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THE BIBLE IN GREEK

TRANSLATION, TRANSMISSION, AND
THEOLOGY OF THE SEPTUAGINT

By

Siegfried Kreuzer

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Preface

This volume presents papers that give an overview on important stages, developments, and problems of the Septuagint and the research related to it.

Under the heading “Background and Beginnings” are papers presenting the cultural and theological background of the Septuagint, including discussion of the Septuagint’s origins and early development (1, 2) as it becomes visible in the early recension and which is closely related to the development of the Hebrew parent text (3).

The development of the Septuagint can be observed in the way that earlier translational approaches from the Pentateuch are taken up, complemented, and modified in the historical books and—later on, but already in the early Jewish context—by the so-called kaige-recension (4).

Not only for the Septuagint translators in the original sense but also for the grandson of Ben Sira, both the Hebrew text and the Greek translation were “the object of great care.” In view of the debate about how to understand the prologue to Ben Sira, it is placed and interpreted in the context of its genre (5).

“Old Greek and the Recensions” addresses observations and problems that not only presently are probably the most debated questions of Septuagint research but that also have far-reaching consequences for the reconstruction of the Old Greek and for the interpretation of the original translation techniques. Several analyses of texts from the kaige sections of the books of Reigns (Samuel and Kings) but also from non-kaige sections are presented (6, 7, 8, 10). The basic conclusion is that the so called Antiochene text is not the result of a late and irregular recensional activity by Lucian (or contemporaries) but that it represents a text very close to the Old Greek and in most cases the best witness to it. The seemingly inconsistent and even contradictory differences can be explained consistently as the result of the isomorphic revision by the revisers of the so called kaige recension that was done according to their early Jewish understanding of scripture. This was discovered by a new approach that, however, tails in with the results of Dominique Barthélemy, who in his *Devanciers d’Aquila* on the basis of the Dodekapropheton scroll from Naḥal Ḥever not only discovered and identified the kaige recension but also concluded that the Antiochene text was more or less identical with the Old Greek and that the assumption of a late Lucianic recension had to be abandoned. Chapter 9 takes up an early critic of Barthélemy and for the first time reviews his examples and argumentations, while chapter 10 takes the analysis to the so-called non-kaige sections (also 14), and chapter 11 discusses Jerome’s statement about the *trifaria varietas*, the best known and most influential statement about Christian recensions of the Septuagint.

In “The Septuagint and New Testament Quotations” a subject that has been touched on in some of the other papers is taken up and applied to the quotations from Dodekapropheton in the Pauline letters (including some comparisons with the same quotations in other letters). The analysis shows that these quotations are taken from the Old Greek form of the Septuagint and not yet from kaige or semi-kaige texts. Contrary to earlier assumptions, there is practically no cross-influence or adaptation between the New Testament quotations and the Septuagint manuscript tradition. Both aspects together make the quotations to most relevant textual witnesses.

The last section treats “Two Important Textual Witnesses” of the Septuagint. Papyrus 967 (13) not only is one of the oldest and largest papyri; it also allows many interesting insights in the textual history of the books of Ezekiel and Daniel, in the development toward a codex, and also in canon history, and even shows the beginnings of chapter numbering and counting. The analysis of different passages from Codex Vaticanus (14) shows that, on the one hand, it is one of the best witnesses of the Old Greek text (although not without some isomorphic revision), and that, on the other hand, there are large sections where the Codex represents the kaige recension and therefore a later stage of the transmission of the Septuagint, the consequence being that this most influential and indeed also most important codex has to be used with due care.

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Siegfried Kreuzer
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