J. ROSS WAGNER

Reading the Sealed Book

Forschungen zum Alten Testament
88

Mohr Siebeck

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J. Ross Wagner

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Old Greek Isaiah and the Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics

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Meiner Frau

So ist's ja besser zu zweien als allein;
denn sie haben guten Lohn für ihre Mühe.
Wenn sie fallen, so hilft der eine dem andern auf.

Foreword

This book began to take shape during a sabbatical year spent as a Humboldt Research Fellow at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen in 2006–2007. My sincere thanks go to the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, the University of Göttingen and Princeton Theological Seminary for the generous support that funded that year and a subsequent research stay in the summer of 2010. I offer my deepest gratitude to my hosts, Prof. Dr. Hermann Spieckermann and Prof. Dr. Florian Wilk, for their warm welcome, generous friendship and continuing collaboration over these past seven years. My thanks go also to Dr. Bernhard Neuschäfer for graciously providing access to the resources of the Septuaginta-Unternehmen. Our family's time in Germany was greatly enriched by the hospitality of kind friends in Göttingen and Bremen, including the families of Karsten and Juliane Ahlers, Gisela Apel, Branislav and Jasna Beocanin, Eberhard and Beate Busch, Markus and Doro Frenz, Rainer and Barbara Hirsch-Luipold, and Florian and Eimelt Wilk. In Göttingen, Michael Grimmsmann and Judith Krawelitzki helped trouble-shoot everything from residence permits and *die Schulpflicht* to transportation, housing and *Handys*, while my colleague and friend Shane Berg provided invaluable support back in Princeton. I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Darrell Guder, my former dean at Princeton Theological Seminary. Without his vision, encouragement and assistance, my residence in Germany would not have been possible.

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Chapter 1

A Book with Seven Seals: The Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics

> καὶ ἔσονται ὑμῖν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ὡς οἱ λόγοι τοῦ βιβλίου τοῦ ἐσφραγισμένου τούτου, ὃ ἐὰν δῶσιν αὐτὸ ἀνθρώπῳ ἐπισταμένῳ γράμματα λέγοντες Ἀνάγνωθι ταῦτα· καὶ ἐρεῖ Οὐ δύναμαι ἀναγνῶναι, ἐσφράγισται γάρ.
>
> OG Isaiah 29:11

The past two decades have witnessed something of a renaissance in the study of the Septuagint. The "first major translation in western culture,"[1] the Greek Pentateuch quickly became the center of a growing body of Jewish-Greek literature comprising original works alongside translations of additional 'scriptural' texts.[2] These texts offer eloquent testimony to the cultural creativity and religious vitality of hellenistic Judaism. Moreover, because of their *Nachleben* as scripture both for diaspora Jews and for emerging Christian communities, the writings collected under the rubric of 'the Septuagint' are of signal importance for investigating early Jewish and Christian practice and belief.

The contemporary confluence of large-scale translation projects in French (*La Bible d'Alexandrie*),[3] German (*Septuaginta Deutsch*),[4] Spanish (*La Biblia Griega Septuaginta*)[5] and English (*A New English Translation of the Septuagint*)[6] has sparked a vigorous debate over how to understand and interpret the

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[1] Rajak 2009: 1. Sebastian Brock observes that "the Greek translation of the Pentateuch was an undertaking totally without precedent in the Hellenistic world" (Brock 1972: 12; see also Brock 1974; Brock 1984; Brock 1992). Dell'Acqua 2010 surveys the evidence for translation in Ptolemaic Egypt.

[2] Accounts of Septuagint origins can be found in Swete 1914; Jellicoe 1968; Dorival et al. 1988; Fernández Marcos 1998 (ET, Fernández Marcos 2000); Jobes and Silva 2000; Siegert 2001; Dines 2004; Tilly 2005; Law 2013.

[3] Numerous volumes of this translation and commentary have already appeared (e.g., Dogniez et al. 2001), with more to follow. See also Harl 1992.

[4] Translation: Kraus and Karrer 2009; Notes and Commentary (two vols): Karrer and Kraus 2011. See also Kraus 2006; Kraus 2010.

[5] Fernández Marcos and Spottorno Díaz-Caro 2008. See also Fernández Marcos 2008.

[6] Pietersma and Wright 2007. The introduction to NETS offers a clear statement of the principles behind the translation (Pietersma and Wright 2007a). There are also two Septuagint commentary series in the works in English: the Society of Biblical Literature Commentary on

translational literature within this corpus.[7] The complexity of the issues has, in turn, given rise to sharply divergent approaches to what might be termed 'Septuagint hermeneutics.'[8] Despite considerable advances elsewhere in the field, there is still no broad consensus concerning either the character of the translated texts within the Septuagint corpus or the proper methods for their interpretation. In this respect, at least, Hans Hübner's wry observation from twenty years ago would still seem to hold: the translation of the Seventy remains "a book with seven seals."[9]

The Shape of the Controversy

The debate over Septuagint hermeneutics circles around a number of interrelated questions. While we find a spectrum of positions on each issue, opinions have tended to cluster at one end of the continuum or the other. Thus, for the purposes of this brief overview, I will risk oversimplification by speaking in each case of two primary alternatives.[10]

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the Septuagint, connected with NETS and sponsored by the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/ioscs/commentary/prospectus.html; see also Pietersma 2004); and the Septuagint Commentary Series published by Brill (http://www.brill.nl/publications/septuagint-commentary-series). A brief statement of its principles may be found in Porter and Pearson 1997: 546.

[7] See, for example, the different perspectives represented by the essayists in B. Taylor 2001: 181–240, Ausloos 2008, and Hiebert 2010. In the present work, I use 'Septuagint corpus' to refer to the set of Greek texts (both translations and new compositions) collected in early Christian codexes of the 'Old Testament' and conveniently collected in the *Handausgabe* of the *Septuaginta Unternehmen* in Göttingen (Rahlfs and Hanhart 2006). The limits of the collection can remain somewhat loosely defined, for there is no reason to believe that there ever existed a distinct 'Alexandrian canon' of scripture (Sundberg 1964). I reserve the designation 'LXX' for the original translations of the Books of Moses (cf. Peters 1992: 1093–94), using 'OG' to refer to the earliest translations of other 'scriptural' texts (cf. Wright 2008:104; Greenspoon 1987). Unless otherwise noted, I take the critical editions in the Göttingen Septuagint (1931) to represent the closest approximation of the LXX/OG texts readily available to scholars.

[8] I take 'Septuagint hermeneutics' to be concerned with two interrelated questions: how a modern reader is to interpret the translated text, and how to characterize the translator's own interpretation of his source.

[9] Hübner 1990, 1:62. Albert Pietersma, the doyen of North American Septuagint Studies and co-editor of NETS, avers: "At the risk of being proven a 'pseudoprophetes,' I predict that the hermeneutics of the Septuagint will become one of the central issues (if not *the* central issue) in the discipline for some time to come" (Pietersma 2005: 2; emphasis original).

[10] As will become clear, the two alternatives are best represented by the 'interlinear paradigm' underlying NETS, on the one hand, and by the approach behind *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, on the other. Despite the intention of the editors of the *Septuaginta Deutsch* to find a 'middle

The first question concerns the degree to which the textual-linguistic character of the LXX/OG translations conforms to target-language models. That in these Greek texts we encounter passages of literary beauty, along with not a few that border on incoherence, is beyond dispute.[11] But one viewpoint holds that, due to pervasive linguistic interference from the source texts, "unintelligibility of the Greek text *qua* Greek text is one of [the] inherent characteristics" of the Septuagint."[12] At the other end of the spectrum lies the view that the LXX/OG translators "produce a text, if not easy to read, in any case almost always of good 'greekness,' comprehensible and coherent – at least just as much so as the MT, and sometimes more so."[13]

A second area of disagreement centers on the nature of the relationship between the LXX/OG translations and their parent texts. One perspective locates the typical translated text in a position of subservience to its source. By consistently subjecting the target text to the form of the parent, such a translation attempts to bring its target audience to the source text, rather than the source to the audience.[14] As a result, it is argued, the reader may be required in some cases to turn to the parent text in order to puzzle out the meaning intended by the Greek translators.[15] In contrast, others regard the typical LXX/OG version as "distinct and independent from its parent text," a translation

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way,' Benjamin Wright alleges that they do not always succeed in doing so in actual practice (Wright 2008: 111).

[11] As Albert Pietersma explains, "It is the aspect of unintelligibility as well as that of intelligibility (even literary beauty) that an explanatory model has to be able to accommodate" (Pietersma 2002: 351).

[12] Pietersma 2001: 220; for support he appeals to Conybeare and Stock 1988: 21, who claim that the language (particularly the syntax) of the Septuagint "is so deeply affected by Semitic influence as often to be hardly Greek at all, but rather Hebrew in disguise" (Pietersma 2001: 219). Ziegler similarly observes, "Als Übersetzung wies die LXX von vorneherein verschiedene grammatikalische und lexikalische Eigentümlichkeiten auf, die zwar dem alexandrinischen Juden nicht unverständlich waren, aber doch erst im Verleich mit der hebr. Vorlage richtig erkannt werden konnten" (Ziegler 1934: 175–176).

[13] Harl 2001: 187. "The translators use in an intelligent and creative way the syntactic flexibility and lexical richness of the everyday language of their time" (ibid., 188).

[14] Pietersma 2001: 219; for this distinction, see Brock 1972: 28; Brock 1984: 73. It is important to recognize that the linguistic competence of the translators need not be at issue here. One can agree with Marguerite Harl that the translators' knowledge of Greek is "sound" (Harl 2001: 187) yet argue that their method of translation led them consistently to adhere to the form of the source text, even at the cost of "good greekness" (so Pietersma 2001: 223).

[15] Pietersma claims, "For some essential linguistic information, the parent text needs to be consulted, since the text as we have it cannot stand on its own feet" (Pietersma 2002: 350); similarly, he asserts, "What the Septuagint says, and how it says it, can only be understood in its entirety with the help of the Hebrew" (Pietersma 2001: 220). Harl cautions, however: "The meaning of the Hebrew text of the MT is often obscure. ... For that reason the meaning of [the] Hebrew does not impose itself on us as something evident. It cannot always serve as a criterion to evaluate semantic and lexical divergences of the Greek text" (Harl 2001: 191).

that aims to bring an interpretation of its source to the target audience.[16] A more extreme version of this view argues that in certain instances the interpretive reworking of the source text by the translator is so extensive as to justify speaking of the Greek version as, in some sense, "a new composition."[17]

A third controversy arises over the proper focus of the modern interpreter's attention. Drawing a sharp distinction between 'text production' (the translator's understanding of the source at the time of translation) and 'text reception' (any later interpretation of the text the translator produced), some take the principal object of study to be the Greek text in its relation to its source.[18] Others place the Greek text itself at the center of the investigation. Whether examined from the point of view of the translator, from the perspective of later interpreters, or 'on its own terms,' the translation is interpreted solely within the target language and culture, "sans contamination avec l'hebreu."[19] In this approach, the entire Septuagint corpus becomes a primary context for interpretation: "Septuagint Greek (syntax and vocabulary) is clarified essentially by itself, by referring one text to another one. ... The recurrence of some un-greek usages ("hebraisms") makes them more comprehensible due to accumulation of like contexts."[20]

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[16] Harl 2001: 185. Speaking on behalf of the translators of *La Bible d'Alexandrie*, Harl explains, "[Our] approach to the Septuagint is based upon our conception of what it is as a text. We do not ignore its nature as a translation, nevertheless we take it primarily for what it says in Greek. We are convinced that every act of translating results in a text which receives a new life within the domain of the translation language. We acknowledge the fundamental axiom of linguistics: a text written in any language should be read and analysed only in the context of this language" (Harl 2001:184).

[17] Van der Kooij 1997: 529. Van der Kooij argues that OG Isa 8:11–16 represents "a free rendering of a whole passage (and not only of single words, or a single clause) which presents itself as a new text with a coherence of its own" (519). Similarly, at Isa 25:1–5, "the passage produced by the translator turns out to be, to some extent, a new text or composition" (van der Kooij 1998: 13; cf. Coste 1954; van der Kooij 2010a).

[18] See Pietersma 2008b.

[19] Dogniez et al. 2001: 19, cited in Wright 2008: 100. Walser 2008 discusses a number of passages in OG Jeremiah where "the subsequent reader is likely to have understood the text in a different way than the translator of the text" (356).

[20] Harl 2001: 186. Harl spells out the consequences for Septuagint lexicography as follows: "The criterion for determining the meaning of words in the LXX is not the meaning of their counterparts in Hebrew. It is their meaning in the Koine, or more precisely, the sense they acquire in the context of the LXX sentences, according to the use the translators make of them, following their choices and habits. The meanings of words are specified by the study of their recurrence in the LXX, within similar contexts. ... The Greek of one passage is explained by the Greek of another. Translation of one book presupposes reference to the entire LXX" (ibid.). The problem with this approach to Septuagint words, according to Pietersma, is that it ignores the role interference from the source plays in the production of the Greek translation. In some cases it is possible to show "that word X was used not because the context of the Greek target text *demanded* it but because a lexeme of the Hebrew source text *suggested*

Implicit in all of these disputes is the problem of how to identify and evaluate 'interpretation' of the source text in the translation. In attempting to answer this most basic question of Septuagint hermeneutics, one must offer a reasoned account of her position on each of the preceding issues. The identification of 'interpretation' in a translated text simply cannot be disentangled from judgments about the 'fit' of that text within the target culture, on the one hand, and about its relationship as a translation to the source text, on the other.[21] Nor can the problem be addressed apart from a clear sense of where the primary interest of one's investigation lies – with the translator's understanding of the source text, as this is manifested in the translation he has produced, or with the rich and varied *Nachleben* of the translated text among its many readers past and present.[22]

No one believes that broad generalizations about the translated texts in the Septuagint corpus will resolve these important questions. All sides recognize that there exist 'family resemblances' as well as notable differences among the LXX/OG translations. What Septuagint hermeneutics needs is a theoretical framework and a corresponding methodology for interpreting translated texts that will enable meaningful analysis of both the deep affinities and the significant dissimilarites among the LXX/OG translations. To advance the discussion beyond its current impasse will require methodical study of the individual members of the corpus and careful comparison between them.

The present monograph seeks to contribute to this project through a close investigation of the opening vision of the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah 1). My purpose is twofold: (1) to characterize Old Greek (OG) Isaiah as a translation, that is to say, as a re-presentation of its source text in the language of the target culture, and (2) to model an approach to its interpretation appropriate to its character as a translated text.[23]

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it" (Pietersma 2012: 1). Thus, he argues, "It is a basic principle of LXX lexicography that, in order to establish the existence of a new sense of a given [Greek] word, incontrovertible examples of that sense must be found, and one must be able to exclude the source text from being the *de facto* context" (ibid., 9). On Septuagint lexicography, see further Lee 1969; Kraft 1972; Tov 1976; Lee 1983; Muraoka 1987; Muraoka 1990; Lefebvre 1995; Lee 2003; Muraoka 2008; Joosten and Bons 2011.

[21] For a broad array of viewpoints on 'exegesis' in the Septuagint, see the essays in Kraus and Wooden 2006.

[22] These stark alternative require further clarification and nuancing. See chapter 2 below on the interaction of translator, text and reader in the production of meaning.

[23] This is not to deny that there are other legitimate and fruitful ways to approach a translated text. For example, exploration of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of a translation, quite apart from consideration of the original-language text, can offer important insights into the impact of the translated text on the receiving culture. One need only think of the numerous conference papers, essays and books published in 2011 tracing the immense influence the King James Version of the Bible has exercised for four centuries on the shape of the English lan-

A Theory of Translation

It is necessary to begin by spelling out in some detail just what interpretation of OG Isaiah "as a translated text" will entail. This task is made much lighter by the recent publication of Cameron Boyd-Taylor's weighty book, *Reading between the Lines.*[24] Drawing heavily on insights from Descriptive Translation Studies, Boyd-Taylor further refines this descriptive-explanatory framework in a way that holds great promise for the study of the translational literature within the Septuagint corpus. In the following pages, I sketch the outlines of this theoretical approach, demonstrating its capacity not only to describe a wide range of translations but also to characterize the differences among them. This then leads to a discussion of the long-standing debate over the particular character of OG Isaiah as a translated text and a proposal for moving the conversation forward.

Describing Translation: Function, Process, Product

As developed by Gideon Toury, Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) conceives of translation as an *event*[25] within the literary system of the target culture:

> Toury identifies three interdependent dimensions of translation, 1) the position or function of the text within the target culture (function); 2) the process through which it is derived from the parent (process); and 3) the textual linguistic make-up of the product (product). Any fully adequate descriptive-explanatory study of a translation will attempt to account for the observed interrelationship of these variables.[26]

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guage and its literature. In a number of previous publications, I have investigated the significance of the Greek version of Isaiah – as a scriptural text in its own right – for Paul and other early Christian writers (Wagner 2002; Wagner 2005; Wagner 2006; Wagner 2008). On the importance of reception-history for Septuagint studies, see further Meiser 2012.

[24] Boyd-Taylor 2011, incorporating insights from a number of earlier studies, including Boyd-Taylor 1998, Boyd-Taylor 2001, Boyd-Taylor 2004, Boyd-Taylor 2006a, Boyd-Taylor 2006b. Although the book is subtitled, "The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies," it is possible to adopt Boyd-Taylor's theoretical framework without accepting his contention that the interlinear paradigm most adequately accounts for the character of the 'typical' translation in the Septuagint corpus. His careful and learned study does go a long way toward making the case for the explanatory power and empirical adequacy of the paradigm, however. Many of Boyd-Taylor's ideas have been worked out in conversation with Albert Pietersma, whose own publications have contributed significantly to the emergence and development of the interlinear paradigm. See especially Pietersma 2001; Pietersma 2002; Pietersma 2004; Pietersma and Wright 2007a; Pietersma 2010.

[25] Toury 1999: 18.

[26] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 39, drawing on Toury 1995: 11–14. See also Toury 1978; Toury 1999. A brief critical introduction to DTS is provided by Munday 2008: 107–123.

With its focus on the prospective function of a translated text within the target culture, Toury's model recognizes that translation takes place in a social context. Shared cultural expectations regarding aims and methods both guide and constrain the translator's work.[27] To become a translator is to assume a social role, that is, "to fulfill a function allotted by a community – to the activity, its practitioners and/or their products – in a way that is deemed appropriate in its own terms of reference."[28] Thus, the role or function envisioned for the translation in the target culture

> will prove a strong governing factor in its surface realization or textual-linguistic make-up [product]. The translator will aim at producing a text with the make-up requisite to its intended location, and will thus be working from a sort of paradigm. This in turn will govern the relationship between the target text and its source. For it is with reference to such a paradigm that the translator will select the linguistic strategies by which the translation is produced [process]. In this way, the process of translation is itself conditioned by the prospective function of the product.[29]

The 'paradigm' or 'model of translation' from which a translator takes his or her bearings can be conceptualized as a set of socially constructed 'norms.'[30] "Insofar as translators make decisions that are open to assessment within the target culture, and hence are liable to sanctions of one sort or another (e.g. the praise or blame implicit in how the translation is received), their work is governed in some manner by norms."[31] These "prescriptions, proscriptions, preferences and permissions" are neither static nor absolute;, sitting somewhere between 'rules' and the 'idiosyncracies' of the translator, norms reflect social conventions that are themselves fluid and changeable, and they constitute a spectrum of negotiable behaviors.[32] As Theo Hermans explains, "A norms-

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[27] "Given the translators' participation in the literate culture of a certain time and place, we would expect them to have internalized assumptions both as to what was expected of them and how best to proceed" (Boyd-Taylor 2011: 34; see further Hermans 1997).

[28] Toury 1995: 53, cited in Boyd-Taylor 2011: 57.

[29] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 56.

[30] For a range of perspectives on the meaning and utility of 'norm' as a concept, see Schäffner 1999. Theo Hermans (Hermans 1999: 50) notes that norms are "legitimat[ed] in terms of institutional values" and handed on "through precept and example," i.e., through processes of socialization into a particular group and activity (cf. Toury 1999: 16).

[31] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 66. Toury speaks of three types of norms: a 'basic' or 'primary norm' governs behavior that is "more or less mandatory for all instances of a certain phenomenon"; a 'secondary norm' or 'tendency' represents "common, but not mandatory" behavior; and what we might call a 'tertiary norm,' which Toury describes as "other tolerated (permitted) behaviour." According to this schema, "the more frequent a phenomenon ... the more it is likely to represent (in this order) a more permitted (tolerated) activity, a more decisive tendency, a more basic norm" (Toury 1978: 95).

[32] Hermans 1999: 50. According to Hermans, "a culture's value system together with the norm complexes which serve to hold it in its place, see to it that translation is governed by at least three normative levels: general cultural and ideological norms which may be held to ap-

based approach to translation starts from the assumption that the translation process involves decision-making on the part of the translator,"[33] a process of selecting one option from among "a limited range of realistically available alternatives."[34] Thus, the investigator asks questions "not only about what is there on the page but also about what might have been there but, for one reason or another, is not."[35] The concept of translational norms allows one to describe in a systematic way the principles guiding the translator as he navigates the challenges of re-presenting the source text in a form that will be 'acceptable' to the target culture (or a particular sub-culture thereof) as a translation.[36]

The 'Acceptability' of a Translation in the Target Culture

The qualification in the previous sentence, "acceptable *as a translation*," must not be overlooked.[37] Within a given culture or community, the standards of

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ply throughout the larger part of a community; translational norms arising from general concepts of translatability and cross-linguistic representation alive in that community; and the textual and other appropriateness norms which prevail in the particular client system for which individual translations cater" (ibid., 59).

[33] Hermans 1999: 52.

[34] Hermans 1999: 57. "[A]t every point in the life of a societal group, especially a complex and/or heterogeneous one, there tends to be more than one norm with respect to any behavioural dimension. Consequently, the need to choose between alternative modes of behaviour tends to be built into the very system, so that socialisation as concerns translating often includes acquisition of the ability to manoeuvre efficiently between the alternatives" (Toury 1999: 27).

[35] Hermans 1999: 57. Toury acknowledges that norms must be extraploated from regularities of behavior that we assume to be governed by "recurrent underlying motives" (Toury 1999: 16). "The texts present us with the results of actual norm-regulated behaviour, that is, with a primary product of their activity, out of which the norms themselves are to be (and can be) *reconstructed* (Toury 1978: 91; emphasis original). Thus, "for the researcher, norms ... emerge as *explanatory hypotheses*" (Toury 1999: 16; emphasis original).

[36] The notion of 'acceptability' plays a key role both in DTS and in Boyd-Taylor's adaptation of the approach. Toury defines acceptability as conformity "to the norms active in the target culture, or in that section of it which would host the end product" of translation (Toury 1995: 56; cf. Boyd-Taylor 2011: 58–59, 68–71). With respect to the translation process, it is useful to distinguish between two types of norms, 'regulative' and 'constitutive.' As Boyd-Taylor (2011: 71) explains, the former "guide the translator's selection from his repertoire of strategies so that he may solve the problems he encounters in [a culturally] acceptable way"; the latter "reflect what a particular culture (or community) accepts as a translation (as opposed to e.g. an adaptation)." In distinction from 'norm,' then, the term 'strategy' describes the means by which a translator 'solves' a perceived 'problem' in replacing a particular feature of the source text with a target-language equivalent (cf. Toury 1999: 28).

[37] Andrew Chesterman develops the notion of 'product (or expectancy) norms,' which "are established by the expectations of readers of a translation (of a given type) concerning what a translation (of this type) should be like" (Chesterman 1997: 64).

'acceptability' for a translation may not be the same as those for a literary work composed in the target language. Toury observes, "There are often good reasons to regard translations as constituting a special system (Dressler 1972), or 'genre' (James 1989:35–36) of their own within a culture."[38] This is because translations

> tend to *deviate from* [the] sanctioned patterns [of the target culture], on one level or another, not least because of the postulate of retaining invariant at least some features of the source text – which seems to be part of any culture-internal notion of translation ... . This tendency often renders translations quite different from non-translational texts, and not necessarily as a mere production mishap either; it is not unusual for a certain amount of deviance to be regarded not only as *justifiable*, or even *acceptable*, but as actually *preferable* to complete normality, on all levels at once. Moreover, even if they are not culturally favoured, deviations – even when they manifest themselves in the very make-up of the texts – do not necessarily disturb the 'persons-in-the-culture.'[39]

Such is likely to be the case especially where the community places a high value on the perceived fidelity of the translation to its source. As Boyd-Taylor notes, "To the extent that its location [in the literary system of the target culture] is central, a translation will tend to break with target models and adhere instead to the textual relations of its source."[40] We will return to this point in the following chapter as we consider the question of the 'target culture' for OG Isaiah and its prospective location within that system.[41]

With this important caveat, target models do serve as key points of reference for determining the 'fit' of a translated text within the overall literary system of the target culture.[42] In Toury's schema, such an assessment takes place at three distinct levels of the discourse hierarchy: the linguistic, the textual and the literary.[43]

At the linguistic level, one considers the extent to which the equivalents chosen by the translator adhere to the grammatical and syntactical conventions of the target language. Interference from the source language at this level may take the form of 'negative transfer,' in which the translator chooses to represent a feature of the source text in her translation in a way that contravenes the norms of the target language.[44] Conversely, interference may be felt

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[38] Toury 1995: 28.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 64, summarizing the findings of Even-Zohar 1978.

[41] See pp. 56–62 below.

[42] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 59.

[43] Toury 1995: 170–171.

[44] For the terminology see Boyd-Taylor 2011: 58–59, following Toury 1995: 275. James Barr (1979: 293) draws attention to an example of negative transfer in the rendering of the Hebrew particle בִּי ('please') as ἐν ἐμοί in Judges 6:15; 13:8; 1 Reigns 1:26; 3 Reigns 3:17, 26. Contrast the idiomatic translation of בִּי with δέομαι/δεόμεθα in the Pentateuch (e.g., Gen 43:20; 44:18; Exod 4:10, 13).

through 'positive transfer.' In this case, the translator represents a particular feature of the source text with a grammatical or syntactical construction native to the target language; due to the influence of the source text, however, the translation ends up showing a markedly higher concentration of this construction than one finds in texts composed in the target language.[45]

At the textual level, the goal is to assess the extent to which the translation conforms to the target culture's expectations of a well-formed text. Here we ask whether "the translation is now not only grammatical but recognisable as a particular type of discourse in the target language."[46] Attention focuses not only on the degree of thematic coherence evident in the translation, but also on the cohesiveness of its discourse.[47]

Evaluating a translation at the literary level requires us to appraise its adherence to "the rhetorical and stylistic conventions" of the target language as well as to "the norms governing such phenomena as intertextuality and cultural referencing."[48] A given translation may compare favorably to target models in one respect – for example, linguistic well-formedness – and yet fall short in another, such as textual cohesion.[49] Conversely, a translation that shows a high degree of interference from the source at the linguistic level may yet find ways to engage the cultural and literary traditions of the target system with a fair degree of sophistication.[50]

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[45] Georg Walser has observed, for example, that in the Pentateuch and in other narrative texts within the Septuagint corpus, predicative aorist participles uniformly "precede their main verb, and all words between the participle and the main verb belong to the participle" (Walser 2001a: 509). As Walser notes, "This word order is of course *not* alien to other varieties of Greek; what is strange is that [in the Pentateuch] we find *only* this word order and no other" (ibid., 503). See further Walser 2001; Walser 2008a. Similarly, Trevor Evans attributes the high ratio of volitive to potential optatives in the Greek Pentateuch to interference from the source language: The volitive optative "is always employed idiomatically and can be regarded as exhibiting bilingual interference only in terms of its frequency comparative to the optative's other functions" (T. Evans 2001: 175–197, here 197).

[46] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 59.

[47] Textual 'cohesion' refers to "the way the text hangs together lexically, including the use of pronouns, ellipsis, collocation, repetition, etc." (Munday 2008: 91). "Languages differ considerably with respect to the degree to which they permit or oblige their users to connect text-units in sequence by means of explicit indications of cohesion" (Lyons 1995: 264).

[48] Boyd-Taylor 2011: 59.

[49] Summarizing the results of his study of OG Gen 11:1–9, Boyd-Taylor comments, "The conditions for acceptability under which the translator produced his text were not those underlying literary composition within the target culture; rather, insofar as his text was acceptable as a cultural product it met a very different sort of criterion. While adhering to the requirements of grammaticality, the translation appears decidedly isomorphic to the source text in its textual linguistic make-up" (Boyd-Taylor 2011: 308).

[50] So, for example, Aquila's sophisticated Greek vocabulary suggests that he was learned and well read, even though the syntax of his translation shows strong interference from the Hebrew source. See pp. 12–16 below.

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