

DE SEPTUAGINTA. Studies in Honour of John William Wevers on his sixty-fifth birthday (ed. Albert Pietersma and Claude Cox.) Benben Publications: Mississauga, 1984. pp. 85-101.

KYRIOS OR TETRAGRAM:
A RENEWED QUEST FOR THE ORIGINAL LXX

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When more than fifty years ago Wolf Wilhelm Graf Baudissin wrote his massive work entitled *Kyrios als Gottesname im Judentum und seine Stelle in der Religionsgeschichte*¹ he arrived at the conclusion, on the basis of his extensive, detailed and at times belaboured investigation, that the ancient LXX read *kyrios* as a surrogate for *Yhwh*, and not a form of the Hebrew tetragram, as had been maintained as far back as Origen. Since his time, however, the claim for an original tetragram, either in Semitic guise or in Greek transliteration, is being reasserted by an increasingly growing number of scholars. The reasons for the revival of a theory already espoused by antiquity's great hebraizer are well known. Important early Greek texts have recently come to light on both Egyptian and Palestinian soil, which give us proof positive that the tetragram was indeed employed in pre-Christian biblical manuscripts. Hence Baudissin must be wrong and Origen must be right!²

What we propose to do in this essay is 1) to survey briefly the important new evidence and the use that has been made of it in scholarly writings, 2) to determine whether the Septuagint itself perhaps gives us a clear-cut answer to the question, *Kyrios* or

¹ 4 vols.; Giessen, 1929.

² See e.g. S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford, 1968) 271-72 and H. Conzelmann, *An Outline of the Theology of the New Testament* (New York, 1969) 83-4, Conzelmann is cited with approval by J. A. Fitzmyer in *A Wandering Aramean* (Missoula, 1979) 120.

tetragram? and 3) to suggest a *terminus a quo* for the substitution process. Our aim, however, is far more modest than Baudissin's. Rather than attempting to deal with the whole Greek Bible, the so-called LXX, we will focus on the (original) LXX, namely the Pentateuch. For an essay of modest scope such delimitation hardly needs defense. Furthermore, to begin at the beginning would seem eminently reasonable, especially now that a critical edition of the Greek Pentateuch is nearing completion thanks to the prodigious efforts and amazing perseverance of Professor J. W. Wevers. Critical texts for all but Exodus are complete, though not all of these are as yet generally accessible.³

Not only have the newly discovered texts, to which we already alluded and to which we will presently turn, been thought to prove that the Hebrew tetragram was employed by some circles in some Greek MSS in pre-Christian times, but that the Alexandrian translators incorporated it in their translation of the Hebrew scriptures. What form the tetragram is surmised to have had at that early date naturally has to depend on what evidence one selects as oldest and/or most trustworthy.

When in 1944 W. G. Waddell⁴ published a fragment of the now famous P. Fouad 266 (Rahlfs 848) he declared Baudissin wholly mistaken in having concluded,

Darüber hinaus ergibt sich aus der Art des Artikelgebrauchs bei κύριος, dass in der ursprünglichen Septuaginta das Tetragramm nicht in hebräischen Buchstaben beibehalten, ebensowenig mit ὄδωνάι umschrieben war, und dass dafür nicht erst später κύριος substituiert worden ist.⁵

When attacking, one understandably attacks at the enemy's weakest point and that is what Waddell clearly does. "Der Artikelgebrauch bei κύριος" is not Baudissin's most conclusive proof (at least not in the Pentateuch). But he does furnish some better evidence, in fact in the immediately preceding paragraph. Waddell, however, issues his verdict,

This statement [says he in comment on Baudissin] is now flatly disproved by a new papyrus of the LXX, the remains of a roll containing the second half of the Book of Deuteronomy, which in the extant fragments shows no example of κύριος but everywhere the Tetragrammaton in Aramaic characters.⁶

³ I am grateful to Professor Wevers for giving me access to his critical texts of Leviticus and Numbers.

⁴ "The Tetragrammaton in the LXX," *JTS* 45 (1944) 158-61.

⁵ Baudissin *apud* Waddell *op. cit.* 159.

⁶ Waddell, *ibid.*

Much more recently George Howard has written a well documented and extensive article, “The Tetragram and the New Testament,”⁷ in which he seeks to launch an exploration into the implications and consequences of early Christian confusion resulting from the substitution of the tetragram by *kyrios*. He discusses the evidence from P. Ryl. Gk. 458 (Rahlfs 957), P. Fouad 266 (Rahlfs 848), 8 HevXllgr (Rahlfs 943), and 4QLXXLev^b (Rahlfs 802) and then writes,

From these findings we can now say with almost absolute certainty that the divine name, יהוה, was not rendered by κύριος in the pre-Christian Bible, as so often has been thought. Usually the Tetragram was written out in Aramaic or in paleo-Hebrew letters or was transliterated into Greek letters.⁸

Since the LXX had the tetragram, according to Howard, the New Testament authors when quoting the Greek Bible naturally incorporated the tetragram in their own writing, thus keeping distinct “the Lord God” and “the Lord Christ”; but this line of demarcation disappeared with the substitution of *kyrios* for the tetragram. If correct, Howard’s theory could produce interesting results for students of early Christianity, but as will be argued below, the foundation on which it has been built, namely, the ancient LXX, will not sustain it, though it might possibly still be debated whether perhaps the Palestinian copies with which the NT authors were familiar read some form of the tetragram.

Interestingly enough, as we indicated earlier, the originality of the tetragram in the LXX is not a modern theory. No less a textual authority than Origen put forth the same claim. Wrote he,

In the more accurate exemplars [of the LXX] the (divine) name is written in Hebrew characters; not, however, in the current script, but in the most ancient.⁹

Similar statements are found in Jerome.¹⁰ Clearly in Origen’s estimation, Greek MSS with the tetragram written in paleohebrew were the best representatives of the LXX. There is, furthermore, evidence to suggest that Origen wrote the tetragram in his Hexapla.

⁷ *JBL* 96 (1977) 63-8.

⁸ *Ibid.* 65.

⁹ Migne, *PG* 12 1104(B): καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀκριβεστέροις δὲ τῶν ἀντιγράφων Ἑβραίοις χαρακτηρῶσι κείται τὸ ὄνομα, Ἑβραικοῖς δὲ οὐ τοῖς νῦν, ἀλλὰ τοῖς ἀρχαιοτάτοις. That Origen is indeed referring to paleohebrew in the last phrase is underscored by what follows: Φασὶ γὰρ τὸν Ἑδραν ἐν τῇ αἰχμαλωσίᾳ ἑτέρους αὐτοῖς χαρακτηρῶσι παρὰ τοὺς παραδεδοκέναι.

¹⁰ *Prologus galeatus* (PL 28 594-95).

The Mercati palimpsest of Psalms¹¹ has it in all its columns, including the LXX one, and the Cairo Geniza fragment of Ps 22 from the Hexapla has π̄ιπ̄ι.¹² But it may well be asked what Origen's statement about the "more accurate exemplars" or the possible evidence from his Hexapla proves about the originality of the tetragram. In our opinion, neither proves anything! Origen obviously knew what we now also know first-hand, namely, that among the Jews there were Greek texts which sported the tetragram in Hebrew characters—and he seized on this as original LXX. But in light of his all surpassing regard for the *hebraica veritas* and his colossal undertaking to attain it, is not this precisely what one would have expected, and is it any wonder 1) that Origen fondly and wishfully judged the tetragram to be "more accurate" and hence presumably original, and 2) that he therefore incorporated it in his Hexapla? One should rely on Origen for an original tetragram no more than one should rely on his fifth column as a whole for original LXX.

That we have very ancient literary as well as documentary evidence for the use of the tetragram is clear. What is perhaps not quite so clear, rather, what has thus far not been clearly stated by the proponents of the original-tetragram theory, is the nature of the textual witnesses on which their case rests. There would appear to be room for closer examination and also for drawing into the discussion what others have said in other connections. The underlying assumption of the original-tetragram theory is a rather simple one: older is better, or to word it more adequately: since we have early, even pre-Christian, MS evidence for the tetragram and no such MS evidence to the contrary, the tetragram must be original LXX. But before we conclude what we all like to believe, namely, that older is better, we should at least ask two questions: 1) With what fidelity do these early texts testify to the LXX? and 2) What internal evidence on *kyrios* versus tetragram does the LXX itself supply?

In answering our first question we begin by calling attention to a text which is being cited to instruct us on what the LXX had or did not have, even though it is not itself an exemplar of the LXX at all. The Scroll of the Minor Prophets (8 HevXIIgr),¹³ written sometime

¹¹ G. Mercati, *Psalterii Hexapli reliquiae. Pars Prima: Codex rescriptus Bibliothecae Ambrosianae o.39 Supp. phototypice expressus et transcriptus* (Vatican City, 1958).

¹² C. Taylor, *Hebrew-Greek Cairo Genizah Palimpsests from the Taylor-Schechter Collection Including a Fragment of the Twenty-Second Psalm according to Origen's Hexapla* (Cambridge, 1900).

¹³ D. Barthélemy, *Devanciers*

between 50 BC and AD 50,¹⁴ writes the tetragram in paleohebrew characters. To be sure this scroll has given us a wealth of information on the fascinating and complicated history of the LXX,¹⁵ but it would be a patent mistake to treat it as a *bona fide* exemplar of the LXX. A hebraizing recension of the LXX it is, but a representative of the LXX itself it is not. And in a text so filled with hebraizing corrections of LXX readings what could persuade one to count its paleohebrew (!) tetragram as original LXX? Furthermore, since, where the Hebrew text is evidentially neutral, the scroll follows the LXX in articulating the tetragram, the latter would seem to be decidedly secondary (cf. Hab 3:20).

Our second important text is P. Fouad 266,¹⁶ or more particularly Rahlfs 848, the only one of three MSS registered under that number which has preserved the tetragram. It has been dated by Ludwig Koenen¹⁷ to the middle of the first century BC. Like the Minor Prophets scroll it contains the tetragram, but in Aramaic rather than paleohebrew script. Also, in distinction from the MP scroll, 848 is an exemplar of the LXX. Whether it is a typical exemplar is open to question. Textually it is first of all an excellent witness to the Old Greek of Deuteronomy, but even by a conservative evaluation¹⁸ it also contains at least half a dozen instances of correction to the Hebrew text. Some revising of this text has obviously been done in order to bring it in better accord with the Hebrew.¹⁹ Furthermore, it consistently reads $\mu\omega\sigma\hat{\eta}\varsigma$ in place of LXX $\mu\omega\ddot{\upsilon}\sigma\hat{\eta}\varsigma$ and as Wevers comments,

The spelling of 848 is certainly nearer M(T), and may be due to the bilingual scribe's undoubted knowledge of the Hebrew name.²⁰

Whether or not the scribe was bilingual (he evidently could not manage to write the tetragram in Aramaic script!), some kind of influence of the Hebrew text seems to have been at work here, and with *consistent* result, it should be emphasized.

¹⁴ Cf. Barthélemy, "Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant de l'histoire de la Septante," *RB* 60 (1953) 18-29 and C. H. Roberts *apud* P. Kahle *Opera Minora* 113.

¹⁵ For a partial list of publications on the so-called kaige recension see Howard *op. cit.* 64 n. 10.

¹⁶ Previous editions have now been superseded by Zaki Aly and Ludwig Koenen, *Three Rolls of the Early Septuagint: Genesis and Deuteronomy* (PapTA 27; Bonn, 1980).

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ For a textual assessment of 848 see J. W. Wevers, *THGD* and R. Hanhart, Review of F. Dunand, *Papyrus grecs bibliques (Papyrus F. Inv. 266)* in *OLZ* 73 (1978) cols. 39-45.

¹⁹ Contrast Wevers *op. cit.* and K. G. O'Connell's review of his *Deuteronomium* and *THGD* in *JBL* 99 (1980) 597-99.

²⁰ *THGD* 64.

Then there is the tetragram itself. Is it to be taken seriously as original LXX or is it a secondary and foreign intrusion into LXX tradition like the other hebraizing corrections it contains? Robert Hanhart in a review of Dunand's edition of P. Fouad 266 leaves no doubt about his answer to that question. He writes,

Ein Indiz dafür, dass dieser Text der ältesten Septuagintaüberlieferung gegenüber bereits eine sekundäre Stufe darstellt, die einen bewussten Eingriff in die vorgegebene Überlieferung voraussetzt, bleibt mir der für diese Handschrift wie für alle bis heute gefundenen jüdischen Septuagintatexte geltende Befund, dass der Jahwename konsequent nicht mit κύριος sondern mit dem Tetragramm wiedergegeben wird.²¹

What the grounds are for his belief that the tetragram is not original LXX, Hanhart feels unable to document in the context of his review. Had he done so, the present essay would undoubtedly not have been written.

Interestingly, if Ludwig Koenen is correct, MS 848 seems to furnish some purely physical evidence that *kyrios* rather than the tetragram was rooted in the textual tradition on which its scribe drew. Koenen has argued in his notes to the new edition of P. Fouad 266 that the scribe of 848 was unable to write the Hebrew tetragram and hence left space for a second scribe to insert it:

Where it [the tetragram] was to occur the original scribe left a blank equal to 5-6 letters (i.e. about the size of κύριος written in full) and marked it by a high dot at its beginning. A second scribe filled in the Hebrew letters. They cover only the middle of the blank, usually the space of 2 1/2 - 3 letters.²²

The 6 letter *kyrios*, therefore, served apparently as a spacer for the tetragram which required only half the allotted room. Naturally, this piece of physical evidence ought not be pressed unduly. Yet, for the light it seems to throw on our problem, it is too interesting to pass by without notice.

On textual grounds there is, however, complementary evidence for the secondary nature of the tetragram. In Deut 31:27 the LXX text, supported by all MSS, including 847 (by Koenen's placement of the relevant fragment), reads πρὸς τὸν θεόν for the Hebrew עִם־יְהוָה, but mistakenly in this instance the scribe(s) of 848, rather than substituting the tetragram for θεόν, inserted it after πρὸς, thus creating a unique doublet. That the introduction of the tetragram into the Greek text was more important than bringing the LXX

²¹ *Op. cit.* 42.

²² *Op. cit.* 5-6.

quantitatively into line with the Hebrew is perhaps further suggested by 28:64 where ὁ θεός has no counterpart in MT. In any case, the tetragram in 31:27 is clearly secondary, and if secondary here it would be difficult to count it as original LXX elsewhere in 848.

When one thus considers the various items of information which 848 supplies, its status, in general, as a typical exemplar of the LXX is not beyond doubt, and its tetragram, in particular, as a remnant of the Old Greek is hardly to be taken seriously.²³

Of the pre-Christian texts which give positive proof of the tetragram there remains 4QLXXLev^b (Rahlfs 802). It was written in a hand very similar to 848, and P. W. Skehan has dated this text to the first century BC.²⁴ 4QLXXLev^b has not yet been published; hence a detailed discussion of its textual character must wait. This much can be said, however: there is no doubt that the very fragmentary 42 verses of 802 give us a genuine LXX text with at most two corrections to the Hebrew, while evidencing as many as 21 extant and *videtur* agreements with the LXX against MT.²⁵ Yet, in spite of its apparent excellence as a representative of the LXX, it contains the Hebrew tetragram in the form of the Greek trigram ιαω, leading Skehan to comment,

This new evidence strongly suggests that the usage in question [i.e. of some form of the tetragram] goes back for some books at least to the beginnings of the Septuagint rendering, and antedates such devices as that in the Fuad papyrus or the special scripts in the more recent Hebrew manuscripts of Qumran and in later Greek witnesses.²⁶

Certainly, to the extent that its fragmentary condition enables us to determine, the genuinely Septuagintal credentials of 4QLXXLev^b are well-nigh impeccable.

The last text we need to mention is P. Ryl. Gk. 458 (Rahlfs 957), not because it is relevant to our discussion but because it has been forcibly introduced into the discussion, in part, one surmises, because it is the oldest extant LXX MS. As is well known, Paul Kahle²⁷

²³ That 942, like 848, read the tetragram as Koenen infers (p.3) on the basis of the close similarity in handwriting should be taken *cum grano salis*. Though the hands are similar and perhaps even identical, the two MSS are hardly at one in every respect. Thus, Hebrew names are surrounded by blanks in 942 but not in 848 (cf. p. 5), and the columns in 942 are wider than in 848 (cf. p. 8). Cf. a similar inference re 847 (p. 13).

²⁴ "The Qumran Manuscripts and Textual Criticism," *Volume du congrès, Strasbourg 1956* (VTSup 4; Leiden, 1957) 157-60.

²⁵ For access to Skehan's reconstruction of this text I am indebted to Professor Wevers.

²⁶ *Op. cit.* 157.

²⁷ "Problems in the Septuagint," *Studia Patristica* (TU 63; Berlin, 1957) 328-30.

managed to persuade the editor of P. Ryl. Gk. 458, C. H. Roberts,²⁸ that at Deut 26:18, in a lacuna too large for the ubiquitous contraction κς, this MS did not read the full form κύριος as Roberts had suggested, but the Hebrew tetragram—as (some) other early witnesses do. That P. Ryl. Gk. 458 did not read κς is, of course, to be expected since the contractions of the *nomina sacra* are of Christian origin,²⁹ but the full κύριος would seem to be perfectly acceptable from every perspective. Kahle wished to insert the tetragram because he thought he knew what the original LXX must have read. One hopes that this text will henceforth be banned from further discussion regarding the tetragram, since it has nothing to say about it.

What we have tried to do thus far in our survey is to emphasize that of the four early texts that have been cited in support of an original tetragram, one gives no evidence at all, a second is non-Septuagintal, and a third contains hebraizing revisions (including at least one instance of the tetragram). Only one text, 4QLXXLev^b, would seem to have good credentials as a typical exemplar of the LXX.

When we put aside the biblical MSS and look for literary sources which may enlighten us on whether *kyrios* was a surrogate for the tetragram, we might possibly appeal to such books as Wisdom of Solomon, 2 Maccabees, 3 Maccabees, *et al.*,³⁰ all of which use *kyrios* as a divine epithet (or name?) extensively. But since there is no sure proof that *kyrios* in these works is a substitute for the tetragram, we had better not draw on them. Similarly, we might appeal to *Aristeas* 155 which contains a near quotation of Deut 7:18, and Aristobulus who seems to make reference to Exod 9:3;³¹ but since these authors were transmitted by Christians, *kyrios* could be secondary. Philo of Alexandria, however, has to be faced. Of course, he too was transmitted by Christians, as Howard emphasizes,³² and Peter Katz³³ has made us all a little cautious in making use of biblical quotations in Philo. Yet, extreme caution sometimes makes one ignore valuable

²⁸ *Two Biblical Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester* (Manchester, 1936) and *Catalogue of the Greek and Latin Papyri in the John Rylands Library Manchester* (Manchester, 1938), 3. 3-8. Unfortunately no complete facsimile appears with either edition.

²⁹ See now C. H. Roberts, *Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt* (London, 1979) ch. 3.

³⁰ Cf. Baudissin, *op. cit.* 3, 12-5.

³¹ A. -M. Denis, *Fragmenta Pseudepigraphorum quae supersunt Graecae* (Leiden, 1970) 219.

³² *Op. cit.* 70-1.

³³ *Philo's Bible* (Cambridge, 1950).

evidence. To deal with *kyrios* throughout the Philonic corpus would be superfluous and might in any case prove little more than that Philo employed *kyrios* in reference to God. Attention may be called simply to two passages in which Philo gives an exposition on the meaning of the divine appellations θεός and κύριος, namely *De Abrahamo* 121 and *De Plantatione* 85-90.³⁴ Especially the latter is instructive because it includes comments on Gen 21:33 (τὸ ὄνομα κυρίου θεὸς αἰώνιος) and 28:21 (καὶ ἔσται κύριος ἐμοὶ εἰς θεόν). In light of his exposition there can be no doubt as to how Philo read his biblical text and what he read. Consequently, Dahl and Segal have stated quite correctly,

While preserved Jewish fragments of the Greek version have some form of transliteration for the tetragrammaton, *Philo must have read kyrios in his texts* (emphasis added).³⁵

There is only one way to negate the force of Philo's evidence on the equation of *kyrios* and the tetragram, and that is by making a distinction between what Philo *saw* in his Bible and what he *understood* and *read*, but that issue we will turn to at a later point.³⁶

Against this background we now finally turn to the LXX itself, or rather the Greek Pentateuch. That throughout the first five books of the Greek Bible *kyrios* is employed as a proper noun was shown long ago by Huber,³⁷ Debrunner,³⁸ and Baudissin³⁹ and has been reiterated since. As a proper noun, a divine name, and in complete conformity with other personal names in these books, it is more often unarticulated than articulated. This basic fact holds true for all five books. Articulation, however, is well attested in all but Deuteronomy, especially in some of the oblique cases, a fact which demonstrates that, if perchance the original text read the tetragram, this was construed in every respect as a Greek personal name and was not treated as a foreign element. Furthermore, a basic rule in the Pentateuch is that *kyrios* is unarticulated in the nominative case, the genitive, as object of a preposition and as subject of an infinitive. *Kyrios* is articulated most often in the dative when rendering Hebrew *le-* prefixed to the tetragram. It is in this construction that differences among the five books are most noticeable. Thus, τῷ κυρίῳ

³⁴ See further, for example, *Quis rerum divinarum heres* 6, 22-3.

³⁵ N. A. Dahl and Alan F. Segal, "Philo and the Rabbis on the Names of God," *JSJ* 9 (1978) 1-28.

³⁶ For a brief survey of Josephus see Fitzmyer *op. cit.* 121-22.

³⁷ Karl Huber, *Untersuchungen über den Sprachcharakter des griechischen Leviticus* (Halle, 1916).

³⁸ Albert Debrunner, "Zur Uebersetzungstechnik der Septuaginta. Der Gebrauch des Artikels bei κύριος," *BZAW* 41 (1925) 69-78.

³⁹ *Op. cit.*

appears twice in Genesis as against five unarticulated instances, in Exodus twelve times against twenty-three without articulation, in Leviticus seventy-two versus twenty-one, in Numbers four as against fifty-four, and not at all in Deuteronomy.

Since most often *kyrios* is unarticulated, the articulated instances naturally attract special attention. Why, for instance, the translator of Leviticus chose to render לַיהוָה approximately three times out of four by τῶ κυρίῳ, while the Numbers translator did so in a mere four occurrences out of fifty-four, is an interesting question. Debrunner believed that the Leviticus translator sought to represent each detail of his *Vorlage*,⁴⁰ but this cannot be the full explanation since Hebrew *le-* is by no means consistently represented in his Greek text. Baudissin,⁴¹ though recognizing some influence exercised by the Hebrew text, places more emphasis on the distinction between *kyrios* as name and *kyrios* as appellative, but this too can hardly be the complete story since the appellative use of *kyrios* would hardly be so one-sidedly linked to the dative.⁴² Yet, as Baudissin discusses at length, in view of the primary meaning of *kyrios*, its use as an appellative in the LXX deserves attention. He speaks with qualified approval of the procedure employed in the Cambridge Septuagint in which unarticulated and articulated *kyrios* are distinguished by means of an upper and lower case kappa. But rather than attempting to draw an absolute distinction between *kyrios* as divine name and *kyrios* as appellative, Baudissin prefers to speak of “appellativartige Färbung.”⁴³ Also the Pentateuch contains many instances where *kyrios* may well have this appellative colouring.⁴⁴ A particularly instructive example for our investigation as a whole is Exod 8:22 (MT 8:18):

... ἵνα εἰδῆς ὅτι ἐγὼ εἶμι κύριος ὁ κύριος πάσης τῆς
 γῆς for MT's לַמַּעַן תֵּדַע כִּי אֲנִי יְהוָה בְּקִרְבְּךָ הָאָרֶץ

Presumably for exegetical reasons the translator deviates from his *Vorlage* and his appellative ὁ κύριος as an interpretation of the preceding word is especially apt on the assumption that he wrote (or at the very least read!) *kyrios* instead of the tetragram.

In the final analysis, however, it must be admitted that, with the exception of Exod 8:22, no list of passages in which *kyrios* seems to have appellative force can *prove* beyond reasonable doubt that the

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.* 69-70.

⁴¹ *Op. cit.* 1, 18-22.

⁴² Though not consistent, the translator seems to have fallen into a kind of rut. Cf. his consistent rendering of אֱתֵּימְשָׁה (צוּהַ יְהוָה) by τῶ Μωϋσῆ without making any attempt elsewhere to represent in Greek every occurrence of אֱתֵּימְשָׁה.

⁴³ *Op. cit.* 1, 24. Cf. Debrunner *op. cit.* 71.

⁴⁴ Some further possible examples are Gen 4:3, 13; 12:8; 18:17; 28:13; Exod 5:2; 9:27; 14:25, 31; 16:29; Deut 2:7; 8:7; 10:17; 17:16.

original LXX read *kyrios*. At best we obtain a glimpse.

Certainly more than a glimpse of what the LXX must have read can be obtained by examining translational consistency. The almost universal Greek equivalent of לַיהוָה in the Pentateuch is *kyrios* in the dative case, often articulated but also frequently without articulation. The translator of Exodus in approximately 23 instances chose not to articulate, and in 14 of these MS evidence shows that the genitive case is a viable alternative. The same is true in Numbers where the incidence of non-articulation is much higher (over 90%) than in Exodus, and where in approximately 25% of the cases the genitive is read by some witnesses, though the original text is nowhere seriously in doubt. Now if we posit that the original LXX did not have *kyrios* but the indeclinable tetragram instead, we would have to believe that the *kyrios* surrogator, without any help whatsoever from his Greek text, hit upon such a remarkably high degree of correspondence between לַיהוָה and κυρίῳ. Impossible it is perhaps not, but certainly improbable.

Proof that, of the translators of the Pentateuch, at least the translator of Exodus understood both *adon* and the tetragram as being equivalent to *kyrios* can be ascertained from two passages in which they occur together in the Hebrew. Both solutions which the translator forged are well known in the LXX outside of the Pentateuch, as we will see presently. The first passage is Exod 23:17:

שֵׁשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יִרְאֶה בְּלִזְכוּרְךָ אֶל־פְּנֵי הָאָדֹן יְהוָה
 τρεῖς καιροὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ὀφθήσεται πᾶν ἀρσενικόν σου
 ἐνώπιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ σου

What we see immediately is that the translator rather than repeating *kyrios*, has opted for the so-called Palestinian *qere*, which was apparently known in Egypt as early as the third century BC. The second passage which posed the same problem, however, called for a different solution. Exod 34:23 reads in our two texts:

שֵׁשׁ פְּעָמִים בַּשָּׁנָה יִרְאֶה בְּלִזְכוּרְךָ אֶת־פְּנֵי הָאָדֹן יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
 τρεῖς καιροὺς τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ὀφθήσεται πᾶν ἀρσενικόν
 σου ἐνώπιον κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰσραήλ

In this case, due to the concluding phrase “the God of Israel,” the writing of the *qere*, though not an impossibility had the translator focused myopically on a one-to-one correspondence, was scarcely a live option. Hence he resorts here to a second solution, also well attested elsewhere in the Greek Bible, namely the omission of one *kyrios*.

That in the two passages above, the LXX rests on a *Vorlage* which differed from MT has, to the best of my knowledge, not been proposed, and would seem in any case most unlikely.

The translator of Genesis was twice faced with the same problem

as the Exodus translator but his solution was strikingly different. In fact his solution, or rather solutions since they are not wholly identical, are rare in the Greek Bible. They show beyond a shadow of a doubt not only that *adonai* and the tetragram were taken to be equivalent to *kyrios* but also that this equivalency was expressed in written form. The first reference is Gen 15:2:

ויאמר אברם אדני יהוה מה תתן לי ואנכי הולך ערירי
λέγει δὲ Ἀβράμ· Δέσποτα, τί μοι δώσεις, ἐγὼ δὲ
ἀπολύομαι ἄτεκνος

Though there is some textual evidence supporting a plus of *kyrie*, Wevers appears to be correct in choosing *despota* as the original text, though in the second passage both are evidently the work of the translator. Gen 15:8:

ויאמר אדני יהוה במה אדע כי אירשנה
εἶπεν δέ· Δέσποτα κύριε, κατὰ τί γνώσομαι ὅτι
κληρονομήσω αὐτήν;

Like the Exodus translator, the translator of Genesis wants to avoid repeating *kyrios*, even though it be in the form of direct address, the vocative, the only case in which a double *kyrios* was to become usual in the LXX,⁴⁵ but it seems as though no generally accepted manner of dealing with *adonai Yhwh* had as yet evolved when the translator of Genesis presumably began a process that was to last for several centuries. He himself, as the inconsistency in our two passages suggests, was just feeling his way.⁴⁶ What is of paramount importance for our discussion is that nowhere else does this translator translate either the tetragram or *adon*, whether the referent be human or divine, by *despotes*, a word unique in Genesis to the two passages under discussion. Both are consistently rendered by *kyrios*. The reason for his unique rendering is obvious: he wished to avoid writing *kyrie kyrie*.⁴⁷ However, by the time we reach the translation of Deuteronomy, the usual Septuagintal solution to *adonai Yhwh* in the vocative has been arrived at. Deut 3:24:

אדני יהוה אתה החלות להראות את עבדך את גדלך
Κύριε κύριε, σὺ ἤρξω δεῖξαι τῷ σὺ θεράποντι τὴν
ἰσχύν σου καὶ τὴν δυνάμιν σου.

And again in Deut 9:26:

ואתפלל אל-יהוה ואמר אדני יהוה אל-שחת עמך
καὶ ηὐξάμην πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ εἶπα· Κύριε κύριε

⁴⁵ For examples in non-translation Greek see 2 Macc 1:24; 3 Macc 2:2; Add Esth C2 (LXX).

⁴⁶ Cf. Baudissin *op. cit.* 1, 497 where he asserts, with some justification, that Gen 15:8 shows a particularly close linkage between *kyrios* and the tetragram.

⁴⁷ Other LXX instances of *despota kyrie* are Jer 1:6; 4:10; Jonah 4:3; Dan(LXX) 9:15; cf. Jdt 5:20; 11:10 (both re Holophernes).

βασιλεῦ τῶν θεῶν, μὴ ἐξολεθρεύσης τὸν λαόν σου.

The latter passage includes an interpretive gloss on *kyrios* of which Philo, with his understanding of this name as indicating God's royal or ruling power, would have been proud.

For confirmation of what we have found in the Pentateuch we might briefly appeal to an important article written recently by the late Patrick Skehan.⁴⁸ Skehan surveys the evidence for the tetragram at Qumran, Masada, and in early Greek MSS. There is no need here to repeat in detail what he has written. In his final section, "Greek Texts of the Prophets," the author calls the reader's attention to the fact that in LXX Ezekiel *adonai Yhwh* is represented by a single *kyrios*, a rendering also encountered in other prophetic books, notably Isaiah and the Minor Prophets. In 15 instances, however, Pap. 967 reads *kyrios ho theos*, which is equivalent to the *qere*, *adonai elohim*. This same translation is found in 9 out of 23 occurrences of *adonai Yhwh* in the Minor Prophets. Whether *kyrios ho theos* in 967 is original or secondary as Ziegler judged it to be,⁴⁹ is not crucial for its Septuagintal nature. Be it sufficient to note that for Hebrew *adonai Yhwh* single *kyrios* and *kyrios ho theos* as well as the vocative *kyrie kyrie*, are amply attested in the prophetic corpus as original LXX—precisely what we already know from the Pentateuch. But Skehan, while emphasizing that both major equivalents must hail from a Jewish setting, seemingly cannot bring himself to call them genuine LXX. He concludes,

A large part of the LXX prophetic corpus... comes to hand with its earliest attainable stage showing leanings toward Κυριος ο θεος as an equivalent for יהוה יי אדני in accordance with the Palestinian *qerê*. Also, as far back as it is possible to go, the Kyrios term is employed in these books for both יהוה and יי אדני, on the basis of the spoken Adonay that stood for either separately; and there is a wide acceptance of one single Kyrios to stand in the place of the combined names. This cannot have come about as exclusively the work of Christian scribes. Whatever earlier incidence of ΙΑΩ or יהוה there may have been in these prophetic books ... the option of translating only the *qerê*...would seem to have been selected by sources familiar with Hebrew and not connected with the work of Origen.⁵⁰

In the Pentateuch *kyrios* as a surrogate for the tetragram is original

⁴⁸ "The Divine Name at Qumran, in the Masada Scroll and in the Septuagint," *BIOSCS* 13 (1980) 14-44.

⁴⁹ J. Ziegler, "Die Bedeutung des Chester Beatty-Scheide Papyrus 967 für die Textüberlieferung des Ezechiel-Septuaginta," *ZAW* 61 (1945/48) 93-4.

⁵⁰ "Divine Name," 38.

LXX, and one more than suspects that its originality is not confined to the first five books; yet, might it not be objected that the translators wrote one thing but pronounced another? No less a scholar than Elias Bickerman wrote more than thirty years ago, “Although the ineffable Name was transliterated in the Greek Bible it was pronounced as *Kyrios*, the Lord.”⁵¹ That both *adonai* and the tetragram were equated with *kyrios* already in pre-Christian times is beyond doubt, but could this possibly have applied only to the *qere*? Internal evidence of the LXX itself, in our view, disproves this. Surely, the singly written *kyrios* not only in the Prophetic Books but also in the Pentateuch argues otherwise. If the LXX translators are thought to have written the tetragram is there any reason to suppose that they would not have written *kyrios Yhwh* where the Hebrew had *adonai Yhwh*? And this *kyrios Yhwh* could then have been read as *kyrios ho theos*—which is in fact the way in which it was at times written, both within and without the Pentateuch. Likewise, does not *kyrios ho theos*, again attested in written form within and without the Pentateuch, indicate equally strongly that the translators wanted to avoid a nonsensical repetition of *kyrios* and hence wrote the *qere*?⁵² Is it possible to explain *despota* and *despota kyrie* in Gen on the *ketib/qere* hypothesis? Surely, the translator could have written *kyrie Yhwh*. That he resorts instead to a word which he otherwise never uses for *adon* not only proves, it would seem, that both *adonai* and *Yhwh* meant *kyrios* to him, but that he wished to avoid writing *kyrie kyrie*. Moreover, had he written a combination of *kyrie* plus the tetragram, would not this have been changed at some later stage to a double *kyrie* (which is in fact usual in the LXX) by the supposed *kyrios* surrogators?

The same argument might be applied to the two instances of *despota kyrie* for *adonai Yhwh* in Jer (1:6; 4:10), and the three occurrences of *ho despotes kyrios sabaoth* for *ha-adon Yhwh sebaot* in Isa (1:24; 3:1; 10:33), since neither translator otherwise ever translates *adon* by *despotes*, and also neither ever writes a double *kyrios* in any form, including the vocative.

When the Pentateuch was translated, *kyrios* was incorporated in the Greek text as the written surrogate for the tetragram, a surrogate which would also serve to safeguard the ineffable nature of the divine name, if indeed ineffability was a concern at so early a date. The translators felt no more bound to retain the tetragram in written form

⁵¹ *From Ezra to the Last of the Maccabees* (New York, 1962) 77.

⁵² The only truly Septuagintal instance of this barbarism is τοῦ κυρίου κυρίου in Ps 67:21.

than they felt compelled to render distinctively Hebrew *el*, *elohim* or *shaddai* Nor were they more unfaithful to the original than the Masada scribe of Ben Sira who everywhere wrote *adonai*.⁵³ Their procedure was certainly far less radical than that of their Hebrew predecessors who on no fewer than 30 occasions in Genesis alone eliminated the tetragram from the Vorlage of the LXX and replaced it with (one assumes) *elohim* (Greek *theos*).

Since, then, as we have tried to show, our early texts do not give us convincing proof of an original tetragram in the LXX, and since, more importantly, a number of passages in the Greek Pentateuch, in direct contradiction to these early witnesses, demonstrate the written originality of *kyrios* we might well ask what kind of historical perspective on the Hebrew tetragram and its Greek surrogate emerges. Skehan's article, to which reference has already been made, provides us with the key.

In delineating the development of the divine names (principally the tetragram) in the Hebrew MSS from Qumran, Skehan distinguishes three stages: 1) names in normal (i.e. square) script, 2) substitution of paleohebrew, 3) spread of the substitution process. And at each stage the author gives appropriate evidence. What the headings indicate and what Skehan makes clear in comment on the evidence is that at Qumran we encounter what may be called an archaizing process in the writing of the divine name, and not, in so far as our present knowledge indicates, a gradual replacement of an older paleohebrew tetragram by a younger one in the square script. Similarly in his survey of Greek evidence Skehan discerns several stages: 1) *iao*, 2) tetragram in square script, 3) tetragram in paleohebrew script, 4) *kyrios*. Naturally we would not agree with *iao* in first place and *kyrios* in last, but apart from that there is evidence of archaizing similar to that in the Hebrew MSS. The paleohebrew tetragram in Greek witnesses is not the oldest but apparently the youngest. Both in the Hebrew MSS from Qumran and in our earliest Greek MSS there is clear evidence that the divine name was the object of revisionary activity.

It is this archaizing tendency or process to which Skehan has called attention that was responsible for introducing the various forms of the tetragram into the Greek traditions. Its original home was not Egypt but Palestine, whence it was exported to the Diaspora. As Hanhart noted quite correctly in connection with P. Fouad 266, the tetragram in Greek MSS is evidence of a secondary stage. When this

⁵³ Cf. Skehan, "Divine Name," 18-20.

secondary stage began to be introduced is not certain. It may be that some sporadic, unconscious,⁵⁴ hebraizing is as old as the LXX itself, though we have very little evidence to support such a view, but what in any case distinguishes the introduction of some form of the tetragram from other (non-recensional) instances of Hebrew influence is its systematic, “recension-like,” nature. We would venture to suggest that the hebraizing corrective process began in earnest during the second century BC when Egypt became once again a place of refuge from troubled Palestine. It is likely to have been the influx of Palestinian Jews into Egypt that created the occasion for Aristeeas’ defense of the venerated LXX against its detractors.

That the book of Aristeeas is, in part at least, an attack on Palestinian Jews has been recognized by Tcherikover⁵⁵ and Howard⁵⁶ and with greater focus on the text of the LXX by Klijn,⁵⁷ Jellicoe⁵⁸ and Brock⁵⁹ the last named of whom calls specific attention to the poignant manner in which the author of the book cuts the legs from under his Palestinian opponents: 1) the translation into Greek had been sponsored by the high priest in Jerusalem and was carried out by Palestinian translators; 2) the translation which was produced had achieved such a high level of accuracy that all subsequent revision was not only uncalled for but in fact proscribed; 3) the LXX had been based directly on the Jerusalem text. Hence, any attack on or belittling of the LXX would be not only ridiculous but aimed directly at the high priest himself and the Jerusalem text. Aristeeas meant to take the wind out of his opponents’ sails and at the same time give them a powerful disincentive against denigrating the Bible of Egyptian Jewry and tampering with its text.

That Aristeeas’ defense of the LXX presupposes a rival Greek text as has been argued by Klijn and carried a step further by Jellicoe, is, in our view, unwarranted. Not a scrap of such a text has survived. Aristeeas’ point is clear: the accuracy of the LXX makes all revision both unnecessary and illegal. Nothing is either said or implied about the scope of such revision. The kind of systematic replacing of the familiar and hallowed κύριος with the parochial Hebrew tetragram which reduced the LXX to an inferior status vis-à-vis the Hebrew,

⁵⁴ See Wevers, “The Earliest Witness to the LXX Deuteronomy,” *CBQ* 39 (1977) 244.

⁵⁵ V. Tcherikover, “The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeeas,” *HTR* 51 (1958) 59-85.

⁵⁶ Howard, “The Letter of Aristeeas and Diaspora Judaism,” *JTS* 22 (1971) 337-48.

⁵⁷ A. F. J. Klijn, “The Letter of Aristeeas and the Greek Translation of the Pentateuch in Egypt,” *NTS* 11 (1965) 154-58.

⁵⁸ S. Jellicoe, “The Occasion and Purpose of the Letter of Aristeeas: a Reexamination,” *NTS* 12 (1965/6) 144-50.

⁵⁹ P. Brock, “The Phenomenon of the Septuagint,” *OTS* 17 (1972) 11-36.

thereby creating what seems to have been a new notion in Egyptian Jewry, viz. that of the *hebraica veritas*, would seem to be perfectly capable of having provided an occasion for Aristeas to launch his counter attack.

That criticism of the LXX by immigrants from Palestine is more than a text-critical inference, is evident from the Prologue of Ben Sira's grandson, whose negative reflection on the Greek Bible has often been pointed out by modern scholars.

Our evidence for the substitution of *kyrios* by the tetragram does not, at present, take us beyond the first century BC. We must therefore frankly admit that there is no sure way to link the beginnings of this process with Aristeas' floruit. But unlike previously proposed theories, the present suggestion rests on concrete textual evidence which is traceable to well within a century of Aristeas' day.