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LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6 as interpretation and translation : a methodological discussion

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CHAPTER 6 - LXX ISA 25 IN ITS OWN RIGHT

ISA 25:1-5: TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

- 1a: O Lord, my God, I will glorify you,
1b: I will sing to the praise of¹ your name
1c: because you have performed wonderful deeds, an ancient, true
plan
1d: May it be, o Lord²
2a: because you have turned cities into a mound
2b: fortified cities so that their foundation might fall
2c: the city of the ungodly will never ever be rebuilt
3a: Therefore, the poor people will praise you
3b: the cities of wronged men will praise you.
4a: for you became a helper to every humble city
4b: and a shelter to those who are feeling despondent because of
poverty.
4c: from evil men you will rescue them
4d: *as* a shelter for the thirsty ones
4e: *as* a breeze for the wronged men.
5a: like faint-hearted men (we are) thirsting in Zion because of
ungodly men

¹ In LXX Isa, a noun either in the accusative or dative case follows *ὑμνέω* (cf. Isa 12:4, 5; 25:1; 42:10). When an accusative noun follows, it is better to translate *ὑμνέω* as “to sing the praise of” as in the translation above. Examples of accusative nouns following *ὑμνέω* are also found in the papyri. A papyrus from 238 B.C.E. reads: *ὑμνεῖσθαι δ’ αὐτήν*, while another one from 165-164 B.C.E has *τούς τε θεούς ... καὶ τὸν δῆμον τὸν Ἀθηναίων ὑμνησεν*. See MM, 649.

² There is an unimportant difference in the translation of *γένοιτο*, which some translate simply as “amen” (cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:155; Coste, “Le texte grec,” 45; das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 165) while others as “may it be so” (cf. Brenton; NETS, LXX.D). This dissertation follows the latter convention.

5b: to whom you delivered us.

Isa 25:1-2

As it was discussed under “part 1” above, the translator’s choice of *δοξάζω* for *דָּוַד* is unusual. The analysis of the LXX Isa “in its own right” helps to clarify his choice. *Δοξάζω* appears here and at the end of 24:23 in the phrase *καὶ ἐνώπιον τῶν πρεσβυτέρων δοξασθήσεται*, where it refers to the *κύριος*’ glorification in Zion. In using *δοξάζω* in 25:1, the translator intended to join 25:1 with the preceding verses in 24:21-23. In MT, Isa 25:1’s link to Isa 24:23 is not immediately clear as different lexemes (*דָּוַד/דָּוִד*) are used thereof. Contrarily, *δοξάζω* makes the link between Isa 24:23; 25:1 clear. This connection indicates that LXX Isa 25:1-5 must be read in light of and in conjunction with LXX Isa 24:21-23. In contradistinction, MT Isa 24:21-23 is usually taken together with Isa 24:6-8.

Isa 25:1c introduces the reason (cf. *ὅτι*) for the praise in Isa 25:1a-b. The second person verb *ἐποίησας* continues the direct address to the *κύριος* that had been initiated in clauses 1a-b. The reason is that the *κύριος* performed *θαυμαστά πράγματα βουλήν ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινήν*. “Part 1” above already noted the single occurrence of *θαυμαστά πράγματα* in the LXX. How should *πράγματα* be understood? In its present context, *πράγματα* is best seen as referring to “deeds.” As it will be seen below, the content of *θαυμαστά πράγματα βουλήν ἀρχαίαν* is the overthrow of “fortified cities”/“the city of the ungodly.” The singular *βουλήν ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινήν* is in apposition to the plural *θαυμαστά πράγματα* as both phrases occur in the accusative case albeit as plural and singular. The parallelism between *πράγμα/βουλή* is not completely strange because the same parallelism occurs elsewhere.³ In Isa 25:1, *θαυμαστά πράγματα* is further qualified as a *βουλήν ἀρχαίαν ἀληθινήν*.

Part 1 above has noted that the translator’s pick of the singular *βουλή* for the plural *πῶς* is striking.⁴ The translator could have translated

³ cf. Prov 11:13: *ἀνὴρ δίγλωσσος ἀποκαλύπτει βουλὰς ἐν συνεδρίῳ πιστὸς δὲ πνοῇ κρύπτει πράγματα*.

⁴ The question as to whether the *βουλή* in LXX Isa 25:1 indicates the translator’s belief that “prophesying is the revelation of an age-old divine plan”

πυγ with the plural βουλάς just as he does when referring to human “counsels” (cf. Isa 41:21; 47:13; 55:7, 8). Furthermore, his use of the plural θαυμαστά πράγματα immediately preceding would have given him a good reason to continue to use plural βουλάς (cf. Prov 11:13: βουλάς/πράγματα). What is then the reason for the translator’s use of singular “counsel”? The answer is found in a harmonization with LXX Isa 14:26. Whereas both places mention a divine “counsel,” MT has “counsel” in Isa 14:26 and “counsels” in Isa 25:1. The “counsel” of Isa 14:26 is against the “whole world” and against “the nations of the world” (ἐπὶ τὴν οἰκουμένην ὀλην/ἐπὶ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη τῆς οἰκουμένης). As it has been noted, the literary context of Isa 25:1 shares with Isa 14:26 the use of οἰκουμένη for the translation of גְּוֹיִם (cf. Isa 24:1). Like in Isa 14:26, the Lord’s anger is directed against the οἰκουμένη (cf. Isa 24:1, 4). Equally remarkable is that Isa 14:16; 25:1-5, 6-8 share a negative view of the ἔθνη “nations” (cf. Isa 24:13 and comments above). The reason for this negative view has to do with the “nations” control over Jerusalem/Zion. Whereas Isa 14:22 proclaims that the Lord will drive the “Assyrians” from “my land,” in Isa 25:5 an unidentified “we” group complains that they are living under the oppression of “ungodly men,” another pejorative term for the “nations” mentioned in Isa 25:6-8. That the Lord’s βουλή is directed against the oppressors of Zion/Jerusalem becomes clear when one looks at the content of Isa 25:1’s βουλή.

The phrase γένοιτο κύριε deserves further attention. Whereas part 1 has noted that the translator read גְּוֵיִם instead of MT’s גְּוֹיִם, it is necessary to ask the question as to the literary function of γένοιτο κύριε. This phrase functions as a request directed to the Lord concerning the “deeds, plan” that he carried out. A “deed” is something that the Lord planned long ago (cf. e.g., Isa 28:22) that must be revealed or fulfilled. By inserting γένοιτο κύριε, the translator betrays his wish that the Lord’s “deed/plan” come true (cf. also Isa 25:7 discussed below). If this interpretation is correct, then a better explanation for γένοιτο κύριε is the translator’s interpretation of Isa 25:1 as referring to the Lord’s “ancient, plan/deed” that must be brought to fruition soon.

(cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version*, 110; see also van der Kooij, “Wie heißt der Messias?” 159) will be left out of discussion here because it is not important for the purposes of this dissertation. For a recent discussion of the issue, cf. Troxel, “ΒΟΥΛΗ,” 153-171.

The construction *ὅτι* + second person *ἔθνη* clearly indicate that the content of the *πράγματα/βουλή* concerns the collapse of “strong cities/the city of the ungodly” (Isa 25:2).⁵ In contrast to MT, LXX Isa 25:2 refers to “fortified cities” and to the “city of the ungodly.”⁶ LXX’s reference to the “city of the ungodly” is remarkable. Part 1 above has noted the LXX’s reading “ungodly” for the Hebrew “foreigner” and the suggestions of a different *Vorlage* and mistake on the translator’s part. There are two important questions needing to be asked here. First, how does the reading “ungodly” fit in its literary context? And, second, in view of LXX’s reference to “cities” in Isa 25:1-b, it is important to research further whether the translator had a specific “city” in mind. As for the first question, it must be noted the theme of the judgment of the *ἀσεβής* plays an important role in LXX Isa 24-26. As it has been seen, Isa 24:8 proclaims the cessation of the “ungodly” arrogance and wealth. It will be seen below that Isa 25:5 mentions the “ungodly” as a group that has control over “Zion.” In a complete reworking of the Hebrew Isa 26:10 (יען רשע), LXX Isa 26:10 declared that the “ungodly has ceased” (*πέπαυται γὰρ ὁ ἀσεβής/ἀρθήτω ὁ ἀσεβής*) with very similar terms to LXX Isa 24:8 (*πέπαυται αὐθάδεια καὶ πλοῦτος ἀσεβῶν*). Finally, LXX Isa 26:19, in contrast to MT’s “the land of the dead will fall” (וארץ רפאים תפיל), LXX has “the land of the ungodly will fall” (*ἡ δὲ γῆ τῶν ἀσεβῶν πεσεῖται*). It becomes clear that “ungodly” in Isa 25:2 was hardly fortuitous. Rather, it indicates that the translator himself introduced the “ungodly” here.⁷ It reflects his interest on the theme of the *ἀσεβής* (cf. Isa 24:8 [עליזים]; 25:5 [זרים]; 26:10 [רשע]; 26:19 [רפאים]). Most important for purposes, it points to a “higher level” interpretation that took Hebrew Isa 24-26 as a reference to certain “ungodly” men (cf. also Isa 25:4-5), in a move that most likely preceded his translation.

⁵ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 46; das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 166; van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 43; idem, “Theologie,” 16; idem, “Wie heißt der Messias?” 159.

⁶ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 46.

⁷ cf. CTAT, 2:178; van der Kooij, “Isaiah 24-27,” 13. One could still argue, in line with Liebmann (cf. “Der Text,” 255-256), that the translator’s *Vorlage* also read זדים in Isa 25:5; 29:5. The weakness of that proposal, however, is that it lacks support from ancient witnesses.

As for the “city of the ungodly” in the singular, it has been correctly put forward that the “city” in question was important. The events in LXX Isa 24 take place on the “inhabited world” (cf. Isa 24:1: οἰκουμένη) and the translator’s use of τῶν ἀσεβῶν (Isa 25:2) recalls the reference to the “ungodly” (ἀσεβῶν) of LXX Isa 24:8. The latter makes clear that the ἀσεβεῖς “are the ungodly, rich and powerful” of Isa 24:8. The “city of the ungodly” must, thus, be an important, powerful city ruling over the οἰκουμένη. A city such as this is best identified as the city of Babylon (cf. LXX Isa 13; 47). First, the picture of the “city” that will never be rebuilt (LXX Isa 25:2) is in line with the picture of Babylon, which will never be inhabited (cf. LXX Isa 13:20). And, second, as in LXX Isa 24:8; 25:2, the concept of the ἀσεβεῖς being punished appears also in LXX Isa 13:11.⁸ Thus, it is safe to conclude that the “city of the ungodly” is a reference to the important “city” of Babylon.⁹

Isa 24:2 proclaims that Babylon city will “never ever be rebuilt.” First, the expression τὸν αἰῶνα, when used with a negative, conveys the idea of “never ever.”¹⁰ Most translations employ the expression “forever” but this translation does not communicate well the idea behind τὸν αἰῶνα in this context.¹¹ And, second, the sense of τὸν αἰῶνα as “never ever” indicates that οἰκοδομέω must be translated as “to rebuild.”¹²

Part 1 above has noted that LXX Isa 25:2a-b mention “cities” instead of MT’s “city/town.” The question was raised as to whether the translator’s *Vorlage* already contained the plural “cities.” The analysis of LXX Isa 25:2 in the light of its own literary context strongly suggests that the translator himself was responsible for inserting the plural “cities” in place of the singular “city.” The plural “cities” in Isa 25:2 is best explained in the light of Isa 24:10, 12, where LXX has “cities” for MT’s

⁸ cf. van der Kooij, “The Cities of Isaiah 24-27,” 193.

⁹ Against van Menxel, *Ελπίς*, 254, who in passing identified the “city of the ungodly” with Jerusalem.

¹⁰ cf. GELS, 19. See also das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 165: “jamais;” LXX.D: “gewiss nie mehr.”

¹¹ cf. Brenton; Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:155; NETS.

¹² cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 45: “La cité des impies pour l’Éternité ne sera pas *rebâtie*” (italics ours).

singular “city.”¹³ Furthermore, the plural πόλεις ὀχυράς for the singular קריה נשגבה appears again for the singular קריה בצורה in Isa 26:5.¹⁴ In Isa 24-26, the “fortified cities” contrast with the “fortified city” (πόλις ὀχυρά) in Isa 26:1. Finally, the collapse of the “fortified cities” contrast with the “cities of ill-treated men” in Isa 25:3, where MT once again reads “city of the violent nations.” When taken as a text in its own right, it becomes clear that the translator had a particular “higher level” interpretation of his *Vorlage*, which focused on the plural “cities” in contrast to MT’s singular “city.”

It is also important to note the translator’s use of πίπτω here and in 24:23 above. The use of πίπτω connects Isa 25:2 and 24:23 together and indicates that the κύριος’ rule in Zion must be preceded by the collapse of the “wall” (τὸ τεῖχος, 24:23) and, more radically, of the “foundations” (τὰ θεμέλια, 25:2) of the “strong cities.” As in the case of δοξάζω (25:1) above, the link between 24:23; 25:2 is not clear in MT as Isa 24:23 does not refer to the fall of a city wall like in the LXX. The translator’s pick of πίπτω in 24:23; 25:2, compound with his use of τὸ τεῖχος in 24:23, betrays his intention to talk about the collapse of “fortified cities” in connection with the κύριος’ rule in Zion.

25:3-4

In contrast with the “fortified cities” and the “city of the ungodly” in 25: 2, the present section focuses on the “poor people” and “the cities of wronged men” (v. 3). The double occurrence of the expression “wronged men” (ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων) indicates that Isa 25:3-4 should be seen as a unit. Furthermore, the conjunction γάρ (25:4) links vv. 3-4 together. Isa 25:3-4, however, is not completely detached from Isa 25:1-2. First, the phrase διὰ τοῦτο (v. 3) clearly ties Isa 25:3-4 with 25:1-2. It also makes clear that the collapse of the “fortified cities” and of “a city of the ungodly” (v. 2) is the reason for the praise in v. 3. And, second, as it will be seen below, Isa 25:3-4 continues vv. 1-2’s emphasis on “cities,” even though those “cities” are of a different kind.

¹³ cf. Liebmann, “Der Text,” 254.

¹⁴ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 40; van der Kooij, “The Cities of Isaiah 24-27,” 192; idem, “Interpretation of the Book of Isaiah,” 63.

Isa 25:3-4 must, thus, be taken as a well-knit unit that relates to Isa 25:1-2.

It is important to note Isa 25:3's introduction of the "poor." Part 1 above remarked that scholars have seen the reading "poor" as a mistake. However, it is clear that the translator introduced "poor" intentionally. The reading "poor" fits in well in its literary context. It parallels the ideas behind "wronged men" (v. 3), "every humble city" (v. 4), "those who are feeling despondent" (v. 4), and "faint-hearted men" (v. 5). Besides, the theme of the liberation of the "poor" will appear again in Isa 26:6 below. As such, rather than being fortuitous, "poor" was the result of a particular interpretation of the Hebrew in a move that most certainly preceded the process of translation.

Isa 25:4 presents a few interpretive difficulties. The first problem is to understand the function of the non-verbal clause *καὶ τοῖς ἀθυμήσασιν διὰ ἔνδειαν σκέπη*. Brenton inserted the phrase "*thou hast been*" in italics in his translation of v. 4, which reveals his understanding that clause 4e is a continuation of the *ἔγένου* clause in v. 4a by means of ellipsis. As the repetition of *σκέπη* and the thematic parallelism between vv. 4b,e make his proposal highly plausible, it has been followed here. The sense is that God became a "helper" and a "breeze" to the oppressed.

Another problem is the syntactical function of the phrases *σκέπη διψώντων* and *πνεῦμα ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων*. Ottley and NETS took *σκέπη* and *πνεῦμα* as nominatives, producing a translation in which clauses 4d-e appear unconnected to its surrounding context.¹⁵ Coste, das Neves, and LXX.D seem to have taken *σκέπη* and *πνεῦμα* in apposition to the addressee in *ῥύση* (25:4c).¹⁶ This option is also recommendable on contextual grounds. The direct address in the preceding clause v. 4c would support taking clauses v. 4d-e as a continuation of that direct address. However, it seems more appropriate to take *σκέπη* and *πνεῦμα* as nominatives and insert the comparative "as" to indicate the manner in

¹⁵ cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:155; NETS; Coste, "Le texte grec," 45.

¹⁶ cf. Coste, "Le texte grec," 45, whose capitalization of "Souffle" indicates that he understood clauses 4d-e to be addressed to God. See also das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 165: "tu que és;" LXX.D: "(du)."

which the “you” of clause 4c will save “them.” That is to say, the “you” will save them “as” or in the quality of a “shelter” and a “breeze.”

In short, LXX Isa 25:3-4 may be described as the poor’s praise for their liberation from the oppressive powers of the “fortified cities” mentioned in Isa 25:2. First, that the translator wanted to emphasize the theme of praise is clear from his double use of εὐλογέω instead of MT ירא/כבד (cf. 25:3). Second, contrarily to MT, LXX Isa 25:3-4 focuses on the oppressed as several expressions therein indicate. The phrase ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός “the poor people” (v. 3a; cf. MT: יַעֲמֵע “a strong people”) parallels in terms of content τοῖς ἀθυμήσασιν διὰ ἔνδειαν “those who are feeling despondent because of poverty” (v. 4; cf. part 1 for the relationship between MT and LXX here). Similarly, πόλεις ἀδικουμένων “cities of wronged men” (v. 3b; cf. MT: קרית גוים עריצים “the city of violent nations”) matches πάση πόλει ταπεινῇ “every humble city” (v. 4a; cf. part 1 of the present work for the relationship between MT and LXX here). Also, the phrase ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων occurs twice (cf. v. 3b; 4e). It has been correctly argued that the translator employed ἀδικ-words to refer to Israel’s oppressors.¹⁷ The language of oppression pervades LXX Isa 25: cf. “the poor people,” “every humble city,” “the ones thirsting,” “faint-hearted men,” and ὄνειδος (cf. comments on this word below). And, finally, the picture of oppression is also present in the term διψώντων “the thirsty ones” (v. 4d). In light of the above, it is clear that LXX Isa 25:3-4 contains the praise of the oppressed in view of the collapse of the “fortified cities” (Isa 25:2). Thus, the theme of liberation from oppression is clear in LXX Isa 25:3-4. The question arises as to the identity of the oppressors.

The oppressors must be identified with the “fortified cities” and “Babylon” mentioned in LXX Isa 25:2. First, the “humble cities” (v. 4a) sharply contrasts with the “fortified cities” in v. 2b. Second, the adverse fate of the “fortified cities” (v. 2a-b) prompts the praise of the “poor people” and the “cities of wronged men” in v. 3a-b. Finally, the expression ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων πονηρῶν “from evil men” designate members of the “city of the ungodly (τῶν ἀσεβῶν πόλις) in v. 2 as the concepts “evil men” and “ungodly” are ideologically parallel (cf. Prov 24:20). Having established the identity of the oppressors, a further question

¹⁷ cf. Olley, “‘Righteousness’,” 122.

arises concerning the interpretation of the picture of the oppressed. Should the “oppressed” be interpreted in religious, almost metaphorical, or in material terms? Or should it be read as a combination of both aspects?

Coste took *πτωχός*, *ἀδικούμενοι*, *ταπεινός*, *διψῶντες*, and *ὀλιγόψυχοι* as a sign of spiritual poverty or humility, an attitude he believed Judaism had developed. Although he proceeded to a discussion of each one of the terms above, his perception of *πτωχός* became central to him. For Coste, *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός* denotes a pious people deprived from human security, which counts only on God.¹⁸ He contrasted *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός* with the “fortified cities” and interpreted the latter in a metaphorical way: the “fortified cities” are cities that arrogantly rely on their own power. In the same fashion, Coste viewed *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός* as a metaphor, indicating spiritual poverty.¹⁹ He then interpreted the other terms in a similar way.

Coste explained *ἀδικούμενοι* as an epithet of the vocabulary of suffering that is applied to the Israelite community.²⁰ And as the term *ἀδικούμενοι* corresponds to *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός*, Coste read *ἀδικούμενοι* as pointing to the misery of the Jewish community.²¹ As for *ταπεινός* in *πόλει ταπεινῇ* (25:4), Coste asserted it designated pious Israel that is object of divine rescue and that searches for no defender other than God. Das Neves accorded with Coste and claimed that *ταπεινῇ* and *βοηθός* are not used in a political but in a religious sense.²² Similarly, Coste interpreted *διψῶντες* in a metaphorical, spiritual manner, indicating a passionate people whose desire is the rescue that only God will be able to

¹⁸ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 53: “On est donc invité à voir dans le peuple « pauvre » un peuple pieux dépourvu de secours humain, ne comptant que sur Dieu.”

¹⁹ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 52-53.

²⁰ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 53: “Là encore nous nous trouvons sans doute en présence d’une de ces innombrables épithètes du vocabulaire de souffrance que s’applique volontiers la communauté israélite.”

²¹ Although Coste refers to “Israelite community,” it is clear that he has in mind the Judaism of the 2nd B.C.E. as he refers to it on p. 51.

²² cf. das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 171.

satisfy.²³ Coste also interpreted the term *ὀλιγόψυχοι* “faint-hearted” (v. 5) as expressing those who are humble in their soul, rightly comparing the *ὀλιγόψυχοι* with the *διψῶντες* and the *ἀδικούμενοι* of vv. 3-4. It becomes clear from the review above that Coste interpreted the reference to *πτωχός* and the like in a spiritual, metaphorical way.

The picture of the oppressed in LXX Isa 25:3-4 does not need, however, to be interpreted only metaphorically. Instead, the immediate context recommends a more material interpretation of the oppressed. As argued above, the [“fortified cities”] and “the city of the ungodly” are better interpreted as a reference to “Babylon.” Furthermore, although v. 5 will be taken apart from vv. 3-4, it introduces a comparison (cf. *ὡς*) between the situation of the “we” in that verse with the situation of the oppressed in vv. 4-5. Like the oppressed, the “we” of v. 5 declares that they have been “delivered” into the hands of the “ungodly men.” As it will be argued below, this deliverance is concrete and not spiritual or metaphorical.

Moreover, some of the terms Coste interpreted metaphorically can actually denote a more concrete situation. For instance, *διψάω* or cognate and *ἀθυμέω* are both used to signify people who had become thirsty and discouraged because of the siege of their city (cf. Judith 7:22, 25). In that same context, *βοηθός* “helper” and *βοήθεια* “help” indicate a real liberation from a siege (cf. Judith 7:25, 31). Even the term *ὀλιγόψυχος* “faint-hearted” denotes a city’s citizen’s psychological estate due to the siege of their city (cf. Judith 7:19: *ὀλιγοψυχέω*).

Finally, the translator’s use of *δι’ ἔνδειαν* demonstrates that the cause of the despair of the “poor people” (cf. *ἀθυμέω*, v. 4) is the lack of access to food. Though *ἔνδεια* appears only here in LXX Isa, the majority of its occurrences in the rest of the LXX denotes famine or hunger (cf. Deut 28:20, 57; Amos 4:6; Job 30:3; Sirach 18:25; Eze 4:16; 12:19). In light of the reference to “fortified cities” and the “city of the ungodly” in v. 2, it is safe to conclude that the inhabitants of the “humble cities” (v. 4) became poor because they were under the oppressive control of the “strong cities.”

²³ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 53-55.

As the context of LXX Isa 25:3-4 is the collapse of “fortified cities” and of “the city of the ungodly” (v. 2) and the liberation of “humble cities,” I submit that the picture of “being poor,” “being thirsty,” “humble,” “discouraged,” and “faint-hearted” all designate a political situation of misery or oppression that was caused by the “fortified cities” and Babylon’s control. The references to God as a “helper,” “refuge,” and “breath” all denote a concrete deliverance that God brought or would bring about through his destruction of the “fortified cities” in v. 2. LXX Isa 25:3-4 is better seen as reflecting a more concrete background.

25:5

LXX Isa 25:5 presents a text-critical issue that has a direct bearing on its interpretation. S A’-26 Q^{mg} and a number of catenae attest to the reading *εὐλογησουσιν σε*, whereas BQ^{xl}L lack it.²⁴ Swete and Ziegler’s critical editions considered *εὐλογησουσιν σε* as a secondary reading, whereas Rahlfs took it as original. The same disagreement holds true in translations. Whereas Coste and das Neves took *εὐλογησουσιν σε* as original, Brenton, Ottley, NETS, LXX.D saw it as secondary.²⁵ This divergence in the manuscript tradition and in scholarly literature calls for further discussion on the originality of *εὐλογησουσιν σε*.

The originality of *εὐλογησουσιν σε* depends on the weight one assigns to Q. Ziegler viewed Q as the best witness to the original LXX text of Isa. In comparison with A, Q transmits the original LXX text

²⁴ cf. Ziegler, *Isaias*.

²⁵ cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:155: “[shall bless thee]; Coste, “Le texte grec,” 45: “ils te béniront”; das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 165: “(Bendire-te-ão).” As seen above, Ottley thought the absence of *εὐλογήσουσιν σε* in B, Q was a possible mistake in light of v. 3. Despite das Neve’s translation within parentheses, he apparently considered *εὐλογήσουσιν σε* as original. In his comments on v. 5, he followed Coste closely, reproducing extensive excerpts from the latter, including comments on *εὐλογήσουσιν σε* (cf. das Neves, *A Teologia da Tradução Grega*, 170-173).

more reliably and is almost completely free from Hexaplaric additions.²⁶ Contrarily, Ziegler pointed out that A contains several secondary readings whose cause lies in the influence of related phraseology from elsewhere in Isa, from LXX 2 Kings 18:13-20:19 in A Isa 36-39, or even from the New Testament. Besides, A contains more Hexaplaric readings than Q, a fact discernible in additions found in A that also occur with an asterisk in Hexaplaric recensions.²⁷ It was Ziegler's justifiable predilection for Q over A and the former's non-attestation of *ευλογησουσιν σε* that led him to consider the phrase under discussion as secondary.

The absence of *ευλογησουσιν σε* in Q^{txt} is difficult to elucidate. Ottley suggested that Q and B omitted it as a probable confusion with the end of v. 3.²⁸ However, his suggestion is unlikely as an explanation for an omission and it would be more appropriate to explain an addition. Considering that Q^{txt} is the best witness to the Alexandrian group, it seems that Q^{txt} non-attestation of *ευλογησουσιν σε* is a strong argument to consider the latter as secondary in line with Ziegler's critical judgment.

Furthermore, it can be easily argued that *ευλογησουσιν σε* in both S and A' was the result of a later scribe's addition influenced by the same phrase in 25:3 to clarify what would be the original difficult reading of v. 5: *ὡς ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι διψῶντες ἐν Σιων ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀσεβῶν οἷς ἡμᾶς παρέδωκας*. The reading *ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων*, appearing in both vv. 3, 4, could have led the scribe to insert *ευλογησουσιν σε* after *ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων* in v. 4 in analogy with v. 3. For the reasons above, this dissertation has decided to follow LXX Isa 25:5 as presented in Ziegler's critical edition.²⁹

The phrase *ὡς ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι διψῶντες ἐν Σιων* "like faint-hearted men, (we are) thirsting in Zion" calls for further discussion. Translations differ in their interpretation of v. 5a. Brenton translated as

²⁶ cf. Ziegler, *Isaias*, 29. Ziegler pointed to *καὶ ἀνταποδώσω* (= α' σ') and *καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν μετ' αὐτῶν* (= σ' θ') in Isa 65:6, 23 respectively as the only two cases of Hexaplaric additions in Q.

²⁷ cf. Ziegler, *Isaias*, 27-29.

²⁸ cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:155, n. 4.

²⁹ cf. Ziegler, *Isaias*.

“*We were* as faint-hearted men thirsting in Sion.” His translation with “we were” is supported by the phrase “to whom you delivered us” at the end of the verse. While Ottley, NETS, and LBA followed v. 5 closely, “like faint-hearted persons thirsting in Sion,” LXX.D offered a more nuanced view of v. 5a: “(Sie sind) wie *kleinmütige Menschen*, (wie wir,) *die wir Durst leiden in Sion durch gottlose Menschen*.” As is clear from the translation above, LXX.D took ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι as another title for the poor, oppressed people in vv. 3-4, while viewing a “we” group as the subject of διψῶντες. For LXX.D, v. 5 offers a comparison of the situation of the “we” with the situation of the poor, oppressed people in vv. 3-4. Among the translations above, LXX.D seems to offer the best interpretation of v. 5.

The comparative particle ὡς further supports LXX.D’s interpretation. This particle indicates that a comparison is meant. In the light of the reference to the “we” at the end of v. 5, it becomes clear that a comparison between the situation of the “we” with the situation of “them” (cf. v. 4) was intended. As the ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι and ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων of vv. 3-4, the “we” of v. 5 also finds itself in a situation of oppression. They are “thirsting in Zion because of ungodly men” because they were delivered to them. Thus, it is reasonable to take the “we” group as the subject of διψῶντες.

Further support is found in the translator’s use of διψάω (v. 5). This lexical choice recalls the use of the same verb in the phrase σκέπη διψώντων (v. 4). The purpose of διψάω is to compare the “we” with the “they” groups of vv. 4-5. Like “them,” the “we” group is thirsting in Zion. Similarly, the phrase ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων ἀσεβῶν parallels ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων πονηρῶν (v. 4). Clearly, the translator intended a comparison between the “we” and “them.” As v. 4 declared that the κύριος would rescue “them” from “evil men,” the “we” group finds themselves in a similar situation, under the oppression of “ungodly men.” Ὡς (v. 5) points out to a comparison of the present situation of the “we” group with that of the “them” in order to ask the κύριος for liberation in light of the liberation that he would give to the “them” (vv. 3-4).

Part 1 above has gone over divergent explanations for the phrase ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι and for scholar’s suggestion that the phrase “in Zion” was the result of confusion. Before one can ascertain how the

translator arrived at a particular reading, it is important to find out its function in its own literary context. The phrase *ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι* “faint-hearted men” should be taken as a parallel to *ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων* “wronged men” (vv. 3, 4), *τοῖς ἀθυμήσασιν δι’ ἔνδειαν* “those who are feeling despondent because of poverty” (v. 4), and, by extension, to *ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός* “the poor people.”³⁰ As argued above, the situation of oppression in vv. 3-4 is concrete and it relates to the oppressive powers of the “fortified cities” and “the city of the ungodly” (v. 2). Although the adjective *ὀλιγόψυχος* appears only three other times in Isa (cf. 35:4; 54:6; 57:15), the verb *ὀλιγοψυχέω* occurs eleven times in the LXX (cf. Num 21:4; Judg 8:4; 10:16; 16:16 (also in the A text); Judith 7:19; 8:9; Ps 76:4; Sir 4:9; 7:10; Jon 4:8). It is important to note that physical hunger may lead to the state of being *ὀλιγόψυχος* in Judges 8:4: *ὀλιγοψυχοῦντες καὶ πεινῶντες* “being faint-hearted and hungry.” In Judith 7:19; 8:9, the inhabitants of Baityloua become *ὀλιγόψυχοι* because their city’s siege had cut out their water access. Similarly, the condition of being *ὀλιγόψυχος* in Isa 25:5 denotes both physical and mental conditions. The “strong cities” (v. 2) oppressive control over the “humble cities” (v. 4) probably prevented the latter from access to vital supplies, causing them to become poor physically and mentally. In this sense, the phrase *ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι* correspond in meaning to the picture of being poor and oppressed in vv. 3-4.

The analysis above casts an important light on how the translator arrived at *ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι*. He reasoned based on the literary context of Isa 25:1-5. As seen above, *ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι* must be seen as motivated by the immediate context’s emphasis on *ἀνθρώπων ἀδικουμένων* (cf. v. 4[2x]).³¹ Realizing that the translator reasoned from the context helps to explain the link between *ἄνθρωποι ὀλιγόψυχοι διψῶντες ἐν Σιών* with its probable source-text. It becomes clear that the whole phrase “like faint-hearted men (we are) thirsting in Zion” was an interpretation of *בזרם קיר כחרב בציון* “like heavy rain against the wall, like heat in a dry land” in the translator’s *Vorlage*. Rather than being the result of confusion, LXX’s reading was the result of a careful “high level” interpretation of the H that paid considerable attention to the immediate literary context.

³⁰ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 56.

³¹ cf. Coste, “Le texte grec,” 44.

The expression ἐν Σιων “in Zion” (MT: בצִיּוֹן) is important. As discussed in part 1 above, it has been suggested that ἐν Σιων resulted from a mistake due to the rarity of צִיּוֹן “desert” in the Tanach.³² Although a superficial comparison between MT and LXX may lead to such a conclusion, when the LXX is analyzed in detail, paying attention to its immediate context, another explanation becomes more appropriate. The phrase ἐν Σιων recalls the same expression in LXX Isa 24:23, where it translates בהר צִיּוֹן. There it is said that the κύριος “will reign in Zion.” The picture of the Lord reigning in Zion sharply contrasts with the situation of suffering of the “we” group in Zion. In using ἐν Σιων in v. 5, the translator betrays his expectation that the Lord’s rule in Zion should come true to solve the burdensome condition of his group. Furthermore, the phrase “on this mountain,” which can only refer to Zion, will appear three more times in Isa 25:6-7, 10. These verses depict the “nations” as controlling Zion, while v. 10 celebrates its liberation from its oppressors. Furthermore, “Zion” is depicted as oppressed in Isa 32:2. There, “Zion” is depicted as “a thirsty land” (cf. ἐν Σιων//ἐν γῆ διψώσῃ, MT: בארץ//בצִיּוֹן עֵיפָה), awaiting the appearance of the “man” who will restore it. Isa 25:5 shares a similar theme, in that the “ones thirsting in Zion” implies that Zion is under the oppression of an alien rule (cf. Isa 25:6-8). The translator’s request that the Lord solve his situation (cf. Isa 25:7) shows that Zion there too needs to be restored.³³ Ἐν Σιων must, therefore, be seen not as an accident but as the result of the translator’s unique reading of his *Vorlage* and of his will to produce a coherent text.³⁴

The translator’s expectation that the Lord brings an end to the suffering of the “we” can also be seen in the phrase οἷς ἡμᾶς παρέδωκας. The verbal form παρέδωκας continues the direct address to the κύριος that had started with ἐποίησας in v. 2. In the immediate context of vv. 3-4, παρέδωκας contrasts sharply in meaning with ῥύσῃ. Whereas God will save the “them” from “evil men” (v. 4), God delivered in the past the “we” to “ungodly men” (v. 5). As vv. 3-4 foresee a time when God

³² cf. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 190.

³³ For a helpful discussion of the relation between Isa 25:5; 32:2, cf. van der Kooij, “Rejoice, O Thirsty Desert!” 19-20.

³⁴ cf. Koenig, *L’herméneutique*, 147, who correctly saw evidence in LXX’s reading “in Zion” for a methodical treatment of homographs.

would deliver the oppressed from the oppressive control of the “evil men,” the translator’s use of “to whom you delivered us” points to his expectation that God would likewise deliver the “we” group.

Part 1 of the present work has shown that the phrase “to whom you delivered us” either has no counterpart in MT or is somewhat linked to תכניע. It is important now to discuss how this phrase fits in its literary context. Ziegler saw possible influences from Ps 27:12; 41:3.³⁵ However, it is more likely that the translator interpreted Isa 25:5 in the light of Isa 64:6(7): *καὶ παρέδωκας ἡμᾶς διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν* “you have delivered us because of our sins”/ *ותמוגנו ביד-עוננו* “you have made us waste because of our sins.”³⁶ The context of Isa 64 is similar to Isa 25. Both places depict God’s people as living under the oppression of “ungodly men,” “nations” or “adversaries” (cf. Isa 25:5, 6-8; 63:18-19). By using the phrase “to whom you delivered us” in Isa 25:5, the translator betrayed the “conditions of his own time.”³⁷ Namely, that he was living under the oppressive rule of the “ungodly men,” who had control over “Zion” (cf. Isa 25:5, 6-8).

ISA 25:6-12: TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY

- 6a: And the Lord Sabaoth will deal with all the nations on this mountain
 6b: They will drink joy,
 6c: they will drink wine,
 6d: they will anoint themselves with ointment³⁸
 7a: On this mountain, deliver all these things to the nations
 7b: for this *is* the counsel against all the nations.³⁹

³⁵ cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 117

³⁶ cf. van der Kooij, “Rejoice, O Thirsty Desert!” 18.

³⁷ cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version*, 112.

³⁸ There is a disagreement in the text critical editions of Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: is est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1979) and Ziegler, *Isaias*, as to the placement of the phrase “on this mountain” (2x) and “they will anoint themselves with ointment.” The latter was taken as belonging to v. 6 in this dissertation (see more comments below).

- 8a: Death, having become strong, swallowed [the nations] up
 8b: and, on the other hand, God took away every tear from every face
 8c: he took away the disgrace of the people from the face of the earth
 8d: for the mouth of the Lord spoke.
 9a: And they will say on that day:
 9b: “Look, our God, in whom we hoped
 9c: and rejoiced in our salvation.”
 10a: because God will give rest on this mountain,
 10b: and Moabitis shall be trampled down,
 10c: as they trample a threshing floor with wagons
 11a: and he will let his hands free
 11b: and like as he himself humbled to destroy
 11c: and he will humble his pride
 11d: on the things which he laid the hands.
 12a: and he will make your high defense wall low⁴⁰
 12b: and it will come down as far as the ground.

25:6

There is a disagreement among critical editions on the position of *χρίσονται μύρον*, which Ziegler took as the beginning of v. 7 and Rahlfs as the end of v. 6. Rahlfs' clause division is highly commendable because *χρίσονται* agrees in person and number with *πίονται* (2x) preceding it. As such, in this dissertation, the phrase *χρίσονται μύρον ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ* will be taken as the end of v. 6.

Καὶ ποιήσει κύριος σαβαωθ πᾶσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο (v. 6a). The third person reference to the *κύριος* (cf. *ποιήσει κύριος* in v. 6a) clearly points to a break with 25:1-5, which addressed the *κύριος* directly throughout. Besides, the future *ποιήσει* with the *κύριος* as the subject indicates that 25:6a must be read in conjunction with Isa 24:23, where

³⁹ The phrase *ἡ βουλή αὐτή* can be taken either in an attributive “this counsel” (cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:157; NETS) or predicative sense “this is the counsel” (cf. Brenton; LXX.D). For an unambiguous case of an attributive sense of the phrase *ἡ βουλή αὐτή*, cf. LXX Isa 7:7.

⁴⁰ For this translation, cf. GELS, 387.

the κύριος also appears as the subject of future verbs (cf. βασιλεύσει/δοξασθήσεται). A further link with 24:23 is the phrase ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο “on this mountain,” clearly referring to Zion (ἐν Σιων) in 24:23.⁴¹ But LXX Isa 25:6 is not completely unconnected to 25:1-5. First, the phrase “on this mountain” (vv. 6-7) clearly refers to ἐν Σιων that also appears in 25:5. Second, the picture of abundant drink (v. 6; cf. πίονται [2x]) contrasts with the image of thirst in 25:4-5 (cf. διψάω). And, third, both pericopae share the use of παραδίωμι (cf. vv. 5, 7). Thus, LXX Isa 25:6-8 must be read in conjunction with both 24:23; 25:1-5.

In his commentary on LXX Isa, Eusebius of Caesarea captured well v. 6’s problem when he asked after quoting v. 6: τί δὲ ποιήσει “what will he do?” In fact, some time before Eusebius, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion had already felt this problem, seen in their addition of the Greek πότον: “drinking-party; drink.”⁴² In taking ποιέω as “to do, make,” most translations are forced to add a word or two to clarify the clause καὶ ποιήσει κύριος σαβαωθ πάσι τοῖς ἔθνεσιν. Brenton and NETS translate “and the Lord Sabaoth will make [a feast] for all nations,” while Ottley and LXX.D simply add “it” or “etwas.”⁴³ However, the verb ποιέω followed by a noun in the dative may convey the idea of “treating sbd in a certain way” or “dealing with someone” (cf. Isa 5:4).⁴⁴ It is in this sense that LXX Isa 25:6a must be interpreted.⁴⁵ The advantage of the translation proposed here is the needlessness of providing an object for the verb ποιέω, as in the case of most translations above.

As argued above, ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο “on this mountain” is a reference to mount Zion and also to Jerusalem (cf. 25:5; 24:23; also LXX

⁴¹ cf. already Eusebius of Caesarea’s comments on LXX Isa 25:6 in J. Ziegler, *Der Jesajakommentar* (Eusebius Werke: Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller; Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1975), 9:162, l. 29-36.

⁴² cf. Ziegler, *Der Jesajakommentar*, 162, l. 26-27.

⁴³ cf. Brenton; Ottley, 1:157; NETS; LXX.D.

⁴⁴ cf. GELS, 569 for more examples of ποιέω + dative in the sense of “treating sbd in a certain way.” The reader will also see there that the most common construction for the sense above is ποιέω + accusative.

⁴⁵ cf. Liebmann, “Der Text,” 266 had noted that the same nuance is true for the H: “לִּישָׁע muss er in folgedessen im Sinne von „verfahren mit“ nehmen.”

Isa 10:12). The translation of 25:6a as “the Lord will deal with the nations on this mountain” raises the question as to whether this “dealing” was meant in a positive or negative manner. The answer to this question will become clearer in the rest of the discussion on vv. 6-8.

Πίνονται εὐφροσύνην πίνονται οἶνον χρίσονται μύρον (v. 6b-d). The plural verbs in these clauses clearly have the plural “nations” (ἔθνεσιν) in 25:6a as their subject. The expressions “they will drink joy, they will drink wine” sharply contrast with the picture of thirst in vv. 4-5. While the “we” group is thirsting in Zion under the oppression of the “ungodly” (v. 5), the nations will be holding rich banquets in the same mountain. The expression “to drink joy” must be seen as an intentional hyperbole to single out the picture of overabundant joy that pervades vv.6b-d. It is interesting to note that “joy and wine” often occur together as the latter is the source of the former. A similar expression to “drink joy, to drink wine” appears in Jdt 12:13: *πίεσαι μεθ’ ἡμῶν εἰς εὐφροσύνην οἶνον* “you will drink wine with us for joy” (cf. also Jdt 12:17; Sir 31:28; Isa 22:13). Thus, the translator’s introduction of *εὐφροσύνη* was clearly not an accident but carefully thought-out in analogy with the reference to “wine” further in v. 6.

The expression *χρίω μύρον* occurs only three times in the LXX (cf. Jdt 10:3; Amos 6:6; Isa 25:6). Amos 6:6 is important because it shows that the drinking of wine and the anointing with ointment may belong together. As such, it is not surprising to find a reference to “anointing with ointment” in LXX Isa 25:6 in light of the previous mention of “drinking wine.” Taken together, *πίνονται εὐφροσύνην πίνονται οἶνον χρίσονται μύρον* paint a very positive picture for the nations. For a little while, the nations will hold rich banquets on mount Zion. Despite the seemingly positive tone of v. 6b-d, it will become clear below that the nations’ activities on mount Zion will be short lived.

25:7

Ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ παράδος ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἔθνεσιν (v. 7a). The phrase *ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ* recalls *ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο* in v. 6a above, indicating that the mountain in question is Zion. *Ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ* also points to an important link between vv. 6, 7. As v. 6 refers to the Lord’s future handling of the nations “on this mountain,” v. 7 emphatically

urges the Lord to “deliver these things to the nations” on the same mountain.

As for παράδος “deliver,” I. L. Seeligmann argued that the imperative addresses the prophet because “it is his task to make God’s plan known to the nations.”⁴⁶ However, the immediate context lacks any evidence that the prophet was being addressed. Rather, the singular direct address παράδος must be seen as addressing the κύριος. Παράδος recalls the second person sing. παρέδωκας at the end of v. 5. In view of the use of second person singular verbs in vv. 1-4 directed at the κύριος (cf. v. 1: ἐποίησας; v. 2: ἔθηκας; v. 4: ἐγένου; v. 5: παρέδωκας), it is clear that the addressee of παρέδωκας is also the κύριος. Thus, παράδος (25:7) should likewise be seen as a direct address to the κύριος.

What would then be the identity of the addresser? The addresser of the κύριος is a member of the group referred to in the “we” (ἡμᾶς, v. 5) and the “I” speaker in v. 1. After having told the κύριος that he was suffering in Zion because the κύριος had delivered (παρέδωκας) him and his group into the hands of the “ungodly” (v. 5), the “I” speaker addresses the κύριος directly in v. 7 and asks him to deliver (παράδος) “all these things to the nations.”

The phrase ταῦτα πάντα “these things” deserves further attention. To what does it refer? Ταῦτα πάντα refers to the “drinking” picture in v. 6, which immediately precedes v. 7a. In 25:7, the phrase ταῦτα πάντα parallels ἡ βουλή αὕτη in 25:7b. It is important to note then that “drinking” of the nations in v. 6 is the content of the Lord’s “counsel” “against” or “concerning” (see below) the nations. The addresser in v. 7 is thus asking the Lord to carry out his βουλή. Is the “drinking” picture to be taken in a negative or positive sense?

The main question of v. 7 is whether the βουλή is “against” or “concerning” the nations as the preposition ἐπί can be taken either as “concerning” or “against.” Translations are divided with Brenton and LXX.D taking ἐπί as “upon; concerning” while NETS and Ottley interpreted it in the sense of “against.” Ziegler argued that the “counsel” of v. 7 is “against” all the nations. He found support for his claim in

⁴⁶ cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version*, 110.

Obad 16, which portrays the nations' drinking in a negative way. Whereas MT reads "all the nations will drink continually and they will drink... and they will be as if they had never been," the LXX has "all the nations will drink *wine*, they will drink, they will go down, and they will be as if they do not exist" (πίονται πάντα τὰ ἔθνη οἶνον πίονται καὶ καταβήσονται καὶ ἔσονται καθὼς οὐχ ὑπάρχοντες). As in Obad 15ff, the "drinking" picture of LXX Isa 25:6 must be interpreted in a negative way: they will drink for awhile but their judgment will come. Ziegler further pointed to the interpretation of the "drinking" of the nations in Targ. Isa 25:6, which also took the "drinking" of the nations in a negative way. It reads: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast *and a festival; they think that it is of glory, but it will be to them for shame, strokes from which they will not be rescued, strokes by which they will come to an end.*"⁴⁷ Moreover, Ziegler showed that the interpretation of the "drinking" in LXX Isa 25:6 as a friendly banquet to the nations goes back to Jerome, who was influenced by the New Testament reading of Matthew 26:29.⁴⁸ In addition to Ziegler's remarks above, one may highlight that in LXX Isa itself the image of "drinking" and "partying" carries a very negative connotation. In Isa 5:11-12, for instance, "drinking and partying" are criticized as they ultimately lead to disregarding "the works of the Lord" (NETS). Thus, the "counsel" of v. 7 is "against" the nations. That the "drinking" of the nations was meant in a negative way will become clearer below.

⁴⁷ cf. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, 49 (italics his). Targ. Isa reads as follows: ויעביד יי צבאות לכל עממא בטורא הדין שירו זמן מדמן דהיא דיקר ותהי להון ויעבד יי צבאות לכל עממא בטורא הדין שירו זמן מדמן דהיא דיקר ותהי להון. לקלן מחן דילא ישתזבון מנהון מחן דיסופון בהון. All Aramaic quotations in this article are taken from A. Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic: based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

⁴⁸ cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 145. It is interesting to note that a theological interpretation of H Isa 25:6 is already attested in the Syr. (cf. HUB), which may reflect a Christian interpretation. Syr reads the H משתה שמרים שמנים as a reference to a drinking belonging to "our life-Giver" as ܡܫܬܗܫܘܢܐ ܫܡܪܝܢܐ ܫܡܢܝܢܐ can be translated as follows: "a preserved and fat drinking, of our heavenly and mighty life-Giver." "Life-Giver" is undoubtedly a reference to Jesus Christ, cf. van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 273-274, also n. 45-46. Vg.'s *convivium pinguium convivium vindemiae pinguium medullatorum vindemiae defecatae* followed the H closely.

25:8

Κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας (v. 8a). Different from MT (cf. part 1 earlier), LXX portrays death as swallowing up. The first question that arises concerns the object of the verb κατέπιεν. Whereas Brenton added “men” after the verb “to swallow,” Ottley, NETS, and LXX.D inserted simply “them.”⁴⁹ In the immediate context, πάντα τὰ ἔθνη “all the nations” (v. 7) is the best candidate as the object of κατέπιεν.⁵⁰ Starkly contrasting with the apparently picture of blessedness for the nations in v. 6b-d earlier, v. 8a declares that the nations were swallowed up.

The reference to the nation’s banquet (v. 6b-d) must be read as temporary. The nations will, for awhile, hold banquets on mount Zion, even while the translator’s group is thirsting under their oppression (cf. Isa 25:5). However, the Lord will deal with them by carrying out his βουλή (25:7) against them. The past tense verbs of v. 8 (ἀφείλεν 2x) indicate that the Lord has started the process of bringing the oppressive rule of the “nations” to an end (cf. also 25:1-2 above). The rest of the commentary on LXX Isa 25:8 will confirm this description.

The phrase ὁ θάνατος ἰσχύσας “death, having become strong” occurs only here and it is not clear what the translator intended. It is important to note that, in LXX Isa, “death” functions as one of the κύριος’ agents. In LXX Isa 9:7, it is said that the κύριος sent “death” against Jacob/Israel. The translator read the H דבר, “word” in MT, as “pestilence” (דָּבָר).⁵¹ Likewise, “death” in LXX Isa 25:8 must be understood as an agent that the Lord sent to punish the “nations.”

Καὶ πάλιν ἀφείλεν ὁ θεὸς πᾶν δάκρυον ἀπὸ παντὸς προσώπου τὸ ὄνειδος τοῦ λαοῦ ἀφείλεν ἀπὸ πάσης τῆς γῆς (v. 8b-c). As noted in part 1 earlier, πάλιν is a plus in the LXX. It has been correctly noted that πάλιν is typical of LXX Isa because it usually occurs as a plus (cf. LXX Isa 7:4; 23:17).⁵² The usual meaning of πάλιν in the LXX is “again.”⁵³ But it

⁴⁹ cf. Brenton; Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:157; NETS; LXX.D.

⁵⁰ cf. Hieke, “„Er verschlingt den Tod für immer“ (Jes 25,8a),” 37.

⁵¹ cf. e.g., Ottley, *Isaiah*, 2:156.

⁵² cf. van der Kooij, *The Oracle*, 72.

⁵³ cf. GELS, 521.

can also denote a turn of thought “on the other hand.”⁵⁴ It is this latter sense that is most fitting to v. 8b. There is a contrast between the actions of “death” (v. 8a) and that of God (v. 8b). While death swallows the nations up, God, on the other hand (πάλιν), has started to take away every tear from every face.

Different from MT (מחה “to wipe out”/הסיר “to cause to depart”), LXX employed the same verb (ἀφαιρέω “to take away”) twice. This double use of ἀφαιρέω indicates that v. 8b-c must be taken together. As such, the phrase “every face” means the faces of the people in v. 8c and “tears” and “reproach” must be interpreted in light of each other. What is exactly at stake in the translator’s use of ὄνειδος?

In the LXX, ὄνειδος may indicate the feeling of shame of those living under the control of foreign nations. In Joel 2:17, for instance, priests ask the Lord: “spare your people, O Lord, and do not subject your inheritance to the reproach of being ruled over by the nations” (NETS; the G reads: φείσαι κύριε τοῦ λαοῦ σου καὶ μὴ δῶς τὴν κληρονομίαν σου εἰς ὄνειδος τοῦ κατάρξαι αὐτῶν ἔθνη; cf. also Micah 6:16).⁵⁵ Similarly, ὄνειδος in LXX Isa 25:8 denotes the shame of being ruled over by foreign nations. The “nations” are the “nations” referred to in vv. 6-7. The past tense ἀφείλεν, different from future ones in MT (cf. ויסיר/ומחה), indicate that God has started to take away the shame of the people, that is to say, the shame of being ruled over by the nations. Thus, v. 8 portrays two divergent but interrelated pictures. On one hand, God has sent “death” to swallow the nations up. On the other hand, that act also meant that God had started to take away the “shame” of the people, that is, the shame of living under the oppression of the nations.

At this point, a word about the “nations” (ἔθνος, vv. 6, 7) and the people (λαός, v. 8c) must be said. In the comparison between the LXX and the MT, it was noted that the use of ἔθνος as a translation of ׀ע is unusual. It is now clear that the translator purposefully employed it antithetically to λαός (v. 8). The “nations” should be identified with the ἀνθρώπων ἀσεβῶν “ungodly men” (v. 5), whose city is named “the city of the ungodly” (v. 2). It is noticeable that God’s handling of the nations

⁵⁴ cf. LEH, 457.

⁵⁵ cf. GELS, 498.

occurs “on this mountain” (vv. 6-7). As argued above, “this mountain” is mount Zion mentioned in v. 5. The picture in v. 5 is that the “we” group is under the oppressive control of the “ungodly” in Zion. In v. 7, an unidentified person asks the Lord to carry out his βουλή in Zion, making it clear he expects the Lord will liberate the “we” group from the control of the “ungodly.” The past tense κατέπειν in v. 8 indicates that the Lord had started to liberate the “we” (25:5) group because “death” was swallowing up the nations. Thus, the translator interpreted his Isa 25:6-8 as judgment against the “nations” (vv. 6-7) and liberation for the “people” (v. 8). For a similar picture, cf. Isa 24:13-16 above.

The reference to λαός differs from MT’s “his people” in LXX’s mention of only “the people” (אָמֶן; cf. also Isa 1:3, where אָמֶן was simply rendered with ὁ λαός). In its immediate context, λαός must be identified with ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός “the poor people” of v. 3. The “poor people” is described in vv. 3-4 as being under the oppressive control of the “evil men” (v. 4). The reference to “death swallowing the nations up” and to “God removing the disgrace of the people” (v. 8) indicates that the “poor people” (v. 3) started to be liberated. It is interesting to note that, whereas v. 4 portrays the liberation of the poor people as a future reality (cf. ῥύση), v. 8 portrays their liberation as something that has already begun. This interchange between future and past tense verbs can only be explained as due to the translator’s view of God’s liberation as something that has started but has not been fully completed. However, this point can not be further addressed here.

25:9

καὶ ἐροῦσι τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἰδοὺ ὁ θεὸς ἡμῶν ἐφ’ ᾧ ἠλπίζομεν καὶ ἠγαλλιώμεθα καὶ εὐφρανθησόμεθα ἐπὶ τῇ σωτηρίᾳ ἡμῶν (v. 9). It is important to discuss who the subject of the plural ἐροῦσι is. In its immediate context, the plural group “us” in 25:5 must be taken as the subject of ἐροῦσι. LXX Isa 25:9 introduces the response of the “we” group (25:5), which was occasioned by the liberation of the “poor people” (vv. 3, 8) from oppression. This explains LXX’s “in our salvation” (τῇ σωτηρίᾳ ἡμῶν) for MT’s “his salvation” (בְּיִשׁוּעָתוֹ). Here one finds the language of the “we” (cf. “our salvation”) group. After their liberation is completed, the “we” group will rejoice in the salvation that their God will have brought to them. Thus, the liberation of the “poor

people” will prompt the declaration of the “we” in v. 10. It becomes now clear that Isa 25 envisages at least two different groups being liberated of oppression. There is the “people” (Isa 25:3-4; 25:8) and the “we” group (Isa 25:5, 9-10). The liberation of the former signals to the latter’s upcoming salvation as well as to Zion’s liberation from her oppressors.

25:10

That the liberation of the “people” (v. 8) marks the beginning of the liberation of the “we” group is clear from v. 10a: ὅτι ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο (v. 10a). The conjunction ὅτι introduces the reason for the declaration in v. 10. The reason is that God “will give rest on this mountain.” The phrase “on this mountain” has already appeared twice (vv. 6, 7) and refers to mount Zion (v. 5). It is significant that v. 10 declares that God will “give rest on this mountain.” “Rest” (ἀνάπαυσις) indicates that the situation of oppression of the translator’s group in Zion will be brought to an end. The future tense verb shows that this situation will occur in the short future, a picture that is in line with v. 6b-d’s description of the nations banqueting in Zion for a little while.

Striking is the translator’s use of ἡ Μωαβίτις for מואב, creating an equivalence that is almost unique to LXX Isa (cf. part 1 above). It seems that the translator was referring here to a region. As one scholar has remarked “this name [Μωαβίτις] was used especially in the Ptolemaic administration for the regions of the southern part of the Ptolemaic province of *Coele Syria*.”⁵⁶ Why did the translator employ Μωαβίτις here? The answer lies in his reading Isa 24:10 in the light of the oracle against Μωαβίτις (MT: מואב) in Isa 15-16. Like Isa 25:10, Isa 15:1 proclaims the collapse of Moabitis’ “wall.” The term τεῖχος does not necessarily imply a human built wall but may designate natural walls. The latter connotation may well apply to Moab’s high mountains located at its border.⁵⁷ The same nuance applies to τοῖχος in Isa 25:12.⁵⁸ Another link between Isa 15-16; 24:1-12 will be observed below. For now, it becomes clear that the translator had in mind the southern region of *Coele Syria* in his use of Μωαβίτις.

⁵⁶ cf. Tov, “Personal Names in the Septuagint of Isaiah,” 427.

⁵⁷ cf. van der Kooij, *The Oracle*, 68.

⁵⁸ cf. van der Kooij, *The Oracle*, 68.

25:11

It is not easy to make sense of the Greek *ὃν τρόπον καὶ αὐτὸς ἐταπείνωσεν τοῦ ἀπολέσαι* because the objects of *ἐταπείνωσεν/τοῦ ἀπολέσαι* are not clear. Brenton rendered the phrase above as “even as he also brings down *man* to destroy *him*.”⁵⁹ Differently, Ottley translated as “like as he himself also humbled *him* to destroy *him*,” whose translation NETS followed.⁶⁰ It seems better to follow LXX.D and take Moab as the subject of *ἐταπείνωσεν* and “someone else” as its object: “ebenso wie *auch er (Moab) (andere) erniedrigt hat bis zur Vernichtung*.”⁶¹ Although the relationship between clauses 11b-c is unclear, the sense seems to be that God will “let his hands free” to punish the region called “Moabitis” in a way similar to what an unknown “he” had done to someone else. Equally unclear is the identity of “his” in “he will humble his pride.” The difficulty here is that “Moabitis” is a feminine noun and, consequently, the masculine *αὐτός* cannot refer to it.

One important aspect here is the translator’s utilization of *ἀπόλλυμι* “to destroy.” While part 1 above has indicated that the reading *ἐταπείνωσεν τοῦ ἀπολέσαι* is the result of re-reading *לשחוח השחוח* “the swimmer to swim” as *לשחוח השחה* “he brought low to destroy,” it is important to ask the question as to why the translator did so. The answer lies in him interpreting Isa 25:11 in the light of Isa 15:1. Like Isa 25:10-12, Isa 15:1 proclaims the destruction of the Moabitis, using the same lexeme *ἀπόλλυμι* (MT: *דד*). It is clear that the translator’s re-reading was motivated by a “higher level” interpretation of Isa 25:11 that saw a connection between that passage and Isa 15:1.

25:12

It is interesting to note the translator’s use of *τοιῖχος* “wall” for *הומה* (cf. part 1 above). Why did the translator decide to use *τοιῖχος* here? The reason is found in his interpretation of Isa 24:10-12 as referring to the region known as *Μωαβίτις*. This region was located in the southern

⁵⁹ cf. Brenton.

⁶⁰ Ottley, *Isaiah*, 1:157 (italics ours); NETS.

⁶¹ LXX.D (italics theirs).

part of Coele-Syria. Different from *τειχος*, which can refer to either the “wall” of a “city” or a “region,” the term *τοιχος* can only refer to the “wall of a region, land.” Cf. e.g., Isa 23:13 (and also comments to Isa 25:10 above). In Isa 25:12, it refers to the collapse of the “walls” of the region known as *Μωαβιτις*. Why did the translator not use *τειχος* here as he did in Isa 15:1? It seems that he was trying to avoid confusion between the “wall” of a “city” (cf. Isa 24:23; 26:1) and the “wall” of a “region” (Isa 25:12).

SUMMARY

A careful reading of LXX Isa 25:1-12 points to a coherent text as far as its content is concerned. The text under discussion refers to three different groups. First, the oppressors, which are named “strong cities,” “city of the ungodly,” “the evil men,” the “ungodly men,” and the “nations” (Isa 24:2, 4-5, 6-7) are described as collapsing (v. 2) as part of God’s “age-old plan” (25:1). Similarly, Isa 25:7-8 urges the Lord (cf. “deliver”) to punish the nations and bring his counsel to fruition. Second, the oppressed, referred to with several terms such as “the poor people,” “wronged men,” “humble city,” “faint-hearted men,” play a role in 25:3-5a, 8. They rejoice by occasion of their oppressors’ fall (v. 3), expect deliverance from God (v. 4), a deliverance that is portrayed as something that has already started (cf. 25:8). The third group is the “we” (cf. 25:5, 9-10). This group finds itself in an identical situation of oppression to the second group in vv. 3-5a. Isa 25:5, 6-7 make clear that they are under the oppression of the “nations,” which are occupying mount Zion. The liberation of the “people” (Isa 25:3-5a, 8) points to the upcoming salvation of the “we” group from oppression in Zion.

In LXX Isa 25:1-12, both “literal” and “free” translations cohere with each other. A case in point is the free “the poor people” (*ὁ λαὸς ὁ πτωχός*) (Isa 25:3 [MT: “strong people”]), which coheres with the more lexically literal translation “the people” (*λαός*) in Isa 25:8. It is also important to note that the free “poor people” and the literal “people” (Isa 25:3, 9) cohere well with the expression “the inhabitants of the earth will become poor” in Isa 24:6. Moreover, it is worthy noticing that several “free” translations come together to create a coherent text. For instance, note the less literal *βουλή* (MT: plural “counsels”) in Isa 25:1 coheres with the very “free” *βουλή* in 25:7, even though the content of both

“counsels” differ from each other (cf. comments to Isa 25:1-2; 7 above). Furthermore, the “free” translations with “cities” form a coherent message by way of contrast. The phrase “fortified cities” (Isa 25:2) contrasts with “the cities of ill-treated men” (Isa 25:3) and “every humble city” (Isa 25:4). The “fortified cities” are mentioned again in Isa 26:5. There, they contrast with the “fortified city” of Isa 26:1. Also, the “cities” of Isa 25:2 cohere with the “cities” of Isa 24:10, 12, as noted above. The references to the “evil/ungodly men” (Isa 25:4-5) contrast with the “ill-treated men” (Isa 25:3-4). “In Zion” coheres well with the same expression in Isa 24:23 and with the phrases “on this mountain” in Isa 25:6-7, 10. Finally, the “free” rendition “nations” (Isa 25:6-7) is in keeping with the literal “nations” in Isa 24:13.

The translator also created a coherent text through a careful choice of his lexemes. Note, for example, πόλις for קריה/עיר in Isa 25:1-5 (cf. also Isa 24:10, 12). Important also is πόλεις ὀχυράς in Isa 25:2 (cf. also Isa 26:5), which contrasts with the πόλις ὀχυρά in Isa 26:1. For his choice of “ungodly” (Isa 25:2, 5), compare with the “ungodly” in Isa 24:8 and the “ungodly one” in Isa 26:10. Lastly, note the repetition of ἄνθρωπος in Isa 25:3-5, all without clear equivalents in MT. The coherence observed in Isa 25:1-12 points to a “higher level,” unique interpretation of the Hebrew that must have preceded the work of the translation.