

February 1994

Frank W. Nelte

THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION (LXX) OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

(Edited and additional quotations supplied in December 2003)

Over the years I have heard many claims made for the LXX translation of the Old Testament. It is claimed by some people that the LXX is a superior version to the Hebrew language Masoretic Text of the Old Testament.

Such claims are usually intended to confer a certain amount of authority to the Greek language LXX translation of the Old Testament. Taken to its logical conclusion, the inference is made that this Greek translation of the Old Testament is actually **BETTER THAN THE ORIGINAL IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE!**

It should be immediately apparent to anyone that any translation into any language can **NEVER** be "better" than the version God originally inspired in the Hebrew language. **WHY** would God possibly have inspired the whole Old Testament in the Hebrew language, if God somehow felt that **A GREEK TRANSLATION** from this original Hebrew text is actually "better than the original"?

Didn't God in Old Testament times use the Hebrew words He **WANTED** to use? Does the Greek translation of the Old Testament somehow express God's feelings **BETTER** than God was able to do when He inspired those thoughts in the Hebrew language?

A translation from the original text **CANNOT** possibly be better than the original. In those places where the translation differs from the original, the original text must always be given priority.

Anyway, let's examine the facts regarding the LXX translation of the Old Testament.

QUOTATIONS FROM THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA

The following quotations are from the 1958 edition, Volume 20, Article "SEPTUAGINT, THE", from pages 335 - 336. The emphasis in all of the following quotations is mine.

"Its (i.e. the LXX) critical value is unfortunately greatly impaired by **THE CORRUPT STATE OF ITS OWN TEXT.**"

"The Hebrew text from which the LXX translators worked was often divergent from that represented by the Masoretic text, but we need not assume that in cases of difference the Greek is to be preferred. **THE LXX TRANSLATORS MADE SOME PALPABLE MISTAKES; THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF HEBREW WAS OFTEN INADEQUATE; THEY OCCASIONALLY INTERPRETED AS WELL AS TRANSLATED, AND THEY SOMETIMES INTRODUCED LOCAL COLOUR.**"

These quotations show that the LXX is totally corrupt and unreliable!

Here are some more facts paraphrased from the Britannica article:

- 1) The LXX does not follow the Hebrew tripartite division but changes the order of the books to the categories of Law, History, Poetry and Prophecy.
- 2) The chief uncial Mss (i.e. written on parchment in semi-capital style letter, which were used for the N.T. till about 800 A.D. and of which about 300 exist today) are "A" and "B", both of Egyptian origin and yet they "vary considerably" from each other. "A" is Codex Alexandrinus and "B" is Codex Vaticanus. Both contain most of the O.T. and N.T. and their O.T. text is the LXX text.
- 3) The original LXX text of the Book of Job was very much shorter than the Hebrew text ... the translator left large portions out!
- 4) In the books of Esther and Daniel the LXX has NUMEROUS ADDITIONS, which are not found in the Hebrew text. Who authorised these additions?
- 5) The LXX frequently changes the order of the text, especially in Jeremiah chapters 25 - 51. That sounds just like Moffatt's English translation, doesn't it?
- 6) The two chief LXX mss of the book of Judges vary very much from each other. Which one is to be trusted?
- 7) There is no authentic LXX version available today ... ANYWHERE! That is, if there ever was such a thing as an "authentic" LXX version.
- 8) Today's LXX actually has Theodotion's translation of the book of Daniel in it. Why did the original translation of the book of Daniel have to be dropped? Theodotion, a Hellenistic Jewish scholar made his translation around 180 - 190 A.D. That's about 400 years after the LXX translation was supposedly made.
- 9) The LXX text of Jeremiah very clearly has two different authors. The first author translated chapters 1 - 28; the rest was done by a different person.
- 10) The LXX text preserves several non-canonical books, known as apocryphal books. On what authority are such books included with the Word of God?

These facts, which can be verified in the Britannica, again make the point that there is nothing inspired about the LXX translation, and that it is a poor quality rendition of the Hebrew scriptures.

THE LETTER OF ARISTEAS

THE ONLY "EVIDENCE" that such a "Septuagint" translation was ever made is based on a pseudepigraphical document entitled "LETTER OF ARISTEAS TO PHILOCRATES".

"Pseudepigraphical" means: ascribing false names of authors to works! Scholars today very readily recognize that this letter was not written by anyone named "ARISTEAS" at all! This forgery was made for the express purpose of deceiving people about the exact origin of the Greek translations of the Hebrew scriptures that were extant at the time this pseudepigraphical letter was written.

Here is a quotation about this letter from the 2003 Encyclopedia Britannica (CD ROM version):

This is from the section "Biblical Literature, Old Testament canon, texts and versions:

"The Septuagint (LXX)

The story of the Greek translation of the Pentateuch is told in the Letter of Aristeas, which purports to be a contemporary document written by Aristeas, a Greek official at the Egyptian court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285–246 BCE). It recounts how the law of the Jews was translated into Greek by Jewish scholars sent from Jerusalem at the request of the king.

THIS NARRATIVE, repeated in one form or another by Philo and rabbinic sources, is FULL OF INACCURACIES THAT PROVE THAT THE AUTHOR WAS AN ALEXANDRIAN JEW WRITING WELL AFTER THE EVENTS HE DESCRIBED HAD TAKEN PLACE. The Septuagint Pentateuch, which is all that is discussed, does, however, constitute an independent corpus within the Greek Bible, and it was probably first translated as a unit by a company of scholars in Alexandria about the middle of the 3rd century BCE.

The Septuagint, as the entire Greek Bible came to be called, has a long and complex history and took well over a century to be completed. It is for this reason NOT A UNIFIED OR CONSISTENT TRANSLATION." [end of quotation] (my emphasis)

In another section, titled "Intertestamental literature, The Pseudepigraphal writings, Works indicating a Greek influence", the 2003 Britannica states:

"The Letter of Aristeas

An important document of Jewish Hellenistic literature is The Letter of Aristeas, a pseudepigraphon ascribed to Aristeas, an official of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, a Greek monarch of Egypt in the 3rd century BCE. The letter is addressed to his brother and gives an account of the translation of the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament) into Greek, by order of Ptolemy. According to the legend, reflected in the letter, the translation was made by 72 elders, brought from Jerusalem, in 72 days. THE LETTER, IN REALITY WRITTEN BY AN ALEXANDRIAN JEW ABOUT 100 BCE, attempts to show the superiority of Judaism both as religion and as philosophy. It also contains interesting descriptions of Palestine, of Jerusalem with its Temple, and of the royal gifts to the Temple." [end of quotation] (my emphasis)

This "letter of Aristeas" is a forgery, written by a Jew who pretended to be a Greek living more than 100 years earlier. And THAT is the only so-called "evidence" that a Septuagint translation of the Hebrew Old Testament was ever made!

THERE IS NO OTHER EVIDENCE OF ANY KIND THAT SUCH AN LXX TRANSLATION WAS EVER MADE!

Think about this for a moment! Why would God inspire the gospel writers to quote from a translation whose only claim to existence rested on a forged letter, rather than quoting from the Hebrew text God had inspired in the first place?

The exact date of this "Letter of Aristeas" stands in question. The "earliest possible date" has been placed at about 150 B.C. ... or 130 years AFTER the LXX was supposedly made! However, some scholars feel, not without reason, that the true author was PHILO, a Jew who was born in Alexandria about 20 B.C. and who died around 50 A.D. If Philo was the author, then this "Letter of Aristeas" would in fact have an A.D. date.

Philo, though ethnically a Jew, was philosophically a Greek. He was a prolific author. He strongly believed in an allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament. His aim was to prove that the philosophy of

the Greeks had in fact been anticipated by the Jews. This way he could justify the Jews embracing Hellenistic customs and ideas. Philo was also heavily influenced by a belief in mysticism. He tried very hard to synthesize the Hellenistic and the Hebrew traditions. And Philo certainly had a motive for WANTING to see the Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures find acceptance.

Whether Philo was the author of "Aristeas" or not does not affect the conclusion that this letter has been proved to be a forgery!

Another problem is that the originally forged "Letter of Aristeas" doesn't exist any more ... and so different writers, CLAIMING to quote from this letter, have recorded different versions of this story. And so "the only REAL evidence" for the existence of an LXX doesn't actually exist!

Now it is not a question that some of the books of the Old Testament were translated into Greek perhaps around 200 B.C. or even earlier. But it is also known that other books were only translated 100 years or more later. And the point is that the LXX is presented as "a package"; some of its books may be reasonably acceptable translations, while at the same time other books are of a totally unacceptable quality. Therefore we have no option but to reject the package as a whole, as far as any inspiration is concerned.

THE ONLY REAL VALUE of the LXX is of a historical nature. There are many questionable translations of words and of phrases in our English language Bibles. In many cases such inaccuracies can be traced back first to Jerome's Latin Vulgate translation, and then even further to the Greek text of the LXX. Thus it is quite helpful to have access to the LXX, because it shows us by what avenue a large number of mistranslations entered into our English language Bibles. It is well-known that many translators of the Bible have relied heavily on both, the Latin Vulgate and the Greek LXX, to produce their translations. So the LXX, while certainly not inspired, and while it is in many cases a very careless and poor quality translation of the Hebrew scriptures, is nevertheless a very important document for biblical research purposes.

But let's continue.

ORIGEN'S HEXAPLA

Is there ANY Greek manuscript of the O.T. written before the time of Christ? Yes, there is ONE and one only ... it is a minute scrap dated at 150 B.C. . That is about 130 years after the supposed LXX translation was made and therefore obviously not the work of the "72 scholars".

It is the Rylands Papyrus #458 and it is in the John Rylands Library in Manchester, U.K. It contains Deuteronomy chapters 23 to 28 ... no more! That is hardly convincing evidence that the whole Pentateuch had supposedly been translated 130 years earlier.

When challenged to produce HARD EVIDENCE for the existence of such a document as the LXX, scholars can only point to Origen's "HEXAPLA". Today there is no copy of Origen's ORIGINAL Hexapla in existence ... we only have the words of other authors who refer to it.

Here is a quotation from the 2003 Encyclopedia Britannica, CD ROM edition, from the article "Hexapla".

"Hexapla":

(Greek: "Sixfold"), edition of the Old Testament compiled by Origen of Alexandria in Caesarea, Palestine, before AD 245. The Hexapla presented for comparison the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, the Hebrew text in Greek characters, and the Greek versions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint, and Theodotian in six parallel columns. For some books, including the Psalms, Origen presented as many as three additional Greek texts from unknown sources. In the column devoted to the Septuagint version, he indicated by the use of critical symbols the variations that occurred in Hebrew and Greek renditions.

The entire work took 20 years to complete and may have filled 7,000 pages. It was available in Caesarea until about 600 and was consulted by many scholars, including Jerome in preparing for his Vulgate translation. THE FATE OF THE GREAT WORK IS NOT KNOWN, but it survives in fragments copied in old manuscripts, in quotations in the works of various Church Fathers, and in several editions of ITS SEPTUAGINT COLUMN — which, because scribes often copied the critical marks incorrectly or left them out, INTRODUCED SOME CONFUSION INTO THE TEXT OF THE SEPTUAGINT. [end of quotation] (my emphasis)

Let's summarize the available information.

Origen wrote his Hexapla about 500 years after the LXX was supposedly translated! That is a long time, longer than from the time of the 1611 KJV translation to our time today.

Origen was born around 185 A.D. in Alexandria and he became one of the foremost "theologians" of the early Catholic Church. When one examines his works entitled "DE PRINCIPIIS" and "CONTRA CELSUM", then it quickly becomes evident that he tried very hard to reconcile GREEK philosophy with Christian theology ... very much like what Philo had tried to do with the Hebrew scriptures 200 years earlier.

By 220 A.D. there were a number of rather divergent Greek MSS of the Hebrew scriptures around, especially so in Alexandria. Many were extremely poor and slipshod renditions, yet claiming to be the LXX ... making a mockery of the meticulous care the Sopherim had taken in preserving the original text.

As a Catholic theologian, Origen wanted to reconcile these various translations. As a Greek philosopher, Origen wanted these Greek MSS to reflect Greek thought and to at the same time have official Church recognition. He wanted that official recognition to be bestowed on HIS work.

The second column of his Hexapla was supposed to represent the LXX-translation. This was the column that Origen wanted to see receiving official recognition. It is this column that the later Catholic scholar Jerome, the translator of the Latin Vulgate version, viewed as the authoritative standard and which is reflected in his "Vulgate" version. This shows that Origen achieved his goal of receiving official recognition for his version of the LXX.

Now let's look at the second column of Origen's Hexapla, which Origen wanted to present as the official copy of the LXX. As I will show, in reality this presents nothing more than ORIGEN'S OWN ATTEMPT AT PRODUCING A GREEK VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT FOR WHICH HE WANTED OFFICIAL CHURCH RECOGNITION!

ORIGEN'S VERSION OF THE LXX

What is today accepted as the text of the LXX is nothing more than the text of the LXX Origen presented in his Hexapla. The LXX we have today does not go back to before the time of Origen.

Let me illustrate this by means of a comparison to our English language translations.

Consider the following:

When the 1611 KJV translators used the word "CONVERSATION" they meant: CONDUCT and behaviour. We today have no difficulty recognizing the word "conversation", but to us it means: talking, SPEECH.

In the course of the past 300 years the English word "conversation" has changed its meaning from "conduct and behaviour" to mean "speech and talking".

NOW, if someone today wanted to forge a document that was supposedly written in 1611 A.D. and in it he used the word "conversation" to mean "speech" because he was unaware of the fact that in 1611 this word had a different meaning ... then scholars of the English language would have no difficulty in seeing that this was a forgery.

Do you follow? Using a word in a historical context in which the word had a different meaning is a dead give-away that the document is a forgery, pretending to have been written much earlier.

THE SAME IS TRUE IN THE GREEK LANGUAGE!

There are similar differences between the classical Greek idiom, which was still in use in 285 B.C., and the Greek of the New Testament and of Origen's time. Scholars of the Greek language can recognize when a word is used with a meaning ahead of its historic place in the language.

NOW ...

The Greek employed in Origen's LXX is NOT the classical idiom which was still in vogue in 280 B.C., or even in 200 B.C.. Instead, Origen's LXX uses the "Koine" Greek of the New Testament period.

Using the Koine Greek in the text of the supposed LXX translation is exactly like using the word "conversation" with its modern meaning of "speech", but in a document pretending to have been written in 1611 A.D..

Scholars readily recognize this anomaly!

This anomaly is a clear and irrefutable give-away that Origen's LXX did not originate anywhere near 280 B.C.. And that is why many scholars, who themselves refuse to acknowledge this LXX text as being a fraud, prefer to say things like:

"the Greek idiom of the LXX 'ANTICIPATED' that of the New Testament."

What do you mean ... "anticipated"? That sounds just like Philo who felt that the Jews had "anticipated" the philosophy of the Greeks. Look, the man, whose word we are supposed to accept as truth when he says that the second column in his Hexapla represents the official LXX, lived in 220 A.D. and he wrote the LXX in the language of his own time. The only LXX that exists today goes back to Origen. There is no other LXX version apart from Origen!

SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF GREEK WORDS USED IN THE LXX

Let's examine some of the Greek words that Origen used in the text of his LXX, but which were not used in the classical Greek of the time when the LXX was supposedly translated. This is like using the word "conversation" in the text of the KJV, but to mean "speech".

Technically, scholars will refer to such words as "LATE words", meaning they weren't part of classical Greek. It is the appearance of these words in Origen's LXX text that prompts scholars to make statements like: "the Greek idiom of the LXX ANTICIPATED that of the N.T."

Here are some examples:

MEGALOSUNE: this is a late word from "MEGAS" and is used in the N.T. in Hebrews 1:3 in the expression "of the Majesty on high" (Greek is "tes megalosunes en hupselois"). It is also used in Hebrews 8:1, etc.. It means "majesty". In the LXX it is used in Deuteronomy 32:3 and in 2 Samuel 7:23. It is NOT FOUND IN GREEK BEFORE CHRIST EXCEPT IN TWO PLACES:

- the Letter of Aristeas (there we have it again, the forgery); and in
- the LXX (Deuteronomy 32:3; 2 Samuel 7:23).

THIS WORD WAS NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

AKATASTATOS: this means "unstable" and is used in James 1:8. This is a LATE DOUBLE COMPOUND from "alpha privative" + "katastatos", which comes from "kathistemi". The LXX uses this word in Isaiah 54:11.

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

EMPAIZO is another LATE word found in the LXX. This verb is used in Matthew 28:19, and the noun "empaigmos" formed from this verb means "mocking" and is used in Hebrews 11:36

in the expression "empaigmon kai mastigon" (i.e. "mockings and scourgings"). In the LXX this late verb empaizo is used in Scriptures like Genesis 39:14; Nahum 2:3; Psalm 104:26 (which in the KJV is Psalm 103:26); etc..

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

AKROGONIAIOS is a compound word that occurs only in the N.T. and in the LXX. In the New Testament it is used in Ephesians 2:20 in the expression "ontos akrogonianiou autou Christou Iesou" (i.e. "Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone"). It is also used in 1 Peter 2:6. In the LXX Origen first used this word in Isaiah 28:16.

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

PAREPIDEMOIS means "strangers" and is used in 1 Peter 1:1. It is a LATE double compound adjective found twice in the LXX (e.g. Genesis 23:4), but not in classical Greek.

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

SUNANTILAMBANOMAI is a LATE and striking double compound, used in Romans 8:26 in the expression "sunantilambanetai te astheneia hemon" (i.e. "helps our infirmities"). It is found in the LXX in Exodus 18:22, etc., in Josephus (who wrote in the first century A.D.) and in Diodorus Siculus (who wrote up to 20 B.C.). But it wasn't used before Diodorus.

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

SUNEGERTHETE is used in Colossians 2:12 in the expression "en ho kai sunegert hete" (i.e. "wherein

also you are risen with him") and it is the first aorist passive indicative of "sunegiro". This is a LATE and rare verb used in the LXX in Isaiah 14:9, and otherwise by Plutarch (he lived from 46 - 120 A.D.). Plutarch used it with the meaning of "waking up together".

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

MOICHALIS means an adulteress and is used in Romans 7:3. It is another LATE word, found in the LXX in Ezekiel 23:45, Hosea 3:1, etc., and in Plutarch's writings.

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

TE MATAIOTETI is used in Romans 8:20 (i.e. "subject to vanity") in the dative case. It is a rare and LATE word from "mataios" meaning "empty, vain", but it is common in the LXX in places like 1 Kings 16:13, etc..

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

EDOLIOUSAN ("they have used deceit" in Romans 3:13) is the imperfect active of "dolioo", which comes from the common adjective "dolios" meaning "deceitful". This word is only used here in the N.T. and otherwise only in the LXX as far as B.C. writings are concerned. In the LXX it is used in Proverbs 20:23, etc..

THIS WORD WAS ALSO NOT USED IN THE GREEK OF 250 B.C.!

There are many, many more examples of words like these, which are not really found in the Greek of 200 B.C. or earlier; yet they are used in the LXX, which supposedly reflects the Greek of 280 B.C.. But they ARE found in the Koine Greek of the New Testament. So when Origen included words like these with their New Testament meanings in his text of the LXX, it shows that he could, at the very least, not have been copying a text that predated 100 B.C.. At worst, Origen himself was composing or editing the Greek text he included in his LXX column. Either way, the conclusion must be that the LXX is simply not a reliable translation of the Hebrew scriptures.

One other point about the LXX is worth noting.

THE "HYPOSTASIS" TEACHING IN THE LXX

Origen is the father of the Catholic teaching about the nature of God, which is expressed by the word "hypostasis", or "hupostasis" in Greek. While this teaching is not a major concern for us one way or the other, it is interesting to observe what Origen did. And this is also clear evidence that Origen did at the very least EDIT AND ALTER the Greek text of the LXX that was available to him.

So note carefully:

Origen wanted to make sure that his "hypostasis-theory" about the nature of God would be accepted as biblical. And so he made very sure that it is included in the Old Testament. In fact, Origen made SO SURE of including this teaching in the Greek LXX text of the Old Testament, that he ...

TRANSLATED FIFTEEN DIFFERENT HEBREW WORDS WITH THE ONE GREEK WORD
"HYPOSTASIS"!

That was Origen's way of making sure that the idea of "hypostasis" would become well entrenched in the

Old Testament!

Now think about this for a moment!

The architect of the Catholic teaching about the "hypostasis" of God is also the same man to whom can be traced the only extant version of the Greek LXX translation. And the only extant Greek LXX translation just happens to have rendered FIFTEEN DIFFERENT HEBREW WORDS into the ONE Greek word "hypostasis". Does Hebrew REALLY have "15 different ways" of saying "hypostasis"?

This all by itself reveals the fraud that Origen tried to pass off as a version produced 500 years before his own time! The fact that he then also used numerous LATE Greek words in the text of his LXX column only further cements this conclusion.

In the New Testament the word "hypostasis" is used exactly FIVE times in two epistles, both written by Paul. But in the LXX of the Old Testament it is so common that it represents 15 different Hebrew words. The fraud involved here should be obvious to anyone whose mind is open to the truth.

No wonder scholars of biblical Greek have to say things like "the Greek idiom of the LXX anticipated that of the N.T.".

ORIGEN'S SHENANIGANS

Now let's examine some of the things Origen did in producing his version of the LXX. Origen wanted to ensure official acceptance of this LXX text. And so the best way to achieve this was for him to create the impression that the New Testament writers were actually quoting from his LXX text rather than from the original Hebrew text. So Origen simply "back-translated" quotations found in the New Testament into his LXX text of the Old Testament. IF people could then be persuaded to view this LXX text as being OLDER than the books of the New Testament, THEN people would be forced to accept that New Testament writers like Paul simply must have used the LXX translation for the quotations they presented.

The fact that Paul in his past training had been "a Pharisee of the Pharisees", meaning that Paul possessed the highest possible qualifications in his knowledge of the Hebrew language, and that as a Pharisee he had basically learned the entire Old Testament off by heart IN THE HEBREW LANGUAGE, is conveniently ignored by that line of reasoning. Why would Paul, who had spent YEARS diligently studying the Hebrew text of the Old Testament, possibly want to quote a corrupt Greek translation of a text he himself knew off by heart in Hebrew?

While Paul certainly was fluent in Greek, he was at the same time AN AUTHORITY ON THE HEBREW LANGUAGE! Paul knew full well that God had originally inspired His Word to be written in Hebrew, and not in Greek. And Paul translated whatever quotations he needed from the Hebrew text himself. And because he had God's Spirit, and because God was inspiring Paul to write a part of what would become the Word of God, therefore Paul at times translated into Greek A SPECIFIC APPLICATION of a Scripture he was quoting, to fit into the context he was writing about.

When God inspired an Old Testament passage to be quoted in the New Testament, then God did not always inspire the Greek text to have the identical meaning to the original Hebrew text. At times the original text has been adapted, under inspiration, to the N.T. conditions. The point is: sometimes God has chosen not to repeat an O.T. quote identically in the N.T., but to ADD to the meaning already provided in the O.T..

This is precisely the same thing which we see when prophecies are repeated. For example, when God made promises to Abraham, with each subsequent reiteration of the promises, they were expanded in

some way, rather than the identical statement being repeated all the time.

Let's get back to Origen.

When Origen, in the process of putting together his version of the LXX, came to an O.T. passage that he knew is quoted in the N.T., he simply wrote the Greek text from the New Testament into the Greek LXX in his Hexapla. In plain English, he made the Greek version of his O.T. quote the Greek of the N.T. verbatim. This was to give greater credibility to his work. That way it would look as if the New Testament writers were quoting from his LXX text, that HIS LXX text was therefore "the originally inspired translation" by the 72 scholars from all 12 tribes of Israel.

HOWEVER, IN THIS PROCESS ORIGEN ALSO MADE SOME SLIP-UPS.

Notice an example:

Here is Hebrews 1:10-12 in the KJV:

And, Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. (Hebrews 1:10-12)

This is quoted from Psalm 102:25-27:

Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens [are] the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou [art] the same, and thy years shall have no end. (Psalm 102:25-27)

When you compare these two passages, then you see that they are basically the same, except that in Hebrews 1:10 Paul added the word "Lord" to this quotation. The Greek for "Lord" in this verse is "Kurie".

There is nothing unusual in the fact that Paul added this form of address to his quotation. Paul was quoting from the middle of a psalm. When you read the whole psalm, you see that it is speaking about "the LORD", because verse 1 opens with the statement: "Hear my prayer O LORD ...". So the "you" in Psalm 102:25, which Paul is quoting in Hebrews 1:10, is obviously speaking about "the LORD"! But in quoting this verse out of context it was appropriate for Paul to identify who the "you" is speaking about. THEREFORE Paul added the word "LORD". This addition simply clarified the context of the quotation he was presenting. With his addition Paul is conveying THE CORRECT MEANING more accurately.

However ...

Origen in his zeal to copy the Greek New Testament quotation of the O.T. back into his version of the LXX Old Testament also copied the word "Lord" into Psalm 102:25 (which in the LXX is equal to Psalm 101:26).

Now there is no way that those fictitious 72 scholars could have faithfully translated Psalm 102 into Greek and somehow "known" that they should ADD the word "Lord" to verse 25, because Paul would later quote that specific verse OUT OF CONTEXT in a letter to the Hebrews.

Understand something very clearly!

Psalm 102:26 reads: "They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed". Now had Paul ONLY QUOTED VERSE 26, do you know what Paul would have quoted? That should be obvious! Had Paul ONLY quoted verse 26, THEN he would have quoted it as:

"They shall perish, but you, LORD, shall endure: yes, all of them ..."!

Isn't that obvious? Paul simply would have had to do that in order to identify who the "you" is speaking about! And IF Paul had only quoted verse 26 out of context here in Hebrews chapter 1, you know what the Greek text of the LXX would read?? That should also be obvious! The LXX would likewise read:

"They shall perish, but you, LORD, shall endure: yes, all of them ..."!

Similarly, Psalm 102:27 reads: "But thou [art] the same, and thy years shall have no end". Now had Paul ONLY QUOTED VERSE 27, do you know what Paul would have quoted? It should be equally obvious! Had Paul quoted ONLY verse 27, THEN he would have quoted it as:

"But you, LORD, are the same, and your years shall have no end"!

Isn't that also obvious? Paul again simply would have had to do that in order to identify who the "you" is speaking about! And IF Paul had only quoted verse 27 out of context here in Hebrews chapter 1, you know what the Greek text of the LXX would read?? That should again be obvious! The LXX would likewise read:

"But you, LORD, are the same, and your years shall have no end"!

But because Paul did NOT quote Psalm 102, verses 26 or 27 on their own, therefore Origen also had no need to add the word "LORD" to either verse 26 or verse 27. And so the LXX also does not contain the word "LORD" in those two verses.

In Hebrews 1:10 there is a very specific and easily identifiable reason for why Paul added the word "LORD". But back in Psalm 102:25 there is no more reason to include the word "LORD" in verse 25 than there is a need to include the word "LORD" in verses 26 or 27.

What Psalm 102 in the LXX version shows very plainly is that the writer (i.e. Origen) simply COPIED the text from Hebrews 1:10-12 back into his version of the LXX (the only version of the LXX in existence today!) into Psalm 102.

THE FORGERY STANDS EXPOSED!

ONE MORE EXAMPLE

Now let's look at one more example, which is found in Hebrews 1:6.

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. (Hebrews 1:6)

This is NOT a direct quote from any passage in the O.T., though it is, IN SUBSTANCE, found in Psalm 97:7, which reads:

Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: WORSHIP HIM, ALL [YE] GODS. (Psalm 97:7)

The Hebrew word for "gods" in this verse is "ELOHIM". Now let's examine Psalm 97 more closely and understand what Paul was doing in Hebrews 1:6.

The subject of Psalm 97 is stated in verse 1:

The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad [thereof]. (Psalms 97:1)

It is Christ RULING ON EARTH, i.e. after His second coming.

Christ's second coming is described in some detail in verses 2-5:

Clouds and darkness [are] round about him: righteousness and judgment [are] the habitation of his throne. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. His lightnings enlightened the world: the earth saw, and trembled. The hills melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. (Psalm 97:2-5)

These are some of the events surrounding the second coming.

Verse 6 tells us that all those who have lived through those end-time events and are still physical, mortal human beings will see the glory of Christ's second coming.

The heavens declare his righteousness, and all the people see his glory. (Psalm 97:6)

Verse 7 tells us two things:

- all those who had been involved in ANY false religion will be "confounded" (i.e. confused and brought to ruin);

- those who have been changed into spirit beings at that very time (i.e. all those in the first resurrection) are then no longer human beings. They are then "ELOHIM", a part of the Family of God, also called SONS (and DAUGHTERS) OF GOD. These "Elohim" will at that time also worship Jesus Christ. God the Father will not be present here on earth at that occasion, and EVERY ELOHIM in that first resurrection will, without any contradiction, look to Jesus Christ for leadership, for instruction, for guidance and direction and for making known the will of God the Father.

There is nothing unusual about those in the first resurrection "worshipping" Jesus Christ. We will worship God the Father and Jesus Christ for all future eternity! Worship is simply a form of showing very great respect. Even when there are only spirit beings in existence, God the Father and Jesus Christ will both have THRONES in the New Jerusalem!

And there shall be no more curse: but THE THRONE OF GOD AND OF THE LAMB shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: (Revelation 22:3)

And they will be worshipped by all of the rest of their Family! They, together, worked out this plan to create others like themselves and to share their existence with us, and we will for all future eternity express our gratitude and appreciation for what both, God the Father and Jesus Christ, have done for us!

Verse 8 tells of the rejoicing at Christ's second coming.

Zion heard, and was glad; and the daughters of Judah rejoiced because of thy judgments, O LORD. (Psalm 97:8)

Verse 9 is speaking TO JESUS CHRIST and says:

For thou, LORD, [art] high above all the earth: THOU ART EXALTED FAR ABOVE ALL GODS. (Psalm 97:9)

Certainly, God the Father has, without contradiction, exalted Jesus Christ "far above" all those in the first resurrection! It is not a matter of Jesus Christ being exalted above "idols" ... those stupid things don't exist in the first place, except as the figment of someone's imagination! To be exalted "above" some non-existent idol is not really any exaltation at all.

Nor is this speaking about Jesus Christ being exalted above some "human judges" (as some would like to see the word "Elohim" translated here). For Jesus Christ, in the glory of His second coming, to be exalted above some dumb, frail, sickly, weak, powerless and helpless "human judges" is not any real exaltation either!

In these verses Christ's glory and power and might at His second coming, when "the hills melted like wax", is not being compared to either some idol or to some human judges (if there are any left alive at that point in time?).

What Christ is exalted above is EVERY OTHER SPIRIT BEING (obviously apart from the Father), both the Elohim in the first resurrection, and the angels of God. That is real exaltation for Jesus Christ, but to be exalted above some fat buddha-idol (or similar caricatures of the image of God) or some human beings (be they judges or kings or business tycoons) is no exaltation for the glorious Jesus Christ!

Now back to the Apostle Paul and Hebrews 1:6.

Paul understood that Psalm 97 makes clear that all those in the first resurrection will worship Jesus Christ. Paul then made a deduction! That's right, HE REASONED! And he reasoned correctly!

He reasoned that Psalm 97:7 OBVIOUSLY implied that if the "Elohim" in the first resurrection will worship Jesus Christ, THEN all the angels, who are lower, will certainly ALSO worship Jesus Christ. And that was SOUND REASONING!

Now Paul's whole point in Hebrews chapter 1 was to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is far greater than any of the angels. In subsequent chapters Paul shows that Christ is also greater than Aaron, as far as being a priest is concerned, and He is greater than Moses, as far as being a lawgiver is concerned. In other words, Paul is in Hebrews showing the Jews in the Church that Jesus Christ is greater than ANYONE the Jews could possibly think of as being great, except for God the Father Himself.

So in the context of Hebrews chapter 1 Paul was comparing Christ to angels. And in this context Paul

made A SPECIFIC APPLICATION of Psalm 87:7 to his context. So Paul wrote Hebrews 1:6 as:

And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, HE SAITH, And let all THE ANGELS OF GOD worship him. (Hebrews 1:6)

Next, notice that Paul wrote: "He saith ...". Paul did not claim that he was giving a direct quote of something that had been "WRITTEN" anywhere in the Old Testament. Paul simply claimed that God had "said" this. Now with Paul basically knowing the whole Old Testament off by heart, IF Paul thought he was actually QUOTING verbatim a statement from the text of the Old Testament, THEN Paul would have written in Hebrews 1:6: "And again, concerning God bringing the firstbegotten into the world, IT IS WRITTEN ..."!

The expression "it is written" occurs 63 times in the whole New Testament. Of those, this expression is used by Paul in his letters 32 times. In the Book of Hebrews Paul only uses this expression in Hebrews 10:7. The point is this: when Paul knew he was quoting an Old Testament scripture directly, then he pointed this out very clearly, as is evident from the 32 times Paul used this expression. So WHY did Paul say in Hebrews 1:6 that "God SAID ...", rather than saying "it is written"?

The answer is that Paul knew quite clearly that he was NOT quoting any scripture directly; he was simply applying sound principles to make this statement. It is very clear that all the angels will worship Jesus Christ.

But what does all this have to do with the LXX, you might be thinking. Well, here's the point:

Paul was not quoting precisely any specific O.T. scripture and did not claim to be quoting anything that was "written". But Origen, in putting his LXX together, decided that Hebrews 1:6 should be found somewhere in the O.T..

And so Origen inserted "and let all the angels of God worship him" into his LXX text of the Old Testament! He put this sentence into the text of DEUTERONOMY 32:43. Notice what Deuteronomy 32:43 actually says:

Rejoice, O ye nations, [with] his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, [and] to his people.
(Deuteronomy 32:43)

Here is the text of the English Translation of the LXX:

Rejoice, ye heavens, with him, AND LET ALL THE ANGELS OF GOD WORSHIP HIM; rejoice ye Gentiles, with his people, and let all the sons of God strengthen themselves in him; for he will avenge the blood of his sons, and he will render vengeance, and recompense justice to his enemies, and will reward them that hate him; and the Lord shall purge the land of his people.
(Deuteronomy 32:43 LXXE)

So in the LXX it says: "... and let all the angels of God worship him", the exact Greek words found in Hebrews 1:6.

Now here is the point:

These are the last words of a song that Moses is speaking to Israel (see the next verse, Deuteronomy 32:44). Now THE CONTEXT makes quite clear that this expression "and let all the angels of God worship him" is TOTALLY OUT OF PLACE!!

Here is the context of this verse:

Verse 39:

See now that I, *even I, am* he, and *there is* no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither *is there any* that can deliver out of my hand. (Deuteronomy 32:39 AV)

God is here speaking about His power and His control over human beings.

Verse 40:

For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. (Deuteronomy 32:40 AV)

God lives for ever and is in full control.

Verse 41:

If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. (Deuteronomy 32:41 AV)

God is speaking about punishing human nations that disobey Him.

Verse 42:

I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; *and that* with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. (Deuteronomy 32:42 AV)

God is speaking about punishing flesh and blood human beings who fight against Him.

Now verse 43:

Rejoice, O ye nations, *with* his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, *and* to his people. (Deuteronomy 32:43 AV)

This verse continues the theme of the previous two verses, with God punishing His enemies.

Now verse 44:

And Moses came and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people, he, and Hoshea the son of Nun. (Deuteronomy 32:44 AV)

This verse very clearly concludes this context.

So note very carefully: "and let all the angels of God worship him" simply does NOT fit into this context for TWO reasons!

1) This reference to "angels" has nothing to do with this context whatsoever!! The statement simply does not make any sense in this context! The clear subject matter of this context is GOD TAKING VENGEANCE on His enemies. The subject matter is NOT about those who "worship God"! Worshipping God doesn't feature in this context! Such a reference is out of place, and would only be inserted into this context by some fool who didn't grasp God's purpose for the statements God was making in this context!

2) Secondly, all of the statements in this whole section are in THE ACTIVE VOICE! Did you notice this? But the statement "let all the angels of God worship him" is in THE PASSIVE VOICE! It is totally out of step with the rest of this whole section. WHY would God possibly switch to the passive voice for this statement in this context?

Furthermore, there is no way that the person who wrote the text of Deuteronomy 32:43 for the Greek LXX version could possibly have gotten that expression "and let all the angels of God worship him" from ANY Hebrew manuscript of the Book of Deuteronomy! There isn't any Hebrew manuscript with this expression in it!

SO ONCE AGAIN ORIGEN'S FORGERY STANDS EXPOSED!

In summary, yes there were Greek translations of the O.T. around in Alexandria. The prologue to Ecclesiasticus, one of the apocryphal books, mentions that by about 130 B.C. portions of the third section of the O.T. (the Writings or the Psalms) were available in Greek. The Law and then the Prophets had been translated earlier. Many of these were private ventures and of very poor quality. By 40 A.D. Philo was familiar with all of the O.T. books in Greek, except for Esther, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon and Daniel. As likely as not, he was the one who authored the "Letter of Aristeas" in order to give recognition and approval to these Greek translations. But note that even as late as 40 A.D. four books of the Old Testament were STILL not yet available to Philo in the Greek language. That's about 300 years after the LXX translation was supposedly made.

So the only LXX we have today stands exposed as a corrupt forgery! It has considerable HISTORICAL value (i.e. to trace how various wrong ideas found general acceptance), but NO THEOLOGICAL VALUE AT ALL!

Frank W. Nelte