

Staffan Olofsson

# **As a Deer Longs for Flowing Streams**

A Study of the Septuagint Version of  
Psalm 42–43 in its Relation to the Hebrew Text

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht

Staffan Olofsson, As a Deer Longs for Flowing Streams



# De Septuaginta Investigationes (DSI)

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## Preface

The choice of a psalm from the Psalter for a monograph on the Hebrew text and the Septuagint translation is an easy choice. At least for me! One reason is obvious; I have to a high degree focused on the LXX Psalms in my work with the LXX translation. My thesis and most of my articles on the Septuagint are related to the Psalter. Furthermore, I am not aware of any other monograph with a detailed discussion of the Hebrew and the Greek text of a specific psalm, and with an emphasis on the translation technique of the Septuagint.

Each book has its history. This one has a long history. I started the work in connection with my doctoral studies when I had an ambition to write about the translation technique of book two in the LXX book of Psalms. Nevertheless, this was an undertaking too extensive for a doctoral thesis. From the beginning, it was a translation-technical study but it has grown into a commentary on the Hebrew and the Greek texts, even if the emphasis on translation technique remains the backbone of this monograph.

I will express my gratitude to my colleagues at Uppsala University, as well as in the Old Testament seminar at Uppsala, from whom I have learned much. The conversation and friendly discussion with Samuel Byrskog, Lennart Thörn, Rosmari Lillas, Gunnar Samuelsson and Tobias Hägerland, my colleagues at the University of Gothenburg as teachers of the Old and the New Testament, have provided a great stimulus for me in my research work. I have presented some of the material included in this book in the Old Testament seminar at the University of Gothenburg where it received a stimulating response that has improved my presentation. My heartfelt thanks go to the doctoral student in New Testaments Exegetics, Tobias Hägerland, who has checked my Greek in parts of the book with great patience and accuracy. A special word of thanks is also due to Jon van Leuven and Heather A. McKay, who undertook to correct my English. However, I am fully responsible for all remaining faults. I am also grateful for all the works that have contributed to my understanding of the Septuagint version. I recognize that I am dependent on other scholars in many respects but I take the responsibility for the views expressed in this book.

A part of this monograph has been translated into Swedish and published in *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok* 2005 with the title “‘Som hjorten längtar till bäckens vatten’. En studie av metaforspråk och teologi i Ps 42–43.”

Gothenburgh, June 2011

Staffan Olofsson



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The aim of the study

There are several goals which I have tried to attain with this study. First and foremost I have made a comprehensive investigation of Hebrew and Greek translation equivalents in Ps 42–43 in the Psalter and in LXX as a whole. Studies of translation technique have a value of their own but they can also be utilized for several different purposes. They can be of importance for grammars of the Septuagint and for dictionaries of the Old and the New Testaments and for the preparation of a critical Septuagint text. The extensive translation-technical emphasis and the discussion of text-critical matters make it possible to use this book to present a more accurate Old Greek text and it may thus contribute to a new critical edition of the Greek Psalter. Although *Psalmi cum Odis*, the critical text in the Göttingen edition, was an excellent accomplishment for its time and represents a high standard of scholarship, it can be improved upon. Several Mss were unknown to A. Rahlfs and he did not have systematic studies of translation technique to build on; and the Lucianic manuscripts, which were not highly regarded by Rahlfs, are now regarded as important text witnesses for establishing the Old Greek. Rahlfs relied mainly upon a combination of manuscripts when he presented the Greek text in *Psalmi cum Odis*. However, it is not enough to build on manuscripts – a systematic investigation of the translator’s method must be carried out before one can use the manuscripts in a proper way. Thus, a more consistent use of translation-technical studies would make it possible to come closer to the Old Greek text. This book is also in some respects in itself a text-critical study, since all variants in Rahlfs’ edition are referred to and studied.

The book is also a commentary on the Hebrew and the Greek texts of Ps 42–43. Like other commentaries, it describes the position of the psalm as part of the Korah psalms; it presents the unity and form of the psalm, its structure and its relation to the close context. As a commentary on both the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, it gives an overall interpretation of the psalm in Hebrew and in Greek. The commentary is especially focused on the meaning of the metaphors and the reflection of temple theology. This detailed study does not only include the translation equivalents, the seman-

tic meanings of the Hebrew and Greek words are also discussed and parallels in the LXX and in the Hebrew Bible are cited.

## 1.2 The presuppositions and the method used

LXX Psalms is a translation where the word-for-word character is conspicuous; it is a version that tried to render every single word of the original, preferably with one single word in Greek and, wherever possible, to follow the exact word order of the original. The study of such a translation must focus to a high degree on the Hebrew parent text, since sometimes this is the only way to make it possible to understand the meaning of the Greek text. Accordingly, the Hebrew text at times ought to be used as an arbiter of meaning.

The translation of the LXX text in my work is, if nothing else is suggested, from the latest Accordance version of *A New English translation of the Septuagint: and the other Greek translations traditionally included under that title*, for which I will use the abbreviation NETS. NETS has a certain official character for the academic community, and it is supported by the *International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*. The translation of the Hebrew is mainly taken from the NRSV but I have felt free to discuss different possibilities to interpret the Hebrew and the Greek texts and to depart from the textual choices in NETS. The choice of NRSV accords with the presuppositions in NETS, since NETS is consciously built on the translation NRSV.

Several new translations of the LXX version of the book of Psalms from which I have benefited have appeared in recent years. These are: the translation by A. Lazarus, *The Holy Psalter from the Septuagint*, the one by the Fathers of the Holy Transfiguration Monastery, *The Psalter According to the Seventy*, and the translation by J.M. de Vinck and Leonidas C. Contos, *The Psalms Translated from the Greek Septuagint*.

The basis for this study is the Masoretic text, as is in fact the basis for nearly all investigations of the translation technique of a LXX translator. To be honest, the investigations, whether explicitly or implicitly, refer to the exact vocalization and thus the derivation of the terms by the Masoretes. I have decided to make this state of affairs transparent in my discussion by citing MT, i.e. the fully vocalized Hebrew text of Codex Leningradensis, as the point of departure. This does not suggest that I have made a decision regarding the *Vorlage* of the LXX text. On the contrary, it rather makes the initial position from which deviations are measured as clear as possible.

It is, actually, the same point of departure as that used in works of textual criticism or in discussions regarding the textual basis of modern translations where all make the vocalized MT the norm for the description of textual variants. See e.g. BHK, BHS, BHQ and the text-critical appendix of NAB, of NEB and of the Swedish translation of the Bible (Bibel 2000).

While *Psalmi cum Odis* is the textual basis for the discussion of Ps 42–43, I have otherwise used Rahlfs' manual edition of the Septuagint for the scriptural references. When I have employed the text of the concordance of E. Hatch and H.A. Redpath, I have taken into account the corrections made by T. Muraoka.<sup>1</sup> The Greek text is used with accents, apart from the citation of Greek variants in the textual apparatus. I will, however, employ the accents in the text-critical discussion that follows the textual apparatus.

The Septuagint can be described as a combination of different kinds of translations, from a strictly literal translation to a paraphrase. Therefore, one cannot apply the experience from one translation unit, mostly a book, to any other unit in the LXX. In fact, the study of the methods of translation in the translation units in the LXX is the pivotal point not only for positing the *Vorlage* of the LXX but also as regards the Old Greek.

Comparisons made between equivalents in the Psalms and equivalents outside the Psalms, of a specific Hebrew word in a certain meaning, can be used only with great caution. The comparisons measure interesting differences if counterparts that are common in the Psalms occur rarely, or not at all, in other LXX books. Furthermore, such comparisons identify significant similarities when consistent renderings that are found in the book of Psalms are identical with such renderings in the whole of the LXX. However, the opposite is not true. Thus, one cannot treat inconsistent renderings in LXX as a whole and inconsistent renderings in the book of Psalms in the same way. A broad spectrum of equivalents in the LXX may be a collection of consistent translations from many different translators. Accordingly, one can only employ the comparison made in my study between the book of Psalms and the rest of the Septuagint with caution because it can at times be misleading. Frequently, therefore, I have looked separately at equivalents in specific translation units, e.g. Genesis and Isaiah.

### 1.3 The structure of the study

The structure of the monograph is as follows. Apart from the preface and the presentation of the aim of the study, I provide a background to the study

<sup>1</sup> T. Muraoka, *Hebrew/Aramaic Index to the Septuagint ...* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998).

that includes an overview of translation-technical studies and a discussion of textual criticism in the book of Psalms. Then I describe the position of the psalm in the Psalter as part of the collections of Korah psalms. The next section is directed to the interpretation and structure of the psalm in Hebrew taking into account the unity and form of the psalm, the structure, including refrains, repetitions and synonymous expressions, and the relation to the close context. This is then followed by a general interpretation of the psalm in Hebrew and in Greek. The next section, a detailed commentary of the Hebrew and the Greek text, is the main part of the monograph. The last part of the book is a compilation of results from the study regarding translation techniques and textual criticism. It is mainly structured according to the different aspects of literalism presented by J. Barr. Since the translation technique is unified in the LXX Psalms, the results of the study have a bearing on the translation technique of the LXX Psalms generally.

Each verse in the main part is dealt with under three headings, *Text*, *Textual Criticism*, and *Commentary*, apart from the repetition of the major refrain in 41 (42):12 and 42 (43):5. The heading *Text* reproduces the MT with translation from NRSV and Rahlfs' Greek text in *Psalmi cum Odis* with the NETS translation. Minor adjustments to the Hebrew and Greek texts are made, which occasionally result in modifications to the translations.

*Textual Criticism* presents Rahlfs' text-critical apparatus, with the addition of manuscript 2110 and comments on all the variants to Rahlfs' text, some of them in brief, others in detail. The question of a deviant *Vorlage* is discussed in my comments on Rahlfs' textual apparatus in the order of the words in the Greek text. Since the question of the *Vorlage* has a bearing on the translation equivalents, it is often touched upon in the Commentary as well.

The section entitled *Commentary* deals with the semantic as well as translation-technical aspects of the words and phrases, paying attention to both the Hebrew and the Greek. I will refer to all Hebrew words extant in the verse and their translation. The order of the discussion in the Commentary section is, in general terms, first questions related to broader aspects of the Hebrew text, then questions regarding semantic aspects and, last but not least, translation-technical issues which follow from the previous discussion. All translation-technical discussions are based on complete statistics of equivalents in LXX Psalms – and often referring to the LXX as a whole.

My primary aim is to discuss the original meaning of the LXX Psalms, i.e. what the translator intended with his rendering. Therefore, my book does not include an investigation of possible readings of the Greek text not related to the Hebrew, or questions concerning the religious influence that the LXX version exercised. "The intention of the translator" should not be

understood at face value. It is of course not possible to probe into the mind of the translator and my suggestions are based on the kind of translation that he actually made, his translation technique.

Words such as “rendering”, “translation”, “equivalent”, and “counterpart” have the same meaning and are thus used as synonyms for the sake of variation. I have also employed “Septuagint” as well as “LXX” for the same reason. “Old Greek” as well as OG are used without discrimination and “*Vorlage*” or the synonymous term “Hebrew *Vorlage*” are used in their traditional sense.

“Translation technique” is here, as is common in translation-technical studies of the Septuagint, used for the characteristics of the translation as it left the hands of the translator. Therefore, it does not presuppose that the translator used consciously adopted principles in the translation, let alone a theory of translation technique. The LXX Psalms may have been literal partly for the practical reason that this was the easiest way to make a translation, especially for translators who embarked upon a pioneer enterprise and partly as a means to reflect the actual wording of the Hebrew *Vorlage*.

Although I use the term “translator”, it by no means implies that I exclude the possibility that the translation of the Psalms was a joint enterprise. The LXX Psalms appears to be the work of a single translator, or perhaps of coordinated teamwork, because no significant differences in the vocabulary or style within the Psalter can be seen.<sup>2</sup>

I adhere to the convention in LXX studies to present the reference in LXX as well as in MT when both texts are discussed, and when the numbers depart from each other. I always give the LXX numbering first and then the number in MT in parenthesis. The order of the books follows the Christian tradition and with the Apocrypha separately in the end.

The exact scriptural references are often given rather than the numbers, which makes it easy to see the textual basis for my statistics. When a certain equivalent occurs very frequently, however, I have confined myself to the number but in which case I give the other equivalents with exact references. This makes it simple to secure the references of the main equivalent with a glance at, for example, the concordance of Lisowsky. I will discuss the doubtful cases in the footnotes because the Greek text and the *Vorlage* are sometimes uncertain. The scriptural references are as much as possible

<sup>2</sup> Thus, e.g. T.F. Williams, “Towards a Date for the Old Greek Psalter”, in R.J.V. Hiebert/C. Cox/P.J. Gentry (ed.), *The Old Greek Psalter: Studies in Honour of Albert Pietersma* (JSOTSup 332; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 255–60; A. Soffer, “The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Psalms”, in S. Jellicoe, *Studies in the Septuagint: Origins, Recensions, and Interpretations. Selected Essays with a Prolegomenon by S. Jellicoe* (Library of Biblical Studies; New York: Ktav, 1974), 417; J. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 76; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 33.



given in the footnotes to enhance the readability of the monograph and to make the overall choice of translation equivalents visible in the main text.

I fully recognize that I am dependent on other scholars in many respects, which the references in the footnotes amply testify, even though I have tried to make my own conclusions. The most original part of the book is my methodology. When I discuss translation technique, textual criticism, and theological exegesis, I will employ methods congruent with the outlook that is presented in my dissertation and my scholarly articles. The translation-technical groundwork in this monograph is mainly based on my own investigation of the text and is seldom dependent on the work of others.

## 1.4 The origin of the Psalter

The book of Psalms is one of the most discussed books in the Septuagint. Therefore, the origin of the LXX book of Psalms is much studied but no consensus has been attained so far. Consequently, it is difficult to give a date and a place of origin for the LXX translation. I myself would favour a date in the second century BCE.<sup>1</sup>

The translation of the Psalter has been associated with Palestine by H.-J. Venetz on the basis of some lexical choices in common with the so-called kaige group, which, according to the studies of D. Barthélemy, was at home in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> The text of the LXX Psalms would in that case be connected with a Palestinian hermeneutic tradition,<sup>3</sup> because it has several lexical choices in common with the kaige group.<sup>4</sup>

However, the LXX Psalms is by no means part of the kaige group or influenced by it which is clearly shown in the studies of O. Munnich and S. Olofsson. The similarity in the choice of equivalents between the Psalter and the kaige group, which does exist, can be explained otherwise. The revision has in some cases been based on the vocabulary of the book of Psalms, in a similar way but not so thoroughly, as later LXX books were drawing on the Greek Pentateuch for their choice of vocabulary.<sup>5</sup>

Since the kaige group is based on the fact that the revisers took up extant Hebrew-Greek correspondences from LXX books, it is no surprise that

<sup>1</sup> See especially the discussion in Williams, “Towards a Date”, 261–76. Regarding the date of the translation of the book of Psalms, a date early in the second century BCE is favoured in e.g. G. Dorival/M. Harl/O. Munnich, *La Bible Grecque des Septante...* (Éditions de CERF – Éditions de C.N.R.S.; Paris: Le Cerf, 1988), 111, the second century BCE, without being more specific, is suggested in O. Munnich, “La Septante des Psaumes et le groupe kaige”, *VT* 33 (1983), 75–89 and the second half of the second century BCE in Schaper, *Eschatology*, 45; J. Schaper, “Der Septuaginta-Psalter als Dokument jüdischer Eschatologie”, in M. Hengel/A.M. Schwemer (ed.), *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (WUNT 7; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1994), 60–1. This dating presupposes that the translation of the Pentateuch is placed in the middle of the third century BCE, a common understanding, which I adhere to. There are, however, divergent voices suggesting a later date for the whole translation project, e.g. F. Clancy, “The Date of the LXX”, *SJOT* 16 (2002), 207–25, who argues that one cannot assume that the earliest LXX translations were being made before 150 BCE. Idem, 223. A. van der Kooij suggests a date for LXX Psalms in the first century BCE in his article “On the Place of Origin of the Old Greek of Psalms”, *VT* 33 (1983), 73.s

<sup>2</sup> H.-J. Venetz, *Die Quinta des Psalteriums. Ein Beitrag zur Septuaginta- und Hexaplaforchung* (PIRHT, Sect. Biblique et Masorétique 1:2; Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1974), 72–84, especially p. 80; D. Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d’Aquila* (VTSup 11; Leiden: Brill, 1963), 4–10.

<sup>3</sup> Venetz, *Quinta*, 72–84, especially 83–4; van der Kooij, “Origin”, 69–71.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed investigation, see S. Olofsson, “Kaige Group and the Septuagint Book of Psalms”, in S. Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis. Collected Essays on the Septuagint Version* (ConBOT 57; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 134–75.

<sup>5</sup> See Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 169.

Hebrew-Greek equivalences from *inter alia* the book of Psalms are used. Certainly, they have employed the translation choices from several LXX books. The kaige group is after all a revisionary activity based on the extant LXX material, that is, their Hebrew-Greek equivalences use existing LXX books as their point of departure. Nonetheless, these are used in a more consistent way. Thus, existing standard Hebrew-Greek counterparts are the backbone of the revision. This does not suggest by any means that these books are connected with the kaige group in any true sense of the word.<sup>6</sup> The translation choices in the kaige group were conditioned by their principles of translation rather than by exegetical or theological principles. With this in mind, Palestine as the suggested geographical milieu in which the LXX Psalms was translated,<sup>7</sup> as well as the supposed connection with Palestinian hermeneutic, remain unproven premises.<sup>8</sup>

### 1.5 Previous studies of the LXX Psalms

I will now turn to the general translation technique of the Psalter as characterized by different scholars, and look at a representative selection of scholarly opinion.

The evaluation of J.E. Berg that, “the version as a whole must be pronounced to be a fairly literal one; too idiomatic to be slavishly so, too faithful to its archetype to in any way resemble a paraphrase,”<sup>9</sup> is a common description of LXX Psalms. “Fairly literal” seems to be a general label to which many scholars can subscribe. J. Barr characterizes the translator as “normally a fairly sober and literal worker”.<sup>10</sup> A. Pietersma regards the

<sup>6</sup> My position in this regard was unfortunately not expressed in a straightforward manner, and thus not fully understood by P.J. Gentry in his discussion of my article “The Kaige-Group and the Septuagint Book of Psalms” in B.A. Taylor (ed.), *IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies in Cambridge 1995* (SBLSCS 45, Atlanta, Georgia 1997), 189–230. See P.J. Gentry, “The Greek Psalter and the *καίγει* Tradition”, in Hiebert/Cox/Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter*, 78–80. See also the revised edition of my article “Kaige Group and the Septuagint Book of Psalms” in Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 134–75. Therefore, I have here stated my case in a more explicit way than I did in my original article.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Munnich, “La Septante des Psaumes”, 80–3.

<sup>8</sup> Venetz, *Quinta*, 80–4; van der Kooij, “Origin”, 70–1. The place of origin of the book of Psalms remains uncertain. The arguments for a Palestinian provenance are not decisive. See e.g. S. Olofsson, *The LXX Version. A Guide to the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (ConBOT 30; Stockholm: Almqvist&Wiksell, 1990), 54.

<sup>9</sup> J.E. Berg, *The Influence of the LXX upon the Peshitta Psalter* (New York: W. Drugulin, 1895), 43.

<sup>10</sup> J. Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the OT* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 249.

version as “a fairly literal translation of the Hebrew”.<sup>11</sup> C.A. Briggs is an exception to this evaluation since he argues that the translator “was concerned ... to give the sense of the original in intelligible Greek”.<sup>12</sup> The great majority of the scholars describe the translation technique in the Psalms as literal, rather than free, if such a dichotomy is allowed.

A literal translation has several features; thus a general description of the literality of the LXX Psalms may have focused on one or a couple of these characteristics. J. Barr depicts a way to distinguish among different aspects of literalism which is especially applicable to biblical translation.<sup>13</sup> These aspects are as follows:

The division into elements or segments, and the sequence in which these elements are represented.

The quantitative addition or subtraction of elements.

Consistency or non-consistency in the rendering.

Accuracy and level of semantic information.

Coded “etymological” indication of formal/semantic relationships obtaining in the vocabulary of the original language.

Level of text and level of analysis.<sup>14</sup>

A translation often consists of a combination of literal and free traits, and the different aspects of literality could sometimes be adversely, rather than complementarily, related to each other. It is thus of primary importance that aspects of literality that more or less contradict each other are not combined when one tries to describe the literality of a translation. The manner of translation of any given translator is not constant. Accordingly, the translators show different capabilities in separate fields. Therefore, one must, in the words of A. Aejmelaus, “strive to provide as many-sided a documentation of his working habits and abilities as possible”.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> A. Pietersma, “David in the Greek Psalms”, *VT* 30 (1980), 214–15. Cf. also I. Soisalon-Soininen, “Die Konstruktion des Verbs bei einem Neutrum Plural im griechischen Pentateuch”, *VT* 29 (1979), 190, who writes that “dieses Buch aber sehr wortgetreu übersetzt ist.”

<sup>12</sup> C.A. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, vol. I (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1906), XXV.

<sup>13</sup> J. Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (MSU 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1979), 294. Criteria for literalism are much easier to put forward than for free translation technique. Regarding the need of useful criteria, see E. Tov, “Compound Words in the LXX Representing Two or More Hebrew Words”, *Bib* 58 (1977), 195.

<sup>14</sup> Barr, “Typology”, 294. Some of these criteria can also be found in J.M. Rife, “The Mechanics of Translation Greek”, *JBL* 52 (1933), 245–6. See also J. Beekman/J. Callow, *Translating the Word of God. With Scripture and Topical Indexes* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1974), 19–23.

<sup>15</sup> A. Aejmelaus, “Characterizing Criteria for the Characterization of the Septuagint Translators: Experimenting on the Greek Psalter”, in Hiebert/Cox/Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter*, 55.

Subservience to the word order of the Hebrew text is a prime characteristic or even *the* primary characteristic of a literal translation.<sup>16</sup> G. Marquis has studied the word order of the LXX version of the book of Ezekiel in relation to MT. The study also includes statistics concerning the word order of Ps 1–78 in the LXX and in the MT, as well as representative samples from other books, i.e. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Job, 1 Samuel and 2 Kings.<sup>17</sup> That the Psalter is described as one of the most literal books in the sample studied, as regards the subservience of the Hebrew word order, is one result of the enquiry.<sup>18</sup> A study of LXX Psalms by Olofsson confirms this evaluation. The translation of the book of Psalms is evidently extremely literal as concerns the word order.<sup>19</sup>

The same is true as regards quantitative additions and subtractions of elements in relation to the MT. Such elements can be found and a few of them are long additions. However, they are probably reflections of a different Hebrew *Vorlage* and thus have no bearing on the translation technique. Additions making implicit information explicit in LXX Psalms are rare.

The translation is consistent but not rigorously consistent, concerning lexical consistency.<sup>20</sup> Often it has one main equivalent for a certain Hebrew lexeme but it is also common that two or more counterparts are used. Furthermore, it repeatedly uses one Greek word for the rendering of several Hebrew words. Or to express it another way, although the translation often is consistent it is seldom reciprocally consistent.<sup>21</sup> The translator chose an approach where consistency in the Hebrew-Greek equivalents can clearly be seen but he from time to time uses one Greek equivalent for a number of non-synonymous Hebrew counterparts. This technique is sometimes labelled “favourite words”, and there are several favourite words in the book of Psalms, ἀνομία, ἄρχων, βουλή, ἐπιποθεῖν, εὐδοκία, θαυμαστός, θυμός, καθιστάναι, κακοῦν, καταγίς, ὀργή, ῥέεσθαι, σαλεύεσθαι, συνάγειν, συνταράσσειν, σῶζειν, ταπεινοῦν, τaráσσειν, to mention only a few. Some of these can be found in Psalms 41–42: ἐπιποθεῖν,

<sup>16</sup> See e.g. Olofsson, *The LXX Version*, 13 and n. 115, 14 and n. 119, 120. See also G. Marquis, “Word Order as a Criterion for the Evaluation of Translation Technique in the LXX and the Evaluation of Word-Order Variants as Exemplified in LXX-Ezekiel”, *Text* 13 (1986), 61 and n. 6.

<sup>17</sup> Marquis, “Word Order in LXX-Ezekiel”, 63–7.

<sup>18</sup> Marquis, “Word Order in LXX-Ezekiel”, 64. Only 2 Kings displays a higher percentage.

<sup>19</sup> See Marquis, “Word Order in LXX-Ezekiel”, *passim*; S. Olofsson, “Studying the Word Order of the Septuagint”, in Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 105–33.

<sup>20</sup> For examples, see e.g. Williams, “Towards a Date”, 256–60.

<sup>21</sup> A reciprocally consistent translation refers to an equivalent in Greek that is the only counterpart to a certain Hebrew word that is never employed for any other Hebrew term. For the background and the necessity of this term, see Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 50–66.

θαυμαστός, ῥέεσθαι, and συνταράσσειν. Consequently, the translation exhibits a considerable degree of semantic levelling.<sup>22</sup> It is also common that one specific Greek equivalent is chosen in LXX Psalms, even though the Hebrew word has several meanings that are not natural to the Greek counterpart. This is a trait typical for literal translations and I will employ the term “stereotypical rendering” for this trait.

In terms of grammatical consistency, the LXX Psalms is often literal but free renderings do occur. J.H. Sailhamer, who has studied the translation of Hebrew verbs and participles, concludes that, although the translator strove for a literal translation, he “was not guided in his work by a commitment to a formal equivalency translation technique in his treatment of the verb. He apparently sought to give to the verbal forms in the LXX Psalms the Greek form required by their sense”,<sup>23</sup> and he was guided primarily by a dynamic equivalency translation technique in this regard.<sup>24</sup> The translator of the Psalms used a kind of rule of thumb: for verbs in the suffix conjugation in the indicative, he used the aorist, and for verbs in the prefix conjugation, he used mainly the future. Nearly 85% of the indicatives in the suffix conjugation are translated by the aorist, the present indicative does occur but is not common (less than 4%), the future, the imperfect and the perfect indicative approximately 2% and other counterparts even less. For the verb in the prefix conjugation, the translator used the future in approximately half of the cases but the present tense is also common and verbs in aorist indicative also occur (more than 20%); the perfect tense is used in 5-10% of the cases, while the imperfect is employed in less than 5%. In three cases in Ps 3–41 a noun renders a verb in the prefix conjugation. The most common translation of the active participle is the present participle in Greek but the use of the

<sup>22</sup> See e.g. the obvious semantic levelling in *words for anger*, T. Muraoka, “Pairs of Synonyms in the Septuagint Psalms”, in Hiebert/Cox/Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter*, 37–9, *words for sin*, Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 50–66, *words for hope*, A. Aejmelaeus, “Faith, Hope and Interpretation: A Lexical and Syntactical Study of the Semantic Field of Hope in the Greek Psalter”, in P.W. Flint/E. Tov/J.C. VanderKam (ed.), *Studies in the Hebrew Bible, Qumran, and the Septuagint. Presented to Eugene Ulrich* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), 360–4.

<sup>23</sup> J.H. Sailhamer, *The Translational Technique of the Greek Septuagint for the Hebrew Verbs and Participles in Psalms 3–41*, diss. (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1981), 213.

<sup>24</sup> Sailhamer, *Psalms 3–41*, XVI. But this is perhaps a somewhat misleading employment of the label dynamic equivalence, since not even Aquila had exact formal equivalences to the tenses of the verb. K. Hyvärinen, *Die Übersetzung von Aquila* (ConBOT 10; Lund: Liber Läromedel/Gleerup, 1977), 62. Concerning the LXX Psalms, see F.W. Mozley, *The Psalter of the Church. The Psalms Compared with the Hebrew, with Various Notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905), XVII; A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis* (Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum X; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1979), 23–4. For the definition of dynamic equivalence, see e.g. E.A. Nida/C.R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Helps for Translators 8. Prepared under the Auspices of the United Bible Societies; Leiden: Brill, 1974), 200. See also idem, 22–8.

present indicative sometimes occurs. It appears in 9% of the cases in Ps 3–41.<sup>25</sup>

In other aspects of grammatical consistency, the translation can be very literal indeed; e.g. it displays a very high degree of consistency as regards repetition of possessive suffixes of the Hebrew, which is contrary to good Greek style.<sup>26</sup> Causal ׀ is regularly rendered by ὅτι and very seldom by γάρ, ׀ with infinitive is as a rule translated by ἐν τῷ with infinitive, rather than with a temporal clause or a participial construction.<sup>27</sup> In other cases the translator achieved a better understanding comparable to the translators of the Pentateuch, e.g. in the case of the rendering of comparative ׀.<sup>28</sup>

LXX Psalms now and then displays an “etymological” indication of relationships obtaining in the vocabulary of the original language. This means that it employs similar forms between words in Greek where the Hebrew forms are similar. Thus, grammatical relations in Hebrew are imitated in the translation but this is not pursued in a systematic way, as is the case in Aquila.

The book of Psalms often departs from the vocalization in MT, and thus has a different interpretation of a Hebrew consonantal text in cases where the consonantal text is identical with the proto-Masoretic text.<sup>29</sup> This is less convincingly described as a free trait by Barr and is discussed by him under the label “Level of text and level of analysis.”<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, literal versus free translation technique is only one way to characterize the translation; another is to judge the translator’s competence. The opinions regarding his competence are varied. M. Flashar summarizes his view of the translator’s competence and his translation:

Der Mann ... war für seine große Aufgabe nicht ungeschickt. Wo seine Übersetzung nicht durch Fesseln und Rücksichten behindert ist, atmet sie Geist und Geschmack. Aber freilich, von diesen Fesseln, die ihn drückten, ist er nicht losgekommen, und sie drücken seiner Übersetzung oft genug den Stempel der Unbeholfenheit und Ungeschicklichkeit auf.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> See Sailhamer, *Psalms 3–41*.

<sup>26</sup> See R. Sollamo, “Repetition of Possessive Pronouns in the Greek Psalter: The Use and Non-Use of Possessive Pronouns in Renderings of Hebrew Coordinate Items with Possessive Suffixes”, in Hiebert/Cox/Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter, passim*, especially p. 53.

<sup>27</sup> See Aejmelaeus, “Characterizing Criteria”, 59.

<sup>28</sup> Aejmelaeus, “Characterizing Criteria”, 63–70.

<sup>29</sup> I define the proto-Masoretic text as a Hebrew consonantal text identical with that of the MT.

<sup>30</sup> Barr, “Typology”, 322–3.

<sup>31</sup> M. Flashar, “Exegetische Studien zum LXX-Psalter”, *ZAW* 32 (1912), 265–6. Swete even argues that the translator to a certain degree “shew obvious signs of incompetence”. H.B. Swete, *An Introduction to the OT in Greek* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), 316. In this evaluation, he was obviously dependent on Sinkler. See Swete, *Introduction*, 315 n. 2.

Generally speaking, most scholars give a positive evaluation of the fidelity of the translation as compared with other LXX books. F.X. Wutz compares it favourably with the Greek Pentateuch which is considered the best translation, or one of the best translations, in the LXX.<sup>32</sup> He emphasized that “die Psalmenübersetzung eine der sorgfältigsten Arbeiten der Übersetzer ist, die mit der Pentateuch zum mindestens konkurriert!”<sup>33</sup> S. Jellicoe asserts that the Psalter is distinguished among the Writings, the third group in the Hebrew canon, as “the one book in this category which the translators treated with respect.”<sup>34</sup>

The style of LXX Psalms can be accounted for in different ways. It is of course partly a consequence of the translation technique adopted. A.E. Goodman states that the style that characterizes the LXX Psalms hardly can be described as elegant: “in some ways it is clumsy, even at times to the point of being uncouth.”<sup>35</sup> R. Sollamo portrays the language of the Greek Psalter, based on the extremely literal character of the rendering of Hebrew possessive pronouns, as “unidiomatic and clumsy” and as having a “peculiarly Hebraistic character”.<sup>36</sup> F. Baethgen depicted the LXX version of Psalms as standing halfway between Ecclesiastes and Job as regards the style and elegance of the Greek, in his investigation of the value of the old translations of the Psalms. An extremely wide characterization! He described the translation as follows:

Die Uebersetzung der Psalmen hält die Mitte zwischen diesen beiden Extremen; schlichte Treue ohne Haschen nach eleganten Ausdrücken aber auch ohne ängstliches Haften am Buchstaben charakterisirt diese Uebersetzung ... Die Besonderheiten der semitischen Grammatik sind grösstentheils (sic!) genau und mit Verständniss (sic!) wiedergegeben. Da das Streben nach Genauigkeit den Uebersetzer in erster Linie

<sup>32</sup> The translation of the Pentateuch cannot be regarded as a single undertaking by one translator. The differences in translation technique between the five books are in fact great. See e.g. A. Aejmelaeus, *Parataxis in the Septuagint. A Study of the Renderings of the Hebrew Coordinate Clauses in the Greek Pentateuch* (AASF; Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 31: Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1982), 176–81. See also R. Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint* (AASF; Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 19: Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia 1982), 281–3, and A. Wifstrand, “Die Stellung der enklitischen Personalpronomina bei den Septuaginta” (*Årsberättelse för Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund 1949–1950*, II; Lund 1950), 50–5.

<sup>33</sup> F.X. Wutz, *Die Psalmen textkritisch untersucht* (München 1925), III.

<sup>34</sup> S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 66. Cf. H.St.J. Thackeray, *The Septuagint and Jewish Worship: A Study in Origins* (The Schweich Lectures 1920; London: Oxford University Press, 1921), 12–13.

<sup>35</sup> A.E. Goodman, “תּוֹרָה and תּוֹרָה in the Linguistic Tradition of the Psalter”, in P.R. Ackroyd/B. Lindars (ed.), *Words and Meanings. Essays presented to D.W. Thomas on his retirement from the Regius professorship of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge 1968* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 111.

<sup>36</sup> Sollamo, “Possessive Pronouns”, 53.



leitete, so hat allerdings das griechische Wortgefüge durchgehend ein eigentümlich semitisches Kolorit erhalten, welches nur selten durch den Versuch, dem griechischen Sprachgeist Rechnung zu tragen, gemildert ist.<sup>37</sup>

Deviations from a literal rendering of the Hebrew have many different motives. The most common motives are that the translator did not know the exact meaning of a certain word or construction, that he for one reason or the other misunderstood a passage, or that he tried to interpret the text in the light of a faulty comprehension of the context. He may sometimes have had dogmatic reasons for his rendering and therefore shows a predilection for certain Greek terms or notions.<sup>38</sup> The combination of the striving for a literal translation and the knowledge, in some respects less than adequate, of the Hebrew could result in a so-called *Verlegenheitsübersetzung*, “a purely mechanical translation of embarrassment”,<sup>39</sup> thus leaving it to the reader to discover the meaning of the phrase.<sup>40</sup> In the words of Flashar:

Seinen Änderungen liegt, so paradox das klingt, das Bestreben zu Grunde, dem überlieferten Text möglichst treu zu bleiben. Nur so erklärt sich die Tatsache, daß man so vielfach der Übersetzung trotz (oder infolge) der Änderung des Sinnes keinen rechten Sinn abgewinnen kann.<sup>41</sup>

F. Siegert asserts another important aspect of the translation: “Die *Psalmen* haben in sich eine sehr einheitliche Sprache, stark hebraisierend und völlig frei von allen typisch-griechischen Dichtervokabeln.”<sup>42</sup> The preference for the employment of uncommon terms, neologisms and words not laden with associations to foreign gods was, for example, also evident in the translation of inanimate metaphors used as designations of God.<sup>43</sup>

The opinions regarding the translator’s knowledge of Hebrew are varied. Some scholars emphasize that the translator was well acquainted with the Hebrew language. For example, A. Soffer writes concerning the translator that he seems to have had “a very good knowledge of the Hebrew language”.<sup>44</sup> Cf. the opinion of Baethgen:

<sup>37</sup> F. Baethgen, “Der textkritische Werth der alten Übersetzungen zu den Psalmen”, *Jahrb-ProtTheol* 8 (1882), 413. Mozley supports this general evaluation by Baethgen. See Mozley, *The Psalter*, XI–XII.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Flashar, “LXX-Psalter”, 252.

<sup>39</sup> C. Rabin, “The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint”, *Text* 6 (1968), 24.

<sup>40</sup> Flashar, “LXX-Psalter”, 94–5.

<sup>41</sup> Flashar, “LXX-Psalter”, 252.

<sup>42</sup> F. Siegert, *Zwischen Hebräischer Bibel und Alten Testament. Eine Einführung in die Septuaginta* (Münsteraner Judaistische Studien 9; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2001), 75.

<sup>43</sup> S. Olofsson, *God is my Rock. A Study of Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis in the Septuagint* (ConBOT 31; Stockholm: Almqvist&Wiksell, 1990), 84–5; S. Olofsson, “Death Shall Be their Shepherd: An interpretation of Ps. 49.15 in the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint”, in Olofsson, *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis*, 193–223.

<sup>44</sup> Soffer, “Anthropomorphisms”, 417.

Die grammatischen Kenntnisse des Uebersetzers müssen, wenn man die Schwierigkeiten in Betracht zieht, mit denen er zu kämpfen hatte, trotz der hin und wieder hervortretenden Verlegenheit und Unsicherheit, recht bedeutende genannt werden.<sup>45</sup>

Berg holds that, unlike the Peshitta, “the Septuagint is guilty of no errors which may be ascribed to ignorance. Real lexicographical errors are never found; although some words are curiously interpreted.”<sup>46</sup> Other scholars are more critical of the knowledge of Hebrew. Thus, Flashar takes for granted that Hebrew was not the mother tongue of the translator: “er hatte diese Sprache gelernt und beherrschte sie nur als eine fremde.”<sup>47</sup> T.H. Robinson and W.O.E. Oesterley argued that the many instances of fantastic renderings show “that the translator could by no means be relied upon for his knowledge of Hebrew”.<sup>48</sup>

Such diverging opinions can be explained by the criteria employed for the evaluation. It is not relevant to compare the translator with modern standards. In that regard, he falls short of all the modern translations of the Hebrew. He definitely did not have access to the scholarship and exact definitions reflected in the modern lexica. Probably he did not have access to lexica at all. There are no signs that the translators of the LXX were dependent on, or even knew of, the work done by the philological specialists in Alexandria.<sup>49</sup> It is hardly likely that they always should make the same rendering of the vocabulary of their *Vorlage* as the one made in the modern lexica. Therefore, the best way to judge a translator’s competence is to compare him with other LXX translators.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, one has to take the opaque character of the Hebrew text into account. The book of Psalms is in some passages hard to interpret even for a modern translator.<sup>51</sup>

It is not possible to engage in a discussion with all the modern articles devoted to text and translation technique in the LXX book of Psalms, although they reflect several important issues.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Baethgen, “Textkritische Werth”, 416.

<sup>46</sup> Berg, *Peshitta-Psalter*, 60.

<sup>47</sup> Flashar, “LXX-Psalter”, 113.

<sup>48</sup> W.O.E. Oesterley/T.H. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament* (London: Macmillan, 1934), 200.

<sup>49</sup> Siegert, *Septuaginta*, 32.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. e.g. Aejmelaeus, “Characterizing Criteria”, 56, “the portrait of a translator always needs the background provided by other translators.”

<sup>51</sup> For some interesting discussions concerning the exegesis of the LXX Psalms translator, see A. van der Kooij, “Zur Frage der Exegese im LXX-Psalter. Ein Beitrag zur Verhältnisbestimmung zwischen Original und Übersetzung”, in A. Aejmelaeus/U. Quast (ed.), *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen, Philologisch-historische Klasse F. 3, 230, MSU 24; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 2000), 366–79.

<sup>52</sup> See e.g. the several important articles in Hiebert/Cox/Gentry, *The Old Greek Psalter*: J.W. Wevers, “The Rendering of the Tetragram in the Psalter and Pentateuch: A Comparative Study”,

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