

# In Search of the “Old Greek” in the Septuagint Psalter: A Case Study of LXX Psalms 49 and 103

*Jonathan Hong, Protestant University Wuppertal/Bethel*

Abstract: Till today Rahlfs’s edition from 1931 is the standard text when it comes to the Greek Psalter. However, important discoveries were made after 1931, for example the Psalm scrolls from Qumran and early Greek manuscripts. This article includes the new material and argues that the original text of the Septuagint has been a freer translation than the text reconstructed by Rahlfs. It also shows that the new Greek manuscript findings of Papyrus Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110) and Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 5101 (Ra 2227) attest to a particularly strongly Hebraized text-form.

The Psalter is a fascinating book for textual research as it is the most received and most copied book of the Old Testament. The Greek version is extant in more than a thousand manuscripts, of which about one hundred date to the fifth century CE or earlier.<sup>1</sup> The last comprehensive text-critical edition with an eclectic text was published by Rahlfs in 1931.<sup>2</sup> Since then, there have been important discoveries like the Qumran manuscripts and the discovery of numerous Greek manuscripts, especially from Upper Egypt. There also have been directed enquiries into Rahlfs’s methodology for reconstructing the oldest text.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See Eberhard Bons and Ralph Brucker, “Psalmoi. Das Buch der Psalmen,” in *Einleitung in die Septuaginta*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, LXX.H1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2016), 338. See also Alfred Rahlfs and Detlef Fraenkel, *Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert, Septuaginta*, vol. 1 of *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments, Vetus Testamentum Graecum Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum Supplementum 1.1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2004), 489–92.

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis: Septuaginta Societatis Scientiarum Gottingensis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1931).

<sup>3</sup> See especially Albert Pietersma, “The Present State of the Critical Text of the Greek Psalter,” in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen: Symposium in Göttingen 1997*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Udo Quast, MSU 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2000), 12–32.

In my previous study, I made an observation that the old codices like Codex Vaticanus or Codex Sinaiticus, which have been assumed so far to have preserved the original Greek text particularly well, often had a Hebraized text form.<sup>4</sup> In this paper I propose that the original text of the Septuagint might represent a freer translation than the text that is attested in the old witnesses and freer than the text reconstructed by Rahlfs. I chose Psalms 49(50) and 103(104) for this case study because they are attested in two of the probably most important Psalms manuscripts that were found in the last century, P.Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110) and P.Oxy. 5101 (Ra 2227).<sup>5</sup> P.Bodmer XXIV has been dated to the fourth century CE and includes most of the psalms (LXX Ps 17–118),<sup>6</sup> whereas P.Oxy. 5101 is much more fragmentary (parts of LXX Pss 26, 44, 47, 48, 49, and 63–64 survived), but it is the oldest extant Psalms manuscript, dating back to the first or second century CE.<sup>7</sup>

## 1. Rahlfs’s Methodology

It is necessary to briefly introduce the methodology Rahlfs used for his reconstruction of the original Septuagint text in his edition of the Psalms from 1931, *Psalmi cum Odis*. His eclectic text is based on two premises which distinctively influenced his text-critical decisions. His first premise was that the text of the old witnesses, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus in particular, is generally preferable. His second was that the reading close to the MT should be preferred. These two premises can be seen in the four text-critical rules that Rahlfs used for his reconstruction of the oldest text.<sup>8</sup> Although he did not follow these rules mechanically, they still determined his text-critical decisions in a fundamental way.

1. If all three old text forms go together, their reading is to be preferred. (Rahlfs grouped the old witnesses in three text forms.)
2. If some old witnesses agree with the MT, while others deviate from it together with the younger witnesses, the reading which corresponds to the MT is usually preferred.
3. If the old witnesses deviate from the MT, but the younger ones agree with the MT, the text follows the old witnesses.
4. In doubtful cases the reading of Vaticanus and Sinaiticus is given preference. However, if these are unsupported, preference is given to the others.

The first premise, his preference for the old text forms against the younger ones, is shown especially in the first and fourth rule. Of the old witnesses the preference of Rahlfs for Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus is evident in rule 4.

His second premise, preference for the reading agreeing with the MT, is shown in his second rule. This premise may be a little surprising, since his teacher, Paul de Lagarde, advocated

<sup>4</sup> In my dissertation I investigated LXX Pss 2, 8, 33, 49, and 103; Jonathan Hong, “Der ursprüngliche Septuagintapsalter und seine hebraisierenden Rezensionen” (PhD diss., Protestant University Wuppertal/Bethel, 2017).

<sup>5</sup> See Albert Pietersma, “The Edited Text of P. Bodmer XXIV,” *BASP* 17 (1980): 67–79.

<sup>6</sup> See Rodolphe Kasser and Michel Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer XXIV: Psalms XVII–CXVIII* (Coligny: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1967).

<sup>7</sup> See Danielę Colomo and W. B. Henry, eds., “5101. LXX, Psalms xxvi 9–14, xliv 9–14, xlvii 13–15, xlviii 6–21, xlix 2–16, lxiii 6–lxiv 5,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 77, ed. Amin Benaissa, *Graeco-Roman Memoirs* 98 (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 2011), 1–11. See also Jannes Smith, “The Text-Critical Significance of Oxyrhynchus Papyrus 5101 (Ra 2227) for the Old Greek Psalter,” *JSCS* 45 (2012): 5–22, especially 5–6. P.Oxy. 5101 probably is of Jewish origin. This is shown for example in the rendering of the Tetragrammaton in old Hebrew letters, see Colomo and Henry, “5101,” 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> These rules are mentioned in Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*, 71–72.

the opposite premise, namely, that the text which deviates from the MT is to be preferred in general.<sup>9</sup> Rahlfs explains his preference with the observation that the old witnesses often agree with the MT against the younger ones.<sup>10</sup> In other words, because the old manuscripts attest a text that is very close to the MT, the original text must also have been translated close to the MT. In the end, Rahlfs comes to his second premise because of his first premise to prefer the old codices.

His third rule also reveals that his preference of the old codices is his actual premise. It is not a preference of the text that agrees with the MT. So if the younger manuscripts agree with the MT, Rahlfs does not follow them, because his actual premise is the preference of the older witnesses. In the case of the younger witnesses, Rahlfs assumes a Hebraizing recension by Origen or Lucian.<sup>11</sup>

So, on the one hand, the younger manuscripts are witnesses of a Hebraizing recension; on the other, the younger manuscripts have a text that deviates more from the MT than the old witnesses, as Rahlfs pointed out in his second rule. If you take Rahlfs's second and third rule together, they almost completely exclude the possibility that the older witnesses have a Hebraizing recension. But a Hebraizing recension is already attested by Jewish translators like Aquila and Theodotion from the first century CE. And today we know that even in the first century BCE the *kaige*-recension, a very strict and isomorphic adaption to the Hebrew text, is attested in the Greek Minor Prophets scroll from Naḥal Ḥever.<sup>12</sup>

In search of the oldest Septuagint text, a crucial step is to move away from Rahlfs's general preference of the old witnesses—and thus a Greek text that is close to the MT—and instead to include the new insights about Hebraizing tendencies before Origen. On this basis a new text should be reconstructed according to common text-critical rules. Only in this way will it be possible to judge whether the preference for the old witnesses is correct, or whether the younger manuscripts that deviate from the MT frequently preserve the original text, while the older witnesses may represent a Hebraized text form of the Septuagint.

## 2. Deviations from the MT in which the External Evidence Is Clear

The aim of this investigation is to examine if there is a pre-Origen recension in the Psalter, which shows the characteristics of an isomorphic adaptation to the Hebrew text. Characteristic of an isomorphic adaption is to be as accurate as possible in the reproduction of the external form of the Hebrew text in quantity, word order, and word rendering. As Dominique Barthélemy has identified for the *kaige*-recension, in the most extreme cases, the isomorphic rendering can lead to word renderings that do not make any sense in the Greek text (e.g., the strictly consequent rendering of אִי with ἐγώ and אִנֹכִי with ἐγώ εἰμι or of אִשׁ “man; every-

<sup>9</sup> See Paul Anton de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863), 3.

<sup>10</sup> See Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*, 72.

<sup>11</sup> See Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*, 72.

<sup>12</sup> See Dominique Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, VTSup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1963). For a survey on the investigations of the *kaige*-group and its characteristics, see Stefan Olofsson, “Kaige Group and the Septuagint Book of Psalms,” in *Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis: Collected Essays on the Septuagint Version*, ed. Staffan Olofsson, ConB OT 57 (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2009), 134–75.

body” with ἀνὴρ “man,” even in passages in which it has the meaning ἕκαστος “everybody”).<sup>13</sup> From this strict *kaige*-recension, a milder form of isomorphic adaption is to be distinguished, for which Siegfried Kreuzer has suggested the term *semi-kaige*-recension and which especially adapted the word order, use of articles, and sometimes word renderings to the Hebrew text.<sup>14</sup>

In order to investigate if the present Psalms show a pre-Origen Hebraizing recension, all cases from LXX Pss 49 and 103 are to be analyzed, in which a part of the Greek transmission differs from the MT while the other part follows the MT. For the latter, it is to be analyzed if a recension can be identified, which had the intention to adapt the Greek text to its Hebrew *Vorlage* not only in terms of content, but also in the external form.

All together there are fifty-four cases in LXX Pss 49 and 103 in which a part of the manuscripts differs from the MT, while the other part agrees with it.<sup>15</sup> In a first step, variants in which a text-critical decision can be made easily by external criteria shall be analyzed; for example, a singular reading or a very poorly attested reading. Through this, an initial rating of specific manuscripts and manuscripts groups can be given. We have twenty-one of such cases in LXX Pss 49 and 103.

Table 1: Singular and Poorly Attested Readings

“Ant” = Antiochene Textgroup; “B” = Codex Vaticanus; “S” = Codex Sinaiticus; “A” = Codex Alexandrinus;

“MT” = Readings consistent with the MT; “•” = Readings diverging from the MT; “[ ]” = The manuscript is fragmentary or not available for this passage

LXX Ps 49	Ant	B (S)	A	2013	2110	2227	MT] •
3 <sup>1</sup>	MT	MT	MT	•	MT	MT	καὶ] -
3 <sup>2</sup>	MT	MT	MT	MT	•	[ ]	-] μῆ
4	MT	MT	MT	•	MT	[ ]	-] ἐξ υψους
5	•	•	•	•	•	MT	θυσιαῖς] θυσία
6	MT	MT	MT	•	•	MT	-] καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐσχαταῖς [...] μετὰ λυχνου
7	MT	MT	MT	•	MT	MT	-] ο
8	•	•	•	•	MT	•	-] ἐστὶν

<sup>13</sup> Barthélemy (*Devanciers*) identified a number of peculiar word renderings, which are typical for the *kaige*-recension. For an extensive list of peculiar word renderings of the *kaige*-recension, which were identified through Barthélemy and after him and an analysis of their attestation in the LXX Psalter, see Olofsson, *Kaige Group*, 146–75.

<sup>14</sup> See Siegfried Kreuzer, “Entstehung und Überlieferung der Septuaginta,” in *Einleitung in die Septuaginta*, ed. Siegfried Kreuzer, LXX.H1 (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2016), 59–61.

<sup>15</sup> For the text-critical apparatus on the passages, see Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis*; Kasser and Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer XXIV*; Pietersma, *The Edited Text*, 67–79; Colomo and Henry, “5101,” 1–11. Deviations from the MT that probably developed through evident secondary scribal errors in Greek or through a deviating Hebrew *Vorlage* are not part of this investigation, because they are not intentional free translations. Deviations in the superscriptions of the psalms are not included either, because they would distort the evidence, since the Greek transmission shows a much freer rendering here than in the psalmtext itself; see Robert J. V. Hiebert, “The ‘Syrohexaplaric’ Psalter,” in *Der Septuaginta-Psalter und seine Tochterübersetzungen: Symposium in Göttingen 1997*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Udo Quast, MSU 24 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 2000), 123–46, esp. 131. Also four very poorly attested deviations from the MT in LXX Ps 49:22–23 and LXX Ps 103:12, 19 are not included, because they are neither attested in the old manuscripts nor in the Antiochene text-form. For an investigation of all above mentioned cases, see my dissertation (note 4).

9	•	•	•	•	•	MT	μοσχους] μοσχον
11	•	•	•	•	•	MT	των ορειων] του ουρανου
17	•	•	•	MT	[ ]	[ ]	σου] -
20	MT	MT	MT	•	MT	[ ]	σκανδαλον] σκανδαλα
23	MT	MT	MT	•	MT	[ ]	οδος] η οσος καθαρα (sic)

LXX Ps 103 Ant B (S) A 2060 2110 MT] •

9	•	•	•	[ ]	MT	-] ο
16 <sup>1</sup>	•	• (MT)	•	[ ]	•	κυριου] πεδιου
16 <sup>2</sup>	•	•	•	[ ]	MT	-] του
19	•	•	•	[ ]	MT	-] ο
21	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	•	αυτοις] αυτων
24	•	•	•	[ ]	MT	εμεγαλυθησαν] - θη
26	•/MT	MT	MT	•	[ ]	αυτω] αυτοις (R'); αυτων vel -τον ( <i>L<sup>pau</sup></i> 2060); αυτα ( <i>L<sup>pau</sup></i> )
28	•	•	•	[ ]	MT	την χειρα σου] σου την χειρα

Nine of these twenty singular or poorly attested readings, which are most probably secondary,<sup>16</sup> attest a deviation from the MT (free translation),<sup>17</sup> while the other ten are in accordance with the MT (see table above). The free translations are especially attested in manuscripts of the Upper Egyptian group, namely, in six cases in MS 2013 and in three cases in MS 2110 (P.Bodmer XXIV). Furthermore, in one case they are attested in some Antiochene manuscripts.

The singular and poorly attested readings that are in accordance with the MT are especially attested in the old witnesses MS 2110 (six cases) and MS 2227 (P.Oxy. 5101) (three cases). It is unlikely that these manuscripts preserve original readings, since it would necessitate a widespread revision in all the other manuscripts, which freely revised the text of the Septuagint in a way that diverged from the MT. However, such a revision is not attested for the Septuagint Psalter. Since a Hebraizing recension is very clearly attested already in early time (see above), it is to be assumed that the oldest Psalter-manuscripts, MS 2227 and MS 2110, reflect a particularly strongly Hebraized text here.<sup>18</sup> Since in LXX Ps 49 both manuscripts attest Hebraizing readings in different passages, they probably go back to independent Hebraizing recensions.<sup>19</sup>

I will proceed with an analysis of the remaining thirty-four passages, in which the diverging readings as well as the readings consistent with MT are not just singularly attested, but are present in several manuscripts. A text-critical decision is more difficult here.

Table 2: Further Divergent Readings<sup>20</sup>

“Ant” = Antiochene Textgroup; “B” = Codex Vaticanus; “S” = Codex Sinaiticus; “A” = Codex Alexandrinus;

<sup>16</sup> Of course, also singular and poorly attested readings can sometimes have preserved the original text. But these cases are rare and can only be assumed if clear indications are present.

<sup>17</sup> Other deviations from the MT like another Hebrew text or scribal errors are not included in this investigation; see note 15.

<sup>18</sup> Nonetheless, an early error transmitted by the majority of the manuscripts cannot be totally excluded.

<sup>19</sup> It is unfortunate that MS 2227 is not extant for LXX Ps 103.

<sup>20</sup> Table 2 presents only an overview of the important manuscripts. For the cases which are analyzed in detail, a complete summary of all witnesses is given (see below in part 3). For the other cases a detailed analysis can be found in my dissertation (see note 4).

“MT” = Readings consistent with the MT; “•” = Readings diverging from the MT; “[ ]” = The manuscript is fragmentary or not available for this passage

LXX Ps 49	Ant	B (S)	A	2013	2110	2227	MT] •
1	MT	•	•	•	•	[ ]	-] και
4	•	MT	•	MT	•	[ ]	-] του
6	•	MT(•)	MT	•	MT	[ ]	-] ο
7	•/MT	•	•	MT	MT	MT	διαμαρτυρομαι] -ρουμαι
10	•	MT	•	MT	MT	MT	δρυμου] αγρου
15	•	MT	•	•	MT	[ ]	-] σου
18	•	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	μοιχων] μοιχου
19 <sup>1</sup>	•/MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	κακιαν] κακιας
19 <sup>2</sup>	•	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	δολιοτητα] δολιοτητας
21	•	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	-] τας αμαρτιας σου
22	•	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	-] ου
23	•	MT	MT	MT	MT	[ ]	του θεου] μου

LXX Ps 103	Ant	B (S)	A	2060	2110	MT] •
1	MT	•	MT	[ ]	MT	-] ως
4	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	•	πυρ φλεγον] πυρος φλογα
5	•	MT	•	[ ]	•	εθεμελιωσεν] θεμελιων
6 <sup>1</sup>	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	αυτου] αυτης
6 <sup>2</sup>	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	στησονται] -σεται
8 <sup>1</sup>	•	MT (•)	MT	[ ]	•	-] τον
8 <sup>2</sup>	•/MT	MT (•)	MT	[ ]	MT	αυτοις] αυτα / αυτους
9	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	παρελευσονται] -σεται
10	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	διελευσονται] -σεται
14	•	MT	•	[ ]	MT	-] ο
16 <sup>1</sup>	•/MT	•	MT	[ ]	[ ]	χορτασθησεται] -σονται
16 <sup>2</sup>	•	MT	•	[ ]	MT	εφυτευσεν] -σας
17	•/MT	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	αυτων] αυτα
19	•/MT	MT	MT	MT	MT	εποιησεν] -σας
20	•/MT	• (MT)	•	[ ]	MT	διελευσονται] -σεται
21 <sup>1</sup>	•	MT	•	[ ]	MT	-] του
21 <sup>2</sup>	•	MT	MT	[ ]	MT	του θεου] τω θεω
26	•/MT	MT	MT	MT	•	διαπορευονται] -ρευεται
27 <sup>1</sup>	MT	•	MT	[ ]	MT	την τρ. αυτων] την τροφην αυτοις
27 <sup>2</sup>	•	MT	•	[ ]	MT	-] εις
28 <sup>1</sup>	•/MT	•	•	[ ]	•	-] δε
28 <sup>2</sup>	•/MT	• (MT)	MT	[ ]	MT	πλησθησονται] -σεται

In contrast with the results from table 1, in table 2 the manuscripts can be clearly divided in two groups: The first group consists of the old codices, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus, in most parts supported by Codex Alexandrinus, MSS 2013, 2110, and 2227.<sup>21</sup> This group consistently attest

<sup>21</sup> Where extant; the manuscript is very fragmentary in the passages concerned.



the text-form close to the Hebrew. The second group consists of the Antiochene manuscripts, which generally represent the freer text-form.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, in LXX Ps 103 it is striking that the Antiochene text-group is not very consistent, but diverges in itself in fifteen cases.

Rahlfs decides in all of these cases for the reading which agrees with the MT, because he prefers the old codices (exceptions are LXX Ps 49:6 and 7). As pointed out above, his preference for the old codices is based on his problematic assumption that an early Hebraizing recension is very improbable. However, a Hebraizing recension is attested in Qumran already and also the investigation above has shown that characteristics of an isomorphic Hebraizing recension can already be identified in the oldest manuscripts of the Psalter (see table 1).

Hence, for the variants in table 2, it needs to be reconsidered if the Antiochene text might have preserved the original text, in which case the other manuscripts represent a secondary text adapted to the MT. In order to determine this, four cases from table 2 shall be analyzed in detail in which a text-critical decision can be made independent from the predictions mentioned above: LXX Ps 49:10; LXX Ps 103:4, 5, 6.

### 3. Text-Critical Case-by-Case Analysis

An overview of the extant manuscripts is presented in the beginning of each case. The first two lines contain the reconstructed Greek Septuagint text and its English translation,<sup>23</sup> which is followed by a list of all Greek and Hebrew manuscripts that preserve the verse and date to the fifth century CE and earlier. Manuscripts that were not included in Rahlfs's edition are set in bold type. The following synopsis shows the MT on the left followed by the text of the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Alexandrinus, and the text of the Antiochene manuscripts. In cases where the Antiochene manuscripts are inconsistent, the assumed oldest Antiochene text is presented in brackets. An adaption or deviation from the MT, which is decisive words for the analysis, are set in bold type. Below the synopsis, a transcription of the manuscripts listed in bold above the chart is given. And finally, the text-critical apparatuses are presented,<sup>24</sup> followed by the text-critical case-analysis.

<sup>22</sup> An exception to this are LXX Ps 49:1 and 103:1, 27a.

<sup>23</sup> The translation of Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), served as basis for my translation.

<sup>24</sup> The following text-critical apparatus were used: Rahlfs = Alfred Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis: Septuaginta Societatis Scientiarum Gottingensis* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1931); BHS = *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. Karl Elliger et al., 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997); Kasser/Testuz (Ra 2110) = Rodolphe Kasser and Michel Testuz, *Papyrus Bodmer XXIV: Psaumes XVII–CXVIII* (Coligny: Bibliotheca Bodmeriana, 1967).

## LXX Psalm 49:10

ὅτι ἐμὰ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ<sup>a</sup> κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες  
for every animal of the field is mine, and the cattle on the hills and the oxen.

A B S 1219 2013 2110 2227

MT	B	A	Ant
כִּי־לִי כָּל־חַיָּוִתוֹ יַעַר בְּהֵמוֹת בְּהַרְרֵי־ אֶרֶץ	ὅτι ἐμὰ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ δρυμοῦ κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες	ὅτι ἐμὰ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες	ὅτι ἐμὰ ἐστὶν πάντα τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ κτήνη ἐν τοῖς ὄρεσιν καὶ βόες

P.Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110): οτι εμα εστιν παντα τα θηρια του δρυμου<sup>a</sup>: κτη | νη εν τοις ορεσι και βοες :  
P.Oxy. 5101 (Ra 2227): οτι εμα [εστι]γ παγτ[α τα θηρια] | του δρυμου<sup>a</sup> κτηγ[η ε]γ τοις ορε[σιν] | και  
βοες  
Rahlfs: δρυμου B' 2013' R TSy 1219' 2110 2227, siluae La<sup>R</sup>Aug = מ] siluarum La<sup>G</sup> Ga; αγρου L' A:  
ex 11<sup>2</sup>

The Hebrew text reads in the beginning of verse 10, “for every animal of the forest is mine.” The Greek transmission diverges in the word “forest.” While some manuscripts read “animals of the forest” thus following the MT, other witnesses read “animals of the field” (τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἀγροῦ). The first reading is attested in most old witnesses while the latter is found in the Antiochene manuscripts and Codex Alexandrinus.

Rahlfs explains the variant ἀγροῦ as a secondary adaption to verse 11, which reads in the Septuagint “I know every bird of the sky, and the beauty of the field is before me.” It is not obvious, what is meant by “the beauty of the field”? Rahlfs might have thought that later editors tried to understand the sentence in connection with the previously mentioned animals in verse 10; this would be the reason for changing the animals of the forest to the animals of the field. However, it is questionable if this really contributes to the understanding of verse 11. Even more questionable is the suggestion that this was the reason for a later editing of verse 10. An easier explanation for the different readings may be found in the Hebrew, for the words “forest” and “field” (יַעַר and שָׂדֵי) are visually similar. A copyist might have read שָׂדֵי instead of יַעַר. This assumption is further corroborated by the fact that the phrase “animals of the forest” occurs only in two other passages in the Old Testament, while “animals of the field” is a very common phrase. Apart from the well-known Gen 2:19, it occurs in seventeen other passages (six times in the slightly modified form τὰ θηρία τὰ ἄγρια). The translator might have been familiar with the more common phrase and thus accidentally read שָׂדֵי instead of יַעַר thus translating the sentence with “animals of the field.” Later editors then corrected the text according to the Hebrew *Vorlage*. That also fits the manuscript evidence. The original text is preserved in the Antiochene manuscripts and in Codex Alexandrinus, while the other old witnesses, including Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, MS 2110 and MS 2227 attest an Hebraized text-form.



## LXX Psalm 103:4

ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ **πυρὸς φλόγα**  
 He who makes his messengers to winds and his ministers to **a flame of fire**.

A B S (L) 1219 2044 2110 (Heb 1,7) 4QPs<sup>d</sup> 4QPs<sup>l</sup> 11QPs<sup>a</sup>

MT	B	A	Ant
עֲשֵׂה מְלַאכָיו רוּחוֹת מְשָׁרְתָיו : אֵשׁ לְהֵט	ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα   καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ <b>πῦρ φλέγον</b>	ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ <b>πυρὸς φλέγα</b>	ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ ( <b>πυρὸς φλόγα</b> )

4QPs<sup>d</sup>: עֲשֵׂה מְלַאכָיו רוּחַ [ות משרת] יו אש | [לה] |

4QPs<sup>l</sup>: עֲשֵׂה מְלַאכָיו רוּחוֹת | משירתו אש להט

11QPs<sup>a</sup>: עושה מלאכיו רוחות משרתיו אש ללהט

P. Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110): ο ποιω[ν] | τους αγγελους αυτου π̄να : και τους λειτουργους | αυτου **πυρος φλογα**

(Heb 1,7): ὁ ποιῶν τοὺς ἀγγέλους αὐτοῦ πνεύματα καὶ τοὺς λειτουργοὺς αὐτοῦ **πυρὸς φλόγα**

Rahlfs: πυρ φλεγον] πυρος φλογα Bo Sa L<sup>b</sup> A<sup>c</sup>(φλεγα!): ex Hebr. 1 7

Kasser/Testuz (Ra 2110): πυρος φλογα : πυρ φλεγον

BHS: Q ללהט, U πῦρ φλέγον, prb l; prp להט

DJD XXIII (11QPs<sup>a</sup>): להט [לוהטת] M; πῦρ ψλέγον [sic!] U

DJD XVI (4QPs<sup>d</sup>): אש [לה] אש 4QPs<sup>l</sup> M; אש לוהטת 11QPs<sup>a</sup>; πῦρ φλέγον U; prp להט BHS n.4<sup>b</sup>

DJD XVI (4QPs<sup>l</sup>): להט M לוהטת 11QPs<sup>a</sup>; πῦρ φλέγον U

The MT attests the grammatically incorrect reading אֵשׁ לְהֵט. As אֵשׁ is a feminine word, the corresponding participle should be feminine, as attested in 11QPs<sup>a</sup> לוהטת.<sup>25</sup> Gesenius proposed that the original Hebrew text might have read אֵשׁ לוהטת “burning fire” like 11QPs<sup>a</sup>.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, the MT reading is also shared by other Qumran manuscripts (according to the reconstruction of DJD, 4QPs<sup>l</sup> and 4QPs<sup>d</sup>).<sup>27</sup> The BHS apparatus proposes that להט is original but is a noun להט “flame” separated from אֵשׁ by a copula. Accordingly, the sentence would read: “he who makes his ministers to *fire* and *flame*.” However, the addition of a copula is not necessary, as אֵשׁ לְהֵט could also be read as genitive construct: “he who makes his servants to *fire* of a *flame*,” a reading supported by Greek witnesses (see above), albeit in reversed order: πυρὸς φλόγα “flame of fire.” The strong attestation makes it probable that אֵשׁ לְהֵט was the original reading, although it is difficult to explain how אֵשׁ לְהֵט of the MT emerged. One possibility is that the rather uncommon noun לְהֵט was misread as a participle.<sup>28</sup> In this case 11QPs<sup>a</sup> would

<sup>25</sup> The *waw* is in plene writing, so we have a very early witness for the participial reading. The *tav* at the end marks the feminine participle, which agrees with the feminine noun אֵשׁ. אֵשׁ is usually feminine. Rarely it occurs in masculine; see Wilhelm Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, ed. Emil Kautzsch, trans. Arthur Ernest Cowley, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), §1220. See also David J. A. Clines, ed., *Aleph*, vol. 1 of *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), s. v.

<sup>26</sup> See Wilhelm Gesenius, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament: With an Appendix containing the Biblical Aramaic, Based on the Lexicon of William Gesenius as translated by Edward Robinson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1906), להט.

<sup>27</sup> “The extant left stroke corresponds to the scribe’s *tet* (cf. [חטי] in 147:14, line 2), and there is insufficient room for לוהטת (cf. 11QPs<sup>a</sup>).” See Eugene Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4.XI: Psalms to Chronicles*, DJD 16 (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 68.

<sup>28</sup> The noun להט is only attested in Gen 3:24. להט as verb or participle is attested in Deut 32:22; Ps 57:7; 83:15; 97:3; 104:4; 106:18; Isa 42:25; Job 41:13; Joel 1:19; 2:3; Mal 3:19.

represent a later grammatical correction of an older misreading (the masculine participle would have been corrected to the feminine).

Most of the Greek manuscripts attest πῦρ φλέγον<sup>29</sup> which corresponds to the participial reading of the MT (אֵשׁ לִהְטֹת/לִהֲטֹת “burning fire”). Some of the Antiochene manuscripts, MS 2110, a citation of the letter in Hebrews 1:7, and presumably Codex Alexandrinus (supported by the Bohairic and Sahidic translations) read πυρὸς φλόγα instead,<sup>30</sup> which corresponds to the nominal vocalization אֵשׁ לִהֲטֹת. Since the original Hebrew text most likely read the consonants לִהֲטֹת as a noun, as seen above, it is most probable that the original Septuagint rendered the word with the noun φλόγα. This is also supported by the broad geographical distribution of the reading in the Septuagint transmission from the Sahidic to the Antiochene text, which points to a relatively old common base.<sup>31</sup> The participial reading πῦρ φλέγον can well be explained as a later adaption to the MT.

LXX Psalm 103:5

ὁ θεμελιῶν τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν αὐτῆς οὐ κλιθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος  
 He who founded the earth on its stability; it will never ever be tilted.

A B S (L) 1219 2044 2110 4QPs<sup>d</sup> 4QPs<sup>l</sup> 11QPs<sup>a</sup>

MT	B	A	Ant
יִסַּד אֶרֶץ -ל- מְכוּנִיָּה בַּל-תִּמוּט : עוֹלָם וָעֶד	ἔθεμελίωσε(ν) τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν αὐτῆς   οὐ κλιθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος	ὁ θεμελιῶν τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν αὐτῆς οὐ κεινηθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος	ὁ θεμελιῶν τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀσφάλειαν αὐτῆς οὐ (κλιθήσεται) εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος

4QPs<sup>d</sup>: [...] | א[רץ על מכונייה כל תמו]ט

4QPs<sup>l</sup>: [ישד ארץ על מכונייה | כל תמוט לעלמ]ו[עד]

11QPs<sup>a</sup>: [יסד ארץ על מכונייה כל תמוט עולם]ו[עד]

P.Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110): θεμελιων την γην : | πυρ φλεγων επι την ασφαλιαν αυτης : ου | κλεισθησεται εις τον αι[ω]να του αιωνος

Rahlfs: εθεμελιωσεν B'-2044 Sa R'' = M | ο θεμελιων Bo L'' A'', qui fundasti GaHi

Kasser/Testuz (Ra 2110): θεμελιων την γην πυρ φλεγον : εθεμελιωσεν την γην

BHS: 6<sup>AL</sup> (L<sup>PT</sup> Hier) ὁ θεμελιῶν = יסד

DJD XVI (4QPs<sup>d</sup>): יסד 4QPs<sup>d</sup> 6<sup>mss</sup> (ὁ θεμελιῶν) | יסד M; ἔθεμελίωσεν (= יסד\*) 6<sup>ed</sup>; ישד 4QPs<sup>l</sup>

DJD XVI (4QPs<sup>l</sup>): [ישד] יסד M6 (ἔθεμελίωσεν); יסד 4QPs<sup>d</sup> 6<sup>mss</sup> (ὁ θεμελιῶν) (orth or var?)

In the Greek manuscripts two different kinds of readings appear that probably go back to two different readings in Hebrew. The reading as participle יסד (ὁ θεμελιῶν) is clearly attested through the plene writing in 4QPs<sup>d</sup> (and maybe also in 11QPs<sup>a</sup>).<sup>32</sup> On the other hand is the reading as 3rd person singular perfect יסד (ἔθεμελίωσεν), as attested in the MT.<sup>33</sup> In the context

<sup>29</sup> Participle accusative neuter singular of φλέγω “to burn.”

<sup>30</sup> Accusative singular feminine of ἡ φλόξ “flame.”

<sup>31</sup> See Siegfried Kreuzer, “Die Bedeutung des Antiochenischen Textes für die älteste Septuaginta (Old Greek) und für das Neue Testament,” in *Von der Septuaginta zum Neuen Testament*, ed. Martin Karrer, ANTF 43 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 33.

<sup>32</sup> “Possible variant readings are יסד, הארץ, or לעולם”; Florentino Garcia Martinez et al., *Qumran Cave 11.II: 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31*, DJD 23 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 32.

<sup>33</sup> Further 4QPs<sup>l</sup> attests the singular reading ישד. There is no evidence for the word ישד in the Old Testament. The reading probably emerged through a hearing mistake in the transmission of the text.

of the psalm, the hymnic participle fits better, since the preceding verses each start with a participle and also the following themes are introduced by a participle (see verses 10, 13, 14 etc.). This suggests that also in our case the original Hebrew text had a participle. The emergence of **דָּבַר** can be explained as misinterpretation of the consonantal text.<sup>34</sup> In this case also the original Septuagint probably read the participial form, while the 3rd singular aorist reflects a later adaption to the MT.

## LXX Psalm 103:6

ἄβυσσος ὡς ἱμάτιον τὸ περιβόλαιον **αὐτῆς** | ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρεων στήσεται ὕδατα

The deep like a garment is **her** clothing; above the mountains the waters will stand.

A B S (L) 1219 2044 **2110** 2QPs 11QPs<sup>a</sup>

MT	B	A	Ant
<p>תְּהוֹם כְּלִבּוֹשׁ כְּפִתּוֹ עַל־הָרִים :יַעֲמְדוּ־מַיִם</p>	<p>ἄβυσσος ὡς ἱμάτιον τὸ περιβόλαιον <b>αὐτοῦ</b>   ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρεων στήσονται ὕδατα  </p>	<p>ἄβυσσος ὡς ἱμάτιον τὸ περιβόλαιον <b>αὐτοῦ</b> ἐπὶ τῶν ὄραίων στήσονται ὕδατα</p>	<p>ἄβυσσος ὡς ἱμάτιον τὸ περιβόλαιον (<b>αὐτῆς</b>) ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρεων (στήσεται) ὕδατα</p>

2QPs: תְּהוֹם כְּלִבּוֹשׁ כְּפִתּוֹ עַל הָרִים | יַעֲמְדוּ מַיִם

11QPs<sup>a</sup>: תְּהוֹם<sup>a6</sup>

P. Bodmer XXIV (Ra 2110): αβ[υσ | σος : ὡς ἱμάτιον τ[ο περιβ]όλαιον **αυτου** επ[ι τ | ων ορειων σ[τη]σονται[ι υ]δατα

Rahlfs: αυτου (cf. M) | αυτης L<sup>b</sup>, cf. Tht: το “αυτου” αντι του “αυτης” τεθεικεν

BHS: Ⓞ τὸ περιβόλαιον αὐτοῦ = ἰσות; α' θ' Hier Ⓞ suff f, prp תְּהוֹם כְּפִתּוֹ cf. 9

The MT attests the difficult reading **כְּפִתּוֹ**.<sup>35</sup> The enclitic personal pronoun in masculine does not make sense in the context.<sup>36</sup> Kraus proposes to read **תְּהוֹם**,<sup>37</sup> and accordingly he translates: “Das Urmeer bedeckte ‘sie’ wie ein Kleid”<sup>38</sup> (The deep covered her like a garment). The feminine pronoun refers to **יָרֵךְ** from verse 5 (see also verse 9).<sup>39</sup> This conjecture fits well with the context in verses 5–9. Nevertheless, it is difficult to explain how **כְּפִתּוֹ** came into existence, for the masculine pronoun makes no sense. This reading is also difficult to explained as a copying mistake from **תְּהוֹם**. There are also no Hebrew witnesses for the conjectured reading.

The Greek witnesses may provide a better explanation, for they attest the pronoun in the feminine while the verb is rendered as a noun: τὸ περιβόλαιον αὐτῆς, “The deep like a garment is her clothing” (the reading is also supported by Hieronymus and the targums). The Hebrew

<sup>34</sup> See Kraus, who is also of the opinion that the hymnical participle is the original reading: “Hier T belegen das hymnische Partizip **דָּבַר**, das an dieser Stelle doch wohl richtig ist.” Hans-Joachim Kraus, *Psalmen 60–150*, BKAT 15.2, 5th ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1978), 879.

<sup>35</sup> This derives from **כָּסַף** “cover up (Pi.)” 2nd singular masculine, perfect piel and a 3rd person singular masculine suffix.

<sup>36</sup> See also Frank-Lothar Hossfeld and Erich Zenger, *Psalmen 101–150*, HThKAT (Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 70. If the pronoun was in the feminine, it could relate to **יָרֵךְ** in verse 5, but the pronoun in the masculine has no noun to relate to.

<sup>37</sup> Thus third person singular feminine perfect piel and a suffix third person singular feminine. See also BHS.

<sup>38</sup> Kraus, *Psalmen 60–150*, 877, 879.

<sup>39</sup> See also Hossfeld/Zenger, *Psalmen 101–150*, 70: “Unter dem Eindruck von V 9b wird die Verbform zur 3. Person Singular Femininum konjiziert.” In verse 9 the reference to **יָרֵךְ** in verse 5 is made as well in the Hebrew as in the Greek transmission.

equivalent would be כְּסוּתָהּ<sup>40</sup> from כְּסוּת “covering, clothing”<sup>41</sup> (+ feminine suffix). If we assume that a Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint read כְּסוּתָהּ (with Qámez chatúf) then also the difficult Masoretic reading כְּסוּתוֹ could be easily explained as hearing mistake in the copying process. Further on, the feminine form is also attested for Aquila and Theodotion, two translators known for translating the Hebrew very faithfully, which supports the thesis that a Hebrew text existed that read כְּסוּתָהּ.

These indications strongly suggest that the original Hebrew text might have read כְּסוּתָהּ “her clothing” and that the original Septuagint has translated correctly with τὸ περιβόλαιον αὐτῆς. The MT evolved through a mistake in the copying process and the Greek manuscripts, which attest the pronoun in the masculine, represent a later adaption to the MT. Accordingly, some Antiochene manuscripts as well as Aquila and Theodotion (supported by Hieronymus and the Targums) attest the original Greek (and Hebrew) reading, while the other manuscripts represent a later adaption to the MT.

## 4. Conclusion

Using LXX Pss 49 and 103 as examples, the investigation has demonstrated early Hebraizing recensional activity in the Septuagint Psalter. It has also become clear that the original Greek text deviated from the Hebrew text far more often than the one reconstructed by Rahlfs. The recensions sought to harmonize the Greek text after the Hebrew even in the minor differences that do not affect the meaning, such as using the third person singular in LXX Ps 103:5 instead of the participle. The Hebraizing recension is predominantly attested in the older manuscripts (i.e., the uncials), while the presumed original Antiochene text does not attest to a Hebraization in the subject of our investigation. The MSs 2227 (P.Oxy. 5101) and 2110 (P.Bodmer XXIV) attest to a particularly strongly Hebraized text-form.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>40</sup> See Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, s. v.

<sup>41</sup> Gesenius, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*, s. v.

<sup>42</sup> I am indebted to Brian Baucom and Joel Korytko for improving my English and giving some helpful advice.