Symmachus: A Greek Targum

by

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A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of Regis College and the Graduate Centre for Theological Studies of the Toronto School of Theology. In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Theology awarded by Regis College and the University of Toronto.

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Abstract

This thesis explores the translation decisions and techniques of the Second Century Jewish biblical translator Symmachus, composing his work in Greek in the Hellenised city of Caesarea. While usually Greek translations of the Hebrew Bible are seen simply to be translations, an examination of Symmachus’s approach reveals that it can be considered targumic, alongside targumim in other languages. His targumic approach is compared to the Aramaic targumim, and to the Greek of the Septuagint, Theodotion and Aquila. Special attention is also paid to the Vulgate, Vetus Latina and the Peshitta. The text selection is from the Creation narrative, Genesis 1:1-5, because of its importance in liturgy and piety; and Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18, 29:25, 33:7 & 8, chosen because of halakic matters. Precision of translation and conveying background information is essential in these matters, and so these verses can be seen to be indicative of a rabbinic approach of targum.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my director, Scott Lewis SJ, and my readers, Judith Newman and Michael Kolarcik SJ, for the opportunities that they provided for me in this process. I should also express gratitude to Joseph Gavin SJ for his close attention to my grammatical follies. Je manquerais complètement de reconnaissance si j’oubliais de remercier Serge Cazelais qui, avec habilité et diligence, m’a appris les méthodes rabbiniques.

Finally, one must not forget Elaine Chu and Wilma Scherloski!

AMDG

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List of Abbreviations

*b. Senh*  
Sanhedrin

*CUP*  
Cambridge University Press

*Comm. in ep ad Gal prol.*  
Commentary on the Letter to the Galatians, Prologue  
(*Ambrosiasta*)

*Comm. in ep ad Gal*  
Commentary on the Letter to the Galatians  
(*Marius Victorinus*)

*Hist. Eccl.*  
History of the Church  
(*Eusebius*)

*HTR*  
Harvard Theological Review

*IOSCS*  
International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies

*Op*  
*De Opificio Mundi*  
(*Philo of Alexandria*)

*SamA*  
Samaritan Aramaic

*TgOnq*  
Targum Onqelos
Introduction

The translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek by Symmachus in the late 2nd Century represents an important tradition in the history of biblical interpretation. The transmission and translation of the biblical text into both a new language and cultural milieu is a task that is characterised by certain necessary questions. How important, for example, is it to render the original language as closely as possible? Or, are there ways to better transmit the narrative in ways that are more suitable both to the target language and cultural milieu? Are there terms which are untranslatable, and better to be reworked using more familiar usage in the target situation? Or, are certain terms, such as proper nouns – though replete with lexicographical meaning in the source text – better transliterated into the target text because of the already familiarity of those terms in their original? These are just some of the questions that one needs to consider when one encounters a translation like that of Symmachus, not only to understand the decisions behind the translation, but also to understand the line of transmission from the source text.

Particular attention will be paid in this thesis to his translation of the Pentateuch, and especially of the books of Genesis and Deuteronomy. The reason for this is that we have a relatively stable attested Pentateuchal corpus from Symmachus, thanks to Alison Salvesen.\(^1\) Furthermore, the rabbinic emphasis on the centrality of the Torah as foundational for the Hebrew Bible cannot be overlooked.\(^2\) Examining Genesis and Deuteronomy posit a unique

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1. Alison Salvesen. *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1991). Henceforth cited as ‘Symmachus in the Pentateuch’. While in this thesis Salvesen is heavily relied upon, her work is included within a variety of other sources due to the extensive nature of the examination at hand. Salvesen, and others, will be indicated when they are the source for translations and insights, the rest, however, is my own reading of the various traditions.


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opportunity to test the transmission and translation decisions that had to be made to present a Biblical text that was vital to the life and spirituality of the community.

Aquila, Theodotion and the Septuagint (LXX) represent different traditions from Symmachus. His religious identity has been a matter of debate, something that has detracted from the appreciation of his translation within the Jewish tradition. Some saw him as tainted by being a converted Samaritan, while others, such as Eusebius, accused him of the heresy of the Ebionites, or Jewish Christians.\(^3\) Others equated him with the Symmachian movement, being either its founder or at least its inspiration. This was based upon his translation of Isaiah 7:14, having “young woman” instead of “virgin”, and thus calling into question the interpretation of Matthew 1:23.\(^4\) This was a movement purportedly coming from ‘James, brother of Jesus’, that might have included Gnostic tendencies within Judaic Christianity.\(^5\) Augustine held this view (\textit{Contra Cresconium} 1.31.36, & \textit{Contra Faustum} 19.17), as did Ambrosiasta (\textit{Comm. in ep ad Gal prol.}) and Marius Victorinus (\textit{Comm. in ep ad gal 1:19} & 2:12).\(^6\) It is, however, the vindication offered by Salvesen that this thesis follows in understanding his biblical translation. Salvesen, tracing him to working in Caesarea around 200 AD, points out that, “... Symmachus’s revision of the Pentateuch displays a thorough knowledge of rabbinic exegesis of that time. Some of his interpretations are paralleled by the haggadists of third and fourth century Caesarea, and his work may have been carried out for the benefit of the Jewish community of that city.”\(^7\) It

\(^3\) cf. \textit{Hist. Eccl.} VI.17. Ebionites seemed to be Judaic Christians who rejected the divinity and virgin birth of Jesus.


\(^5\) Broadhead: 231.


\(^7\) \textit{Symmachus in the Pentateuch}: 297.
is this assessment of Salvesen that guides this thesis, namely that Symmachus made not only a Greek biblical translation, but that he did so in the rabbinic exegetical tradition. What is unique, then, to Symmachus, is that he represents a Greek tradition of targum. Targum is the use of rabbinic technique to pass along traditions through generations, and offering an appraisal of the scripture that meets its contemporary audience within their milieu while linking them to the past.

Targumim have especially been thought of as being Aramaic or Hebrew, such as Onqelos, Jonathan, Neofiti and others. Symmachus, on the other hand, had a different environment, he lived in a more Hellenised milieu, and thus both his task and style had to be different. That said, he still held to certain rabbinic targum traditions. These traditions were diverse, and maybe could be thought of as being ‘rabbinic thought’, or as ‘manifestations of rabbinic approaches’. Targum in this sense is a reflection on the scriptural text, bringing it forward in such a way that it meets the perceived needs of the community. One could characterise a targum as a story about the story. Yet, more importantly, the question of what targumic method is in a proper sense should be considered further.

A targum is usually thought of as being an Aramaic tradition responding to the complexities of the Hebrew text. In this sense, a targum is more than a translation, but it is something marked by its method. Its method brings forward the text at hand, but does so in a way that makes sense of it in light of the contemporary audience. In this sense, while normally conceived as being exclusively Aramaic, in fact a targum could possibly be witnessed in other

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8 By ‘tradition’ here one should understand it as pluriform, mainly that there are many traditions or ways. So, to use the term ‘tradition’ here simply connotes a sense of commonalities that are manifested in a variety of ways.

languages. This is because the language of the targum does not matter, but rather how it relates the text to the audience matters. An example of this would be Deuteronomy 11:18, with the Deuteronomist command to bear daily witness to the divine through something on the body, such as phylacteries. This directive is made sometimes in targum to be something represented as immovable, like something static, and at other sometimes as something moveable, as with an active people on a path. This will be seen later on when we discuss the text of Symmachus in relationship to other translators and targumic representatives.

While often seen as a response to a Hebrew text, however, this would seem to be something debatable. While the Aramaic text can be seen as a response to the Hebrew text in a more determined manner, a Greek targum should be seen as responding to another source tradition in the Greek language, such as the Septuagint.10 This is because if the Greek interpreted text of the Hebrew was just that, a Greek translation of the Hebrew, then it would be just that, a Greek translation. Yet, however, if the Greek text was responding to the complexities of a source text, like that of the Septuagint, then it would constitute being within targumic method. This is because it is responding in the same way to the Septuagint, for example, as is the Aramaic text to the Hebrew source text that provides it with complexities to consider for its audience. These complexities to be accounted for could be cultural challenges. How to make a text of a nomadic people relevant to a more cosmopolitan people? It could be a matter of halakah. How do we do these things proscribed to us if there is doctrinal disputes as to their proper orthopraxy? Or they could be matters of liturgical representation. How do we present the Torah in such a way that it makes sense in our pluralistic environment, such as in the light of

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natural science? These are challenges that a targum responding to the Septuagint would find just as complex as one responding to the Hebrew text. The ways that one accounts for these complexities, drawing on traditions, experience, questions of the community, help constitute what makes targumic method.

As noted, Symmachus is likely to have worked on his translation in Caesarea, a Hellenised city. By the time of his composition, Greek was the common language not only of commerce and discourse, but also of the synagogue. It is said that the R. Levi bar Hita once came to that city and was aghast to hear the Shema recited in a synagogue in the Greek language. While not all Jewish communities so welcomed Greek, such was the case in the Hellenised Jewish community in Caesarea. One must only remember the construction of the synagogue of Dura Europos, in eastern Syria, around 200 AD. That synagogue is an excellent example of the appropriation of Greco-Roman techniques to promote Jewish beliefs. Caesarea, however, was not just a Hellenised city, but it was also a city of many cultures, a veritable meeting place. Symmachus had a task not only to convey scriptural meaning, but to do so in a pluralistic environment.

An example of this would be Deuteronomy 32:43, where Symmachus painstakingly preserves the sense of “servants [of God]”, whereas the Septuagint translates it as “sons of God.” At Genesis 1:26, however, Symmachus preserves the plural of the Lord’s interior monologue of the Hebrew, by employing ἡμῶν, something which was not treated in the Septuagint. Though Symmachus emphasised the monotheistic quality of God, he shows that the plural pronoun conveyed the fulness of God in reflecting the spirit of the Hebrew text. Instead, the Septuagint extends the sense of fulness also to the creature Adam, and possibly to Eve.

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11 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 297.
through the use the pronoun αὐτούς. Perhaps that reflected more a tradition of the masculo-
feminine, as evidenced by Augustine and others. Symmachus seems keen to differentiate
between the fulness of God and the singularity amongst the multiplicity of the creature. This
also relates to treating plural forms as singular, in an attempt to make a reading less ambiguous
for his audience.

Since, normally conceived, the targum approach is within the Semitic parameters of a
Hebrew-Aramaic linguistic and cultural setting, a Greek Targum, such as that of Symmachus,
presented certain problems. For example, the more Hellenistic metropolitan cultural
environment of those in Caesarea put constraints on the Pentateuchal emphasis on the
wilderness. There also is the added problem of cultural familiarity, because Aramaic speakers
were culturally closer to Hebrew speakers, certain ideas and names could be preserved from
Hebrew into Aramaic targumim due to the common understanding. A Hellenised Jew, or a
possible Greek proselyte, might not be aware of what a proper name in Hebrew actually means,
or maybe unfamiliar with certain customs around the Temple. Should this proper name be
translated literally, or simply transliterated? In Aramaic it could mostly be kept in its original
form, the root spoke for itself so to speak. This was not the case in Greek. More importantly,
however, while there is a certain ease in translating and relaying forms from Hebrew into
Aramaic, it is not the case into Greek. The grammar and syntax differ greatly, as well as being
able to refer to common nounal and verbal roots. In Aramaic renderings of the Hebrew, the
translator can more create the translation in a more facile way, whereas the Greek translator
must find more hermeneutically sound modes of Greek to preserve the intention of the source
text.

12 Serge Cazelais. "La masculoféminité d’Adam: quelques témoins textuels et exégèses chrétiennes anciennes de
In this way, Symmachus offers a unique perspective on a Greek, and even Hellenised, targum. This thesis proposes to pay close attention to Symmachus’s adherence to the Hebrew source text, by means of comparison to the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible. This is so that the rabbinic approach of Targum can be demonstrated in his rendering of the text. This will be compared to that of other translators, namely Aquila, Theodotion and the Septuagint for the Greek, and where possible, Onqelos and other Targumim for insights from the Aramaic rendering of the Hebrew. This will help identify Symmachus’s place within the rabbinic tradition of the time.

**Methodology & Text**

Methodologically, the critical text of Symmachus in the Pentateuch by Salvesen will be employed to consider the attested text of Symmachus vis à vis the aforementioned translators. When required, reference will be made to wider Targumim sources and earlier and his contemporaneous rabbinic counterparts. Close attention to Emanuel Tov will help to gain an understanding of Symmachus within the traditions of his contemporaneous translators. Symmachus’ text will be analysed through Gideon Toury’s Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) and Cameron Boyd-Taylor’s isomorphic approach.\(^\text{13}\) Briefly, DTS allows us to study the governing language constraints and in what ways we can understand them when analysing a translation from a source text to a target text.\(^\text{14}\) An isomorphic approach builds on this, allowing us to see the relationship quantitatively of a target text to its source, through the consistent


decision of the translator to translate specific terms in a specific way. An example of this would be the Hebrew י being rendered as δέ, or how a Greek translator might use definite articles to express the Hebrew accusative marker.\textsuperscript{15} An isomorphic analysis is especially helpful here because it was pioneered for use in Septuagint studies by Boyd-Taylor.

The attested text grouping of Genesis 1:1-5 and Deuteronomy 6:8, 11:18, 29:25, 33:7-8 will be the focus of the analysis. This selection of verses to be examined exegetically for this thesis will highlight the rabbinic emphasis of the translation of Symmachus. As aforementioned, this text selection is taken as a fair representation of rabbinic text that held foundational value for Symmachus’s audience since it represents what is essential to the demands of the Torah and the practical spirituality of the community. In light of that, the problems inherent to such a translation make for a good demonstration of the methodology of Symmachus.

\textbf{Procedure}

Chapter I: Symmachus: History & Rabbinic Methods & Other Translators

- Sitz im Leben and relevant discussion of Symmachus in the context of his contemporaneous translators and those from the rabbinic tradition.

  (i) General historical situation

  (ii) Onqelos

  (iii) Aquila

  (iv) Theodotion

  (v) Rabbis

Chapter II: Comparing the Text of Symmachus

• Presentation of the selected text to that of other translators vis à vis the Masoretic Text through an isomorphic analysis.

  (i) Introduction to textual analysis

  (ii) Genesis 1:1

  (iii) Genesis 1:2

  (iv) Genesis 1:3

  (v) Genesis 1:4

  (vi) Genesis 1:5

  (vii) Deuteronomy 6:8 & Deuteronomy 11:18

  (viii) Deuteronomy 29:25

  (ix) Deuteronomy 33:7

  (x) Deuteronomy 33:8

Chapter III: The Targum of Symmachus

• How Symmachus’s translation constitutes a targum and its relationship to the concept of ‘rewritten scripture’.

Conclusion & Final Thought
Chapter I
Symmachus: History & Rabbinic Methods & Other Translators

(i) General Historical Situation

It is important to first situate Symmachus within the historical range of Second Century translators of the Hebrew Bible. Symmachus held enough literary weight to be included by Origen in his Hexapla. From this inclusion, we can see that he represented a strong enough translation tradition that he had to be reckoned with, and compared to other texts in order understand the meaning of the source text. According to Eusebius of Caesarea, the old Greek translation of Symmachus was used by the Jewish community alongside those of Aquila and Theodotion.16 The use of the Greek translations were not simply for study, but also had liturgical roles. Gerard Norton had asked the question whether one could consider a Greek translation, such as that of Symmachus, to be either a “Greek targum”, or simply a “Tannaitic Septuagint”?17 Although this question will be examined more thoroughly later on in this thesis, it is worthwhile, however, to examine the historical parameters that a possible response to that question demands.

As noted, Symmachus was greatly esteemed by Jerome, but was viewed in suspicion by Eusebius of Caesarea. Jerome says that his translation of the Hebrew Bible is straightforward, and more in keeping with the source text than the Septuagint. Whereas the Septuagint may have

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16 Aramaic Bible: 402.
17 Aramaic Bible: 410.
had other concerns in making a more dynamic translation, Symmachus painstakingly tried to convey the literal meaning of the source text. Ironically, perhaps because of the Christian overtures that Jerome seemed to profit from, this made him suspicious to Eusebius, viewing him as straddling the line two closely between Christianity and Judaism as a supposed adherent of the Ebionite heresy. It seems that it is hard to please everyone.

This could probably be understood in light of the heresies ascribed to Symmachus, as previously seen in the introduction. To recall this previous conversation, Symmachus translated Isaiah 7:13 as “young woman” and translated “servants of God” instead of “sons of God” for Deuteronomy 32:43 and how he rendered Genesis 1:26 by employing the plural pronoun, ἡμῶν, like the Hebrew as opposed to the Septuagint. It is probably for these reasons that he was accused of being associated with the Ebionites and the Symmachians. One could see how these claims could be substantiated, since he was presented as a convert to Judaism, possibly from Christianity. In this way, he could be seen as having an ‘inside’ knowledge of Christianity and would have been able to respond to Christianity in a polemical manner. Or so the charges went.

The Ebionites could be seen as a dangerous counter-weight to the increasingly Hellenised, or even Syriac, forms that Christianity was morphing into while the religion coalesced in the diverse parts of the Mediterranean world. The Ebionites were not only seen as heretical, but also as possible roadblocks to the more pluralistic dimensions that Christianity was taking on in the world. Also, the Ebionites could be seen in a negative light because of their rather distinctive Jewish origins and perceived stress on Jewish identity. This would not sit well with those Christians who seemed to have carried a nascent sense of the so-called ‘blood libel’, or a more benignly, simply a more universal identity. Yet, and more evidenced in his translations of the Bible, Symmachus offered a perspective that did not sit well with some aspects of the
early development of Christian doctrine, such as translation Isaiah 7:14 simply as “a young woman shall give birth”, rather than the Christian emphasis on the virgin aspect of that verse. Symmachus, in this light, would be seen as possibly more dangerous than someone writing in Aramaic because his Greek version was much more accessible to a seemingly vulnerable Christian audience.

Origen, though, was an influence on Eusebius, and so this is only tangential. It is, however, that Eusebius only saw the inclusion of Symmachus in the Hexapla as a sort of cataloging the possibilities, and not as an endorsement. Allison Salvesen, however, pointed out how in fact that Symmachus shared much halakic material with his contemporaries and does stand out as heretical in that regard. Indeed, much of the haggadah material in Symmachus is in a similar manner to that in Onqelos.

Another matter worth considering was the question of distinction between the Jews and Christians. Christians seemed to seek to distinguish themselves from Jews, and yet relied on much of the same material. They both made appeals to the Imperial and local governing authorities in their own right and yet they seemed to share much in common, as indicated by Judith Lieu. To early emperors Christians seemed impious because they seemed to have rejected both the faith of their spiritual Jewish forebears, as well as the imperial cult.

As the usual logic goes, a targum is written in Aramaic. This, however, does not seem to be the last word on the matter, as Salvesen has demonstrated, both in her study of the Greek

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18 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 297.
19 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 263.
of Symmachus but also her work on the Syriac of Ephrem the Syrian. This also something demonstrated by G. Veltri, something that we will consider more later. As Anthony Giambrone pointed out, a Greek targum would respond to the Septuagint and its problematics apropo problems of halakah and law.

(ii) Onqelos

Onqelos is important to consider briefly since he represented a significant targum, and very much a standard one because he wrote in Aramaic. The targum of Onqelos represented a significant translation of the Hebrew Bible for the Jewish community in Babylon. Onqelos was considered to be an authoritative targum and was employed for halakah use.

Halakic content in Onqelos was often worked into the translation of the text. This showed a deep understanding of the Hebrew as well as the Rabbinic concerns about the application and following of the law. Bernard Grossfeld pointed this out concerning Onqelos’ interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:9:

This example is very representative of the conciseness that typifies Targum Onqelos in general when reflecting a Halakha within his translation. The Hebrew reads: ‘You shall inscribe them on the doorposts of your house’. It is rendered by Targum Onqelos as: ‘You should inscribe them on Mezuzot and affix them on the doorposts of

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25 Giambrone: 45.
your house’. It is easy to foresee the consequences of a literal translation in Onqelos had he chosen not to follow the Halakha here. The biblical injunction is so simple that the average individual would simply have inscribed the texts on the stone or wooden doorposts of his house. As this injunction, however, was one aimed at the masses, Onqelos felt compelled to insert, through an economy of words, the correct way of carrying out this commandment as reflected in the Halakha.26

Onqelos’s stress on the proper way to do things may also have reflected the fervour of a convert, since he is presented as being a convert to Judaism from Christianity.27 This passage also demonstrated how Aramaic could easily render the sense of the Hebrew because of the shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds of the languages. The instructional character of the interpretation also points to a Jewish community that may have not been strongly connected to the intricacies of the law and needed better guidance. This would be especially true if the community was diverse and consisted of different converts and even just different Jewish sects that differed on the application and following of the law.

The provenance of Onqelos is debated, however, though much evidenced in Babylonian usage, the halakah tends to reflect Palestinian origins.28 Grossfeld noted that while Onqelos shares much material with Rabbi Ishmael, it is significant the amount he shares with Rabbi Akiba. This association with Rabbi Akiba puts Onqelos very much in line with Aquila. Grossfeld noted that:

In Onqelos, it manifests itself very conspicuously in the fact that several of his interpretations equal those of R. Aqiba—of a total of 153, no less than 19 are expressly attributed to him—the remainder

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28 *Aramaic Bible*: 142.
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probably anonymously so, in the Halakhic Midrashim, not to mention the many parallels to R. Aqiba’s sayings in both Talmudim and the early Aggadic Midrashim. In addition to this is the citation in the Jerusalem Talmud (Qid. 1.1.59a) which draws an association between R. Aqiba and Akylas—‘R. Jose in the name of R. Johanan said: Akylas the Proselyte translated in the presence of R. Aqiba...’ That Onqelos and Aquila/Akylas are the same is agreed upon by consensus.29

This adherence to Akiba certainly begs the question of Onqelos’s relationship or identity with Aquila.30 It is, however, beyond the scope of this present thesis to address this question adequately. What is relevant here, though, is how both Onqelos and Aquila adhered to the school of Akiba. This demonstrates a commonality between Greek and Aramaic targumic concerns in translations. Onqelos was not only translating the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic, he was resolving problems and providing guidance in the way of the law.

(iii) Aquila

As previously mentioned, Aquila’s translation of the Hebrew Bible stemmed from the school of Akiba. Like Onqelos, Aquila was trying to present the scriptures in such a way that those removed from a Hebrew linguistic context could properly observe the law and apply it in their lives. Aquila has generally been considered to be merely a translation and not meriting status because it was in Greek. Jenny R. Labendz, much more recently, went further, and provided a dubium about whether or not Aquila even enjoyed esteem amongst his confrères and only really served as a sort of dictionary to be employed in times of confusion.31 This certainly

29 Grossfeld: 243.
30 Smelik: 452.
would mean that Aquila’s translation does not constitute a Targum, seemingly in keeping with those like Liebreich. She dealt with the praise of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yoshua, “you are the fairest of the children of men”, as being an anomaly and as being not related to any targumic activity on his behalf. She argued that targum-like activity does not equate to actual Targum, because it is beholden upon a positive reception from rabbinic circles. Labendz’s argument, while substantial, does not seem to be in accord with the aforementioned traditions and even the contribution of Veltri and Smelik, amongst others.

The thrust of Labendz’s argument seems to rest upon the ‘outsider’ status that Aquila the Proselyte would have endured. Labendz downplayed the importance of the use of the verb תרגמ, seeming to ignore the previous conversation about the importance of the use of that verb for legitimacy in the Targum tradition, or in the Palestinian tendency to employ אמר and the Babylonian tendency of תרגמ. Labendz did not even consider Onqelos in her consideration, perhaps following in a very strict critical textual methodology.

Anthony Giambrone and Smelik also offer more positive appraisals than Labendz. Giambrone stressed Rabbi Akiba’s influence on Aquila’s targumic activity and situated Aquila within the circle of rabbinic method for Targum. He dismissed Labendz’s removal of Aquila from the rabbinic circle of Targum, though he distances himself from an Onqelos connexion and instead focuses on the two editions hypothesis of Aquila. Giambrone rightly pointed out that

32 Labendz: 355/6.
33 Labendz: 371.
34 Labendz: 355.
35 Labendz: 367.
36 Smelik: 399.
37 Giambrone: 24.
38 Giambrone: 26.
the very scale of Aquila’s project pointed to his authoritative status within the targumic traditions. Any awkwardness of the Greek of an Aquila Targum would point to the greater importance placed on adherence to the interpretation of Akiba, than to an elegant Greek composition. It is interesting that while Giambrone pointed out the Babylonian tradition of Onqelos receiving his Targum from “the mouth of Eliezer and Joshua” Labendz had only presented this in light of Aquila, and certainly not as Targum.

Giambrone’s analysis of the language of Aquila is helpful, showing how he was making what was unclear in the Septuagint more apparent. Indeed, here Giambrone offered a characteristic for understanding what constitutes a Greek Targum, namely responding to the Septuagint. The Septuagint presented certain halakah problems, while Aquila’s relation to both the Hebrew text and Aramaic targums was instrumental in making matters much more evident. He also pointed out the different attention given to Aquila’s Targum, namely that, for example Aquila (Greek) translated..., תרגם, while someone else, like Rabbi Simai (Aramaic) said... אמר. This seems to be in accordance with the distinction made earlier between the stress on the literality of Greek and the orality of Aramaic. If so, this weakens the argument that the use of תרגם with regards to Aquila is insignificant.

Giambrone, however, like Smelik, found it implausible to associate Onqelos with Aquila further than merely seeing them as being associated post factum as means of extending authority
to Targum Onqelos in the Babylonian context. While this does not outright dismiss a relationship of somewhat, if only tangential, dependence, it does not rest upon any consideration of two projects of a single translator, or even at least a single tradition. While this might be the case, it is important to test the hypothesis of Silverstone that Aquila and Onqelos constitute a single author, or at least a single tradition. The question of a single tradition might be more appropriate than that of a single author, though it does not rule out the latter. It seems that Aquila the Proselyte had a certain missionary zeal, and what would prevent him, or his tradition, having the same targumic concern for the Babylonian Jews as he, or his tradition, had for those of Palestine?

An Aramaic targum was considered normative in scholarship, however targum is not limited to Aramaic. The Jewish community of the Late Antiquity Greco-Roman world held Aquila’s Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures in great esteem. An often cited, though controversial, to be seen why later, was the praise rendered to Aquila by Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Joshua:

It is taught (in the Mishnah): Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Scripture was only permitted to be written in Greek (or Hebrew). They investigated and found that the Torah is able to be sufficiently translated only into Greek. A barbarian (or watchman) “took out” for them the Latin from the Greek. (Said) R. Yirmiyah (early-fourth century) in the name of R. Hiyya bar Ba (late-third century): Aquila the proselyte translated the Torah before R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, and they praised him, saying to him “You are fairer than the children of men” (Ps 45:3).

The rabbinic homage given to Aquila shows the reverence that his Greek translation held in the Jewish community of his time. Indeed, Greek had only become acceptable as a language to

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44 Giambrone: 45.
convey matters of Jewish scripture and law, though Aquila’s strong translation may have helped this gradual acceptance. It is said that the R. Levi bar Hita once came to Caesarea and was so aghast to hear the Shema recited in a synagogue in the Greek language that he tore his clothes.46

(iv) Theodotion

It is difficult to historically date Theodotion, but Dominic Barthélemy surmised that he must have translated quite early, around the year 57 CE, due to his independence of place vis à vis the other Greek translators.47 Theodotion was viewed with suspicion by Christian commentators to his apparent use of the Hebrew Bible to rebut Christian claims.48 Irenaeus cited him, along with Aquila, as contributing to a heretical interpretation by promoting ‘young woman’ in the place of ‘virgin’ (Adversus haereses, III, 21, 1).

Like Aquila, Theodotion was presented as a disgruntled Jewish convert from Christianity who wanted to translate the Hebrew Bible in such a way that refuted Christian claims. Theodotion was incredibly fastidious in maintaining a Jewish theological approach to the Hebrew Bible in his Greek translation. A clear example of this was how he treated the Tetragrammaton. Rather than translating it as Κυρίος ο θεός, as in the more normal and usual manner, he instead did not translate but transliterated the liturgical Hebrew and Aramaic targumic rendering of it in the formula of αδωναί κυρίος. This technique maintained the position that the Divine Name was sacrosanct and unique no matter where it was written. It also

46 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 297.
48 Barthélemy: 146.
promoted a view that further distanced the Christian notion of the incarnation from the Hebrew Bible.

(v) Rabbis

While there was a reluctance to translate religious texts in Roman Egypt\textsuperscript{49}, there developed a position elsewhere, following Rabban Shimon b. Gamaliel, that Greek enjoyed a status that allowed translation.\textsuperscript{50} This based upon the view that Greek was one of the languages spoken in the tents of Shem, and could be hence traced back to the holy tongue, or temple tongue, of Adam.\textsuperscript{51} Furthermore, this was no ordinary Greek, but it was a semiticised Greek that differentiated itself from the Greek of Pagans and Christians.

Sacha Stern masterfully presented an approach to understanding time in Ancient Judaism as something more than being merely reified.\textsuperscript{52} He pointed out that zeman in early rabbinic Judaism meant not ‘time’, but rather a ‘point in time.’ He held that time was implicit for Ancient Judaism, and was expressed in festivals, calendars, and so forth. He wrote that:

The centrality of time in rabbinic halakah (law), or of calendar reckoning in Qumran literature (for example), suggests a high level of interest in astronomical and other processes, but not the underlying, synthetic abstraction which we call ‘time’; or ‘time-dimension.’\textsuperscript{53}

Indeed, time in this sense is more about being present, or a sense of being available or actively re-membering, than it is about time as a delineated thing. This is something seen in Qumran and

\textsuperscript{49} Smelik: 39.
\textsuperscript{50} Smelik: 28.
\textsuperscript{51} Smelik: 45.
\textsuperscript{53} Stern: 4.
its related literature, with the emphasis on celebrating the festivals appropriately, or the strict adherence to the rhythm of the Sabbaths.

It is, however, important to remember that Ancient Judaism was not monolithic, but rather pluriform in its expression. The present day concept of time is not modern, but according to Stern, goes back to the Greeks. This assertion might be true, it is, however, important to recall that the Ancient Greeks were not monolithic either, and that the sense of time in the Homeric odes is much different from that of the Oresteia. What is apropos here, though, is that a reified concept of time existed amongst those who were Hellenised, and many such persons in Second Temple Judaism would not have been immune.\textsuperscript{54} Jewish culture of the time was made of many different groups — Essenes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots and Samaritans to name just a few — and it would be difficult to isolate acutely their respective theological stands concerning time.

Josephus wrote about “time going forward” (Antiquities I.7,I, etc), conveying a more characteristic Hellenised sense of the discrete reification of time.\textsuperscript{55} Josephus, not to offer a moral estimation, was an individual who bridged cultures. In his own cosmopolitan way, he was offering something that was worthwhile to his audience, namely, an appraisal of Jewish ‘history’ in a way that foreigners could understand it.

So, while a so-called Hellenised concept of time was current in Ancient Judaism, it did, however, have its limits. Whereas Jewish-Hellenistic literature used time, it is almost completed

\textsuperscript{54} Stern: 90-1.
\textsuperscript{55} Stern: 101.
unvalidated in literature of the Hebrew-Aramaic milieu. In relation to Jewish religious writing at the time, Stern asserted that:

Here we find that although the Jews were not immune to Hellenistic influence — not surprising as they were writing in Greek — their apparently infrequent use of the Greek concept of time reveals a fundamentally different cultural background that to some extent they were unwilling, or unable, to shed.

This is not surprising since the authority of their writing would be derived from a Hebrew theological source, and they would want to have been seen as free from foreign accretions. This applies even when they were writing in Greek, something that we also see in Symmachus. It is possible to convey the ideas in the Greek language, however it a Hebrew spirit — so to speak — that imbues the meaning.

The authors of the Septuagint significantly used other Greek words for time over Χρόνος, and instead used Χρόνος to indicate זָמַן (zeman), or a point in time. Instead of the contemporaneous Greek expression ‘time having gone by’, I Maccabees expressed it ‘after these things’ (5:37, 7:33). This is much more similar to the Hebrew Bible, with הָאֵלֶּה הַדְּבָרִים אַחַר in Genesis 15:1 or Esther 2:1. In 1 Maccabees 11:40, instead of the common Greek expression, ‘he spent time’, it was rendered ‘he stayed there many days.’ From this, the spiritual sense of Biblical Hebrew trumped the employment of common Greek words and expressions available. Perhaps this was somewhat anachronistic, but from a Targum perspective, lifted out of a Semitic milieu and into a Hellenistic one, it allowed for the original spirit of the authors to be continued.

Stern: 98.
Stern: 99.
Stern: 99.
Respectively, μετὰ δὲ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα and the even more Hebrew imitating, καὶ μετὰ τοὺς λόγους τούτους.
Going beyond merely translations, this sense of Targum and re-written scripture, had to meet the demands that greater cultural dissimilarity presented.

Aramaic, however, was a language also that represented a formidable audience, Jewish populations existed to the east in Babylon, and elsewhere, and were in need of sound biblical translations. Aquila and Onqelos were considered as translations both worthy of attestation by Rav Yoseph. There was a differentiation between the orality of Aramaic, and the literality of Greek. It was often stated by the Rabbis that a translation was ‘said’ in Aramaic, but ‘written’ in Greek. This most likely had to do with the more simple status of Aramaic as a paraphrase of Hebrew, and as an indication to the high literary sophistication of Greek and its more marked distance from Hebrew. Rav Yoseph, however, used תרגם to refer to both the Aramaic of Onqelos and the Greek of Aquila. It would be rendered as “Rav Yoseph translates...”, when the translation is of Rav Yoseph. Onqelos was rendered “as we translate...” and Aquila was rendered as “Aquila translated...”. The orality of the Aramaic of Onqelos was preserved by conveying it in the present tense, but the literality of the Greek of Aquila was expressed through the past tense. In Aramaic renderings of the Hebrew, the translator can render and shape the translation in a more facile way, whereas the Greek translator must find more hermeneutically sound modes of Greek to preserve the intention of the source text. This distinction between Aramaic and Greek, however, may have represented more a desire than a reality. Namely, that what the Rabbis said was what how they wished the situation was, rather than the stark reality.

60 Smelik: 329.
63 Smelik: 332.
64 See, for example, Hayin Lapin. Rabbis as Romans: The Rabbinic Movement in Palestine 100-400 CE (Oxford: OUP, 2012), especially the second chapter.
not an unusual matter historically, the way that one presents oneself often entails how one wishes how they were perceived.

Symmachus is best compared with Aquila, Theodotion and the Septuagint, if one admits that there was a Greek targum tradition of a kind. A Greek targum would respond to the problematic of the Septuagint, something witnessed in both Aquila and Symmachus. Katrin Hauspie noted that both Aquila and Symmachus tried to render the Hebrew in a close Greek translation, however, Aquila was more likely to allow clumsy Greek if it more preserved the spirit of the Hebrew. Hauspie noted that:

The translation of Symmachus, too, was intended to bring the Greek text closer to the Hebrew, but in a different way. Symmachus avoided “hebraisms”, or constructions in which the Hebrew text became transparent; he preferred good idiomatic Greek above calques from the Hebrew. He merely dug up existing rare words; his text abounds in *hapax legomena* as far as the Bible is concerned. These words are common in writers of his time, and often only there Symmachus, while making his translation, was really concerned with his Greek reader (by use of variation, more idiomatic Greek).

Symmachus had a more elegant Greek translation than that of Aquila. Whereas Aquila was influenced by Rabbi Akiba and sought to maintain a clear Hebrew Spirit, Symmachus seemed rather to wanting to demonstrate that the Scriptures could be rendered in a clear and erudite Greek. This would make sense in a cosmopolitan centre like Caesarea, where there was a great stress on Greek language oratory and poetry. Aquila’s Greek could be seen as a sort of ‘in house’ translation, whereas Symmachus’s Greek was ‘for show’, so to speak.

Symmachus preferred a more sophisticated Greek rendering of the Hebrew, however this did not prevent him from translating words more closely to the Hebrew than the Septuagint did.

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at times. Indeed, in this sense he was closer to Aquila, yet, at the same time not going to the same speculative imagination that Aquila sometimes employed. An example of this is how Aquila in almost strange ways rendered the Hebrew into the Greek. He seemed to treat the Greek text as something that had to be read alongside the Hebrew, much like the interlinear Aramaic-Hebrew translation of Onqelos. As Smelik pointed out:

Aquila sometimes interprets Hebrew words as if they were Greek or Aramaic. Thus the word יָדָר in Lev. 23.40 is interpreted as ὕδωρ (= ὀδόρ) ‘water’. The hermeneutic strategy of rendering a Hebrew word by a similar sounding word in Greek would seem to agree with what is known about the Hexaplaric Aquila, and is well-attested in rabbinic literature in general; the same strategy may underly the translation of Est. 1.6 in Est. R. 2.7. The authenticity of this reading is not beyond doubt: the Hexapla elsewhere equates יָדָר to διαπρέπεια ‘glory’, a literal translation. Either we must assume that Aquila, like TgOnq, sometimes substitutes the aggadic for the literal equivalent, or this is a rabbinic ad-hoc translation, unrelated to the version of Aquila.

Not only does this show a text dependent upon rabbinic tradition about the Hebrew Bible, but it also points to a strong appreciation of the weight of an Aramaic translation. By relating his Targum to the wider Hebrew-Aramaic traditions, Aquila forged a space for a Greek interloper with rabbinic Targum methods. Indeed, this related the Targum of Aquila much closer to the more metaphorical Targum Onqelos than that of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan or Targum Neofiti.

Symmachus also was responding to the Septuagint in ways that Aquila was not. Whereas Aquila had a more explicitly targumic response to the Septuagint, such as seen above, Symmachus wanted his Greek translation to more suite the Hebrew in places were the translators of the Septuagint did not. Both the Septuagint and Symmachus can be seen as

66 Smelik: 185.
67 Smelik: 390.
68 Smelik: 387.
targumic as well, but within their proper context. It is not relevant to say anything about the Septuagint on this matter here, however, the translation choices of Symmachus in his version do indicate targumic method. More will be said about this in the chapter concerning targum and Symmachus. Hauspie pointed out this phenomenon with Symmachus:

In Christian circles Symmachus was more appreciated than Aquila. The function of the Hebrew to address a specific notion of a Greek word, is less active in Symmachus than in Aquila. Mostly the lexical choices of Symmachus are in agreement with the Hebrew word, and the meaning of the Greek word arises from the components and formation of the Greek word itself. Eg. υμνοσωμαι in Ps 55:11 (56:11), expresses the same as the piel of ללה to praise; also the Septuagint has the same meaning of αινεω: the same can be said of χαροσωμαι in Ps 20:7 (21:7), for the Hebrew פופי, and the Septuagint ευψραινω. In some cases Symmachus has a translation which is in accordance with the Hebrew, in opposition to the text of the Septuagint. Eg. Βορατον juniper tree in Ps 103:17 (104:17), Hebrew ברושׁ juniper tree, Septuagint ηγειται. And γαληνη calm sea in Ps 106:29 (107:29), Hebrew דממה (the calm, in fact in this case it refers to the sea). Septuagint αυρα breeze. But in all these cases, we do not need the Hebrew to understand the Greek.69

The adherence of Symmachus to the Hebrew reflects a targumic interest in conveying the Hebrew spirit, while at the same time avoiding hebraisms. This was accomplished by formally translating Hebrew words, so that their original sense was preserved, but at the same time allowing the Greek translation to stand on its own. In this way, the translation of Symmachus stood as a targumic response to the Septuagint. Aquila’s translation grew in popularity with the Jewish community partly because of its targumic play with the Hebrew-Aramaic traditions, while Symmachus served the Christians well because of their more independent approach to the scriptures. Symmachus gave Christians access to the Hebrew Bible in a way that neither Aquila nor the Septuagint did.

69 Hauspie: 175.
We must recall however, that Symmachus was Jewish and his intention was to serve the Jewish community with a Greek translation. He may have wanted to appeal to possible converts as well, from within the ranks of the educated Gentiles of Caesarea. His appropriation by Christians ought to be seen as something *post factum* to his Jewish targumic activity.
Chapter II

Comparing the Text of Symmachus

The text selected for analysis consists of a considerable amount of verses from Deuteronomy. They are: Deuteronomy 4:12, 19; 6:8; 11:18; 32:31, 34, 7 & 27. In addition, Numbers 15:37 is included. The reason for this text selection is to see how Symmachus systematically treated a corpus of work, namely Deuteronomy. This is to ascertain a consistency in approach by Symmachus. As well, Deuteronomy serves as an important source of halakah and can be seen to be vital to the observance and application of the law within Symmachus’s target community. The translating such important halakic material from Hebrew into elegant Greek certainly presented important challenges. Halakah will be treated more in depth when it comes to Deuteronomy, but first Genesis is examined to see what sort of ‘preliminary’ language decisions were made by Symmachus in comparison to the other authors examined here. Please note that all translations are my own unless other stated.

The text selected is thanks to the diligent collation and analysis by Salvesen. She compared the Pentateuchal text to other translations, grouping them according to type. She divided the text according to these lines:

The Septuagint (early Hellenistic Judaism);

Theodotion and the κατε Recension (First Century Palestinian Judaism);

Aquila (Tannaitic Judaism – Mid Second Century);

The Vulgate (Western Christianity – Late Fourth Century);
Jewish Targumim (Rabbinic Judaism), including Onqelos, Pseudo Jonathan and the Palestinian traditions of Neofiti, the Fragment Targumim and the Geniza Fragments;

The Samaritan Pentateuch and Targumim (Samaritanism); and,

The Peshitta (Eastern Christianity, with Jewish roots).

Salvesen pointed out that by no means were these translations fully independent of one another. She noted that the Peshitta, though Christian, contained midrashic material, perhaps attributed to Jewish-Christian translators. The same with the Vulgate, something mostly likely arising from the influence of Jerome’s Jewish teachers. The Septuagint, though Jewish in origin, was quickly appropriated by Christians who applied their interpretation of it and formed an approach to the text that would last centuries. As well, the SamA contained notable traces of Onqelos. One should not forget, in addition, that there is a possible relationship between Aquila and Onqelos, not to mention the task of Greek targumim to respond to the Septuagint. Salvesen is followed here for her methodological approach, but this analysis is not limited to her considerable opus. She will be cited whenever it is advantageous to our project.

For the purpose at hand, the Greek translations are the most relevant, namely the Septuagint, Theodition and Aquila, since Symmachus was working in Greek. The Greek translations, as indicated earlier, presented their own challenges and had to be more deliberate than the Aramaic. Important decisions had to be made about how to convey the meaning of the text in a rather alien context both linguistically and culturally. An example of this would be how curiously the Septuagint translated צלם, ‘image’, and דמות, ‘likeness’. In Genesis 1:26 צלום becomes εικονα, ‘image’, and דמות becomes οµοιωσιν, ‘likeness’ or ‘similitude’. In Genesis 1:27, the first צלום is once again εικονα, however, the second one is dropped altogether. In
Genesis 5:1 there is a change, with דמות becoming εικόνα. Further, in Genesis 5:3, צלם once again becomes εικόνα, but דמות becomes the curious ιδεαν.

Genesis 1:26

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ποιήσωμεν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα ἡμετέραν καὶ καθ’ ὀμοίωσιν καὶ ἀρχέτωσαν τῶν ἱερῶν τῆς θαλάσσης καὶ τῶν πετεινῶν τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῶν κτηνῶν καὶ πάσης τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐρπετῶν τῶν ἐρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.

Genesis 1:27

καὶ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς.

Genesis 5:1

αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἄνθρωπων ἦ ἡμέρα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἀδαμ κατ’ εἰκόνα θεοῦ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν.

Genesis 5:3

ἐξῆσεν δὲ Ἀδαμ διακόσια καὶ τριάκοντα ἑτη καὶ ἐγέννησεν κατὰ τὴν ἱδέαν αὐτοῦ καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰκόνα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπωνόμασεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Σηθ.

These curious translation decisions point to the more Hellenistic approach of the Septuagint,
while trying to make sense of the matters in Greek. Yet, it shows that the Septuagint took liberty to change the translation and not adhering to a consistent representation of the source Hebrew text. Symmachus, on the other hand, consistently translated צלם as εἰκόν and דמות as ομοιωσίν.

In Genesis 1:26-27, Aquila and Theodotion, much more strictly relating to the Hebrew source text and rabbinic traditions or directions, made sure to translate εἰκόν in the dative, to preserve the sense of divine agency and the receiving aspect of the human subject. The image of the human subject was shown to be much more clearly dependent on the divine.

The Aramaic translations of this, as well as the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate are also much more in accordance with the Hebrew and the other Greek texts than is the Septuagint. The Aramaic translations had either the privilege of using shared root words, or at least having an audience more familiar with the Hebrew original meaning or use of the words. The Latin translations were also more consistent due to their relationship with the Hebrew as a source, especially the Vulgate.

Interestingly enough is the case of Deuteronomy 4:12, “Then the Lord spoke to you out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but saw no form; there was only a voice.”

It offers an opportunity for the Greek translator to employ the word ομοιωσίν, or some derivative of ‘similitude’ or ‘form’, and yet the way translators respond is not so predictable. The Hebrew word דמות, ‘similitude’, is translated by the Aramaic word דרים in Onqelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and SamJ. In the Peshitta, it is translated as דמותא. In the Vulgate the word is translated as formam, ‘form’. The Septuagint translated it as ομοιωμα, ‘effigy’. Symmachus, on the other hand, translated it as μορφην, or something either fashioned, moulded or shaped. The
Aramaic and Peshitta translations of Deuteronomy 5:12 seemed to rely on the Hebrew sense of דמות in the earlier Genesis verses, whereas Jerome follows more of a sense of דמות with formam. Symmachus, it seems, by employing μορφὴν, was trying to stress the distance between what can be made by the divine and what could be made by humankind, as well as preserving the uniqueness of the word here and not borrowing from Genesis. This also seems like a targumic concern, since it was a dynamic translation decision by Symmachus to explain what this was to his audience rather than simply reproduce an approximation of the original word, and instead conveyed the spirit of it in a new context.

**Genesis 1:1**

בראשית ברא אלהים את השמיים ואת הארץ.

LXX ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν.

In order to understand properly a biblical translator’s approach, it is important to see how the translator lays out their direction from the very beginning of the Pentateuch, namely Genesis. The translation decisions made in Genesis ought to influence how the translator proceeds. We have already seen this with the curious approach of the Septuagint in translating ‘image’ and ‘likeness’ or ‘similitude’. While this might seem like a departure from the source, Eugene Ulrich pointed out that the Septuagint does seem faithful to a Hebrew vorlage, just one that we are only beginning to appreciate more and more. In this way the Septuagint is not a paraphrase, but rather some constitutive or formative as an accepted expression of the narrative. Unfortunately, all we have on this verse from Symmachus is fragmentary evidence; however, it

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70 A lot could be said about the Septuagint’s translation decisions, especially if one does not see it as merely an alternative translation to the Masoretic Text, but in fact representing an historic tradition or different source.

is telling about his translation technique.

Aquila, sacrificing Greek convention in the name of keeping to the approach of Aqiba, translated the verse thus:

Ἐν κεφαλαίῳ ἔκτισεν ὁ Θεὸς σὺν τὸν οὐρανόν (καὶ) σὺν τὴν γῆν.

The employment of κεφαλαίῳ makes Aquila’s translation much more in the style of the בְּרָאָשִׁי of the Hebrew, and the translations of the Samaritan Pentateuch. Symmachus, instead, began the verse with the construction of Ἐν ἀρχῇ, like the Septuagint and also Theodotion. This is also a similar translation decision of that of Onqelos (בָּקַדמִין) and the Samaritan Targum (בַּכַדמָא). This is also similar to the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate, with both introducing the verse with “In principio...”. It should be noted, however, that Symmachus did not often render the Hebrew ב with εν, however, to do so here makes syntactic sense. His translation style differed greatly from the καιγε recensions and their imitation through Greek of the Hebrew particles and other points of style.

Though this is all what is extant of Symmachus on Genesis 1:1, one can expect that he did not try to render the הָנ accusative marker with the Greek σὺν, since this was a feature of Aquila that broke with Greek grammatical convention and was meant to express the fulness of creation in a uniquely Semitic sense. The Aramaic targumim likeness expressed this הָנ as הַנ, but this was something more in keeping with the relationship of Aramaic to Hebrew. Symmachus would not have done this because it would go against his project of making an elegant Greek translation of the Hebrew.

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72 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 229.
Genesis 1:2

The two rivers flowed under the open sky where God was present and the spirit of God swept over the face of the deep.

LXX: ή δε γη ήν ἀόρατος και ἀκατασκεύαστος, και σκότος ἐπάνω της ἀβύσσου· και πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος.

Here we have more evidence of what Symmachus translated than Genesis 1:1.

Symmachus translated Genesis 1:2 as:

η δε γη εγενετο αργον και αδιακριτον. ... και πνευμα Θεου επιφερομενον επι προσωπον υδατων.

Whereas the Septuagint employs the verb ἦν, the third person imperfect indicative of εἰμι, ‘to be’, Symmachus chose the much more impersonal εγενετο, the third person aorist middle indicative of γινομαι, ‘to become’. When he translated the first part of the verses as η δε γη εγενετο αργον και αδιακριτον, it could rendered as ‘the earth’s being (εγενετο) was gaseous (αργον) and nondescript (αδιακριτον).’ This is a different explanatory approach than that of the ‘earth’ was (ήν) invisible (ἀόρατος) and unfashioned/unprepared (αδιακριτον) of the Septuagint.

While both are translations that deepen the explanation of what the poetic phrase ‘formless and void’ (ובהו תוהו) means, they do so in different ways. Pieter Van Der Horst argued that ἀόρατος does not actually mean ‘invisible’, but rather a synonym of δυσόρατος, “ill to look on, unsightly.” This, he pointed out, is the sense of the meaning in II Maccabees 9:5, with ‘hideous blow’ seemingly to make more sense than ‘invisible blow’:

ο δε παντεπόπτης κύριος ο θεος του Ισραηλ ἐπάταξεν αυτον ἀνιάτω και ἀοράτω πληγη άρτι δε αυτου καταλήξαντος τον λόγον ἔλαβεν αυτον ἀνήκεστο τον σπλάγχνων ἄλγηδων και πικραι

As Van der Horst pointed out, the words must be seen in their context and it is important to start with the primal meaning. It is, however, difficult to ascertain the veracity of this in definite manner. For example in Isaiah 45:3, the Hebrew Masoretic Text reads:

Yet, however, this is rendered into the Greek of the Septuagint as:

The Hebrew word תרנופ, ‘treasures’, does not have a negative sense, it is something valuable and sought after. The ‘darkness’ implies hiddenness and the unseen. In this way, Isaiah 45:3 is more in accordance with the uses of ἀόρατος in the pseudo/Pauline corpus of the New Testament, notably Colossians 1:15-16; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:27 and Romans 1:20. These verses are more in the spirit of the Septuagint sense of ἀόρατος in Isaiah 45:3 than they would be of Van der Horst’s translation of Septuagint Genesis 1:2 or II Maccabees 9:5.

Variations of מטמון, ‘hidden treasures’, also appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls. In 4Q213, 4Q214 (AramaicLevi) and the Cairo Geniza Testament of Levi, it is written about the sons of darkness that they למן מטמון מטמוריה ואלא יலע תרני, ‘they cannot steal the [hidden] treasures [of wisdom] and see’ (4Q214:2). In 4Q387a (Pseudo-Moses), the word מטמון of Isaiah 45:3 is used in the ninth verse of the third fragment, והניך מטמון, ‘my face shall be hidden’, in the context of seemingly divine displeasure at the disobedience of Israel.

Howard Jacobson wrote that Chalcidius claimed that Origen translatedause Terra autem stupida quadam erat admiratione, ‘the earth was stunned with
amazement’ (In Timaeum 276). Jacobson noted that Chalcedius asserted this in the context of presenting the translations of Symmachus, Aquila and the Septuagint. Jacobson observed that:

The key here is to recognize that Origen’s version is dependent on the original (i.e. Hebrew: in exemplari) text of Gen. 1:2 and on its exegesis by Jewish Hebrew and Aramaic commentators. There are three reasons for so believing. First, Origen has his information from Jews (ab Hebraeis). Second, while וָהָ and וָבָה is usually understood as descriptive of the earth’s material condition (e.g. invisibilis et incompta, inanis et nihil, otiosum quid confusumque et inordinatum; all quoted earlier by Chalcidius), some Jewish exegetes personified the Earth and took the phraseology to describe an emotional response. So too is Origen’s stupida admiratione (‘stunned with amazement’). Third, the nature of this Jewish response is grounded in the exegete’s taking the strange phrase as based on Aramaic roots והָ and בַּהַר. He noted that there is a parallel in Genesis Rabba 2:2, with the personification of the earth. This is also something that seems to be targumic, in accordance with Targum Neofiti. The Aramaic root of והָ is also in Daniel 3:24, connoting the astonishment of the King when he saw the men in the furnace not being consumed by the fiery flames:

This sense of astonishment, or alarm, expressed through the Aramaic is echoed in the Septuagint translation of this verse:

καὶ περιπατοῦν ἐν μέσῳ τῆς φλογὸς ὑμνοῦντες τὸν θεὸν καὶ εὐλογοῦντες τὸν κύριον καὶ Ὁσαυχοδονοσορ ἡκουσέν ὑμνοῦντος αὐτῶν καὶ ἐθαύμασεν καὶ ἐξανέστη ἐν σπουδῇ καὶ εἶπεν


75 Jacobson: 181.

76 Jacobson: 182.
τοῖς μεγιστάσιν αὐτοῦ οὐχί ἄνδρας τρεῖς ἐβάλομεν εἰς μέσον τοῦ πυρὸς πεπεδημένους καὶ εἶπαν τῷ βασιλεὶ ἀληθῶς βασιλεῖ.

The Greek text use of ἐθαύμασεν, ‘to marvel’ or ‘to wonder’, to convey the Aramaic רַחַם gives credence to the interpretation of Genesis 1:2 asserted to be that of Origen. When applied to Genesis 1:2 it gives the sense of the earth being in awe of its creator and the very creation that the earth is part. This targumic approach to explaining not just what was, and also how it was in the beginning. The sense of the earth sitting stunned in complete amazement emphasises the incredible power of the Divine and the sole monolithic power of the Divine agency. This interpretation would account for the differences between the Septuagint and Symmachus on this point. The Septuagint wanted to present the creation of the world along the lines that could be appreciated in a metaphysical-type understanding of formlessness and the void. Symmachus, on the other hand, but just as Hellenistic, was appealing to a presentation that was more about natural sciences, an gassy amorphous thing.

Both Theodotion and Aquila simply translated this as basically ‘the earth was empty and nothing’.

The dependent clause of הָוָסִר עַל פְּנֵי הָהוֹם of Genesis 1:2 is missing from Symmachus. In the Septuagint conveyed it as καὶ σκότος ἐπάνω τῆς ἀβύσσου, ‘and darkness (completely) covered the abyss’. In both Aquila and Theodotion they translated it as καὶ σκοτος επι προσωπον αβυσσου, ‘and darkness upon the (of an) abyss’. This Greek translation, doing Semitic gymnastics so to speak, without a verb or definite articles, is more like the Hebrew and the Aramaic Onqelos and Samaritan targumim. The Vetus Latina, et tenebrae erant super abyssum, is more like the Septuagint, whereas Jerome’s Vulgate followed a more semitic approach with et
tenebrae super faciem abyssi, emphasising the ‘face of an/the abyss’. The uses of προσωπον and faciem to convey פנים are an interesting way to, respectively use the Greek and the Latin in a uniquely biblical manner. It is most likely that the missing text of Symmachus would not have done this, and instead would have been translated more along the conventional grammatical lines of the Septuagint, though it is difficult to hazard an assumption about what word choice he would have made, at least at this point.

The Greek word ἄβυσσος and the Latin word abyssus, ‘abyss’, come from the character of Apsu in the Babylonian creation story of the Enuma Elish. Apsu is more than just water, he was a character. It is quite possible that Aquila, Theodotion and Jerome were maintaining a sort of rabbinic polemic against the Babylonian creation story that the biblical creation narrative is set against. Thus, the creation story in their translations would relate the acts of creation to the taming of chaos and other competitive world-views, such as the Babylonian.

The final part of the verse, והמים פני על מרחפת אלהים ורוח, which in the Septuagint is rendered καὶ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπεφέρετο ἐπάνω τοῦ ūdɔtɔς, is intact in the translation evidence of Symmachus. The Septuagint’s translation mirrors the previous clause with its use of verbs and a definite article, ‘and a spirit of God was brought (or floated) upon the water. The verb ἐπεφέρετο (indicative, imperfect, middle, third person, singular of ἐπιφέρω) is also used in Genesis 7:18, translating the Hebrew verse:

וַיָּבֶּרֶו הָמָּיִם וַיַּרְבּוּ הָאָרֶץ וְהָאָרֶץ וַיְגִבְרוּ הָמָּיִם

with the a Greek curiously reminiscent of Genesis 1:2:

καὶ ἐπεκράτει τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ ἐπληθύνετο σφόδρα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐπεφέρετο ἡ κιβωτὸς ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος.

Instead of having the Ark, ‘going upon the face of the waters’, the Septuagint has the ‘wooden box was brought (or floated) upon the water.’ This word choice reflects the sense of Genesis 1:2, giving the Ark a more passive passage. According to Marguerite Harl, it is also an allusion to the κιβωτὸς that carries the infant Moses in the Septuagint version of Exodus 2:3. In this way, the Septuagint seems to convey somewhat of a messianic preparation from the beginning of time. To use ἐπεφέρετο to translate מרחפת in Genesis 1:2 relates to the Aramaic translations of ממותם in Onqelos and the Samaritan Targum. Onqelos translated it as ‘and the spirit from before יי blew upon the face of the waters’, and the Samaritan Targum has ‘and the spirit of Elaha blew upon the face of the waters.’ These translations, however, give the spirit of the divine more agency than does the Hebrew or the Septuagint. The Jerusalem called this ‘the spirit of mercies from before the Lord breathed upon the waters.’ This is also the case with Targum Neofiti.

Aquila translated it as καὶ πνεῦμα Θεοῦ ἐπιφερομένον επὶ προσωπὸν υδάτων, ‘and a spirit of God was being brought the face of the waters.’ Aquila seems to imply that it is God who makes God’s spirit move upon the face of the waters, rather than extending agency to the spirit of God itself. Theodotion has a much similar approach, however, and unexpectedly because of his usual adherence to the Hebrew sense, the water is singular and not plural over which the spirit of God is being brought.

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Symmachus translated this last part identically to Aquila, both probably have made a targumic decision to provide insight from the Aramaic targumim traditions that use variations of מָנָשָׁבָה or מָנָשָׁבֶּה, ‘being moved (about)’. The translation of Symmachus, and of Aquila, most likely meant to convey the rabbinic details about how the spirit of God was over the water, as a sort of reflection of oral torah. While Aquila did not have qualms about breaking the linguistic conventions of the Greek language if it meant conveying something he deemed important from the Hebrew and the traditions around the text, Symmachus was much less prone to do this. In this context, that last part of the verse should be seen then as something suitably conveyed in its fullest meaning in the medium of the Greek language. Otherwise, the translation of Symmachus would have differed from that of Aquila. Salvesen thought that Symmachus was influenced by Pseudo-Jonathan and his translation of Jeremiah 4:23.  

**Genesis 1:3**

רָאָםּ אֶלֹהֵי וֶה הָאָרֶץ אָור

LXX: Καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός Γενηθήτω φῶς καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς.

The Septuagint account is also evidenced in some variant readings as omitting the final καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς. These, however, would seem to be corruptions since almost all readings contain it. The Codex Alexandrinus has it as:

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός; γενηθήτω φῶς καὶ ἐγένετο φῶς

This puts it in a much more explicitly Jewish religious context, with the divine name not yet comfortably rendered as ὁ Θεός. Yet, the use of sacred letters for the names of divine characters and places carried on into Christianity, especially in Greek and Coptic texts.

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80 *Symmachus in the Pentateuch*: 1.
The verb γενηθήτω, ‘let there be’, third person, singular, aorist, imperative, passive, γίνοµαι, connotes a sense of causal occurrence, of the divine simply thinking something into being. This is something strengthened by the end of the verse, namely that once the divine thought there will be light, there was light.

The Aramaic targumim use a variation of the verb ‘to be’, reminiscent of the יְהִי and the וַיְהִי of the Hebrew. For Example, Targum Onqelos translated it as:

The Aramaic is similar in style and syntax, seeming to mirror the simplicity of the original Hebrew and emphasising the link between the divine thought and the divine creation. The Vetus Latina and the Vulgate are both very similar and share strong commonalities in their construction to the Aramaic and the Hebrew. The verb facere are employed by both, as fiat lux and facta est lux. A possible variation of a translation of both could be “And God said ‘(let) light be made’, and light was made.” Neofiti translated this with a little more targum editorial content. Namely, the Targum Neofiti translated it thus:

There is a sense here of the divine more directing things, almost as if something else was present with the divine to do the divine’s bidding, as with the end phrase, ‘and there was light because he commanded.’

The translations of Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus on Genesis 1:3 are more fragmentary than the Aramaic and Latin ones already examined. All three are missing a Greek translation of εἶπεν ὁ θεός, ‘And said God’, yet, one can surmise, that originally they did contain it since it is present in other translations of there, such as Theodotion on Genesis 1:4ff.
To have omitted this important phrase would be highly unusual since it is at the heart of the creation narrative’s style. Theodotion translated יְהִי Vapor אָרוֹן_yy, ‘be light, and light was’, identically to the Septuagint with γενητω φως· και ἐγένετο φῶς. In this way, Theodotion seems very much in the same fashion and spirit of the Hebrew, Aramaic and Latin translations.

Aquila had a slightly different approach, and translated it as γενεσθω φως· καὶ ἐγενετο φως. The verb γενεσθω, ‘let become’, third, singular, aorist, imperative, middle, γίνοµαι, gives a more medial spirit to the translation. It could therefore be translated as ‘let become light and was light.’ Here there is more of a sense of the arising of light, whether this was a gentle arising or an abrupt arising is difficult to determine, but what is clear is that there is an emphasis on light collating, a coming together. Pseudo-Jonathan added the material that the light was for humankind to be able to work, and that the darkness was for rest. Aquila’s arising of light seems more like a daybreak, reminiscent of Pseudo-Jonathan introduction of this targumic material even before the creation of the division between night and day. This curiously is in contrast to the spirit of Jubilees and the Dead Sea Scrolls, especially 1QS Community Rule and 1QM War Scroll, which tend towards an interpretation that this light goes along with the sons of light and darkness is associated with Belial and the sons of darkness. This ties the sons of light and the sons of darkness to the very creation of the world and the introduction of seasons for rituals associated with the creation narrative by the Qumran community. These struggles are not to be understood merely as something between Jews and Kittim (Romans), but something more eschatological or apocalyptic. This is also the opinion of Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis, who posited a strong link between this and Enoch and humanity’s participation in the angelic realm.
realised in the world.\textsuperscript{81} He also saw this as being important to the liturgical life of the community.\textsuperscript{82} This is interesting to note because a targumic method would want to respond to such notions, since such notions represented not so far off developments in Judaic thought. Just as notions of the Qumran community can be seen to have currents within early Christian thought, it is not unlikely that this was also so with the Jewish community situated around those like Aquila and Symmachus, at least in terms of remnants of traditions. This is similar to John 1:5, with the prologue declaring that in its own creation narrative that “the Light shone in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it”. This privileging of light over darkness seems to have been a common theme that kept arising in these discourses.

Symmachus translated it thus εστω φως· και εγενετο φως. This is a more predictable Greek translation. ‘Let light be, and light became.’ Of course, as noted previously, the introductory ‘And God said...’ is missing but it can be presumed to have been included in the translation as well, as with Theodotion and Aquila, not to mention the Aramaic and Latin translations. This is especially the case since Jerome included Dixitque Deus, ‘And God said...’, and Jerome was highly influenced by Symmachus. The verbal usage of ειμι as εστω, present indicative, third person singular, imperative, gives the verse the sense that God really is simply willing it into existence, or on another reading, letting light be differentiated from the amorphous gassy thing and be light in itself according to the will of its creator, God. This relates to how Symmachus translated Genesis 1:2, namely the portion that reads η δε γη εγενετο αργον και αδιακριτον, especially the sense that it gives of the world as being gaseous and unfashioned,

\textsuperscript{81} Crispin H. T. Fletcher-Louis. All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls (Leiden: Brill, 2002): 395. Henceforth cited as All the Glory of Adam.

\textsuperscript{82} All the Glory of Adam: 398.
or unprepared. In this way, it is not so much that the creation is not there, but that it is chaotic and undifferentiated.

The approach that Symmachus took is reminiscent of the Plato’s Demiurge noetically ordering the κόσμος to form the intelligible world (Timaeus 28a6). This is not surprising since Symmachus lived in the cosmopolitan and cultivated Hellenised city of Caesarea and endeavoured to produce a translation of the Hebrew text that could be respectable in the eyes of an educated audience. This approach to the creation narrative would have left out the Genesis account in the lines of a more scientific-philosophical worldview. This shows that it is not only the language of Symmachus that matters, but also how he chose to present his material to his audience. No doubt many Jews in Caesarea were tempted by more Platonic and Gnostic ideas, and as well as many potential converts already having those types of ideas.

**Genesis 1:4**

החשך ובין האור ובין אלהים ויבדל טוב כי האור את אלהים וירא

LXX: Καὶ εἶδεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ φῶς ὅτι καλὸν∙ καὶ διεχώρισεν ὁ Θεὸς ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ σκότους.

The text of the Septuagint can be rendered quite literally as, ‘And saw God the light as good, and divided God between through of the light and through of the dark.’ The Greek text here captures the Hebrew well, with the את accusative marker being expressed through ὅτι, as expressing the uniqueness of the light as good. The verb διεχώρισεν is used to express the Hebrew נפרדו. This verb is also used in the Septuagint for the niphil Hebrew verb נפרדים in 2

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83 See also *De Aeternitate Mundi* of Proclus, found in *On the Eternity of the World: Greek Text with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*, edited and translated by Helen S. Lang and A.D. Marco (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001).
Samuel 1:23:

In the Septuagint this was rendered as:

Σαουλ καὶ Ιωναθαν οἱ ἠγαπηµένοι καὶ όρατοι οὐ διακεχωρισµένοι εὑπρεπεῖς ἐν τῇ ζωῇ αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ αὐτῶν οὐ διεχωρίσθησαν ὑπὲρ άετοὺς κόµῳ καὶ ὑπὲρ λέοντας ἐκραταιώθησαν.84

The use of verbal forms of διεχωρίζω to express both verbal forms of בדל and פרד shows how the Septuagint stressed conveying and communicating the meaning of the text over etymological adherence to the text. It is important to note that the Hebrew verb בדל is expressed in Aramaic as שרש in Targum Onqelos and the Samaritan Targum.

The use of ἀνὰ µέσον τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ἀνὰ µέσον τοῦ σκότους might seem a little awkward, however, it does express the meaning of the text well. The use of ἀνὰ and µέσον given an impression that light and dark are truly divided between one another. By employing ἀνὰ and µέσον in a repeating fashion they show that God truly has divided between light and dark in a definitive way. It also can be seen to suggest that God’s actions are most profound and deliberate in themselves.

There is no substantial evidence to indicate how Theodotion translated this verse. The first part of the verse is not fully evidenced in Aquila; however, he translated literally מְשָׁר as συν το φῶς. The use of συν to express מש is of course a very common technique for Aquila. It

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84 See also “Lucifer of Cagliari and the kaige Recension” in The Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d’Aquila, edited by Tuukka Kauhanen and Anneli Aejmelaeus (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017): 158.
is expressing not just the accusative marker, but also the definiteness and uniqueness of the light.

The first part of the verse is missing for Aquila. The ending of the verse is unique, Aquila translating it as καὶ διεχωρισεν ο Ὁς μεταξὺ του φωτος, καὶ μεταξὺ του σκοτους. The use of the simple form of διεχωρισεν gives the text a sense of definiteness. God had divided light from darkness. That was something done in time and does not need to be done at any further time. The use of μεταξὺ twice is also unique, rather than the Septuagint’s μέσον. While they are in many ways equivalents, it seems that the decision of Aquila to employ μεταξὺ, rather than μέσον, was a deliberate attempt to represent the weight of the Hebrew יב. The יב is also evidenced in the Aramaic targumim. מֶטָּכָּז is a combination of מֶטָא and כָּז, the latter being a form of כָּז. Normally, it can be used to connote (1) between, (2) like a preposition (with the genitive) and (3) afterwards. In this case, מֶטָּכָּז is operating like how it does in Matthew 23:35, namely:

ὅπως ἔλθῃ ἔφ᾽ ύμᾶς πάν αἶμα δίκαιον ἐκχυννόμενον ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος Αβελ τοῦ δικαίου ἐως τοῦ αἵματος Ζαχαρίου υἱοῦ Βαραχίου, ὃν ἐφονεύσατε μεταξὺ τοῦ ναοῦ και τοῦ θυσιαστηρίου.

In the New Testament, the use of μέσον is much more common than μεταξὺ. Matthew’s use of this word gives it a stronger sense than μέσον, which seems more porous. Instead, in this case, with Aquila, there is an absolute sense of it. The sense of the כָּז gives the words a definitiveness once again, and reminds one of the earlier accusative marker in the verse, and the strong repetition of the יב of the Hebrew and the Aramaic.
The Vetus Latina translated the verse as *Et vidit Deus lucem, quia bona est: et divisit Deus inter lucem, et tenebras*. Jerome’s Vulgate on the other hand reads *Et vidit Deus lucem quod esset bona et divisit lucem ac tenebras*. The Vetus Latina’s use of *quia bona est* is more reminiscent of the Septuagint’s ὅτι καλόν. Jerome omits God in the second part of the verse. The use of *inter* by the Vetus Latina gives the sense of ‘between’, a sense of spatial division, whereas the *ac* of the Vulgate has more a sense of ‘from’, in this case, perhaps more like the image of the parting of the waters of the sea in Exodus 14.\(^85\)

Unfortunately, there is very little evidence from Symmachus about how he chose to translate the verse. He translated בָּדַל as διεστειλεν, a verb that occurs in the Septuagint. The Septuagint used this in Ecclesiasticus 44:23 where it means ‘portioned’, as of an inheritance. It also appears in Genesis 30:35, as ‘removed’, taking the place of סֵר, from the root סָר, as ‘separated’ in Genesis 30:40, for מָרָד, from the root מָרָד, and in Numbers 16:9, as ‘divided’, for בָּדַל, like the case here, from בָּדַל. That the Septuagint used the verb in a variety of ways most likely indicates that Symmachus chose to regularise its use as denoting בָּדַל, taking his targumic direction from the Septuagint’s translation of Numbers 16:9. This would avoid confusion to his audience whether the action was one of dividing, removing, separating, portioning or dividing. It is most likely that he settled on the Septuagint translation of בָּדַל in Numbers 16:9 because it best conveyed the sense of dividing. This would have been the case because of his Greek targumic role in responding to the Septuagint, but by responding to it through a parallel approach from the Masoretic text.\(^86\)

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\(^85\) Aĉ, of course, usually expresses ‘and’.

\(^86\) See, for example, Leon Liebreich, “Notes on the Greek Version of Symmachus”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 63:4 (December 1944): 397.
How Symmachus translated the rest of the verse is not known. It is possible, however, to extrapolate along the lines of the Vulgate and the Masoretic Text. He probably translated טוב כי האור as τὸ φῶς ἦν καλὸν. This is because of his clear renderings of the verbs in the other verses, the use of ὅτι without a verb seems awkward (unless he used it with the verb) in this case and the example of the Vulgate. Of course, this is all speculation.

**Genesis 1:5**

This verse can be rendered as, ‘And called God the light day, and the dark he called night. And it became evening and it became dawn, one day.’ The Septuagint mostly consistently renders קָרֵא root based verbs with forms of καλέω. The Septuagint translation clearly mimics the Hebrew text syntactically. Martin McNamara noted that during the Second Temple period,

[T]he Israelites who assembled in the synagogues read the first chapter of Genesis. Each day of the week, for the six days from Sunday to Friday, they read in order the work of the six days of creation.  

That is something attested to in the Mishnah, *Ta'anith* 4:3, which gives a step by step description of how this was performed. In the post Temple period liturgical functions were performed in multilingual contexts. Van der Horst pointed out that for Jewish worshippers many prayers

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87 McNamara: 65.

were recited in Greek if that was the lingua franca where they lived.⁸⁹ He pointed out that these Jewish liturgical prayers were not only composed with a ‘Hebrew’ mind, but that they also followed a very Hebrew model, something evidenced in the Egerton Papyrus 5.⁹⁰ If such prayers in Greek were used liturgically, great attention would have been made to ensure that the original spirit of the Hebrew source was conveyed. Bolstered by Rabban Shimon b. Gamaliel, Greek was being accepted as a language worthy of transmitting sacred scripture and rites based upon the belief that it was spoken in the tents of Shem.⁹¹ It was becoming accepted that it was not Hebrew itself that was the so called Temple Tongue of Adam, but that certain other languages, such as Aramaic, Arabic and Greek could have a similar status.⁹² Still, how these languages were employed mattered greatly for their acceptability as conduits of scriptural and ritual meaning.

The Vetus Latina maintained the sense of ‘called’ through the verb vocavit being employed twice, *Et vocavit Deus lucem, diem; et tenebras vocavit noctem: et facta est vespera, et mane, dies unus.* A possible translation could read, ‘And called God light, day; and darkness he called night: and was made evening, and morning, day one.’ On the other hand, Jerome translated it as *Appellavitque lucem diem, et tenebras noctem factumque est vespere et mane, dies unus.* The Vulgate only uses the ‘called’ once, and through the verb *appellavitique* for the Hebrew נָתַן. This translation had a more active sense to it, ‘And naming light (as) day, and darkness (as night) and was made evening and morning, day one.’ The Vetus Latina seems to

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⁹⁰ Greek Evidence: 280.

⁹¹ Smelik: 28.

⁹² Smelik: 48.
mimic the style of the Hebrew more closely than the Vulgate does, however *appellavitque* seems closer to ה召 than does *vocavit*.

A key to understanding the difference between the verbs can be found when the semitic targumim are analysed. Onqelos translated this as:

In his translation, Onqelos was careful to maintain the strong sense of ‘called’, קרא, using it twice as the Hebrew does. He also maintained the sense of employing the notion of time, with the use of והוה twice. Interestingly, Onqelos made a targumic decision to play with the creation narrative and make it self-referential. He did so by anticipating Genesis 1:23, and expressed the ‘and there was evening and there was morning as צפר והוה רמש והוה צפר’. This curious translation with רמש and צפר can be seen to describe poetically this ‘first day’. If one ignores the diacritical marks on רמש, and situates it alongside צפר, it becomes possible to see a targumic technique at play here. One could render this as ‘And there was the time of creeping things (night) and there was the time of bird/song (morning)’. One could almost imagine the night as something fearful or mysterious in the minds of children and the morning as something beautiful and full of birdsong. The birdsong notion may be based upon Judges 7:3, when the men are told that they can יצפר, usually translated as ‘depart early in the morning’, but perhaps also, in the context of Onqelos, ‘depart like birds in the morning’ or ‘depart as the birds begin to sing’. The Peshitta also has this sense of creeping things and birds, and like Onqelos, uses a verb very close to קרא twice:
The Syriac of the Peshitta is very close to the Aramaic of Onqelos, and both not only mimic the verbal sense of the Hebrew, and both reflect the same targumic concern to poetically describe the night and the morning. Even the words of the Syriac sound very similar to that of the Aramaic, since they are cognates. The Samaritan Targum on the other hand translated this verse in a slightly different manner. The Samaritan Targum rendered the text as:

ירק אלוהים לָאָרֶךְ דִּים וּלָאשֶּׁךְ זֶעַק לָיְלָה וּלָאָרֶךְ וְדַעְתּוּ לָיְלָה

It has the same targumic rendering of צפר והוה רמש והוה זפר as Onqelos and the Peshitta, but the verb ‘called’ is different. The verb.Direct is used twice in place of קִרְעָת יָעַק. The verb יָעַק is widely used in the Hebrew Bible, but usually with the sense of ‘cried out’, as in Exodus 2:23, or as ‘summoned’, as in Joshua 8:16. In this way, the Vetus Latina’s vocavit is more like this Targum, whereas Jerome is more like Onqelos (and the Samaritan Pentateuch, which in itself renders it identically to the Masoretic Text). The Aramaic יָעַק may have had a sense of naming, but also of ‘convocating’, ‘convoking’ or even ‘voicing’.

For Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus there is evidence only of how they translated יְקָרָה אֵלֹהִים לָאָרֶךְ יִם וּלָאשֶּׁךְ קָרָא לְיָלָה, responding to the Καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ φῶς ἡμέραν, καὶ τὸ σκότος ἐκάλεσεν νύκτα of the Septuagint. Theodotion translated it as καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ο Θεὸς τῷ φωτὶ ἡμεραν καὶ τῷ σκότῳ ἐκάλεσε νυκτα. This could be expressed as ‘And called God to the light day, and the darkness he called night.’ Aquila translated it slightly differently, as καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ο Θεὸς τῷ φωτὶ, ἡμεραν καὶ τῷ σκότῳ ἐκάλεσε τηνυκτα. The slight nominative play of ἡμερα by Aquila seems to give the day a little more prominence in the translation than does the accusative sense of Theodotion. Perhaps this could be rendered as ‘And God called to the light, day, and the darkness he called night.’
Symmachus translated it as καὶ ἐκάλεσεν ὁ Θεὸς τῷ φωτὶ ἡμερὰν· καὶ τὴν σκότιαν ἐκάλεσε νυκτα. It is much the same as Theodotion, Aquila and the Septuagint; however, whereas Theodotion, Aquila and the Septuagint have ‘darkness’ as neuter accusative, but Symmachus translated it as as a feminine accusative, τὴν σκοτίαν. The Septuagint, Theodotion and Aquila rendered ‘darkness’ as neuter because this captured more of the Hebrew sense of the masculine ἤψωπ, similar also in the New Testament where it is either neuter or masculine. Symmachus, however, seems to follow a different direction. Rendering ‘darkness’ as feminine, however, is more reminiscent of Plato (e.g. Republic 7, 518c), Philo (De Opificio Mundi 22 7 33) and Josephus (Antiquities 15,11,5). Symmachus might be making a nod to the accepted authority of the higher Greek of those, such as, Plato and Philo and others. Another matter that ought to be considered is how contrasting the masculine τῷ φωτὶ with the feminine τὴν σκοτίαν, Symmachus further emphasised not only the definitiveness of God’s will and action, but also the great divide between the light and the darkness.

The later, however, emphasising definitiveness and distance, is probably a greater reason for the translation decision of Symmachus. The masculine sense of light and day contrasted to the feminine of darkness and night probably carried significant cultural value. Gender imbalances were a reality, something seen to be reflected in the natural order and hence justifiable in the human economy. The light was seen as something beneficial to humankind,

93 See also the sense of the χώρα in Plato’s Timaeus 38.


and hence was seen as closer to God, such as seen in Philo Op 30-35. Philo considered darkness to the adversary of the light, and hence the adversary of God. The feminine rendering of darkness would have connoted that darkness was given an inferior value by Symmachus, in contrast to the superior value of the masculine light. Not only are light and darkness distinct from one another, light is greater than darkness. Since Symmachus avoided Hebraisms, this allowed him to use a targumic technique to communicate and convey the rabbinic tradition around this verse and, at the same time, while it also conveyed the thought of those in the traditions of Plato and Philo and others.

The use of και εκαλεσεν by the Septuagint, Theodotion, Aquila and Symmachus in their Greek rendering of the Hebrew כיָּרָא does not represent anything of note. While the the Aramaic and the Latin have the options of יָּרָא and וּצֶּיוּדָה , and Et vocavit and Appellavitque, respectively, the distinction in the Greek is not so important. They could have possibly rendered כיָּרָא as the ὄνόματι of Matthew 27:32, namely:

Ἐξερχόμενοι δὲ ἐδρῶν ἀνθρωπον Κυρηναίον, ὄνόματι Σίμωνα· τούτον ἤγγαρεσαν ἵνα ἀρῃ τὸν σταυρὸν αὐτοῦ.

This option, however, would not make much sense in the context of Genesis 1:5, because ὄνόματι refers to the ‘given name’ of Simon of Cyrene in a personal way, but εκαλεσεν is employed for ‘calling’ something what it is ontologically, so to speak. So the use of εκαλεσεν here by the Greek translators can cover the range of כיָּרָא and וּצֶּיוּדָה , since εκαλεσεν can also mean ‘summoned’ as well.


97 Worthington: 87.
Deuteronomy 6:8 & 11:18

6:8

וקשרתם לאחת לעי ידו וחי لتטפם ביין עינייך

LXX καὶ ἀφάψεις αὐτὰ εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρός σου καὶ ἔσται ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου.

11:18

ורשماتם את דבר אלוה לעל חבטם על פ geçmişם וקשתם את לאתח על ידם והיו لتטפם ביין עינכם

LXX καὶ ἐβαλεῖτε τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα εἰς τὴν καρδίαν ὑμῶν καὶ εἰς τὴν ψυχὴν ὑμῶν καὶ ἀφάψετε αὐτὰ εἰς σημεῖον ἐπὶ τῆς χειρός ὑμῶν καὶ ἔσται ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν ὑμῶν.

Salvesen treated these two verses together because of the similarity of their topics. The Septuagint translation of Deuteronomy 6:8 could be rendered as ‘And fasten it as a sign on your hand and let it be unshakeable (of) before your eyes’. This, of course, is in reference to the שֵׁם of Deuteronomy 6:4. The important part of the Septuagint version of 6:8 for our purposes here is καὶ ἔσται ἀσάλευτον πρὸ ὀφθαλμῶν σου. Deuteronomy 11:18 can be rendered as ‘And insert this very matter in your [plural] heart and in your [plural] soul and fasten it as a sign in your [plural] hand and let it be of before your [plural] eyes’. The Septuagint rather carefully recreates the Hebrew sense and style. The use of τὰ ρήματα ταῦτα carefully conveys the sense of דברי אלה, and does so without resorting to such translations such as λόγος. The shift from the singular to the plural from Deuteronomy 6:8 to 11:18 is clear in the Septuagint. This maintains the sense of the text of the individual responsibility that is also held collectively by the

98 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 150.
community as a whole. This sort of textual adherence would have been of great importance of these verses in pious and liturgical actions.99

This later part of Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18 was translated by Aquila as και εσονται εις νακτα μεταξει των οφθαλμων σου and και εσονται εις νακτα μεταξει των οφθαλμων υμων, respectively. Aquila’s translation is a little curious as it also captures the semitic style of the Hebrew, albeit in a much more deliberate manner than did the Septuagint. Aquila begins with the standard και but then uses εις lemma εσονται, which is future, middle, indicative, third person, and plural, invoking more the open spirit of the Hebrew ויהי. The use εις captures the ל of the Hebrew text. The curious word νακτα, seemingly an example of a hapax legomenon, means ‘solid things’, which Field thought could be conveyed as ‘densum’ or ‘pressum’, relating to טפף, referring to phylacteries containing the scriptures.100 The possible reason for this rare word, νακτα, could be that Aquila did not want to convey the image of phylacteries in a manner that seemed crude or common. Another deliberate attempt to keep to the style of the Hebrew text, Aquila translated ו as µεταξυ, instead of the προ of the Septuagint. This is because µεταξυ is the combination of µετά and ξύν, equivalent to σύν, giving it the flavour of the καιγε recension. Aquila consistently used µεταξυ to translate ו.101 Aquila’s use of the constructions των οφθαλμων σου and των οφθαλμων υμων matched that of the Septuagint, both translations are making sure to indicate the definiteness of the phrase by using the definite case of the

99 McNamara: 190.

100 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 151.

101 See, for example, Joseph Reider & Nigel Turner, An Index to Aquila: Greek-Hebrew, Hebrew-Greek, Latin-Hebrew with the Syriac and Armenian Evidence, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum, Volume XII (Leiden, Brill, 1966).
genitive. This portion of the verses could be translated in both the singular and the plural as ‘Let it be in solid things before your own eyes.’

Theodotion translated Deuteronomy 6:8 as καὶ εσονται εἰς σαλευτα ανα μεσον οφθαλμων σου. There is no certain evidence for how Theodotion translated this portion of Deuteronomy 11:18. It is probable that, since his translation is one of the καὶ γε recensions, and how the other Greek translators translated it, that he rendered this portion as καὶ εσονται εἰς σαλευτα ανα μεσον οφθαλμων ὑμων. The first part is very similar to Aquila, καὶ εσονται εἰς, conveying the sense of ‘let it be in’ as a translation of לוהיו. It is, however, notable to compare his rendering of σαλευτα ανα μεσον οφθαλμων σου to the other Greek translators seen thus far.

To begin with, while Aquila had νακτα and the Septuagint had ἀσαλευτα, they do seem to have a similar sense, despite the apparent differing connotations. While both Aquila and the Septuagint had the sense of something solid or unmoveable/unshakeable, respectively, the σαλευτα of Theodotion connotes the sense of something that moves. It could be that these things are to be put in something portable, rather than to interpret it as being put in something that can be cast away or lost. Jerome also followed this sense of the portable, when in the Vulgate it reads et movebuntur inter oculos tuos, verses the Vetus Latina which reads inter vestros oculos conlocate, which is more like the Septuagint and Aquila. The preposition ανα should probably be translated as ‘up’ because of its following adjective μεσον, ‘midst’. This preposition, ανα, seems difficult to translate properly, yet, when seen in relation to μεσον, it seems like a very deliberate attempt to imitate the גּ of the Hebrew text. ‘Eyes’, while still genitive, is not marked by a definite article, but, its definitiveness is still preserved, of course, by the final

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102 See, for example, Joannem Georgium Treuttel, Sophoclis tragediae septem / ad optimorum exemplarium fidem emendata cum versione et notis Volume 4 (Strasbourg: Rich. Franc. Phil. Brunck, 1789), 655.
possessive pronoun σου, and presumably υμων in Theodotion’s translation of Deuteronomy 11:18. The lack of the definite article might be explained by Theodotion wanting to imitate the Hebrew text more closely that also does not have the definite article there, and instead also conveys the definiteness through the possessive suffix. Theodotion’s translation then might be rendered as ‘And let it be in something portable up amidst your eyes’.

Symmachus translated this portion of Deuteronomy 6:8 as και εσονται διεσταλμενοι μεταξου των οφθαλμων σου and from the relevant portion of Deuteronomy 11:18 as και εσονται διεσταλμενοι μεταξου των οφθαλμων. The και εσονται of Symmachus is like that of both Aquila and Theodotion, and differs from the Septuagint rendering. The omission of εις makes for a more clear and elegant Greek style, not literally translating the –ל of the Hebrew, and instead letting the verbs work for themselves. The use of διεσταλμενοι is interesting here, because it means more a sense of ‘making larger’, or as Salvesen put it, making it “definite” or “distinct”. She pointed out that this definition did not come from טטפת, but from תפילין instead, coming from the root סלים, in the sense of ‘separate’ or ‘distinguish’. This is a targumic translation that conveys the reason why the people ought to wear phylacteries, namely that it makes them distinct from those who are not Jewish. This manner of translating aimed at providing a reason for the specific religious practice of wearing phylacteries. The targumic technique here draws greater attention to Jewish identity and the need to conserve it in a cosmopolitan environment. The use of μεταξου is not surprising as this is a common construction for Symmachus and conveys the ןב of the Hebrew well. The phrasing των οφθαλμων σου is the same as Aquila, and differs from Theodotion. It is noteworthy that in Deuteronomy 11:18

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103 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 151.
104 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 151.
that he omitted the final word of the other Greek translations, namely υμων. Perhaps this is because he presumed that his Jewish audience knew that this stipulation was directed at them. The portion of Deuteronomy 6:8 could be rendered as ‘and let it be distinguishing amidst your eyes’.

Deuteronomy 29:5

The Septuagint can be translated as ‘And they departed, honouring other gods and prostrated themselves to them, whom they did not understand since neither were they given to them.’ The Septuagint avoids the second אלהים, and instead uses the less direct αυτοῖς. This was probably to weaken the possible recognition of the divinisation of these ‘other gods’.105 This strong monotheistic emphasis reflects a targumic concern to emphasise the uniqueness of the God of Israel.106 The translation as such removes the possibility that these ‘other gods’ have any power or even reality, reflecting the targumic concern to make the translation convey the oral teaching of the rabbis.107


Deuteronomy 29:26 is a very important verse in understanding translation techniques because it is within the corpus of understanding Israel’s identity as a people under God. As pointed out by Salvesen, the verse is a corollary to Deuteronomy 4:19. The verse captures the sense of the absolute demand God puts on Israel, to the full exclusion of other cultic practices, playing off the sense of wandering in the wilderness and wandering after foreign deities:

A key word between these verses is בְּכֵלָה. The notion of this word is ‘divided (for)’ or ‘allocated’. The Septuagint translated this as διένειµέν, however, בְּכֵלָה is rendered as ἀπένειµέν in Deuteronomy 4:19, namely:

καὶ μὴ ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ άδὼν τὸν ἥλιον καὶ τὴν σελήνην καὶ τοὺς ἀστέρας καὶ πάντα τὸν κόσμον τοῦ οὐρανοῦ πλανηθεὶς προσκυνήσῃς αὐτοῖς καὶ λατρεύσῃς αὐτοῖς ἃ ἀπένειµέν κύριος ὁ θεὸς σου αὐτὰ πάσιν τοῖς ἔθηνειν τοῖς ὑποκάτω τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.

The rendering of בְּכֵלָה in two different ways is not out of keeping with the style of the Septuagint. The sense of διένειµέν is more to ‘apportioned’, whereas ἀπένειµέν has more of a sense of ‘divided’. In the New Testament, διανεµῶ is seen in the form διανεµήθη in Acts 4:7. In this usage it means ‘it might spread out’, coming from a sense of ‘to distribute’ or ‘to disseminate.’ The Septuagint use seems more like connoting that the proper worship for the Israelites has been ‘distributed’ to them as a certain gift (or demand), or that they have been

109 The lexicographical analysis here, like in other places, unless otherwise indicated, is based upon the author of this thesis comparing different Biblical versions of the relevant verses, and the appearances of the relevant terms in other places, such as in the New Testament in this case.
informed (by dissemination) whom only they should worship. Also, in the New Testament
\( \alpha πονεμω \) is seen in the form \( \alpha πονεμοντες \) in 1 Peter 3:7, with the sense of ‘giving’. To apply this
to the Septuagint, it would be more a sense that God ‘gave’ the obligation to worship only God.
The use of a verb form of \( \delta ενεμω \) is only used in the Septuagint in this verse. On the other
hand, \( \alpha πονεμω \) is used in 3 Maccabees 1:7 and 3:6, both with the sense of something having
been ‘apportioned’.

Aquila responded to the Septuagint’s \( δενεμεν \) translation of the Hebrew \( קְלָלָה \) with
\( \epsilon μερισεν \), from the lemma \( \mu εριζω \), to ‘divide’ or to ‘apportion’. This same form is also used in
the Septuagint, notably 4 Maccabees 13:19, Job 31:17, Sirach 44:23 and 45:20. In these verses it
has the sense of ‘apportioned’, ‘divided’, ‘assigned’, or even ‘bequeathed’, in the case of 4
Maccabees 13:19. It is also widely used in the New Testament.\(^{110}\)

We have textual evidence for Symmachus that he rendered the \( ουδε δενεμεν αυτοις \) of
the Septuagint as \( ουδε προσηκον αυτοις \). The employment of \( προσηκον \) in place of \( δε
ενεμεν \) probably reflects a more consistent translation of \( קְלָלָה \). Symmachus was much more likely to
make standard his Greek translations than were the other translators, tending towards
consistency of style above other concerns.\(^{111}\) It also seems like a more precise translation as
well.\(^{112}\) It is quite likely that Symmachus chose to translate it as \( προσηκον \) because it is more
concise and precise about what the Israelites are not to do, that regarding the foreign gods, ‘they
are not to come present to them.’ In a targumic way, this is to indicate the sense of not keeping

\(^{110}\) cf. Mark 6:41, Romans 12:3, Hebrews 7:2, where it can be translated as either ‘divided’ and ‘apportioned’. In 1
Corinthians 7:17 and 2 Corinthians 10:13 it is more in the sense of ‘assigned’.

\(^{111}\) Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 242.

\(^{112}\) This sense of \( προσηκον \) seems to echo Plato’s exhortation for the just teacher in Gorgias 507B.
company with the worship of foreigners, something all the more important in a cosmopolitan
city like Caesarea.

This verse is an important part of the ‘book within the book’ narrative of the ‘book of the
torah’. Symmachus and the other translators would have had to be careful to relate the
narrative in a way that suited their audiences’ experiences. David Frankel pointed out that there
were many different traditional Jewish rabbinic approaches to the text selection of Deuteronomy
29:21-28. For some, the text had to do with a dynamic of blessings and curses at a national
level, whereas for Rashi the text had to do with individual guilt (b. Sanh. 43b). Dominik
Markl pointed out that this narrative had to be reread in light of 2 Kings 22-23 (and Judges),
understanding better what it meant to be an exilic community.

**Deuteronomy 33:7**

וַאֲמַרְתֶּם־לַיְהוֹה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂרָאֵל־יִשְׂרָאֵל־יִשָּׂרָאֵל־יִשָּׂרָאֵל

LXX: καὶ αὕτη Ἰουδα εἰσάκουσον κύριε φωνῆς Ἰουδα καὶ εἰς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ εἰσέλθοισαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ διακρίνοσιν αὐτῷ καὶ βοηθὸς ἐκ τῶν ἐχθρῶν αὐτοῦ ἔσῃ.

In order to compare the available and relevant textual evidence of Symmachus, Salvesen
selected the segment of Deuteronomy 33:7. Perhaps this can be

114 David Frankel, “‘Why Did the Lord Do Thus to This Land?’: Deuteronomy 29:21-28 in Historical and Textual
115 Frankel: 142.
Covenant (Deuteronomy 29–30)”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133:4, (2014), 723 & 725. See also the chapter
by Adrian Schenker, entitled “The Relationship between the Earliest Septuagint and the Masoretic Text in the
Book of Kings in Light of 2 Kings 21:2-9”, in *Traduire la bible hébraïque*, edited by Robert David & Manuel
Jinbachian (Montreal: Médiaspaul, 2005).
117 *Symmachus in the Pentateuch*: 172.
translated as ‘And unto his people he shall bring his abundant hand to him.’ This translation, however, should be considered more carefully in the light of the other translations because of their proximity to various rabbinic and targumic sources and traditions.

The Septuagint segment reads εἰς τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ εἰσέλθοσαν αἱ χεῖρες αὐτοῦ διακρινοῦσιν αὐτῷ. This is quite a departure from the Hebrew source it seems. This could possibly be translated as ‘to the people of him let them happen to enter the hands of him thoroughly discerning to him.’ Salvesen pointed out that the Septuagint seemed to treat the verb тбоин to be a qal verb, translating it as ‘may they enter’, or as ‘let them happen to enter’, instead of ‘bring’.

The targumic traditions take a different approach also from the literal Hebrew text, perhaps reflecting a different interpretation of the portion of the verse. Onqelos rendered it as.

This could possibly be rendered as ‘And to his people bring in peace his hand to him revenging’, if тпоун of Onqelos could be translated in the context of ‘him revenging against his enemies’. Pseudo-Jonathan took a similar approach, however; instead of the тпоун of Onqelos, a closer cognate to the Hebrew, Pseudo Jonathan used the more imaginative тпун, ‘go up’. The segment reads thus:

This could be rendered as ‘And to his people go up in order of battle with peace in his hand revenging.’ Salvesen pointed out that the targumim in general can be best understood as

118 See, for example, Harl: 134.
119 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 172.
conveying the verse as ‘Receive Lord, the prayer of Judah when he goes out to the ranks of battle and to his people bring him back in peace.’ This targumic approach gives a new light to why the Septuagint would have the expression διακρινοῦσιν αὐτῷ, the sense of a warrior deciding his next tactical step in a battle. The Vulgate of Jerome also carries this bellicose sense, reading ad populum suum introduc eum manus eius pugnabunt pro eo. This is a blessing for a battle for liberation, a battle for deliverance. From Aquila, there is not much evidence of how he translated this, however, he added, δικασεται αυτω, or δικασονται αυτω. This seems to follow in the same targumic spirit, but perhaps with a more judgemental approach, ‘to be bring justice to him’, or ‘to bring vindication to him’.

Symmachus rendered this portion of Deuteronomy 33:7 as επι τον λαον αυτου εξαξεις αυτον αι χειρες αυτου υπεραχησουσιν αυτου. Like the Septuagint, he used the plural hands instead of rendering it as a singular in the Hebrew source (αι χειρες verses ידו). Salvesen noted that Symmachus had “an unusual equivalent for נבך, ‘lead him out to (?) his people.’” His translation here could be rendered as ‘upon the people of him lead him out with his hands to overpowering of him’. This is a rather awkward translation, so perhaps its better to express it as ‘lead him out to his people, with his hands (or strength?) to overpower him. As in all the other translations it is not abundantly clear who the final αυτου refers to, but one can presume that it is whomever is the cause of the people being in need of deliverance or liberation. Symmachus follows in the targumic manner of the others to express this more bellicose reading.

120 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 172.
121 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 172.
Deuteronomy 33:8

The last verse to be examined here is Deuteronomy 33:8. This is a rather curious verse with the reference to וָאֹרִיךְ תָּמִיךְ. This would explain why the Septuagint, the targumim and others handle it in quite different manners. The Septuagint seems to convey the verse as ‘And to Levi he said, give to Levi his evidence, and his truth to the holy (man?), whom they tested in the testing; they reviled him at the water of contradiction.’ This is quite different from the sense of וָאֹרִיךְ תָּמִיךְ and מִרְבָּה of the Hebrew text. In this sense, the Septuagint is taking a targumic decision to explain what this means in context, or at least as how the traditions that shaped the understanding of the verse, saw the meaning best conveyed. The part of the verse relevant here to Symmachus is the rest of the verses, excluding the first part. LXX: καὶ τῷ Λευι εἶπεν δότε Λευι δήλους αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀλήθειαν αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀνδρὶ τῷ ὑσίῳ ὑπὲρ ἑνεπείρασαν αὐτὸν ἐν πείρᾳ ἑλοιδόρησαν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ ὑδάτος ἀντιλογίας.

Onqelos rendered the full verse as

This could be translated as ‘And of Levi he said: with perfections and lights, clothe the man who is found holy before you whom you did try in the temptation, and he was upright, and whom you did prove at the waters of contention.’ Salvesen pointed out that the Septuagint interpreted מִרְבָּה based upon the verb רָב to get the understanding of ‘water of contradiction’. For Onqelos, it is still water of contention/disagreement. It does not follow from the same root.

122 Symmachus in the Pentateuch: 173.
Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti also have a very similar rendering of the verse. The Vulgate rendered it as *Levi quoque ait perfectio tua et doctrina tua viro sancto tuo quem probasti in temptatione et iudicasti ad aquas contradictionis*. This is more similar to the targumim and the Septuagint, but takes on a more legal tone with *iudicasti*.

From Symmachus we have τελειοτης σου και διδαξη σου τω ανδρι τω οσιω ον επειρασας εν δοκιμασια εδοκιμασας αυτον επι του υδατος της αντιλογιας. This could be expressed as ‘your perfection and your teaching to the holy man whom was tested, proven in the water of contradiction.’ Again, Symmachus is more similar to other translations than he is to the Hebrew text. Again, he made a targumic decision to explain what are these ואריך תמיך and what did happen at the water in the wilderness. One can see how Jerome followed Symmachus’s lead here with the inclusion of ‘perfection’ and ‘teaching’. As well, Symmachus is like the targumim of Onqelos and others for including these instead of the ‘evidence’ and ‘truth’ of the Septuaigint. The expression ον επειρασας εν δοκιμασια εδοκιμασας seems to give a more thorough description of the event, the ‘holy man was tested in a test and was proven’ gives the narrative more a sense of dynamic intention and action, thus resulting in a more colourful account of the matter.
Chapter III
The Targum of Symmachus

After this close analysis of these certain verses of Symmachus in comparison with the Hebrew source text and the other translators, it is now possible to respond to the question whether Symmachus does in fact represent a Greek targum of the Hebrew Bible. As previously noted, Giambrone held that for something to be deemed appropriately as a Greek targum, it had to respond to the dynamics of the Septuagint.\textsuperscript{123} Just as the Aramaic targumim responded to the complexities and apparent problematics of the Hebrew Bible, the Greek targumim would do likewise to the Septuagint. Concerning the Septuagint, Veltri did not think that it constituted a targum proper\textsuperscript{124}, because, to quote Smelik:

\begin{quote}
Whether he translates into Greek, Aramaic or Hebrew is not important; decisive is his intention to substitute exegetical meaning for the verbal one. Aquila’s version performed the task of a dictionary, but despite appearances the meaning of a difficult Hebrew word or phrase was not so much derived from etymology as from an authoritative understanding of the word. Polemics was not the main scope of this version, but the attempt to express the full meaning and message of the Hebrew text up to the position of the letters in the Hebrew source text, which was understood as a mystery in the words of Jerome. For Veltri, the rabbinic Aquila is a Targum because his version is inconceivable without MT; conversely, the Septuagint is not, because it replaced the Hebrew source text.\textsuperscript{125}
\end{quote}

This observation of Smelik regarding Veltri’s position on Aquila and the Septuagint is very important here. The sense of Aquila being a ‘dictionary’ is in terms of his translation’s

\textsuperscript{123} Giambrone: 42.
\textsuperscript{124} Veltri: 109.
\textsuperscript{125} Smelik: 392.

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relationship to the Hebrew text within the range of rabbinic targumic traditions. Aquila offered a perspective as a targum that enhanced and amplified the meaning of the scriptures, while at the same time allowing new meanings to apply halakah and other matters in a Greek-speaking environment. The Septuagint, however, Veltri did not see as targumic because he saw it as a replacement text to the Hebrew. Whether this is assured or not seems to be open, since the Septuagint certainly does seem to respond to the Hebrew text in such a way that might presume some prior experience of it. This, though, is beyond this thesis.¹²⁶

Theodotion also seems to be quite targumic, and the rest of the κατγε recensions as well. Often times these Greek traditions shared more in common with the Aramaic than they did with the Septuagint or the Hebrew, as we saw in our analysis. In light of this analysis it does allow us to deem Symmachus to be targumic, with certain clarifications.

Symmachus responded to the Septuagint and made targumic decisions to render the translation in such a way that it was in conversation, so to speak, with the other traditions as well as the ambiguities of the Septuagint and the Hebrew source text. This made it much more a Greek targum than a ‘Tannaitic Septuagint’.¹²⁷ It was not intentionally replacing the Septuagint or the Hebrew Bible. Rather, it was meant to be an explanatory text alongside of them.

In the first verses of Genesis, we saw how Symmachus established his style to suit such important verses in the pious and liturgical life of his community. Genesis 1:1 had very little


¹²⁷ Aramaic Bible: 410.
evidence in terms of Symmachus. Yet, the verse was of great importance to consider it first since it set the tone for the translators. Genesis 1:2 showed Symmachus’s targumic technique of relating the verse to Genesis 7:18. This of course bolstered the rabbinic teaching in the Babylonian Talmud (Pesachim I:6b) that ‘there is no beginning and no end in the Torah’. In Genesis 1:3 he maintained the almost ambivalent simplicity of the Hebrew and Aramaic, using the verb εστω to convey יְהִי, instead of a form of a more advanced verb such as γίνοµαι. In this way, he gave it almost a sense of timelessness, that he was ambivalent to the specific time of the act, but that it simply happened. In Genesis 1:4 he shows a consistency of translation and responds to Numbers 16:9 of the Septuagint to demonstrate how decisively God divided between the darkness and the light. In Genesis 1:5 he made the targumic decision to contrast as feminine night and darkness and masculine day and light. This contrast through the gender of the words showed the greater emphasis placed on the light and the day over the dark. It also played with the curious rendering of the Aramaic targumim and the Peshita, and the sense of the mystery of night and the birdsong of the morning.

These verses demonstrated how Symmachus approached the creation narrative of Genesis 1:1-2:3. An analysis of Genesis 1:6-2:3 would reveal a consistent approach to the previous verses analysed, as Symmachus consistently translated words on a one to one basis. These Genesis verses indicate a strong targumic approach on the part of Symmachus, while doing so in a more elegant Greek composition than the Septuagint, Aquila or Theodotion.

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For Deuteronomy 6:8 and 11:18 Symmachus made a targumic decision to explain why people ought to wear phylacteries. He did not just translate the matter of the verses, but he sought to remind his audience that wearing these phylacteries made Jewish people distinctive from those who were not Jewish. Likewise, in Deuteronomy 29:25, he stressed the unique identity of the Jewish people and took the sense of not going after foreign gods to be also a warning about to much mingling with those also deemed foreign, who followed those foreign god, namely people who were not Jewish. This was in contrast to the seemingly more fluid relationship between Jewish people and people who were not Jewish at Dura Europos. In Deuteronomy 33:7, Symmachus follows the more bellicose spirit of the Septuagint over the Hebrew source text, as did the other translators analysed. He is more like Onqelos in his translation of Deuteronomy 33:8, stressing ‘perfection’ and ‘teaching’ instead of the ‘evidence’ and ‘truth’ of the Septuagint. Like most of the other translators, he translated the so called ‘waters of Meribah’ as the ‘waters of contradiction’.

These verses from Deuteronomy demonstrated a strong targumic intention. This intention was to carefully present the narrative of the Hebrews in the wilderness in a way that would make sense to his audience and that would explain certain peculiarities and particularities of Jewish practice at his time. These verses, combined with those from Genesis, show a consistent targumic approach aimed at a Jewish community living in a cosmopolitan environment. This would probably also account for his more elegant Greek, but his style of composition was targumic as to its intention.

At an isomorphic level, Symmachus was more consistent in a one for one translation of the Hebrew, and made use of the witness of the Aramaic traditions. He also avoided the expressions and indications (peculiarities?) of the κατε recensions. His Greek translations differed the most from the other Greek traditions analysed though did show many common borrowings.

Another matter to consider in light of a targum tradition coming from Symmachus is rewritten scripture. Jerome’s reliance on Symmachus demonstrates an acceptance of Symmachus’s translation as a valid rendering of the Hebrew source text and a response to the Septuagint. Symmachus was not only translating the scriptures, but he was bringing them forward through a means of hypertextuality that not only linked the narratives to one another, but also to his present time. In this way, he was not unlike the Qumran yahad and its approach to, and appropriation of, Enoch, Jubilees and the narratives of the Hebrew scriptures.

The Vulgate’s reliance on Symmachus was akin to the appropriation of certain themes coming from the Dead Sea Scrolls in the New Testament, and especially the Gospel of John. This is especially evident in Deuteronomy 33:8, where the text of Symmachus, and Jerome’s later reliance upon it, corresponds closely to the presentation of the blessings in 4QTestimonia (4Q175). It is not surprising that Jerome would prefer Symmachus’s rendering, as it was more messianic, like 4QTestimonia than the Hebrew source text.

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Conclusion

Symmachus’s translation was indeed a targum and should not merely be considered as a Tannaitic Septuagint. It has the same targumic features of the Greek targumim of Aquila and Theodotion. It shares much in common with the more recognised Aramaic targumim traditions, especially a certain link with Onqelos. Translations by faith-communities of their scriptures are not done for mere purposes of gaining information. Rather, such translations are done so that the faith-community can have access to their foundational narratives and participate in them in the present. These translations bring the past to the present, and the present to the past, making the members of the faith-communities themselves participants in the narratives of the scriptures. It also allows the characters of the narratives to speak to the faith-community, and the narratives to be events lived by the members of the faith-communities. Targumim has this very much as its goal, its τέλος, and Symmachus’s translation was no different.
A Final Thought: Dialogue through Liturgy

In 1979 the Nova Vulgata was promulgated for use in liturgy by John Paul II, superseding the use of the Vulgate after many centuries. While the Nova Vulgata is a beautiful translation in many ways, it also at times is limited in how it conveys the meaning behind scriptural passages. For example, Deuteronomy 33:8, which we have seen previously, is translated in a quite literalist fashion as:

De Levi quoque ait:

Tummim et Urim tui

viro sancto tuo,

quam probasti in Massa

et cum quo litigasti ad aquas Meriba.

Although this translation and style seeks to represent fairly the Hebrew, especially in a lyrical-musical rendering of the blessing, it does not provide the same context that Jerome applied to it, thanks to Symmachus. The replicated transliteration of ‘Tummim’, ‘Urim’, ‘Massa’ and ‘Meriba’ do not permit the audience easily to understand the significance of the event portrayed in the narrative. Rather, the audience is left more with an opaque image that is clouded by these obscure names. It does not contextualise the event pronounced in the blessing, something which is much stronger in the Vulgate.

In translations like this, important meanings are lost to the audience which would instead be available to members of other faith-communities with a clearer access to the targumim, such
as the Jewish people. Christians can risk being left with a weaker understanding of the scriptural narratives of the Hebrew Bible and even their significance when referred to in the New Testament. While it does not seem to be critical today, Christians could profit from reassessing the Vulgate, but specifically in light of its Jewish influences from Symmachus.

A new appraisal of Symmachus via Jerome could be a point of dialogue between Christians and Jews and help further our understanding of scriptural reasoning. This translator, once denigrated as being an Ebionite, might provide a new approach to understanding the scriptures in the life of Jesus Christ and the early Christians, and how the Jewish traditions affected them.
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