TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION IN THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF THE BALAAM ACCOUNT

by

KYLE ALLEN BIERSDORFF

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We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

Dr. Robert J.V. Hiebert, Ph.D.; Thesis Supervisor

Dr. Larry J. Perkins, Ph.D.; Second Reader

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Bibliography

1. Editions, Translations, and Computer Software

2. Secondary Literature
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For her dedicated love, patience, and support I dedicate this thesis to Tanya, beloved wife and best of friends.
SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

cod.  codex
DSS  Dead Sea Scrolls
LXX  Septuagint
Lat  Latin
MS  Manuscript
MT  Masoretic Text
OG  Old Greek
OT  Old Testament (both the Hebrew and Greek versions)
SP  Samaritan Pentateuch

ANCIENT TEXTUAL AND LITERARY SOURCES

16  Greek minuscule manuscript of the C group
46  Greek minuscule manuscript of the cII group
100  An Old Latin manuscript
129  Greek minuscule manuscript of the f group
426  Greek minuscule manuscript of the O group
551  Greek minuscule manuscript of the cII group
Aeth  Ethiopic version
Aq  Aquila
Arm  Armenian version
Bo  Bohairic version

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QM  War Scroll (1Q33)
1QSb  Rule of Blessing (1Q28b)
4Q23  4QLeviticus-Numbersa
4Q27  4QNumbersb
4Q175  4QTestimonia
CD  The Damascus Document (4Q266-273)
Irenaus

<table>
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<th>Work</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adv. Haeres.</td>
<td><em>Adversus Haereses (Against Heresies)</em></td>
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</table>
| Demonstr. | *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching*

Justin Martyr

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<td>Dial.</td>
<td><em>Dialogue with Trypho</em></td>
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Philo

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<td>Her.</td>
<td><em>Quis rerum divinarum heres sit (Who Is the Heir?)</em></td>
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<td>Mos.</td>
<td><em>De vita Mosis (On the Life of Moses)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plant.</td>
<td><em>De plantatione (On Planting)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Praem.</td>
<td><em>De praemii et poenis (On Rewards and Punishments)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QG</td>
<td><em>Quaestiones et solutiones in Genesin (Questions and Answers on Genesis)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sa   Sahidic version
Syh  Syrohexapla
Sym  Symmachus
Th   Theodotion

T. Levi  Testament of Levi
T. Judah Testament of Judah
Tg. Onq. Targum Onkelos
Tg. Ps.-J. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan
Tg. Neof. Targum Neofiti

**JOURNALS, BOOKS, AND SERIES**

**ABD**  *Anchor Bible Dictionary*. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992


**BHK**  *Biblia Hebraica*. Edited by R. Kittel. Stuttgart, 1973
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BO</td>
<td>Bibliotheca Orientalis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DJD</td>
<td>Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (of Jordan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JPS</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society Translation of the Bible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSJ</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSOT</td>
<td>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NETS</td>
<td>The New English Translation of the Septuagint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGTE</td>
<td>John William Wevers, Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus</td>
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<td>NGTG</td>
<td>John William Wevers, Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis</td>
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<td>NGTN</td>
<td>John William Wevers, Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version</td>
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<tr>
<td>SBL</td>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCS</td>
<td>Septuagint and Cognate Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THGN</td>
<td>John William Wevers, Text History of Greek Numbers</td>
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ABSTRACT

Although the Septuagint translation of the Balaam account is in many ways similar to that found elsewhere in the LXX Pentateuch, two aspects of the translation are distinctive in the LXX and important indicators of the translator's interpretation of the text. First, the translator frequently represents the Hebrew יהוה with the Greek θεός, a striking departure from the normal LXX translation practice. This divergence likely reflects an anti-Balaam bias on the part of the translator. Second, the translator gives unusual renderings for portions of Balaam's oracles. These are often cited as evidence of Septuagintal messianic interpretation. This thesis surveys the LXX translation of the Balaam account and examines these two issues in the context of textual transmission, the linguistic constraints of the source and target languages, translation practice elsewhere in the Septuagint, and in other related literature of the period.
INTRODUCTION

The Balaam account is perhaps one of the most unique narratives in the Hebrew Bible. The story of a non-Israelite prophet, hired by a king to curse Israel, interrupted by an angel and rebuked by his donkey, who finally arrives at his destination only to bless Israel instead of curse it is unprecedented in the book of Numbers and in the Pentateuch, where non-Israelites rarely play such a prominent role. The figure of Balaam, and the prophecies he spoke, also posed an interpretive challenge for readers. How were they to understand the ambiguous figure of Balaam, who although intending to curse Israel ultimately blessed it? How should his oracles reaffirming God's intent to bless Israel and predicting its future exaltation be understood? Balaam's reputation throughout history has been mixed, and his prophecies provided fodder for speculation about the future of Israel and the possibility of a conquering and ruling figure who would rescue and lead Israel.

Alongside the technical aspects of translating a text from Hebrew to Greek, the Septuagint translator also engaged these interpretive challenges and provided a translation which reflects both his faithfulness to the text and his own perspective on these issues. This thesis investigates two of the major areas in which the Septuagint translation differs from the Hebrew text, and their significance for our understanding of the interpretation of the translator: (1) the translator's marked preference for θεός in the narrative as expressing his understanding of Balaam's relationship to God and the role of the divine in the events described, and (2) the rendering of Balaam's oracles, especially in 24:7 and 24:17, that reflect the translator's interpretation of these predictions.

1. Sources

The primary Hebrew text for comparison is the Masoretic Text (MT) published in Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia, but frequent reference is made to the text from the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP).
The book of Numbers exists in fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and portions of Numbers 22-24 appear in 4Q23 (4QLev-Numa) and 4Q27 (4QNumb). Reference will be made to these as well. The Greek text of the Septuagint is from Wevers' Göttingen edition of the Septuagint. I would furthermore be remiss if I did not here mention the debt I owe to John Wevers and his Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers. Although often brief and sometimes imperfect, it is a source of keen observations and valuable insights into the LXX translation of Numbers.

The Deir 'Alla Inscription, discovered in 1967, contains mention of a “Balaam, the son of Beor,” a seer who hears from El, elohim, and šdy and relates this knowledge to the people. Although the inscription is a fascinating piece of early evidence about stories that circulated about Balaam, it has no relevance for questions about the Greek translation of the Hebrew account, and so will not be discussed here.

2. Proposal

In chapter one, I examine the Greek version of the Balaam account, and compare it to the extant Hebrew versions. On many levels, the translation of this section is similar to the rest of the book. However, in two aspects the translator departs from his customary translation practice: (1) in the use and avoidance of the divine name with respect to Balaam, and (2) in the translation of portions of Balaam's third and fourth oracles, which refer to the exaltation of Israel and the emergence of a future ruling figure. These two aspects will be the focus of the following chapters.

In chapter two, I address the treatment of the divine name in the Balaam narrative. The translator appears to avoid using κύριος in a context where the narrator speaks of divine interaction with Balaam. Some explanations have been offered to explain this practice. I argue that these explanations are...

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1 John William Wevers, Numeri (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1982).
essentially correct, while attempting to place them on firmer footing by looking at the broader context of the treatment of the divine name throughout the LXX Pentateuch.

In chapter three, I engage the question of messianic emphasis in the translation of Balaam's third and fourth oracles. The poetic Hebrew of the oracles is more challenging than the surrounding prose, and the translator is forced to provide a freer, more interpretive translation. In doing so, the translator reveals his own interpretation of the oracles as referring to an individual messianic figure.

The resulting form of the Greek translation sheds light both upon the understanding of the Balaam account in the historical and geographic context in which it was translated, and upon the reception history of the Old Testament. This thesis attempts to make a small, but meaningful, contribution in both of these areas.
CHAPTER ONE: THE GREEK VERSION OF THE BALAAM ACCOUNT

Chapter Synopsis: Chapter one provides an English translation of the Septuagint and compares the Greek text to the Hebrew, focusing on text-critical issues and lexical issues, as well as elements that have bearing on the following chapters.

1. Introduction

This chapter includes a translation of Numbers 22-24 with select analysis. Unfortunately, the length of the Balaam account makes the full inclusion of the Greek, Hebrew, and English versions prohibitively long, and consequently I have opted to include the Hebrew only in the notes. The English translation is that of the New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS). NETS offers a translation that attempts to represent the Septuagint as produced, and provides a translation that reflects the stylistic spectrum of the Old Greek version, ranging from isomorphic to idiomatic renderings. Any footnotes in the English translation, however, are mine. I have noted the occasional instance where I question the NETS rendering. My analysis focuses on matters of potential textual and exegetical significance, especially with regard to two of the most noteworthy characteristics of the Septuagint translation: the treatment of the divine name and the translation of the possibly messianic material in the oracles. This chapter is intended to cover the basic information that will be investigated in detail in the following chapters, as well as to provide a backdrop for the following discussions. Although I focus on those areas in which the translation diverges from its source text, it should not be forgotten that, overall, the Greek follows the Hebrew closely. The translation of Numbers can be said to generally follow an “interlinear” or unit-for-unit approach, and the translator's usual fidelity to the form and sense of his source text makes these exceptions all the more striking.

Among the books of the LXX Pentateuch, comparatively little ink has been spilled on the subject of the translation character of LXX Numbers. The most comprehensive study of LXX Numbers
translation (in English) is John William Wevers' *Notes on the Greek Text of Numbers*.\(^3\) Wevers concluded that LXX Numbers is the weakest translation in the Greek Pentateuch.\(^4\) In his view, the translation contains a striking inconsistency in the quality of translation. The translator often appears careless or inattentive, omitting sections and introducing grammatical or lexical infelicities into the text. All is not lost, however, and Wevers finds a significant degree of thoughtfulness and astuteness in the translation as well. The translator was concerned to provide a text accessible to its readers, often to a greater degree than some of the other LXX translators.\(^5\) LXX Numbers also contains the characteristics of other LXX translations such as a tendency toward consistency and following patterns (often more closely than the MT does), harmonizations, attempts at clarification and resolving contradictions, as well displaying interpretive and theological values.\(^6\)

2. **The LXX Version of the Balaam Account**

*Balaam's Invitation to Balaam (22:2-21)*

22:2 Καὶ ἰδὼν Βαλὰκ υἱὸς Σεπφὼρ πάντα, ὅσα ἐποίησεν Ἰσραὴλ τῷ Ἀμορραίῳ, 3 καὶ ἐφοβήθη Μωὰβ τὸν λαὸν σφόδρα, ὅτι πολλοὶ ἦσαν, καὶ προσώχθισεν Μωὰβ ἀπὸ προσώπου υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ. 4 καὶ εἶπεν Μωὰβ τῇ γερουσίᾳ Μαδιάν Νῦν ἐκλείξει ἡ συναγωγή αὕτη πάντας τοὺς κύκλῳ ἡμῶν, ὡς ἐκλείξαι ὁ μόσχος τὰ χλωρὰ ἐκ τοῦ

---


\(^4\)Wevers, *NGTN*, lx.

\(^5\)Wevers observes, “The demands of the target language play a greater role in Num than in Deut which is often literalistic in its rendering....the linguistic demands of Greek are respected to a greater extent in Num than in Deut.” (Text History of the Greek Numbers, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), 94.

\(^6\)Space does not permit a survey of all of Wevers' observations and examples, (cf. the introduction to *NGTN*). A few recent articles address limited aspects of LXX Numbers: Anssi Voitila argued that the translator translated small segments of text at a time, resulting in a literal translation that rarely takes the larger context into account (“The translator of the Greek Numbers,” in IX Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Cambridge, 1995 [SCS 45; ed. Bernard A Taylor; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997], 109-21). Hans Ausloos argued that the translator of LXX Numbers harmonized a section of his text (Numbers 14:23) with Deut 1:39 (“LXX Num 14:23: Once More a “Deuteronomist” at Work?” in X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998 [SCS 51; ed. Bernard A. Taylor; Atlanta: SBL, 2001], 415-27). James Findlay proposed that the translator displays a pro-Aaronide and anti-Levitical bias in his translation of chs. 16-17 by highlighting the role of Aaron and focusing on Korah as the object of divine wrath (“The Priestly Ideology of the Septuagint Translator of Numbers 16-17,” *JSOT* 30 [2006]: 421-29). Overall, one finds that LXX Numbers, while containing some distinctiveness, is not radically different from the other books in the LXX Pentateuch. The translation shows strengths and weaknesses, and the translator's own perspective shows through in some places.
πεδίου. καὶ Βαλάκ υἱός Σεπφώρ βασιλεύς Μωὰβ ἦν κατά τὸν καιρὸν ἐκείνον. 5 καὶ ἀπέστειλεν πρέσβεις πρὸς Βαλαὰμ υἱόν Βεὼρ Φαθούρα, ὁ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ τοῦ ποταμοῦ γῆς υἱῶν λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, καλέσας αὐτῶν λέγων Ἱδοὺ λαὸς ἐξελήλυθεν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἰδοὺ κατεκάλυψεν τὴν ὄψιν τῆς γῆς, καὶ οὗτος ἑγκάθηται εὑρῶν μου. 6 καὶ νῦν δεῦρο ἄρασαί μοι τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον, ὅτι ἰσχύει οὗτος ἢ ἡμεῖς· ἐὰν δυνώμεθα πατάξαι ἐξ αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐκβαλῶ αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς γῆς· ὅτι οἶδα οὓς ἂν εὐλογήσῃς σύ, εὐλόγηνται, καὶ οὓς ἂν καταράσῃ σύ, κεκατήρανται.  

lick up the greenery of the plain.” And Balak son of Sepphor was king of Moab at that time. 5 And he sent ambassadors to Balaam son of Beor of Pathoura, which is on the river of the land of his people’s sons, to call him, saying, “Behold, a people has come out of Egypt, and behold, it has covered the sight of the earth, and it is lying in wait next to me. 6 And now come, curse for me this people, since it is stronger than we are, if we may be able to strike some of them, and I will cast them out from the land. For I know that whomever you bless are blessed, and whomever you curse are cursed.”

3: The translator renders the Hebrew phrase: יִוְדֶה מֹאָב מִפְּנֵי הַעַם מַעֲרִי with καὶ ἐφοβήθη Μωὰβ τὸν λαὸν σφόδρα. The use of σφόδρα with the preposition σφοδρα αν indicates cause or reason, i.e. “Moab was in great fear because of the people.” Here the LXX employs the accusative, τὸν λαὸν. Later in the same verse the translator provides ἀπὸ προσώπου υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ for the Hebrew construction, מפני בני ישראל.

3: ὅτι πολλοὶ ἠσαν, a plural adjective and verb translates the Hebrew בָּשָׁר, which is singular. LXX Numbers shows a great degree of variation in its treatment of collective nouns and concepts, frequently going with a sensible rendering rather than following the Hebrew as closely as possible.

5: Balak sends πρέσβεις, while the Hebrew has מלאכים (MT, SP, 4Q27). The translation of מלאך by πρέσβης is rare, occurring only two other times in the LXX: Numbers 21:21 and Deuteronomy 2:26. ἀγγελος is by far the more common translation for מלאך in Numbers and in the LXX overall. The Hebrew uses several different terms to refer to those whom Balak sent to summon Balaam; the evidence is summarized in the following chart:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
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<tr>
<td>22:4 ἡ γερουσία Μαδιαμ</td>
<td>θυρ. μεζ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:5 πρέσβεις</td>
<td>מלאכים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:7 ἡ γερουσία Μωὰβ καὶ ἡ γερουσία Μαδιαμ</td>
<td>θυρ. μαζί θυρ. μεζ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1See HALOT, “panion” section 5d, BDB “panion” section 6a-b.
2Here SP, 4Q27 = MT.
Wevers suggests that the translator's use of πρέσβεις in verse 5 was influenced by זקני in verse 7, but that the translator probably understood πρέσβεις as a better term than זקני to refer to both groups of elders (of Moab and of Madiam). In verse 18 the translator ignores the use of שבת and translates תוים, following the terminology established from v. 8 onward.

5: The MT has בנים עמו, literally “sons of his people.”\(^9\) Some other Hebrew manuscripts, as well as SP, have בנים עמון, “sons of Ammon.”\(^10\) The LXX source text must have had the same reading as the MT, since the translator provides the equally awkward υἱῶν λαοῦ αὐτοῦ.

6: Balak summons Balaam to curse the Israelites. The MT uses three different terms for “cursing” in the Balaam account: ארה, קבב and זעם. The verb ארה occurs 63 times in the OT and 7 times in the Balaam account.\(^11\) The verb זעם occurs 12 times in the OT and 3 times in the Balaam account.\(^12\) The verb קבב occurs 14 times in the OT and 10 times in the Balaam account.\(^13\) The distribution of curse language in Numbers 22-24 is illustrated in the following table:

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
\text{LXX} & \text{MT} & \text{LXX} & \text{MT} \\
22.6 & ἄρασαι & אָרָה & 23:8 & τί ἀράσωμαι & מקב
\end{array}
\]

\(^9\)Some modern translations treat עמו as a proper noun, e.g. “Amaw” (NRSV) or “Amawites” (NAB, NJB)
\(^10\)So BHS, cf. also the Vulgate “Ammon.”
\(^11\)At 22:6(3x), 12; 23:7; 24:9(2x).
\(^12\)At 23:7, 8(2x).
\(^13\)At 22:11, 17; 23:8(2x), 11, 13, 25(2x), 27; 24:10.
The translator uses one root word (ἀράω/ἀράομαι) with compound cognates: καταράομαι (most commonly), ἀράομαι, and ἑπίκαταράομαι. The translator does not follow a discernable pattern in his choice of Greek equivalents to the above-mentioned Hebrew terms. However, the translation does reflect the degree of lexical variation of the source text.

7: The term μαντεῖον usually denotes to an oracle, an oracular judgment, a seat of an oracle, or a

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14There is some textual uncertainty in the rendering of μαντεῖον. Rahlfs gives Μαδίων at 22:4, 7, and Μαδίων at 25:15, 18; 31:3(2x), 7, 8(2x), 9. The Göttingen edition gives Μαδίων throughout (for Wevers' argument for the priority of Μαδίων see his Text History of Greek Numbers, 117). NETS reflects Rahlfs by giving “Madiam” at 22:4, 7, and “Madian” in the other instances.
method or process of divination. Here, in the plural, it refers to something carried by the elders. NETS translates τὰ μαντεῖα as “the instruments of divination.” However, in the context of the narrative it is best understood as some sort of initial payment. Why would the elders carry implements for divination all the way to Balaam when they intended to bring him back to Moab? Furthermore, once Balaam arrives in Moab, Balak provides all the sacrificial elements that Balaam requires. In any case, μαντεῖον is an adequate representation of כָּפָן, which also usually refers to divination.¹⁵

8: Balaam tells the messengers he will reveal to them whatever יהוה/κύριος says to him. In vv. 9, 10, 12, it is אלהים/θεός who appears to, and interacts with, Balaam. The Hebrew Bible often alternates between יהוה and אלהים, and in the majority of cases the LXX follows the Hebrew by giving κύριος and θεός, respectively. The LXX treatment of the divine name will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

9: The interrogative pronoun τί, which could mean “what?” or “why?” contrasts the MT’s מי “who?” Wevers suggests that this may be a deliberate change by the translator, intending to avoid the implication that God does not know the identity of the messengers.¹⁶ However, the SP reads מה, which represents the probable Vorlage for the LXX reading.

11: The phrase καὶ οὗτος ἐγκάθηται ἐχόμενός μου has no parallel in the MT or SP, but may have a Hebrew antecedent represented by 4Q27 (וַיָּשֶׂה הַיָּשָׁר לְמֵימָר). Wevers considers this phrase a case of harmonization with v. 5, where an identical phrase occurs (MT, SP, 4Q23, 4Q27).¹⁷ In light of the Greek’s not uncommon correspondence to 4Q27, it seems likely that the translator is representing his Hebrew text here.

¹⁶Wevers, NGTN, 365.
¹⁷Ibid., 366.
11. ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς has no equivalent in the MT or SP. This may represent a reading found in 4Q27, where the editor reconstructs א[ה] נ[ר] א[י] רָשָׁאָה.

13: Balaam says τοῖς ἄρχουσιν Βαλάκ, “Run off to your master” (τὸν κύριον ὑμῶν). The Hebrew (MT, SP), however, has אל־ארץכם “to your land.” The LXX reading may have an antecedent in 4QNum⁴, where the editor reconstructs אדוני י—ה..” Ǹò6 And now come, curse for me this people, since it is stronger than we are, if we may be able to strike some of them, and I will cast them out from the land. For I know that whomever you bless are blessed, and whomever

18: In the Hebrew version of 22:18 (MT, SP, not extant in the DSS), Balaam tells the messengers that he cannot transgress the command of “the LORD my God” (יהוה אלהי). The LXX, otherwise translating the Hebrew closely, omits the pronoun, giving τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ. Although it is possible that the translator’s source text read אָלֶיה, no extant Hebrew witnesses give this reading. Furthermore, it is
relatively uncommon for a *mem* to be lost in the process of textual transmission. This is therefore best understood as an intentional omission. Wevers comments, “What this means for the narrative is that LXX here fails to designate Yahweh as the personal God of Balaam.”

18: ἐν τῇ διανοίᾳ μου “in my mind” has no equivalent in the MT (or SP). It may be influenced by the similar phrase "טובה או רעה מלבי" in 24:13. It may also find a precedent in 4Q27 (4QNumb), which although fragmentary, appears to have a *lamed* at the end of the verse, on the basis of which the DJD editor infers ר[ס]ל[ב]כ.22

**Balaam, The Donkey, and The Angel (22:22-35)**

22:22 And God was angry with wrath, because he went, and the angel of the Lord rose up to oppose him. And he himself was sitting on his donkey, and his two servants were with him. And when the donkey saw the angel of God standing opposed in the road and the sword drawn in his hand, then the donkey turned away from the road and kept going into the plain. And he struck the donkey with his rod to direct it in the road. And the angel of God stood in the furrows of the vineyards, a fence here and a fence there. And when the donkey saw the angel of God, it pressed itself against the wall and squeezed Balaam’s foot, and he added to whip it again. And the angel of God proceeded and went on and stood still in a narrow place in which it was not possible to turn right or left. And when the donkey saw the angel of God, it settled down under Balaam, and Balaam was angered and kept beating the donkey with the rod. And God opened the mouth of the donkey, and it said to Balaam, “What have I done to you that you have struck me this third time?” And Balaam said to the donkey, “Because you have mocked me! And if I had a dagger in my hand, I would already have stabbed you!” And the donkey says to Balaam, “Am I not your donkey on which you would ride from your youth to this very day? Disregarding—I have not done so to you, have I?” And he said, “No!”

22: The MT and LXX agree on the divine name, giving ὁ θεός/אלהים. This reading is probably

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22 *DJD* XII, 231.
23 *NETS* gives “the angel of the Lord.” Both Rahlfs and the Göttingen edition read ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ. A few manuscripts and versions have τοῦ κυρίου.
supported by 4Q23 (אָלְחָף). However, SP and some Greek and versional witnesses give κύριος/יהוה. SP may have been influenced by the following马拉ך יוה, whereas the agreement of the MT, 4Q23, and the LXX probably indicates that אלהים is the earlier reading.

22: Earlier, in 22:13, we saw the translator substitute θεός for יוה. In this section (22:22-35) that becomes the translator's standard practice. In vv. 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, and 35 the translator gives θεός for יוה, instead of the expected κύριος. Except for the occurrences in vv. 28 and 30 (describing divine actions: giving the donkey the facility of speech and opening Balaam's eyes to see the angel) these refer to the angel who intercepts Balaam. The LXX consistently employs ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ as an equivalent to the Hebrew's马拉ך יוה. The sole exception to this pattern is in v. 34, where Balaam exclaims τῷ ἀγγέλῳ κυρίου “I have sinned.” Wevers tentatively suggests that since Balaam may here be repenting, this confession of sin should be directed to “the Lord” rather than an unidentified deity. The issue of the translator's use of κύριος and θεός will be touched upon briefly in the following sections, where relevant, and taken up further in chapter two.

22: The LXX takes the Hebrew לֶשֶטֶן as a preposition + infinitive, giving ἐνδιαβάλλειν. This is an unusual compound in the LXX, occurring only six times in the LXX (also Ps 37:21; 70:13; 108:4, 20, 29, all translating שנן). The Masoretes pointed this differently here, giving לֶשֶטֶן, a preposition + noun, i.e. “as an adversary.”

23: The translator adds τῇ ῥάβδῳ, presumably influenced by the occurrence of במקל (= τῇ ῥάβδῳ) in v. 27.

23: In the narrative, Balaam strikes the donkey three times (vv. 23, 25, 27). The Hebrew uses Hiphil forms of נכה in each case, as well as when the donkey speaks and asks why Balaam struck him (v. 28).

24The Göttingen edition records only two minor witnesses against κύριος: 54, Bo give τοῦ θεοῦ.
The LXX, however, uses a different term each time:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22:23 ἐπάταξεν (πατάσσω)</td>
<td>יִרְשָׁ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:25 μαστίξα (μαστίζω)</td>
<td>נכתה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:27 ἔτυπτεν (τύπτω)</td>
<td>יִרְשָׁ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:28 πέπαικας (παίω)</td>
<td>הכתני</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Greek terms are roughly synonymous, and the vocabulary may be explained by the translator's personal preference for variety.

29: ἐκκεντέω translates the qal וַדַּי. This Greek term only occurs here in the Pentateuch, and this is the only occasion in the LXX where ἐκκεντέω translates וַדַּי. The Greek term generally means “to pierce,” i.e., “And if I had a dagger in my hand, I would have already stabbed you!” Here the translator gives a more specific and contextually appropriate word to represent the more generic Hebrew.

30: The Hebrew has פּוּדכָּשׁ (probably best understood as “all your life”), which the LXX translates loosely, but acceptably, with ἀπὸ νεότητός σου “from your youth.”

22:31 ἀπεκάλυψεν δὲ ὁ θεὸς τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς Βαλαάμ, καὶ ὁρᾷ τὸν ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀνθεστηκότα ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ καὶ τὴν μάχαιραν ἐσπασμένην ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ κύψας προσεκύνησεν τῷ προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ. 32 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ Διὰ τί ἐπάταξας τὴν ὄνον σου τοῦτο τρίτον; καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ ἐξῆλθον εἰς διαβολήν σου, ὅτι οὐκ ἀστεία ἡ ὁδός σου ἐναντίον μου. 33 καὶ ἰδοῦσά με ἡ ὄνος ἐξέκλινεν ἀπ᾿ ἐμοῦ τρίτον τοῦτο· καὶ εἰ μὴ ἐξέκλινεν, νῦν σὲ μὲν ἀπέκτεινα, ἐκείνην δὲ περιεποιήσαμην. 34 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλαὰμ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ κυρίου Ἡμάρτηκα, οὐ γὰρ ἠπιστάμην ὅτι σύ μοι ἀνθέστηκας ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ εἰς συνάντησιν· καὶ νῦν εἰ μή σοι ἀρέσκει, ἀποστραφήσομαι. 35 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ πρὸς Βαλαάμ Συμπορεύθητι μετὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων· πλὴν τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ ἂν εἴπῃς πρὸς σέ, τοῦτο φυλάξῃ λαλῆσαι. καὶ ἐπορεύθη Βαλαάμ μετὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων Βαλάκ.

22:31 ¶ Now God uncovered the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of God standing opposed in the road and the dagger drawn in his hand, and he bowed down and did obeisance to his face. 32 And the angel of God said to him, “Why have you struck your donkey this third time? And behold, I came out to oppose you, because your way was not pretty before me. 33 And when the donkey saw me, it turned away from me this third time. And if it had not turned away, now surely I would have killed you but kept it alive.” 34 And Balaam said to the angel of the Lord, “I have sinned, for I did not understand that you stood opposed to me on the road for a meeting. And now, if it is not pleasing to you, I will turn back.” 35 And the angel of God said to Balaam, “Go with the men, but the word that I say to you, this you shall take heed to speak.” And Balaam went with the rulers of Balak.

22:31: Wevers adopts the reading τὸν ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ, against Rahlfs’ τὸν ἄγγελον κυρίου. Despite its relatively broad textual support, Wevers argues that κυρίου is secondary, since the translator's

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25 Including B, most of the hexaplaric group O’, the b and f groups, some marginal notations, and Aeth, Arm, Syh.
practice of giving θεός for יהוה is well established.26

32: At the end of v. 32 the MT has כִּי־ירִט הָדַרְךָ לְנָא, probably following the SP's דְּרַךְ rather than the MT's דְרֵךְ. In the Hebrew, the reading attested in 4QNum, כִּי־ירִט הָדַרְךָ לְנָא, is probably earlier.27 The translator’s Vorlage, however, was probably that represented by the MT. Faced with יָרִט, a rare term with which he was probably unfamiliar, he provided a contextualized translation: οὐκ ἀστεία.28

34: In the Hebrew, Balaam tells the angel he will turn back, “if it is evil in your eyes” (אָמַרְתָּךְ אָמַר בְּעֵינֶךָ), whereas the Greek reads “if it does not please you [εἰ μὴ σοι ἀρέσκει] I will turn back.” Wevers notes that, as a result, the translator avoids the anthropomorphism, but it is not clear that this was his intent.29

35: The LXX gives τοῦτο φυλάξῃ λαλῆσαι, following the SP's אתו תשלם, against the MT אתו תדבר (not extant in the Scrolls). A similar phrase occurs in 23:12.

Balaam Arrives Before Balak (22:36-40)

22:36 Καὶ ἀκούσας Βαλὰκ ὅτι ἥκει Βαλαάμ, ἐξῆλθεν εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ εἰς πόλιν Μωάβ, ἥ ἐστιν ἐπὶ τῶν ὁρίων Ἀρνών, ὅ ἐστιν ἐκ μέρους τῶν ὁρίων.

37 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλὰκ πρὸς Βαλαάμ Οὐχὶ ἀπέστειλα πρὸς σὲ καλέσαι σε; διὰ τί οὐκ ἤρχου πρὸς με; ὄντως οὐ δυνήσομαι τιμῆσαί σε;

38 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλὰμ πρὸς Βαλάκ Ἰδοὺ ἥκω πρὸς σέ· νῦν δυνατὸς ἔσομαι λαλῆσαί τι; τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἂν βάλῃ ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸ στόμα μου, τοῦτο λαλήσω.

39 καὶ ἐπορεύθη Βαλαὰμ μετὰ Βαλάκ, καὶ ἦλθον εἰς πόλεις ἐπαύλεων.

40 καὶ ἔθυσεν Βαλὰκ πρόβατα καὶ μόσχους, καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τῷ Βαλαὰμ καὶ τοῖς ἄρχουσι τοῖς μετ’ αὐτοῦ.

22:36 And when Balak heard that Balaam had come, he went out to meet him, to a city of Moab, which is on the borders of Arnon, which is on the edge of the borders.

37 And Balak said to Balaam, “Did I not send to you to call you? Why did you not come to me? Really, shall I not be able to honor you?”

38 And Balaam said to Balak, “Behold, I have come to you. Shall I now be able to speak anything? The word that God puts into my mouth, this I shall speak.”

39 And Balaam went with Balak, and they came to cities of quarters.

40 And Balak sacrificed sheep and calves and sent them to Balaam and to the rulers who were with him.

39: The LXX translates קרית חצות “Kiriath-huzoth” by πόλεις ἐπαύλεων “cities of quarters”.30 Possibly

26 Wevers, THGN, 129-30.
27 Cf. SP יָרִט הָדַרְךָ לְנָא.
28 יָרִט is rare in the OT. BDB (cf. TWOT) defines it as “precipitate, be precipitate.” NETS translates οὐκ ἀστεία as “not pretty” on the basis of the majority of uses of ἀστείος in the LXX, where the term frequently refers to appearance. Exod 2.2 uses ἀστείον the newborn Moses; Judg 3:17 describes king Eglon as ἀστείος σφόδρα “very handsome;” Holofernes compliments Judith, telling her ἀστεία εἰ σὺ ἐν τῷ εἶδέσι σου καὶ ἀγαθή ἐν τοῖς λόγοις σου “you are beautiful in your appearance and good with your words;” Susanna is ἀστεία τοῦ εἶδεί (Sus 1:7 [OG]). But it also may be used in a virtuous sense, e.g. 2 Macc 6:23, ὁ δὲ λογισμὸν ἀστείον ἀναλαβὼν “but making a high resolve” (NETS).
29 Wevers, NGTN, 379-80.
30 Or cities of encampments.
the translator read כְּרֵי as a plural (with a waw instead of yod) and took חָצֵת as derived from חֵצֶר as “settlement.”

**Balaam’s First Attempt to Curse Israel (22:41-23:7a)**

41 And it became morning, and Balak took along Balaam and brought him up to the stele of Baal, and he showed him from there a part of the people.

23:1 And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven calves and seven rams.” 2 And Balak did in the manner Balaam told him, and Balak and Balaam offered up a calf and a ram on the altar. 3 And Balaam said to Balak, “Stand beside your sacrifice, but as for me I will go, if God will appear to me in a meeting. And whatever word he shows me I will report to you.” And Balak stood beside his sacrifice, and Balaam went to inquire of God, and he went straight ahead. 4 And God appeared to Balaam, and Balaam said to him, “I prepared the seven altars, and I brought up a calf and a ram on the altar.” 5 And God put a word into Balaam’s mouth and said, “When you return to Balak, thus you shall speak.” 6 And he returned to him, and the latter stood over his whole burnt offerings, and all the rulers of Moab with him. 7 And a divine spirit was upon him.

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The term בַּמּוֹן is translated by τὴν στήλην τοῦ Βααλ. Wevers suggests that the early LXX translators had trouble with בַּמּוֹן, a rare term in the Pentateuch. The translators of Leviticus and Numbers gave στήλη “monument, pillar” in its first four occurrences. בַּמּוֹן also appears twice in Deuteronomy, at 32:13 and 33:29, where two different contextual translations are provided. בַּמּוֹן is more common in the later books of the Hebrew Bible, and the translators adopted several more suitable terms, e.g. ὑψηλός, βωμός, ὕψος. Wevers suggests that these renderings in the LXX Pentateuch imply that the concept of idolatrous worship at high places was unknown to the translators in Alexandria.

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31 Or the spirit of God
33 Isa 15:2; 16:12; Jer 7:31; 32:35; 48:35; Hos 10:8; Amos 7:9.
34 2 Sa 1:25; 22:34; Amos 4:13; Mic 1:3.
θυσιαστήριον, which is usually used for Israelite altars.  
Certainly an altar built by Balak would be considered pagan, even if the sacrifices offered upon it were directed at the Israelite god.

3: The LXX gives θεός, agreeing the SP and 4Q27 (fragmentary), against the MT's יהוה.  
3: The second half of this verse follows the text found in 4QNum\(^b\). The MT omission can be explained as parablepsis, with the scribe's eye skipping from the first ילך to the second ילך at the end of the verse.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers 23:3b</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ παρέστη Βαλὰκ ἐπὶ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ Βαλαὰμ ἔπορεύθη ἐπερωτήσαι τὸν θεόν καὶ ἐπορεύθη εὐθείᾳ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5: The LXX has ὁ θεός putting the word into Balaam's mouth. MT has יהוה, while SP and 4Q27 (reconstructed) give יהוה יראֵם.

6(7): The Greek reads καὶ ἐγενήθη πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐπ᾿ αὐτῷ, whereas the MT (supported by SP, not extant in the Scrolls) has no equivalent. The translator may have had this phrase in his Hebrew Vorlage here, but more likely was influenced by the appearance of the same phrase in 24:2.

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**Balaam's First Oracle (23:7b-10)**

23:7 καὶ ἀναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν

23:7 And he took up his parable and said:

‘Out of Mesopotamia Balak sent for me, Moab’s king from mountains on the east, saying:
‘Come, curse Iakob for me, and come, call down curses upon Israel for me!’

8 How shall I curse whom the Lord does not curse?
Or how shall I call down curses on whom God does not call down curses?

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\(^{37}\)Cf. DJD XII, 234.
ὅτι ἀπὸ κορυφῆς ὀρέων ὄψομαι αὐτὸν, καὶ ἀπὸ βουνῶν προσνοήσω αὐτὸν. ἰδοὺ λαὸς μόνος κατοικήσει, καὶ ἐν θεσαλογίσασται. τίς εξηκριβάσατο τὸ σπέρμα Ἰακώβ, καὶ τίς εξαριθμήσεται δῆμος Ἰσραήλ; ἀποθάνοι ἡ ψυχή μου ἐν ψυχαίς δικαίων, καὶ γένοιτο τὸ σπέρμα μου ὡς τὸ σπέρμα τούτων.

For from a top of mountains I shall see him, and from hills I shall observe him. Behold, a people shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among nations!

Who has accurately counted the offspring of Jakob, and who shall number Israel's divisions? May my soul die among souls of righteous ones, and may my offspring be as their offspring!

7: ארם is translated by Μεσοποταμία, a term which is most often the counterpart to מַעַרְס הַארֶם “Paddan-aram,” as well as as בָּרֶם הָארֶם. Μεσοποταμία refers to the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Συρία/Σύρος is a much more common translation of ארם in the LXX.38

8: The translator reverses the order of the divine names, giving κύριος for אלה, and ὁ θεός for יהוה. This verse is not extant in 4QNumb, and Sam = MT. The lines are otherwise synonymous, and no explanation is readily apparent for this variation.

10: The LXX translates μῖσος “dust,” here a metaphor for the numerous Israelites, as σπέρμα “seed, offspring.” The translator may have had in mind the divine promise to Abram that his זרע (LXX: σπέρμα) would be כעפר הארץ (ὡς τὴν ἄμμον τῆς γῆς).39

10: δῆμος Ἰσραήλ “the people of Israel” contrasts with ἀριθμηθῇ Ἰσραήλ, usually translated “the fourth part of Israel” (SP הָרָבָּה אֶת-רָעָם, not extant in the Scrolls).40 The meaning of the Hebrew here is difficult. There may be a textual problem in the Hebrew, and Gray suggests emending the text to read רבע הָרָבָּה “myriads.”41 Others have found a cognate in the Akkadian turba’u “dust-cloud.”42 Either way, the

40BDB “fourth-part”, cf. TWOT, Hol “dust-cloud.”
41Gray, Numbers, 348.
42E.g. NRSV “the dust-cloud of Israel.” Cf. Levine, Numbers, 175-76.
Balak’s Response and A Second Attempt (23:11-17)

23:11 And Balak said to Balaam, “What have you done to me? For cursing my enemies have I called you—and behold, you have blessed them with a blessing.”

12 And Balaam said to Balak, “No, as much as God puts into my mouth, shall I beware of speaking it?”

13 And Balak said to him, “Come yet with me to another place, from there where you shall not see it; rather, some part of it you shall see, but all you shall not see. And curse it for me from there.”

14 And he took him to a lookout place of a field, on the top of Hewn. And he built there seven altars and brought up a calf and a ram on the altar. And Balaam said to Balak, “Stand beside your sacrifice, but I will go to inquire of God.”

16 And God met with Balaam, and he put a word into his mouth and said, “Turn back to Balak, and this is what you shall speak.”

17 And he turned back to him, and the latter stood beside his whole burnt offering, and all the rulers of Moab with him. And Balak said to him, “What did the Lord speak?”

12: The Hebrew begins the verse with וַיַּעַן וַיֹּאמֶר. The translator removes any potential ambiguity by specifying the speaker and recipient.

12. Whereas the Hebrew has יְהוָה (= SP, not extant in the Scrolls), the Greek has ὁ θεὸς.

14: Instead of treating it as a proper name, the translator reads פָּסְגָּה as a form of the verbal root פָּסַג “split, cut off, cut in two” and translates as λελαξευμένου “hewn.” This equivalent occurs earlier as well, at 21:20, and appears also at Dt. 3:27 (cf. similarly Dt. 4:49 τὴν λαξευτήν). Elsewhere the LXX transliterates the Hebrew, giving Φασγα (Dt 3:17; 34:1; Jos 12:3; 13:20).

14: Balak took Balaam to שדה צופים “field of Zophim,” which the LXX translates as ἀγροῦ σκοπίαν “a lookout place.”

15: In the Hebrew the final phrase of v. 15 is somewhat cryptic: אֲרָחוֹנִים כִּהָנִים. The LXX, however, interprets and expands, rendering ἐγὼ δὲ πορεύσομαι ἐπερωτήσαι τὸν θεόν.⁴⁴

⁴³MT = SP, not extant in the Scrolls.
⁴⁴Cf. 23:3 where the translator also provides a contextualized translation in a similar context.
16: The LXX has θεός as the counterpart to the MT’s יהוה.\textsuperscript{45} This may be due to the influence of 23:4, which begins with a similar phrase: יִצָּר אָדָם אֶלָּבָלוּה.

**Balaam’s Second Oracle (23:18-24)**

23:18 And he took up his parable and said,

“Rise up, Balak, and hear;
give ear as a witness, O son of Sepphor:

19 God is not to be put upon like man,
nor is he to be threatened like a son of man.
When he himself has said, shall he not do?
Shall he speak and not make good?

20 Behold, I have been taken hold of to bless;
I will bless, and I will not turn away.

21 There shall be no trouble in Lakob,
nor shall hardship be seen in Israel.
The Lord his God is with him;
the glories of rulers are in him.

22 God was the one who brought them out of Egypt;
like a unicorn’s glory he was to him.

23 For there is no omen in Iakob
nor divination in Israel;
opportunely it shall be told to Iakob and to Israel
what God shall accomplish.

24 Behold, a people shall rise up like a whelp
and shall bear itself proudly like a lion!
It will not lie down until it eats prey
and will drink blood of mortally wounded.”

19: The translator makes the contrast between man and God explicit, and so avoids even the hint of anthropomorphism by inserting the clarifying ὡς, with no corresponding particle in the Hebrew.\textsuperscript{46}

19: οὐδὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου ἀπειληθῆναι. The verb here is ἀπειλέω “threaten, warn, force back” (passive: “be threatened”)—God cannot be coerced into changing his declarations. This is in contrast to the reflexive sense of the Hebrew יִתְנַחֵם “that he should repent” (JPS) or “change his mind” (NRSV).

Wevers suggests this is also an intentional avoidance of a literal translation.\textsuperscript{47}

21: The Hebrew begins לא־הביט און ביעקב “He has not beheld misfortune.” The translator abandons the

\textsuperscript{45}MT = SP, not extant in the Scrolls. A few Hebrew manuscripts agree with the LXX.

\textsuperscript{46}MT = SP, not extant in the Scrolls.

\textsuperscript{47}Wevers, *NGTN*, 394.
concept of not seeing in the first line, simply giving οὐκ ἔσται “there shall be no...”.

21: The final phrase, τὰ ἔνδοξα ὀφρόντων ἐν αὐτῶ, differs from the Vorlage מְלֹךְ בָּהֵיהָ. The Hebrew term is difficult, and the LXX translates it variously throughout. This will be discussed further in chapter 3.

22: The Hebrew has “like the horns of a wild ox.” The translator gives what he must have considered an equivalent metaphor: ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος. The term ἔνδοξα appears only four times in the Hebrew Bible: in Num 23:22; 24:8 (both of these with the phrase מֶלֶךְ), translated in the LXX by δόξα; in Job 22:25 (בְּכֵן מִזְמוֹר), probably best understood as “precious silver” (NRSV, JPS), where the LXX translator contextualized and rendered ὀργύριον πεπυρωμένον; and Psalm 95(94):4 (וּתועפות הרים), where the LXX translator renders τὰ ὕψη τῶν ὀρέων. The term μονόκερως is the standard LXX equivalent for רָאִים, whose specific meaning is uncertain, but seems likely to refer to an animal like a wild ox. The significance of the translator’s rendering here and at 24:8 will be discussed further in chapter 3.

23: Balaam declares that there is nochantment, bewitchment” nor κεκάλαμος “divination” against the people. The LXX renders οἰωνισμός “omen” (by the flight or cries of birds) and μαντεία “oracle, prophecy.” οἰωνισμός only occurs rarely in the LXX, but μαντεία appears in Deut 18:10, 14, characterized as a forbidden practice.

Balak's Response and A Third Attempt (23:25-30)

23:25 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλὰκ πρὸς Βαλαάμ Οὔτε κατάραις καταράσῃ μοι αὐτόν, οὔτε εὐλογῶν μὴ εὐλογήσῃς αὐτόν. And Balak said to Balaam, “You shall neither curse them with curses for me, nor, when blessing, shall you bless...”
καὶ ἀποκριθεὶς Βαλαὰμ εἶπεν τῷ Βαλάκ Οὐκ ἐλάλησά σοι λέγων Τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἂν λαλήσῃ ὁ θεός, τοῦτο ποιήσω; 27 Καὶ εἶπεν Βαλάκ πρὸς Βαλαὰμ Δεῦρο παραλάβω σε εἰς τόπον ἄλλον, εἰ ἀρέσει τῷ θεῷ καὶ κατάρασαί μοι αὐτὸν ἐκεῖθεν. 28 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλὰκ πρὸς Βαλαάμ Δεῦρο παραλάβω σε εἰς τόπον ἄλλον, εἰ ἀρέσει τῷ θεῷ καὶ κατάρασαί μοι αὐτὸν ἐκεῖθεν. 29 καὶ παρέλαβεν Βαλὰκ τὸν Βαλαὰμ ἐπὶ κορυφή τοῦ Φογώρ, τὸ παρατεῖνον εἰς τὴν ἔρημον. 30 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλαὰμ πρὸς Βαλάκ Οἰκοδόμησόν μοι ὧδε ἑπτὰ βωμούς, καὶ ἑτοίμασόν μοι ὧδε ἑπτὰ μόσχους καὶ ἑπτὰ κριοὺς. 31 καὶ ἐποίησεν Βαλὰκ καθάπερ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Βαλαάμ, καὶ ἀνήνεγκεν μόσχον καὶ κριὸν ἐπὶ τὸν βωμόν. 26 And Balaam answered and said to Balak, “Did I not speak to you, saying ‘The word that God speaks, this I shall do’?” 27 And Balak said to Balaam, “Come, let me take you to another place, if it shall please God, and curse it for me from there.” 28 And Balak took Balaam to the top of Phogor, which extends into the wilderness. 29 And Balaam said to Balak, “Build for me here seven altars, and prepare for me here seven calves and seven rams.” 30 And Balak did just as Balaam told him, and he offered a calf and a ram on the altar.

29: Wevers suggests that for vv. 29-30 the translator simply copied his translation of 1-2. The MT is nearly identical in verse 1 and verse 29, but verses 2 and 30 differ: verse 2 supplies the subject of the sacrificing: יהוה and verse 30 omits a subject for ויעל.55

Balaam’s Third Oracle (24:1-9)

24:1 And when Balaam saw that it was good before the Lord to bless Israel, he did not go, according to his custom, to meet the omens but turned his face toward the wilderness. 2 And when Balaam raised his eyes, he looked down upon Israel encamped tribe by tribe. And a divine spirit came upon him, and he took up his parable and said:

*Says Balaam son of Beor; says the man who truly sees.* 4*Says one who hears divine oracles, who saw a divine vision, in sleep when his eyes had been uncovered:* 5*How beautiful are your dwellings, O Iakob, your tents, O Israel!* 6*Like wooded valleys giving shade and like orchards by rivers and like tents that the Lord pitched, like cedar trees beside waters.* 7*A person will come forth from his offspring, and he shall rule over many nations, and reign of him shall be exalted beyond Gog, and his reign shall be increased.* 8*A god guided him out of Egypt; like a unicorn’s glory he was to him.* 9*He lay down and rested like a lion and like a whelp. Who will raise him up?*

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55Also, verse 2 has רעה whereas verse 30 has רעא. However this difference might not be expected to be reflected in the LXX translation.
κατακλίθεις ἀνεπαύσατο ὡς λέων καὶ ὡς σκύμνος·
tίς ἀναστήσει αὐτόν;
oi εὐλογούντες σε εὐλόγηνται,
kai oι καταρώμενοι σε κεκατήρανται.

Blessed are those who bless you,
and cursed are those who curse you.”

1: κατὰ τὸ εἰωθός is an idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew כֶּסֶם בְּכֶסֶם “as at other times.”

1: The translator gives ἀπέστρεψεν for ἴσχυς, possibly reading ἴσθημι instead.56

3: Verse 3 concludes וַיָּשַׁם גֶּבֶר שָׁם עֵינָי. The term “open” appears in the Hebrew Bible only at Num 24:3, 15. Some commentators suggest reading שָׁמַע “closed” instead.57 However, this is not necessary, since one might well expect to find unusual words among the unusual diction of the Balaam pericope.58 Wevers suggests that the translator “hedged his bets” by rendering ὁ ἀληθινῶς ὁρῶν, which is what the Hebrew metaphor presumably means.59

4: The translator adopts θεός as the rendering for both אלהי and שדי. Although these equivalences are acceptable, the resulting Greek text has one name for the divine whereas the Hebrew had two. The translator’s treatment of divine names will be addressed in more detail in chapter 2.

6: ἔπηξεν reflects שָׁם, the reading attested in SP and 4QNumb, instead of the MT’s שָׁמַע.

7: The MT has גֶּבֶר, as opposed to the LXX’s Γόγ. The LXX reading is supported by the SP (שבע), α’ σ’ θ’, and possibly 4Q27.60 In light of this textual support, it is likely that the translator’s Hebrew Vorlage read Gog. Although not an intentional change on the part of the translator, the use of Gog would convey a significantly different sense than Agag. Agag was king of the Amalekites during the reign of Saul. In the LXX, then, the reference is no longer to a historical figure in the early days of Israel's kingship, but instead to the eschatological figure of Gog from the land of Magog described in Ezekiel 38-39. One day Israel will rise up over the great destroyer and emperor from the east. This variant will

56SP = MT, not extant in the Scrolls.
57BDB כֶּסֶם, cf. also Gray, Numbers, 361.
58See Levine, Numbers, 191-3;
59Wevers, NGTN, 402-3.
60DJD XII, 236.
be discussed further in chapter 3.

7: The first couplet in the MT ( chai מדרים) continues the arboreal imagery of verse 6. Israel is like trees with an abundant supply of water. The translator, however, departs from the metaphors of trees and water by translating ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ, “A person will come forth from his offspring.” Instead, this translation provides a subject for the following predictions of ruling over many nations and having a reign that exceeds that of Gog.

7: In the third line the translator gives басилеία αὐτοῦ (= מלכותו), whereas the Hebrew has מלך. The translator of Numbers, as well as the translator of Deuteronomy, avoids the term βασιλεύς when referring to Israelite rulers.

8: ὠδήγησεν reflects the SP’s נחהו, rather than the MT’s ניסהו.

8: In the final phrase the MT lacks an object. The LXX supplies ἐχθρόν, which may be supported by 4QNum, where the editor reconstructs אויב.

8: The LXX renders the Hebrew תועפת ראם לו with ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος αὐτῷ. See the discussion above at 23:22.

Balak Commands Balaam To Leave (24:10-14)

24:10 καὶ ἐθυμώθη Βαλὰκ ἐπὶ Βαλαάμ, καὶ συνεκρότησεν τοῖς χερεῖν αὐτοῦ, καὶ εἶπεν Βαλὰκ πρὸς Βαλαάμ: Καταρᾶσθαι τὸν ἐχθρόν μου κέκληκά σε, καὶ ἰδοὺ εὐλόγησας τρίτον τοῦτο. Νῦν οὖν φεῦγε εἰς τὸν τόπον σου· εἶπα Τιμήσω σε, καὶ νῦν ἐστέρησέν σε κύριος τῆς δόξης.

11 καὶ εἶπεν Βαλαὰμ πρὸς Βαλάκ: Οὐχὶ καὶ τοῖς ἁγγέλοις σου, ὧς ἀπέστειλας πρός με, ἐλάλησα λέγων Ἐάν μοι δῶ Βαλὰκ πλήρη τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ ἀργυρίου καὶ χρυσίου, οὐ δυνήσομαι παραβῆναι τὸ ῥῆμα κυρίου ποιῆσαι αὐτὸ πονηρὸν ἢ καλὸ παρ᾿ ἐμαυτοῦ· ὅσα ἂν εἴπῃ ὁ θεός, ταῦτα ἐρῶ; καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ἀποτρέχω εἰς τὸν τόπον μου· δεῦρο συμβουλεύσω σοι, τί ποιήσει ὁ λαὸς οὗτος τὸν λαόν σου ἐπ᾿ ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν.

24:10 And Balak became infuriated with Balaam, and he clapped his hands together. And Balak said to Balaam, “I have summoned you to curse my enemy, and behold, in blessing you have blessed him this third time. Now then be off to your place! I said, ‘I will honor you,’ but now the Lord has deprived you of glory.” And Balaam said to Balak, “No, even to your messengers whom you sent to me I spoke, saying, ‘If Balak gives me his house full of silver and gold, I will not be able to transgress the word of the Lord to do it, bad or good, of my own accord; whatever God says, that I will speak.’ And now, behold, I am going off to my place; come, let me advise you what this people will do to your people at the end of days.”
13: ὅσα ἂν εἴπῃ ὁ θεός. In contrast, the MT has יהוה for the divine name.

14: εἰς τὸν τόπον μου is probably the result of harmonization with εἰς τὸν τόπον σου in v. 11, against the MT's בĕרם (= SP).

Balaam's Fourth Oracle (24:15-19)

24:15 Καὶ ἀναλαβὼν τὴν παραβολὴν αὐτοῦ εἶπεν

Φησὶν Βαλαὰμ υἱὸς Βεώρ,
φησὶν ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἀληθινῶς ὁρῶν,
ἀκούων λόγια θεοῦ,
ἐπιστάμενος ἐπιστήμην παρὰ ὑψίστου,
καὶ ὁρασὶν θεοῦ ίδὼν,
ἐν ὑπνῷ ἀποκεκαλυμμένοι οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ·
Δείξω αὐτῷ, καὶ οὐχὶ νῦν·
μακαρίζω, καὶ οὐκ ἐγγίζει·
ἀνατελεῖ ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακώβ,
καὶ ἀναστήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ Ἰσραήλ,
καὶ θραύσει τοὺς ἀρχηγοὺς Μωάβ,
καὶ προνομεύσει πάντας υἱοὺς Σήθ.
καὶ ἐσται Ἐδὼμ κληρονομία,
καὶ ἔσται κληρονομία Ἠσαὺ ὁ ἐχθρὸς αὐτοῦ·
καὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἐποίησεν ἐν ἰσχύι.
καὶ ἐξεγερθήσεται ἐξ Ἰακώβ,
καὶ ἀπολεῖ σωζόμενον ἐκ πόλεως.

24:15 And he took up his parable and said:

“Says Balaam son of Beor;
says the man who truly sees,
one who hears divine oracles,
one who understands knowledge of the Most High
and one who sees a divine vision,
in sleep when his eyes had been uncovered:
I will point to him, and not now;
I deem him happy, but he is not at hand.
A star shall dawn out of Jakob,
and a person shall rise up out of Israel,
and he shall crush the chiefs of Moab,
and he shall plunder all Seth’s sons.
And Edom will be an inheritance,
and Esau, his enemy, will be an inheritance,
and Israel acted with strength.
And one shall arise out of Jakob,
and he shall destroy one being saved from a city.”

15: Verse 15 is an exact copy of v. 3 in both the Greek and Hebrew versions.

17: The translator misread רוש as from the verbal root רוש, “be happy” instead of רוש “gaze, see.”
The same consonantal form, יָשָׁר, appeared in 23:9, where the translator gave the correct translation.

17: The Hebrew יָשָׁר and רָכִּי posed a challenge for the translator. יָשָׁר carries the sense of “side, edge” or “temple” (of the head), for which the translator chose τοὺς ἀρχηγοὺς “leaders.” The Hebrew term רָכִּי is problematic. Although it is possibly a form of רכָּב “break down,” a much more likely explanation is that it is an error; the editor of BHS proposes רָכִּי “head, crown of head.” The translator renders προνομεύσει, “plunder.” The Targumim also had difficulty with these terms, and provided

65Cf. רָכִּי at Isa 22:5, although as a hapax legomenon its meaning is uncertain.
contextual readings as well.

17: The LXX gives ἀνθρώπος for the Hebrew שבט (= SP). This variant will be discussed in depth in chapter 3.

### Concluding Oracles (24:20-25)

24:20 And when he saw Amalek and took up his parable, he said:

"Rule of nations is Amalek, but their offspring will perish."

21 And when he saw the Kenite and took up his parable, he said:

"Strong is your dwelling place; even if you set your nest in a rock, even if a nest of cleverness accrues to Beor, Assyrians shall take you away captive."

23 And when he saw Og and took up his parable, he said:

"Alas, alas, who shall live when God ordains these things? And one shall go forth from the hand of Kitieans, and they shall harm Assour, and they shall harm Ebreans, and they too shall perish together."

25 And Balaam got up and went away as he returned to his place; Balak too went home.

24: The phrase καὶ ἐξελεύσεται probably represents ייצאים, rather than the MT’s ייצים “ships.”

### 3. Conclusion

Although the LXX can be said to generally follow the Hebrew majority text, there are multiple instances where it agrees with other texts against the MT. For example, at 22:9 τί follows ממה in the SP against the MT’s מי. In 23:3b the LXX contains several lines absent in the MT and SP, but present in 4Q27. Although some LXX variants can be explained with recourse to the Samaritan text or the Scrolls,
many of the major LXX variants have no extant Hebrew support. The LXX’s preference for θεός has no precedent in extant Hebrew texts. Neither does the LXX translation of 24:7, and the reading ἄνθρωπος in 24:17.

The translation character of the LXX Numbers 22-24 is not especially uncharacteristic of LXX Numbers, nor of the LXX Pentateuch in general. The translator gives a generally isomorphic translation where, within the constraints of the target language, each Hebrew morpheme is represented by one equivalent Greek morpheme.66 The translation is guilty of errors (possibly misreading מים at 24:7; אראנו at 24:17), ignorance (of proper names, e.g. שדה צפים and הפסגה at 23:14), inconsistency and variation in translation (as in the different terms used for the emissaries of Balak in ch. 22, for הנון in ch. 22, and ראדו in chs. 22-23), as well as awkwardness (e.g. προστίθημι for יסף in 22:15, 19, 25, 26). All these characteristics have precedent in the other books of the LXX Pentateuch. Less expected, however, are the elements singled out for further study, the use of κύριος and θεός, and the reworking of elements of Balaam's oracles with eschatological or messianic significance, especially in 23:21, 24:7, and 24:17.

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66Even in translations that are widely considered anomalous, see e.g. the discussion of 24:7 in the following chapter.
CHAPTER TWO: THE DIVINE NAME IN THE LXX BALAAM ACCOUNT

Chapter Synopsis: This chapter examines the translator's substitution of θεός for יהוה in the Balaam account in the light of its context in the Septuagint version of Numbers, the LXX Pentateuch, and contemporary literary context. I argue that this tendency reflects the translator's intentional attempt to influence the reader's perception of the interaction of God and Balaam.

1. Introduction

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the translation of the divine name in Numbers 22-24 departs from the usual approach taken in the LXX of giving κύριος for יהוה and θεός for אלהים. The translator followed this practice throughout most of Numbers, but radically departs from it in his translation of the Balaam account, frequently rendering יהוה with θεός. Although some variation in lexical equivalents is normal in the LXX, the sudden appearance of numerous θεός - יהוה equivalences raises questions about the translator's approach to translation and his interpretation of the Balaam account. The following tables summarize the translation of the divine name in Numbers and in the Balaam account:

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<th>The Divine Name in the Book of Numbers</th>
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In Numbers overall, θεός translates יהוה approximately 6% of the time. In chapters 22-24, nearly 66% of the occurrences of יהוה are rendered by θεός. What accounts for this radical change? The Balaam account is a distinct literary unit in Numbers. Furthermore Balaam, is a pagan seer who communicates with God, is hired to curse Israel, but blesses Israel instead, although ultimately he aids Moab in the corruption of Israel. He therefore poses an interpretive challenge to readers of this text. Is Balaam a righteous prophet or a corrupt seer? Does he really hear from and speak for God? This literary and theological context likely influenced the translator's treatment of the divine names in the Balaam account.

Studies of LXX translation practice rightly begin with an examination of the text-critical issues. In this case the evidence of the transmission of the text and what we know of usual scribal practice do not provide an explanation of the frequent use of θεός for יהוה. Therefore, it seems appropriate to posit a literary or theological motivation for this aspect of the translation.

Martin Rösel has made perhaps the most broad-ranging proposal about a theologically motivated use of the divine name in the LXX. He argues that textual criticism and scribal practice fail to explain

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73 The tetragrammaton has no Greek equivalent at 5:6 and 31:3; at 10:36(34) the translator takes יהוה as a verbal form.
74 The translation lacks an equivalent for אלהים at Numbers 10:9, and two occurrences of אלהים are translated by εἴδωλον, at 25:5(2x).
75 At 24:4, 16.
76 The translator gives πρὸς τὸν κύριον ὑμῶν for אל ארץכם at 22:13.
77 The Greek has phrases with no Hebrew equivalent at 23:3, 6, 15.
78 If we were to exclude chapters 22-24 from this overall picture, we would see 5 instances of θεός for יהוה, representing approximately 1.8% of the 267 total occurrences of יהוה.
the LXX treatment of the divine name. Instead, deviations from the standard translation equivalents can best be explained exegetically. In nearly all cases, contextual factors are determinative. Therefore, Rösel asserts, “one can also glimpse the translator's theological thinking in his use of the names of God in the Greek Pentateuch.”

Rösel proposes several contexts in which the θεός for יהוה (and less commonly—κύριος for אלהים) occurs. One such category is that of judgment or punishment. For example, in Genesis 12:17 θεός (יהוה) afflicts Pharaoh and his house with plagues. In Gen 38:7 we are told that Er was sinful before κύριος (יהוה) but that θεός (יהוה) killed him. In Genesis 6:6 θεός (יהוה) ponders that he made humankind, and in 6:7 θεός (יהוה) declares that he will wipe them out. In Exodus 16:7 Moses and Aaron tell the Israelites that they will see the glory of κύριος (יהוה), for he has heard their complaining against θεός (יהוה).

Another category Rösel suggests is in connection with foreigners. In Gen 13:13, we are told the men of Sodom are sinful against θεός (יהוה). In Gen 30:27, Laban declares that θεός (יהוה) has blessed him because of Jacob, and in 31:49 Laban calls θεός (יהוה) to enforce the covenant between Laban and Jacob. In Exod 3:18, יהוה אלהים becomes θεός in Moses' declaration to Pharaoh—the God of the Hebrews should not be identified as “Lord” to non-Israelites. Rösel suggests that the avoidance of κύριος when Balaam is addressed in Num 22-24 is motivated by this same tendency.

A tendency towards the use of θεός also appears in contexts involving displays of God's power. In Gen 18:13-14, κύριος asks Abraham if anything is impossible with θεός (יהוה). Similarly, in Exodus 13:21 it is θεός (יהוה) who leads by pillar and cloud. In a similar context, the LXX version of the

80Rösel, “Reading and Translation,” 419.
81Other examples Rösel gives of θεός for יהוה in contexts of judgment/punishment include Num 16:5, 11; Deut 2.14, as well as different forms of the divine name in Genesis 4.
82Rösel, “Reading and Translation,” 421-2.
83Rösel also cites Exod 5:2-3; 10:11 as examples of this tendency. (“Reading and Translation,” 421.)
theophany account in Exodus 19 shows a decided preference for θεός. 

Rösel also observes that the translators sometimes employed the name κύριος for other theological reasons. He cites Gen 50:25, where the translator gives κύριος for אלהים because, he suggests, the context has to do with a promise that κύριος will visit Israel (cf. Exod 13:19). Rösel argues that this tendency can also be found in the Hebrew text. He cites Donald W. Parry's study of 4QSam⁴, in which Parry observes that 4QSam⁴ uses יהוה more frequently than the MT and suggests that this frequency of use signals the scribe's belief that יהוה is actively involved in the life of Israel. This suggests that the practice of emphasizing one divine name over another may have its origin prior to the creation of the LXX.

Rösel adds that the scribe of 4QSam⁴ appears to avoid using the tetragrammaton in contexts that go against the view of יהוה as merciful. In the narrative that describes God killing David and Bathsheba's first son (2 Sam 12:15), the MT has יהוה and 4QSam⁴ has אלהים.

Rösel provides a plausible theoretical argument for theologically motivated substitutions of θεός for יהוה in the LXX. Absent from his essay, however, is any discussion of the textual background of the examples he cites. Do any of these cases have a textual basis? Furthermore, Rosel's thesis suffers from an over-reliance on isolated instances of θεός for יהוה which could easily be a result of the apparently random textual variation that occasionally occurs in the transmission of Hebrew and Greek texts. Except for the Balaam account, none of Rösel’s examples have enough θεός / יהוה equivalences to be considered a pattern. Numerous counter-examples exist as well. The LXX often gives κύριος in cases

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84Ibid., 422.  
86Rösel, “Reading and Translation,” 423.
of judgment, in contexts with foreigners, and in displays of divine power. In the overwhelming majority of cases, the LXX translators simply give the standard equivalent for יהוה or אלהים irrespective of context.

Rösel's thesis would be more convincing if he could point to a discernible pattern of divine name substitution. One or two occasions of θεός for יהוה (or κύριος for אלהים) could simply be examples of random variation. Groups of these occurrences, however, could make random variation a less likely explanation and provide a broader base of context for interpretation. This chapter begins, therefore, by examining every instance of θεός for יהוה in Numbers, with a particular eye for contextual elements that may have influenced the translator's rendering.

2. θεός for יהוה in Numbers

2.1. Outside of the Balaam Account.

Outside of Numbers 22-24, the translation θεός for יהוה occurs only five times: 9:19; 15:30; 16:5, 11; and 31:41. These are discussed below.

Num 9:19

MT: תשמך בני ישראל את מְשֹרָת יהוה (SP)

LXX: καὶ φυλάξονται οἱ γιοὶ Ἰσραήλ τὴν φυλακὴν τοῦ θεοῦ

The Greek text, with the future verb φυλάξονται, reads like an instruction, whereas the Hebrew is straightforward narrative. In 9:19 the narrator tells us that the Israelites kept the command of God by remaining where they where camped while the cloud stayed over the tabernacle. κύριος is frequently used in the surrounding context, and it is unclear why the translator preferred θεός here. One Greek witness gives κύριος: manuscript 129, supported by Aeth Arm Bo. That κύριος is secondary is indicated by the paucity of witnesses, and can be accounted for on the basis of the surrounding context.

87Eg. Numbers 16; Genesis 19:24; Exodus 8.
Verse 23 has τὴν φυλακὴν κυρίου, and προστάγματος κυρίου appears several times in the nearby verses.

**Num 15:30**  
MT: אתה דוה את לא מתחלה (SP)  
LXX: τὸν θεὸν οὗτος παροξύνει

The context here concerns regulations about offerings for sin. Different regulations exist for different offenses. Verses 30-31 describe the person who παροξύνει (“provokes”) God. No offering exists for him; he is to be cut off from the people of God. In this case, there may be a syntactical explanation. Wevers points out that the translator usually represents the direct object marker את with τὸν. This presents a problem to the translator in the present context, because he usually employs the phrase τὸν κύριον to render את אדני. In order to avoid this, the translator gives θεός. The translator also uses παροξύνω, “provoke, irritate,” which Wevers suggests is a weaker word than לֹא “blaspheme,” resulting in a milder condemnation. Instead of blaspheming Yahweh, the individual is guilty of merely a “provocation of deity.” However, one should be cautious of comparing the relative strength of Greek and Hebrew terms, and it is not completely clear whether the translated text was an intentional avoidance of κύριος by the translator, or an attempt to preserve translation equivalents he had established earlier.

**Num 16:5**  
MT: בַּכּוֹ אֵינָה הָאָדָם אֲבָרָרֵי (SP)  
LXX: ἐπέσκεπται καὶ ἔγνω ὁ θεὸς τοὺς ὄντας αὐτοῦ

**Num 16:11**  
MT: לֵלַך אֵית הַכֹּל יִוְטִירֵיהַ הַנָּחֲרֵיהַ (SP)  
LXX: οὕτως σὺ καὶ πᾶσα ἡ συναγωγή σου ἡ συνήθροισμένη πρὸς τὸν θεόν

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88Wevers, *NGTN*, 251.
89παροξύνω appears for נָזֵר in one other case in the LXX, at Isa 37:23, where the translator renders τίνα ὀνείδισας καὶ παροξύσας for יָדִים אלוהים תקפת. The term נָזֵר is itself relatively rare, occurring only 7 times in the Hebrew Bible.
90Wevers, *NGTN*, 250-1.
Numbers 16 describes the rebellion of Korah, who leads a group of Israelites who protest that they too should be able to perform the duties of the tabernacle. God rejects the offering of Korah and his men, and the earth opens up and swallows them. In 16:5, the translator takes the text in a somewhat different direction than the Hebrew. In the Hebrew, Moses tells Korah, “In the morning the LORD will make known who is his, and who is holy, and who will be allowed to approach him; the one whom he will choose he will allow to approach him.” The Greek translates the imperfect Hebrew verb with a perfect, with the result that Moses says, “God (ὁ θεός) has enrolled, and he recognized the ones who are his and who are holy, and he brought them to himself, and those whom he chose for himself he brought to himself” (NETS). In the LXX, God has already judged the ones who belong to him: those who are holy and obedient.

In 16:11a Moses tells Korah, “Thus are you and all your congregation that has gathered together against God (ἡ συναθροίζων πρὸς τὸν θεόν).”\(^{91}\) Συναθροίζω, “gather together,” is an acceptable counterpart to the Niphal of יעד, “gather.”\(^ {92}\) The sense of the verse is similar to that of 15:30, discussed above. However, the Hebrew has no direct object marker, and thus there is no readily apparent syntactical reason for the translator’s choice of θεός.

A few witnesses give κύριος instead of θεός in 16:5, 11, and Wevers concludes that κύριος is an early correction.\(^ {93}\) Any reason for the substitution of θεός in Numbers 16 is unclear from the text, and in nearby contexts κύριος often appears for יהוה, e.g. in vv. 7, 17, 30, 35.

Num 31:41

MT: ויתן משה את־מכס תרומת יהוה לאלעזר הכהן (SP)

LXX: καὶ ἔδωκεν Μωυσῆς τὸ τέλος κυρίῳ τὸ ἀφαίρεμα τοῦ θεοῦ Ἐλεαζὰρ τῷ ἱερεῖ,

\(^ {91}\) The reading κύριος is supported in the Greek by 426, and in other witnesses \(^ {1} \text{al.} \) cod 100, Aeth, and Sa.

\(^ {92}\) This is the only instance in the LXX where יעד is translated by συναθροίζων. The translator renders יעד by ἐπισυνίστημι at 14:35; 27:3; προσέρχομαι at 10:4; συνάγω at 10:3. At Numbers 17:19 the translator gives γνωσθῆσομαι for יעד, this equivalence also occurs in Exodus at 25:22; 29:42; 30:6, 36.

\(^ {93}\) Wevers, *NGTN*, 261.
καθ’ συνέταξεν κύριος τῷ Μωυσῆ.

The translator has added κυρίῳ (without a counterpart in MT, SP) and given τὸ ἀφαίρεμα τοῦ θεοῦ for τὸ τέλος κυρίῳ. Unlike the other occasions discussed above, this occurs in a positive context.

Since he has added κυρίῳ, probably to harmonize with other occurrences of τὸ τέλος κυρίῳ (31:37, 38, 39), it is possible he chose to use θεός for sake of variety. Wevers suggests that since the translator has added κυρίῳ, the use of θεός avoids the possible perception of a repeated יהוה in the parent text, although it is unclear why this would be considered a problem.

2.2. The Divine Name in the Balaam Account

Num 22:13  MT: יִרְאוּ דָּוִד מֵאָרֶן יְהוָה לְךָ (SP, 4Q27)  
LXX: οὐκ ἀφίησίν με ὁ θεός πορεύεσθαι μεθ’ ὑμῶν

Balaam tells the messengers to return to their own land, for “ὁ θεός will not allow me to go with you.” The Hebrew has יהוה. The translator may have been influenced by the previous verse, where it is אלהים who speaks to Balaam. In the LXX Balaam tells the messengers to return πρὸς τὸν κύριον ὑμῶν, probably following a Hebrew text similar to 4Q27, which (reconstructed) reads לֶךְ בַּרְאָלֶכְּא לְבַרְאָלֶכְּא לְאֵלָהָי צְכַּדָּא.  

Most of the occurrences of θεός for יהוה appear in Balaam’s encounter with the Angel of God:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT (SP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22:22 298 καὶ ἀνέστη οὗ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐνδιαβάλλειν αὐτόν</td>
<td>ὑδατεῖς Μαλακ ἀναμμένον τῷ μαλακῷ λέιψαν λέιπῃ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:23 καὶ ἱδούσα ἡ δούς τοῦ ἄγγελον τοῦ θεοῦ</td>
<td>τοῦρ ἄτομον ἄρτου τοῦ μαλακοῦ λέιπῃ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94 Some minor witnesses (16, 46, 551, Aeth, and Syh) give κυρίου instead of θεοῦ.
95 Wevers, NTGN, 521.
96 Witnesses included in parentheses indicate that they agree in the particular divine name although there may be slight differences in phrasing.
97 In all these cases SP = MT, with respect to the divine name used. The Qumran scrolls are unfortunately very fragmentary in this section.
98 The SP contains a variant in the divine name earlier in the verse, where it reads ייחר אף יהוה against the MT’s ייחר אף אלהים (= LXX).
An angel blocks Balaam's way. In the Hebrew this is מלאך יהוה, but the LXX gives ὁ ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ. Although less common than ἄγγελος κυρίου, ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ does occur throughout the LXX, with no significant distinction from ἄγγελος κυρίου.99 The replacement of מלאך יהוה with ἄγγελος τοῦ θεοῦ occurs in 22:22,100 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31,101 32, and 35, the only exception occurring in v. 34. Wevers suggests that this exception is due to Balaam's repentance. In addition, θεὸς replaces יהוה in vv. 28 and 31, where one reads that ὁ θεὸς opens the mouth of the donkey and uncovers Balaam's eyes.

In the MT Balaam anticipates the appearance of יהוה, but in the LXX Balaam seeks the appearance of ὁ θεὸς. The agreement of SP and 4Q27 suggests the LXX is following a Hebrew Vorlage. After Balaam departs to go with Balak, the language of divine interaction with Balaam is

99E.g. Gen 21:17, 28:12 31.11, 32.2; Exod 14:19; Deut 32:8, 43.
100The MT, supported by the LXX, gives אלהים אלוהים. The SP, supported by a number of other witnesses, reads יהוה אלהים. Wevers suggests that SP may represent the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX, since LXX exhibits a marked preference for θεὸς ("The Balaam Narrative," 139).
101Here only Rahlfs disagrees with the Göttingen edition, giving τὸν ἄγγελον κυρίου.
102SP gives את בalaam. Similarly, 4Q27, although fragmentary, appears to follow the MT wording but has אֱלֹהִים instead of יהוה.
almost exclusively in terms of θεός. In 22:8 and 22:19, Balaam expects κύριος to tell him what to do, but after his decision to go to Balak, he inquires of and hears only from ὁ θεός.

Num 23:3  
4Q27: [הֵרָעְתָּ בָּלָק עַל ע] [וַיִּתְעַבְּרָה בָּלָק שְׁפֵי ] [נַפְשָׁתָא אֲלֹהֵיהֶם לְשָׁו (MT SP)]  
LXX: καὶ παρέστη Βαλὰκ ἐπὶ τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ, καὶ Βαλαὰμ ἐπορεύθη ἐπερωτήσαι τὸν θεόν καὶ ἐπορεύθη εὐθεῖα (4Q27)

The LXX, supported by 4Q27, includes a line missing in the MT and SP texts. The editor of 4Q27 reconstructs ἀλλάζειν.103

Num 23:5  
MT: יִשָּׁהוּ יְהוָה דָּרֶס מִבּוֹלֶם (SP, not extant in the DSS)  
LXX: καὶ ἐνέβαλεν ὁ θεὸς ρῆμα εἰς τὸ στόμα Βαλαὰμ

In the LXX ὁ θεός places the word in Balaam's mouth. There is some variation in the Hebrew sources here: in verse 4 the SP and 4Q27 give מלאך אלהים against the MT's מלאך יִהוָה, and in verse 5 the SP again has יִהוָה against the MT (not extant in the Scrolls).

Num 23:7  
not extant in the MT, SP, DSS  
LXX: καὶ ἐγένετο πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ,

The LXX includes this phrase which is not found in any extant Hebrew witnesses. A similar phrase, καὶ ἐγένετο πνεῦμα θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ, appears in 24:2, supported by MT, SP, 4Q27.

Num 23:8a  
MT: מַה אִקב לָא חָפֵּשׁ אֲלִ (SP, not extant in the DSS)  
LXX: τί ἀράσσομαι ὃν μὴ ἀράται κύριος,

Num 23:8b  
MT: יִשָּׁהוּ יְהוָה דָּרֶס מִבּוֹלֶם (SP, not extant in the DSS)  
LXX: ἢ τί καταράσσομαι ὃν μὴ καταρᾶται ὁ θεός;

In 23:8 the divine names are reversed. Balaam declares, “How can I curse the one whom the κύριος (אֲלִ) has not cursed, or how can I denounce the one whom ὁ θεός (יִהוָה) has not denounced?”

103DJD XII, 234-5.
The phrases are synonymous, and there is no apparent reason why the translator would have intentionally departed from his source text. Furthermore, textual witnesses are divided between κύριος and θεός in the first line, suggesting that the translator simply followed the Hebrew text that was in front of him.104

Num 23:12  MT:  ההלא את אשרש שיבן יהוה בפיו אשרש לדבר (SP, not extant in the scrolls)  
LXX: Οὐχὶ ὅσα ἂν ἐμβάλῃ ὁ θεὸς εἰς τὸ στόμα μου, τοῦτο φυλάξω λαλῆσαι;

After the first oracle and Balak's response, Balaam declares that he will surely speak what ὁ θεός gives him to speak.

Num 23:15  MT:  והכבר אקרא המ (SP, not extant in Scrolls)  
LXX: ἐγὼ δὲ πορεύσομαι ἐπερωτήσαι τὸν θεόν.

The Hebrew text is somewhat abrupt, and the translator provides a sensible paraphrase.

Num 23:16  MT:  ויכرأ מלאך יהוה אל בלעם (SP, not extant in Scrolls)  
LXX: καὶ συνήντησεν ὁ θεὸς τῷ Βαλαὰμ ὁ θεός meets Balaam and gives him another message to speak. The SP supplies מלאך יהוה. The SP also includes מלאך at 23:4, 5.

Num 23:26  MT:  כל אשר ידבר יהוה אתו אעשוה (not extant in the Scrolls)  
LXX: Τὸ ῥῆμα ὃ ἂν λαλήσῃ ὁ θεός, τοῦτο ποιήσω; (SP כל המדבר אשר ידבר אלהים אתו אעשה)  

Balaam reaffirms that he will do whatever ὁ θεός tells him. Although the SP usually agrees with the MT in its use of either יהוה or אלהים, here it agrees with the LXX.

Num 24:4  MT:  אשר מדבר יהוה (SP, not extant in the Scrolls)  
LXX: ὁστις ὁρασεν θεον εἶδεν

104Wevers, Numeri, 280-1.
In the Pentateuch שָדֵי usually appears as part of the compound שֶׁדֶי. The LXX translators, uncertain about the etymology of שָדֵי, usually contextualized by giving θεός, often with the pronoun μου or σου, depending on the context.\textsuperscript{105} The translator lacks a pronoun here and at 24:16, possibly because he thought it unnecessary, but compare the absence of the pronoun “my” in 22:18: κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ for יהוה אלהי. Although far from certain, these renderings may point to the translator's discomfort with Balaam referring to κύριος as “my God.”

Num 24:13 \textit{MT:} אשר־ידבר יהוה אתו אדבר \textit{(SP, not extant in the Scrolls)}
\textit{LXX:} ὃσα ἂν εἴπῃ ὁ θεὸς, ταῦτα ἐρῶ;

In 24:13 Balaam repeats that he will speak whatever ὁ θεὸς (for יהוה) speaks.

Num 24:16 \textit{MT:} מחזה שדי יחזה \textit{(SP, not extant in the Scrolls)}
\textit{LXX:} καὶ ὅρασιν θεοῦ ἰδών

Here, as in the similar phrase in 24:4, the translator gives θεός for שדי.

2.3. \textbf{Summary}

Although throughout the book of Numbers the translator generally adheres to the usual LXX equivalents for divine names, here he frequently gives θεός instead of κύριος. This is not a wholesale avoidance of κύριος, since in the narrative sections κύριος does appear for יהוה in 22:8, 18, 19, 34; 23:8, 17; 24:1, 11. Balaam and Balak speak of κύριος communicating to Balaam (22:8, 18, 19; 23:17; 24:13), however the translation never allows κύριος to speak to or directly interact with Balaam. Instead of the MT's angel of יהוה, Balaam encounters the “angel of God.” The appearance of ἄγγελος κυρίου at 22:34 may be the exception that proves the rule.

3. Clusters of θεός for יהוה in the LXX Pentateuch

The following texts are those in which θεός appears for יהוה three or more times in a single narrative or literary unit. I have cast a rather wide net in an attempt to include all relevant data, however it will become apparent that not all of these groups represent a pattern of intentional departure from the source text. The texts are arranged in canonical order.

3.1. Genesis 4:1-16: Cain and Abel

The first cluster of θεός for יהוה appears in Genesis 4:1-16, the story of Cain and Abel. In the Hebrew version of this narrative, the tetragrammaton is used exclusively. The LXX, however, shows variation in its choice of equivalents for the divine name.

In MT 4:1, Eve gives birth to Cain “with the help of יהוה,” but the LXX has ὁ θεός. In 3-4a, Cain
and Abel bring their offerings to יהוה/κύριος. However, in 4b-5, it is ὁ θεός (for יהוה) who regards Abel's offering but not Cain's. When Cain becomes angry, κύριος ὁ θεός (יהוה) speaks to Cain (v. 6). After Cain kills Abel, ὁ θεός (יהוה) confronts Cain and pronounces the curse him (v. 9, cf. v. 10).  

Cain appeals his punishment before κύριος (יהוה). κύριος ὁ θεός (יהוה) qualifies the judgment, placing a mark on Cain so that no one will kill him. We are then told that Cain leaves the presence of ὁ θεός (יהוה).

In this account we see that the κύριος for יהוה equivalence is avoided in most instances. The two exceptions in vv. 3, 13 appear in the narration and have to do with making offerings and appeals to κύριος. In vv. 6, 15(2x) the translator gives κύριος ὁ θεός for יהוה, twice when God speaks to Cain, and once when God places the mark on Cain. The reason for this use of the double name is not immediately clear, however one might posit that the translator wished to include the term θεός, as he prefers ὁ θεός elsewhere in the passage. Elsewhere the translator gives ὁ θεός for יהוה every time God and Cain are brought into direct contact (4:1, 9, 10, 16). In addition, at 4:4-5 it is ὁ θεός, rather than יהוה, who favors Abel's offering over Cain's.

Can this aspect of the translation be linked to any other tendency present in the LXX here? Joel Lohr has observed that the translator attempts to provide a theological explanation for God's preference of Abel over Cain. He finds this primarily in the vocabulary of the LXX, which heightens the contrast between the two and casts a negative light on Cain. In 4:2 the vocations of the brothers are contrasted with δὲ (MT has ר). Although the Hebrew uses the same term for both Cain's and Abel's

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106 In verse 10 the LXX supplies ὁ θεός, in the Hebrew the speaker is implied.
107 Wevers notes the translator's preference for the double name, but finds no apparent exegetical reason for it (VGTG, 60). Outside of this passage and Gen 6-8 (discussed below), the translator adds θεός to form κύριος ὁ θεός at Gen 5:29 (καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ἦς κατηράσατο κύριος ὁ θεός); 10:9 (οὕτως ἦν γῆς κυνηγὸς ἐναντίον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ); 11:9 (καὶ ἐκεῖθεν διέσπειρεν αὐτούς κύριος ὁ θεός ἐπὶ πρόσωπον πάσης τῆς γῆς); 16:7 (εὗρεν δὲ αὐτὴν ἄγγελος κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ). The translator adds κύριος to form κύριος ὁ θεός at 9:12 (καὶ εἰπεν κύριος ὁ θεός πρὸς Νωε). In all of these instances SP = MT, not extant in the scrolls.
offerings, מנה, the LXX distinguishes between the two, using θυσία for Cain's and δῶρον for Abel's.\textsuperscript{109} Similarly, the MT uses נחמה to indicate Yahweh's disposition toward both offerings, but the LXX uses two different terms. θεός has regard for (ἐπείδον) Abel's offering, a term that implies favor.\textsuperscript{110} In contrast, θεός “did not pay attention to” (οὐ προσέσχεν) Cain's offering. After Cain reacts to God's rejection of his offering, God tells him somewhat cryptically,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>οὐκ, ἐὰν ὀρθῶς προσενέγκῃς, ὀρθῶς δὲ μὴ διέλθῃς, ἡμαρτεὶς; ἡσύχασον πρὸς τὴν ἀποστροφήν αὐτοῦ, καὶ σὺ ἂρξεις αὐτοῦ</td>
<td>ἦλθον ἐκεῖνοι ἐπὶ τὸ πεδίον ῥῆνας, καὶ σὺ ἄρξεις αὐτοῦ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The translator, faced with both the difficult Hebrew and the apparent arbitrariness of God, interprets the statement as a reference to correct cultic observance.

The final element Lohr finds in this LXX text is supported by the SP, Peshitta, and Vulgate. Whereas the MT tells us that “Cain spoke to his brother Abel,” the LXX relates what he spoke:

\[Διέλθωμεν εἰς τὸ πεδίον.\] This phrase suggests that Cain's murder of Abel was premeditated, and thereby casts Cain in a much more negative light. Interestingly, although Lohr notices the discrepancies in the LXX's use of divine names, he fails to address them specifically. The presence of both a clear bias against Cain and an unusual treatment of the divine names may be significant.

If we compare this pericope to the Balaam narrative, we find several similarities. Both Cain and Balaam are seen as negative characters, especially in later traditions. Furthermore, in both cases God’s relationship to the characters seems somewhat ambivalent. God rejects Cain’s offering and condemns him for the murder of Abel, but also warns Cain and shows him a degree of leniency. In the case of Balaam, Balaam is identified as one who hears from and is obedient to God, yet God becomes angry with Balaam and nearly kills him. In Gen 4:1-16 and Num 22-24 we see an unusual pattern of

\textsuperscript{109}Lohr cites Philo (\textit{QG} 1.62) to discuss the difference between the two. For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to note that the translator apparently wanted to distinguish the two offerings (“Righteous Abel, Wicked Cain,” 487).

\textsuperscript{110}Cf. Gen 16:13; Exod 2:25.
rendering the divine name, which includes ὁ θεός in multiple instances where אלהים is not present.

Both of these patterns have exceptions. When Cain makes his offering and appeals the harshness of God's verdict, the LXX gives κύριος. In Balaam's case, κύριος appears only when Balaam declares his sin before the angel of κύριος.111

3.2. Genesis 6-8: The Flood Narrative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT112</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:2 θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>7:1 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יוהו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:3 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>7:5 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יוהו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:4 θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>7:9 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יוהו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:5 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>7:16 (1*) ό θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:6 θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>7:16 (2*) κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יוהו</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:7 θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>8:1 (1*) θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:8 κυρίου του θεου</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
<td>8:1 (2*) θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:9 θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>8:15 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:11 θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>8:20 θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:12 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>8:21 (1*) κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:13 θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td>8:21 (2*) κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>יהוה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:22 κύριος ό θεός</td>
<td>אלהים</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the MT version of the flood narrative (Gen 6-8) יוהו occurs 11 times, and אלהים occurs 12 times. In comparison, the LXX version has κύριος 11 times and θεός 23 times. The LXX translates the divine names as usual (κύριος for יוהו, θεός for אלהים, κύριος ό θεός for יהוה אלהים) seven times.115 The

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111 Wevers notes that this is appropriate, as repentant prayer is only appropriately addressed to Yahweh, Israel's God. (NGTN, 379).
112 The Qumran evidence in Gen 6-8 is very fragmentary and does not contain any instances of κύριος or θεός. Unless otherwise noted, SP = MT with respect to the divine name used.
113 Here the SP has אלהים.
114 Against both the MT and LXX, the SP has יהוה here.
115 At 6:2, 4, 9, 11, 13; 7:9 (vs. SP); and 8:1 (2x).
translator gives θεός for יְהוָה three times,\footnote{At 6:6, 7; 8:20.} and supplies κύριος three times\footnote{At 6:12, 22; 8:15.} and θεός eight times\footnote{At 6:3, 5, 8, 7:1(SP = G), 5, 16b; 8:21(2x).} with no extant Hebrew equivalent. The translator's unsystematic approach in chs. 6-8 results in a text in which κύριος never appears alone, although there are 8 occurrences of יְהוָה occurring alone. We cannot conclude that the translator simply avoids κύριος, since he does supply κύριος without an extant Hebrew counterpart. Neither does this reflect a preference for the combined designation κύριος ὁ θεός, since θεός occurs alone 10 times in the narrative (for either יְהוָה or אלהים).\footnote{Excluding the phrase “sons of God.”}

Wevers suggests that the use of “Lord God” recalls the Eden narrative and its subsequent events, and that it is appropriate in reference to God's favor for Noah.\footnote{Wevers, \textit{NGTG}, 78.} However, he ultimately concludes that the translator of Genesis uses the double name arbitrarily.\footnote{Ibid., 82.} In spite of this Wevers does suggest that the inclusion of ὁ θεός throughout the flood narrative portrays God as creator, rather than as covenantal Lord.\footnote{Ibid., 79.}

There is some similarity here to the Genesis 4 account, where the translator both substitutes the Greek generic term for deity for the tetragrammaton and adds it to κύριος despite the absence of that usual Hebrew counterpart. Although the translator's interpretation of the text is not as apparent as it was in Genesis 4, the texts do share some similarities. The element of divine judgment is present in both accounts, and it is possible that the translator was uncomfortable with the actions of God. Here, in the context of catastrophic judgment, ὁ θεός becomes the dominant term in this theologically unsettling account of a God who judges and destroys human civilization.

\begin{itemize}
  \item \footnote{At 6:6, 7; 8:20.}
  \item \footnote{At 6:12, 22; 8:15.}
  \item \footnote{At 6:3, 5, 8, 7:1(SP = G), 5, 16b; 8:21(2x).}
  \item \footnote{Excluding the phrase “sons of God.”}
  \item \footnote{Wevers, \textit{NGTG}, 78.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., 82.}
  \item \footnote{Ibid., 79.}
\end{itemize}
3.3. Genesis 13: Abram and Lot Divide the Land

LXX | MT
--- | ---
13:4 | καὶ ἐπεκαλέσατο ἐκεῖ Ἀβράμ τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου. | ויקרא שם אברם בשם.
13:10 (1°) | πρὸ τοῦ καταστρέψαι τὸν θεὸν Σόδομα καὶ Γόμορρα. | לפני שחת ראה ואדר𝑇 wyświetl
13:10 (2°) | ως οἱ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ως η γῆ Αἰγύπτου ἐως ἐλθεῖν εἰς Ζόγορα. | לפני שחת렴 כארץ מצרים באכה צער.
13:13 | οἱ δὲ άνθρωποι οἱ ἐν Σοδόμοις πονηροὶ καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ σφόδρα. | והאישים רעים וחטאים ליוהו פלא.
13:14 | ὁ δὲ θεὸς εἶπεν τῷ Ἀβρὰμ | מוהו יאואר אברם.
13:18 | καὶ ὁ θεὸς μοπά λαβὼν | וברχים מופת לוהו מ.

Genesis 13 describes Abram and Lot dividing and settling the land. The expected translation κύριος for יהוה is used twice (13:4, 18), where Abram is depicted building altars to Yahweh. The four other occurrences of יהוה in chapter 13 are translated by ὁ θεός. In v. 10, Lot surveys the land (the narrator states that this is before ὁ θεός (יהוה) destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) and sees that it is like ὁ παράδεισος τοῦ θεοῦ (יהוה). In verse 13, after Abram and Lot settle in their respective places, the narrator states that the people of Sodom were πονηροὶ καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ (יהוה) σφόδρα. In the following verse 14, ὁ θεὸς (יהוה) speaks to Abram, telling him that he will give Abram all the land.

In this chapter κύριος for יהוה appears only in the context of worship—when Abram invokes and builds an altar to Yahweh.124 ὁ θεὸς appears in connection with Sodom, and Sodom's negative associations may have influenced the translator's use of that designation. The occurrence of ὁ θεὸς for יהוה in v. 14 seems to break this pattern, but may have been used out of attraction to ὁ θεὸς in v. 13.125

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123 In all these instances the SP support the MT against the LXX. The Scrolls are not extant after v. 3.
124 Similarly, in Gen 4:3 Cain brings an offering to κύριος. However, compare Gen 8:20, where Noah builds an altar to θεός.
125 Wevers suggests that the use of θεός throughout the rest of the chapter may be intentional, although he does not comment on what the translator's intention may have been. (NGTN, 176-7).
### 3.4. Exodus 3-6: Moses and the People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT&lt;sup&gt;126&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:18...καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς αὐτόν ὁ θεός τῶν Ἑβραίων προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ... ἵνα θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.</td>
<td>ἀπεραθθεὶς ἀλλὰ ἄρθραι Ἀλληλούριον νῦν ἐπελεξέναι τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1...ἐροῦσιν γὰρ ὅτι Οὐκ ὁπταὶ σοι ὁ θεός, τὶ ἐρώ πρὸς αὐτούς;</td>
<td>ὑπὸ τοῦ ἔρωτος τῶν Ἰσραήλ ἀπετάλληλον.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:11εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ... οὐκ ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ θεός;</td>
<td>ὅπως ἐπεσκέψατο ὁ θεὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:30καὶ ἐλάλησεν Ἀαρὼν πάντα τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα, ὁ θεός πρὸς Μωυσῆν...</td>
<td>ὁ Ἰσραήλ ἐπεσκέπτηκε ταῦτα ἐν ἑαυτῷ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:31...ὁ θεός τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ...</td>
<td>ἕως ὅτου οἱ Ἰσραήλ ἔκακοι καὶ ἔσχατον ἐπεσκέπτηκαν τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:3καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός τῶν Ἑβραίων προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ... ὅπως θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν...</td>
<td>ἀπεκάθαρσα τὴν ἀλήθειαν τούτην ἀπὸ τοὺς Ἰσραήλ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:17...Πορευθῶμεν θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.</td>
<td>καὶ εἰπαν αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναρχήσητο ἐκ τῶν Ἰσραήλ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:21καὶ εἶπαν αὐτοῖς ἵνα ἀναρχήσητο ἐκ τῶν Ἰσραήλ...</td>
<td>καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ἡμῖν ὃς ἐξέχων ἀπὸ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ ἐκ γῆς Ἰσραήλ...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:26...οἷς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς ὁ θεός εξεγαγαίνει τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραήλ ἐκ γῆς Αιγυπτίων σὺν δυνάμει αὐτῶν.</td>
<td>ἔθεσεν ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου Ἰσραήλ κατὰ τὸν ἑαυτοῦ τόπον...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The early chapters of Exodus tell of the initial self-revelation of Yahweh to the people of Israel, and their deliverance from captivity in Egypt. ὁ θεός occurs for יְהֹוָה more frequently in these early chapters than throughout LXX Exodus as a whole, but these occurrences are scattered more widely than the groups discussed above.

In chapters 3-6 ὁ θεός appears for יְהֹוָה eight times.<sup>127</sup> In 3:18, God instructs Moses to tell Pharaoh to release the Israelites. The translator renders יְהֹוָה with ὁ θεός twice. In 4:1 Moses voices his fear that the Israelites will reject his message and claim that ὁ θεός (יְהֹוָה) did not actually appear to him.<sup>128</sup> In 4:30-31 Aaron tells the Israelites everything that ὁ θεός (יְהֹוָה) has spoken to Moses, and the

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<sup>126</sup>In all these instances the SP and Scrolls (where extant) support the MT against the LXX.

<sup>127</sup>The translator also provides a θεός as a subject where it is implied in the Hebrew, in 3:12, 16(2x). The translator adds θεός once, at 4:11. Once in this section (3:4) the translator gives κύριος where the MT (=SP) has יְהֹוָה, but this is probably a result of assimilation to the κύριος/יְהֹוָה earlier in the same verse.

<sup>128</sup>Wevers suggests that θεός is used to indicate that the people did not accept the revelation of God's name (NGTE, 40, 70).
people believe that ὁ θεός (יְהוָה) has taken note of their trouble. In 5:21 after Pharaoh has increased the workload of the Israelites, the people confront Moses and Aaron and provoke the judgment of ὁ θεός (יְהוָה) upon them for inciting Pharaoh's wrath. κύριος appears relatively frequently in these chapters, in God's interaction with Moses and Moses' exchanges with Pharaoh. Wevers suggests that the LXX intentionally delays the revelation of the name κύριος to the Israelites until after the Lord has revealed his name to Moses in 6:2-3, and to the Israelites in vv. 6-8. If Wevers is correct, these chapters show an approach to the translation of the divine name that is primarily motivated by a sensitivity to the narrative and its logic over, but not necessarily excluding, theological considerations.

However, it should be noted that אלהים is frequently used by the MT in these chapters. Also, it seems somewhat odd that the translator would allow Moses and Aaron to speak of κύριος to Pharaoh (5:1-2), but delay speaking it to the Israelites.

### 3.5. Exodus 16: Israel Complains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>καὶ πρῶτον ὤψεσθε τὴν δόξαν κυρίου ἐν τῷ εἰσακούσατο τὸν γογγυσμὸν ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ ἤμείς δὲ τί ἐσμέν ὅτι διαγακτικέτε καθ’ ἡμῶν;</td>
<td>νῦν ἐστὶν καθ’ ἡμῶν οὐ γὰρ καθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ γογγυσμὸς ὑμῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>καὶ εἶπεν Μωυσῆς Ἐν τῷ δίδοναι κυρίου ὑμῖν ἑσπέρας κρέα φαγεῖν καὶ ἄρτους τὸ πρῶτον εἰς πλησμονήν, διὰ τὸ εἰσακούσατο κύριου τὸν γογγυσμὸν ὑμῶν, ὅν ὑμεῖς διαγογγύζετε καθ’ ἡμῶν ἤμείς δὲ τί ἐσμέν; οὐ γὰρ καθ’ ἡμῶν ὁ γογγυσμὸς ὑμῶν.</td>
<td>εἶπεν δὲ Μωυσῆς πρὸς Ααρῶν Ἐπὶ πᾶσα συναγωγὴ υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ Προσέλθετε ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>εἶπεν δὲ Μωυσῆς πρὸς Ααρῶν Εἶπον πᾶσα συναγωγή υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ ἐναντίον τοῦ θεοῦ εἰσακείκοεν γὰρ υἱῶν τὸν γογγυσμὸν.</td>
<td>καὶ τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

129 Compare 4:28 where Moses tells Aaron all that κύριος (יְהוָה) has told him.

130 NGTE, 57. Compare 5:17, 21 where θεός is used for יְהוָה in contexts involving the Israelites. Larry J. Perkins, in his introduction to the NETS translation of Exodus, acknowledges this possibility, and suggests that the translator may have felt it more appropriate to use a generic term in Moses' first appeal to Pharaoh. (*“To the Reader of Exodus,”* NETS, 46).

131 In all these instances, SP = MT with respect to the divine names used. Unfortunately, the Qumran evidence is too fragmentary to provide any textual insights.
In Exodus 16, the Israelites complain to Moses about their lack of food. God hears their protests, and responds by sending quail and manna. Verses 1-12 describe the complaint of the people, and the exchange between the people, Moses, and God. Most of the translations of the divine name are what we would expect: κύριος represents יהוה seven times, and κύριος ὁ θεός represents יהוה אלהים once. In three instances, however, θεός replaces יהוה.

In 16:7, Moses tells the Israelites that in the morning they will see the glory of κύριος (יהוה), because “he has heard your complaining against ὁ θεός (יהוה).” In the following verse (16:8), Moses tells the people that they are not complaining against Moses and Aaron, but against ὁ θεός (for יהוה). In 16:9 Moses and Aaron tell the people to come before ὁ θεός (יהוה), because he has heard their complaining. In vv 10-12, κύριος (יהוה) appears and promises to provide the people food, telling them that then γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγώ κύριος ὁ θεὸς ὑμῶν (יהוה אלהיכם).

In this section the translator follows the standard translation for יהוה in most instances, but departs from this three times. Wevers suggests that by using θεός in these three instances the translator emphasizes the distinction between God and the people.132 On the other hand, Martin Rösel suggests this exemplifies a tendency he sees in the LXX to avoid κύριος in contexts of judgment or punishment.133

Although any of these explanations are plausible, it must be acknowledged that only three occurrences of ὁ θεός for the tetragrammaton stretches the definition of a pattern. If the translator employs ὁ θεός intending to emphasize the distinction between the divine and human, why does he not do this elsewhere? Furthermore, similar events are described in the surrounding chapters where the translator is content to represent the tetragrammaton with κύριος. In chapter 17, the Israelites complain.

132 NGTE, 246.
133 Rösel, “Reading and Translation,” 420-1. Cf also Deut. 2.14; Num 16:5, 11.
and Moses responds, saying τί λοιδορεῖσθέ μοι καὶ τί πειράζετε κύριον.

3.6. Exodus 19: Israel at Sinai

Exodus 19 describes the events that took place directly before the giving of the Ten Commandments (ch. 20). Although ὁ θεός appears for יָהּ nine times in this chapter, κύριος also appears for יָהּ nine times. In verse 3, Moses goes up to ἱεράλατον (= SP). The Greek, however, has Moses going up εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ. This is apparently a move by the translator to preserve the transcendence of God by putting a little more distance between Moses and God. This is followed by a series of ὁ θεός – יָהּ equivalences. In the text, after Moses goes up to the mountain of ὁ θεός (ἱεράλατον),

LXX

MT

19:3 καὶ Μωυσῆς ἀνέβη εἰς τὸ ὄρος τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸν ὁ θεός ἐκ τοῦ ὄρους λέγων Τάδε ἐρεῖς τῷ οἴκῳ Ἰακὼβ καὶ ἀναγγελεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραήλ.

19:7 ἤλθεν δὲ Μωυσῆς καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τοὺς πρεσβύτερους τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς πάντας τοὺς λόγους τούτους, οὓς ἑξέστη αὐτῷ ὁ θεὸς.

19:8 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς ὁμοθυμαδὸν καὶ εἶπαν Πάντα, ὅσα εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς, ποιήσομεν καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα. ἀνήνεγκεν δὲ Μωυσῆς τοὺς λόγους πρὸς τὸν θεὸν.

19:18 τὸ δὲ ὄρος τὸ Σινὰ ἐκαπνίζετο ὅλον διὰ τὸ καταβεβηκέναι τῶν θεῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὸ ἐν πυρί, καὶ ἀνέβαινεν ὁ καπνὸς ὡς καπνὸς καμίνου· καὶ ἐξέστη πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σφόδρα.

19:21 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσῆν λέγων Καταβὰς διαμάρτυραι τῷ λαῷ, μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοῆσαι, καὶ πέσωσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν πλῆθος.

19:22 καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς οἱ ἐγγίζοντες κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ἁγιασθήσαν, μήποτε ἀπαλλάξῃ ἀπ’ αὐτῶν κύριος.

19:23 καὶ εἶπεν Μωυσῆς πρὸς τὸν θεὸν Οὐ δυνήσεται ὁ λαὸς προσαναβῆναι πρὸς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σινὰ· σὺ γὰρ διαμεμαρτύρησαι ἤμιν λέγων Αφόρισαι τὸ ὄρος καὶ ἁγίασαι αὐτό.

134In all these instances, SP and the Qumran material (where extant) = MT with respect to the divine names used.
ὁ θεός (יהוה) speaks to Moses from the mountain. 135 Moses tells the elders of the people what ὁ θεός (יהוה) had commanded him (v. 7). In verse 8 the people respond that they will do whatever ὁ θεός (יהוה) says, and Moses relates these words to ὁ θεός (יהוה).

In the following verses (9-17), Moses receives instructions about setting limits around the mountain. The translator gives the standard translations κύριος for יהוה four times and ὁ θεός for אלהים once. κύριος speaks to Moses twice (εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν); Moses relates the words of κύριος to the people (ἀνήγγειλεν δὲ Μωυσῆς τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ λαοῦ πρὸς κύριον), and the Lord tells Moses that on the third day καταβήσεται κύριος ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ Σινα ἐναντίον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ. On the third day Moses takes the Israelites εἰς συνάντησιν τοῦ θεοῦ.

Verses 18-25 contain several more instances of ὁ θεός for יהוה. In v. 18 ὁ θεός (יהוה) descends to Sinai with fire. Verse 19 has ὁ θεός ( אלהים) answering Moses. In v. 20, it is κύριος (יהוה) who descends on the mountain and calls Moses. However, in v. 21 it is ὁ θεός (יהוה) who tells Moses to warn the people to not approach ὁ θεός (יהוה). In v. 22, the priests who approach κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ( אלהי) must be sanctified. In v. 23, Moses tells ὁ θεός (יהוה) that the people will not be able to approach the mountain. In v. 24, κύριος (יהוה) tells Moses to go down the mountain, and to bring Aaron up. He warns Moses to not let the people come up to ὁ θεός (יהוה). 136

It is difficult to discern a pattern in the translator's treatment of the divine name here. In v. 18, ὁ θεός (for יהוה) descends to Mt. Sinai, in v. 20 it is κύριος. In v. 10 ὁ θεός speaks to Moses, but in v. 21 it is κύριος. Wevers comments that vv. 7-8 show a pattern in which covenant-making is expressed in terms of God and people, although he acknowledges that this is not the case in parallel passages, e.g.

135 This second instance of θεός is probably a result of assimilation to the first instance.
136 At the end of v. 24 κύριος appears with no Hebrew equivalent. The translator was probably influenced by the similar construction in v. 22.
24:3, 7. Although the frequent use of ὁ θεός for יהוה was a deliberate choice on the part of the translator, his lack of consistency or any apparent pattern in this substitution obscures his intent.

3.7. **Exodus 24: Theophany**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT(^{138})</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24:2</td>
<td>καὶ ἐγγεί Μωυσῆς μόνος πρὸς τὸν θεόν, αὐτοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἐγγιοῦσιν· ὁ δὲ λαὸς οὐ συναναβήσεται μετ᾿ αὐτῶν.</td>
<td>τὸν μόνον οὐκ ἐγνωρίσθη, ἀλλὰ οἱ οὐρανοί, ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:3</td>
<td>εἰσῆλθεν δὲ Μωυσῆς καὶ διηγήσατο τὰ λόγια τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὰ δικαιώματα· ἀπεκρίθη δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς φωνῇ μιᾷ λέγοντες Πάντας τοὺς λόγους, οὓς ἔλαλησεν κύριος, ποιήσομεν καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα.</td>
<td>ἦλθε οὖν ἔνας ἁγίος πρὸς ἡμᾶς Κύριος, ἐκ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:5</td>
<td>καὶ ἔξαπεσεὶ τοὺς νεανίσκους τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραήλ, καὶ ἐθυσιάσαν ὁλοκαυτώματα, καὶ ἔθυσαν θυσίαν σωτηρίου τῷ θεῷ μοσχάρια.</td>
<td>ωσα οὖν ἐξήλαλθεν κύριος ἐν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἁμαρτίαις αὐτῶν.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:16</td>
<td>καὶ κατέβη ἡ δόξα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τῷ Σινά, καὶ ἐκάλυψεν κύριος τὸν Μωυσῆν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ ἑβδόμῃ κατὰ μέσον τῆς νεφέλης.</td>
<td>ὡσα οὖν ἐλάλησεν κύριος κατὰ μέσον τῶν ὀλοκλήρων ἡμερῶν κατὰ τὸ ὄρος Σινα.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are four occurrences of ὁ θεός as an equivalent for יהוה in Exodus 24. The chapter begins with ὁ θεός (אלהים) commanding that Moses, Aaron and the seventy elders of Israel come up to to worship at a distance, but that only Moses could come near to ὁ θεός (יהוה) (v. 2). In the following verse (3), Moses reports what ὁ θεός (יהוה) commanded, and the people respond that they will do what κύριος (יהוה) commands. In v. 5, Moses sends young men to offer peace offerings to ὁ θεός. 24:16 says that the glory of ὁ θεός (יהוה) came down on Mt Sinai.

Wevers observes, “Throughout the entire account of ch. 24 all the references to יהוה have been changed in Exod to “God” except where he is presented as speaking in vv. 3, 4, 7, 12, 16 or as making the covenant with Israel (v.8), and the reference to the glory of the Lord in v.17.” He concludes that

\(^{137}\text{NGTE, 296.}\)

\(^{138}\)In all these instances SP = MT with respect to the divine names used. The Qumran evidence (in this case 4Q22) is too fragmentary to shed light on these verses.
whenever human action is described, the LXX avoids a reference to “the Lord.” If this is indeed a distinction the translator makes, it is a subtle one. Verse 3 is illustrative, where the translator gives different renderings for the divine name in the two similar phrases: πάντα τὰ ρήματα τοῦ θεοῦ (יוהו) and λόγους οὓς ἐλάλησεν κύριος (יוהו).

The context of covenant-making is similar to that in Exodus 16. However, κύριος also appears for יוהו multiple times in chapter 24. In verse 1, Moses is instructed to come up πρὸς κύριον, along with other leaders of the people. In 24:3, 7 the people respond that they will do and heed all that κύριος has spoken. At 24:8 Moses sprinkles blood on the people and declares the covenant that κύριος made with them. In verse 12 κύριος tells Moses to come up to him on the mountain, and in verses 16 and 17 κύριος speaks and appears to Moses.

3.8. Summary

These groups of passages discussed above in which ὁ θεός is the counterpart to יוהו are characterized more by their diversity than their unity. No single context, theme, or issue unifies all of these texts. None give ὁ θεός for יוהו exclusively, but they instead contain a mixture of standard and non-standard translation equivalents. Often, κύριος appears for יוהו in the majority of instances. Furthermore, the use of the combined designation κύριος ὁ θεός complicates the question of the significance of the divine names, and suggests that perhaps the question of the LXX's use of the divine names should not be reduced to a binary simply between ὁ θεός and κύριος.

In Genesis 4, the LXX translator wrestles with the apparent arbitrariness of God's preference for Abel over Cain. In the Greek text, Cain and Abel are further differentiated, and Cain is cast in a negative light. We find a consistent inclusion of ὁ θεός when God interacts with Cain, with the

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139 NGTE, 379-80.
140 Exodus 24:3 also has an instance of θεός for יוהו, followed by κύριος for יוהו in the same verse in a similar context.
exception of the offering to κύριος and Cain's appeal to God that his punishment is too great.

In the flood narrative (Genesis 6-8), the translator shows a considerable inconsistency in his translation of the divine names. κύριος never appears alone, and we see a marked preference for the combined designation κύριος ὁ θεός. This preference for including ὁ θεός, though not always to the exclusion of κύριος, suggests the translator was not simply avoiding κύριος, but perhaps found a special significance in ὁ θεός that he wished to highlight.

In Genesis 13 ὁ θεός appears for יהוה in contexts involving Sodom. This may be due to the negative associations with Sodom, and God's imminent destruction of the city. There is, however, no such tendency to avoid κύριος when the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is actually described.141

Exodus 3-6 shows a frequent avoidance of κύριος, possibly to reflect the Israelites' ignorance of the tetragrammaton until its revelation to them in chapter six. If this is correct, it suggests that the translator understood κύριος and the tetragrammaton to be closely linked, and that the translator took the narrative into account in his choice between using κύριος or ὁ θεός. The translator of Numbers may be revealing a similar sensitivity to the logic of the narrative in his treatment of the divine name.

Exodus 16 employs ὁ θεός as the counterpart to יהוה twice when a complaint has been expressed, and once when the Israelites are told to assemble before God, also in the context of complaint. The translator may have adopted ὁ θεός to emphasize the distinction between the people and God, or to avoid κύριος in association with punishment or judgment. ὁ θεός appears instead of κύριος only three times, making it difficult to ascertain a pattern or intent here.

Exodus 19 uses ὁ θεός for יהוה nine times. Wevers suggests that the translator wanted to put covenant-making in terms of ὁ θεός and the people. However, covenantal language is featured prominently in the following chapters, with no similar preference for ὁ θεός.

141 Ἐ.γ. καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ ἐκτρίψαι κύριον (אֱלֹהִים) πάσας τὰς πόλεις τῆς περιοίκου ἐμνήσθη ὁ θεὸς (אֱלֹהִים) τοῦ Αβρααμ καὶ ἔξηγεν τὸν Λωτ ἐκ μέσου τῆς καταστροφῆς ἐν τῷ καταστρέψαι κύριον τὰς πόλεις ἐν αἷς κατῴκει ἐν αὐταῖς Λωτ (Gen 19:29).
In the account of theophany in Exodus 24, in a context similar to that of Exod 19, there is a tendency to employ ὁ θεός except in instances of divine speech. However, there are exceptions here too, as in 24:3: πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ...Πάντας τοὺς λόγους, οὗς ἐλάλησεν κύριος.

We can arrive at the following conclusions based on the above survey of groups of appearances of ὁ θεός where κύριος would be expected: (1) Most of these instances do not correspond to any extant Hebrew text and are not the result of any particular linguistic constraint.\(^\text{142}\) (2) These groups of ὁ θεός for יהוה are therefore most likely theologically or contextually motivated. (3) There is no single theological issue or theme that is characteristic of all these texts, and it is therefore unlikely that all of these translations of ὁ θεός for יהוה share the same motivation. (4) Occurrences of ὁ θεός for יהוה, especially in Genesis 4 and 6-8, often appear in contexts in which θεός also occurs as a plus. This suggests that perhaps inclusion of ὁ θεός rather than avoidance of κύριος may be a better way to characterize what we find in the LXX.

4. Extra-biblical Evidence

Outside of the Old Testament there is some evidence that the terms θεός and κύριος could be associated with different attributes of God. Different sources, however, disagree on which particular attributes were assigned to which name.

Philo asserts that the terms θεός and κύριος refer to the two principle characteristics (or activities) of God, which he calls δυνάμεις.\(^\text{143}\) According to Philo, θεός refers to the beneficent and creative aspect of the divine, and κύριος to the ruling and judging aspect. In one case, Philo explains the significance of the three figures visiting Abraham before the destruction of Sodom (Gen 19):

\(^{142}\)E.g. supplying an implied subject, etc. This is especially clear in Genesis 4 and 6-8, where the translator often gives κύριος ὁ θεός for יהוה.

\(^{143}\)Symbolized by, for example, the cherubim (QE 2.62). See also Abr. 24:121; Plant. 20:86; Mos. 2:99; QG 2:51; Her. 6:22-23. For a more detailed discussion of Philo's conception of God see Edwin R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 21ff.
The one in the middle is the Father of the universe, who in the sacred scriptures is called by his proper name, I am that I am (ὁ ὤν); and the beings on each side are those most ancient powers which are always close to the living God, one of which is called his creative power (ποιητική), and the other his royal power (βασιλική). And the creative power is God (θεός), for it is by this that he made and arranged the universe; and the royal power is the Lord (κύριος), for it is fitting that the Creator should lord it over and govern the creature.  

Philo generally employs an allegorical approach to scripture, in which literal elements also have symbolic significance. In this case, the three figures visiting Abraham represent different divine characteristics. Although the literal meaning does have significance, allegorical meaning is usually the more important for Philo. In his exegesis he often employs etymological resemblances, and here he may have been influenced by the common use of κύριος to refer to figures in a position of authority and power: rulers, heads of households, and deities.

The rabbis also held that the divine names were associated with different aspects of God. They, however, drew the distinction differently. They taught that the tetragrammaton was to be associated to God's mercy, and אלהים with God's judgment. The Midrash on Psalm 56:3, for example, states:

In God—I will praise His word—in the Lord—I will praise His word (Ps. 56:11). What is the difference in meaning between In God and in the Lord? R. Nehorai explained that where God (אלהים) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out justice, as in the verse Thou shalt not revile God (Ex. 22:27), or, as in the verse The master of the house shall come near unto God (Ex. 22:8) [in both verses God is understood to mean “judge”]; but where Lord (יהוה) is used, Scripture is speaking of Him as meting out mercy, as in the verse The Lord, the Lord...merciful and gracious (ibid. 34:6). Accordingly, David said to the Holy One, blessed be He: “If Thou metest out judgment against me, I accept Thee by saying, In God—I will praise His word; and if Thou metest out mercy to me, I accept Thee by saying In the Lord—I will praise His word.”

Neither of these interpretations of the divine names entail hard and fast rules. Rather they were attempts to explain the lexical variation in the text. For the rabbis both aspects of God were not mutually exclusive, but the use of different divine names could reflect the character of God and the

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144 Abr. 24:121; English translation from The Works of Philo Judaeus, the Contemporary of Josephus, Translated from the Greek (trans. C. D. Yonge; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1854-5).
nature of his interactions with humans. Dahl and Segal state,

The contradiction between the Philonic and rabbinic “system” of relating God's attributes to his names is less important than it may seem to be. Both “systems” make it possible to see the mixture of mercy and justice as fundamental to the relationship between man and God.\footnote{N.A. Dahl and Alan F. Segal, “Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God,” \textit{JSJ} 9 (1978): 1-28.}

Although Philo may be nearer chronologically and geographically to the translators of the LXX Pentateuch, the texts discussed above suggest a closer correlation of the LXX and rabbinic perspectives. Genesis 4, 6-8, 13, and Exodus 16 can plausibly be described as having to do with divine judgment. The other passages examined above do not fit into this schema, and judgment does not seem the appropriate category with which to associate the Balaam account. Both Philo and the rabbis were attempting to resolve the question they saw raised by the text's use of these two terms for God. For the LXX translators, this did not seem to be a major problem. The LXX readily interchanges ὁ θεός and κύριος, and we find no attempt in the LXX to use either ὁ θεός or κύριος exclusively.

Instead, we find that these divine names could be used in ways to sharpen or subtly alter the overall sense of a text. Despite their differences, Philo and the rabbis both demonstrate that distinctions in significance could be associated with the different divine names. Although they lived after the time of the creation of the LXX, and were not translators themselves, they may represent a line of thinking that goes back to or even predates the LXX translators. The translators, then, may not have been doing something entirely new in their use of θεός and κύριος.

5. Conclusion: the Divine Name in the Balaam Account

I began by examining the use of κύριος and θεός in the LXX version of the Balaam account. The Septuagint version generally avoids the use of κύριος in contexts that involve Balaam, especially in contexts in which Balaam communicates with the divine. Although Balaam can speak of κύριος, the text never has κύριος speaking to or listening to Balaam. Instead, Balaam only interacts with θεός. The
single exception to this is in Numbers 22:34, where Balaam repents before the messenger of κύριος.

Outside of the narrative sections of the Balaam account, the translator normally maintains the standard translation equivalents. Throughout the rest of Numbers, and even within Balaam’s oracles, the translator does not show a marked preference for ὁ θεός. This suggests that it is an aspect of the narrative involving Balaam that motivated the translator to use ὁ θεός instead of κύριος.

In order to contextualize the Septuagint’s treatment of θεός and κύριος, I examined groups of passages in which the LXX uses ὁ θεός as the equivalent for יהוה. These passages are diverse, with no single unifying aspect or theme. Divine judgment is a theme present in many, but not all, of these texts. Foreigners appear in Genesis 13 and Numbers 22-24. Genesis 6-8 and Exodus 19, 24 contain displays of divine power. It is difficult to show that any of these themes are connected with the use of ὁ θεός as the equivalent for יהוה. One cannot, of course, expect to find a single characteristic that connects all these occurrences. The Septuagint is a collection of translations, and although one can make some generalizations about it, each translation of each book should be taken on its own terms. Furthermore, ὁ θεός / יהוה equivalences are rare in the LXX, and the contexts in which these equivalences occur are not entirely unique. Rösel overstates his case when he argues that nearly all substitutions of θεός for יהוה can convincingly be explained as theologically motivated translations. However, he is correct in arguing for the possibility of a theological explanation for these renderings, and their likelihood in some cases.

In the case of the Balaam account, the translator was likely motivated by theological concerns. Substituting ὁ θεός for יהוה results in a slightly different picture of Balaam’s relationship to God. Instead of speaking to and hearing from κύριος, the LXX’s usual equivalent for יהוה, the Greek represents Balaam as communicating with ὁ θεός—perhaps a term less associated with relationship and

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148 Rösel, “Reading and Translation,” 422.
devotion. Although we have no explicit evidence for the translator’s bias against Balaam (compare the LXX’s portrayal of Cain in Genesis 4), such a bias provides the best explanation of the translation, and accords with the overwhelmingly negative bias against Balaam in the theological interpretation of later writers.

In the LXX, the semantic distinction between ὁ θεός and κύριος (when used in reference to God) is subtle at best, and it is questionable whether the readers of the LXX and of the Hebrew texts would have walked away from the text with a significantly different sense of the relationship between Balaam and God. For the translator, however, his use of ὁ θεός was a way of preserving the correct sense of the text and maintained an appropriate distance between Balaam and the Lord God of Israel.

149 That is, in the narrative voice. Note that Balaam himself can speak about communication with κύριος. As well as the inarticulated πνεύμα θεοῦ in 23:7 and 24:2.
CHAPTER THREE: MESSIANIC INTERPRETATION IN THE LXX BALAAM ORACLES

Chapter Synopsis: The Septuagint translation of Balaam's oracles has often been cited as evidence of a tendency toward messianic interpretation in the LXX Pentateuch. This chapter examines the elements of the LXX translation that diverge from its presumed Hebrew Vorlage with potential messianic significance: the translation of 23:21, the use of μονόκερως in 23:22 and 24:8, the translation of 24:17, and the term ἄνθρωπος.

1. Background

Balaam's oracles were vitally important texts in the Second Temple period and following.150 Their predictions of the exaltation of Israel and a future conquering and ruling figure provided fodder for messianic speculation that could even fuel violent revolt. Although Balaam's oracles had little apparent impact on the New Testament, evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls and later Jewish and Christian writings indicate their widespread significance.151

Portions of the Balaam oracles appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls corpus. 4Q175 (4QTestimonia) contains an anthology of texts including Numbers 24:15-17.152 Although 4Q175 contains no commentary, many scholars conclude that these texts have eschatological significance and argue that these texts were understood to be messianic.153 MS A of the Damascus Document (CD 7:19) also contains a reference to Numbers 24:17. The passage begins with quotation and exposition of Amos 5:26-27 and 9:11, but then gives a citation and interpretation of the star and the scepter of Numbers 150

This chapter will focus on the content of Balaam's oracles. For a more detailed discussion of the figure of Balaam see e.g. Charles H. Savelle, “Canonical and Extracanonical Portraits of Balaam,” Bibliotheca Sacra 166 (2009): 387-404; John T. Greene, “Balaam as a Figure and Type in Ancient Semitic Literature to the First Century B.C.E., with a Survey of Selected Post-Philo Applications of the Balaam Figure and Type,” Society of Biblical Literature Seminar Papers (1990): 82-147.

151 There is no explicit citation of the Balaam oracles in the NT, although some have suggested that the Balaam narrative and oracles forms the background for the Matthean narrative of the Magi, e.g. Raymond Brown, The Birth of the Messiah, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1977), 190-6. Balaam is used typologically in 2 Pet 2:15, Jude 11, and Rev 2:14 as a representative of people who love doing wrong and lead people astray.


153 Arguing for messianic significance see e.g. Jonathan G. Campbell, The Exegetical Texts. (New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 88-99; G.J. Brooke “Testimonia (4QTestim),” ABD 6:391-2. But against see e.g. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, who agrees that these texts have eschatological significance, but argues that they are not explicitly messianic (The Dead Sea Scrolls and Christian Origins [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 98-100).
24:17. The writer interprets the verse as referring to two figures, the star representing the Interpreter of the Law, and the scepter representing the Prince of the Congregation.\(^{154}\) Numbers 24:17-19 is cited in the War Scroll (1QM 11:5-7) as part of a prayer given by the high priest before battle. The War Scroll describes the future eschatological battle, but is not explicitly messianic. 1QSb 5:27-28 alludes to the scepter in Numbers 24:17 in a blessing on the “prince of the congregation” that contains allusions to Isaiah 11.\(^{155}\) The frequency and context in which Numbers 24:17 appears in the Qumran literature leads most scholars to conclude that Numbers 24:17 played a significant role in the messianic speculations of the Qumran community, and perhaps the Jewish community as a whole.\(^{156}\)

Balaam's oracles remained important even after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The last major Jewish revolt against Rome was led by Simon bar Kosiba in 132-135 CE. The rebellion was steeped in messianic concepts and ideals, and Rabbi Akiba is said to have explained “a star shall go forth from Jacob” (Numbers 24:17) as “Kosiba goes forth from Jacob” and to have called him “king” and “messiah.” During the rebellion, coins were minted bearing the name and title, “Simon, Prince of Israel.”\(^{157}\)

The Targumim generally show a messianic interpretation of Numbers 24:17. Targum Onqelos reads, “A king will arise from Jacob, and the anointed one [משיחא] will be consecrated from Israel.”\(^{158}\) Targum Neofiti states, “A king will arise from the house of Jacob and a redeemer and ruler from the

\(^{154}\)John Collins concludes from this citation that “Balaam's oracle was widely understood in a messianic sense and that the “Prince of the Congregation” was a messianic title” (The Scepter and the Star, (New York: Doubleday, 1995), 64). Dana M. Pike comments that the “Interpreter of the Law” is best understood as a future priestly figure, and is elsewhere called “messiah” and “chief priest” and the “prince of the congregation” as a messianic military leader (“The Book of Numbers at Qumran: Text and Context,” in Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls (ed. Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 166–93. 183.)


\(^{156}\)See e.g. Jonathan G. Campbell, The Exegetical Texts, (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 93.


\(^{158}\)Translation from Cathcart, “Numbers 24:17,” 512.
“When the mighty king from the house of Jacob will reign, and the Messiah, the mighty scepter from Israel will be anointed.” The Targumim date from a much later period than the Scrolls and the Septuagint, and so witness to the significance of the Balaam oracles at a later period. However, they probably also preserve elements of older traditions of Jewish biblical interpretation.

Within the corpus known as the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, Numbers 24:17 is quoted in the Testament of Judah and the Testament of Levi. T. Judah (24:1-6) alludes to Numbers 24:17 using language of a “star of Jacob” and a “scepter” of God's kingdom. In T. Levi, the writer predicts a priestly figure whose “star will rise in heaven like a king” (18:3). Although the Testaments are textually problematic and contain both Jewish and Christian material, they bear witness to the application of Numbers 24:17 to a messianic figure in the early centuries CE.

The appeal of a Gentile prophet predicting the coming of a messiah was strong for the early Christian writers. Despite the challenge posed by the character of Balaam himself (who was universally condemned in the NT), they often appealed to Numbers 24:17 as a prediction of the coming of the Messiah. For example, in his First Apology, Justin appealed to Balaam's prophecy as evidence that the Old Testament predicted Christ, blending language of Numbers 24:17 with a citation from Isaiah 11:

And Isaiah, another prophet, foretelling the same things in other words, spoke thus: “A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a flower shall spring from the root of Jesse; and His arm shall the nations trust.” And a star of light has arisen, and a flower has sprung from the root of Jesse—this

159 Ibid.
160 Ibid., 512-513.
162 Collins argues that both of these text have Jewish cores to them, but that the combination of an eschatological priest with royal messianic figure into one was the innovation of the Christian redactor (Scepter and the Star, 92).
163 Some writers attempted to disassociate Balaam from the content of his oracles, cf. Judith Baskin, Pharaoh's Counsellors: Job, Jethro, and Balaam in Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition (Brown Judaic Studies 47; Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1983), 102-3. However, Baskin may not have accounted for the possible use of florilegia, which may account for the conflation of Balaam's oracles with other texts that she cites.
As Judith Baskin suggests, the frequent Christian appeal to the Balaam oracles may have incited the nearly universal excoriation of Balaam in later Jewish interpretation. In Rabbinic literature, Balaam is condemned for his attempts to curse Israel, and his involvement in leading the Israelites into apostasy.

Scholarly opinion is divided over whether the Hebrew version of the Balaam oracles is itself specifically “messianic.” However, it is evident that Balaam's oracles, especially Numbers 24:17, were often taken as messianic predictions during the Second Temple and early Christian periods. Because of this interpretive history, and on the basis of unique aspects of the LXX translation of the Balaam oracles, scholars have often cited the Septuagint version of parts of Balaam's oracles as evidence of messianic interpretation in the LXX Pentateuch. The following study does not take a position on the nature of the Hebrew text, but instead examines elements unique to the Greek version and asks the question: Does the LXX reflect a messianic interpretation on the part of the translator, or do these elements make the text more likely to be interpreted as having messianic significance by the earliest readers of the LXX?

2. Definition and Method

For the purposes of this study, messianism will be defined as the expectation of a future eschatological figure who will act as God's agent for the restoration of Israel.

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164 I Apol. 32.12-13 (ANF 1:173-4).
165 Pharaoh's Counsellors, 92.
166 E.g. William Horbury finds in the LXX Pentateuch evidence of continuity in messianic ideology between the period of the Chronicler and the Second Temple Period (“Monarchy and Messianism in the Greek Pentateuch,” 102ff.); Schaper, Eschatology in the Greek Psalter, 117-118; Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 165.
167 Or multiple figures. This is essentially the definition adopted by those scholars engaged in the question of messianism in the LXX Balaam oracles: Collins, “the expectation of a figure who will act as God's designated agent in the eschatological time” (“Messianism and Exegetical Tradition,” 129); Horbury, “Messianism is taken in the broad sense as the expectation of a coming pre-eminent ruler.” (Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ, 6-7); J. Lust, “Messianism can be tentatively defined as 1. The expectation of a future human and yet transcendent Messiah or saviour, 2. who will establish God's kingdom on earth, 3. in an eschatological era. In its narrower sense, the expected saviour is a descendant of David.”
forms of messianism may have circulated during the period in which the LXX was translated, the focus on conquest and rule make royal messianism the relevant topic.

In this chapter I will examine elements of the LXX that may have potential significance for a messianic reading of the text. Since the focus is on the meaning and significance of the LXX text, I will concentrate on elements which differ (in form or meaning) from the presumed Hebrew Vorlage, or the Hebrew “majority text.”

The translations that will be examined are: (3) τὰ ἔνδοξα ἀρχόντων ἐν αὐτῷ (in 23:21); (4) ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος for כותועפת ראם (in 23:22 and 24:8); (5) the translation of 24:7; and (6) ἄνθρωπος in 24:7 and 24:17.

3. τὰ ἔνδοξα ἀρχόντων ἐν αὐτῷ (23:21)

Numbers 23:21

LXX       SP
οὐκ ἔσται μόχθος ἐν Ἰακώβ,   ולא אביט עון ביעקב
οὐδὲ ὀφθήσεται πόνος ἐν Ἰσραήλ.   ולא ראה עמל בישראל
κύριος ὁ θεὸς αὐτοῦ μετ’ αὐτοῦ,   יהוה אלהיו עמו
τὰ ἔνδοξα ἀρχόντων ἐν αὐτῷ.   תוֹרָעָת מלך בו

Balaam's second oracle begins in verse 18 with the reaffirmation of God's constancy toward Israel. God is not like a human that he should change his disposition toward his people, and God has determined to bless Israel, not to curse it. Verse 21 continues this theme with a prediction that there will be no misfortune in Israel. οὐκ ἔσται is a contextual rendering, and the future tense is closer to the

("Messianism and Septuagint with Special Emphasis on the Pentateuch," 142); Salvesen, “a Davidic or priestly figure who will perform acts of deliverance for the Jewish people and establish God's kingdom on earth in the last days.” (“Messianism in the Septuagint?” 245).

168E.g. “Gog” in 23:7 appears in the SP and likely in the LXX Vorlage. However, it should be discussed since it does not appear in what may have been the most widespread Hebrew version, the MT, and has a cumulative effect with other elements in the LXX translation.

169The translator, perhaps to soften the anthropomorphic implication, adds ὡς.
Samaritan text here, which has “I shall not see” in contrast to the MT’s “he has not seen.” The SP/LXX reading is a prediction of a future state of events, whereas the MT’s reading directs the oracle toward the past or present. μόχθος is somewhat unexpected here, as the translator of Numbers usually gives ὀμορφία for עון, however it is acceptable in light of the following parallel term (πόνος).

In the final line, תרועה translates to a loud sound, battle cry, or a signal. It occurs earlier in Numbers as the signal for the camp to depart (Num 10:5, 6), a celebratory noise (29:1), and as a war signal (39:6). In each of these other instances, תרועה is translated by σημασία. Here, תרועה probably describes acclamation given to a king. The LXX’s translation ἔνδοξος is a unique translation for תרועה in the LXX. BHS suggests the translator read והרעה, and construed it as “majesty.” Horbury comments, “The Septuagint with τὰ ἔνδοξα here leans in Hellenistic fashion towards acclamation, δοξολογία, using ἔνδοξα “glorious things” in a sense which corresponds with the Hebrew use of [cabod] and its cognates in the sense of praise.” In the LXX, ἔνδοξος most often refers to the honor or esteem attributed to individuals.

A more dramatic departure from the Hebrew is the translator’s replacement of מלך with ἀρχόντων. Commentators have noted the tendency in the LXX to avoid βασιλεύς, often replacing it with ἀρχόν, and the general absence of βασιλεύς from Jewish documents of the Ptolemaic period.

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170 At 5:15, 31(2x); 14:18, 19, 34; 15:31; 18:1(2x); 30:16.
171 Cf. BDB, “תרועה.” Wevers emphasizes the audible nature of the term (NGTN, 396).
172 Cf. the translations of the NRSV, JPS. Compare Levine, who takes תרועה here as a battle cry of the divine king, God (Numbers, 184).
174 SP reads the same as the MT for this line. The editor of 4Q27 also reconstructs the scroll to agree with the MT (DJD XII, 235). It is possible that this reading reflects a Hebrew recension that substituted מלך with שלם, but there is no evidence for such a recension here.
later Hebrew usage נשיא tends to take the place of מלך in reference to Jewish rulers, and ἀρχόν, a common translation equivalent of נשיא, may reflect this. Some scholars conclude that the LXX translators were treading lightly in their political situation by avoiding the mention of future Jewish kings (βασιλεῖς). Wevers, on the other hand, suggests that this tendency is motivated by a theological conviction that only יהוה is king of Israel. Regardless of the translator's motivation for avoiding βασιλεύς, avoiding the term would not necessarily exclude readers from interpreting ἀρχόντων as a reference to kings. However, throughout LXX Numbers ἀρχόν (for נשיא) is used to refer to tribal leaders, and this probably would have been the interpretation of the translator and his earliest readers.

The plural form, ἀρχόντων, is also unexpected, and might possibly be understood as multiple tribal leaders. Horbury suggests that the ἀρχόντων envisioned may have been Moses and Joshua, commonly linked together in the LXX Pentateuch, as well as other tribal leaders. John Collins, on the other hand, suggests it could be interpreted as a reference to the rise of a line of rulers of the tribe of Judah. This latter suggestion seems more consistent with the focus of the rest of the oracle.

Horbury argues that this use of ἀρχόν facilitates an exegetical connection between this text and others that use ἀρχόν to speak of Israelite kings: Gen 49:10, Jacob's prophecy that an ἀρχόν (שבט) will not depart from the line of Judah; Deut 17:15, where Israel is instructed to set an ἀρχόν (מלך) over them; Deut 28:36, the prediction to Israel that the Lord will carry away σε καὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντάς σου (מלכן) to a foreign land where they will serve foreign gods; and Deut 33:4-5, Moses' prediction of an “ἄρχον (מלך) in the beloved one, when rulers of peoples have been gathered together with the tribes of

177Freund, “Kings to Archons,” 60.
178NGTN, 396. Some commentators (e.g. Levine, Numbers, 2:184) interpret “king” here as referring to Yahweh. Evidently the LXX translator did not take it this way.
179There is no clear evidence for a plural Hebrew Vorlage, although one may be suggested by Tg. Onq. “their king.”
180Hobury, “Monarchy and Messianism.” 120.
181Collins, “Messianism and Exegetical Tradition,” 142. Although he does not see this rendering as particularly eschatological.
Israel.” ἄρχων appears in each of these texts, and interpretive connections would have been reinforced by this shared rendering. Horbury concludes, “These three oracular passages [Gen 49:10; Num 23:21; Deut 33:4-5] are made to refer, more clearly than in the Hebrew, to the Israelite succession of rulers, and the use of archon in all three binds them more closely than in the Hebrew to the Israelite ruler ordained in Deuteronomy.”183 Horbury's proposal is possible, but it should be remembered that ἄρχων is a very common word in the LXX and therefore may not have attracted any special attention.184 Furthermore, little to no evidence exists that ἄρχων was seen as an exegetical link between these texts around the time the LXX was produced. The scant nature of Horbury's evidence suggests we should be cautious about assigning his theory too much weight.

4. μονόκερως for לֶבֶן in 23:22 and 24:8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>MT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23:22 θεός ὁ ἐξαγαγὼν αὐτούς ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος αὐτῷ.</td>
<td>אל מוזיאת מתメリット בחותמת לחם ל</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:8 ὁ θεός ὠδήγησεν αὐτόν ἐξ Αἰγύπτου, ὡς δόξα μονοκέρωτος αὐτῷ, ἐδεται ἐθνη ἐξουσίαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ τὰ πάχη αὐτῶν ἐκμυελεῖ, καὶ ταῖς βολίσιν αὐτοῦ κατατοξεύσει ἐχθρόν.</td>
<td>יאכל נים זורי עתמאים נירח חつき</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In his engaging and controversial study on the LXX Psalms, *Eschatology in the Greek Psalter*, Joachim Schaper makes an extended argument for the messianic significance of μονόκερως both in the Psalms and in Num 23:22 and 24:8. Schaper's volume has received mixed reviews, but his work has generated discussion and has significant potential impact on our understanding of messianism in the LXX, and so deserves some treatment here.185

184 ἄρχον occurs 535 times in the LXX (Rahlfs), translating sar in 246 instances, rosh at 106 instances, נשיא at 94 instances, מונה at 18 instances, and multiple other terms <10 times each.
The term רָאָם appears nine times in the Hebrew Bible. Although the specific meaning of רָאָם is uncertain, in light of similar terms in cognate languages, the standard English translation, “wild ox,” is adequate. In seven of its nine occurrences, the LXX translators gave μονόκερως as its equivalent. Although μονόκερως means (etymologically) “one-horned” (NETS translates “unicorn”), there is some uncertainty as to what the LXX translators meant by the term. In Deut 33:17 the translator gives κέρατα μονοκέρωτος τὰ κέρατα αὐτοῦ “his horns are horns of a unicorn,” apparently unconcerned about assigning plural horns to a unicorn.

This stereotypical translation of μονόκερως for רָאָם has often been explained as a result of the LXX translators’ general ignorance of רָאָם, and adoption of μονόκερως because of its connotations of fierceness and power. Schaper objects to these explanations, arguing that the translators probably were familiar with רָאָם, a term in use only a few centuries earlier. He suggests that anyone unfamiliar with the bull imagery could have gone to Job 39, where its characteristics were described. Schaper asserts that, instead, the LXX translators were deliberate in their use of μονόκερως, choosing it because of its particular connotations, and using other terms when deemed appropriate. Schaper cites Isa 34:7, where the translator gives οἱ ἁδροὶ (lit: “mighty ones”) for רָאָמים as an indication that μονόκερως was not adopted as a stereotyped rendering of רָאָם, but was an intentional translation by the LXX translators.

Schaper argues that μονόκερως has a significant role in what he calls a “messianic network” of

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See HALOT, "לָאָֽם," 1163-4.

The exceptions are at Isa 34:7, where the translator gave οἱ ἁδροὶ “the prominent ones” (NETS) for רָאָמים, and Job 39:10 supplies a pronoun instead of repeating the רָאָמים of the previous verse.

A TLG search of the term yields only 10 hits that predate the LXX.


Schaper, Eschatology in the Greek Psalter, 115-6.
texts in the LXX. In all of its Septuagintal occurrences but one, Schaper observes, μονόκερως appears in a positive context. In the Hebrew version of Psalm 22 and the Hebrew and Greek versions of Psalm 92(91), Schaper concludes that bull/unicorn imagery has to do with God's saving power. In Ps 77(78):69 the translator apparently read רמים (a possible form of ראים) instead of the more likely רמים (= MT). Schaper argues that Ps 77(78) directly contradicts Deut 33:17 by explaining and endorsing the election of David and Jerusalem, in contrast to the religious tradition underlying Deuteronomy 33 that holds the North (Shiloh) to be the center of the Israeliite religion. Schaper finds it noteworthy that both of these texts contain the imagery of the wild bull or unicorn to depict divine power or invincibility.

In addition to the term μονόκερως itself, Schaper finds unicorn imagery in the vision of Daniel, in 8:5-8 where Alexander is represented as a single horn of a goat. Although the reference is not to divine glory or power, Schaper notes that unicorn imagery is used of a singularly important individual who had a profound effect on his time. Schaper concludes, “Therefore we can assume a certain structural similarity in the application of the imagery: both messianic figures and outstanding historical personalities could be invested with literary imagery alluding to their virtually super-human powers.”

Schaper concludes that the appearance of μονόκερως (with all its associations of divine power and deliverance) links these texts (in the Psalms and in Numbers) together with other texts that were taken to be messianic. This constitutes what Schaper calls “something like Septuagintal network of messianic (or rather 'messianized') texts.” These texts, linked together by their interpretation in the Second Temple period, also became connected in translation via shared vocabulary, namely

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192 The negative occurrence is in Ps 21(22):22, where in the Greek the psalmist appeals to be delivered from the “horns of the unicorns.” Schaper argues that the Hebrew means that deliverance will come from the horns of the wild bulls, but that the LXX translator, confronted with the apparent contradiction of an appeal for deliverance juxtaposed with a declaration of deliverance, misread the text (Eschatology, 109-10).

193 Eschatology, 111.

194 Ibid., 113.

195 Ibid.

196 Ibid.

μονόκερως. The term μονόκερως, therefore, served as a signal to readers that a particular text could be interpreted as referring to the messiah.

Schaper's argument is formally similar to Horbury's discussed above: lexical connections between different texts that, even if not intended by the LXX translators, would be noticed by readers of the LXX. These readers would have existing interpretive connections reinforced by this shared vocabulary, or would have generated new ones. While this approach is not uncommon and is sure to yield interesting results, it is weak without concrete evidence of these interpretations taking place. This evidence is lacking in Schaper's reconstruction. How are we to know with any level of certainty what sort of connections early readers of the LXX would have made? Schaper's arguments are further problematic. Schaper reads this network of texts as messianic largely because of their connection to Balaam's oracles, which Schaper assumes are messianic. This is the very issue being questioned here, and Schaper fails to argue the case that Balaam’s oracles are in fact messianic.

5. **Numbers 24:7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>SP</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num 24:7</td>
<td>ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ,</td>
<td>יִהל מִים מָדוֹלָדֵי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>καὶ κυριεύσει εθνῶν πολλῶν.</td>
<td>והرؤ עַמִּים רְבֵּם</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>καὶ ὑψωθῆσεται ἤ Γώγ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ,</td>
<td>וּרְחָם מְנוֹת מֹלֵכָּה</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>καὶ αὐξηθῆσεται ἤ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ.</td>
<td>וֹחַטָּשָא מַלְכָּה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Samaritan text reads מגוג instead of the MT’s מגוג, and probably reflects the Vorlage of the LXX. The MT and the SP are otherwise nearly identical.198 Vermes argues that the LXX, as well the other versions with the exception of the Vulgate, take 24:7 as messianic. He summarizes, “It is clear

198 Whereas the MT reads מגוג, the SP has מגוג. The evidence from the scrolls, where extant, agrees with the MT. The editor of 4Q27 reconstructs מגוג.
from these texts that the versions as a whole interpret יזל as “to come forth,” “to arise”; מים as the Messiah; and מdehyל (or rather, מדליותיו) as “the children of Israel.” These interpretations are, he argues, rooted in midrashic associations, e.g. יזל מים with יזל צדק (Isa 45:8) and צדק with the Messiah (Jer 23:5; 33:15). The Septuagint translation represents, then, another example of this sort of midrashic interpretation of Numbers 24:7.

Although the translator’s lexical choices may be considered interpretive, it should be remembered that the translator still maintains close correspondence to his source text in word order and in morpheme-for-morpheme translation, as can be seen in the following table.

| ἐξελεύσεται | יזל | ( ) | βασιλεία | ממלך |
| ἄνθρωπος | מים | ἐθνῶν | αὐτῷ, |
| ἐκ | πολλῶν, | ἔθνων | καὶ |
| τοῦ σπέρματος | Ἐλ | καὶ | αὐξηθήσεται |
| αὐτῷ, | ὑψωθήσεται | ἡ βασιλεία | ממלכת |
| καὶ | ἃ | ἀν | αὐτῷ. |
| κυριεύσει | Ἄγγ | וירע | ג וγ |

5.1. ἐξελεύσεται

The Greek verb ἐξερχομαι renders יזל “flow.” The verb יזל occurs infrequently in the Hebrew Bible, and does not have a consistent LXX equivalent. Lust suggested that the translator may have read יזל as a form of יזא “to go,” a verb that occurs in the OT five times. It is also possible that since the translator has abandoned the metaphor of water in the first line of the verse, he adopts a verb better

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199 Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 159.
200 Ibid.
201 Ibid., 237.
suited to ἀνθρωπός. The word choice evokes other biblical predictions. ἐξελεύσεται appears in a similar context in Micah 5:2(1): “... from you shall come forth [ἐξελεύσεται] for me one who is to rule in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days.” The prophet goes on to describe this figure, who “shall be great to the ends of the earth” (v. 4[3]) and will provide protection for the people of Israel. This image of a ruling figure who emerges from Israel is shared with Numbers 24. Similarly, Isaiah 11:1 reads, “A shoot [ῥάβδος] shall come out [ἐξελεύσεται] from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.”

5.2. ἀνθρωπός

In the Hebrew, Num 24:7a-b continues the imagery of abundant water that began in verse 6. Lines c-d of verse 7 begin speaking in more direct terms about an exalted king, a theme that continues into verse 8 and following. In the LXX, the translator treats verse 7 as a more independent unit. The translator abandons the metaphor of water and makes the subject of v. 7 explicit by giving ἀνθρωπός. Vermes argued that the translator interpreted מים as a reference to the messiah. Lust, on the other hand, suggests that the translator's eye simply skipped over מים to the mem of מְדַלִּים, and the translator supplied the subject from the context. Whereas the original phrase apparently had to do with the prosperity of Israel, like a tree planted by water, the phrase is refocused on an individual figure. Although ἀνθρωπός is anarthrous, contextually it must refer to a specific figure. The use of ἀνθρωπός and its significance will be addressed in more detail below.

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202 That at least the Isaiah passage could be connected with Numbers 24 is shown by Justin, who conflates Numbers 24:17 with Isaiah 11 (I Apol. 32).
203 Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 159.
204 Lust, “The Greek Versions,” 236.
205 M.F. Collins calls this use of ἀνθρωπός “particular but unspecified” (Messianic Interpretation of the Balaam Oracles, 36).
5.3. ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ

likely posed a challenge to the translator. The term דליי “buckets” appears elsewhere only at Isa 40:15, where the nations are compared to a drop in a bucket. Levine suggests that דליי is a masculine form of a word meaning “branches” otherwise found in the Hebrew Bible only in the feminine (דליותיו Ezek 17:6; 19:11, 31:7, 9, 12). Others suggest simply emending the text to read דליותיו. Taken in this form, the verse continues the tree imagery of verse 6. Perhaps a more likely explanation is that the translator read דליי “out of his children.” Such a reading would perhaps prompt the translator to provide a more interpretive rendering of the rest of the line. Alternatively, the translator may have simply taken “branches” as a metaphor for offspring. It is also possible that the translator may have been influenced by זרע in the following line.

5.4. καὶ κυριεύσει

The translator seems to have read זרע (“seed”) as זרוע (“arm, strength”) and gave a translation that explicates the metaphor. Vermes suggests that the LXX (as well as the Palestinian Targumim) combines both the concepts of “seed” (σπέρμα) and of “arm” (κυριεύω) in its renderings. However, Vermes fails to account for the potential alternate readings of the previous phrase, especially דליי, and the fact that the LXX still maintains an “interlinear” approach. It is also possible, as Collins argues, that the translator took זרע with the first part of the verse, hence τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ.

As Lust observes, κυριεύω in the LXX never carries a specifically messianic sense. However,

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206 Levine, Numbers, 197.
207 E.g. Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 159.
209 As Vermes suggests, Scripture and Tradition, 160.
211 Collins, “Messianism and Exegetical Tradition,” 143.
this may not have prevented its readers from finding a connection to the messiah of the New Testament, often referred to as κύριος. Lust writes, “If the verb and its context belong to the original layers of the LXX, it does not seem to imply a positive messianic connotation, but, once adopted in the Christian tradition, it may have facilitated messianic interpretations.”

5.5. ἐθνῶν πολλῶν

The Hebrew phrase בנים רבים continues the tree metaphor: a thriving tree planted by plentiful water. Similar language (על‐מים רבים) appears in Ezekiel 17:5‐6, where a seed planted in fertile soil by abundant water is a metaphor for a thriving nation (cf. also Ezek 17:8; 19:10). The translator of Numbers may have read עמים רבים, a reading shared by the Targumim. It is also possible that he simply understood במים רבים as a metaphorical reference to many nations.

5.6. Γώγ

Perhaps the most striking difference in the LXX is the variant Γώγ (גוג SP) ] אָגָג (MT). The Samaritan Pentateuch has Gog, and presumably represents the reading of the LXX source text. Although the reading Gog is almost certainly secondary, its attestation in both the Septuagint and Samaritan versions indicates that many readers would have encountered it. While the reading Γώγ is not an instance of interpretive translation, it is significant in shaping the sense of the resulting text.

Both Gog and Agag are characters that occur elsewhere in the Bible, but in contexts that would signal very different things to readers. Agag was a king of the Amalekites, who was defeated by King

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213 The phrase has multiple uses in the Hebrew Bible: a literal sense at Num 20:11, where abundant water (מים רבים) came out from the rock; or as a metaphor to describe dangerous situations, e.g. Ps 17(18):17 “he drew me out of mighty waters (מים רבים), he delivered me from my strong enemy”.
214 Cf. Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 159. Both BHK and BHS propose emendations that would support the LXX rendering, but cite no Hebrew witnesses in support. The Scrolls agree with MT, where extant.
215 Aq, Sym. Th. also give Gog. Tg. Onq., Vulgate have Agag.
Saul in 1 Samuel 15. Instead of obeying God's command and completely destroying the Amalekites and their belongings, Saul took Agag captive and saved the best of the plunder. Samuel came, rebuked Saul, and killed Agag.

After this Agag is not mentioned again in the Bible (although Haman is named as an Agagite in the book of Esther). Agag is not a significant figure in the Bible, nor does he play a significant role in extrabiblical Jewish traditions. Therefore the prediction about an Israelite king who would be greater than Agag would have seemed to be an obscure historical reference to readers in the Second Temple period. Furthermore, in the biblical text Agag does not appear to be an exceptionally powerful ruler, and so a comparison with Agag is not particularly meaningful.

In contrast, Γωγ would have carried eschatological connotations for the readers of the LXX. Gog, from the land of Magog, is described in Ezekiel 38-39 as a foreign ruler whom God will incite to attack Israel. Then God will display his power to the nations by destroying Gog (38:18-23). Gog also appears in the LXX version of Amos 7:1 as the king of a locust-like army that devours the grass of the land. The New Testament book of Revelation, drawing on Ezekiel 38-39, describes Gog and Magog as nations that will participate in the final eschatological battle between Satan and God (Rev 20:8).

In these occurrences, Gog functions as a symbol of nations or rulers opposed to Israel and to God, who imperils the existence of the people of God. The appearance of Gog in the LXX and Samaritan versions of Numbers 24:7, by evoking the eschatological and apocalyptic traditions associated with Gog, would have given the verse an eschatological thrust not present in the Masoretic Text.

216 E.g. Esther 3:1.
5.7. βασιλεία αὐτοῦ

The Hebrew text refers to מִלְכָּה “his king.” In contrast, the LXX renders βασιλεία, “kingdom.” Although one might expect the translation βασιλεύς, scholars have observed the intentional avoidance of the use of βασιλεύς as a designation for Israelite rulers. In this case it appears that the LXX translator has resorted to harmonization by employing βασιλεία in his renderings of both מִלְכָּה and מִלְכָּתָה.

5.8. καὶ αὔξηθήσεται

αὔξάνω is employed as a counterpart to נָשָׁא only twice in the LXX. It more often translates פָּרָה “be fruitful, multiply,” a term that usually has to do with the fruitfulness of animals, plants, or humans.

5.9. Numbers 24:7: Evaluation

In the Hebrew, 24:7 is a transitional verse. Stichs 7a-b continue the language of abundant water (symbolizing fruitfulness in descendants) that began in verse 6. Stichs 7c-d begin to describe the exaltation of the nation's king, continued in vv. 8-9 in the language of military conquest. In the LXX, the translator treats 24:7 as somewhat independent of the preceding verse, abandoning the water imagery in favor of a translation that transitions to the description of divine guidance and power on behalf of Israel. Although this departure from the source text may be explained by textual corruption or misreading, it is noteworthy that he translated it as referring to the appearance and rule of an individual. The translator's use of ἄνθρωπος to render the metaphor ὕδας suggests that the translator already understood this passage to be about a particular individual, whom he designated as ἄνθρωπος.

219 Cf. 1 Ch 14:2. Lust suggests the both the Hebrew text and translation at 1 Ch 14:2 represent a deliberate allusion to the Balaam oracle (“The Greek Version of Balaam's Oracles,” 237).
Furthermore, the terms ἐξελεύσεται and ἄνθρωπος may have evoked other texts with messianic or eschatological associations, and Γώγ almost certainly would have. Consequently, LXX Numbers 24:7 would have been understood to be eschatological (and perhaps messianic) in scope, with ἄνθρωπος at the center of its predictions.

6. ἄνθρωπος in LXX Numbers 24:7, 17: A Messianic Title?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>SP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ἐξελεύσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ, καὶ κυριεύσει ἐθνῶν πολλῶν, καὶ υψωθήσεται ἢ Γώγ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ, καὶ αὐξηθήσεται ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ.</td>
<td>ἤλθεν Μωλὼν, καὶ κυριεύσει τῶν οὐράνων, καὶ ἐπικράτησεν καὶ κυριεύσει τὰς πόλεις τῶν ἀνθρώπων. τὸ βασίλειον τοῦ Γώγ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>SP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>δείξω αὐτῷ, καὶ οὐχὶ νῦν., μακαρίζω, καὶ οὐκ ἐγγίζει, ἄναστησαι ἄστρον ἐξ Ἰακώβ, καὶ ἀναστήσεται ἄνθρωπος ἐξ Ἰσραήλ, καὶ θραύσει τοὺς ἀρχηγοὺς Μωάβ, καὶ προνομεύσει πάντας υἱοὺς Σήθ.</td>
<td>ἔδειξεν ἡμῖν τὸν βασίλειον τοῦ Αράμ, καὶ συνάντησεν τὸν βασιλέα Ἰσραήλ, τῆς Σύρεως τῆς ἐσπερίας, καὶ προνόμευσεν πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς Σήθ.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.1. Numbers 24:7

ἄνθρωπος appears in 24:7 (discussed above) as part of a reworking of the text in which the translator maintains an “interlinear” correspondence with the Hebrew text while interpreting it to refer to the emergence and rule of a figure referred to as ἄνθρωπος, “a man.”220 The significance attributed to ἄνθρωπος here is debated. As noted above, Vermes finds in ἄνθρωπος a messianic interpretation of the entire verse, by means of a complex of midrashic associations. On the other hand, Lust argues that ἄνθρωπος is simply a gloss inserted by the translator as he worked through the passage. The level to which the translator deliberated on his use of ἄνθρωπος is ultimately uncertain. However, its appearance in 24:7 indicates that the translator had an individual figure in mind who was central to the eschatological predictions.

The translator's adoption of ἄνθρωπος in 24:7 probably influenced his use of the term in 24:17. Its appearance in 24:17, where the Hebrew terms are more common and the syntax more straightforward, suggests that the translator saw continuity between the third and fourth oracles, and understood ἄνθρωπος to play a key role in both texts.

6.2. Numbers 24:17

ἄνθρωπος occurs in all the major LXX witnesses.221 Some later witnesses attest to different readings, but there is no strong evidence for an alternate LXX reading.222 This later diversity perhaps reflects textual uncertainty at a later point in the transmission of the text, as well as interpretive diversity in concurrent understandings of the text.

220 The LXX treatment of this verse is not disimilar to the treatment of other versions, especially the Targumim, which also give a specific subject: Tg. Onq. gives “king”, Tg. Ps.-J. “king”; Frg. Tg. “king” (Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 159).

221 According to the Göttingen edition, although some minor versions give alternate readings. All the extant Hebrew witnesses give σβτ.

222 E.g. ἱγομενος (Justin Martyr, Dial., CVI 4), dux (Irenaus, Demonstr., 58; Adv. Haeres., III:9:2), “anointed one” (Tg. Onq.), “redeemer and ruler” (Tg. Neof.), “the Messiah, the mighty sceptre.” (Tg. Ps.-J.). C.f. also CD 7:18-21 “...The sceptre is the Prince of the whole congregation...” T. Judah 24:1-6 appears to have read ἄνθρωπος, “...a man will arise from among my descendants...”
In Numbers the Hebrew word שבט is used with the principal meaning “tribe.” When this is the case, the translator gives φυλή, a term that denotes a tribe, familial group, or race. φυλή is by far the most common translation equivalent for שבט in the LXX.223 After this, ράβδος and σκῆπτρον are the second and third most common translation equivalents, both carrying the sense of “staff” or “rod.” The latter, σκῆπτρον, does not appear in the LXX Pentateuch at all. ράβδος occurs a handful of times in Numbers: in ch.17 as a symbol of tribal leadership (e.g. 17:18), and in ch. 20 as Moses' rod with which he strikes the rock to bring forth water. In both of these chapters ράβδος also translates שבט. Elsewhere in the Pentateuch ράβδος is used for Moses' staff (Ex 4, 7-8 10, 14, 17), a symbol of the status of a tribal leader (Gen 32), the wooden rods Jacob used to manipulate the breeding of his flocks, and as a staff used for walking or striking (Gen 32:10, Exod 21:19, 20).

The only exception to this use of שבט in Numbers is at 24:17 where it is paralleled by “a star from Jacob” that will crush Moab. Its usual equivalent, φυλή, would have been inappropriate here.

Furthermore, as noted above, σκῆπτρον does not appear to have been an option for the translators of the LXX Pentateuch. Presumably the translator considered ράβδος as an option, but rejected it in favor of ἄνθρωπος. It is not clear why the translator would have objected to ράβδος, but perhaps he wished to distinguish the symbol here from αἱ ῥάβδοι of the tribal leaders, Aaron, Moses, and Balaam.

Other explanations for ἄνθρωπος have been suggested. Wevers asserts that the translator interpreted the metaphor of a scepter to ensure that the text referred to an individual figure.224 Furthermore, by using ἄνθρωπος, the translator avoided the explicit notion of a king in Israel.225 Wevers finds a tendency to avoid mention of a king in Israel in the LXX Pentateuch, especially in Numbers and

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223 שבט appears in the Hebrew Bible 191 times. Of these, 121 are translated by φυλή, 27 by ράβδος, and 16 by σκῆπτρον.
224 Wevers, NGTN, 413.
225 Lust comments, “This appears to do away with the royal character of the expected figure” (“The Greek Version of Balaam's Oracles,” 241).
Deuteronomy.226 Behind this, he suggests, is a conviction that only יְהוָה is king of Israel. Although the avoidance of βασιλεύς in these books is striking (e.g. 23:21), the translator cannot be said to be completely avoiding the notion of a royal figure, as in 24:7 ἄνθρωπος is said to have a kingdom. Even if we grant that this tendency does exist in the LXX Pentateuch, it is not clear that the translator would have found “scepter” objectionable, since he employed similar terminology that seems to imply kingship just as explicitly. Furthermore, the translator could have simply used ἀρχων, as at 23:21.

Lust, similarly, suggests that the translator is interpreting the symbol of “scepter.” He observes that Num 24:17 usually appears alongside or linked to other biblical texts. This linking may explain the translator’s choice of ἄνθρωπος, which Lust suggests may have been evoked by the ἄνθος which appears in Isa 11:1, a text frequently linked to Num 24:17.227 Furthermore, Lust goes on to argue that ἄνθρωπος has no particular messianic associations. It is instead a generic term, as if the translator were saying “someone.”

Horbury maintains that ἄνθρωπος in 24:7 comes about as a result of יָמָּה being read as יַמָּה, “man.”229 Although it is difficult to see how this reading would have arisen, Salvesen suggests that it may represent an early reading tradition for this difficult text.230 Subsequently, Horbury asserts, the translator chose ἄνθρωπος to connect the victorious warrior of v. 17 with the ruling figure of v. 7. In LXX Numbers, ἄνθρωπος is also applied to other major figures: Moses in Num 12:3 (cf. Deut 33:1), Joshua in Num 27:16, and Balaam in 24:3. For Horbury, this along with the exalted context, indicates that the LXX translator understood ἄνθρωπος as a glorified figure, and that he did not intend to de-emphasize that individual’s status.

These scholars tend to agree that ἄνθρωπος is an interpretive rendering of the source text,

227 E.g. Justin Martyr, 1 Apol. 32.12-13; 1QSb 5:27-28.
whether as a decoding of a metaphor, or as making explicit an implied subject. The significance of ἄνθρωπος, however, is another question entirely. Is ἄνθρωπος a generic term that simply refers to an unspecified historical king of Israel, or is it a term loaded with messianic and eschatological connotations that gives additional force to, or even modifies, the sense of the original text?

6.3. Similar Context: Genesis 49:10

A similar translation occurs in Genesis 49:10, a text also widely interpreted as messianic.231 Jacob blesses his son Judah, telling him:

MT

לא יסור שבט מיהודה ומקק מבין רגליו עד כי יבוא שילה ולו יקהת עמים

LXX

ὁ άρχων ἐξ Ἰούδα καὶ ἡγούμενος ἐκ τῶν μηρῶν αὐτοῦ, ἕως ἂν ἔλθῃ τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτῷ, καὶ αὐτὸς προσδοκία ἐθνῶν.

In Genesis 49:10, שבט “scepter” and חקק “ruler's staff” are instances of metonymy, in which an attribute is substituted for the thing meant. The translator recodes the text, understanding the terms “sceptre” and “staff” as actually referring to the person holding the sceptre or staff (an ἀρχων/ἡγούμενος). Although this translation may not be literal, nothing new is brought to the meaning of the text.232 Numbers 24:17 may be an instance of similar recoding, in which the translator understands ἄνθρωπος to be the thing to which שבט refers (i.e. ἄνθρωπος is the one holding the שבט). If this is the case, the translator did not intend ἄνθρωπος to mean something different than שבט, but simply to make the meaning of שבט more clear.

6.4. ἄνθρωπος in the Septuagint and “Man” in the Old Testament

Scholarly opinion is divided as to whether the term ἄνθρωπος itself has messianic connotations.

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Lust argues that ἄνθρωπος has no messianic significance in the LXX. Although he acknowledges the possibility that “man” may have messianic connotations in some biblical passages as well as at Qumran and in some Christian texts, he argues that this does not necessarily transfer to ἄνθρωπος in the Septuagint. Furthermore, the LXX often uses ἀνήρ, not ἄνθρωπος, in messianic contexts (e.g. 2 Sam 23:1; Zech 6:12; 13:7). Lust maintains, therefore, that in the Septuagint ἄνθρωπος is not a technical term for the messiah. On the contrary, it is a more neutral term that often refers simply to an indefinite “someone.”

Lust finds support for this conclusion in reception history. Philo cites Numbers 24:7 twice: in Mos. 1:290 (where he retells the Balaam story, including the third oracle but excluding the fourth) and Praem. 95. The latter is one of the few instances in which Philo speaks of a future eschatological age in which war, both among animals and among humankind, will cease. Philo mentions ἄνθρωπος as one who will lead an army to pacify the world of savage men. Although this might seem to imply that Philo understood this ἄνθρωπος to be a messianic figure, ἄνθρωπος plays no further role in Philo’s vision of the future age. Furthermore, Lust observes, Philo typically eschews the notion of an individual messianic figure. Here, he suggests, ἄνθρωπος is intended as a reference to humankind, which stands in contrast to wild animals and brutish humans.

The early Church fathers, Justin Martyr and Irenaus, do not preserve ἄνθρωπος, but instead give ἡγούμενος and dux, respectively. Their focus, furthermore, is on the star, which is applied to Jesus, or understood to be pointing to Jesus. Later Church fathers, such as Origen and Eusebius, do preserve ἄνθρωπος, but their discussion of the text is almost exclusively concerned with issues related to the

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237 Ibid.
humanity and divinity of Christ, not his messianic identity. The earliest Christian evidence does not have ἄνθρωπος yet focuses more on the messianic identity of Jesus. In contrast, the later Christian evidence, which reads ἄνθρωπος, is less concerned with messianism. In other words, the use of ἄνθρωπος is associated with non-messianic readings of Numbers 24:17. Lust concludes that, in the absence of clear evidence from Greek interpretive traditions that attach messianic significance to ἄνθρωπος, ἄνθρωπος cannot be understood as an example of messianic interpretation by the LXX translator.

In favor of messianic associations for ἄνθρωπος, Vermes and Horbury argue that, although ἄνθρωπος has a wide semantic range, it would have included messianic associations. They cite multiple situations in which a variety of terms meaning “man” are understood as messianic, either explicitly in the text or in later interpretation.

In addition, Horbury observes what he calls a “tendency toward titularity” in words and phrases found in messianically interpreted passages. In other words, key terms in texts to which were attributed messianic significance could absorb some of that messianic significance, so that the use of a term elsewhere could bring to mind the significance of that entire messianic passage. Horbury applies this tendency to the phrase “son of man,” arguing that it became a messianic title as a result of its appearance in Daniel 7:13 and the messianic association of terms for “man.” If this indeed is what took place with “son of man,” it could have also presumably taken place with ἄνθρωπος. Its messianic use in various instances could have resulted in ἄνθρωπος gaining a titular function.

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239 Lust, “The Greek Version” 241-5. Lust excludes as evidence The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, which alludes to Num 24:17 twice at T. Levi 18 and T. Judah 24, as textually problematic since it contains Christian scribal intervention and exists in longer and shorter versions.

240 See Vermes’s discussion on various terms meaning “man” in Scripture and Tradition, 56-66; Horbury, “Messianic Associations of the Son of Man,” 48ff.


242 Horbury, “Messianic Associations,” 52.


244 Some commentators have taken Pilate’s statement in John 19:5, ἰδοὺ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, as a possible allusion to Zech 6:12.
The key issue that divides these two perspectives on ἄνθρωπος is the breadth of evidence allowed to have bearing. Lust restricts his discussion to only the term ἄνθρωπος, and therefore excludes any messianic associations that ἄνηρ etc. may have. On the other hand, Vermes and Horbury find messianic significance in the cluster of overlapping terms meaning “man.” Consequently, any use of any of these terms could contribute to or derive meaning from the concept “man.” For Vermes and Horbury, if a text with messianic associations uses ἄνηρ, those associations could be evoked in other instances where ἄνηρ or ἄνθρωπος or any other word meaning “man” appears, since they are all linked to the concept “man.” This approach is problematic because it ignores the distinction between words and concepts. For Vermes and Horbury, the concept “man” is virtually indistinguishable from the various Greek and Hebrew words that denote “man.”

A few observations on ἄνθρωπος are in order. First, messianic language cannot be reduced to a limited set of specific words. Biblical literature uses a variety of words and phrases to express ideas, and messianic language can be either direct or circumlocutional. Some words semantically overlap with ἄνθρωπος, and their connotations can overlap as well, although they do not necessarily do so.

Second, even a cursory examination of the LXX text shows that sometimes the translator adheres to a specific translation equivalent, and at other times varies vocabulary for no apparent reason. Similarly, the occurrence of calques in the LXX indicates that Greek words could acquire new meanings from their Hebrew counterparts. This means that the translator could conceivably have thought of ἄνθρωπος as carrying at least some the same meaning and resonances as ἀνήρ. The translator stands in a unique position between the Hebrew and Greek texts, and in the translator the two languages intersect and influence one another.246

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245 Vermes, Scripture and Tradition, 56-66; Horbury, “Messianic Associations of the Son of Man,” 48ff.
246 N. F. Marcos describes this tendency, “The translation into Greek of polysemic Hebrew words often produces an extension of the semantic field of the Greek word in question, creating new meanings” (The Septuagint in Context, trans (iðον ἄνηρ) and/or Numbers 24:7. See C. K. Barrett, The Gospel According to St. John, 541; Raymond Brown, The Gospel According to John, 875-876; Wayne A. Meeks, Prophet-King, 70-72.
Third, we should be careful not to overload the semantic content of a word. A word may have a wide range of potential meanings, but a much more limited range within a specific context. The most important determiner of whether or not ἄνθρωπος has messianic significance is not its use elsewhere, but its immediate context. ἄνθρωπος must be evaluated in the context of the verses in which it appears: 24:7 and 24:17, as well as the larger context of Balaam's oracles as a whole, and the broader narrative of Numbers 22-24.

Finally, the translator did not pick the term ἄνθρωπος at random. He chose ἄνθρωπος out of all the translation options at his disposal because he thought that it best communicated the meaning of the passage. The significance of ἄνθρωπος in Numbers 24:7, 17, should therefore be understood in light of how the translators of the LXX used ἄνθρωπος elsewhere, and how the rest of the Balaam account is translated.

We can conclude therefore that the use of the term ἄνθρωπος does alter the meaning of the oracles by focusing on a particular (but unspecified) figure who plays a key role in the exaltation of Israel. However, it should not be understood as a the translator imposing a messianic ideology on an otherwise non-messianic text. We have no indication that the translator of Numbers intended his translation of 24:7, 17 to evoke associations with any other text, and we have no way of knowing whether the translator had a larger conceptual scheme in mind that influenced him to use ἄνθρωπος, or if he was focused on translating this passage with no thought to how his translation might be understood in the light of other LXX passages.

7. Conclusion: Messianic Interpretation in the LXX Balaam Oracles

This chapter has examined major ways in which the LXX differs from its Hebrew Vorlage: (a) the phrase τὰ ἔνδοξα ἀρχόντων ἐν αὐτῷ in 23:21; (b) the translation μονόκερως for רָעָם in 23:22 and Wilfred G. E. Watson; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), 24.
24:8; (c) the LXX reworking of 24:7; and (d) the use of ἄνθρωπος in 24:7 and 24:17. Each of these changes could open new avenues for messianic interpretation, either by reworking the text or creating new possibilities for interpretive connections with other texts.

The definition of messianism adopted in this chapter includes three elements: (1) an individual; (2) eschatology or an eschatological context; and (3) an important role for that figure in God's actions/plans/relations with his people. All three of these elements are arguably present in the Hebrew text, but are even more explicit in the Septuagint version of Balaam's third and fourth oracles. While the Hebrew text, with its language of “seed,” “king,” “star,” and “scepter,” probably refers to an individual, the LXX focuses the oracles further on ἄνθρωπος “a man.” The use of ἄνθρωπος makes the reference to an individual unambiguous, and possibly links this text to others that predict a messianic figure as part of the continuation of the Davidic dynasty. Furthermore, the eschatological aspect of the oracles is heightened dramatically by the LXX's Gog (also present in the Samaritan text), which links Balaam's predictions to the eschatological conflict between Israel and Gog described in Ezekiel 38-39. Finally, the figure's role as conqueror and ruler is reaffirmed, especially in the reworked lines of 24:7.

The resulting Greek translation could, then, be said to have more potential than his Hebrew Vorlage to be interpreted as messianic. This does not mean that the translator imposed a messianic interpretation on the text. Instead, whether translating contextually or adhering closely to his source text, the translator gave what he considered to be the best rendering of the source text.
CONCLUSION: TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION IN THE LXX VERSION OF THE BALAAM ACCOUNT

This study has examined the text of the Septuagint version of Numbers 22-24 and attempted to contextualize and understand two particular problems raised by the translation: (1) the treatment of the divine name in the narrative; and (2) the translation of the third and fourth oracles.

The translator's clear preference for ὁ θεός in the narrative portions of the Balaam account probably reflects a negative bias against Balaam. Although the use of ὁ θεός hardly constitutes an explicit condemnation of Balaam, it distances Balaam from κύριος (the LXX’s equivalent for the tetragrammaton).

This study has shown that the preference for ὁ θεός has precedent in other LXX texts, especially Genesis 4 and 6-8. Furthermore, both Philo and the rabbis associate different divine names with distinct aspects of God. Although these interpreters postdate the LXX, they were likely not the first to make such distinctions, and may represent an interpretive approach that influenced the LXX translators.

The translation of Balaam’s third and fourth oracles also reflects the translator’s interpretation of his text, although in a less systematic way. It is less clear that here the translator was attempting to bend the text toward a particular interpretation of the text. Instead, the translator’s contextual renderings, especially with the use of the term ἄνθρωπος, resulted in a Greek text with new interpretive possibilities, and a greater potential to be taken as messianic.
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