Septuagint

The **Septuagint** (from the Latin: *septuāgintā* literally "seventy"; often abbreviated as 70 in Roman numerals, i.e., LXX; sometimes called the **Greek Old Testament**) is the earliest extant Koine Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures.[1] It is estimated that the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Torah or Pentateuch, were translated in the mid-3rd century BCE and the remaining texts were translated in the 2nd century BCE.[2] The Septuagint was the Koine Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament and was in wide use by the time of Jesus and Paul of Tarsus because most Jews could no longer read Hebrew. For this reason it is quoted more often than the Hebrew Old Testament in the New Testament,[3][4] particularly in the Pauline epistles,[5] by the Apostolic Fathers, and later by the Greek Church Fathers.

The full title in Ancient Greek: Ἡ μετάφραση τῶν Ἑβδομήκοντα, lit. 'The Translation of the Seventy', derives from the story recorded in the Letter of Aristeas that the Septuagint was translated at the request of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–247 BCE) by 70 Jewish scholars or, according to later tradition, 72, with six scholars from each of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, who independently produced identical translations. The miraculous character of the Aristeas legend indicates the esteem in which the translation was held in the ancient Jewish diaspora and, later, early Christian circles.

A Greek translation was certainly in circulation among the Alexandrian Jews who were fluent in Greek but not in Hebrew.[6] The evidence of Egyptian papyri from the period have led most scholars to view as probable Aristeas's dating of the translation of the Pentateuch to the third century BCE. Whatever share the Ptolemaic court may have had in the translation, it satisfied a need felt by the Jewish community, among whom a knowledge of Hebrew was waning before the demands of every-day life.[7]

While there are other contemporaneous Greek versions of the Old Testament,[4] most did not survive except as fragments. Modern critical editions of the Septuagint are based on the Codices Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus.

Septuagint

Fragment of a Septuagint: A column of uncial book from 1 Esdras in the *Codex Vaticanus* c. 325–350 CE, the basis of Sir Lancelot Charles Lee Brenton's Greek edition and English translation

Also known as	LXX · Greek Old Testament
Date	c. 3rd century BCE
Language(s)	Koine Greek

Contents

Names

The name "Septuagint" is derived from the Latin phrase *versio septuaginta interpretum*, "translation of the seventy interpreters", in turn from the Ancient Greek: Ἡ μετάφραση τῶν Ἑβδομήκοντα, romanized: *hē metáphrasis tōn hebdomḗkonta*, lit. 'The Translation of the Seventy'.[8] However, it was not until the time of Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE) that the Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures came to be called by the Latin term *Septuaginta*.[9]

The Roman numeral LXX (seventy) is commonly used as an abbreviation, also 𝔊[10] or **G**.

From a Christianity-influenced perspective, it is sometimes called the "Greek Old Testament" as it is the earliest extant Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures from the original Hebrew and is quoted in the New Testament.

Composition

Jewish legend

Beginning of the Letter of Aristeas to Philocrates. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 11th century.

Seventy-two Jewish scholars were asked by the Greek King of Egypt Ptolemy II Philadelphus to translate the Torah from Biblical Hebrew into Greek for inclusion in the Library of Alexandria.[11]

This narrative is found in the pseudopigraphic Letter of Aristeas to his brother Philocrates[12] and is repeated by Philo of Alexandria, Josephus in Antiquities of the Jews,[13] and by various later sources including St. Augustine.[14] The story is also found in the Tractate Megillah of the Babylonian Talmud:

> King Ptolemy once gathered 72 Elders. He placed them in 72 chambers, each of them in a separate one, without revealing to them why they were summoned. He entered each one's room and said: "Write for me the Torah of Moshe, your teacher". God put it in the heart of each one to translate identically as all the others did.[15]

Philo of Alexandria, who relied extensively on the Septuagint,[4] claims that the number of scholars was chosen by selecting six scholars from each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

According to later rabbinic tradition, according to which the Greek translation was regarded as a distortion of the sacred text and thus not suitable for use in the synagogue, the Septuagint was handed in to Ptolemy on the date of an annual fast known as the Tenth of Tevet fast and also mourning for the Jewish people.[4]

History

The date of the 3rd century BCE is supported for the Torah translation by a number of factors including the Greek being representative of early Koine Greek, citations beginning as early as the 2nd century BCE, and early manuscripts datable to the 2nd century.[16]

After the Torah, other books were translated over the next two to three centuries. It is not altogether clear which was translated when or where; some may even have been translated twice into different versions and then revised.[17] The quality and style of the different translators also varied considerably from book to book from a literal translation to paraphrasing to an interpretative style.

The translation process of the Septuagint itself and from the Septuagint into other versions can be broken down into several distinct stages, during which the social milieu of the translators shifted from Hellenistic Judaism to Early Christianity. The translation of the Septuagint itself began in the 3rd century BCE and was completed by 132 BCE[18][19] initially in Alexandria but in time elsewhere as well.[8] The Septuagint is the basis for the Old Latin, Slavonic, Syriac, Old Armenian, Old Georgian, and Coptic versions of the Christian Old Testament.[20]

Language

The Septuagint is written in Koine Greek. Some sections of the Septuagint may contain Semiticisms, which are idioms and phrases based on Semitic languages like Hebrew and Aramaic.[21] Other books, such as Daniel and Proverbs, show Greek influence more strongly.[11]

The Septuagint may also elucidate pronunciation of pre-Masoretic Hebrew: many proper nouns are spelled out with Greek vowels in the translation, while contemporary Hebrew texts lacked vowel pointing. However, it is unlikely that all ancient Hebrew sounds had precise Greek equivalents.[22]

Differences regarding canonicity

As the work of translation progressed, the canon of the Greek Bible expanded. The Hebrew Bible, also called the Tanakh, has three divisions: the Torah (Law), the Nevi'im (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings). The Septuagint has four: law, history, poetry, and prophets, with the books of the Apocrypha inserted at appropriate locations.[2]

The Torah (Pentateuch in Greek) has held preeminence as the basis of the canon. It is not known when the Ketuvim (Writings), the final part of the Tanakh, were established, although some sort of selection process must have been utilised, because the Septuagint did not include other Jewish documents such as Enoch or Jubilees or other writings that do not form part of the Jewish canon, which are now classified as *pseudopigrapha*.

However, the Psalms of Solomon, 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, the Epistle of Jeremiah, the Book of Odes, the Prayer of Manasseh and Psalm 151 are included in some copies of the Septuagint,[23] some of which are accepted as canonical by Eastern Orthodox and some other churches.

The Septuagint includes books called *anagignoskomena* in Greek, known in English as deuterocanon, itself derived from the Greek words for "second canon", because they are not included in the Jewish canon. Among these are the first two books of Maccabees; Tobit; Judith; Wisdom of Solomon; Sirach; Baruch, including the Letter of Jeremiah; additions to Esther; and additions to Daniel. All of these books are considered by the Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodox Church as canonical books; to Protestantism, they are the Apocrypha. The Septuagint version of some Biblical books, like Daniel and Esther, are longer than those in the Masoretic Text.[24] Meanwhile, the Septuagint text of the Book of Jeremiah is shorter than the Masoretic text.[25]

Since Late Antiquity, mainstream rabbinic Judaism rejected the Septuagint as a valid Jewish scriptural text. Several reasons have been given for this. First, differences between the Hebrew and the Greek were found.[4] Second, the Hebrew source texts, in some cases, particularly the Book of Daniel, used for the Septuagint differed from the Masoretic tradition of Hebrew texts, which were affirmed as canonical by the rabbis. Third, the rabbis wanted to distinguish their tradition from the emerging tradition of Christianity, which frequently used the Septuagint.[4] Finally, the rabbis claimed for the Hebrew language a divine authority, in contrast to Aramaic or Greek. As a result of this teaching, other translations of the Torah into Koine Greek by early Jewish Rabbis have survived as rare fragments only.

In time the Septuagint became synonymous with the Greek Old Testament, a Christian canon of writings which incorporated all the books of the Hebrew canon, along with additional texts. The Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches include most of the books that are in the Septuagint in their canons. Protestant churches, however, usually do not. After the Protestant Reformation, many Protestant Bibles began to follow the Jewish canon and exclude the additional texts, which came to be called the Apocrypha, with some arguing against them being classified as Scripture.[26][27][28] The Apocrypha are included under a separate heading in the King James Version of the Bible.[29]

Deuterocanonical and Apocryphal books included in the Septuagint

Greek name [8][30][31]	Transliteration	English name
Deuterocanonical Books		
Τωβίτ (also called Τωβείτ or Τωβίθ in some sources.)	Tōbit (or Tōbeit or Tōbith)	Tobit or Tobias
Ἰουδίθ	Ioudith	Judith
Ἐσθήρ	Esthēr	Esther with additions
Μακκαβαίων Αʹ	1 Makkabaiōn	1 Maccabees
Μακκαβαίων Βʹ	2 Makkabaiōn	2 Maccabees
Σοφία Σαλομῶντος	Sophia Salomōntos	Wisdom or Wisdom of Solomon
Σοφία Ἰησοῦ Σειράχ	Sophia Iēsou Seirach	Sirach or Ecclesiasticus
Βαρούχ	Barouch	Baruch
Ἐπιστολὴ Ἰερεμίου	Epistolē Ieremiou	Letter of Jeremiah
Δανιήλ	Daniēl	Daniel with additions
Apocryphal Books		
Ἔσδρας Αʹ	1 Esdras	1 Esdras
Μακκαβαίων Γʹ	3 Makkabaiōn	3 Maccabees
Μακκαβαίων Δ' Παράρτημα	4 Makkabaiōn	4 Maccabees[32]
Ψαλμός ΡΝΑʹ	Psalmos 151	Psalm 151
Προσευχὴ Μανασσῆ	Proseuchē Manassē	Prayer of Manasseh
Ψαλμοί Σαλομῶντος	Psalmoi Salomōntos	Psalms of Solomon[33]

Final form

All the books of western biblical canons of the Old Testament are found in the Septuagint, although the order does not always coincide with the Western ordering of the books. The Septuagint order for the Old Testament is evident in the earliest Christian Bibles, which were written in the 4th century AD.[11]

Some books that are set apart in the Masoretic Text are grouped together. For example, the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings are in the Septuagint one book in four parts called Βασιλειῶν ("Of Reigns"). In the Septuagint the Books of Chronicles supplement Reigns, and it is called Παραλειπομένων ("Of Things Left Out"). The Septuagint organizes the minor prophets as twelve parts of one Book of Twelve.[11]

Some scriptures of ancient origin are found in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew Bible. These additional books are Tobit; Judith; Wisdom of Solomon; Wisdom of Jesus son of Sirach; Baruch along with the Letter of Jeremiah, which later became chapter six of Baruch in the Vulgate; additions to Daniel, namely The Prayer of Azarias, the Song of the Three Children, Susanna, and Bel and the Dragon; additions to Esther; 1 Maccabees; 2 Maccabees; 3 Maccabees; 4 Maccabees; 1 Esdras; Odes, including the Prayer of Manasseh; the Psalms of Solomon; and Psalm 151.

Despite this, there are fragments of some deuterocanonical books that have been found in Hebrew among the Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran

Sirach, whose text in Hebrew was already known from the Cairo Geniza, has been found in two scrolls (2QSir or 2Q18, 11QPs_a or 11Q5) in Hebrew. Another Hebrew scroll of Sirach has been found in Masada (MasSir).[34]:597 Five fragments from the Book of Tobit have been found in Qumran, four written in Aramaic and one written in Hebrew (papyri 4Q, nos. 196-200).[34]:636 Psalm 151 appears along with a number of canonical and non-canonical psalms in the Dead Sea scroll 11QPs(a) (named also *11Q5*), a first-century CE scroll discovered in 1956.[35] This scroll contains two short Hebrew psalms which scholars now agree served as the basis for Psalm 151.[34]:585–586

The canonical acceptance of these books varies among different Christian traditions. For more information regarding these books, see the articles Biblical apocrypha, Biblical canon, Books of the Bible, and Deuterocanonical books.

Incorporations from Theodotion

In the most ancient copies of the Bible, which contain the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, the Book of Daniel is not the original Septuagint version but instead is a copy of Theodotion's translation from the Hebrew, which more closely resembles the Masoretic text. The Septuagint version was discarded in favor of Theodotion's version in the 2nd to 3rd centuries CE. In Greek-speaking areas, this happened near the end of the 2nd century; and in Latin-speaking areas, at least in North Africa, it occurred in the middle of the 3rd century. History does not record the reason for this. St. Jerome reports in the preface to the Vulgate version of Daniel, "This thing 'just' happened". Several Old Greek texts of the Book of Daniel have been discovered recently, and work is ongoing in reconstructing the original form of the book.[11]

The canonical Ezra–Nehemiah is known in the Septuagint as "Esdras B", and 1 Esdras is "Esdras A". 1 Esdras is a very similar text to the books of Ezra-Nehemiah, and the two are thought to be derived from the same original text. It has been proposed that "Esdras B" is Theodotion's version of this material, and "Esdras A" is the version which was previously in the Septuagint on its own.

Use

Jewish use

The pre-Christian Jews Philo and Josephus considered the Septuagint on equal standing with the Hebrew text.[11][36] Manuscripts of the Septuagint have been found among the Qumran Scrolls in the Dead Sea and were thought to have been in use among Jews at the time.

Starting approximately in the 2nd century CE, several factors led most Jews to abandon use of the Septuagint. The earliest gentile Christians used the Septuagint out of necessity, as it was at the time the only Greek version of the Bible and most, if not all, of these early non-Jewish Christians could not read Hebrew. The association of the Septuagint with a rival religion may have rendered it suspect in the eyes of the newer generation of Jews and Jewish scholars.[20] Instead, Jews used Hebrew or Aramaic Targum manuscripts later compiled by the Masoretes and authoritative Aramaic translations, such as those of Onkelos and Rabbi Yonathan ben Uziel.[37]

What was perhaps most significant for the Septuagint, as distinct from other Greek versions, was that the Septuagint began to lose Jewish sanction after differences between it and contemporary Hebrew scriptures were discovered (see Differences regarding canonicity). Even Greek-speaking Jews tended less to the Septuagint, preferring other Jewish versions in Greek, such as the translation by Aquila, which seemed to be more concordant with contemporary Hebrew texts.[20]

Christian use

The Early Christian Church used the Greek texts[4] since Greek was a *lingua franca* of the Roman Empire at the time and the language of the Greco-Roman Church, Aramaic being the language of Syriac Christianity.

The relationship between the apostolic use of the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts is complicated. The Septuagint seems to have been a major source for the Apostles, but it is not the only one. St. Jerome offered, for example, Matthew 2:15 and 2:23, John 19:37, John 7:38, and 1 Corinthians 2:9[38] as examples not found in the Septuagint but in Hebrew texts. Matthew 2:23 is not present in current Masoretic tradition either, though according to St. Jerome it was in Hosea 11:1. The New Testament writers, when citing the Jewish scriptures or quoting Jesus doing so, freely used the Greek translation, implying that Jesus, his apostles, and their followers considered it reliable.[5][21][4]

In the early Christian Church, the presumption that the Septuagint was translated by Jews before the era of Christ and that the Septuagint at certain places gives itself more to a Christological interpretation than 2nd-century Hebrew texts was taken as evidence that "Jews" had changed the Hebrew text in a way that made them less Christological. For example, Irenaeus writes concerning Isaiah 7:14 that the Septuagint clearly writes of a *virgin* (Greek *παρθένος*, *bethulah* in Hebrew) that shall conceive,[39] while the word *almah* in the Hebrew text was, according to Irenaeus, at that time interpreted by Theodotion and Aquila, both proselytes of the Jewish faith, as a *young woman* that shall conceive. According to Irenaeus, the Ebionites used this to claim that Joseph was the biological father of Jesus. From Irenaeus' point of view that was pure heresy, facilitated by late anti-Christian alterations of the scripture in Hebrew, as evident by the older, pre-Christian Septuagint.[40]

When Jerome undertook the revision of the Old Latin translations of the Septuagint, he checked the Septuagint in contrast to the Hebrew texts that were then available. He broke with church tradition and translated most of the Old Testament of his Vulgate from Hebrew rather than Greek. His choice was severely criticized by Augustine, his contemporary.[41] While on the one hand he argued for the superiority of the Hebrew texts in correcting the Septuagint on both philological and theological grounds, on the other, in the context of accusations of heresy against him, Jerome would acknowledge the Septuagint texts as well.[42] With the passage of time, acceptance of Jerome's version gradually increased until it displaced the Old Latin translations of the Septuagint.[20]

The Eastern Orthodox Church still prefers to use the Septuagint as the basis for translating the Old Testament into other languages. The Eastern Orthodox Church also uses the Septuagint untranslated where Greek is the liturgical language. Critical translations of the Old Testament, while using the Masoretic Text as their basis, consult the Septuagint as well as other versions in an attempt to reconstruct the meaning of the Hebrew text whenever the latter is unclear, undeniably corrupt, or ambiguous.[20] For example, the New Jerusalem Bible Foreword says, "Only when this (the Masoretic Text) presents insuperable difficulties

have emendations or other versions, such as the ... LXX, been used."[43] The Translator's Preface to the New International Version says: "The translators also consulted the more important early versions (including) the Septuagint ... Readings from these versions were occasionally followed where the MT seemed doubtful ..."[44]

Textual history

Table of books

Greek name [8][30][a]	Transliteration	English name
Law		
Γένεσις	Genesis	Genesis
Ἔξοδος	Exodos	Exodus
Λευϊτικόν	Leuitikon	Leviticus
Ἀριθμοί	Arithmoi	Numbers
Δευτερονόμιον	Deuteronomion	Deuteronomy
History		
Ἰησοῦς Ναυῆ	Iēsous Nauē	Joshua
Κριταί	Kritai	Judges
Ῥούθ	Routh	Ruth
Βασιλειῶν Α′[b]	1 Basileiōn	Kings I (I Samuel)
Βασιλειῶν Β′	2 Basileiōn	Kings II (II Samuel)
Βασιλειῶν Γ′	3 Basileiōn	Kings III (I Kings)
Βασιλειῶν Δ′	4 Basileiōn	Kings IV (2 Kings)
Παραλειπομένων Α′	I Paraleipomenōn[c]	Chronicles I
Παραλειπομένων Β′	2 Paraleipomenōn	Chronicles II
Ἔσδρας Α′	1 Esdras	Esdras I
Ἔσδρας Β′	2 Esdras	Esdras II (Ezra-Nehemiah)
Τωβίτ[d]	Tōbit[e]	Tobit
Ἰουδίθ	Ioudith	Judith
Ἐσθήρ	Esthēr	Esther with additions
Μακκαβαίων Α′	1 Makkabaiōn	Maccabees I
Μακκαβαίων Β′	2 Makkabaiōn	Maccabees II
Μακκαβαίων Γ′	3 Makkabaiōn	Maccabees III
Wisdom		
Ψαλμοί	Psalmoi	Psalms
Ψαλμός ΡΝΑ′	Psalmos 151	Psalm 151
Προσευχὴ Μανασσῆ	Proseuchē Manassē	Prayer of Manasseh
Ἰώβ	Iōb	Job
Παροιμίαι	Paroimiai	Proverbs
Ἐκκλησιαστής	Ekklēsiastēs	Ecclesiastes
Ἆσμα Ἀσμάτων	Asma Asmatōn	Song of Songs or Song of Solomon or Canticle of Canticles
Σοφία Σαλομῶντος	Sophia Salomōntos	Wisdom or Wisdom of Solomon
Σοφία Ἰησοῦ Σειράχ	Sophia Iēsou Seirach	Sirach or Ecclesiasticus
Ψαλμοί Σαλομῶντος	Psalmoi Salomōntos	Psalms of Solomon[45]
Prophets		
Δώδεκα	**Dōdeka**	**Minor Prophets**
Ὡσηέ Α′	I. Hōsēe	Hosea
Ἀμώς Β′	II. Āmōs	Amos

Μιχαίας Γ′	III. Michaias	Micah
Ἰωήλ Δ′	IV. Iōēl	Joel
Ὀβδιού Ε′[f]	V. Obdiou	Obadiah
Ἰωνᾶς Ϛ'	VI. Iōnas	Jonah
Ναούμ Ζ′	VII. Naoum	Nahum
Ἀμβακούμ Η′	VIII. Ambakoum	Habakkuk
Σοφονίας Θ′	IX. Sophonias	Zephaniah
Ἀγγαῖος Ι′	X. Angaios	Haggai
Ζαχαρίας ΙΑ′	XI. Zacharias	Zachariah
Μαλαχίας ΙΒ′	XII. Malachias	Malachi
Ἠσαΐας	Ēsaias	Isaiah
Ἰερεμίας	Hieremias	Jeremiah
Βαρούχ	Barouch	Baruch
Θρῆνοι	Thrēnoi	Lamentations
Ἐπιστολὴ Ἰερεμίου	Epistolē Ieremiou	Letter of Jeremiah
Ἰεζεκιήλ	Iezekiēl	Ezekiel
Δανιήλ	Daniēl	Daniel with additions
Appendix		
Μακκαβαίων Δ' Παράρτημα	4 Makkabaiōn	4 Maccabees[g]

Textual analysis

Modern scholarship holds that the Septuagint was written during the 3rd through 1st centuries BCE; but nearly all attempts at dating specific books, with the exception of the Pentateuch (early- to mid-3rd century BCE), are tentative and without consensus.[11]

The inter-relationship between various significant ancient manuscripts of the Old Testament (some identified by their siglum). LXX here denotes the original Septuagint.

Later Jewish revisions and recensions of the Greek against the Hebrew are well attested, the most famous of which include *the Three:* Aquila (128 CE), Symmachus, and Theodotion. These three, to varying degrees, are more literal renderings of their contemporary Hebrew scriptures as compared to the Old Greek, the original Septuagint. Modern scholars consider one or more of the 'three' to be totally new Greek versions of the Hebrew Bible.

Around 235 CE, Origen, a Christian scholar in Alexandria, completed the Hexapla, a comprehensive comparison of the ancient versions and Hebrew text side-by-side in six columns, with diacritical markings ("editor's marks", "critical signs", or "Aristarchian signs"). Much of this work is lost, but several compilations of the fragments are available. In the first column was the contemporary Hebrew, in the second a Greek transliteration of it, then the newer Greek versions each in their own columns. Origen also kept a column for the Old Greek (the Septuagint), which included readings from all the Greek versions into a critical apparatus with diacritical marks indicating to which version each line (Gr. στίχος) belonged. Perhaps the voluminous Hexapla was never copied in its entirety, but Origen's combined text ("the fifth column") was copied frequently, eventually without the editing marks, and the older uncombined text of the Septuagint was neglected. Thus this combined text became the first major Christian recension of the Septuagint, often called the *Hexaplar recension*. In the century following Origen, two other major recensions were identified by Jerome, who attributed these to Lucian (Lucianic or Antiochene recension) and Hesychius (Hesychian or Alexandrian recension).[11]

Manuscripts

The oldest manuscripts of the Septuagint include 2nd century BCE fragments of Leviticus and Deuteronomy (Rahlfs nos. 801, 819, and 957), and 1st century BCE fragments of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and the Minor Prophets (Alfred Rahlfs nos. 802, 803, 805, 848, 942, and 943). Relatively complete manuscripts of the Septuagint postdate the Hexaplar recension and include the Codex Vaticanus from the 4th century CE and the Codex Alexandrinus of the 5th century. These are indeed the oldest surviving nearly complete manuscripts of the Old Testament in any language; the oldest extant complete Hebrew texts date some 600 years later, from the first half of the 10th century.[20] The 4th century Codex Sinaiticus also partially survives, still containing many texts of the Old Testament.[46] While there are differences between these three codices, scholarly consensus today holds that one Septuagint—that is, the original pre-Christian translation—underlies all three. The various Jewish and later Christian revisions and recensions are largely responsible for the divergence of the codices.[11] The Codex Marchalianus is another notable manuscript.

Differences with the Latin Vulgate and the Masoretic text

The sources of the many differences between the Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate and the Masoretic Text have long been discussed by scholars. Following the Renaissance, a common opinion among some humanists was that the Septuagint translators bungled the translation from the Hebrew and that the Septuagint became more corrupt with time. The most widely accepted view today is that the Septuagint provides a reasonably accurate record of an early Hebrew textual variant that differed from the ancestor of the Masoretic text as well as those of the Latin Vulgate, where both of the latter seem to have a more similar textual heritage. This view is supported by comparisons with Biblical texts found at the Essene settlement at Qumran (the Dead Sea Scrolls).

These issues notwithstanding, the text of the Septuagint is generally close to that of the Masoretes and Vulgate. For example, Genesis 4:1–6 is identical in both the Septuagint, Vulgate and the Masoretic Text. Likewise, Genesis 4:8 to the end of the chapter is the same. There is only one noticeable difference in that chapter, at 4:7, to wit:

Genesis 4:7, LXX and English Translation (NETS)	Genesis 4:7, Masoretic and English Translation from MT (Judaica Press)	Genesis 4:7, Latin Vulgate and English Translation (Douay-Rheims)
οὐκ ἐὰν ὀρθῶς προσενέγκῃς, ὀρθῶς δὲ μὴ διέλῃς, ἥμαρτες; ἡσύχασον· πρὸς σὲ ἡ ἀποστροφὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ σὺ ἄρξεις αὐτοῦ. If you offer correctly but do not divide correctly, have you not sinned? Be still; his recourse is to you, and you will rule over him.	הֲלוֹא אִם תֵּיטִיב שְׂאֵת וְאִם לֹא תֵּיטִיב לַפֶּתַח חַטָּאת רֹבֵץ וְאֵלֶיךָ תְּשׁוּקָתוֹ וְאַתָּה תִּמְשָׁל בּוֹ׃ Is it not so that if you improve, it will be forgiven you? If you do not improve, however, at the entrance, sin is lying, and to you is its longing, but you can rule over it.	nonne si bene egeris, recipies : sin autem male, statim in foribus peccatum aderit? sed sub te erit appetitus ejus, et tu dominaberis illius. If thou do well, shalt thou not receive? but if ill, shall not sin forthwith be present at the door? but the lust thereof shall be under thee, and thou shalt have dominion over it.

This instance illustrates the complexity of assessing differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text as well as the Vulgate. Despite the striking divergence of meaning here between the Septuagint and later texts, nearly identical consonantal Hebrew source texts can be reconstructed. The readily apparent semantic differences result from alternative strategies for interpreting the difficult verse and relate to differences in vowelization and punctuation of the consonantal text.

The differences between the Septuagint and the MT thus fall into four categories.[47]

1. *Different Hebrew sources for the MT and the Septuagint*. Evidence of this can be found throughout the Old Testament. Most obvious are major differences in Jeremiah and Job, where the Septuagint is much shorter and chapters appear in different order than in the MT, and Esther where almost one third of the verses in the Septuagint text have no parallel in the MT. A more subtle example may be found in Isaiah 36:11; the meaning ultimately remains the same, but the choice of words evidences a different text. The MT reads *"...al tedaber yehudit be-'ozne ha`am al ha-homa"* [speak not the Judean language in the ears of (or—which can be heard by) the people on the wall]. The same verse in the Septuagint reads, according to the translation of Brenton: "and speak not to us in the Jewish tongue: and wherefore speakest thou in the ears of the men on the wall." The MT reads "people" where the Septuagint reads "men". This difference is very minor and does not affect the meaning of the verse. Scholars at one time had used discrepancies such as this to claim that the Septuagint was a poor translation of the Hebrew original. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, variant Hebrew texts of the Bible were found. In fact this verse is found in Qumran (1QIsa*a*) where the Hebrew word "haanashim" (the men) is found in place of "haam" (the people). This discovery, and others like it, showed that even seemingly minor differences of translation could be the result of variant Hebrew source texts.
2. *Differences in interpretation* stemming from the same Hebrew text. A good example is Genesis 4:7, shown above.
3. *Differences as a result of idiomatic translation issues* (i.e. a Hebrew idiom may not easily translate into Greek, thus some difference is intentionally or unintentionally imparted). For example, in Psalm 47:10 the MT reads "The shields of the earth belong to God". The Septuagint reads "To God are the mighty ones of the earth." The metaphor "shields" would not have made much sense to a Greek speaker; thus the words "mighty ones" are substituted in order to retain the original meaning.
4. *Transmission changes in Hebrew or Greek* (Diverging revisionary/recensional changes and copyist errors)

Dead Sea Scrolls

The Biblical manuscripts found in Qumran, commonly known as the Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS), have prompted comparisons of the various texts associated with the Hebrew Bible, including the Septuagint.[48] Emanuel Tov, editor of the scrolls,[49] identifies five broad variation categories of DSS texts:[50]

1. Proto-Masoretic: This consists of a stable text and numerous and distinctive agreements with the Masoretic Text. About 60% of the Biblical scrolls fall into this category (e.g. 1QIsa-b)
2. Pre-Septuagint: These are the manuscripts which have distinctive affinities with the Greek Bible. These number only about 5% of the Biblical scrolls, for example, 4QDeut-q, 4QSam-a, and 4QJer-b, 4QJer-d. In addition to these manuscripts, several others share distinctive individual readings with the Septuagint, although they do not fall in this category.
3. The Qumran "Living Bible": These are the manuscripts which, according to Tov, were copied in accordance with the "Qumran practice" (i.e. with distinctive long orthography and morphology, frequent errors and corrections, and a free approach to the text. Such scrolls comprise about 20% of the Biblical corpus, including the Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa-a):
4. Pre-Samaritan: These are DSS manuscripts which reflect the textual form found in the Samaritan Pentateuch, although the Samaritan Bible itself is later and contains information not found in these earlier scrolls, (e.g. God's holy mountain at Shechem rather than Jerusalem). The Qumran witnesses—which are characterized by orthographic corrections and harmonizations with parallel texts elsewhere in the Pentateuch—comprise about 5% of the Biblical scrolls. (e.g. 4QpaleoExod-m)
5. Non-Aligned: This is a category which shows no consistent alignment with any of the other four text-types. These number approximately 10% of the Biblical scrolls, and include 4QDeut-b, 4QDeut-c, 4QDeut-h, 4QIsa-c, and 4QDan-a.[50][51][h]

The textual sources present a variety of readings. For example, Bastiaan Van Elderen compares three variations of Deuteronomy 32:43, the Song of Moses.[49]

Deuteronomy 32.43, Masoretic	Deuteronomy 32.43, Qumran	Deuteronomy 32.43, Septuagint
1 Shout for joy, O nations, with his people	**1 Shout for joy, O heavens, with him**	**1 Shout for joy, O heavens, with him**
-------	**2 And worship him, all you divine ones**	**2 And let all the sons of God worship him**

-------	-------	**3 Shout for joy, O nations, with his people**
-------	-------	**4 And let all the angels of God be strong in him**
2 For he will avenge the blood of his servants	**3 For he will avenge the blood of his sons**	**5 Because he avenges the blood of his sons**
3 And will render vengeance to his adversaries	**4 And he will render vengeance to his adversaries**	**6 And he will avenge and recompense justice to his enemies**
-------	**5 And he will recompense the ones hating him**	**7 And he will recompense the ones hating**
4 And will purge his land, his people.	**6 And he purges the land of his people.**	**8 And the Lord will cleanse the land of his people.**

Printed editions

The texts of all printed editions are derived from the three recensions mentioned above, that of Origen, Lucian, or Hesychius.

- The *editio princeps* is the Complutensian Polyglot. It was based on manuscripts that are now lost and is one of the received texts used for the KJV like Textus Receptus, and seems to transmit quite early readings.[52]
- Brian Walton Polyglot is one of the few versions that includes a Septuagint not based on the Egyptian Alexandria type text such as Vaticanus, Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus, but rather follows the vast majority which extremely agree like the Complutensian Polyglot.
- The Aldine edition (begun by Aldus Manutius) appeared at Venice in 1518. The text is closer to Codex Vaticanus than the Complutensian. The editor says he collated ancient manuscripts but does not specify them. It has been reprinted several times.
- The Roman or Sixtine Septuagint,[53] which uses Codex Vaticanus as the base texts and various other later manuscripts for the lacunae in the uncial manuscript. It was published in 1587 under the direction of Cardinal Antonio Carafa, with the help of a group of Roman scholars (Cardinal Gugliemo Sirleto, Antonio Agelli and Petrus Morinus), by the authority of Sixtus V, to assist the revisers who were preparing the Latin Vulgate edition ordered by the Council of Trent. It has become the textus receptus of the Greek Old Testament and has had many new editions, such as that of Robert Holmes and James Parsons (Oxford, 1798–1827), the seven editions of Constantin von Tischendorf, which appeared at Leipzig between 1850 and 1887, the last two, published after the death of the author and revised by Nestle, the four editions of Henry Barclay Swete (Cambridge, 1887–95, 1901, 1909), etc. A detailed description of this edition has been made by H. B. Swete in his *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (1900), pp. 174–182.
- Grabe's edition was published at Oxford, from 1707 to 1720, and reproduced, but imperfectly, the Codex Alexandrinus of London. For partial editions, see Fulcran Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible*, 1643 sqq.
- Alfred Rahlfs, a longtime Septuagint researcher at the University of Göttingen, began a manual edition of the Septuagint in 1917 or 1918. The completed *Septuaginta* was published in 1935. It relies mainly on Vaticanus, Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus, and presents a critical apparatus with variants from these and several other sources.[54]
- The Göttingen Septuagint *(Vetus Testamentum Graecum: Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum)* is a major critical version, comprising multiple volumes published from 1931 to 2009 and not yet complete (the largest missing parts are the history books Joshua through Chronicles except Ruth, and the Solomonic books Proverbs through Song of Songs). Its two critical apparatuses present variant Septuagint readings and variants from other Greek versions.[55]
- In 2006, a revision of Alfred Rahlfs's *Septuaginta* was published by the German Bible Society. This *editio altera* includes over a thousand changes to the text and apparatus.[56]
- Apostolic Bible Polyglot contains a Septuagint text derived mainly from the agreement of any two of the Complutensian Polyglot, the Sixtine, and the Aldine texts.[57]

English translations

The Septuagint has been translated only a few times into English.

The first one, which excluded the Apocrypha, was Charles Thomson's in 1808, which was subsequently revised and enlarged by C.A. Muses in 1954 and published by The Falcon's Wing Press.

The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English translated by Sir Lancelot Brenton 1854. For most of the years since its publication it has been the only one readily available, and has continually been in print. It is based primarily upon the Codex Vaticanus and contains the Greek and English texts in parallel columns. It has on average four footnoted transliterated words per page, abbreviated by "*Alex*." and "*GK*." Updating the English of Brenton's translation, there is a revision of the Brenton Septuagint available, called *The Complete Apostles' Bible*, translated by Paul W. Esposito, Th.D, and released in 2007. It uses the Masoretic Text in the 23rd Psalm, and possibly other places, although it removed the apocrypha.

A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title (NETS), an academic translation based on the New Revised Standard version (which is Masoretic Text) was published by the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS) in October 2007.

The *Apostolic Bible Polyglot*, published in 2003 is not a translation *per se*, but actually a Greek- English Interlinear Septuagint useful in conjunction with the re-print of Brenton's translation. It includes the Greek books of the Hebrew canon, (i.e. without the Apocrypha), along with the Greek New Testament, all numerically coded to the AB-Strong numbering system, and set in monotonic orthography. Included in the printed edition is a concordance and index.

The *Orthodox Study Bible* was released in early 2008 with a new translation of the Septuagint based on the Alfred Rahlfs edition of the Greek text. To this base they brought two additional major sources: first the Brenton translation of the Septuagint from 1851, and, second, the New King James Version text in the places where the translation of the Septuagint would match that of the Hebrew Masoretic text. This edition includes the New Testament as well, which also uses the New King James Version; and it includes, further, extensive commentary from an Eastern Orthodox perspective.[58]

Father Nicholas King, SJ completed a Catholic translation of the Septuagint into English. It is titled *The Old Testament* (volumes 1 through 4), and *The Bible* in hardcover and presentation editions.[59]

Brenton's Septuagint, Restored Names Version, (SRNV) is a two volume editing primarily based on Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton's translation. The Hebrew Names restoration is based on the Westminster Leningrad Codex with the prime focus being the restoration of the Divine Name. It is rendered in Modern English yet remains faithful to Brenton's translation. Additionally it features extensive Hebrew and Greek footnotes.

The *Eastern Orthodox Bible* (EOB, in progress) is an extensive revision and correction of Brenton's translation which was primarily based on Codex Vaticanus. Its language and syntax have been modernized and simplified. It also includes extensive introductory material and footnotes featuring significant inter-LXX and LXX/MT variants.

Holy Orthodox Bible by Peter A. Papoutsis and the Michael Asser English translation of the Septuagint. Both the HOB and the Asser English translations are based on the Church of Greece's Septuagint text.

Society and journal

The International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies (IOSCS)—a non-profit, learned society—promotes international research in and study of the Septuagint and related texts [60]

In 2006, IOSCS declared February 8 "International Septuagint Day", a day to promote the discipline on campuses and in communities.[61] The Organization also publishes the *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies*.[62]

See also

- Book of Job in Byzantine illuminated manuscripts

- Brenton's English Translation of the Septuagint
- Dead Sea Scrolls–some of the Dead Sea Scrolls are witnesses to the LXX text.
- Documentary hypothesis–discusses the theoretical recensional history of the Torah/Pentateuch in Hebrew.
- *La Bible d'Alexandrie*
- Samareitikon

Notes

a. The canon of the original Old Greek LXX is disputed. This table reflects the canon of the Old Testament as used currently in Orthodoxy.
b. Βασιλειῶν (Basileiōn) is the genitive plural of Βασιλεία (Basileia).
c. That is, *Things set aside* from Ἔσδρας Αʹ.
d. also called Τωβείτ or Τωβίθ in some sources.
e. or Tōbeit or Tōbith
f. Obdiou is genitive from "The vision *of* Obdias", which opens the book.
g. Originally placed after 3 Maccabees and before Psalms, but placed in an appendix of the Orthodox Canon
h. Note that these percentages are disputed. Other scholars credit the Proto-Masoretic texts with only 40%, and posit larger contributions from Qumran-style and non-aligned texts. The Canon Debate, McDonald & Sanders editors, 2002, chapter 6: Questions of Canon through the Dead Sea Scrolls by James C. VanderKam, page 94, citing private communication with Emanuel Tov on biblical manuscripts: Qumran scribe type c.25%, proto-Masoretic Text c. 40%, pre-Samaritan texts c.5%, texts close to the Hebrew model for the Septuagint c.5% and nonaligned c.25%.

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External links

General

- The Septuagint Online (http://www.kalvesmaki.com/LXX/) – Comprehensive site with scholarly discussion and links to texts and translations
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- Septuagint/Old Greek Texts and Translations (http://www.kalvesmaki.com/LXX/texts.htm) LXX finder, listing dozens of editions, both print and digital, in various languages and formats. A good place to start.
- Elpenor's Bilingual (Greek / English) Septuagint Old Testament (http://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/default.asp) Greek text (full polytonic unicode version) and English translation side by side. Greek text as used by the Orthodox Churches.
- Titus Text Collection: Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes (http://titus.fkidg1.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/grie/sept/sept.htm) (advanced research tool)
- Septuagint published by the Church of Greece (http://www.apostoliki-diakonia.gr/bible/bible.asp?contents=old_testament/contents.asp&main=OldTes)
- Plain text of the whole LXX (http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/gopher/text/religion/biblical/lxxmorph/)

- Bible Resource Pages (http://www.katapi.org.uk) – contains Septuagint texts (with diacritics) side-by-side with English translations
- The Septuagint in Greek (http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~hancock/sept.zip) as a Microsoft Word document. Introduction and book abbreviations in Latin. Non-free Antioch (Vusillus Old Face, Vusillus) (http://www.users.dircon.co.uk/~hancock/antioch.htm) TrueType font file required.
- The New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS), electronic edition (http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/)
- EOB: Eastern / Greek Orthodox Bible: includes comprehensive introductory materials dealing with Septuagintal issues and an Old Testament which is an extensive revision of the Brenton with footnotes. (https://archive.today/20121218210540/http://www.orthodox-church.info/eob/)
- The Holy Orthodox Bible translated by Peter A. Papoutsis (http://www.peterpapoutsis.com/) from the Septuagint (LXX) and the Official Greek New Testament text of the Ecumenical Patriarch.
- LXX2012: Septuagint in American English 2012 (http://www.ebible.org/eng-lxx2012/index.htm) – The Septuagint with Apocrypha, translated from Greek to English by Sir Lancelot C. L. Brenton and published in 1885, with some language updates by Michael Paul Johnson in 2012 (American English)

The LXX and the NT

- Septuagint references in NT (https://web.archive.org/web/20040602211822/http://www.scripturecatholic.com/septuagint.html) by John Salza
- An Apology for the Septuagint (https://books.google.com/books?id=UakGAAAAQAAJ&printsec=titlepage) – by Edward William Grinfield

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