

it.<sup>61</sup> I would argue, for instance, that the norm of isomorphism renders doubtful many of the assumptions commonly brought to the Greek text by exegetes—the idea that the text represents an expository work, to be read as a sustained commentary on its parent; the idea that it was fashioned as a free-standing literary work; the idea that it reflects theological or philosophical views with any consistency. In this respect, further comparison of Greek Deuteronomy with *Targum Onkelos* will prove illuminating. Drazin concludes his exhaustive study of the latter as follows,

A better approach is to recognize that TO, in contrast to N and Ps-Ion, is neither an aggadic nor a halakhic document. . . . TO is primarily a translation. The translator(s) was concerned with being faithful to the Biblical text and not with conforming to technical halakhic details. . . . TO is a rabbinic document, but one that renders according to the *peshar*.<sup>62</sup>

It is obviously tempting to approach the Greek version as the earliest exegetical source that we possess for the Pentateuch, because in certain respects it is just that.<sup>63</sup> Yet the translational norms underlying LXX-Deut 19:16–21 suggest a rather different picture of Septuagint origins than this implies, one that places much tighter constraints on historical exegesis. Whether this holds for the rest of the Greek Deuteronomy remains an open question. What should be emphasized, however, is that the issue cannot be decided one way or the other without further descriptive analysis of the sort outlined here.

In closing, I would like to express my hope that the limitations of the present study do not dissuade anyone from taking seriously my initial proposal, namely, that Septuagint studies have much to gain from DTS, and in particular, from the analysis of translational norms. I look forward to an ongoing conversation between our field and DTS—a conversation, I trust, that will increasingly involve scholars working on the other ancient versions.

61. A further question that needs to be addressed is what sort of textual function is consistent with the concept of equivalence underlying the translation.

62. Drazin, *Targum Onkelos*, 14.

63. Wevers, *Notes on Greek Deuteronomy*, xiv.

## *The Letter of Aristeas and the Reception History of the Septuagint*

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My argument in this paper originated in two separate places: conversations about the methodological foundation for the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS) and the proposed NETS Commentary Series that will complement the NETS translations (Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on the Septuagint [SBLCS]), and some preliminary thinking about the *Letter of Aristeas*, on which I am beginning to write a commentary. As I see it, the essential problem is this: many scholars, either explicitly or implicitly, no matter what they say about the historical and/or propagandistic value of the work, accept the basic notion promulgated by Pseudo-Aristeas that the LXX was originally intended to serve as an independent and self-standing replacement for the Hebrew text rendered by it. As we will see, at almost every point Pseudo-Aristeas argues that the translators (as commissioned by their Ptolemaic patron) produced an exemplary work of Greek philosophy and literature, highly acceptable (to use the language of translation theorist Gideon Toury) in its target culture, and that the Jewish community of Alexandria adopted the LXX as its sacred Scripture.

Yet, as scholars pursue a solution to the major problems connected with the LXX and its origins, we must place one basic fact at the center of the

*Author's note:* I extend thanks to Steven Fraade for his kind invitation to present an early version of this paper at Yale University. The questions and conversation there caused me to make a number of significant revisions to the argument. I am also grateful to Albert Pretserma and Cameron Boyd-Taylor, who read an earlier version of the paper and who, as always, pushed me on a number of important points.

stage—the LXX is a translation, not a work originally composed in Greek.<sup>1</sup> This realization matters, and matters a great deal. Cameron Boyd-Taylor aptly articulates why.

Quite simply, a translated text never represents a straightforward instance of performance in the target language. Translations deviate from the conventions governing well-formed texts and this fact has both linguistic and socio-cultural implications. The practices of reading brought to bear on a translation, the expectations of its readership, the uses to which it is put, will vary systematically from those proper to non-translational texts.<sup>2</sup>

That is, the LXX was intended to occupy a specific sociocultural niche for the Jews of Alexandria, and its textual expression, social location, uses, and transmission are all conditioned by the fact that it is a translated text. What seems necessary, then, as a means of approaching the problem I have in mind, and what we scholars of the LXX rarely seem to employ, is a theory of translation that will provide an adequate explanatory framework for addressing the central questions we ask about this important translation.<sup>3</sup>

The importance of seeing the LXX as a translation and the concurrent need for some theoretical framework in which to discuss it were nowhere more obvious than in the beginning stages of the NETS project. The editors and the committee charged with creating the policies for translating the LXX into English had to reckon constantly with the fact that we were translating a translation, and one that had a close relationship to its Semitic parent text at that. One theoretical approach to the enterprise of translation that has proved very productive for the way that we look at the Septuagint is the work of the Israeli translation theorist Gideon Toury, as set out most recently in his book,

1. By "Septuagint," I mean the Pentateuch, most likely translated in the third century B.C.E. in Alexandria.

2. Cameron Boyd-Taylor, "In a Mirror, Dimly: Reading the Septuagint as a Document of Its Times," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (SBLSCS 53, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Glenn Woodon, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 16–17.

3. Albert Pieterma, "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint," in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch ALBI-6 Conference. Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique "From Alpha to Byte."* University of Stellenbosch, 17–21 July 2000 (ed. Johann Cook, Leiden: Brill, 2002) 337–364 [340] citing Jonathan Z. Smith, *Druidgery Divine* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 79.

*Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (DTS).<sup>4</sup> Fundamentally, Toury argues that

the position and function of translations (as entities) and of translating (as a kind of activity) in a prospective target culture, the form a translation would have (and hence the relationships which would tie it to its original), and the strategies resorted to during its generation do not constitute a series of unconnected facts.<sup>5</sup>

The interconnected nature of these "facts" gives rise to the claim that all translations originate within a particular cultural environment, and they "are designed to meet certain needs of, and/or occupy certain 'slots' in it."<sup>6</sup> In short, translations need to be thought of first and foremost as facts of their target cultures.

According to Toury, not only are a translation's function/position, its textual linguistic makeup (what Toury calls "product"), and the strategies employed by the translator (called "process" by Toury) interconnected, they exert specific influences in a particular direction. As Toury describes this threefold series of relationships, he argues that the intended position of any translation in its target culture exerts a determining influence on its surface realization or textual-linguistic makeup. Further, this surface realization establishes the parameters and strategies that a translator can use in the execution of that translation.<sup>7</sup> He diagrams this series of relationships as follows:

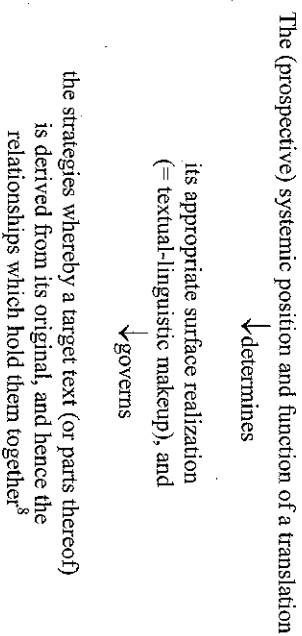


Figure 1. Toury's Relations between function (position), product, and process

4. Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995).

5. *Ibid.*, 24

6. *Ibid.*, 12.

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

Since Toury's categories are inextricably linked in such a way that each informs the others, presumably what we know about one or two of these elements should provide some indications of the nature of the other(s). This inter-connectedness of function, product, and process has potential significance for the study of the LXX, since we actually do know quite a bit about the textual linguistic makeup of the translations and the strategies employed by the translators, while we are still relatively in the dark about the translator's origins. To put it in Toury's language of function-product-process, knowing something of the product and process of the LXX should enable us to derive some conclusions about the intended function of the translation in the target culture. That intended function might provide clues as to the origins of the translation.

While the terms "function" and "position" might lead us to think that Toury has in mind the *Sitz im Leben* of a translation, he appears to mean something else.<sup>9</sup> For a translation like the LXX, we really cannot know what the translators intended to do with it once it existed in Greek. By function/position, Toury means cultural location. The "slots" within the target cultural environment more appropriately have to do with the value of a text within that target culture. When he speaks of function/position, Toury is interested in the systemic value of the translation, which is structural and which can perhaps best be expressed in oppositions such as literary/nonliterary, central/peripheral, prestigious/nonprestigious, monolingual/bilingual.<sup>10</sup> In any analysis of a translation that is function-oriented, these oppositions, to which we could probably add others, will provide indicators of a translation's intended function.

Translators, by dint of the fact that they must work in two language systems and thus with two differing sets of linguistic norms, are faced with decisions about which norms to follow. A translator could subject him/herself to the norms of the source text or to the norms of the target culture. This "basic choice" between the source norms or target norms, which a translator can

9. *Ibid.* I am indebted in this short section to several e-mail exchanges with Albert Pieterstra and Cameron Boyd-Taylor, then of the University of Toronto, in which we tried to sort out what Toury was getting at in his discussion of function.

10. This list of oppositions comes from private communication from Cameron Boyd-Taylor. It should be pointed out here that Toury's theoretical approach is rooted in Polysystem theory, which itself is a development within structuralism and (Russian) formalism. See also Steven Frade, "Locating Targum in the Textual Polysystem of Rabbinic Pedagogy," below, pp. 69-90.

make at the macro and/or micro levels, Toury calls an initial norm.<sup>11</sup> Some translations "tend to subscribe to the norms of the source text, and through them also to the norms of the source language and culture." Such translations "may well entail certain incompatibilities with target norms and practices, especially those lying beyond the mere linguistic ones."<sup>12</sup> Translations can also work in the other direction, adopting the norms of the target system. In these cases, the translators pursue different agendas. Toury characterizes the pursuit of these differing translational agendas with the terms adequacy and acceptability. "Thus," he writes, "whereas adherence to the source norms determines a translation's adequacy as compared to the source text, subscription to norms originating in the target culture determines its acceptability."<sup>13</sup> Adherence to source (adequacy) or target (acceptability) norms bears initially on any evaluation of the textual-linguistic makeup of a translation, but, as Toury notes, the norms pursued are not strictly linguistic. They are also more broadly cultural. In that sense, any assessment of the degree to which the translator pursued adequacy or acceptability would seem to provide potential evidence for the intended function/position of a translation.

One of the important and productive consequences of the theoretical insights advocated by Toury is that they can provide a framework within which to ask historical questions about translations, since translating is social behavior, and translations, as he argues, are facts of target cultures. As the large quantity of scholarly literature on the LXX will attest, the matter of its origins remains a vexed and largely unanswered question. Since we possess no firsthand testimony from those connected with the production of the LXX, we are left, it seems to me, with two sorts of evidence upon which to draw: (1) the claims of the earliest "account" of the translation's origins, the *Letter of Aristeas* (external evidence), which conveys a great deal of information about what Pseudo-Aristeas envisioned the function of the LXX to be;<sup>14</sup> and (2) the evidence of the textual-linguistic makeup of the LXX itself (internal evidence). In what follows, I employ aspects of Toury's theoretical framework

11. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 56.

12. *Ibid.*, 56.

13. *Ibid.*, 56-57. Important to note at this juncture is that acceptability is relative to the norms of literary composition in the target culture. Toury is not talking about the relative acceptability of a text *qua* translation.

14. For the purposes of my argument, it is immaterial whether Aristobulus is earlier or later than Aristeas. Aristobulus mentions Demetrius of Phalerum as the instigator of the translation, as Aristeas does. The relationship of these authors and their possible sources for the tradition about Demetrius are still a very open question.

in order to discover what the *Letter of Aristeas* says about the intended function of the LXX and, since Toury's model posits a connection between intended function and textual-linguistic makeup, to see if Pseudo-Aristeas's construction comport with the evidence derived from the translations themselves.

#### *The Septuagint in the Letter of Aristeas*

This early Jewish text stands at the center of any discussion of the translation of the LXX. In general scholars agree that the *Letter of Aristeas* is pseudonymous, the product of a Jewish author and not the creation of its putative author, "Aristeas," a Greek courtier of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (hence the designation of the author as Pseudo-Aristeas); is not a contemporary account that chronicles the making of the translation but an account made a significant time after it, probably sometime in the mid-second century B.C.E.; and reflects the Jewish author's interests and concerns in his own time, not the concerns of third-century B.C.E. Judaism. Significant scholarly disagreement remains about the author's motivations for writing the book. Possible motivations are: a response to some contemporary crisis, a polemic targeting the emergence of rival translations, or certain problems of Hellenism and Judaism. Whatever the author's motivation, and despite the fact that only a small portion of the book actually describes the process and acceptance of the translation, *Aristeas* is occupied throughout with the rendering of the Torah into Greek. For starters, this task frames the entire work. The translation is the reason for the deputation to the high priest Eleazar (§§1-3),<sup>15</sup> and the book culminates with the acceptance of the translation by the Jewish community and the approbation of the king (§§308-321). The four major digressions (the description of the gifts [§§51-83]; the journey to Jerusalem [§§83-120]; Eleazar's apology for the Law [§§128-171]; the symposia [§§187-300]) all contribute to the overall purpose of the book, "to transform the translation of the Law into a 'major event,'" that is, to articulate a myth of origins for the LXX.<sup>16</sup> Of these four digressions, the section describing the series of symposia

is given by the king in honor of the Jewish translators bears most directly on Pseudo-Aristeas's construction of the nature of the LXX, since it demonstrates how the translators' proficiency in Greek philosophy and Jewish piety outstrips the Alexandrian philosophers' and why they are qualified to undertake this momentous task in the life of the Jewish people.

Even though scholarly opinion holds that *Aristeas* is not a contemporary historical account of the production of the LXX, scholars often assume that the *Letter* supplies important evidence for the origins and character of the translation. Yet, if we examine carefully just what Pseudo-Aristeas claims for the LXX as a translation of the Hebrew Torah, we find that the central (and apologetic) goal is to portray the LXX as genealogically a translation deriving prestige and authority from its source text. At the same time, however, the author constructs the LXX as genetically an independent entity, of great literary and philosophical quality, highly acceptable, occupying a prestigious slot in the target culture. Pseudo-Aristeas effectively ignores, however, the actual and observable relationship between the Hebrew and the Greek.<sup>17</sup> If we look back at Toury's arguments, his model posits that function/position governs the textual-linguistic makeup of a translation and that the translators' position (the initial norm) on adequacy/acceptability reveals which cultural norms are being followed. *Aristeas*'s story of LXX origins does not account for the disconnect between its claim of the LXX's function/position as a highly acceptable, prestigious, and independent work of literature and the results of textual-linguistic analysis of the translations themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Pseudo-Aristeas's story begins when King Ptolemy charges his librarian, Demetrius of Phalerum, with gathering together "if possible, all the books of the world" (§9). Demetrius purchases and transcribes as many as he can, but missing from the collection is the Jewish Law, which, Demetrius tells the king, "should be given a place in your library, for their [the Jews'] legislation is most philosophical and flawless (διὰ τὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτεράν εἶναι καὶ ἀτέτατον τὴν νομοθεσίαν ταύτην), inasmuch as it is divine" (§31). The reason for the absence of such a prestigious text, Demetrius notes, is that "translation/interpretation (ἐγγραφή) is required." The *raison d'être* for the

15. For the Greek text of *Aristeas*, see André Pelletier, *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate* (SC 89; Paris: Cerf, 1962).

16. Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 32. For arguments about the purpose of *Aristeas*, see also my "Translation as Scripture: The Septuagint in Aristeas and Philo," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges*

in the *Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (SBI:SCS 53; ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Glenn Wooder; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006) 50-57.

17. For the language of genetics, I am indebted to Albert Pietersma, "LXX and DTS: A New Archimedean Point for Septuagint Studies?" above, pp. 1-12.

18. See below, pp. 54-55, for studies that have characterized the nature of Septuagintal Greek.

translation, then, was to occupy a place in the royal library alongside all the other books that Demetrius had acquired. The claims made about the Jewish Law and the intention to have it in the library indicate that from its inception the translation was supposed to be read and used independently of the Hebrew. The king's copies would be accorded high cultural status, and the expectation was that the accomplished translation would itself be highly acceptable to the target culture. That is, it would be a work of high literature (a point to which I will return). That Pseudo-Aristeas credits the Hellenistic king with initiating the translation emphasizes both its independence from the Hebrew, since its users would have been Greek speakers who presumably would not have been able to read the original, and its prestige, since from the beginning the translation was connected with royal patronage.

The vocabulary of translation/interpretation employed throughout the book furthers this twofold agenda of independence and prestige. The term ἐπιμύθεια, which can mean 'interpretation' as well as 'translation', occurs often along with the verb ἐπιμύθεω and its roughly synonymous compounds μεθεπιμύθεω and διεπιμύθεω. While they probably mean 'to translate' (cf. especially §§15, 38–39) for the most part, and terms for translation routinely appear in contexts with words for transcription and copying (§§9, 19, 15, 307, 309), the built-in lexical ambiguity in these terms actually works in the author's favor, and he probably even plays intentionally on that ambiguity.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, we might expect as much from Pseudo-Aristeas. On the one hand, the connotation of translation explicitly constructs the Greek version as a representation of its genealogically-famous parent, and in §§32 and 310, Pseudo-Aristeas makes clear that the rendering was 'accurate'. On the other hand, the language of interpretation establishes the LXX as an independent entity, able to stand on its own without dependence on the parent text. Thus, Pseudo-Aristeas lexically wants to have it both ways. The LXX shares the prestige and divine quality of the Hebrew Law through its genealogical, that is translational, relationship, but at the same time it can take its own place in the king's library as an independent work of Greek literature. The language of interpretation/translation that Pseudo-Aristeas employs provides an important initial indication that the LXX is culturally prestigious and therefore highly acceptable in the target culture.

19. For a good discussion of this terminology, see Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 44–49, and Holger Gzella, *Lebenszeit und Ewigkeit: Studien zur Eschatologie und Anthropologie des Septuaginta-Padlers* (Berlin: Philo, 2002) 13–39.

In order to execute the task of translating the Hebrew Law, Demetrius dispatches a deputation to Eleazar, the high priest of the Jews, seeking "elders who have led exemplary lives and are expert in their own law and are able to translate" (§§32, 39). He should send these men to Alexandria where they will execute the translation. From the beginning, it is clear that they will be engaged in a cooperative effort to achieve "accuracy in the translation" (τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἐπιμύθειαν ἀκριβέως). Once accomplished Ptolemy intends to "place it conspicuously, worthy of the subject and of your [Eleazar's] benevolence." The translators carry with them manuscripts on which the Law is written in Hebrew script in golden characters. Upon their arrival, the Gentile king acknowledges the divine nature of the Hebrew. "When they had uncovered the rolls and unrolled the parchments the king paused for a considerable space, and after bowing deeply some seven times, he said, 'I thank you, good sirs, and him that sent you even more, but most of all I thank God whose holy words these are.'"<sup>20</sup> These manuscripts vouchsafe the authenticity of copies of the Hebrew Law, especially in light of Demetrius's earlier statement in §30 that the Law "has been transcribed rather carelessly and not as is proper."<sup>21</sup> That the translation was made from these divinely impressive and carefully transcribed manuscripts argues powerfully for its own verisimilitude and sanctity.

Before the translation can be executed, the king fetes the translators in a series of symposia, which serve to highlight the characteristics of these formidable men. Through a series of questions that the king proposes, each of the translators demonstrates a keen grasp of Greek philosophy. Their answers outstrip those of the court philosophers because they additionally make the Jewish God the basis for their arguments. They are eloquent, learned/cultured (τρεταίδευμένους, §321) and virtuous (cf. §§200, 235, 293–296). The work's portrayal of the translators presents them as men who are well versed in both Greek philosophy and the Hebrew Law. They draw their superior

20. §177.

21. Paul Kahle (*The Cairo Geniza* [2nd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1953] 212–13) argued that this section referred to earlier translations of the Law into Greek, but the interest of this passage is in the Hebrew text. It thus almost certainly refers to Hebrew manuscripts. The key term in the passage is the verb ομογραφῆσαι, here translated 'transcribed'. The verb has been variously translated by a variety of English verbs, including 'edit', 'copy', 'transmit', or 'write'. For a discussion of the meaning of the verb, see Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 48–49.

answers to the king's questions from their divine legislation—God is at the center of all their responses.

If we recall the lexical ambiguity of the translation/interpretation vocabulary that Pseudo-Aristeas employs with respect to the translation itself, this same ambiguity surrounds what these men do. That is, they are interpreters in addition to being translators. They do more than render into Greek what is in Hebrew; they are divinely-led authors who also endow their product with their superior philosophical qualities and exemplary learning. Pseudo-Aristeas's descriptions of the qualities that these men possess and of the symposia in which they participate help support the claim that the LXX, the result of their efforts, is an outstanding example of philosophical literature, indeed even better than Greek philosophy. Additionally, as Sylvie Honigman argues, the translators engage in activities that Pseudo-Aristeas intentionally modeled after those of the Alexandrian grammarians, and their scholarly activity assures the literary quality of their product.<sup>22</sup> They read, interpret, and then translate this most philosophical and flawless of texts, providing a work of the same quality for their Ptolemaic patron. Pseudo-Aristeas's emphasis on the accuracy (*κατὰ πᾶν ἠκριβομένως*) of the translation, the piety with which it was executed (*ὁσίως δηριγύρευται*), how well it was done (*καλῶς ἔχον ἔστιν*) and that it needs no revision or alteration, all reassert the exemplary philosophical, and hence literary quality, of the work (§310). We find pictured in *Aristeas* cultured men producing a text of high culture for a cultured elite. According to Pseudo-Aristeas's vision of the LXX's creation, these translators were perfectly capable of employing the norms of the target language and culture when producing their translation. In such claims, we see yet again the assertion of the high prestige and thus high acceptability of the LXX in the target culture as envisioned in *Aristeas*.

Later in §§303–307, Demetrius assists with finding an appropriate place for the translators to work, and they ultimately settle on the island of Pharos. The Jewish scholars operate by translating and then comparing their work, harmonizing their differences, which Demetrius then puts into writing. Every day before beginning to work, they appear before the king, wash their hands, and pray. When asked by Aristeas about the purpose of this washing, the translators tell him that in this way they demonstrate that they have done no evil. Pseudo-Aristeas continues to show that these men are indeed the learned

22. *Ibid.*, 47–49.

and pious scholars that Ptolemy had sought from the beginning, and they ultimately produce a perfect translation.

As far as *Aristeas* is concerned, the translation also acts as an independent replacement for the Hebrew Torah within the Jewish community of Alexandria, which in §§308–311 not only affirms the accuracy of the translation, but also binds itself to the LXX as divinely inspired Scripture. In these paragraphs, the central claim is “to accord the Septuagint version of the Torah the same sanctity and authority long held by the Hebrew original—in a word to certify the ‘divine’ origin of the Septuagint.”<sup>23</sup> Establishing the translation as Scripture places it on an equal status with its Hebrew original, and thus the LXX can stand in its place. Pseudo-Aristeas accomplishes this goal by framing the creation and acceptance of this Greek translation in similar language to the reception of the Hebrew Torah by Israel. Harry Orlinsky argues that the public reading of the Septuagint accompanied by the consent of the people closely resembles Exod 24:3–7, where Moses reads the Law and afterward the people consent to follow it. Orlinsky concludes that the phrase “to read aloud to the people” followed by some expression of consent “describes the biblical procedure in designating a document as official and binding, in other words, as divinely inspired, as Sacred Scripture.”<sup>24</sup> After the people approve of the translation, the Jewish priests and elders command that it cannot be altered or revised in any fashion, and a curse should fall on anyone who might do so. Deut 4:1–2 employs the same tactic with respect to the laws commanded by God.<sup>25</sup> Sections 312–317, which describe the unsuccessful attempts by Theopompus and Theodectes to translate sections of the Law, reinforce the assertion made here that only this version deserves the approval accorded it by the entire Jewish community. The punishment experienced by these two Gentiles for their presumably arrogant actions demonstrates that only the LXX can be regarded as authoritative Scripture.<sup>26</sup>

The confirmation scene in §§303–307 is actually the third of three scenes that Honigman dubs the “Exodus paradigm” and that demonstrate that *Aristeas* has as a central thematic concern the elevation of the LXX to scriptural status.

23. Harry Orlinsky, “Septuagint as Holy Writ and the Philosophy of the Translators,” *HUCA* 46 (1975) 94.

24. *Ibid.*, 94. See also the reading of the Law in Ezra/Nehemiah.

25. *Ibid.*, 95.

26. *Ibid.*, 98–103.

This paradigm equates the story of the translated Law, the LXX, with the story of the original Hebrew Law, the Torah. Equating their stories is, implicitly, a way of equating the status of both texts. By the end of [the] B[look of] A[r]ist[eas], the LXX has been turned into the text of the Alexandrian Jews who, in turn, stand for the whole people of Israel.<sup>27</sup>

The first of the three "Exodus paradigm" scenes is Ptolemy's liberation of the Jewish slaves. According to §§12–14, the Jews were imported as slaves under oppression. At Arist[eas's] behest, Ptolemy frees them while at the same time lavishing gifts upon them. The one element of this story that, of course, does not comport with Exodus is that Ptolemy is not forced to free the Jews against his will; he does so out of his great benevolence. Honigman explains, however,

In the Bible, the Jews escape from Egypt not only to material freedom, but also to be given the Law on Mount Sinai, before they are finally led into the Promised Land. Ptolemy's benevolence means that there is now no need to flee.

The Law can and will be received in Alexandria. B.Ar. is the story of a non-Exodus.<sup>28</sup>

The second "Exodus paradigm" scene is the selection of the 72 elders in Jerusalem. This scene prepares for the final scene of confirmation of the translators' work, the giving of the Law. These elders, explicitly said to be from each of the 12 tribes, parallel the elders who ascended Mount Sinai with Moses to receive the Law (Exodus 24).<sup>29</sup>

Honigman also emphasizes that Pseudo-Arist[eas] does more than appeal to Hebrew Scripture in order to establish the LXX's scriptural status. The author employs the language and ideology of Homeric scholarship in Alexandria to certify that the manuscripts of the Law acquired by the king were the most reliable form of the text. They had been transcribed carefully and reliably, unlike the other forms of the text that Demetrius knew; they were authentic and authoritative. Such authoritative copies provide the basis for establishing that the LXX was sacred Scripture. She writes,

By informing his account with this paradigm [of Alexandrian Homeric scholarship] B.Ar.'s author was, first and foremost, interested in convincing his readers that translation of the LXX was the best possible one, primarily because it was based on the most authentic original. Establishing the quality of the

27. Honigman, *Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship*, 53.

28. *Ibid.*, 56.

29. *Ibid.*, 58.

translation was an indispensable prerequisite before he could establish the claim that really mattered for him and which was to be conveyed by the secondary theme of the central narrative: that the LXX was a sacred text. Sacredness implies first of all flawless quality. He presented this quality in the form that was most natural both for him and his well-educated Alexandrian readers, namely, the Alexandrian ideology related to the recovering of original texts by textual emendation as practiced by the grammarians subsidized by the Ptolemaic dynasty.<sup>30</sup>

While the gist of Honigman's argument here is on target, the emphasis perhaps needs some revision. Honigman suggests that Arist[eas] focuses on authenticity and that Pseudo-Arist[eas] uses the language of Alexandrian scholarship to make that point. But in Arist[eas] while the results of Homeric scholarship and textual emendation might contribute to claims of authenticity, the arrival of the Hebrew parchments inscribed in gold brought (and presumably used) by the translators would seem to certify that "The quality of the translation is certainly crucial, and it derives from its genealogical relationship with these Hebrew manuscripts, and from the piety, learning and culture (if not divine inspiration) of the translators themselves."<sup>31</sup> What Honigman correctly senses here, I think, is that the pedigree of the Greek inasmuch as it is based on an authentic Hebrew text, contributes to Pseudo-Arist[eas's] claim of the high prestige of the resulting translation and its sanctity. Pseudo-Arist[eas], of course, does not appeal to the relation between the source text and the target text, as Philo will do later, because to do so would undercut his picture of the translation as a highly acceptable instance of Greek literature.

To sum up, at each point in *Arist[eas's]* narrative, the author makes a concerted effort to make three essential claims for the intended function of the Greek translation of the Pentateuch that we can organize around the kind of function-oriented analysis outlined above. First, according to *Arist[eas]*, the LXX is intended from the beginning to stand alone as a replacement for the Hebrew Law. As an independent text, Pseudo-Arist[eas] clearly envisions the LXX operating in a monolingual environment in which its readers ought to be able to engage it as a Greek text just as they would any other Greek text.

30. *Ibid.*, 48.

31. The language of this paragraph suggests that Honigman recognizes the genealogical connection. In another place in her book she emphasizes that the theme of piety is important to Arist[eas] and helps to make the case that the LXX is now sacred Scripture. See *ibid.*, 58–63.

Second, to describe the LXX as a stand-alone text does only partial justice to what Pseudo-Aristeas presents. Not only can the LXX stand on its own, it is a work of high literature wholly sufficient to itself that can match up to and even exceed other Greek philosophical works. The strategies that Pseudo-Aristeas pursues emphasize that the Hebrew Law on which the LXX is based is philosophical and flawless, and the translators/interpreters who produced the LXX are capable and learned philosophers who can interpret and translate their flawless original. For *Aristeas*, what characterizes the Hebrew Law *mutatis mutandis* will also characterize the LXX. As far as Pseudo-Aristeas is concerned, the translators have worked almost exclusively in the norms of the target language and culture, and he portrays the LXX as a Greek literary work, highly acceptable to what he presents as the LXX's target culture—the cultural elite of Hellenistic Alexandria.

Third, the LXX constitutes the sacred Scripture of the Jewish people, and it holds a status equal to the Hebrew Law given to Moses on Sinai. It is, in effect, a new revelation of the Law transmitted through the work of the Jewish translators. While the *modus operandi* of the translators in which they compare the results of their work and arrive at an agreed-upon translation does not bear the stamp of divine inspiration (unlike in Philo of Alexandria, whose story more heavily highlights divine activity in the translation process), Pseudo-Aristeas does note that the 72 scholars completed their work in 72 days, "as if this coincidence had been the result of some design" (οἰοῦντες κατὰ πρόθεσιν τινα τοῦ τοιοῦτου γεγενημένου, §307). The author certainly intimates that the deity had something to do with the LXX's production. Here again what applies to the Hebrew original extends to the translation—in this case the centrality and prestige of being sacred Scripture.

Near the end of the book, the king's reaction to hearing the translation read encapsulates these last two themes of high literary and philosophical quality and scriptural status. He first marvels "exceedingly at the intellect of the lawgiver," and then asks why it is that none of the poets or historians had mentioned "such enormous achievements." Demetrius responds that the reason is that the Law "is holy and has come into being through God." He then cites the abortive attempts by Theopompus and Theodectes to include the Jewish Law in their work. The king responds by showing reverential deference to the books. "When the king heard the account of these things from Demetrius, as I have said before, he bowed deeply and gave orders that great care be taken of the books and that they be watched over reverently" (§317).

This reverential reaction mirrors his initial attitude to the Hebrew manuscripts when they arrive with the translators (§177, see above).

#### *The Constitutive Character of the Septuagint*

We have seen how the *Letter of Aristeas* constructs the intended function of the LXX, but what about the LXX itself? If *Aristeas* communicates the LXX's actual intended function/position, then DTS would lead us to expect to find evidence of it embedded or reflected somehow in the LXX's textual-linguistic makeup. If it is not, then that disparity requires some explanation. What we discover when we look at the LXX is that at every point its textual-linguistic makeup contradicts what *Aristeas* would have us expect.

If there is one general agreement among scholars who have studied the LXX over the last two centuries, it is that the Greek of the LXX does not represent good literary Greek. Scholars have characterized Septuagintal Greek in a variety of fashions, but generally they note its frequent Hebraisms, its pedestrian character, its transliterations, and its occasional impenetrability. Descriptions range from that of Conybeare and Stock, who note that LXX Greek is often "hardly Greek at all, but rather Hebrew in disguise,"<sup>32</sup> to R. R. Ottley who remarks on the "flat, bald surface of the Greek."<sup>33</sup> Even John Wevers, who insists that "the product of the Alexandrian translators was throughout sensible," can remark about the LXX of Numbers that this dictum is "hard put to the test in [Numbers]; in a few cases I have been forced to admit that I was uncertain as to what [Numbers] was trying to say."<sup>34</sup>

The Greek of the LXX often contains, for example, a fairly high degree of stereotyping of lexical items, word order that follows the Hebrew, and odd to sometimes non-Greek syntactical features like unidiomatic uses of prepositions. The frequent occurrence of these features does not suggest that the translators produced throughout nonsensical Greek, however. Much, even most, of the Greek of the LXX is adequate and understandable, but it

32. F. C. Conybeare and St. George Stock, *Grammar of Septuagint Greek* (Boston: Ginn, 1905; repr. *With Selected Readings, Vocabularies, and Updated Indexes*, Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1995) 21.

33. Cited in Pieterma, "A New Paradigm," 341.

34. John W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers* (SBLSCS 46; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998) x.

certainly does not generally rise to a level that one might characterize as literary.<sup>35</sup>

Additionally, as Albert Pieterma notes, even if we were to ignore an entire range of LXX translation phenomena such as transliterations, purely mechanical translations, or unidiomatic uses of prepositions and other "structure words," we would still be faced with a Greek whose most prominent Hebraism "consists in the excessive use of and 'the special prominence given to certain correct, though unidiomatic, modes of speech, because they happen to coincide with Hebrew idioms.'"<sup>36</sup> This phenomenon, what Toury calls interference, consists of the transference to the target text of "phenomena pertaining to the makeup of the source text," and Toury argues that all translations experience it.<sup>37</sup> However it might be articulated, across the board in the history of scholarship on the LXX the consensus has been that we consistently see interference in the LXX, that it occurs with great frequency, and that it is one phenomenon that connects the translation to its source text.<sup>38</sup>

This all-too-brief and general assessment of the Greek of the LXX suffices for my purposes to highlight the contrast with what the *Letter of Aristeas* says about the translation. The nature of the LXX's Greek enables us to conclude that the translation is not and apparently was not intended to be a literary translation, despite the fact that Pseudo-Aristeas says that it was supposed to be one. Here I adopt Toury's definition of literary translation, which "involves the imposition of 'conformity conditions' beyond the linguistic and/or general-textual ones, namely, to models and norms which are deemed literary at the target end. It thus yields more-or-less well-formed texts from the point of view of the literary requirements of the recipient culture, at various pos-

35. Yet, to characterize the translations that we find in the LXX as often quite literal, even at times isomorphic, does not imply that they are free of the translators' exegesis of their source texts. Often, though, that exegesis is constrained by the translators' basic isomorphic or paraphrastic approach to the source text. Cameron Boyd-Taylor ("A Place in the Sun: The Interpretive Significance of LXX Psalm 18:5c," *BIOSCS* 31 [1998] 75 n. 8) uses the term "metaphrasis" which, he says, "captures the isomorphic verbal relationship between the translation and its *Vorlage*."

36. Pieterma, "A New Paradigm," 343, citing H. St. J. Thackeray.

37. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 275. Interference is manifested as either negative transfer, "deviations from normal, codified practice of the target system," or, what Pieterma describes here, positive transfer, the propensity to select and employ features of the source text that also exist in the target system.

38. For a detailed explanation of the consequences of these observations for questions of the LXX and its origins, see Pieterma, "A New Paradigm."

sible costs in terms of reconstructions of the source text.<sup>39</sup> Producing a literary translation will of necessity involve suppressing certain features of the source text and perhaps reshuffling some while adding others.<sup>40</sup> Perhaps another way to put it is to say that the character of LXX Greek suggests that the translators, when confronted with Toury's initial norm, pursued adequacy rather than acceptability—quite the opposite of what Pseudo-Aristeas claims. In short, the LXX is not the great work of literature that Pseudo-Aristeas envisioned.

The LXX's textual-linguistic makeup also does not support Pseudo-Aristeas's contention that it was intended to act as a substitution or replacement for its Hebrew original and to function in a monolingual environment. In fact, just the reverse appears to be the case; the textual-linguistic makeup of the LXX suggests that it was intended to have a close relationship with its Hebrew *Vorlage*. The overall literal, and frequently isomorphic, technique of the LXX translators functions in such a way as to bring the original to the reader rather than the reader to the original.<sup>41</sup> That is, the LXX was meant from its inception to act as a gateway to lead the reader back to the Hebrew original, which was the more prestigious text of the two. The LXX translators faced a basic translational choice (Toury's initial norm). They could subject themselves either to the norms of their source text (adequacy) or to those of the target text (acceptability).

Louis Kelly, working from a somewhat different methodological approach from Toury, sees the translator faced with a similar basic choice. Kelly articulates this choice as one of competing authority structures in relation to the source text, which he calls "personal" and "positional."<sup>42</sup> Within personal authority structures, one takes responsible autonomy and retains power of decision, while positional structures impose formal patterns of obligation. Commitment, then, based on a personal authority structure, gives rise to translation behaviors akin to an elaborated sociolinguistic code: the translator's approach to text is multidimensional, author- or reader-centered, and

39. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 171.

40. *Ibid.*

41. Sebastian Brock, "The Phenomenon of the Septuagint," *OSt* 17 (1972) 17.

42. Louis Kelly, *True Interpreter* (New York: St. Martin's, 1979) 206–7. Kelly's analysis of the two authority structures here depends on the work of Basil Bernstein, "Social Class, Language and Socialisation," in *Language and Social Context* (ed. P. P. Giglioli; New York: Penguin, 1972) 157–78 (cited in Kelly, 252 n. 1). For an application of Kelly's categories to other ancient translations, see my "Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, the Septuagint and Their Audiences," *JSL* 34 (2003) 1–27.

subjective. Where, however, the translator sees the relation between her/him and the text as positional, the approach is that of restricted sociolinguistic code: unidimensional, text- and object-centered, and objective. Thus, depending on the type of authority his text exercises over the translator, fidelity will mean either collaboration or servitude.<sup>43</sup>

The LXX translators adopted a positional stance (or, à la Toury, made the fundamental decision to pursue adequacy), and as a result, the translation has the unidimensional and object-centered qualities that Kelly sees as characteristic of a positional authority stance. In the case of the LXX, servitude generally wins the day. Almost certainly, it seems to me, such a positional stance has at the least as a consequence, at most as the motivation, of bringing the original text to the reader, and it is difficult in this respect to see how the LXX could be intended to act as an independent replacement for the Hebrew.

Whether the textual-linguistic makeup of the LXX indicates anything about its authoritative or scriptural status poses a thorny problem. While one of Pseudo-Aristeas's central agendas is to certify the LXX as sacred Scripture, what the textual-linguistic makeup of the LXX reveals about the translator's approach to Toury's initial norm may provide some insight. Even if the translators understood themselves to be translating a sacred text, I certainly do not think that there is any inherent reason to claim that the desire to produce a sacred text was part of the intended function for the translation. The translators' process and final product in which they subject themselves to the norms of the source text (Toury), adopt a positional stance toward the original text (to use Kelly's language), or bring the reader to the original (Brock, Pieterma) implicitly recognize the more privileged status of the original. That is, the translation does not supplant or rival the prestige of the original, but it was intended to act as a way of accessing it. Thus, whereas Pseudo-Aristeas presents the LXX as the equal of the Hebrew, these considerations suggest a less prestigious status for the translation when placed alongside the Hebrew original. These considerations justify Pieterma's comments about the relationship between *Aristeas* and the textual-linguistic makeup of the LXX when he writes,

But to regard Aristeas's depiction as reflective of the constitutive character of the text itself and thus to elevate it to the status of explanatory model for its linguistic makeup, and hence its exegetical dimension, cannot be accepted.

43. Kelly, *True Interpreter*, 206–7.

Rather than being rooted in the text, the paradigm built of Aristeas is nothing more than a superimposition upon the text as produced.<sup>44</sup>

*Aristeas: A Witness to the Reception History of the Septuagint*<sup>45</sup>

How then should we make sense of the obvious disconnect between *Aristeas*'s construction of the intended function/position of the LXX and the actual textual-linguistic makeup of the translation? The most likely conclusion is that the picture offered by the *Letter of Aristeas* does not, indeed it cannot, provide any indication of what the original intended function of the LXX was. We can only try to discover the intended position of the LXX from the internal evidence we derive from the translation itself. If *Aristeas*, then, has no evidentiary value for getting at the intended function of the LXX, what is the purpose of the fiction that Pseudo-Aristeas (or his sources) creates? Paul Kahle, I would suggest, actually pointed to the answer in his comments about *Aristeas* in *The Cairo Geniza*. Kahle thought that *Aristeas* was not even concerned with the "original" LXX at all, but with a revised version that was being touted as superior to other versions. He argued in part that the LXX could not be the subject of *Aristeas* because "[n]obody makes propaganda for something a hundred years old. Propaganda is made for something contemporary. We can be sure that the translation had just been made when the letter of propaganda was written."<sup>46</sup> Kahle was trying to drive a wedge between *Aristeas*'s account and the origins of the translation of the Pentateuch in order to construct his larger argument about the LXX's beginnings. Kahle was right about *Aristeas* in a way, I think, but we do not have to accept his larger reconstruction of the nature of LXX origins in order to argue that *Aristeas* has nothing to do with the actual production of the translation or with its original intended function.

Toury offers a caveat about the relationships between position-product-process. "[T]ranslations which retain their status as facts of the target culture may nevertheless change their position over time."<sup>47</sup> In these cases the actual function/position of the translation will differ from its initial one, obscuring the original relationship between position and product. I think that this is

44. Albert Pieterma, "A New English Translation of the Septuagint and a Commentary Series to Follow," *TLZ* 129 (2004) 1008–16 [1012].

45. Much of this section originated in my article "Translation as Scripture."

46. Kahle, *Cairo Geniza*, 211.

47. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 30.

exactly what happened with the LXX, and this changed function necessitated the kind of claims that Pseudo-Aristeas makes about it. The LXX gradually lost its dependent relationship with the Hebrew, and those who read it began to regard it in the manner that we see reflected in *Aristeas*, as an independent free-standing replacement for the Hebrew. While the textual-linguistic makeup of the translation did not change, it was no longer moored to the Hebrew, which was its initial and primary context. At the point of its inception, the LXX was meant to serve as the gateway to the Hebrew, a way of bringing the reader to the original, but the Hebrew Scriptures remained the major focal point. The Hebrew was regarded as authoritative, and the translators certainly regarded it as sacred. The Greek provided the Alexandrian Jewish community the means of accessing its Scripture. As readers later encountered the LXX separated from its original mooring, its status perhaps became something of a problem due to the inelegant, pedestrian, and sometimes obscure nature of its Greek, but almost certainly the relative authority of the translation, now severed from its parent, presented a fundamental problem. In fact, in the prologue to the Greek of Ben Sira, we see the author's grandson worrying about just this sort of problem in his own translation.<sup>48</sup> The linguistic relationship between the two texts, Hebrew and Greek, had been severed, which raised the crucial problem of what relationship the two texts continued to have, if any, as individual and independent repositories of the divine will. How authoritative was the LXX by itself?

We know how it all turned out in the end because Pseudo-Aristeas tells us. The LXX came to be regarded as sacred Scripture. But somewhere along the road to the LXX's becoming Scripture someone had to offer a justification for accepting it as a prestigious, central, and sacred text. Pseudo-Aristeas presents precisely that kind of justification. And here is where Kahle was wrong, even though his impulse was correct. If the LXX's intended function was dependent on the Hebrew, if it was less prestigious than the original and non-literary, for example, then however old it was when it began to be read as a replacement for the Hebrew and as a literary and authoritative text, someone did have to defend it. Propaganda would have been essential, and Pseudo-

Aristeas provides that propaganda. *Aristeas* does not contain any genuine reflection on the original intended function of the LXX; it legitimizes what the LXX had become by the middle part of the second century B.C.E. In other words, *Aristeas* offers us a foundation myth of origins for the LXX's transformed function/position as an independent, scriptural authority.

The story in *Aristeas* of the translation of the LXX, then, belongs to the reception history of the LXX, and it has little to no evidentiary relevance for the question of the origins of the translation. Those origins remain clouded, but because *Aristeas* contains the oldest "account" of the making of the translation, it exerts a seductive power on those investigating the circumstances in which the LXX originated. However much we might be tempted to adopt its viewpoint, *Aristeas* testifies to a place in the process of transmission of the LXX at which the translation had become independent and scriptural. In the end, however, we must search for the intended function of the LXX not in the external sources but in the place where Touvy's model predicts it will be found, in the textual-linguistic makeup of the third-century B.C.E translation itself.<sup>49</sup>

49. Touvy speaks of the use of what he calls "extratextual" sources for reconstructing translational norms (*Descriptive Translation Studies*, 65–67). The products of translation, the translations themselves, are the "primary products of norm-governed instances of behaviour, and can therefore be taken as immediate representations thereof" (p. 65). About extratextual sources, he writes, "Normative pronouncements, by contrast, are merely by-products of the existence and activity of norms. Like any attempt to formulate a norm, they are partial and biased, and should therefore be treated with every possible circumspection; all the more so since—emanating as they do from interested parties—they are likely to lean toward propaganda and persuasion" (p. 65).

48. See my "Why a Prologue? Ben Sira's Grandson and His Greek Translation," in *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (ed. Shalom M. Paul et al.; VTSup 94; Leiden: Brill, 2003) 633–44.