

Abi T. Ngunga

Messianism in the Old Greek of Isaiah

An Intertextual Analysis

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht



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Preface

The present monograph is a revised version of my Ph.D. thesis submitted to the University of Aberdeen in May 2010 and examined by Professors Arie van der Kooij of Leiden University, the Netherlands and William Horbury of Cambridge University, United Kingdom.

Many thanks are due to a number of individuals and organisations, who/which contributed directly and indirectly to the production of this piece of work. First mention goes to my Ph.D. supervisor, Professor Joachim Schaper. The debt I owe to him is immeasurable. Not only did he influence me to think of doing my research in the area of the Septuagint, but he also provided me with an exceptional friendship and extremely helpful guidance and support. These, along with his most impressive possession of academic knowledge in several fields, critical judgement, and meticulous reading of my academic copy that helped me to remove a good number of inaccuracies, were and will continue to be inspiring and aspiring in my scholarly journey. Any typographical or material errors that might still remain are, however, entirely mine, even as I also recall the generosity of Mr John Hutchinson, whom I would like to thank very much for kindly proofreading an earlier version of this study.

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methodology, submitted to the Septuagint Institute of Trinity Western University for an international conference on the Septuagint held in September 2008 as I was unfortunately unable to travel to the conference to present it in person due to visa complications.

Many thanks also to other scholars who have been kind enough to discuss a few aspects of this work, whether in personal conversation or in a formal academic setting. Their insights and inputs were extremely enriching. In particular, I would like to mention Professors Robert P. Gordon, Mumo P. Kisau, and Drs Myrto Theocharous, Benjamin A. Foreman, David Morgan, Stephen Herring, Jeffery W. Aernie, David Instone-Brewer, Wolter H. Rose, and Peter J. William. As far as the latter is concerned, I would also like to express my deepest gratitude to him for his unexpected help that unlocked for me the whole process of obtaining the needed documents that allowed me to join the University of Aberdeen for my studies. His recommendation for me to have a desk for a few weeks at Tyndale House Library in Cambridge, whose most exceptional setting for biblical research from which this work has benefited, has also been very much appreciated. I am grateful too to the Librarian, Dr Elizabeth Magba for her helpful assistance.

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By far my greatest debt and gratitude are due to my wife, Elisée and our three children, Pistis, Elpis, and Isaac, whose tremendous love, sacrifices, and continual support and understanding made it ultimately possible for me to write my Ph.D. dissertation at all and, eventually, to turn it into a book. To them I dedicate this volume.

Soli Deo Gloria

χάριτι δὲ θεοῦ εἰμι ὃ εἰμι, καὶ ἡ χάρις αὐτοῦ ἡ εἰς ἔμε οὐ κενὴ ἐγενήθη, ἀλλὰ περισσώτερον αὐτῶν πάντων ἐκοπίασα, οὐκ ἐγὼ δὲ ἀλλὰ ἡ χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ σὺν ἐμοί. (1 Cor 15:10)

12th May, 2012

Abi T. Ngunga

Abbreviations

| | |
|------------------|--|
| AB | The Anchor Bible |
| ABRL | Anchor Bible Reference Library |
| ACSF DHL | Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum |
| BAT | Die Botschaft des Alten Testaments |
| BdA | La Bible d'Alexandrie |
| AJBI | Annual of the Japanese Biblical Institute, Tokyo |
| ATAbh | Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen |
| BIOSCS | <i>Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i> |
| BJS | Biblical and Judaic Studies |
| BO | <i>Bibliotheca Orientalis</i> |
| BT | <i>The Bible Translator</i> |
| BETL | Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium |
| <i>Bib</i> | <i>Biblica</i> |
| BRS | The Biblical Resource Series |
| BZAW | Beihefte zur ZAW |
| CBC | Cambridge Bible Commentary |
| CBET | Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology |
| CBQ | <i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i> |
| CE | Cahiers Évangile |
| CESup | Cahiers Évangile, Supplément au Cahier Évangile |
| Ch(s) | Chapter(s) |
| CPJUD | Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum |
| CRU | Centre de Recherche de l'Université Saint-Paul |
| DJD | Discoveries in the Judaean Desert |
| EBAW | Essays on the Bible and the Ancient World |
| ed. | Edited |
| edn. | Edition |
| esp. | Especially |
| ET | English Translation |
| ETL | <i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i> |
| FAT | Forschungen zum Alten Testament |
| FOTL | The Forms of the Old Testament Literature |
| GNT ⁴ | B. Aland/K. Aland, <i>et al.</i> (ed.), <i>The Greek New Testament</i> (4 th revised edn; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1998). |
| HCOT | Historical Commentary on the Old Testament |
| HUCA | <i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i> |
| HUB | The Hebrew University Bible |
| HUC-JIR | Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion |
| IOSCS | <i>International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies</i> |
| ISBL | Indiana Studies in Biblical Literature |

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| ITC | International Theological Commentary |
| <i>JBL</i> | <i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i> |
| JBLMS | Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series |
| JBTh | Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie |
| <i>JHS</i> | <i>Journal of Hebrew Scriptures</i> |
| <i>JJS</i> | <i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i> |
| <i>JNSL</i> | <i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i> |
| JNNTSup | Journal of the Society of New Testament: Supplement Series |
| <i>JSOT</i> | <i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i> |
| <i>JTS NS</i> | <i>Journal of New Testament Studies: New Series</i> |
| LCL | The Loeb Classical Library |
| LD | Lectio Divina |
| LHBOTS | Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| LXX.D | M. Karrer/W. Kraus (ed.), <i>Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung</i> (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009). |
| MLN | Modern Language Notes |
| MSU | Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens |
| MT | Masoretic Text |
| NA ²⁷ | B. Aland/K. Aland, et al. (ed.), <i>Novum Testamentum Graece, post Eberhard et Erwin Nestle editione vicesima septima revisa</i> (27 th edn; Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1996). |
| NCB | New Century Bible |
| NETS | A. Pietersma/B. G. Wright (ed.), <i>A New English Translation of the Septuagint</i> (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). |
| NICOT | The New International Commentary on the Old Testament |
| NIDOT | New International Dictionary of Old Testament & Exegesis |
| NT | New Testament |
| OBO | Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis |
| OG | Old Greek |
| OLA | Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta |
| OS | <i>Oudtestamentische Studiën</i> |
| OT | Old Testament |
| OTL | Old Testament Library |
| 1QIsa ^a | The first, long, Isaiah Scroll from Qumran, cave 1 |
| 1QIsa ^b | The second, short, Isaiah Scroll from cave 1 |
| <i>Par</i> | Paragraph |
| <i>Psal.</i> | Psalms of Solomon |
| Praem | De Praemiss et Poenis |
| Sib Or | Sibylline Oracle |
| <i>RB</i> | <i>Revue Biblique</i> |
| repr. | Reprinted |
| SB | Sources Bibliques |
| SBL | Society of Biblical Literature |
| SBL SCS | Society of Biblical Literature, Septuagint and Cognate Studies |
| SBSL | Society of Biblical Literature Symposium |
| SCS | Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series |
| SVTP | Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| STDJ | Studies on the texts of the desert of Judah |
| <i>TDNT</i> | Theological Dictionary of the New Testament |
| <i>TDOT</i> | Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament |
| Theod | Theodotion |
| Tg Onk | Targum Onqelos |
| <i>Tg.</i> | Targum |
| trans. | translated |
| UBW | Understanding the Bible and its World |
| <i>VT</i> | <i>Vetus Testamentum</i> |
| VTSup | Supplements to Vetus Testamentum |
| <i>Vulg.</i> | Vulgate |
| WBC | Word Biblical Commentary |
| WMANT | Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament |
| WUNT | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament |
| WUNT 2 | Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe |
| ZAW | <i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i> |

Chapter 1: Introduction

This study explores the theme of messianism in the entire corpus of the Old Greek of Isaiah (LXX-Isaiah) as an important piece of Jewish theological literature from (and for) the Jewish community in Alexandria in the Hellenistic period. This is done through the lens of an intertextual hermeneutic employed by the Isaiah translator as a mode of reading this text.

It goes without saying that in recent years, interest in scholarship regarding the issue of messianism in the Greek Bible (LXX) in general has significantly increased.¹ Scholars have been disagreeing concerning the level to which the LXX as a whole displays a messianic exegesis. In the debate, Coppens, who has been followed by a host of other significant scholars,² has claimed that, in comparison with the Hebrew Bible, the LXX provides evidence of a trajectory of development of messianism.³ According to them, the

1 For instance, there are twenty papers presented in the fifty-third Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense in M. A. Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism* (BETL 195; Leuven: Peeters, 2006). The main question that was dealt with in this Colloquium was “whether an evolution in messianism belief is to be discerned in the Septuagint” (on p. xiv). – In this study, the phrase ‘Greek Bible’ will be used interchangeably with the term ‘Septuagint’ or the standard abbreviation ‘LXX’. It is understood in a wide sense as a vast and complex corpus of collections of Jewish sacred texts (of all the books of the Hebrew Bible and the so-called deuterocanonical or apocryphal as well pseudepigraphical books) translated into Greek during the Hellenistic and Early Roman periods. Given this typical use of the term ‘Septuagint’ and the fact that, in its inception, it was first and foremost linked with the initial Greek translation of the Torah, the phrase ‘LXX-Pentateuch’ will also be used to refer to the aforementioned Greek Torah. However, when referring to an individual book within the ‘LXX-Pentateuch’, this will be specified. For instance, the abbreviation ‘LXX-Genesis’ will be used for the Greek version of the Book of Genesis. Similarly, the phrases ‘Old Greek of Isaiah’, ‘LXX-Isaiah’, and ‘Septuagint of Isaiah’ will be used interchangeably to designate the ancient Greek translation of the Book of Isaiah. For more detail on various issues pertinent to the meaning and the content of the term ‘Septuagint’, one may consult, amongst others, J. M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (ed. M. A. Knibb; UBW; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 1–24, and T. Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 14–16.

2 J. Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint”, in J. A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume, Salamanca 1983* (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 174, provides a list of these scholars and the textual evidence for their beliefs; see also Knibb, “The Septuagint and Messianism: Problems and Issues”, in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, 4–9, who adds other scholars, e.g. V. der Woude, W. Horbury, J. Schaper, and N. F. Marcos; also M. Harl et al., *La Bible Grecque des Septante: Du Judaïsme Hellenistique du Christianisme Ancien* (Paris: Cerf, 1988), 219.

3 J. Coppens, *Le Messianisme royal: Ses origines, Son développement, Son accomplissement*, LD 54 (Paris: Cerf, 1968), 119.

LXX paved the path for the messianic reading of the Old Testament in the New. However, other scholars have been critically objecting to this view. Lust, a leading protagonist among them, has cautiously concluded that, at the present stage of the investigation, the LXX as a whole does not exhibit an increased interest in messianic thought.⁴ He has consistently argued that there are numerous passages in the LXX that should not be overlooked, where a ‘messianising’ translation is not found, where it might have been expected, thus each relevant passage should be studied on its own, and in its own context.⁵ Many other LXX scholars have shared his view.⁶

In a recent article, Knibb has discussed some general issues that seem to be central to the present debate.⁷ One of them is about achieving “clarity over the question of definition of messianism,”⁸ a term which is not always used in the same way. This implies that the tendency in the modern LXX scholarship has been that of starting an argument by providing a working definition so as to secure a proper treatment of a given topic and/or passage.⁹ For example, in his objection to the view of scholars in favour of a gradual emergence of messianic belief in the LXX, Lust (after being unsatisfied with Coppens’ view of messianism) starts his argument by saying:

-
- 4 See Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint: Collected Essays* (ed. K. Hauspie; BETL 178; Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 26; also his article on “Messianism in LXX-Ezekiel: Towards a Synthesis”, in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, 417–430; “Messianism in Ezekiel in Hebrew and in Greek, Ezek 21:15(10) and 20(15)”, in S.M. Paul et al. (ed.), *Emanuel: Studies in Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honor of Emanuel Tov* (Leiden: Brill: 2003), 619–31, on p. 620 n. 4.
 - 5 Lust, “Messianism in Ezekiel”, 619–20; see also his thirteen papers collected in *Messianism and the Septuagint*.
 - 6 See e.g. K. H. Jobes/M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2000), 96–97; 297–300; Harl et al., *La Bible Grecque des Septante*, 219–22; see also Knibb, “Introduction”, xiv.
 - 7 Knibb, “The Septuagint and Messianism”, 9–15; also “Introduction”, in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, xiv–xv.
 - 8 Knibb, “Introduction”, xiv. For instance, the aforementioned fifty-third Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense (see note 1) was unable, according to Knibb (quoting Martin Karrer), to arrive at a conclusion as to how ‘messianism’ was to be defined (on p. xx). More recently, in his study on messianism (though with a perspective of the Hebrew Bible), Heskett (quoting Schafer, Neusner, and Charlesworth) has argued that “the view of messianism that one brings to the text will influence what will seem to be messianic”; see R. Heskett, *Messianism Within the Scriptural Scroll of Isaiah*, LHBOTS 456 (New York/London: T & T Clark, 2007), 2. Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint*, 28, also says, “[L]es discussions du messianisme sont souvent entravées par un manque de définitions claires.”
 - 9 For instance, Munnich writes, “Pour étudier ce thème, les auteurs modernes commencent souvent par en donner une définition de travail;” see O. Munnich, “Le messianisme à la lumière des livres prophétiques de la Bible grecque”, in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, 327. W. Horbury, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London: SCM Press, 1998), 6, states: “messianism has been an elusive word ‘chargé de vibration et peu définissable,’ [...] ‘dont on use et abuse aujourd’hui’”. Writers on messianism indeed usually try to clarify the term”.

Before we begin our critical investigation it may be useful to provide a tentative definition of messianism. Messianism is the expectation of an individual human and yet transcendent saviour. He is to come in a final eschatological period and will establish God's Kingdom on earth. In a more strict sense, messianism is the expectation of a royal Davidic saviour at the end time.¹⁰

Lust's emphasis on the future coming of a saviour figure in the eschatological era has found a significant support in scholarship. For instance, Knibb has argued that this is "important [in order] to distinguish clearly between kingship ideology and messianism."¹¹ According to him, it is not helpful to use the term 'messianic' with reference to historical figures which echo the idea of kingship ideology. In this connection, he criticises G. Bertram, J. Coppens, W. Horbury, and J. Schaper for identifying such figures when discussing the notion of messianism in Israel.¹² Unfortunately, Knibb seems to go too far in trying to draw a sharp line of demarcation between these two concepts: kingship ideology and messianism in Israel. One needs to note, as Schaper has correctly said, that "the Israelite concept of messianism did not replace the earlier kingship ideology centring on the Davidic line but was deeply rooted in it."¹³ In this way, as Schaper claims, "it does not make sense to postulate an opposition between kingship ideology and messianism."¹⁴ In the current monograph, the latter concept is used with reference to the hope of an individual figure with a substantial mission to launch a new period of redemption. This definition is, to some extent, in line with the one(s) already provided by other scholars.¹⁵

Almost all scholars in favour of a gradual emergence of the messianic belief in the LXX have also a tendency to claim that the LXX can have a theology of its own. Schaper, for instance, has declared that "[a] 'theology of the Septuagint' – or, strictly speaking, an account of the theological trends of Hellenistic Judaism that shaped the Greek Bible – can, and indeed should be written."¹⁶ However, instead of taking up such a challenge, their opponents

10 Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint*, 142. However, it is not clear whether this definition is his. For, in another article in the same volume, one may curiously observe that he clearly quotes Coppens as the owner of it (on p. 154).

11 Knibb, "The Septuagint and Messianism", 10.

12 Ibid., 10–15; also, "Introduction", xiv–xv. According to him, these scholars use the term 'messianic' to refer to historical figures of the past (e.g. Judas Maccabaeus) (on p. xiv).

13 J. Schaper, "The Persian Period", in M. Bokmuehl/J. Carleton Paget (ed.), *Redemption and Resistance: The Messianic Hopes of Jews and Christians in Antiquity* (London: T & T Clark, 2007), 3–14, on p. 5.

14 Ibid.

15 See e.g., Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint*, 142; Horbury, *Jewish Messianism*, 6–7; Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter* (WUNT 2/76; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 29; Sollamo, "Messianism and the 'Branch of David'", in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, 357–70, on p. 358; and more recently, R. F. de Sousa, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1–12*, (LHBOTS 516; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 3.

16 Schaper, "Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah and Messianic Intertextuality in the Greek Bible", in Knibb (ed.), *The Septuagint and Messianism*, 371–80, on p. 380. In a recent article,

seem to have been more sceptical of the whole idea of speaking of a ‘theology of the LXX’.¹⁷ To give one example, Sollamo¹⁸ (in support of Hanhart’s opinion¹⁹ against Bertram’s²⁰) has claimed that theology was not a primary concern for the LXX translators. After analysing comparatively the Hebrew and Greek texts of one expression referring to God (in 1 Kings 15:26 and 16:7), she argued that the minor changes that one can observe in the LXX “do not justify one in speaking of a special septuagintal theology or ideology.”²¹ However, it seems precarious to make such a statement on the basis of only one example, analysed in isolation. Hence, from the foregoing opposing views, both the issue of whether a gradual emergence of messianism is to be discerned in the LXX and that of a ‘theology of the LXX’ appear to be two of the most pressing tasks of the LXX research. However, as said earlier, the focus of the present study is only on the former.

As shall be seen, a survey on the question related to the theme of messianism in the LXX surprisingly reveals that not much effort has been dedicated to investigating meticulously this topic at least in an entire given individual Septuagintal book.²² It is against this background that the present study is

Rösel asks: “Can a book be written on the theology of Septuagint?” The answer is “[y]es, it can be written;” see M. Rösel, “Towards a ‘Theology of the Septuagint’”, in W. Kraus/R. G. Wooden (ed.), *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 239–52. A similar idea is echoed by J. Cook, “Theological/Ideological’ *Tendenz* in the Septuagint – LXX Proverbs: A Case Study”, in F. G. Martínez/M. Vervenne (ed.), *Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust* (BETL 192; Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 65–79, on p. 79; also Cook, “Towards the Formulation of a Theology of the Septuagint”, in A. Lemaire (ed.), *Congress Volume Ljubljana 2007* (VTSup 133; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), 621–37; G. Bertram, “Praeparatio evangelica in der Septuaginta”, *VT* 7 (1957) 225–49.

17 See Jobes/Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 96–97; 297–300; Harl *et al.*, *La Bible Grecque des Septante*, 219–22; Lust, “Messianism and Septuagint”, 177; see also Knibb, “The Septuagint and Messianism”, 19.

18 In her article on “The Significance of Septuagint Studies”, in Shalom M. Paul *et al.*, (ed.), *Emanuel*, 497–512, on pp. 505–08.

19 “that there exists no septuagintal theology as a separate entity, but whenever Old Testament theology is investigated, the theology of the Septuagint should be given a special section or a place of honour,” (*Ibid.*, 506).

20 “that the Septuagint has a theology of its own” (*ibid.*).

21 *Ibid.* Cf. also Jobes/Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 94–95.

22 Moreover, in 1948, Seeligmann has claimed that, “from a methodological point of view, and in view of the present state of our knowledge of this field of research, the study of a given book of the Septuagint is to be preferred to that of any particular concept (e. g. the Law, the Prophecy, Messianism, etc.), since any treatise on any of these notions can only be written on the basis of investigations into the views and individuality of the translators respectively,” see I. L. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of its Problems, Mededelingen en verhandelingen van het vooraziatisch-egyptisch genootschap “Ex oriente lux”*, 9 (Leiden: Brill, 1948); repr. in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies* (ed. R. Hanhart/H. Spieckermann; FAT 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 127. Seeligmann’s argument justifies his focus on a particular Septuagint book, i. e. Isaiah. However, it is worthwhile noting that a few scholars, who came after him, have attempted to study a par-

set. In particular, it intends to contribute to a better and more reliable understanding of the issue of the messianism in LXX-Isaiah with a few implications with regard to the LXX as a whole. In this way, this investigation seeks to encourage further discussion on the topic of messianism in the Greek Bible.

1. Messianism in the LXX-Isaiah

Focusing more recently on the significance of messianism in the LXX-Isaiah, Schaper has claimed that “[s]ince the Book of Isaiah has been such an important focus for the hopes and fears of the people of Israel, one should expect it to have been a prime candidate for what one may call a ‘messianization’ of its text in the Hellenistic period.”²³ However, some passages in this important literature have been at the heart of a scholarly debate. The question has been as to whether the traces of messianic belief can be detected in them (and eventually in the LXX-Isaiah). The discussion was already in existence during the first four centuries C.E. We may recall, for instance, a well-known dispute between Justin Martyr (one of the early Church Fathers) and Trypho (a Jewish exegete) on the subject of messianism in Isaiah 7:14. The former constructed his argument based on the Greek form of the text. He understood the words in Isaiah 7:14 as foretelling the virgin birth of Jesus. In contrast, his opponent Trypho responded with an argument from the Hebrew text. According to him, this passage does not refer to the virgin birth of Jesus, but rather to a young woman who was expecting a child;²⁴ thus making the Isaianic text useless for a messianic interpretation.

ticular concept; see e.g. Schaper, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*; Cook, “The Law in the Septuagint Proverbs”, *JNSL* 23 (1997) 211–23.

23 Schaper, “Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah”, 371. Heskett, *Messianism Within the Scriptural Scroll of Isaiah*, 2, has stated that “Jews and Christians traditionally interpreted many passages in the book of Isaiah as containing messianic promise more than any other books,” and that “the book of Isaiah warrants a messianic reading” (on p. 17). The importance of the Book of Isaiah (with references to its impact on the theology of early Judaism and Christianity, as well as the literature of the first Temple, exilic, and second Temple periods) has been highlighted in the preface of an ambitious collection of papers on Isaiah; see C. C. Broyles/C. A. Evans (ed.), *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah: Studies of an Interpretive Tradition* (VTSup 70/1; Leiden: Brill, 1997), ix. On the NT’s usage of the LXX of Isaiah, see C. A. Evans, “From Gospel to Gospel: The Function of Isaiah in the New Testament”, in Broyles/Evans (ed.), *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 2.651–91, on pp. 651–53; also B. S. Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah as Christian Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 5. Our own inventory of the quotations of the LXX-books in the NT based on the index of Greek Texts shows that in GNT⁴ (cf. p. 888) the LXX-Isaiah is quoted 37 times (the remaining prophetic LXX books are quoted in total 10 times) against 18 quotations of the LXX-Psalms. NA²⁷ (cf. pp. 789–93) mentions 144 quotations of the LXX-Isaiah against 107 of LXX-Psalms, 52 times for all the remaining prophetic LXX-books, and 162 times for the LXX-Pentateuch.

24 Cf. Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint*, 214.

In the modern research on the LXX-Isaiah, scholars have been building their investigation on solid foundations laid by the work of Seeligmann.²⁵ Prior to his monograph, R. R. Ottley²⁶ and J. Ziegler²⁷ carried out significant studies on the same book. All three of these works are well known and have greatly contributed to the study of the LXX-Isaiah.²⁸ While the present study shall refer (whenever necessary) to some of the substantial efforts and admirable achievements made by these scholarly figures and those who came subsequently, serious consideration shall be given to tasks left virtually untouched. With regard to the question of messianism in the LXX-Isaiah, the tendency in scholarship has been: (1) to compare one or two passages in their Hebrew and the Greek texts;²⁹ (2) to investigate contextually one or two passages either from a Jewish or Christian exegesis;³⁰ (3) to explore some passages in comparison to the Targum or Peshitta;³¹ and/or (4) to study the messianic intertextuality of a few passages in this literature in relation to one or two passages from (an)other LXX book(s).³² Besides these trends, de Sousa's recent monograph on the first twelve chapters of the LXX-Isaiah³³ must also be mentioned. As a result, not only some passages that have been advanced for or against the presence of a development of messianism have been questioned, but also each study has held a partial view of the messianic thought and its significance in the LXX-Isaiah, with little implications to the LXX as a whole.

25 See e.g. Schaper, "Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah", 371–80.

26 *The Book of Isaiah According to the LXX (Codex Alexandrinus)* (2 vol.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd edn; 1909 [1904, 1906]).

27 *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (ATAbh 12.3; Münster: Aschenorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934).

28 See for instance their assessments in L. Laberge, *La Septante d'Isaïe 28–33: Etude de Traduction Textuelle* (Ontario: CRU Saint-Paul, 1978), 2–4; A. van der Kooij, "Isaiah in the Septuagint", in Broyles/Evans (ed.), *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 2.513–30, on pp. 513–519; S.E. Porter/B.W.R. Pearson, "Isaiah through Greek Eyes: The Septuagint of Isaiah", in Broyles/Evans (ed.), *Writing and Reading the Scroll of Isaiah*, 531–46; E.R. Ekblad, *Isaiah's Servant Poems According to the Septuagint: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (CBET 23; Leuven: Peeters, 1999), 19–21; D.A. Baer, *When We All Go Home: Translation and Theology in LXX Isaiah 56–66* (JSOTSup 318; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 11–13; and Childs, *The Struggle to Understand Isaiah*, 3–4.

29 See e.g. Lust, "Messianism in the Septuagint Isaiah 8,23b-9,6(9-17)", 153–69; R.L. Troxel, "Isaiah 7,14–16 through the Eyes of the Septuagint", *ETL* 79 (2003) 1–22; van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah 19:16–25: Translation and Interpretation", in C.E. Cox (ed.), *VI Congress of the IO SCS, Jerusalem 1986* (SBL SCS 23; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), 127–66; J.J. Collins, "Isaiah 8:23–9:6 and its Greek Translation", in A. Voitila/J. Jokiranta (ed.), *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 205–21.

30 See Lust, "A Septuagint Christ Preceding Jesus Christ?", 211–26.

31 Munnich, "Le Messianism", 327–355 (esp. p. 328).

32 Schaper, "Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah", 371–80.

33 De Sousa, *Eschatology*

Further, though it has been claimed that there exists a significant number of intertwined messianic passages in the LXX-Isaiah, (which are also linked with other prophetic passages with messianic overtones in the LXX-Pentateuch³⁴), it appears surprisingly enough that no-one so far, to the best of our knowledge, has ever tried within one single exegetical scholarly work to engage in their exploration. This may be sufficient to say that this is an interesting topic for the present study.

2. The LXX-Isaiah as a Translation

This section is an attempt to understand the LXX-Isaiah and its translator. To begin with, it is important to keep in mind that there are several issues related to the topic of “the LXX-Isaiah as a translation.”³⁵ An exhaustive consideration of them is beyond the scope of the present study. However, a few of them that are particularly pertinent to our discussion shall be surveyed in the sections that follow.

2.1 The Translation as the Work of a Single Translator

One of the most obvious issues that anyone dealing with the LXX-Isaiah encounters is whether or not to consider the translation as the work of a single translator. The issue is directly linked to forming an opinion on whether the LXX-Isaiah “forms a unity in respect of its origin.”³⁶ Before attempting to make any claim, let us gain some insights from Seeligmann who, almost six decades ago, re-examined the question.

Seeligmann started his investigation by rejecting the view of B. Gray and F. Baumgärtel, who argued that it is possible to see that there are two different translators of the LXX-Isaiah, i. e. one for chs. 1–39 and another one for chs. 40–66.³⁷ For, according to them, there are certain Hebrew terms in Isa 1–39, which are either preferably or exclusively translated by certain Greek words or expressions, while in Isa 40–66, they are translated, either preferably or exclusively, by different ones.³⁸ Building upon Fisher’s and Ziegler’s objection to these arguments, Seeligmann went on to investigate a few examples among those that offer the most convincing evidence on the data collected by Gray and Baumgärtel. As a result, Seeligmann discovered numerous inconsistencies exhibited everywhere (often, indeed, within one and the same verse) in the rendition of Hebrew words in the entire LXX-Isaiah. He

34 See Schaper, “Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah”, 377; Ekblad *Isaiah’s Servant*, 31.

35 Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 179–221, deals with the majority of them.

36 *Ibid.*, 179.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

also discovered that in all parts of the translation there is evidence of a reasonably constant choice “for certain special terms, and for certain theological notions.”³⁹ According to Seeligmann, this phenomenon alone is already suggestive of the unity of the LXX-Isaiah.⁴⁰ Phrased differently, Seeligmann claimed that the translation before us is the work of one translator. His view has become commonly held,⁴¹ even though there is still a growing opinion among some scholars to question it.⁴² Hence, in the present study, we shall approach the LXX-Isaiah as one united product from one single Jewish translator⁴³ who employed various exceptional creative mechanisms. He worked for the Jewish community in Alexandria to which he himself belonged. The use of intertextuality (to be discussed later) is one of those devices.

39 Ibid., 180–85.

40 This unity of the LXX-Isaiah has also been noted by Baer, *When We All Go Home*, 19. We shall come back to the issue of unity later and its implication on how the book should be approached.

41 Ibid.; also C. Dogniez, “Le traducteur d’Isaïe connaissait-il le texte grec du Dodekapropheton?” *Adamantius* 13 (2007) 29–37, on p. 29.

42 Some scholars, for instance, are still sceptical about the translator of LXX-Isaiah 36–39; see e.g. M. S. Hurwitz, “The Septuagint of Isaiah 36–39 in Relation to that of 1–35, 40–66”, *HUCA* 28 (Philadelphia: HUC-JIR, 1957), 75–83 (esp. p. 82); Troxel, ‘βουλή in the Septuagint of Isaiah’ (unpublished paper presented at the SBL Annual Meeting, San-Diego, 2007), 5 n. 3; Baer, *When We All Go Home*, 19 n. 28, who has claimed “that ch. 66 stands somewhat apart from LXX Isaiah chs. 1–65”. More recently, in his article on “What happens in the end? Evidence for an early Greek recension in LXX Isaiah 66”, in A. van der Kooij/M. N. van der Meer (ed.), *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives* (CBET 55; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 1–31, on p. 3, Baer has also argued that LXX-Isaiah ch. 66 “has a provenance distinct from that of chapters 1–65”.

43 It should be noted that there is a debate (and/or sometimes confusion) in LXX scholarship on the terminology used with reference to the person responsible for the text of LXX, i.e. either to view him as a “translator” or an “author”. In the case of the former, according to A. Pietersma, “Exegesis in the Septuagint: Possibilities and Limits (The Psalter as a Case in Point)”, in W. Kraus/R. G. Wooden (ed.), *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (Atlanta: SBL, 2006), 33–45, on p. 35, the Greek translator is viewed “as a mere medium (a conduit) of the source text”. That is he “does not add to nor subtract from the text being transmitted, nor are alterations made to it” (*ibid.*). With reference to the latter, “the Greek translator is [...] elevated to the status of an author, whose work becomes a substitute or replacement for the source text” (on p. 36). With reference to the LXX-Isaiah, a glance in a few works on it could reveal that its experts sometimes choose (whether consciously or not) either one term, or both terms, even within one single given piece of work. See, for instance, P. Le Moigne, “ὄχι ὡς dans Ésaïe-LXX”, in J. Joosten/P. Le Moigne (ed.), *L’apport de la Septante aux études sur l’Antiquité* (Paris: Cerf, 2005), 71–104, on p. 78, where he speaks of “l’auteur d’Ésaïe-LXX” and not even a page later, he writes: “[l]e traducteur d’Ésaïe-LXX” (p. 79). Although the terminology of “translator” is adopted in the present study, its meaning refers (to some extent) to that of an author (discussed above) based on his creative skills.

2.2 The Translator's 'Freedom' in the Context of Ancient Biblical Translation

The issue at hand here relates to an investigation of the 'translation techniques' used by the translator. As said above, the task before us requires that we limit ourselves to what is essential.⁴⁴ Given this restriction, we intend to have a particular look at the characteristic of the translation.

Since the meticulous works of Ziegler⁴⁵ and Seeligmann,⁴⁶ it has been generally accepted, as many scholars have noted,⁴⁷ that the characteristic style of the translation of the LXX-Isaiah is none other than that of a rather remarkably 'free' (as opposed to 'literal') translation. However, the meaning of 'literal' and 'free' in the context of ancient biblical translations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the qualification of the distinctive 'freedom' with regard to the techniques of translation in the LXX-Isaiah need to be clarified in the present study.

With reference to the former, while analysing thoroughly the meaning of 'literal' and 'free' in the ancient translation, Barr states: "'literal' and 'free' are not clear and simple terms in the world of ancient biblical translation. There are numerous ways in which a version could be both at the same time. It could be literal, by one of the ways in which one may be literal, while by another of the ways it was simultaneously free."⁴⁸ According to him, one of those ways in which an ancient translation may be literal is, for instance, "one-for-one representation of elements of the Hebrew by elements of the Greek."⁴⁹ Tov, who aimed to contribute to Barr's typology of literalism, provides five criteria for the analysis of literal renderings: (1) consistency; (2) representation of the constituents of Hebrew words; (3) word-order; (4)

44 Moreover, despite the fact that, as E. Tov, *The Text-critical use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, JBS 8 Revised and Enlarged Second Edition (Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 17, has rightly pointed out that an "analysis of the techniques used by the Greek translators provides data for a better understanding of the translators' exegesis," (cf. Dines, *The Septuagint*, 117, 121), it has been observed by Baer, *When We All Go Home*, 14, that even the larger scholarly works on LXX-Isaiah have made less of an attempt "to describe exhaustively matters of translation technique or exegetical practice".

45 *Untersuchungen*.

46 *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*.

47 See e.g. van der Kooij, "Isaiah in the Septuagint", 513; also *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 12–13; J. W. Olley "The Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah and 'Righteousness'", *BIOSCS* 13 (1980) 55–74, on p. 59; Jobes/Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 114, 215; Baer, *When We All Go Home*, 15–16; Dines, *The Septuagint*, 22.

48 J. Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (MSU 15; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 283 [9]; cf. also B. Lemmelijn, "Two Methodological Trails in Recent Studies on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint", in R. Sollamo/S. Sipilä (ed.), *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Spetuagint: Proceedings of the IOSCS Congress in Helsinki 1999* (PFES 82; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 43–63 (esp. 43–52)

49 *Ibid.*, 280 [6], 324 [50].

quantitative representation; and (5) linguistic adequacy of lexical choices.⁵⁰ With regard to ‘free’ translation, according to Barr, one of the most obvious ways in which an ancient translation can be regarded as ‘free’ composition is when large additions or subtractions of elements are made.⁵¹ This way of identifying a ‘free’ approach of the translator to its Hebrew parent text has been one of the major topics of interest in van der Kooij’s significant contributions to the understanding of the Greek version of Isaiah. According to him, it is this ‘free’ approach which “allowed the translator to add words, to omit words, and to introduce variant readings.”⁵²

From the paragraph above, one can observe not only the complexities in determining whether an ancient translation of the Bible is to be termed as a rather ‘literal’ or ‘free’ translation, but also the emergence of a definition of a ‘literal’ translation, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, that of a ‘free’ translation. Dines provides such a definition:

By ‘literal’ is meant a close approximation to the (supposed) source-text, word for word, or phrase for phrase, and including grammatical and syntactical idioms and word order; this is called ‘formal equivalence.’ By ‘free’ is meant a style which is more paraphrastic and idiomatic, and which apparently aims to give the translator’s understanding of the original rather than reproduce it quantitatively; this is called ‘dynamic equivalence’.⁵³

Without undermining Dines’ contribution to the LXX research, it can be observed in her statement above that she does not provide the meaning of her use of the terms ‘formal equivalence’ and ‘dynamic equivalence’ as first understood by the modern theoretician of translation Eugene A. Nida. It is important to note that in his investigation, as Hatim and Mason correctly say, “Nida shifts attention away from the sterile debate of free versus literal towards the effects of different translation strategies.”⁵⁴ This implies that, in modern analysis of translation, the terms ‘formal equivalence’ and ‘dynamic equivalence’ are used to describe two extremes of varying attitudes of translators towards translating. Nida, in his book *Toward a science of Translating*,⁵⁵ defines the term ‘formal equivalence’ as a method of translation that

50 See Tov, *The Text-critical use of the Septuagint*, 54–60. A useful analysis of these five criteria and their various failures in the translation studies can be found in R. T. McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in the New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 51–61.

51 Barr, *The Typology of Literalism*, 303–05 [29–31]; McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint*, 56–57.

52 Van der Kooij, “The Old Greek of Isaiah 19: 16–25”, 128.

53 Dines, *The Septuagint*, 119–20.

54 B. Hatim/I. Mason, *Discourse and the Translator* (London: Longman, 1990), 7. A useful survey of the history of translation theory over ‘literal’ and ‘free’ debate, starting with Cicero via St Jerome, Dolet, Luther, Dryden, Tytler, to Schleiermacher can be found in J. Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2001), 18–33.

55 Nida, *Toward a science of Translating with Special Reference to Principles and Procedures Involved in Bible Translating* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).

“focuses attention on the message itself, in both *form* and *content*.”⁵⁶ However, five years later, within his publication (together with Taber) of *The Theory and Practice of Translation*,⁵⁷ Nida’s position on ‘formal equivalence’ seemed to change. This discrepancy is not merely to be observed in his use of the expression ‘formal correspondance’ instead of ‘formal equivalence’, but more remarkably in relating it *only* to form, not to content.⁵⁸ Without going into too much detail, Nida’s inconsistency in his use of ‘formal equivalence/correspondence’ implies that in translation studies, “closely related to the literal versus free issue is the debate on the primacy of content over form or vice versa.”⁵⁹ With reference to the term ‘dynamic equivalence’, although Nida also used ‘functional’ in place of ‘dynamic’, he seems to show a consistent understanding of these terms. According to him, ‘dynamic or functional equivalence’ is the “quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors.”⁶⁰ This assumes that the basic meaning of the original text is known to the translator, or is knowable indirectly through the mediation of scholarly means (e.g. dictionaries and reference books), thus implying a favouring, in our modern culture, of a ‘free’ against ‘literal’ translation.⁶¹

All this is to say that, in modern biblical translations, a textual-linguistic make-up of a given translation will argue for whether a translation is characterized by either a formal or a dynamic equivalence. On the contrary, in ancient biblical translations, these two poles are entirely too simplistic, thus suggesting to modern scholars, as Dines puts it, “to envisage a continuum running from extremely literal to extremely free renderings, with many intermediate stages and combinations, on which [...] even different parts of the same translations, can be located.”⁶² However, while Barr’s chief argument that “a translation can be literal and free at the same time but in different modes or on different levels”⁶³ is true even for the LXX-Isaiah, it will still be argued that his claim does not conceal the aforementioned scholarly consensus that the LXX-Isaiah has been rendered rather freely. This characteristic will be observed throughout the present investigation. This leads us to the other issue (noted above) concerning the qualification of the translator’s distinctive ‘freedom’ in his translation techniques.

56 Ibid., 159 (emphasis mine).

57 Nida/C.R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).

58 Ibid., 203.

59 Hatim/Mason, *Discourse and the Translator*, 8. For a similar thought, see also R. P. Roberts, “Translation”, in R. P. Roberts (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), 429–42, on p. 43.

60 Nida/Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 24, 200.

61 Barr, *The Typology of Literalism*, 289 [15].

62 Dines, *The Septuagint*, 121.

63 Barr, *The Typology of Literalism*, 280 [6]. Dines, *The Septuagint*, 120, has a similar thought, so J. K. Palmer, “‘Not Made With Tracing Paper’: Studies in the Septuagint of Zechariah,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 57.2 (2006) 317–20, on p. 318.

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Abi T. Ngunga explores the theme of messianism in the entire corpus of the Old Greek of Isaiah (LXX-Isaiah). This is done through the lens of an intertextual hermeneutic employed by the Isaiah translator as a mode of reading this text.

The study concludes by highlighting the detected particular messianic imprints left on the LXX-Isaiah. Given the results, Ngunga dismisses any doubt concerning the contention that there is a dynamic messianic thought running through the whole of the Greek Isaiah. He also sheds some light on the understanding of some of the messianic beliefs later echoed in early Christianity.

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