PRO-HASMONEAN INTERPRETATION IN LXX-ZECH 9

By Gunnar Magnus Eidsvåg, Norwegian School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger

1 Introduction

This paper will deal with the Septuagint translation of Zech 9. I will point out some peculiarities in the translation which indicate how the translator understood the passage. It is debated how much of the translator's own interpretation it is possible to retrieve from the translation, but I believe that the translators were part of an exegetical tradition and that they had clear ideas about the texts they translated. These ideas formed the framework for the translation and influenced the rendering of the text. It is this influence I will try to recover. In this particular passage my claim is that the translator understood the text within his own relio-political environment and had pro-Hasmonean sympathies.

I will divide my paper in two parts. The first will deal with the Hebrew and the Greek texts and provide a translation of the Greek text. The second will discuss the traces we find of interpretation in the Greek translation.

2 The Texts

2.1 The structure of the Hebrew and the Greek texts

Zech 9 in the MT predicts or describes a situation where Yahweh saves his people from its enemies. Yahweh acts as a warrior and brings about peace and material abundance. The people again have a king with a kingdom extending to the ends of the world. The chapter is commonly divided into three units; verses 1-8, 9-10, and 11-17.[1] The first unit is a prophecy of doom to the land of Hadrach and Damascus, to Hamath, and coastal cities from Sidon to Gaza. In the second unit we find a prophecy of a king restored to Jerusalem, and in the third unit the future salvation of Yahweh is described. We thus have a development from judgement of the nations to the salvation of Yahweh's people.

This structure then is the basis for the Greek text and it appears that the unity of the passage is even stronger in the Greek version.

---

[1] Wilhelm Rudolph, *Haggai - Sacharja 1-8 - Sacharja 9-14 - Maleachi* (Gütersloh, 1976) 166 – 189; Katrina J. A. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology* (Kampen, 1994) 54 – 86.

2.2 The characteristics of the translation

When we compare our Greek text with the MT, we find that they are quite similar. From this observation we may assume that the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the translator must have been close to the MT. It is possible that the *Vorlage* contained a few variant readings, but there are no longer minuses or pluses.

Furthermore we may assume that the translation of these verses is a fairly literal translation. It is literal in the sense that it follows its *Vorlage* when it comes to word order, quantitative representation of the elements in the Hebrew text, and the representation of the constituents of Hebrew words by individual Greek equivalents.[2] Therefore we may get a good overview of the Greek text in relation to its Hebrew *Vorlage*.

When it comes to literacy on the word level the picture is somewhat different. The translator seems to have been mindful of the near textual context when he chose his renderings. Furthermore, he is quite free when it comes to choosing the person and the number of the verbs and pronouns in the text. In this manner he has formed a translation which is formally close to its source text, but quite different on the semantic level.

2.3 Translation

[1] The burden of the word of the Lord, in the land of Sedrach and Damascus, his sacrifice; for the Lord looks upon men, and all the tribes of Israel. [2] And Emath, in her regions, Tyre and Sidon, because they were very clever. [3] And Tyre built fortresses for herself, and heaped up silver like dust and gold like the mud of the streets. [4] Therefore the Lord will take possession of her, and smite her power in the sea; and she shall be consumed with fire. [5] Ascalon shall see, and be afraid, Gaza too, and be greatly pained, and Accaron; for she was put to shame by her transgressions; and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ascalon shall not be inhabited. [6] And foreigners shall dwell in Azotus, and I will bring down the pride of the foreign tribes. [7] And I will remove their blood from their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth; and this also shall be left to our God, and they shall be like an officer of a thousand in Juda, and Accaron like the Jebusite. [8] And I will set up a garrison for my house that they may

[2] The study of literalism in the LXX-translation was greatly advanced by J. Barr, "The Typology of Literalism in ancient biblical translations," *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens (MSU) XV* 11 (1979). Similar ideas was formed into a methodological framework in Emanuel Tov, *The Text Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem, 1997) 17 -29. I use the categories presented by Tov for my analysis above.

not pass through, nor turn back. And there shall not come anyone to drive them away, for now I have seen with my eyes. [9] Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion; proclaim aloud, daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King is coming to you, he is just and saving; he is meek and riding on an ass, and a young foal. [10] And he shall destroy chariots out of Ephraim, and cavalry out of Jerusalem, and the bow of war shall be utterly destroyed; and there will be abundance and peace from the nations; and he shall rule over the waters as far as the sea, and the rivers to the ends of the earth. [11] And you have by the blood of your covenant sent forth your prisoners out of the pit that has no water. [12] You shall dwell in fortresses, you prisoners of the congregation: and for one day of your exile I will repay you double. [13] For I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow, I have filled Ephraim; and I will raise up your sons, Zion, against the sons of the Greeks, and I will handle you as the sword of a warrior. [14] And the Lord shall be over them, and go forth like a lightning arrow: and the Lord Almighty shall blow with the trumpet; and shall come forth with a wave of his menace. [15] The Lord Almighty shall protect them, and they shall consume them, and overwhelm them with sling-stones; and they shall swallow them down as wine, and fill the altar like saucers. [16] And the Lord shall save them on that day, his people like sheep; for holy stones are rolled upon his land. [17] For if he has anything good, and if he has anything fair, there will be grain for the young men, and fragrant wine to the virgins.

2.4 Textual notes

1 "His sacrifice": In the MT we find מְנֻחָתוֹ "his rest". The Greek equivalent θυσία αὐτοῦ "his sacrifice" appears to stem from a different vocalization, namely מִנְחָתוֹ "his offering".
"the Lord looks…": MT has כִּי לַיהוָה עֵין אָדָם " for the eyes of man are directed to Yahweh".
2 "in her regions": MT has תִּגְבָּל־בָּהּ "borders to it (the land in v 1)". The Greek ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις αὐτῆς may reflect a different *Vorlage* בגבלתה, but more likely is it the translator who renders his interpretation of the somewhat difficult Hebrew line. Also the Vulgate renders a line similar to the Greek.
"they were very clever": MT has the verb in the feminine singular referring back to Hamath. The Greek plural includes not only Emath, but also Tyre and Sidon.
4 "Therefore": The Greek διὰ τοῦτο "because of this" has the equivalent הִנֵּה "look" in the MT. This is unusual and it appears that the translator intended to underline the connection to the previous clauses making the actions of Yahweh the result of the heaping up of gold and silver.
5 "by her transgressions": MT has מֻבְטָהּ "from her expectations". It is conceivable that the Greek translator read מבטה as the root בטה / בטא, which means "to speak rashly, thoughtlessly", but that does not explain why he chose "transgression" as his translation. The three occurrences of the root בטה / בטא are translated by διαστέλλειν (Lev 5:4; Ps 106 (105):33) and λέγειν (Prov 12:18).
6 "Foreigners": MT has מַמְזֵר "bastard". See page 8 for a discussion of the Greek equivalent ἀλλογενεῖς.
8 "Garrison": MT has מִצָּבָא "from an army".
"anyone to drive them away": MT has נֹגֵשׂ "oppress". We find the Greek ἐξελαύνων for נֹגֵשׂ also in Zech 10:4 which indicates that the translator regarded it as an adequate translation.

9 "Proclaim aloud": MT has הָרִיעִי (to shout). The translation of the hiphil of this root by κηρύσσειν is only found in LXX-MP (Hos 5:8; Joel 2:1; Zeph 3:14).
"saving": MT has the niphal form נוֹשָׁע (being saved/ having salvation KJV) while the Greek renders it by an active participle σῴζων (he who is saving). Brenton translates this participle by "a Savior", while SD has "ein Retter". See 11 for further discussion.
10 "he shall destroy": MT has 1 sg with Yahweh as the subject.
"abundance and peace from the nations": The Greek may rely on a different *Vorlage*, ורב ושלום מגוים, which may be secondary and a response to the MT being too positive towards the nations (see Rudolph *Haggai* 1976 178). But the Greek text may also stem from the translator and reflect his exegesis of the text (van der Kooij *"Septuagint of Zechariah"* 2003 59-60).
"waters as far as the sea": The translator read מַיִם עַד־יָם and not מִיָּם עַד־יָם as the Masoretes. H.-J. Fabry sees more than a simple mistake in this reading, and connects it to Nah 1:12 where the LXX has τάδε λέγει κύριος κατάρχων ὑδάτων πολλῶν, (MT: כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה אִם־שְׁלֵמִים וְכֵן רַבִּים) and claims that the translations may reflect the old Canaanite "*Chaoskampf-Motiv*" (Fabry "The Lord over Mighty Waters" 2008 156). This explanation suits well for Nahum where Yahweh is the ruler, but in the LXX-version of Zech 9:10 the ruler is the king and it is not likely that the translator would ascribe such an attribute to him.
12 "Congregation": The Greek may reflect המקוה "gathering" (see Lev 11:36) rather than MT's הַתְּקוָה or it is as Joseph Ziegler suggests possible that the translator simply had the root קוה with the meaning "to gather together" in mind while he chose his rendering (Ziegler *"Einheit"* 1971 41).
13 "I will handle you": The peculiar equivalents καὶ ψηλαφήσω σε "touch, feel" for וְשַׁתְּתִיךְ "put, place" may be explained by a metathesis in the transmission of the *Vorlage*. The Hebrew root משׁשׁ is a common equivalent for ψηλαφᾶν found not only in the Minor Prophets but also in Job and the Psalms. In Zech 3:9 ψηλαφήσω renders מְמַשְּׁתִּי, and it is likely that this was also the form in the *Vorlage*.
14 "shall be over them": MT has וַיהוָה עֲלֵיהֶם יֵרָאֶה "Yahweh will be seen over them". Perhaps the *Vorlage* was ויהוה עליהם יהיה (Rudolph *Haggai* 1976 184).

3 Interpretation

3.1 The different Greek text

The Greek text follows the structure of the Hebrew, but differs on quite a number of smaller instances. If we look at these deviations some of them reveal a pattern which may represent how the translator interpreted the text. It does not require much effort to read it as a text relating to events in the second century, and that is, as I will argue, what the translator did. Several issues make this likely. First, the setting of the text easily accommodate a contemporary interpretation. Secondly, the adversaries and their offences are given a harsher description. Thirdly, the punishment they receive is also harsher, and finally the salvation of Jerusalem is more mundane and the king in verse 9 has a more central role.

3.3.1 The Setting.

The adversaries in the Greek text are close to those we find in the MT. It is not certain what the translator had in mind by "the land of Sedrak" but the rest of the places must have been

known to him.[3] Damascus, Hamath, Tyre, Sidon, Ashkelon, Ashdod and Gaza were all important cities in the second century. The coastal cities mentioned were under the shifting influence of the Ptolemaic and the Seleucid kingdoms although with a certain amount of independence.[4] They are described as hostile to the Jews and the Maccabees in 1 and 2 Maccabees, and in Josephus. Perhaps the most telling statement about the continuous alienation between the Judean hill country and the coastal plains is found in Jos. *Ant.* 13.89-90 where Appolonius, the governor of Coelesyria, is reported to have said to Jonathan: "Do not, therefore, deceive yourself," he added, "sitting in the mountains and thinking that zou are strong; but if you have confidence in zour force, come down to the plain and measure zour force against mz armz, and the final victorz will show which is the braver of the two."

A passage in 1 Macc 11:59-62 reports that Simon is made the *strategos* of the area from Tyre to Gaza. These cities reacted differently to coming under the Maccabean control, and while the people of Gaza responded with an uprising, which was brutally put down, Ashkelon, on the other hand, received the new *strategos* with humble submission. The cities were never allied of the Maccabees but were treated as an area that continuously needed to be controlled.[5]

In addition to these cities we find mentioning of another adversary, Zech 9:13 directs an attack on the Greeks. The form in the MT is יָוָן which our translator rendered by ἕλλην. Such a Greek rendering is found in the LXX-prophets [6] while LXX-Genesis and LXX-Paralipomenon I (1 Chronicles) transliterate into Ιωυαν. The term ἕλλην, originally referring to the people from Thessaly, a city founded by Hellen,[7] was quite early used as a term designating all Greeks, and in the second century it was used of the Greeks of both the Seleucic and the Ptolemaic kingdoms.[8]

3.1.2 The Offences of the Adversaries.

---

[3] For the Greek "Sedrach" MT has the equivalent חַדְרָךְ. The Hebrew "Hadrach" may be referring to the capital city of a state called by the same name. The name was also used to designate the Assyrian province in the area between Hamath and Aleppo (E Zolli, "'Eyn 'Adam (Zaxh. IX 1)," *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955) 90). For the Greek "Sedrach", it has been suggested that this is a personal referring back to Daniel's friend (Dan 1:7) (Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology* 55, and Rudolph, *Haggai* 168). On the other hand, Eusebius does not indicate such a connection in his "Onomasticon" but reads "Sedrach" as a toponym (as does Jerome in his Latin version) (Erich Klostermann, ed., *Eusebius Werke: Das Onomasticon der biblische Ortsnamen* (Leipzig, 1904). 162-163) Jerome does, however, claim that this was a misreading in his commentary on the Minor Prophets (See DP).

[4] XXXXXXXX

[5] 1 Macc 12:24-34

[6] Isa 66:19; Ezek 27:13; Dan 8:21; 10:20; 11:2

[7] See the entrances ἑλλάς and ἕλλην in LS.

[8] See for instance 1 Macc 1:10; 2 Macc 4:36; 3 Macc 3:8.

Zech 9:1-2 in the Hebrew text are somewhat obscure and the connections between the different sentences are not easily accessible. The text left the translator with difficulties how to translate them.

1 מַשָּׂא דְּבַר־יְהוָה בְּאֶרֶץ חַדְרָךְ וְדַמֶּשֶׂק מְנֻחָתוֹ כִּי לַיהוָה עֵין אָדָם וְכֹל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל׃	1 Λῆμμα λόγου κυρίου· ἐν γῇ Σεδραχ καὶ Δαμασκοῦ θυσία αὐτοῦ, διότι κύριος ἐφορᾷ ἀνθρώπους καὶ πάσας φυλὰς τοῦ Ισραηλ.
2 וְגַם־חֲמָת תִּגְבָּל־בָּהּ צֹר וְצִידוֹן כִּי חָכְמָה מְאֹד׃	2 καὶ Εμαθ ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις αὐτῆς, Τύρος καὶ Σιδών, διότι ἐφρόνησαν σφόδρα.
[1] The burden of the word of the LORD. In the land of Hadrach, and in Damascus shall be His resting-place; for the LORD'S is the eye of man and all the tribes of Israel. [2] And Hamath also shall border thereon; Tyre and Zidon, for she is very wise. [9]	[1] The oracle of the word of the Lord, in the land of Sedrach and Damascus, his sacrifice; for the Lord looks upon men, and all the tribes of Israel. [2] And Emath, in her regions, Tyre and Sidon, because they were very clever.

I shall not discuss all the elements in the Greek text, for further comments the reader may confer the notes to the translation above,[10] but rather focus on how the translator made these verses intelligible to the ancient reader.

The line לַיהוָה עֵין אָדָם has been an issue in scholarly debate and textual emendations have been suggested in order to make better sense of it.[11] In my opinion there is no reason to assume that the *Vorlage* of the Greek translation differed from the text we find in the MT. We should rather regard the Greek text as an attempt from the translator to make the text understandable. The Greek does, however, make *Kyrios* the subject of the clause, and instead of the noun "eye" in the Hebrew, it has the verb "see". The Greek text then arrives at: "because the Lord sees man and all the tribes of Israel", which serves well as an introduction to an oracle of doom.

The offences of the adversaries and their consequences are described in a similar manner in the two texts. But, a few changes the translator made, seems to underline the graveness of the offences.

---

[9] JPS 1917

[10] The textual criticism of these verses is discussed by many scholars, see for instances Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology* 54-56; Magne Sæbø, *Sacharja 9-14: Untersuchungen von Text und Form* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969) 45-47

[11] BHS suggests that the MT is corrupt and the form עֵין אָדָם should be emended to עָוֹן אֲרָם "Aram sinned". Mitchell Dahood contends that the text as it stand is ok, but that its meaning is similar to עֵין הָאָרֶץ "the face of the earth" (f.ex. Exod 10:5). This suggestion emphasizes the close relationship between אדם and אדמה (Mitchell Dahood, "Zacharia 9,1 'ên 'adam," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963) 123-124). E. Zolli argues that אדם is the name of a town *Ed-Damieh*. Zolli also list a number of other suggestions (Zolli, "'Eyn 'Adam (Zaxh. IX 1)," 91-92).

At the end of verse 2 we find an interesting line in the Greek text. MT's "for she is very wise" is rendered by "because they were very clever". In the Hebrew text we find the verb in the feminine singular probably referring back to Hamath, while the Greek text renders the verb in plural which leaves no room for doubt that it includes Tyre and Sidon in the subject.[12] The Greek text thus includes all these cities as offenders.

The usage of φρονεῖν to render the root חכם is an adequate translation. It was, however, not the only option available to the translator. The fact that he elsewhere rendered the same Hebrew word by the adjectives σοφὸς "wise" (Hos 14:10; Oba 1:8) and φρόνιμος "prudent, wise" (Hos 13:13) puts the choice of φρονεῖν into perspective. Φρονεῖν is the less commonly used translation among these renderings and interestingly enough, it can be used with a negative sense, namely "to be arrogant / to think arrogantly".[13] In this context it is perhaps more likely that it means "clever" but the usage of φρονεῖν shows that this cleverness is a despiteful attitude.[14]

We should also note a difference in verse 5.

תֵּרֶא אַשְׁקְלוֹן וְתִירָא וְעַזָּה וְתָחִיל מְאֹד וְעֶקְרוֹן כִּי־הֹבִישׁ מִבְטָחָהּ וְאָבַד מֶלֶךְ מֵעַזָּה וְאַשְׁקְלוֹן לֹא תֵשֵׁב׃

ὄψεται Ἀσκαλὼν καὶ φοβηθήσεται, καὶ Γάζα καὶ ὀδυνηθήσεται σφόδρα, **καὶ Ακκαρων, ὅτι ἠσχύνθη ἐπὶ τῷ παραπτώματι αὐτῆς**· καὶ ἀπολεῖται βασιλεὺς ἐκ Γάζης, καὶ Ἀσκαλὼν οὐ μὴ κατοικηθῇ.

Ashkelon shall see *it* and fear; Gaza also shall be very sorrowful; **And Ekron, for He dried up her expectation.** The king shall perish from Gaza, And Ashkelon shall not be inhabited.[15]

Ascalon shall see, and be afraid, Gaza too, and be greatly pained, **and Accaron; for she was put to shame by her transgressions**; and a king shall perish from Gaza, and Ascalon shall not be inhabited.

The verb ἠσχύνθη is in the passive voice, while the equivalent verb in the Hebrew text is active. In the Greek text Akkaron then becomes the grammatical subject. Moreower, we see that the translator chose the word παράπτωμα "transgression".[16] This is an unusual

[12] The plural form is supported by the Washington ms III cent. A singular form, ἐφρόνησε(ν), is found in Codex Venetus ἐφρόνησε(ν) VIII cent., a ms 68 XV cent., from the catenae group, a ms 770 XII cent., from the Alexandrinian group, and some of the mss attesting the work of Theodoretus.

[13] Esther 8:12.

[14] Interestingly we find that all three of the revisions have εσοφισαν.

[15] NKJV.

[16] This reading is supported by the Washington ms (III cent.), a marginal note in the Syro Hexaplaric translation, with minor deviations in Codex Sinaiticus (IV cent) (>τῷ), and Codex Venetus (VIII cent.) (accusative instead of dative). A number of mss from the Alexandrinian group, the text in the Syro Hexaplaric translation, Cyrillus Alexandrinus, Basilius Neopatrensis, and Jerome have απο της ελπιδος αυτης. But this reading is likely to be a correction towards the Hebrew.

equivalent for מבט "expectation". It is conceivable that the Greek translator read מבטה as מַבְטָא, which means "rash utterance",[17] although such a change would not account for the rendering of the pronominal suffix by αὐτῆς. But, whether or not he read מַבְטָא, the use of "transgression" still seems peculiar. Παράπτωμα was used with various meanings, but the most common amongst the Septuagint translators is "transgression, trespass".[18] In this manner the text explains why this city had reason to fear, and it furthermore serves to justify the image of it as a rightful enemy.[19]

3.1.3 Punishment.

A similar tendency is found in the following verses of the translation where the punishment is measured out. Verse 6 has:

וְיָשַׁב מַמְזֵר בְּאַשְׁדּוֹד וְהִכְרַתִּי גְּאוֹן פְּלִשְׁתִּים׃	**καὶ κατοικήσουσιν ἀλλογενεῖς** ἐν Ἀζώτῳ, καὶ καθελῶ ὕβριν ἀλλοφύλων
And a bastard will dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.	**And foreigners shall dwell** in Azotus, and I will bring down the pride of the foreign tribes.

Here we find that the Hebrew מַמְזֵר "bastard" has the Greek equivalent ἀλλογενεῖς "foreigners". The word מַמְזֵר is only used here and in Deut 23:3 in the Hebrew Bible. The Greek translation of Deut 23:3 used ἐκ πόρνης "of a harlot" which is closer to the Hebrew than ἀλλογενεῖς in Zechariah. In Zech 9:6 the translator was probably influenced by the use of ἀλλόφυλος in the last hemistich of the verse and found a parallel expression.[20] Thus, the choice the translator made was not without base in the Hebrew text, but the plural form of both this noun and the preceding verb indicates that the translation is carefully chosen. The

[17] See Num 30:7-8.

[18] Cf Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones, *A Greek-English lexicon* (Oxford, 1968) 1322.

[19] It may also be contended that the passive voice here is a so called divine passive, which means that the acting agent is implied to be Yahweh.

[20] Is it possible that the translator here did not fully understand the Hebrew word? This seems to be the case in Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion who all transliterated into μαμζηρ. If so it may be contended that the translator made his choice on the base of the last two consonants in the Hebrew word ז and ר. זְר is a common equivalent for ἀλλογενής. Such a kind of exegesis is found elsewhere in the Septuagint translations, see Barr, "The Typology of Literalism in ancient biblical translations," 321 - 322 and Tov, *The Text Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* 172 - 180. Against this solution, it may be argued that if the translator aimed at a strictly literal translation why would he choose a plural form? I believe that the best explanation is that the translator arrived at ἀλλογενής due to the parallel with ἀλλόφυλος, and that he regarded this as a suitable rendering in the context.

word ἀλλογενής carries with it a negative judgement of those referred to.[21] In the translation of the Minor Prophets the word is used as a parallel to "all who act unlawfully" (πάντες οἱ ποιοῦντες ἄνομα),[22] as a designation of foes entering Jerusalem and casting lots on her,[23] and as a designation for those who are not to allowed to enter in the eschatological Jerusalem.[24]

In the following verse in the Greek text, Zech 9:7, these ἀλλογενεῖς are further described by the line "and I will remove their blood from their mouth, and their abominations from between their teeth". In the Hebrew text we find the pronominal suffixes all in the singular, thus "his blood", "his mouth" etc. The Greek equivalents are rendered in the plural leaving no doubt that the ones having blood and abominations in their mouths are the ἀλλογενεῖς of the preceding verse.

3.1.4 The salvation.

From these adversaries Yahweh will bring salvation. He appears as the instigator of the events which are described in the passage, but he does not act alone. He has his human agents, who are presented in verses 9, 10, and 13. Let us look at verses 9 and 10 first.

9 גִּילִי מְאֹד בַּת־צִיּוֹן הָרִיעִי בַּת יְרוּשָׁלָ͏ִם הִנֵּה מַלְכֵּךְ
יָבוֹא לָךְ צַדִּיק וְנוֹשָׁע הוּא עָנִי וְרֹכֵב עַל־חֲמוֹר
וְעַל־עַיִר בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת׃

10 וְהִכְרַתִּי־רֶכֶב מֵאֶפְרַיִם וְסוּס מִירוּשָׁלָ͏ִם וְנִכְרְתָה
קֶשֶׁת מִלְחָמָה וְדִבֶּר שָׁלוֹם לַגּוֹיִם וּמָשְׁלוֹ מַיִם עַד־יָם
וּמִנָּהָר עַד־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶץ׃

9 Χαῖρε σφόδρα, θύγατερ Σιων· κήρυσσε,
θύγατερ Ιερουσαλημ· ἰδοὺ ὁ βασιλεύς σου
ἔρχεταί σοι, δίκαιος καὶ **σῴζων** αὐτός, **πραΰς**
καὶ ἐπιβεβηκὼς ἐπὶ ὑποζύγιον καὶ πῶλον νέον.
10 **καὶ ἐξολεθρεύσει** ἅρματα ἐξ Εφραιμ καὶ
ἵππον ἐξ Ιερουσαλημ, καὶ ἐξολεθρευθήσεται
τόξον πολεμικόν, καὶ πλῆθος καὶ εἰρήνη ἐξ
ἐθνῶν· καὶ κατάρξει ὑδάτων ἕως θαλάσσης καὶ
ποταμῶν διεκβολὰς γῆς.

[9] Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and **saved**, **lowly** and riding on an ass, A colt, the foal of a ass.
[10] **I will cut off** the chariot from Ephraim And the horse from Jerusalem; The battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

[9] Rejoice greatly, daughter of Sion; proclaim aloud, daughter of Jerusalem; behold, your King is coming to you, just, and a **savior**; he is **meek** and riding on an ass, and a young foal. [10] **And he shall destroy** chariots out of Ephraim, and cavalry out of Jerusalem, and the bow of war shall be utterly destroyed; and there will be abundance and peace from the nations; and he shall rule over the waters as far as the sea, and the rivers to the ends of the earth.

[21] Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets* (Louvain, 2002)19-20.
[22] Mal 3:19
[23] Obad 1:11
[24] Joel 4:17

It has been noted that the Hebrew text of these two verses refers to other biblical texts. The most obvious are Gen 49 and Psalm 72, though the textual context of the passage is possibly even more complex.[25]

In Gen 49 we find Jakob's farewell blessing of his sons. The blessing of Judah which promises eternal kingship for his descendants, is believed to have served a political purpose as a pro-Judean, pro-Davidic propaganda.[26] In Zech this blessing is turned into prophecy with eschatological overtones of an ideal king. The most direct reference is in the description of the humble king riding on an ass (וְעַל־עַיִר בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת) using the same language as in Gen 49:11. But also the line "...I have sent forth your prisoners (אֲסִירַיִךְ) out of a pit that has no water (מְבוֹר אֵין מַיִם בּוֹ)" in verse 11 plays on the patriarchal story of Joseph and his brothers.[27] Joseph was thrown into a pit without water (Gen 37:24 וְהַבּוֹר רֵק אֵין בּוֹ מָיִם) and was later a prisoner in Egypt (Gen 39:20).

Verses 9-10 in Zech 9 combines Jakob's blessing with Psalm 72. This Psalm speaks about a king who will be a righteous judge and a saviour to the poor and the meek of the people. The line in Zech 9:10 "his dominion will be from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth" is close to a quote of Ps 72:8 "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." But also verse 7 in the Psalm is probably reflected in Zech 9. In 72:7 we find the line יִפְרַח־בְּיָמָיו צַדִּיק וְרֹב שָׁלוֹם עַד־בְּלִי יָרֵחַ "in his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, till the moon is no more" to which Zechariah's צַדִּיק וְנוֹשָׁע הוּא and וְדִבֶּר שָׁלוֹם לַגּוֹיִם may be referring to.

As we note the textual interplay between these texts we should pay attention to the way the texts are combined in order to construct the passage in Zech 9. The peace which is spoken of in the Psalm is a peace where the enemies are destroyed and must lick the dust. The

---

[25] See Terry Collins, "The Literary Contexts of Zechariah 9:9," in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, ed. Christoffer Tuckett (Aldershot, 2003), and Adrian M. Leske, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62 (2000)

[26] See Michael Fishbane, *Biblical interpretation in ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985) 501, and Rex Mason, "Why is Second Zechariah so Full of Quotations?," in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, ed. Christoffer Tuckett (Aldershot, 2003) 25.

[27] Gen 37:24; 39:20-22, see Fishbane, *Biblical interpretation in ancient Israel* 502.

peace in Zech 9:10 seems to be of a different kind where the king will speak peace to the nations.[28]

We should note that the pro-Davidic links of Gen 49 are not included in these verses in Zechariah. Judah is mentioned in verse 13, but there as a reference to the Judean army alongside with the army of Ephraim.[29] The playing down of the Davidides' claim to royalty seems to be in line with Zech 12:7 where we find a more direct critique of the House of David "The LORD also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the house of David and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem be not magnified above Judah".[30]

The prophecy in Zech 9:9-10 is then combining different images of the ideal king in order to create its own image of a non-Davidic, humble and peace seeking king.[31] This image is taken over by the Greek text, although with some alterations.

In the Greek text the role of the king is more prominent than in the Hebrew text. In the Hebrew text the king is described as being saved by Yahweh, and in verse 10 it is Yahweh who will cut off the chariots from Ephraim and the horses from Jerusalem. In the Greek text the role of the human agent is enhanced in several ways. It has been noted by several scholars that the niphal participle נוֹשָׁע is rendered by the active participle σῴζων in the Greek.[32] Thus the king is no longer one who "has been delivered" but rather one who "delivers". A similar enhancement of the role of the king is found in the first verb in verse 10. In the Hebrew text Yahweh act as the subject of the verb, while in the Greek the king is the subject.[33] This verb spells out the saving acts, now ascribed to the king. He will act as a warrior clearing out the enemies.

In the description of the king we should also note that the translator used the word πραΰς "humble, meek". The Hebrew word it translates, עני, can take several meanings and the translator accordingly had a few options how to translate it. עני occurs also other places in the MP and it appears that the Greek translator rendered it mindfully. He was careful to

---

[28] It has been argued that שלום in Zech 9:10 should be understood not only as external peace but also an inner peace, see Walter Eisenbeis, *Die Wurzel שׁלם im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1969) 215-221.

[29] Zech 9:11-17 portray Yahweh as a divine warrior, is distinguished from other divine warrior texts by the fact that Yahweh will use human agents, the armies of Judah and Ephraim. See Collins, "The Literary Contexts of Zechariah 9:9," 31.

[30] Mason, "Why is Second Zechariah so Full of Quotations?," 25.

[31] It has been discussed who this king may be referring to. Adrian Leske suggests that the king is the faithful people of Judah (Leske, "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9,").

[32] Similar renderings are found also in the Peshitta, the Targum and the Vulgate.

[33] The reading of this verb as indicative future active 3 sg is attested in the majority of the mss. Washington* has subjunctive aorist active 3 sg., and Sinaiticus* has indicative future active 2 pl. There is one mss, 544 XI cent. belonging to the Alexandrinian group, which has an infinitive form, and only in one of the church fathers (Theodorus Mopsuestensis) do we find a form corresponding to the 1 sg of the MT.

choose the positive πραΰς whenever the context required so,[34] while he used πένης "poor, needy" and πτωχός "poor" when he perceived עני with a negative reference.[35] Πραΰς was thus not accidentally chosen in our passage.[36]

The ideal of a humble leader goes all the way back to the description of Moses in Num 12:3 as the most humble man on earth. In the Greek version of this verse we find the use of πραΰς. Another text which uses πραΰς in a similar manner is 2 Macc 15:12 where we find it in Judah Maccabee's dream vision of Onias III. It seems therefore that πραΰς was considered an honourable designation for a leader.

The changes in the Greek text described above, are likely to stem from the messianic nature of the text; the question is whether it is probable that the translator had a specific person in mind while he translated. Scholars have come up with several suggestions as to who this person might have been. Arie van der Kooij has, based on the focus on the peaceful kingdom towards the end of verse 10, suggested that the king described in the Greek text was Simon.[37] Thomas Pola who works on the last verses of Zech 14, sees connections from that text to Zech 9:9-10 and suggests that the king is Judah Maccabee.[38] We should note that both scholars are suggesting that the translator had one of the Maccabees in mind.[39] Even though these were heroic figures in the second century BCE, their role as high priests and political leaders of Judea was not accepted by all factions in the Jewish society. How do we know that the translation was carried out by one who sympathized with the Maccabees and perhaps also the Hasmoneans?

As with most studies done on Septuagint text, we have to collect indications. If we find several indications leading in the same direction we may be on the trail of the translators. What other indications do we find in this passage? Let us turn to the next three verses of the text.

גַּם־אַתְּ בְּדַם־בְּרִיתֵךְ שִׁלַּחְתִּי אֲסִירַיִךְ מִבּוֹר אֵין 11 11 καὶ σὺ ἐν αἵματι διαθήκης ἐξαπέστειλας

---

[34] Zeph 3:12.
[35] Amos 8:4; Hab 3:14; Zech 7:10.
[36] That this form was perceived to be special is confirmed by the fact that both Symmachus and Quinta instead have πτωχος while Theodotion has επακουων.
[37] Arie van der Kooij, "The Septuagint of Zechariah as Witness to an Early Interpretation of the Book," in *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, ed. Christoffer Tuckett (Aldershot, 2003)
[38] Thomas Pola, "Von Juda zu Judas: Das theologische Proprium von Sach 14, 21-21 LXX," in *Die Septuaginta - Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, ed. M. Karrer, Kraus, W., Meiser, M. (Tübingen, 2008) See also the note to Zech 14:14 Wolfgang and Martin Karrer Kraus, *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griachische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung* (Stuttgart, 2009) 1225.
[39] It has also been suggested that the late Hasmonean ruler Judas Aristobulus I's epithet "Philhellene" was in fact playing on Zech 9:10 as a fulfilment of the prophecy Joachim Schaper, "Eschatology in the Greek Psalter" (Mohr, 1995). 143. See also Goldstein "Hasmonean revolt..."

מַיִם בּוֹ׃

12 שׁוּבוּ לְבִצָּרוֹן אֲסִירֵי הַתִּקְוָה גַּם־הַיּוֹם מַגִּיד מִשְׁנֶה
אָשִׁיב לָךְ׃

13 כִּי־דָרַכְתִּי לִּי יְהוּדָה קֶשֶׁת מִלֵּאתִי אֶפְרַיִם
וְעוֹרַרְתִּי בָנַיִךְ צִיּוֹן עַל־בָּנַיִךְ יָוָן וְשַׂמְתִּיךְ כְּחֶרֶב גִּבּוֹר׃

δεσμίους σου ἐκ λάκκου οὐκ ἔχοντος ὕδωρ.
12 καθήσεσθε ἐν ὀχυρώματι, δέσμιοι τῆς
συναγωγῆς, καὶ ἀντὶ μιᾶς ἡμέρας παροικεσίας
σου διπλᾶ ἀνταποδώσω σοι·
13 **διότι ἐνέτεινά σε, Ιουδα, ἐμαυτῷ τόξον,**
ἔπλησα τὸν Εφραιμ καὶ ἐπεγερῶ τὰ τέκνα σου,
Σιων, ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα τῶν Ἑλλήνων **καὶ**
ψηλαφήσω σε ὡς ῥομφαίαν μαχητοῦ·

[11] **As for you also**, because of the blood of your covenant, **I will set your prisoners free** from the waterless pit.[12] Return to the stronghold, you prisoners of hope. Even today I declare that I will restore double to you. [13] **For I have bent Judah, for me as a bow** and filled it with Ephraim, and raised up your sons, Zion, against your sons, Greece, **and put you like the sword of a mighty man.**

[11] **And you have** by the blood of your covenant **sent forth your prisoners** out of the pit that has no water. [12] You shall dwell in fortresses, you prisoners of the congregation: and for one day of your exile I will repay you double. [13] **For I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow**, I have filled Ephraim; and I will raise up your sons, Sion, against the sons of the Greeks, **and I will handle you as the sword of a warrior.**

In verse 11 the addressee of the text shifts from third person to second person. In the Hebrew text we find the personal pronoun in the feminine which refers back to the parallel expressions "daughter of Zion" and "daughter of Jerusalem" in verse 9. Verse 11 of the Hebrew text describes how Yahweh will deliver the captives of Zion/Jerusalem. In the Greek text we also find a personal pronoun in the second person, but as Greek does not have gender forms in the second singular, the translator had more room for his own interpretation of who the addressee was.

Verse 11 in the Greek text has, in difference from the Hebrew, the verb in second singular. This means that it is the addressee rather than Yahweh who will deliver the captives. We saw how the king in verses 9-10 was given a more active role in the Greek text than in the Hebrew. It appears that verse 11 continues this tendency and we may assume that the reference of the pronoun is the king.

The pronoun in second singular reoccurs in verse 13. In the Hebrew text the reference is again Zion; "I will raise up your sons, Zion". In the Greek text the reference of the pronoun once more proves to be different. The Greek translator adds the pronoun to the first sentence and thus arrives at the text: "For I have bent you, Judah, for myself as a bow". In the last clause the same pronoun is again used and now the Greek text has: "and I will handle you as the sword of a warrior". If we then follow the line from verses 9-10 through 11 to this line in verse 13, it appears that Judah is the king referred to. Of course the Judah of the Hebrew text refers to the tribe of Judah, but it seems like there is something else going on in the Greek

text. Is it possible that the translator had Judah Maccabee in mind while he translated these verses?

The reading of the tribal name of Judah as the personal name of Judah Maccabee lies close at hand in such a text. And this kind of identification is in fact known from other antique sources. The author of 1 Maccabees used such an interpretation in his praise of Judah. 1 Macc 3:1-9 draws, as Zech 9, upon Jakob's blessing of his son, Judah, especially where Judah Maccabee is described in the image of a lion.

> **1 Maccabees 3:1**[40] Then his son Judas, who was called Maccabeus, took command in his place. [2] All his brothers and all who had joined his father helped him; they gladly fought for Israel. [3] He extended the glory of his people. Like a giant he put on his breastplate; he bound on his armor of war and waged battles, protecting the camp by his sword. [4] **He was like a lion in his deeds, like a lion's cub roaring for prey.** [5] He searched out and pursued those who broke the law; he burned those who troubled his people. [6] Lawbreakers shrank back for fear of him; all the evildoers were confounded; and deliverance prospered by his hand. [7] He embittered many kings, but he made Jacob glad by his deeds, and his memory is blessed forever. [8] He went through the cities of Judah; he destroyed the ungodly out of the land; thus he turned away wrath from Israel. [9] He was renowned to the ends of the earth; he gathered in those who were perishing.

> **Genesis 49:8-12**[41] [8] Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. [9] **Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He crouches down, he stretches out like a lion, like a lioness-- who dares rouse him up?** [10] The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and the obedience of the peoples is his. [11] Binding his foal to the vine and his donkey's colt to the choice vine, he washes his garments in wine and his robe in the blood of grapes; [12] his eyes are darker than wine, and his teeth whiter than milk.

1 Macc 3:1- 4 use several elements from Gen 49. The mentioning of Judah's position among his brothers and his battle against Israel's enemies both have parallels in Gen 49. The most obvious link is, however, the usage of the imagery of Judah as a lion.[42] The peculiar thing about this kind of interpretation is the identification of the name Judah. In 1 Macc it is no longer the tribe of Judah that is to be like a lion's whelp, but rather Judah Maccabee.

The author in 1 Maccabees does not utilize the whole range of elements found in Gen 49, but rather goes on to describe the heroic acts of Judah. He fought the wicked and the ungodly as well as kings. He received "those who were ready to perish" and, verse 7 and 9 has "...and his memory is blessed forever", and "he was renowned to the ends of the earth". This description brings Psalm 72 to mind where the saving acts of the king are described.

---

[40] NRSV
[41] NRSV
[42] Cf. also Isa 31:4 and Ps 104 (103): 20-22. Jonathan Goldstein suggests that the author in 1 Macc 3:3-4 compares Judah to David, cf. 1 Sam 17:34-39 (Jonathan A. Goldstein, *I Maccabees*, The Anchor Bible (New York, 1976) 244).

Especially in Ps 72:9-17 we find enemies and kings bowing to the king as he saves the meek and poor people. In verse 17 the Psalm ends the royal hymn by the words "May his name endure for ever, may his name be continued as long as the sun, may men bless themselves by him, may all nations call him blessed".

Whether the author of 1 Maccabees also used Zech 9 is difficult to assert, but it is remarkable that he collocates the same two scriptural passages. The reinterpretation of these passages to fit Judah Maccabee is an interesting piece of exegetical work and the combination of these two texts does provide us with a parallel to how Zech 9 may have been understood.

That references to Judah, the tribe, were interpreted to be concerned with Judah Maccabee has been suggested for other passages in the Septuagint translations. In Zechariah 14:14 Thomas Pola argues that the translator had Judah Maccabee in mind as he formed the translation: "and Judah shall fight in Jerusalem and gather the strength of all the peoples round about, gold, and silver, and apparel, in great abundance." I will discuss this passage in XXX, but this may be another instance of this kind of interpretation. In his study on the Greek Psalter Joachim Schaper claims that the translation Ιουδας βασιλεύς μου "Judas, my king" for יהודה מחקקי, "Judah, my scepter" according to Schaper, in Pss 59 (60):9 and 107 (108):9 represents a messianic interpretation.[43] Schaper calls this change a "personalization" of the phrase, and suggests that such a rendering was influenced by the same kind of hermeneutical decision found in the Greek translation of Gen 49:10.[44] Schaper then places these Greek Psalms within a Hasmonean context and finds reason to believe that they show signs of pro-Hasmonean exegesis.[45]

4 Summary and Conclusions

The setting and the plot described in this chapter lends itself well to be read and interpreted in the second century BCE. The cities and the people mentioned are still there and they are still regarded as enemies. The coastal cities were several times in conflict with the Maccabees and their troops and control over them was only achieved through confrontation. The text in Zech 9 may quite easily have been appropriated to this political environment.

---

[43] Schaper, "Eschatology in the Greek Psalter". 42-43.
[44] Compare "The scepter (שבט) shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff (מחקק) from between his feet" with "A ruler (ἄρχων) shall not fail from Judah, nor a prince (ἡγούμενος) from his loins". Ibid. 83-84.
[45] Ibid. 44-45.

The signs we find of interpretative elements in the translation are first that the adversaries are depicted in a negative light. Although the Hebrew text in the first place gives a rather gloomy description of their past deeds and their future, this is in a few instances even stronger in the Greek text. But while these cities will be punished Yahweh will save Jerusalem and the temple. A new king will come to reign there. In the Greek text the king is ascribed a more active role in this salvation. This goes all the way through to verse 13 where he acts as Yahweh's agent, Yahweh's bow and sword. This saviour is addressed as Judah and there is reason to believe that the translator read Judah in the Hebrew text to refer to Judah Maccabee of his own time.

Barr, J. "The Typology of Literalism in ancient biblical translations." *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens (MSU) XV* 11 (1979): 277-325.

Collins, Terry. "The Literary Contexts of Zechariah 9:9." In *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, edited by Christoffer Tuckett, 29 - 40. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

Dahood, Mitchell. "Zacharia 9,1 'ên 'adam." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 25 (1963): 123 - 124.

Eisenbeis, Walter. *Die Wurzel* שלם *im Alten Testament*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1969.

Fabry, Heinz-Joseph. ""The Lord over Mighty Waters"." In *Translating a Translation: The LXX and its Modern Translations in the Context of early Judaism*, edited by Hans et al. Ausloos, 151 - 165. Leuven: Peeters, 2008.

Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical interpretation in ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

Goldstein, Jonathan A. *I Maccabees, The Anchor Bible*. New York: Doubleday, 1976.

Klostermann, Erich, ed. *Eusebius Werke: Das Onomasticon der biblische Ortsnamen*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung 1904.

Kraus, Wolfgang and Martin Karrer *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griachische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2009.

Larkin, Katrina J. A. *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology*. Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1994.

Leske, Adrian M. "Context and Meaning of Zechariah 9:9." *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 62 (2000): 663 - 678.

Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Lust, J., Erik Eynikel, and K. Hauspie. *Greek-English lexicon of the Septuagint*. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003.

Mason, Rex. "Why is Second Zechariah so Full of Quotations?" In *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, edited by Christoffer Tuckett, 21 - 28. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint: Chiefly of the Pentateuch and the Twelve Prophets*. Louvain: Peeters, 2002.

Pola, Thomas. "Von Juda zu Judas: Das theologische Proprium von Sach 14, 21-21 LXX." In *Die Septuaginta - Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, edited by M. Karrer, Kraus, W., Meiser, M., 572 - 580. Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2008.

Rudolph, Wilhelm. *Haggai - Sacharja 1-8 - Sacharja 9-14 - Maleachi*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Ger Mohn, 1976.

Schaper, Joachim. "Eschatology in the Greek Psalter." Mohr, 1995.

Sæbø, Magne. *Sacharja 9-14: Untersuchungen von Text und Form*. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969.

Tov, Emanuel. *The Text Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*. Jerusalem: Simor, 1997.

van der Kooij, Arie. "The Septuagint of Zechariah as Witness to an Early Interpretation of the Book." In *The Book of Zechariah and its Influence*, edited by Christoffer Tuckett, 53 - 64. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003.

Ziegler, Joseph. "Die Einheit der Septuaginta zum Zwölfprophetenbuch." In *Syllogie: Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Septuaginta*, 29 - 42. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1971.

Zolli, E. "'Eyn 'Adam (Zaxh. IX 1)." *Vetus Testamentum* 5 (1955): 90 - 92.