all fronts.

Further reading

Much of the content of this chapter is covered by Fernández Marcos (2000, Chapters 17 (‘Indirect Transmission: Biblical Quotations’) and 20 (‘The Religion of the Septuagint and Hellenism’); Jobes and Silva (2000, Chapters 10 (‘Interpreting the Septuagint’) and 14 (‘Theological Development in the Hellenistic Age’). See also Dines (1990); Joosten (2000).

For more on Hellenistic Jewish authors and pseudepigrapha, see Swete (1914: 369–72); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 269–72); Holladay (1983); Bartlett (1985: 35–55 (‘the Sibylline Oracles’), 56–71; (‘Eupolemus’) van der Horst (1988).

For Philo, see Borgen (1992: 337–9; 1997, Chapters 3–7; on the various exegetical forms used by Philo); Kamesar (2002). For Josephus, see Bartlett (1985: 79–86, on *Ant.*); Feldman (1992: 985–8); Pelletier (1988: 99–102).

For the New Testament, see Fernández Marcos (2000: 320–37); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 274–88); Jobes and Silva (2000: 183–205); Swete (1914: 381–405 (‘Quotations from the LXX in the New Testament’); Longenecker (1975); McLay (2003).

On the Early Church, see Fernández Marcos (2000: 274–86 (‘*Aporiae* and Biblical Commentaries’), 287–301 (‘The Literature of the *Catena*’), 338–62 (‘The Septuagint and Early Christian Literature’); Harl, Dorival and Munnich (1988: 289–320); Swete (1914: 406–32 (‘Quotations from the LXX in Early Christian Writings’), 462–77 (‘Influence of the LXX on Christian Literature’); Harl (1999); Horbury (1988: 727–87); Simonetti (1994).

For the BA/NETS approaches to translation, see Harl (2001: 181–97); Pietersma (2001b: 217–28), with the

evaluations of van der Kooij (2001: 229–31) and Fernández Marcos (2001: 235–40). Hiebert (2001: 263–84) gives a ‘hands-on’ demonstration of the NETS method for Genesis; Dogniez (2001: 199–216) does the same for BA Zephaniah. The NETS website (which includes a general introduction to the project) may be found at <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/>. See also Pietersma 1996 for the NETS translators’ handbook. For details about BA, go to <http://www.tradere.org/biblio/lxx/harl.htm>. The website for the new German translation-project is found at <http://www.uni-koblenz.de/~sept/index2.html>.

Jennifer M. Dines and Michael A. Knibb, *The Septuagint* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 131.