

# Divine Kingdom and Kingdoms of Men / Gottesreich und Reiche der Menschen

Edited by  
EVANGELIA G. DAFNI

*Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen  
zum Neuen Testament*  
432

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**Mohr Siebeck**

# Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

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Divine Kingdom  
and Kingdoms of Men /  
Gottesreich  
und Reiche der Menschen

Studies on the Theology of the Septuagint Volume II /  
Studien zur Theologie der Septuaginta Band II

Edited by / Herausgegeben von  
Evangelia G. Dafni

Mohr Siebeck

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Jörg Jeremias  
zum 80. Geburtstag



Ὁ κύριος ἐβασίλευσεν, εὐπρέπειαν ἐνεδύσατο,  
ἐνεδύσατο κύριος δύνάμιν καὶ περιζώσατο·  
καὶ γὰρ ἐστερέωσεν τὴν οἰκουμένην, ἥτις οὐ σαλευθήσεται.

יְהוָה מִלְּהִימָּה לָּאֵת לְבָשׁ לְבָשׁ יְהוָה עַז הִתְאַדָּר אֶת־תְּכוֹן תְּכַל בַּל־תִּמְוֹט:

(Ps 92[93],1)





## Vorwort

Die Entwicklung in der Septuaginta-Forschung, die sich bis vor kurzem in textkritischen und übersetzungstechnischen Diskussionen erschöpfte, kann an ihrer Theologie nicht mehr vorübergehen. Das anfangs auf Umwegen geweckte Grundinteresse an einem methodisch-reflektierten Verfahren zur Gewinnung von Erkenntnissen hinsichtlich des Wesens, der Grundprinzipien und -voraussetzungen, des Gehalts, der Leitgedanken und der Hauptmerkmale einer *Theologie der Septuaginta* als Krönung aller exegetisch-hermeneutischen Bemühungen wird im vorliegenden Band weiter gefördert. Der Band geht auf die 4. Internationale Jahreskonferenz zur *Theologie der Septuaginta* zurück, die am 4. und 5. Mai 2017 an der Aristoteles-Universität Thessaloniki stattfand und sich dem Thema βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ βασιλεία τῶν ἀνθρώπων („Gottesreich und Reiche der Menschen“) widmete.

Begriffe und Konzepte vom göttlichen Reich und menschlichen Reichen werden aufgrund von einschlägigen Texten der Septuaginta im Vergleich zum masoretischen Text untersucht. Um einen möglichst tiefgreifenden Wandel im Studium der Glaubenswelt der Septuaginta zu bewirken, wird hierbei besonderes Augenmerk auf das religiös-historische, philologische und philosophische Umfeld der Septuaginta gelegt. Die Erforschung der Sprache der Septuaginta kann erst dann zu einer wahrhaften Erkenntnis ihrer besonderen theologischen Aussagekraft gelangen, wenn die Idee vom Austausch von hebräischem und griechischem Sprach- und Gedankengut in der Klassik und im Hellenismus eine so bestimmte Gestalt gewinnt, dass sie zum Leitfaden und Kern der ganzen Septuaginta-Forschung wird.

Mein Dank gilt der Forschungskommission der Aristoteles-Universität Thessaloniki und der Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung für die großzügige Unterstützung dieses Forschungs- und Konferenzvorhabens, sowie dem Verlag Mohr Siebeck, der die Konferenzbeiträge in seine bewährte Betreuung übernommen hat.

Auch danke ich besonders Herrn Professor Dr. Christoph Elsas, Frau Professorin Dr. Kristin De Troyer, Frau Dr. Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, Herrn Dr. Peter Nagel, Herrn Dr. Michael Thate, sowie Frau Barbara Hohmann M. A., die Einzelbeiträge sorgfältig mitgelesen und sprachliche und stilistische Verbesserungen bewirkt haben.

Gewidmet ist dieser Band unserem hochverehrten Lehrer, Jörg Jeremias, in Verbundenheit zu seinem 80. Geburtstag. Vom ihm haben wir an der LMU München und an der Philipps-Universität Marburg gelernt, das Alte Testament

im Kontext seines außerbiblischen Gegenübers das Eigene sagen zu lassen, genau hinzuhören und, vom formal Beobachtbaren zum Inhaltlichen voranschreitend, das Wesentliche intuitiv wahrzunehmen und festzuhalten.

6. Januar 2019

Evangelia G. Dafni

## Preface

Until recently, Septuagint research was limited to text-critical discussions and issues of translation-technique. The stage has been reached, however, where its theology can no longer be overlooked. And now that fundamental interest has, in roundabout ways, been aroused, the time is ripe for a methodically-reflected procedure for gaining insights into the nature, basic principles and prerequisites, the content, guiding ideas and main features of a Septuagint theology as the culmination of all exegetical-hermeneutic efforts. This volume homes in on and hones this state of affairs by presenting contributions from the Fourth International Annual Conference on the Theology of the Septuagint, dedicated to the topic βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ βασιλεία τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Divine Kingdom and the Kingdoms of Men), which took place in May 2017 at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

The terms for and concepts of the divine and human realms are examined by comparing relevant Septuagint texts to the Masoretic text. To bring about the most profound change possible in how the world of faith in the Septuagint is studied, special attention is paid to the religious-historical, philological and philosophical environment of the Septuagint. The study of the Septuagint's language can only bring about true recognition of its particular theological significance when the idea of exchange between Hebrew and Greek language and thought in the classical and Hellenistic period is so defined that it becomes the guideline and core of all Septuagint research.

My thanks go to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki's Research Commission and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for their generous support of this research project and conference, as well as to the publishing house Mohr Siebeck for taking the contributions into its usual trusted care.

I would also especially like to thank Professor Dr. Christoph Elsas, Professor Dr. Kristin De Troyer, Dr. Helen Efthimiadis-Keith, Dr. Peter Nagel, Dr. Michael Thate, and Barbara Hohmann M. A., for carefully reading the individual papers and making many linguistic and stylistic improvements.

This volume is dedicated to our highly esteemed teacher Jörg Jeremias on the occasion of his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Under his supervision at the LMU Munich and the Philipps University in Marburg, we learned to let the Old Testament speak for itself in the context of its non-biblical counterpart, to listen closely, and, progressing from the formally observed to the substantive, to intuitively perceive and record the essential.



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## Abbreviations

AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ALW	Archiv für Liturgiewissenschaft
AncB	Anchor Bible
AGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
ARG	Archiv für Religionsgeschichte
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
ATS	Arbeiten zu Text und Sprache im Alten Testament
BBB	Bonner Biblische Beiträge
BETHL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium
BHS	Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
BHQ	Biblia Hebraica Quinta
BI	Biblical Interpretation
BIOSCS	Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BThS	Biblich-Theologische Studien
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CAP	A. E. Cowley (ed. and transl.), <i>Aramaic Papyri from the fifth century B. C.</i> , Oxford 1923
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBOT	Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series
CBQ	Catholic Biblical Quarterly
CBQ MS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly. Monograph Series
CD	Codex Damascus
CPJ	V. A. Tcherikover, A. Fuks & M. Stern (eds.), <i>Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum</i> , 3 vols., London 1957, Cambridge, MA 1960 and 1964.
DCLS	Deuterocanonical and <i>Cognate Literature</i> Studies
EÜ	Einheitsübersetzung
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GAT	Grundrisse zum Alten Testament
Ges <sup>17</sup>	W. Gesenius, <i>Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament</i> , bearbeitet von F. Buhl, unveränderter Neudruck der 1915 erschienenen 17. Auflage, Berlin – Göttingen – Heidelberg 1962
HThKAT	Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament
HUCA	Hebrew Union College Annual
IE	Indo-European
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JBSCE	Jewish and Biblical Studies in Central Europe
JETS	Journal of the Evangelical Theological Seminary
JSB	Jewish Study Bible
JSJ	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods



JSJSup	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods. Supplements
JSNL	Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages
JSPseud	<i>Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha</i>
JSS	Journal of Semitic Studies
JQR	Jewish Quarterly Review
KJV	King James Version
KT	Kröner Taschenbücher
LHB/OTS	Library of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
LU	Lutherübersetzung (1984)
LXX	Septuaginta
LXX.D	Septuaginta Deutsch
LXXSA	Association for the Study of the <i>Septuagint</i> in <i>South Africa</i>
MVEOL	Mededelingen en Verhandelingen Ex Oriente Lux
MJS	<i>Münsteraner judaistische Studien</i>
MSU	Mittlungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
MT	Masoretischer Text/Masoretic Text
NET	New English Translation
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NF	Neue Folge
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis biblicus et orientalis
OG	Old Greek
OTE	Old Testament Essays
OTL	Old Testament Library
PG	Patrologiae cursus completes: Series graeca. Edited by J.-P. Migne, 162 vols. Paris 1857–1886
QD	Questiones Disputatae
RivBi	Rivista Biblica
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBL.SCS	Society of Biblical Literature. Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
SJOT	Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament
TDNT	Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, translated by G. W. Bromiley et al., 10 vols., Grand Rapids, MI 1964–1976.
ThSt	Theologische Studien
ThZ	Theologische Zeitschrift (Basel)
ThWAT	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament. Edited by G. J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, 10 vols., Stuttgart et al. 1973–2000
VT	Vetus Testamentum
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
VWGTh	Veröffentlichungen der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft für Theologie
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZABR	Zeitschrift für altorientalische und biblische Rechtsgeschichte
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

Divine Kingdom  
On the Ideology and Theology of the Septuagint



# Theocracy and Aristocracy

## On divine kingship and royal priesthood in the Septuagint (Pentateuch and Isaiah)

*Arie van der Kooij*

*Abstract:* The idea of “theocracy” is usually taken as referring to the rule of religious personnel, esp. the government of priests. Things are different, however, with Josephus Flavius, Jewish scholar of the first century AD, who coined the term (θεοκρατία). He distinguishes between ‘theocracy’ on the one hand, and forms of human government (aristocracy and monarchy) on the other. In this paper the focus is on the concept of theocracy, divine kingship, and aristocracy, i. e., priestly rulership. It shall be argued that parts of the Septuagint – LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah – contain evidence for both concepts. The relationship between these concepts shall be dealt with, including the close relationship between God and the High Priest. In addition, the issue will be touched on why Jewish circles adhering to the model of aristocracy were opposed to monarchy, the rule of human kingship.

### 1. Introduction

Aristotle and other Greek philosophers of the time were greatly interested in constitutions and laws of several people. As is well known, they distinguished between three forms of government – monarchy (rule of a king), aristocracy (rule of “the best”), and democracy (rule of the people).<sup>1</sup> Josephus Flavius, the Jewish historian of the first century AD, used these labels in his writings, but interestingly, added a new term – “theocracy” (*C. Ap.* 2, 165):

Our lawgiver however was attracted by none of these forms of polity (i. e., monarchies, oligarchies, or political power of the masses [see previous passage, §164]), but gave to his constitution the form of what – if a forced expression be permitted – may be termed a “theocracy” (θεοκρατία), placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God.

Usually, and also in the case of Josephus, the idea of “theocracy” is taken as referring to the rule of religious personnel, in particular the government of priests. As has been pointed out by Barclay, as far as Josephus is concerned it is more ap-

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<sup>1</sup> On Aristoteles, see *C. Rowe & M. Schofield* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge 2000, 310–389.

propriate however to distinguish between the idea of theocracy, on the one hand, and the three forms of polity which are also employed and applied by him, on the other.<sup>2</sup> The former being a statement about God's governance of the universe can be understood as a theological foundation, whereas the issue of forms of human governance belongs to the discourse on political structures.<sup>3</sup>

Seen this way, one can imagine that the idea of divine kingship goes hand in hand with kingship of men (monarchy).<sup>4</sup> Josephus however did not like the monarchy as the polity of his people but had a strong preference for aristocracy (cf. *Ant.* IV, 223–224).<sup>5</sup> The latter form is very likely meant by him as a reference to priestly rule, i. e., the rule of the High Priest and his colleagues.<sup>6</sup>

In this contribution I shall argue that the concept of divine kingship going together with priestly rule is also found in two parts of the Greek Bible – LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah. First, I shall present and discuss passages relevant for the two sides of this concept. Second, I will raise the question of how both elements might be related to each other, in LXX Pentateuch and in LXX Isaiah. In doing so I shall pay particular attention to the relationship between God and the figure of the High Priest.

## 2. LXX Pentateuch

### 2.1. Divine kingship

In LXX Pentateuch there is one passage only, which explicitly refers to God as king – Exod 15:18:<sup>7</sup>

The Lord *is ruling as king* (βασιλεύων) forever and ever, and beyond  
(MT: The Lord *will reign* [yimlok] forever and ever)

<sup>2</sup> J. M. G. Barclay, *Against Apionem* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, Vol. X), Leiden 2007, 262. See also O. Gussmann, *Das Priesterverständnis des Flavius Josephus* (TSAJ 124), Tübingen 2008, 315.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Barclay, *Against Apionem*, 262. For a slightly different view, see Gussmann, *Priesterverständnis*, 324.

<sup>4</sup> For an example, see LXX Chronicles: Solomon is going to “sit on the throne of the Lord's kingdom over Israel” (1Chr 28:5).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Gussmann, *Priesterverständnis*, 306–324, and Z. Rodgers, “Monarchy vs. Priesthood: Josephus, Justus of Tiberias, and Agrippa II,” in: Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton & A. Fitzpatrick McKinley (eds.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne* (JSJSup 132), Leiden 2009, 173–184.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion, see Barclay, *Against Apionem*, 261 (“the leadership of the high-priests appears most compatible [...] with ‘aristocracy’” [*Ant.* XX, 251]). See also *Ant.* XI, 111, where beside the term “aristocratic” also “oligarchic” is employed regarding the rule of high priests; the latter one, “oligarchic”, fits the official body being composed of the High Priest and his colleagues, the chief priests. On this institution, see further below.

<sup>7</sup> Num 23:21 and Deut 33:5 are other passages which are often considered as referring to God as king but in LXX things are different. On the other hand, LXX Deut 9:26 contains the expression “king of the gods” for God, which is not attested in the MT.

This passage is part of the famous Song of the Sea. Unlike MT, which has a *yiqtol* form of the verb involved (ךלמ), LXX has a present participle, denoting a continuous fact: God *ruling as king* forever.<sup>8</sup> As the Song expresses, he acted as the mighty one who threw the chariots of Pharaoh and his host into the sea (v. 4), crushed the enemies (v. 6), and led and redeemed his people (v. 13), showing in this way his royal power over the nations.

It is interesting to note that the use of the present participle relating to God (βασιλεύων) has parallels elsewhere in LXX Pentateuch: first of all, in v. 3 of the same chapter (Exod 15): the Lord “who shatters wars” (συντριβων πολέμους), and furthermore in Gen 18:25, “the one who judges (ὁ κρίνων) all the earth”, and in Exod 3:15, “I am ὁ ὦν” (cf. Exod 6:3, θεὸς ὦν αὐτῶν) as well.

## 2.2. Human governance

As to the matter of leadership of the Jewish nation in LXX Pentateuch the following passages are of great interest: Exod 19:6 and 23:21, as well as Deut 17:14–20. In what follows I will concentrate on the two passages in LXX Exodus.<sup>9</sup>

*Exod 19:6*

You will be to me a royal priesthood (βασιλειον ιεράτευμα) and a holy nation (MT: You will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation)

The expression in Hebrew, “a kingdom of priests” (ממלכת כהנים), has been rendered as βασιλειον ιεράτευμα. It has been suggested to take the phrase in Greek as two substantives, “kingdom” and “priesthood”, but scholars have pointed out that the Greek βασιλειον is better understood here as an adjective: a *royal* priesthood.<sup>10</sup> The other term employed, ιεράτευμα, is an interesting one too. In distinction to the Greek ιερατεία denoting the priesthood and the priestly office in general, the lexeme ιεράτευμα carries a specific meaning, just like στρατευμα and τεχνίτευμα, referring to a particular group of people, that is to say, a body of priests.<sup>11</sup>

Due to an early Christian tradition the expression “a royal priesthood” is often understood as designating the people as a whole, but in light of the way the text was read in ancient Judaism it is more plausible to understand it as referring to the leadership of the Jewish people. In 2Macc 2:17 the Greek version of Exod 19:6 is quoted as follows: τὸ βασιλειον καὶ τὸ ιεράτευμα. In this text, both terms do

<sup>8</sup> For this form, see also LXX 1Chr 16:31.

<sup>9</sup> See also A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” in: J. Cook & A. van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom. On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version* (CBET 68), Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2012, 42–49. I leave aside here LXX Deut 17:14–20. For this passage, see van der Kooij, “Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” 49–54. See also the contribution by Hans Ausloos in this volume.

<sup>10</sup> See e. g., J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SCS 30), Atlanta, GA 1990, 295.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Louvain 2009, s. v.

not pertain to the people as a whole, but to the leadership of the nation, albeit in this instance to the “kingship” and the “priesthood” as two distinct institutions. Seen from this perspective the phrase “royal priesthood” makes perfect sense if taken as referring to a body of *leading* priests. On the question which body might be implied, see below.

*Exod 23:20–21*

And look, I am sending my angel in front of you in order to guard you on the way in order to bring you into the land that I prepared for you

Mind yourself, and listen to him, and do not disobey him. For he shall not hold you in undue awe, for my name is upon him

(MT: Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.

Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not show bitterness towards him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him)

In MT the figure of the “angel” (see also v. 23) is commonly understood as a heavenly messenger,<sup>12</sup> but the Greek version, v. 21 in particular, displays features, which point into another direction. As to the divergences between LXX and MT, the following are of note, particularly the third one:

(a) LXX: “Do not disobey (ἀπειθει) him” (MT: “do not show bitterness towards him”).

MT reflects the *hifil* of מָרַר, whereas LXX presupposes an interpretation via the root מָרָה (for the same rendering of this verb, see Deut 1:26; 9:7, 23, 24).

(b) LXX: “He shall not hold you in undue awe (οὐ γὰρ μὴ ὑποστειληταί σοι)” (MT “he will not pardon your transgressions”). The Greek verb used here (ὑποστέλλομαι) means “to draw, shrink back.” LXX alludes to the role of a judge, as is clear from LXX Deut 1:16–17:

And I commanded your judges at that time, saying: Give a full hearing among your brothers, and judge rightly between a man and between his brother [...] You shall not recognize the person when judging: like the small so you shall judge the great; *you shall not shrink from the face of a person* (οὐ μὴ ὑποστειλή πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπου) [...]

The issue at stake is the sensitive matter of showing partiality in court, pronouncing someone guilty, who is not, or the other way around.

(c) LXX: “My name is *upon* him (τὸ γὰρ ὄνομά μου ἐστὶν ἐπ’ αὐτῶ) (MT: “my name is *in* him”). The rendering “upon” (ἐπί c. dat.) for “in” (בְּקִרְב) is unusual and is to be seen as an interpretation.<sup>13</sup> It has been suggested that this difference

<sup>12</sup> Compare the figure in Jos 5:13–15. H. Ausloos, “The Angel of YHWH in Exod xxiii 20–33 and Judg. ii 1–5. A clue to the ‘Deuteronomistic’ puzzle?” VT 58 (2008) 1–12, points to Judg 2:1–5.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. R. Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint*, Helsinki 1979, 241.

points to a weakening of the role of the angel.<sup>14</sup> It is to be asked however what the phrase, “my name is upon him”, means. To which figure might it apply? In the light of several data, the most likely answer is: to the figure of the High Priest. According to Exod 28:36 and 39:30 (MT), the High Priest is the one who carries the name of the Lord as part of an inscription – “Holy to the Lord” – being engraved on a plate of gold which was fastened on the turban. In the section describing the apparel of the High Priest, the Letter of Aristeas (§98) also refers to the inscription, the difference being that here the focus is on the name (of God) only, as being inscribed, because no reference is made to the term “holiness” (ἁγίασμα) as found in LXX (Exod 28:32; 36:38). The same is true of description of the head-dress of the High Priest by Josephus (*bell. Iud.* V, 235 and *Ant.* III, 178).

Josephus is also the one who provides us with a most interesting illustration of the significance attached to the fact that the name of God is on the High Priest. It is a story about Alexander the Great, who after having taken Tyre and Gaza, went up to the city of Jerusalem (*Ant.* XI, 326). His meeting with the Jewish leaders at Mount Scopus is described as follows:

When Alexander while still far off saw the multitude in white garments the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it *on which was inscribed the name of God*, he approached alone and prostrated himself before the Name and first greeted the high priest. [...] the kings of Syria and the others were struck with amazement at his action and supposed that the king’s mind was deranged. And Parmenion [...] asked why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews, whereupon he replied, “It was not before him that I prostrated myself but the God of whom he has the honour to be high priest [...]” (*Ant.* XI, 331–333)

This story, considered legendary by most scholars, offers clear proof of the significance of the “name” of God being carried by the High Priest, underlining in this way the very close relationship between him and God.

In the light of all this it is plausible to assume that LXX Exod 32:21 refers to the figure of the High Priest rather than to the angel of the Lord. It is to be asked however whether this fits the term ἄγγελος in v. 20 and v. 23. Should it not be taken as alluding to the (or, an) angel of the Lord as in MT? This however is not necessarily so because the term can also denote a human messenger (e. g., Gen 32:4), or can also designate a priestly figure, as is the case in LXX Mal 2:7, or even the High Priest as is clear from the following example. In his description of the *politeia* of the Jews, Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek scholar of ca. 300 BCE, tells his readers: “They (i. e., the Jews) call this man the high priest, and believe that he acts as a messenger (ἄγγελον) to them of God’s commandments.”<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> H. Ausloos, “The Septuagint version of Exod 23:20–33: A Deuteronomist at work?” JSNL 22 (1996) 102.

<sup>15</sup> See M. Stern (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Vol. I: From Herodotus to Plutarch, Jerusalem 1974, 28.



To sum up, it can be said that the two passages in LXX Exodus discussed so far allude to a body of leading priests (19:6), on the one hand, and to the High Priest (23:21), on the other. As to the relationship between the High Priest and the body of leading priests there are textual data which are clarifying in this regard. To quote some of them:

*Letter from Elephantine, dating to the Persian period (407 BCE):*

“we sent a letter [...] to Jehohanan the high priest and his colleagues, the priests who are in Jerusalem” (CAP 30, 18).

*Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 BCE)*

Concerning the *politeia* of the Jews he tells his readers that “the priests” were selected (by Moses) “to head the entire nation.” They should not only occupy themselves with the temple and the cult, but were also “appointed to be judges in all major disputes.” The one who was “regarded as superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue,” was called the high priest.<sup>16</sup>

*IQM 2,1*

The priests representing the highest rank in the priestly hierarchy are described here as follows: “The chiefs of the priests behind the High Priest and of his second (in rank), twelve priests to serve continually before God.”

*Josephus, Contra Apionem II, 194*

“With his colleagues (συνιερέων) he (i. e., the high priest) will sacrifice to God, safeguard the laws, adjudicate in cases of dispute, and punish those convicted of crime.”

These data indicate that the group of the leading priests was composed of the High Priest and his colleagues, the “chiefs of the priests.”<sup>17</sup> The “chiefs of the priests” (IQM) are the same as those called in other sources, the New Testament and Josephus, the “chief priests” (ἀρχιερείς). They were the (leading) priests who under the supreme direction of the High Priest were heading the Jewish nation. Beside their cultic role they were also acting as judge in the High or Central Court (cf. Hecataeus of Abdera: “judges of major disputes”).<sup>18</sup> Thus, the royal body of priests (LXX Exod 19:6) and the figure of the High Priest (LXX Exod 23:21) closely belonged together, making up the highest official body within the constitution of the Jews.

<sup>16</sup> Stern, Greek and Latin Authors, 28.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. van der Kooij, “Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” 51 f. See also A. van der Kooij, “The Old Greek of Isaiah 9,6–7 and the Concept of Leadership,” in: W. Kraus & S. Kreuzer (eds.), *Die Septuaginta – Text, Wirkung, Rezeption* (WUNT 325), Tübingen 2014, 343 f.

<sup>18</sup> On this Court, see A. van der Kooij, “Scholars and Officials in Early Judaism: The *Sôfer* of Jesus Ben Sira,” in: R. N. Gauthier, G. R. Kotzé & G. J. Steyn (eds.), *Septuagint, Sages, and Scripture. Studies in Honour of Johann Cook* (VTSup 172), Leiden 2016, 201 f.

### 3. LXX Isaiah

#### 3.1. The divine kingship

Regarding the concept of God as king in the book of Isaiah, the text of Isa 6:5 is the one that immediately comes to mind. It reads, in LXX:

(Isaiah who saw the Lord sitting on a throne (v.1), says:) “I have seen the king (τὸν βασιλέα), the Lord Sabaoth, with my eyes!” (cf. MT)

The prophet sees God, the King, sitting on a throne. He is king of the whole earth as is clear from v. 3: “the whole earth is full of his glory”. His kingship is related to the temple on Mount Sion, the place where he is said to “dwell” (“who dwells on Mount Sion” [8:17]).

Another passage which is important in this respect, is to be found in Isa 37:16:

(Hezekiah praying in the temple:) “O Lord Sabaoth, God of Israel, who sits upon the cheroubin, you alone are God of every kingdom of the world (σὺ θεὸς μόνος εἶ πάσης βασιλείας τῆς οἰκουμένης); you have made heaven and earth” (cf. MT).

Although not explicitly designated as “king” the underlying idea is that God is king of all the kingdoms and nations of the world. Notably, in contrast to imperialistic claims of Assyria or other world powers he is said to be the only one (μόνος).

In this connexion it is interesting to note that LXX Isaiah contains the phrase “the great God” (26:4; cf. 33:22 [“my God is *great* [...] the Lord is our king”]). Though not attested in MT Isaiah at both instances, the notion of God being “great” is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (e. g., Deut 7:21; Jer 32:18), while, more interestingly, it seems typical of sources of the time of LXX Isaiah (second century BCE): Daniel (2:45; 9:4), Wisdom of Sirach (39:6; 43:5, 29) and Book III of the Sibylline Oracles (passim) in particular. The last one also offers the related expression “the great king” (III, 560. 808), which as is well known goes back to Mesopotamian literature (royal inscriptions), conveying the notion of rulership of the whole world.<sup>19</sup>

Beside the passages of LXX Isaiah just mentioned, two other places are to be noted:

*Isa 24:23*

“... the Lord will reign (βασιλεύσει κύριος) in Sion and in Jerusalem, and before the elders he will be glorified”

*Isa 52:7*

“... I (God) will make your salvation heard, saying to Sion, “Your God shall reign” (βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός)

<sup>19</sup> For an example in the book of Isaiah, see Isa 36:4.

These two instances are announcing that God *is going* to rule as king in Sion and Jerusalem. This is related to the idea that he had left, for a while, Sion (see e. g., 54:7–8).<sup>20</sup> Thus, after a while, he will come back; cf. LXX Isa 4:5, “he will come” to Sion (MT diff.; see also 35:4), in order to dwell on Mount Sion again.

### 3.2. Human governance

In the Hebrew version of Isaiah, the passages referring to priests are small in number, indicating that it does not reflect a great interest in priests and priesthood. LXX Isaiah on the other hand displays a different picture because in several instances its vocabulary points to an interest in priests and priesthood.<sup>21</sup> One of the passages to be mentioned is Isa 40:2, since here the LXX offers the term “priest” where MT (nor 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>) does not:

Comfort, O comfort my people, says God.  
O *priests* (ἱερείς), speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her [...]

Another passage is to be found in LXX Isa 22:15–25, the prophecy about Shebna and Eljakim. In MT these persons are presented as officials of the royal court, but in LXX things are different. The Old Greek version of this passage is marked by vocabulary that points to the concept of priestly leadership being vested with royal power.<sup>22</sup>

LXX Isa 9:6–7 (MT vv. 5–6) is yet another interesting passage in this regard, which because of the topic of this contribution deserves our attention. It reads, in translation:

For a child was born to us, a son was even given to us,  
whose sovereignty was (put) upon his shoulder;  
and his name is called, “Messenger of great counsel.”  
For I will bring peace upon the rulers,  
peace and health to him.  
Great is his sovereignty, and his peace has no boundary,  
upon the throne of David and his kingdom,  
to establish it and to uphold it with righteousness  
and with judgment, from now on and for evermore.  
The zeal of the Lord Sabaoth will do these things.

<sup>20</sup> In two other passages God is called “king of Jacob” (41:21), or “king of Israel” (44:6). Each of them is part of a disputation with the gods, the idea being that God unlike other gods is the one who has the power (as king) to redeem Israel. See also 33:22.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood,” in: I. Provan & M. J. Boda (eds.), *Let us Go up to Zion. Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (VTSup 153), Leiden 2012, 69–78.

<sup>22</sup> See A. van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35), Freiburg – Göttingen 1981, 56–57.

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