

The Septuagint Translation of the Books of Kings in the Context of the History of Early Jewish Literature

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Abstract: Why are the books of Kings translated into Greek alongside the production of new texts dealing with Israel's history? This contribution sketches developments in Second Temple Judaism which led to the production of these texts that between the third century BCE and the first century CE came to be seen as Holy Scripture.¹

There is a growing awareness in Septuagint research that one cannot simply take the much debated rationale for the translation of the Torah² and apply it to the translations of the other parts of what later became biblical books.³ This is all the more so because some of the postpentateuchal works were translated in Israel and some, outside of Israel. Further, the translation of these texts was not the project of

1. With gratitude, I mention the kindness of Prof. Dr. William Loader, Perth, to edit a readable English version of my paper. With gratitude, I used Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, ed., *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), and Florentino García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated: The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

2. See Gilles Dorival, "New Light About the Origin of the Septuagint?," in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer, WUNT 252 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 36–47.

3. See Gert J. Steyn, "Which 'LXX' are we talking about in NT scholarship?," in *Die Septuaginta: Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 698–707, esp. 699–701.

an all-embracing scholarly enterprise,⁴ and it also remains a question whether Philo or Paul regarded such postpentateuchal texts as part of the Septuagint?⁵

There are a variety of attempts to explain, for instance, the translation of the latter prophets. They were translated, so Arie van der Kooij argues in relation to Isaiah, because what they had predicted had come true.⁶ But why were the former prophets translated? Was the translation of the book of Joshua motivated by cultural prestige, with a focus more on military than on religious themes, analogous to the reworking of Egyptian and Babylonian history in the third century BCE by Berossus and Manetho?⁷ Were the translators wanting to remind the Jews in the diaspora of their own history, as Folker Siegert suggests?⁸ The mostly very literal translations of the original, with the exception of Joshua, offer little by way of clues. We are left then with needing to reconstruct a plausible milieu in which someone felt the need to make these sometimes cumbersome texts available in Greek.

It was not simply the interest in heroes that was decisive. If that had been the case, it would have been better to have written a new text like Chronicles but going beyond its schematic structures. It appears that there were various concerns operating in literary circles: uncritical glorification especially of heroes for the purpose of reassurance or propaganda, as well as didactic concerns centered on the Torah. Sometimes these concerns overlapped. The first is evident in the so-called Miscellanies in 3 Kingdoms and in some parts of the Septuagint of Chronicles, as also in Artapanus. The concern with teaching Torah could also use the failures of significant figures as negative examples to this end. Both tendencies, glorification of Israel and its God and didactic concerns, including warnings about wrong behavior, need not have been mutually exclusive in this context.

These two tendencies, however, do not explain why the dual phenomena of translating old texts alongside producing new ones. A newly produced text can be glorifying (such as Artapanus) but also critical, such as in apocalyptic texts of

4. See Emanuel Tov, "Reflections on the Septuagint with Special Attention Paid to the Post-Pentateuchal Translations," in Kraus and Karrer, *Septuaginta: Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, 3–22, esp. 16–17.

5. Peter J. Williams, "The Bible, The Septuagint, and the Apocrypha," in *Studies on the Text and Versions of the Hebrew Bible in Honour of Robert Gordon*, ed. Geoffrey Khan and Diana Lipton, VTSup 149 (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 169–80, esp. 177–78.

6. Arie van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah and Other Prophecies Published in Ptolemaic Egypt," in Kraus and Karrer, *Septuaginta: Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, 72–84.

7. Michaël N. van der Meer, "Provenance, Profile, and Purpose of the Greek Joshua," in *XII Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Leiden 2004*, ed. Melvin K. H. Peters, SCS 54 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 55–80, esp. 78.

8. Folker Siegert, *Zwischen hebräischer Bibel und Altem Testament*, Münsteraner Studien zur Theologie 9 (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2001), 39.

the postexilic period, which are predominantly negative in their treatment of Israel's history. Translations can, in turn, reflect heroic tendencies, as far as their literalness allows us to detect them. We find such tendencies in some brief passages in the books of Kings and Chronicles.

The juxtaposition of work on older historical writings in Hebrew and production of new ones continued into the second century BCE. This raises the question: why were new works being produced when texts that later became biblical texts already existed? Or, approaching the issue from a different angle, why did they continue to work on the older texts, resulting in a plurality of texts,⁹ when new ones were being produced which also claimed revelatory authority, such as IQ22, the Temple Scroll, and Jubilees, whose claims were, indeed, sometimes acknowledged?¹⁰ There was no clear cut distinction between "biblical" literature and texts formerly classified as "rewritten Bible."¹¹

With regard to this reworking, we have to bear two issues in mind: (1) We have to distinguish between textual variants and variants reflecting theological interests.¹² These theological variants derive from a scribal milieu that reflects both ancient philological interests and clearly theological concerns.¹³ (2) Such variants are to be found both in the *Vorlage* of the Old Greek of the former prophets and in the Masoretic text, both of which show traces of textual development.

In my view, the work on these texts that were to become canonical belonged to the tendency to treat Israel's history as integral to Israel's identity centered on the worship of the one true God and on his torah. We can detect the beginnings of the tendency to assess biblical figures on the basis of their adherence to monotheism and the centralization of the cult already in the books

9. Emanuel Tov, "The Qumran Hebrew Texts and the Septuagint: An Overview," in *Die Septuaginta: Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, Martin Meiser, and Marcus Sigismund, WUNT 286 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 3–17, esp. 16; Andrés Piquer Otero, "What Text to Edit? The Oxford Hebrew Bible Edition of 2 Kings 17.1–23," in *After Qumran: Old and Modern Editions of the Biblical Texts: The Historical Books*, ed. Hans Ausloos, Bénédicte Lemmelijn, and Julio Trebolle Barrera, BETL 246 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 227–43, esp. 242.

10. See Jan Doehorn, *Die Apokalypse des Mose: Text, Übersetzung, Kommentar*, TSAJ 106 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 217.

11. Moshe J. Bernstein, "'Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?," *Text* 22 (2005): 169–96 (175).

12. Emanuel Tov, "Theological Tendencies in the Masoretic Text of Samuel," in Ausloos, Lemmelijn, and Trebolle Barrera, *After Qumran*, 3–30; Adrian Schenker, "What Do Scribes, and What Do Editors Do," in Ausloos, Lemmelijn, and Trebolle Barrera, *After Qumran*, 275–93.

13. Counterbalancing antagonism is an issue within both corpora of literature, ancient philology on Homer, and the Septuagint (Schenker, "What Do Scribes," 290–91).

of Kings. This tendency then continues in Chronicles and in the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint translation of these books.

With regard to the newly produced texts like Sir 44–49, we can ask whether they, too, evaluate biblical figures according to similar criteria. But we can ask further: (1) Do they presuppose not only the tradition of the biblical figures, but also the biblical traditions as texts? (2) Did such impulses motivate the translations in Greek-speaking Judaism? Reworking Hebrew texts is one thing; translating them very literally, another. Did the purposes which led to new rewritten texts in Hebrew also lead to the translations? That cannot simply be assumed but needs to be demonstrated. On the basis of such caution, I now proceed to examine the material chronologically.

1. EXILIC AND EARLY POST-EXILIC PERIOD

The tendency in the books of Kings to evaluate a king with regard to his obedience to torah in general and especially to Deut 12:5, 15–19 (command of the centralization of the cult), is widely acknowledged. Second Kings 14:6; 18:6–7; and 23:25 are typical expressions of this pattern. Second Kings 14:6 gives the reason why Amaziah kills the murderers of his father but not their children as having been done: “according to what is written in the book of the law of Moses, where the Lord commanded, ‘The parents shall not be put to death for the children, or the children be put to death for the parents; but all shall be put to death for their own sins.’” This command, however, is part not of the Torah but of Ezek 18. In 2 Kgs 18:6–7, the connection between Hezekiah’s good conduct and his divine support is stated in a way which is repeated very often in the Chronicles. In 2 Kgs 23:25, Josiah is characterized positively by identifying traits which recall Deut 6:5.

To characterize single persons, however, is one thing, to characterize periods of history, another. We also have to consider the historical psalms and Ezek 20. In Ps 136, written sometime after 400 BCE,¹⁴ the consideration of Israel’s history during the exodus includes thankfulness for God’s everlasting love. In Ps 135, the polemic against foreign deities leads to the glorification of Israel’s God who is superior to other deities due to his power in creation.¹⁵ In these psalms, we do not encounter critical comment about Israel’s conduct in contrast to Ps 78 and Ezek 20 where critique dominates. Based on its use of Deuteronomistic language, Ps 78 was probably written in the late exilic or

14. See Erich Zenger, “Psalm 136,” in *Psalmen 101–150*, by Erich Zenger and Frank-I. Lothar Hossfeld, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 677.

15. According to Erich Zenger, “Psalm 135,” in Zenger and Hossfeld, *Psalmen 101–150*, 664, the psalm dates from the fourth century BCE.

postexilic period,¹⁶ more likely, in my view, the latter. It is the first text that, like Chronicles, looks beyond what is reported in the Pentateuch, to include the disavowal of the Northern and the election of the Southern Kingdom.

2. THE LATE PERSIAN AND EARLY HELLENISTIC PERIOD

Isaac Kalimi¹⁷ has clearly identified tendencies in Chronicles¹⁸ to depict post-Mosaic figures positively or negatively on the basis of their adherence to Torah, in part continuing trends already laid down in the books of Kings but also going beyond them.¹⁹ The latter is also true for the brief flashbacks on Israel's past. Thus 2 Chr 15:3–5 encourages Asa of Judah by referring to God's help in answer to prayer in the past; 2 Chr 16:8 reminds him of his former reliance on God, which is in contrast to his present foolishness; and 2 Chr 20:5–12 reminds God of his former deeds of salvation in order to persuade him to do so again against the Ammonites.

The books of Chronicles are helpful for discerning the emerging scribal milieu in another way, especially when compared with the books of Kings. In the latter, we find references to other books,²⁰ written probably as royal annals. By contrast, the books of Chronicles refer to books of prophets and seers, the books of Nathan and Gad (1 Chr 29:29), the books of Samaiah and Addo (2 Chr

16. See Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, "Psalm 78," in *Psalmen 51–100*, by Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2000), 429.

17. Isaac Kalimi, *Zur Geschichtsschreibung des Chronisten: Literarisch-historiographische Abweichungen der Chronik von ihren Paralleltextrn in den Samuel- und Königsbüchern*, BZAW 226 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995), 115–43.

18. The books of Chronicles include a couple of literary strata. Antje Labahn, *Levitischer Herrschaftsanspruch zwischen Ausübung und Konstruktion: Studien zum multi-funktionalen Levitenbild der Chronik und seiner Identitätsbildung in der Zeit des Zweiten Tempels*, WMANT 131 (Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 2012), 32–39, suggests a primordial stratum at the time of Artaxerxes II Mnemon (404–359 BCE) and a couple of redactional strata until the third century BCE. The last redactional stratum includes the tendencies mentioned here.

19. See Martin Meiser, "Historiographische Tendenzen in der Septuaginta," in *Die Apostelgeschichte im Kontext antiker und frühchristlicher Historiographie/Acts in the Context of Ancient and Early Christian Historiography*, ed. Jörg Frey, Clare K. Rothschild, and Jens Schröter, BZNW 162 (Berlin: de Gruyter 2009), 77–100 (81–2). In addition, I refer to the portrait of Hezekiah. Second Kings 18:6–7 praises him in terms of Deuteronomistic theology; 2 Chr 31:21 adds an allusion to Deut 6:5. On the other hand, the scolding in 2 Chr 24:7 may have been influenced by 2 Kgs 11:18.

20. See the "Book of the Acts of Solomon" (3 Kgdms 11:41); the "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Judah" (3 Kgdms 14:28[29]; 15:7, 23, further the "Book of the Annals of the Kings of Israel" in 3 Kgdms 15:31; 4 Kgdms 12:19[20]; 13:8[9]; 14:28; 15:11, 15, 21, 26.

12:15), the book of Iddo (2 Chr 13:22),²¹ Isaiah's book on Uzziah (2 Chr 26:22), Isaiah's book on Hezekiah (2 Chr 32:32), the "records of the seers" on Manasseh's repentance (2 Chr 33:19), and Jeremiah's lament on Josiah (2 Chr 35:25). Our concern is not with the historical value of such works, but rather with the fact that alongside royal annals we find these additional works which address events during the various reigns.²² This raises the question of the role these allusions play in Chronicles. Is it chronology?²³ Is it the actualization of traditional material?²⁴ Or is it to support the Chronicler's particular point of view? My answer is as follows: these references are part of the concluding remarks with regard to the described persons. The Chronicler does not make evaluative comment about these sources. He does not repeat the kind of critical remarks about kings found in 2 Chr 12:5 and 21:12–15 in relation to them or use them to do so. Rather these references serve to show agreement with these works, which, in turn, serve legitimize his own point of view.²⁵ Second Chronicles 33:19 illustrates this: the seers' and his own evaluation of Manasseh are identical. Thus the Chronicler claims to continue the heritage of legitimate prophecy within Israel, to give the correct interpretation of Israel's past, and so to persuade the reader that Israel's identity is to be centered on its God and his Torah.

3. THE SECOND CENTURY BCE

3.1. JESUS SIRACH

Twice the author of this work points to Israel's history in order to instruct the reader both to trust in God (Sir 2:10) and to fear his power (Sir 16:7–9; 16:15 G II).²⁶ Israel's history generates identity and points to the correct path for the future, both for the nation and for the individual.²⁷ Sirach 39:1 and 44–49 are especially important in this regard. The sage "will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients, and he will be occupied with prophecies. He will preserve the narrative

21. The word מדרש is to be understood in general sense; see, however, Siegfried Wagner, "מדרש דָּרָשׁ *midraš*," *ThWAT* 2:313–29, esp. 328: "Abhandlung ... zitierte Interpretation"; see further Sara Japhet, *2 Chronik*, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 176.

22. Nonroyal authorship is evident, similarly the issue of contemporaneous history as the main content.

23. Dieter Sänger, "2 Chronik," in *Genesis bis Makkabäer*, vol. 1 of *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 1105–64, esp. 1125, with regard to 2 Chr 9:29.

24. Labahn, *Herrschaftsanspruch*, 246.

25. See Zipora Talshir, "Several Canon-Related Concepts Originating in Chronicles," *ZAW* 113 (2001): 386–403.

26. Sir 16:7 LXX presupposes Gen 6:4 LXX (γίγαντες).

27. Frank Ueberschaer, *Weisheit durch Begegnung*, BZAW 379 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2007), 233.

of famous men, and he will penetrate into the twists of illustrations” (Sir 39:1, NETS). Perhaps a threefold or fourfold differentiation of the future biblical canon is emerging here.²⁸ The word “prophecy” may include also works on history, in analogy to 2 Chr 32:32.²⁹ In Sir 39:2, the phrase *διηγῆσιν ἀνδρῶν ὀνομαστῶν συντηρήσει* is translated as gen. subj. in NETS and LXX.D.³⁰ We have to remember the ancient notion of the “Introduction in the Old Testament”: Moses wrote the Torah, Joshua, the book of Joshua, Samuel, the book of Judges, the books of Samuel, et cetera.³¹ It is, however, also possible to translate the gen. as gen. obj.: he will preserve the narrative about famous men. Then, the focus is history.

In the following context, the “understanding” (*σύνεσις*) of the scribe, given by God (Sir 39:6), is praised by many: “and his name will live for generations of generations” (Sir 39:9). The account recalls the words of David to Solomon in 1 Chr 22:11–13:

And now, my son, the Lord will be with you and will make you prosper, and you will build a house for the Lord, your God, as he has spoken concerning you. Only, may the Lord grant you wisdom and understanding and strengthen you over Israel both to watch over and to do the law of the Lord your God. Then he will make you prosper, if you take care to do the ordinances and the judgments, which the Lord commanded Moses for Israel.

There is a clear analogy: the king should be wise, like the scribe. Sometimes in Sirach, as in other literature of Second Temple Judaism, torah is mentioned but only summarily as a norm for orientation.³²

What the reader of Sir 44–49 should learn is said right at the beginning: “the Lord created much glory” (Sir 44:2 NETS). Faithfulness to torah is a motif not always visible but implied. In Sir 44:16, the *μετάθεσις* of Henoch is evaluated as “an example of repentance (*μετάνοια*) for generations,” and in Sir 44:17, Noah “was found perfect, righteous” despite the contents reported in Gen 9:20–21, which are not repeated in Sir 44. The “praise of the judges” in Sir 46:11

28. See Michael Reitemeyer, “Sophia Sirach. Ben Sira / Ecclesiasticus / Das Buch Jesus Sirach: Erläuterungen zu Kap. 24–50,” in *Psalmen bis Daniel*, vol. 2 of *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 2192–2267 (2230–31).

29. CD VII. 17 refers on texts like the books of Jeremiah or Ezekiel; 4Q397 14–21, 10.15 refers on announcements for the future.

30. NETS: “He will preserve the narrative of famous men;” LXX.D: “Die Darlegung namhafter Männer bewahrt er (im Gedächtnis).”

31. See b. B. Bat. 14b.

32. LXX Sir 19:19; LXX 32:24; LXX 45:5; Bar 4:4. See also the detail in Sir 46:20 [23], referring on the *ἀνομία λαοῦ* (in Sam 28, it is Saul alone who is guilty).

[13–14a] is shaped by Deuteronomistic terminology; similarly the praise of David, Hezekiah and Josiah in Sir 49:4.

We should also have in mind the parallel wording between Sir 39:10[11] and Sir 44:15. Sirach 39:10[11] formulates the praise of the scribe: τὴν σοφίαν αὐτοῦ διηγῆσονται ἔθνη, καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἐξαγγελεῖ ἐκκλησία; in Sir 44:15, it is said concerning the ancestors: σοφίαν αὐτῶν διηγῆσονται λαοί, καὶ τὸν ἔπαινον ἐξαγγελεῖ ἐκκλησία. The scribe assumes the heritage of the ancestors who are functioning as examples to inform his self-understanding.³³

Can we understand Sir 44–49 without the biblical source texts? To be sure, the paragraph on Aaron (Sir 45:6–22) is understandable in this way. Sirach 45:5 (“He caused him to hear his voice, and he led him into the deep darkness, and he gave him commandments”), recalls Exod 19–20, but a quite general knowledge of these traditions is sufficient.

Other texts, however, are not understandable without their biblical pretexts. Sirach 46:4[5] evokes questions concerning traditions of the sun standing still (Josh 10:12). Sirach 46:15 refers to the tradition of Samuel’s being as “accurate as a prophet.” In Sirach 49:12, the message of the Twelve Prophets is rendered in a rather brief way; they are not identified by name. In Sir 44:20, Abraham’s faithfulness to God’s command is mentioned, but without any explicit reference to circumcision. The reader must infer his acquaintance with Gen 17. The wording “faithful” presupposes knowledge of Gen 22. We cannot understand Sir 45:23 [29] (Pinehas’s atonement for Israel) without having Num 25 in mind; nor understand Sir 47:10 [12] without the portrait of David in the Chronicles. The notion of Samuel as Nazir in Sir 46:13 MS B presupposes 1 Kgdms 1:11 LXX diff. MT.

So we can conclude: for purposes of teaching,³⁴ Sir 44–49 is in most cases useful only if the biblical texts are at least orally transmitted.³⁵ This is true also for the Greek translation of Sirach’s book.

Are there differences between Jesus Sirach and the Chronicles? The number of references to Torah does not increase. The difference lies in the clear and

33. See also Reitemeyer. “Erläuterungen,” 2248; Ueberschaer, *Weisheit durch Begegnung*, 232.

34. See Oda Wischmeyer, *Die Kultur des Buches Jesus Sirach*, BZNW 77 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1995).

35. See also Benjamin G. Wright, “Biblical Tradition in the Praise of the Ancestors,” in *Studies in the Book of Ben Sira: Papers of the Third International Conference on the Deuterocanonical Books, Shime’ on Centre, Pápa, Hungary, 18–20 May, 2006*, ed. Géza G. Xeravits and József Zsengellér, JSJSup 127 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 183–207, esp. 188: “1. There is a large web of intertextual relations that shapes Ben Sira’s descriptions of his heroes and 2. His concern is not to reproduce the texts, but to carry out his own agendas and ideological commitments using these textual traditions as his raw material.”

explicit presentation in Sir 44:2 of the purpose of what is to follow, praise of the forefathers. But we cannot assume this is always the focus during this period.

3.2. QUMRAN

Traditions of the books of Samuel and Kings are not really important in the literature of Qumran. In Qumran texts, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah are not mentioned; Omri and Ahab are mentioned only in IQ14 17–19 within a quotation of Mic 6:15–16.

Some Qumran texts dealing with persons of this period assume only a general orientation,³⁶ whereas other texts presuppose specific acquaintance with the detail. Thus, according to 4Q398 14, II, 2, David “was freed from his many afflictions and was forgiven.” The reader of 4Q398 (4QMMT) must have I Sam 12:13b in mind and so concludes from the fact that David received forgiveness that forgiveness was possible also for his addressee, if he is willing to do what is upright and good before God, according to the Torah interpretation of the author of the halakhic letter.

CD VIII, 16–21 depicts the turning aside of converts of Israel from the path of the people in a way that parallels Jeremiah’s word to Baruch Jer 43:3–5 and Elishah’s word to Gehazi 2 Kgs 5:25–27, which are rendered only in summary. Familiarity with these details is presupposed. In CD VIII, 16–21, where the Qumran members’ claim to be a religious élite is formulated, there is no need to prove that orientation to the Torah is the ruling criterion. It is assumed. CD V, 5–6 alludes to David’s murder of Uriah, which is not forgiven, though all the other things are forgiven. Since “David had not read the sealed book which was in the ark, for it had not been opened in Israel since the day of the death of Eleazar” (CD V, 2–3), he is not condemned for his “multiplying wives for himself” (Deut 17:17 forbids it). To understand this, the reader must be familiar with I Sam 11; 12. In CD XIII, 7–8, teaching Israel’s history in terms of theology is explicitly demanded. In some texts specific to Qumran, Israel’s postexilic history, evaluated in a negative way, is the rationale for the coming-into-being of the Qumran-group itself.

Once, the portrait of negative biblical figures is changed to a positive one. Despite I Sam 15, Saul’s victory over Amalek in 4Q252 I IV, 1–3, is evaluated

36. 4Q398 11–13, 2 mentions the “days of Jerobeam” and the exile without any comment. A general knowledge of Israel’s history is also presupposed in 4Q390 1, 4–5 and in apocalyptic texts dealing with Israel’s history. In IQM XI, 1–2 (originating from the Hasmonean period), David’s victory against Goliath is explained on the basis of his trust in God and not in sword or spear; I Sam 17:45 is the background, but it is not absolutely necessary to have I Sam 17:45 in mind; the reader can understand IQM XI, 1–2 also as generally pious admonition.

as adequate in the light of God's command to Moses in Deut 25:19.³⁷ In this way, it was possible for the parents of the later apostle of Jesus Christ to choose the name Saul. We do not know, however, why the author of 4Q252 changed the portrait of Saul in this way.

3.3. TEXTUAL HISTORY OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS

In the textual transmission of the books of Kings, we find tendencies of actualization in the Septuagint, whereas tendencies of harmonizing with the Torah can occur in both Hebrew and Greek textual strands.³⁸ The most important example of the former tendency, the translation ἀλλόφυλοι for שַׁתְּשֻׁפִּי in Judg 3:3, 31; 8:10 and in the Septuagint of Samuel, is well known. This translation influences also the book of Maccabees, where the term ἀλλόφυλοι names contemporary enemies of Israel.³⁹

Tendencies of harmonizing with the Torah occur in the Hebrew tradition with regard to Hannah's and Elkana's offering⁴⁰ and Samuel's offering.⁴¹ According to 2 Kgdms 8:18, the sons of David are not priests but chiefs of the court. This presentation is influenced by MT 1 Chr 18:17. Sometimes it is not clear which strand of textual tradition offers the starting point for the changes. 4 Kgdms 10:27⁴² and 4 Kgdms 23:11⁴³ are examples for this.

37. See Josephus. *Ant.* 7.346.

38. Despite that, we find sometimes the tendency of uncritical glorification. An example for this tendency is 2 Kgdms 2:25a–o: Solomon's marriage to the daughter of the pharaoh is without critical comment, in contrast to 3 Kgdms 11:1–2, a text which is shaped by Deuteronomistic thought. Sometimes the Masoretic text offers a more favorable portrait of a king of Israel; see Philippe Hugo, "The King's Return (2 Sam 19.10–16): Contrasting Characterizations of David, Israel and Juda in the Old Editions," in Ausloos, Lemmelijn, and Trebelle Barrera, *After Qumran*, 95–118 (117 with n. 71); see also Kristin de Troyer, "Bathseba and Nathan: A Closer Look at Their Characterizations in MT, Kaige and the Antiochene Text," in Ausloos, Lemmelijn, and Trebelle Barrera, *After Qumran*, 119–42 (140: MT 2 Sam 11:4 and kaige exonerates David, in contrast to the Antiochene text).

39. Perhaps Exod 34:15 influenced this translation, see Siegfried Kreuzer, "Kritik / Judices / Das Buch der Richter, Einleitung," in Karrer and Kraus, *Genesis his Makkabäer*, 664–65.

40. 4Q51 par. 1 Kgdms 1:25 diff. 1 Sam 1:25; cf. Lev 23:9–21 (offering of bread).

41. 1 Kgdms 9:24 LXX diff. MT, cf. Lev 3:9; 7:3 (offering the fat tail only in a sacrifice of deliverance or error).

42. Is it Jehu (4 Kgdms 10:27Ant), or is it the people (MT + kaige-rec.) who pulled down the steles of Baal? Was it the intention of the Antiochene text to improve the portrait of Jehu, or was it the intention of the MT to avoid contradicting the negative evaluation of Jehu's revolution in Hos 1:4?

43. The phrase "in the house of On," extant only in the Antiochene text, could be an addition charging the authorities, or they could be omitted in MT in order to exonerate

The number of changes of this kind is modest but why? The very literal translation technique of the books of Kings makes clear that the translators treated these texts as inviolable. Some of the newly produced texts enhanced the tendency towards actualization, but the reader had to be familiar with the biblical reference texts to understand them. Therefore the transmission of biblical texts was necessary. Transmitting old and producing new texts were perhaps simply two sides of the same coin and not necessarily activities excluding one another.

There is an analogy in the transmitting and allegorical interpretation of Homer. Though at times subject to criticism, for instance, by Plato, his epic works were also valued for their moral doctrines.⁴⁴ Allegorical interpretation helped minimize offensive passages but also presupposed and therefore helped preserve the pure transmission of these texts.⁴⁵

3.4. TRANSLATION OF CHRONICLES

In the Septuagint of Chronicles, there are only few changes relevant to the focus of this study. According to 1 Chr 10:13, Saul's death is caused by his making inquiries of a medium (1 Sam 28). Whereas in the MT it is named "unfaithfulness," the translator of the Septuagint uses a more general term, namely, "lawlessness" (*ἀνομία*). At the end of Josiah's portrait in LXX 2 Chr 35:19a–d, the translator (or his Hebrew source text) adds 4 Kgdms 23:25–27, which is shaped by allusions on Deut 6:5. Concerning David and Solomon, however, we find another tendency, that of political and military glorification, perhaps in order to assert Israel's adequacy and equal status in relation to surrounding nations.⁴⁶

The term *מדרש* is rendered once by *βιβλίον* (2 Chr 13:22), once by *γραφή* (2 Chr 24:17). The aspect of interpreting Scripture is not an issue in the Septuagint of Chronicles.

1 Esdr 1:22 ("the matters of his reign in previous times have been recorded: about those who sinned and those who acted impiously toward the Lord") is perhaps a reference to 2 Kgs 22:11–20.⁴⁷

Jerusalem from the blame of a temple built for Baal: see Jürgen Werlitz and Siegfried Kreuzer, "Basileion IV: Das vierte Buch der Königtümer / Das zweite Buch der Könige nach dem antiochenischen Text," in Karrer and Kraus, *Genesis bis Makkabäer*, 973.

44. Dion of Prusa, *Hom. (Or. 53)*, 11.

45. Heraclitus, *Hom. Probl.* 1.1; see Donald A. Russell and David Konstan, ed., *Heraclitus: Homeric Problems*, WGRW 14 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2005), 2.

46. Antje Labahn and Dieter Sänger, "Die Bücher der Chronik: Einleitung," in Karrer and Kraus, *Genesis bis Makkabäer*, 1041, referring to 1 Chr 11:1–4, 8, etc.

47. Aric van der Kooij, "Zur Frage des Anfangs des 1. Esrabuches," *ZAW* 103 (1991): 239–52 (246).

3.5. TRANSLATION OF PSALMS

Concerning the Psalms dealing with Israel's history, there are no important changes with regard to the issues we are discussing in this paper. Solely in the superscription to Ps 77[78]:1, the term *σύνεσις* is added. Thirteen times, *συνέσεως / εἰς σύνεσιν* term renders the Hebrew *משכיל*. Thus in Ps 77[78]:1, Israel's history is depicted in the light of perspectives informed by wisdom literature. The very literal translation of the Psalms shows that they well on the way to becoming holy texts. This is true also for the Psalms dealing with Israel's history and shaped by Deuteronomistic perspectives.

3.6. EUPOLEMUS AND PHILO THE ELDER

In Greek-speaking Jewish literature of this period, there are also historiographic interests concerning the persons of post-Mosaic époque. Eupolemus wrote around 158 BCE with the aim to convey Israel's history to non-Jewish readers. He presupposes the books of both Kings and Chronicles and is familiar with both the Greek and the Hebrew. Philo the Elder wrote a history of the kings of Judah, which differs from Demetrius's work in terms of chronology. Such historiographic interests both led to and presupposed the translation of the historical books.

4. THE END OF THE SECOND CENTURY BCE

In 1 Macc 2:49–60, some figures are only briefly mentioned usually in reference to important events of their life. It is not necessary to list all the biblical source texts. It is more important to note, for instance, that the source texts must be available in order for 1 Macc 2 to be understood properly. Thus the motif of David's mercy in 1 Macc 2:57 presupposes familiarity with 2 Sam 9; and Elijah's zealotry for the law presupposes 1 Kgs 18; 19. In 1 Macc 4:30, the mention of the "bearer of David's armor," alludes to 1 Sam 14:6, which must be available for the reader to understand the allusion. The term *ἀλλόφυλοι* draws a parallel between David's enemies and contemporary enemies, a parallel which the reader can appreciate only if the texts of the book of Samuel are available in oral or written transmission. By contrast, 1 Macc 4:9 alludes to Exod 14 in order to motivate to trust in God but does not presuppose any acquaintance with the text of Exod 14 in detail. The same is true of 1 Macc 7:41 with its allusions on 2 Kgs 18; 19.

5. THE FIRST CENTURY BCE

5.1. QUMRAN

In the Qumran texts of this period, traditions recorded in the books of Kings appear to have little or no significance. For example, the name “Bethel” occurs mostly in the rendering of traditions concerning Abraham or Jacob⁴⁸ but only once in reference to the “old man” from 1 Kgs 13 who is named in the “list of false prophets.”⁴⁹

Scribal interests are reflected in 4Q160, which goes beyond mere transmission of the text of the books of Samuel. Historical interests are also evident in 4Q559, a chronological work originating from the Hasmonean period and including also the times of the judges, and perhaps also in 6Q9,⁵⁰ whose fragmentary status, however, precludes any certainty in interpretation. 4Q399 may be seen as the earliest Jewish example of practice list-making, following Hellenistic models.⁵¹ 4Q381 33 offers a partly revised version of the prayer of Manasseh, based on 2 Chr 33:12. 4Q174 III, 7–13 quotes 2 Sam 7:11–14, actualizing it for the Qumran congregation, but without changing the source text.

5.2. TEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOOKS OF KINGS

By the first century BCE, the text of the books of Kings had achieved an elevated status. The kaige-recension illustrates this, where even the morphologic surface of the text is treated as authoritative by the translators.⁵²

48. 1QapGen XXI, 1, 7, 8 (on Abraham); 1Q17, 3 (early Herodian period, on Jacob); 4Q464 9 (Herodian period, on Jacob); 5Q13 2,6 (first century CE on Jacob); 11Q19 XXIX, 10 (on Jacob).

49. 4Q339, 3 (first century BCE).

50. 4Q245, 4Q247, and 4Q470 are very fragmentary, so we cannot describe the character of these texts.

51. Shaye J. D. Cohen, “False prophets (4Q339), Netinim (4Q340), and Hellenism at Qumran,” in *The Significance of Yavneh and Other Essays in Jewish Hellenism*, by Shaye J. D. Cohen, TSAJ 136 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 93–102.

52. See Siegfried Kreuzer, “Das frühjüdische Textverständnis und die Septuaginta-Versionen der Samuelbücher: Ein Beitrag zur textgeschichtlichen und übersetzungstechnischen Bewertung des Antiochenischen Textes und der Kaige-Rezension an Hand von 2 Sam 15,1–12,” in *La Septante en Allemagne et en France / Septuaginta Deutsch und Bible d’Alexandrie*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Olivier Munnich, OBO 238 (Fribourg: Academic Press; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2009), 3–28 (21–24).

6. THE FIRST CENTURY CE

In the first century CE, the so-called former prophets are treated as Holy Scriptures. Josephus reports their preservation in the temple archive of Jerusalem (*Ant.* 5.61), similarly to the preservation of the Torah (*Ant.* 3.81). LAB 43:4 presupposes acquaintance with Judg 14:5; 15:15. Liv. Pro. 16:3 explicitly mentions this biblical book. Fourth Maccabees 18:10–20 mirrors a program of domestic education substantiated by biblical traditions and focusing on the preservation of Israel's identity. Abel's murder, Isaac's binding, Joseph's imprisonment, the zealous Phinehas, Azarias, Ananias, Meshach, Daniel, are all mentioned, as well as Isaiah, Psalms and Proverbs, and the Song of Moses. Persons of the postpentateuchal historical books are not mentioned, but the focus of this passage does not require it. Eagerness for martyrdom, sustaining the righteous in affliction, and resurrection of the dead are the main elements of 4 Maccabees' repertory. Persons of the postpentateuchal historical books did not offer any contribution beyond the figures mentioned in this text.

7. CONCLUSION

The reworking of texts that later became biblical texts had its origin in a scribal milieu where the interpreters valued these texts as a basis for formulating Israel's identity and in doing so to highlight both positive and negative examples. Only sometimes they changed these texts. The tendency to glorify human figures is also sometimes present, but is not dominant in the literature of early Judaism.

Side by side with these texts, other new texts were written. They served both to glorify Israel and Israel's God and to provide resources for didactic purposes. Chronicles enhances and develops further the tendency, found already in the books of Kings, to describe and evaluate Israel's history on the basis of whether the kings preserved monotheism and supported the centralizing of the cult. In contrast to Kings, here, beside writers of the royal annals, prophets who wrote of Israel's history feature as sources. The author of Chronicles deems them trustworthy clearly aligns his theological point of view with theirs, thus enhancing both his own authority and theirs.

The fact that Greek translations of the books of Kings and Chronicles were made reflects common interests but at the same time opens the way for the production of new works reflecting sometimes different sets of interests.

In the second century BCE, we find texts claiming an authority of their own (1Q22, Jubilees) alongside texts, later to become biblical texts, on which the new authoritative texts in part depend. In this way, these older texts, which were to become biblical texts, became part of Israel's national literature, analogous to what happened with the epics of Homer. This both presupposes and facilitates their literary translation. Their application to issues of Jewish identity is

illustrated in the section on praise of the forefathers in the new composition, Sirach (Sir 44–49). New texts preserved at Qumran are in many cases too fragmentary for firm conclusions to be drawn. From what can be discerned, one frequently finds a negative assessment of Israel's (postexilic) history used as a basis for legitimizing the distinctive existence of the Qumran group as a congregation of converts.

In the first century BCE, parts of the historical books are the focus of interpretation but on the basis that their texts are established. The kaige-revision illustrates the increasing holiness attributed to these texts even with regard to their morphologic surface. Finally, in the first century CE, the historical books have become part of Israel's sacred Scripture.