

What Do You Do When a Text is Failing? The Letter of Aristeas and the Need for a New Pentateuch

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Abstract

This study highlights features of the Letter of Aristeas that reveal how that story conceives of the royal translation project. It will apply the concept of ‘auxiliary texts’ developed by Markus Dubischar based on the conversation theory of Paul Grice in order to show that Aristeas understands the Hebrew Pentateuch as a failing text. It will be shown that because Aristeas both respects the traditions and teachings contained within the Pentateuch, and recognizes the failure of the text outside of a particular context, it sees the translation as necessary for the Pentateuch’s survival. The study will compare the statements related in prologues from Graeco-Roman ‘auxiliary texts’ to statements in the Letter of Aristeas to underline the ways how the Greek translation of the Hebrew text is simultaneously conceived of as a correction of the problems inherent in the Hebrew text tradition, and is not attempting to entirely replace that tradition.

Keywords

Aristeas – auxiliary texts – Septuagint – literary criticism

1 The Letter of Aristeas and the Greek Translation of the Pentateuch

The Letter of Aristeas is best known as the oldest and most extensive version of the myth telling of the translation of the Judean law into Greek under the guidance of Ptolemy II Philadelphus in Alexandria.¹ It has long been recognized

¹ On Aristeas as the oldest version of this account, see Tessa Rajak, *Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009),

that, though Aristeas is presented as a letter from a Greek member of the third-century BCE Alexandrian court, the work is neither a letter nor the product of the ostensible courtier.² Instead, the narrative voice of Aristeas appears to be an artifice allowing the story to be told by an authoritative Greek witness to both the business of the court of Philadelphus and to the full participation of Judean actors and their cultural output, particularly in the events surrounding the translation of Judean laws into Greek.³

The persona employed by the author is not the only artifice relating to the narrative. For, most scholars agree that it is very unlikely this text stems from the early third-century court of Ptolemy II Philadelphus.⁴ Instead, the most common conclusion is that the text comes from Alexandria at some point in second century BCE. This is a decision founded upon several historical errors concerning the court of Ptolemy II, the use of certain phrases thought to belong to the second century, and some statements in the narrative that imply

34; Abraham Wasserstein and David Wasserstein, *The Legend of the Septuagint: From Classical Antiquity to Today* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12-13; Benjamin G. Wright III, *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction: Essays on Ben Sira and Wisdom, the Letter of Aristeas and the Septuagint*, JSJSup 131 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 301.

- 2 Moses Hadas, *Aristeas to Philocrates* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1973), 55-56; Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 1, 13; Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend*, 21. All of the above testify to the fact that this work neither follows epistolary formulae, nor does the narrator even claim to be writing a letter in any sense. Rather, it is pointed out that despite being addressed to a certain Philocrates, the narrator calls his work a *δηγγίσις*, or narrative, from the start (§1). As to the narrator's purported identity as a Greek courtier, Timothy Michael Law, *When God Spoke Greek: The Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 36, notes that this is a persona taken on in order to provide the text with greater credibility. A similar sentiment can be observed in Victor Tcherikover, "The Ideology of the Letter of Aristeas," *HTR* 51 (1958): 59-85, esp. 63.
- 3 Benjamin G. Wright III, "Pseudonymous Authorship and Structures of Authority in the Letter of Aristeas," in *Scriptural Authority in Early Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. Isaac Kalimi, Tobias Nicklas, and Géza Xeravits, DCLS 16 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2013), 43-61, esp. 46, adds further nuance in suggesting that the pseudonymity of the author lends credibility to the presentation of the translation as a thoroughly Hellenistic document.
- 4 John Bartlett, *Jews in the Hellenistic World: Josephus, Aristeas, the Sibylline Oracles, Eupolemus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 16-17, argues on the basis of an analysis of Aristeas's relationship to other literature, including Hecataeus of Abdera, the Greek translation of the Pentateuch, and Aristobulus, that a date in the middle of the second century BCE is most likely.

a reflection on the Ptolemaic court at a later date.⁵ Because of this proposed date many scholars do not think much reliable information can be garnered from Aristeas with respect to the translation project, though some will admit a kernel of truth in the myth.⁶

The low estimation of the historical value of Aristeas does not mean the text is entirely worthless. It is not the historical circumstances of the translation of the Pentateuch that is the focus of this paper. Instead, this study joins a stream of Aristeas scholarship investigating the text as evidence for an ancient reception of the pentateuchal translation.⁷ This scholarship has tried to answer pivotal questions concerning how the Greek translation of the law was used and conceived of, both in its own right, and in relationship to the Hebrew versions. What was the authoritative or scriptural status of the Greek text? Was it thought of as simply a translation, or also an interpretation? Did the Greek translation obviate the need for the Hebrew, or were they meant to be used alongside one another? Along these lines, this paper shall argue that the narrative contains several notable features also present in other Hellenistic and Greco-Roman texts that suggest the Greek translation is presented as an attempt to rescue a valuable tradition which is at risk of failure due to its preservation through inferior performances. That is, I shall attempt to demonstrate some ways in which this particular ancient reflection on text production can participate in Derrida's project of deconstruction by reevaluating the role of translation. In order to achieve this goal, I shall interpret the evidence from the Letter of Aristeas and

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- 5 On the linguistic evidence see Elias Bickerman, "The Dating of Pseudo-Aristeas," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History: A New Edition in English including The God of the Maccabees*, ed. Amram Tropper, 2 vols., AJEC 68 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 1:108-33. For a concise roundup of all the information used in dating see John Collins, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Jewish Identity in the Hellenistic Diaspora* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000), 98.
 - 6 On the various positions as to the relative reliability of the account see Rajak, *Translation*, 38-43, who herself endorses it as a possibility. Joseph Méléze Modrzejewski, *The Jews of Egypt: From Rameses II to Emperor Hadrian*, trans. Robert Cormman (Skokie, IL: Varda Books, 2001), 99-119, is a notable example of a scholar who makes the case for a degree of historicity by way of comparison with a translation of Egyptian law codes under Ptolemy II and an analysis of Jewish Egyptian papyri. Honigman, *Septuagint*, 93-118, further surveys a number of possibilities and concludes that the involvement of the king and library in the translation are rather likely.
 - 7 Several other studies have investigated the Letter of Aristeas for this purpose. These include: Dries De Crom, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Authority of the Septuagint," *JSP* 17 (2008): 141-60; Benjamin Wright III, "The Letter of Aristeas and the Reception History of the Septuagint," in *Praise Israel for Wisdom and Instruction*, 275-95; Francis Borchartd, "The LXX Myth and the Rise of Textual Fixity," *JSJ* 43 (2012): 1-21; and Borchartd, "Influence and Power: The Types of Authority in the Process of Scripturalization," *SJOT* 29 (2015): 225-41.

the broader Greco-Roman context thereby arguing for widespread applicability of what classicist Markus Dubischar has termed “auxiliary texts.”⁸

2 Auxiliary Texts and Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman Scholarly Practice

Markus Dubischar has recently outlined a new category for a set of old written materials, which he calls “auxiliary texts.” These are texts that:

render service and help, as it were, to a primary text (or corpus) that needs or deserves this kind of service or help . . . They provide vital help and render an important service to the text in trouble. Auxiliary texts allow, facilitate, or even assure that a primary text or primary corpus is read as, in the opinion of the auxiliary author, it deserves to be read.⁹

As any reflection on the description will make clear, this is a broad and flexible category. Dubischar himself highlights epitomes, anthologies, summaries, collections, commentaries, and glossaries among this group.¹⁰ Although formally distinct, these written materials all share a general function of serving another primary text or tradition thereby aiding in its survival. So, epitomes abbreviate primary texts, anthologies and collections gather together separate primary texts, summaries convey what is conceived of as the message of primary texts, and commentaries and glossaries facilitate what is deemed to be the proper understanding of identifiable primary texts. The category is not based on formal or genre markers, but on the function of these written materials and their often explicit presentation as related to other primary texts or traditions. Because of this functional and relational aspect of the category, we might be justified in expanding it into other texts, particularly those most relevant for the study of the Hebrew Bible and cognate literature. Examples abound, but those written works that immediately come to mind might be midrashim, pesharim, and at least some of the loosely and inadequately defined category of texts often

8 The term was introduced by Markus Dubischar, “Survival of the Most Condensed? Auxiliary Texts, Communications Theory, and Condensation of Knowledge,” in *Condensing Texts—Condensed Texts*, ed. Marietta Horster and Christiane Reitz (Stuttgart: Steiner, 2010), 39-67.

9 Dubischar, “Survival,” 42.

10 Dubischar, “Survival,” 43.

termed rewritten bible or rewritten scripture.¹¹ In addition to these we might think of the whole process of redaction, expansion, or collocation of materials seen in manuscript witnesses of biblical texts as a sort of creation of auxiliary texts. In private correspondence with Dubischar, the possibility that even translations belong to this category has been discussed, but it has yet to be tested.¹² This paper will provide evidence that supports this connection based on the qualities attributed to auxiliary texts by the scribes responsible for them and those attributed to the Greek translation of the Pentateuch by Aristeas.

But, why should we be concerned at all with such a category, let alone try to identify and perhaps expand its limits? One of the primary strengths of this category is that it is not an artificial category, but is empirically demonstrable from Hellenistic and Greco-Roman written material. That is, Dubischar finds evidence for the category within many of the texts themselves.¹³ Such evidence is valuable because it constitutes a scarce commodity in the study of the transmission of ancient texts: empirical evidence of attitudes toward texts, and motivations for what we recognize as change in texts. Rather than following the usual and problematic practice of trying to derive motivations for adaptation by identifying and interpreting the techniques posited for textual adaptation, the evidence Dubischar has compiled allows those making the changes to

11 Hermann Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans. and ed. Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 234-35. Midrash here should be understood as any of those written materials containing explicit non-literal interpretation of what is presented as an authoritative, usually scriptural text. Pesharim, as defined by Shani Berrin Tzoref, "Pesharim," *Encyclopedia of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Lawrence Schiffman and James VanderKam, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2:644-47, are running or thematic commentaries that cite scriptural texts, introduce their interpretations, and then proceed to apply text to some contemporary and external reality. The term rewritten bible was first proposed by Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism: Haggadic Studies*, StPB 4 (Leiden: Brill, 1961), 95, and was used to describe texts like the *Judean Antiquities*, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, Jubilees, and the Genesis Apocryphon. It has since been applied to many other texts, but also modified and criticized on many grounds by a host of scholars, perhaps most notably Moshe Bernstein, "Rewritten Bible': A Generic Category Which Has Outlived Its Usefulness?" *Texts* 22 (2005): 169-96, and Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Rewritten Bible as a Borderline Phenomenon—Genre, Textual Strategy, or Canonical Anachronism," in *Flores Florentino: Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honor of Florentino García Martínez*, ed. Anthony Hilhorst, Émile Puech, and Eibert Tigchelaar, JSJSup 122 (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 285-306.

12 Personal communication with Markus Dubischar July 2-3, 2014.

13 Dubischar, "Survival," 44-47.

speak for themselves.¹⁴ This empirical evidence is found primarily in prefatory writings which literary theorist Gérard Genette has called paratexts.¹⁵ Where these prefatory writings are present, Dubischar finds that the scribes responsible for creating the auxiliary texts as a whole frequently reflect on their task by identifying the need for change and the solution offered by the newly created auxiliary texts.¹⁶

The prefatory writings contain two important sections, often among other miscellaneous material. The first section, termed by Dubischar the “problem” section, falls into two parts. Part 1^a notes the high value a given text, corpus, or tradition has for potential audiences, while Part 1^b remarks on difficulties concerning the reception of the text, tradition, or corpus, and often amounts to a criticism of the primary textual performance itself.¹⁷ The critiques of the primary text within the ancient prologues examined by Dubischar appear to conform quite closely to what conversation theorist Paul Grice has noted as violations of the cooperative principle.¹⁸ This principle simply asserts that in conversations, the speakers typically engage in a shared effort to understand one another. However, Grice also notes that contributions to conversations are likely to fail due to any number of violations of the cooperative principle. He classifies these under four broad categories of violations: (1) quantity: a statement is deemed either too long or too short; (2) quality: a statement is thought to be invalid or disingenuous; (3) relation: a statement is judged to be irrelevant; and (4) manner: a statement is thought to be unclearly expressed or is not easily understood.¹⁹ These happen to also be the most commonly cited problems in the auxiliary prologues.

The second section of the ancient prologues of auxiliary texts is identified by Dubischar as the “solution” section. This presents the way the primary text,

14 On the problems associated with drawing too close a connection between what is recognized as an effect of editorial technique and the motivation for the change see Molly Zahn, *Rethinking Rewritten Scripture: Composition and Exegesis in the 4QReworked Pentateuch Manuscripts*, STDJ 95 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 233-35.

15 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane Lewin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 161. These prefatory writings include prologues, epilogues, colophons, proems, etc. Paratexts are all written material outside of the main text itself. In a modern printed book this would include such material as the title, front matter, and pagination.

16 Dubischar, “Survival,” 46-47.

17 Dubischar, “Survival,” 46-47.

18 Paul Grice, *Studies in the Way of Words* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 26-29. Dubischar, “Survival,” 51-56.

19 Grice, *Studies*, 28.

tradition, or corpus will be aided by the auxiliary text being created.²⁰ As one might expect, the solution offered frequently matches the problem identified in the first section.²¹ Dubischar hypothesizes that these solutions perform a similar function for the scribes responsible as do implicatures for participants in failing conversations.²² Implicature is a term invented by Grice to describe the way failing conversations might be saved by the efforts of their participants to supply what is deemed lacking.²³ Allow me to provide an example. A parent asks a child how the child performed on a recent assignment. The child answers that the teacher hates this particular child. The parent, without receiving a direct answer to the question is nonetheless able to ascertain the answer through implicature: the child performed poorly on the exam. In this case, the parent enacts the role of the audience and supplies the meaning that is lacking in the child's plain statement. The child's statement is nonsensical as a response to the question, so it is interpreted as a text with a deeper meaning. It has thus been saved from failure. In conversations as in texts, this supplying of meaning can remain inexplicit. However, frequently, because of unfamiliarity with a given convention of language, or a desire to both understand and be understood, such implicature may be voiced and/or put into text. Because of these similarities, and because Dubischar sees both speech and writing as forms of communication, he is willing to apply Grice's theory to written materials. He claims that in the same way as speech can fail, texts can fail. Dubischar notes that whereas speech can correct the failure through implicature, texts can correct the failure only by creating auxiliary texts due to the particular experience of portability, endurance, and impersonality traditionally observed in written material.

What is fascinating about these ancient prologues is that they support a more nuanced relationship between two related written documents than the diachronically linear arguments of traditional *Literarkritik*, or the geographically focused answers to textual pluriformity offered by the likes of Frank Moore Cross.²⁴ They provide empirical examples of scribal attitudes toward

20 Dubischar, "Survival," 46-47.

21 Dubischar, "Survival," 56.

22 Dubischar, "Survival," 56-57.

23 Grice, *Studies*, 24-26.

24 Examples of scholarship working with a premise of linear diachronic development are far too numerous and varied to cite. A fine example of Cross's idea of local texts comes in Frank Moore Cross, "The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts," in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, ed. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 306-15.

texts, and for what reasons changes to those texts are introduced. This model further allows for and might help to explain the manuscript evidence we have of pluriformity of given traditions even in single locales. These prologues suggest that, although a given auxiliary text, such as an epitome, might be considered an improvement upon the primary text, tradition, or corpus it adapts, the auxiliary is not meant to replace that text in all circumstances. Several versions of a text might well coexist in the same place, because they serve different needs. Instead it is offered as a better option for addressing particular needs of audiences. For example, the preface of 2 Maccabees, found at 2 Macc 2:19-32, which claims that 2 Maccabees is an abbreviation of a five-volume history of Jason of Cyrene, states at 2 Macc 2:23-25:

23 ὑπὸ Ἰάσωνος τοῦ Κυρηναίου δεδηλωμένα διὰ πέντε βιβλίων πειρασόμεθα δι' ἑνὸς συντάγματος ἐπιτεμεῖν. 24 συνορώντες γὰρ τὸ χύμα τῶν ἀριθμῶν καὶ τὴν οὖσαν δυσχέρειαν τοῖς θέλουσιν εἰσκυκλεῖσθαι τοῖς τῆς ἱστορίας διηγήμασιν διὰ τὸ πλῆθος τῆς ὕλης 25 ἐφροντίσαμεν τοῖς μὲν βουλομένοις ἀναγινώσκειν ψυχαγωγίαν, τοῖς δὲ φιλοφρονούσιν εἰς τὸ διὰ μνήμης ἀναλαβεῖν εὐκοπίαν, πᾶσιν δὲ τοῖς ἐντυγχάνουσιν ὠφέλειαν.

23 all this, which has been set forth by Jason of Cyrene in five volumes, we shall attempt to condense into a single book. 24 For considering the flood of figures involved and the difficulty there is for those who wish to enter upon the narratives of history because of the mass of material, 25 we have aimed to please those who wish to read, to make it easy for those who are inclined to memorize and to profit all those who happen to read this. (NETS)

Here, we have a clear indication of the problem with Jason of Cyrene's text given in the voice of the epitomator: it is too long, and probably too complex to be read by non-expert readers or by those who wish to memorize the history. His effort is meant to serve that need. It is obvious that the epitomator's voice contributes to the impression that the newly produced text is better, as is indicated by a metaphor at the close of 2 Maccabees (15:39) comparing his text to the more refined wine mixed with water, and Jason's text to unmixed wine.²⁵ However, he does not imagine that his text is sufficient for everyone. In 2 Macc 2:28-31, the voice of the epitomator reports that he is "leaving the

25 The practice of drinking wine mixed with water in antiquity is well catalogued. See, e.g., Hesiod, *Works and Days* 594-595 and Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 10.426-427, 430-431. That this custom was considered sophisticated, and therefore better than drinking unmixed wine can be seen in Herodotus, *Histories* 6.84, and Plato, *Laws* 637e.

responsibility of exact details to the compiler" (2:28), and notes that "it is the duty of the original historian to occupy the ground . . . but the one who recasts the narrative should be allowed to strive for brevity of expression and to forego exhaustive treatment" (2:30-31). These statements show that there is still an audience for the work of Jason, an audience likely to be comprised of experienced readers and historians. This indicates that the texts might exist side by side. It also shows that there is likely to be some overlap between those using 2 Maccabees and those using Jason's work, particularly among the experts.

One further appealing idea arising from these auxiliary texts and the prologues attached to them is that the labels of auxiliary and primary are not fixed. This is for two reasons. First, because the violations of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner are the decisions of scribes responsible for creating auxiliary texts, multiple auxiliaries can be made of any given primary text serving their specific needs. This can be observed most clearly in the prologue to Galen's epitome of his own *De pulsibus* entitled *Synopsis librorum suorum sedecim de pulsibus*, cited by Dubischar, in which Galen notes:

ὄλως μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲ προηρούμην ἐμῆς πραγματείας ἐπιτομὴν ποιεῖσθαι, βέλτιον ἡγούμενος εἶναι τοὺς τὰς διεξόδους ἀκριβῶς ἀναλεξαμένους ἑαυτοῖς ἐπιτέμνεσθαι. χρήσιμοι γὰρ οὕτως αἱ τ' ἐπιτομαὶ καὶ αἱ συνόψεις γίνονται, κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν ἕξιν ἐκάστῳ γραφόμεναι.

For in no way did I choose to make an abridgment of one of my own long works, believing that it is better if those who have thoroughly read the comprehensive treatises abridge them for themselves. For that way abridgments and the overview become useful if they are written by each person individually tailored to his own ability (432.17-433.3).²⁶

Galen in this passage makes clear that ideally (for him) people would make their own auxiliary texts, because it could be personally suited. Thus one would expect multiple auxiliary texts to be produced. This would seem to be an important element if we wish to expand the use of this category into the realm of our Judean material, wherein multiple versions or performances of a text abound.²⁷ Although this would need to be tested in individual cases where we find multiple forms of ancient Judean texts, there is some potential for understanding each of these forms as an auxiliary text of a tradition adapted for specific needs and specific situations. The second reason for which the terms

26 Translation from Dubischar, "Survival," 49.

27 See, e.g., the various essays of Eugene Ulrich in his *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Origins of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

are not fixed is that because the terms primary and auxiliary describe only the relationship between two or more texts, corpora, or traditions, any given text can be simultaneously a primary and secondary text. This is demonstrated by Hephæstion's self-epitomization of his *Enchiridion*, which he first reduced from forty-eight books down to eleven, and then created an epitome of this eleven-book work that resulted in one book.²⁸ The value of this flexibility is that it avoids judgments against auxiliary texts simply because they are derivative, reflecting their high value observed within the prologues. This would further seem to ease the use of this category in the Judean literary milieu.

The foundations of the concept of auxiliary texts in both the ancient evidence and in modern theory makes it an attractive lens through which to view texts and their relationships in antiquity. Can a Greek translation be an improvement on a Hebrew original, as it is in Aristeas? Is the Septuagint, as it is presented in the Letter of Aristeas an auxiliary text to the Hebrew? At the very least the idea provides us with a glimpse of the "horizon of expectations" for ancient scribes dealing with the transmission of text and tradition.²⁹ The evidence is unquestionably relevant for Hellenistic and Greco-Roman texts which were produced within a type of book culture and can likely be extended with due caution to writings produced and transmitted in the Judean milieu, at least in this time period.³⁰ This, of course, is not a small number of texts as nearly all of our earliest empirical evidence for textual transmission arises

28 Ilona Opelt, "Epitome," *RAC* 5:944-73, esp. 953.

29 Hans Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahtu (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 22, coins the term "horizon of expectations" to describe the ideas and institutions present in a given historical circumstance.

30 On the subject of book culture see Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 9, who claims that books do not exist in the Mediterranean or Near East until well into the Hellenistic period. Armin Lange, "In the Second Degree: Ancient Jewish Paratextual Literature in the Context of Graeco-Roman and Ancient Near Eastern Literature," in *In the Second Degree: Paratextual Literature in Ancient Near Eastern and Ancient Mediterranean Culture and its Reflections in Medieval Literature*, ed. Philip Alexander, Armin Lange, and Renate Pillingner (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 3-42, esp. 6-7, largely agrees. He notes that the Greeks may have had the concepts of books and authors already in the sixth and fifth centuries BCE, but that these conventions are largely foreign in the Judean milieu until a later period, and even then are rare. Leighton Reynolds and N. G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, 3rd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 1-43, add further nuance in describing the advent of book culture in the classical period, with a true realization of books and book culture only in the libraries and book trade of the Hellenistic period.

from the Hellenistic period.³¹ The way in which the Letter of Aristeas presents the relationship between the Greek translation of the Hebrew Pentateuch and its Semitic original is an appealing place to begin.

3 The Letter of Aristeas and the Greek Pentateuch as Auxiliary Text

Now that the concept of auxiliary texts has been introduced we can turn to the evidence from Aristeas that can be interpreted to suggest that it presents the Greek translation of the Pentateuch as an auxiliary text. Of course, we are not arguing that Aristeas is, or should primarily be understood as, a prologue to the Greek Pentateuch, despite its ubiquitous appearance in Byzantine Octateuch catena manuscripts.³² Instead, we aim to show that the way in which Aristeas presents the translation project reflects the same concerns we observe in the prologues of auxiliary texts. Such an argument, while innovative in its comparison with these particular works, is part of a larger trend in Aristeas scholarship which examines the connections between the presentation of the translation project and what we know of scholarly activity within the context of the library of Alexandria.³³ Let us now turn to the details of the argument, beginning with the occasion for the translation.

31 Robert Carroll, "Jewgreek Greekjew: The Hebrew Bible is All Greek to Me, Reflections on the Problematics of Dating the Origins of the Bible in Relation to Contemporary Discussions of Biblical Historiography," in *Did Moses Speak Attic? Jewish Historiography and Scripture in the Hellenistic Period*, ed. Lester Grabbe (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 91-107, esp. 93.

32 Wasserstein and Wasserstein, *Legend*, 19-20. Paul Wendland, *Aristae ad Philocratem Epistula cum ceteris de origine versionis LXX interpretum testimoniis* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1900), vii-ix, allows that the practice may go back even further to larger editions of the Greek bible.

33 Opinions in this field of Aristeas study differ as to the extent of scholarly practice used in the presentation of the translation process. Günther Zuntz, "Aristeas Studies II: Aristeas on the Translation of the Torah," *JSS* 4 (1959): 109-26, demonstrates a wide ranging though unsystematic use of Alexandrian scholarly vocabulary in the description of the translation. Honigman, *Septuagint*, 119-39, carries on a sustained argument for the possibility that not only the description, but the actual translation was conducted under the influence of, and with the express intention of mimicking Alexandrian scholarship. Maren Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 19-37, puts forth an argument that, although scholarly vocabulary is used in the description of translation, the presentation is ultimately aiming at a sharp contrast between Alexandrian critical methods and those of Judeans. Borchardt, "LXX Myth," 21, concludes his examination of the desire for a fixed text in three early versions of the myth by suggesting both the desire and technique employed are influenced by

Outside of a brief remark in the narrator's preface to Aristeas (§3, to which we shall return later) the first time the Judean laws are mentioned comes in §§10-11. It is here that the audience is introduced to the laws through the artifice of a conversation between Demetrius of Phalerum, who is presented as chief librarian in Alexandria, and Ptolemy II.³⁴ This artifice would seem to be part of what Benjamin Wright and Dries De Crom have noted as authority-conferring strategies for the law.³⁵ The conversation is revealing of the general attitude toward the law in Aristeas, and is worth repeating:

προσήγγελται δέ μοι καὶ τῶν Ἰουδαίων νόμιμα μεταγραφῆς ἄξια καὶ τῆς παρὰ σοὶ βιβλιοθήκης εἶναι. 11 Τί τὸ κωλύον οὖν, εἶπεν, ἐστὶ σε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι; πάντα γὰρ ὑποτέτακται σοὶ τὰ πρὸς τὴν χρείαν. ὁ δὲ Δημήτριος εἶπεν Ἑρμηναίως προσδεῖται· χαρακτηῖρσι γὰρ ἰδίους κατὰ Ἰουδαίων χρόνεται, καθάπερ Αἰγύπτιοι τῇ τῶν γραμμάτων θέσει, καθὼ καὶ φωνῆν ἰδίαν ἔχουσιν. πολλαμβάνονται Συριακῇ χρῆσθαι· τὸ δ' οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλ' ἕτερος τρόπος. Μεταλαβὼν δὲ ἕκαστα ὁ βασιλεὺς εἶπε γραφῆναι πρὸς τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν Ἰουδαίων, ὅπως τὰ προειρημένα τελείωσιν λάβη.

"I am told that the laws of the Jews are worth transcribing and worthy to be in your library." [11] "What is to prevent you from doing this?" replied the king. "Everything that is necessary has been placed at your disposal." "They need to be translated," answered Demetrius, "for in the country of the Jews they use a peculiar alphabet (just as the Egyptians, too, have a special form of letters) and speak a peculiar dialect. They are supposed to use the Syriac tongue, but this is not the case; their language is quite different." And the king, when he understood all the facts of the case, ordered a letter to be written to the Jewish High Priest that his purpose (which has already been described) might be accomplished.

Alexandrian Homeric scholarship. Wright, "Pseudonymous," 49-50, embraces the depiction of the translation as mimicking Alexandrian scholarship in service of a broader aim to show Alexandrian Judaism and its central document, the Greek Pentateuch, are thoroughly at home in the Hellenistic world. On Alexandrian scholarship in general, see: Rudolf Blum, *Kallimachos: The Alexandrian Library and the Origins of Bibliography*, trans. Hans Wellisch (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991), and Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, passim.

34 The impossibility of Demetrius, who was a courtier of Ptolemy I Soter, and supported Ptolemy Geraunus instead of Philadelphus as his successor, has a long history in scholarship. It is based on the brief remarks of Diogenes Laertius 5.78. See, e.g., Honigman, *Septuagint*, 88-91.

35 Wright, "Pseudonymous," 60-61; De Crom, "Letter," 148-49.

This part of the conversation begins with a statement put into the mouth of Demetrius which praises the laws in rather general terms. Although the ostensible librarian is simply repeating hearsay at this point, as will be revealed later in the conversation, it contains two paths of positive evaluation. The legislation is deemed to be both worthy of transcription (μεταγραφῆς) and to be included in the royal library. Although there is a mixed message within the immediate narrative context, because the narrator claims the goal is to collect all the scrolls in the world (§9 πρὸς τὸ συναγαγεῖν, εἰ δυνατόν, ἅπαντα τὰ κατὰ τὴν οἰκουμένην βιβλία), Demetrius's use of the term ἄξιος "worthy" would seem to at least suggest that in Demetrius's mind there is some priority to what ought to be collected and in what order. Greater elaboration on this praise follows much later in the text in the voice of Eleazar, the ostensible high priest.³⁶ At §168 Eleazar closes his conversation with the narrator, Aristeeas, by noting that the laws are "enacted toward righteousness, and nothing in the writing has been drawn up randomly or mythologically" (§168 πάντα κεκανόνισται πρὸς δικαιοσύνην, καὶ οὐδὲν εἰκῆ κατατέτακται διὰ τῆς γραφῆς οὐδὲ μυθωδῶς). With these statements we already have an indication of why the translation project will be profitable. It is equivalent to what I, following Dubischar, have termed part 1^a of the "problem section" in the Greco-Roman prologues. Here, the reasons for creating an auxiliary text are communicated first by showing the inherent value of the text, corpus, or tradition.

These are by no means the only instances of praise for the text or tradition to be translated. In the narrator's preface at §3 the Judean laws are praised universally "for their interpretation of divine law" (καὶ κατακεκτημένον μεγίστην ὠφέλειαν τοῖς σὺν ἑαυτῷ καὶ τοῖς κατὰ τοὺς ἄλλους τόπους πολίταις, πρὸς τὴν ἔρμηνείαν τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου). Further, at §31 Demetrius, in the course a memorandum dictating why the translation ought to be made, notes that the Judean "legislation is very wise and pure as it is divine" (τὸ καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον εἶναι καὶ ἀκέραιον τὴν νομοθεσίαν ταύτην, ὡς ἂν οὖσαν θεϊαν). The memorandum goes on to describe how this sacred nature has prevented their use in other written material. The divine nature of the legislation is highlighted in several more passages. On one occasion it is the voice of Ptolemy II that extends this praise. This comes at §177 with the arrival of the translators who have been sent from Jerusalem along with a copy of the law. There, after performing proskynesis to a deluxe set of scrolls "about seven times," the king gives thanks to the translators, the high priest, and "most to God, whose oracles these are" (Εὐχαριστοῦ

36 The lack of any reliable information on the high priest and the modern historical assessment that he is unlikely to have existed is discussed throughout the literature. See, e.g., De Crom, "Letter," 149.

μὲν . . . μέγιστον δὲ τῷ θεῷ, οὐτινός ἐστι τὰ λόγια ταῦτα).³⁷ All these statements reveal a strong premise on the narrative level that the law, even before translation, is especially valuable because of a perceived connection to the one God shared by the Judeans and Ptolemaic courtiers alike.

The significance of this praise, like part 1^a of the problem section of the prefatory writings considered by Dubischar, should be clear. If the underlying text, corpus, or tradition has no value in itself, it would be ludicrous to expend effort on an attempt to save it from failure.³⁸ Therefore, any text, corpus, or tradition that is changed, according to what we see in these prologues, and what we shall see in *Aristeas* must also be valued by the person performing the adaptation.

Let us now return to the rest of the passage from the Letter of *Aristeas* with which we began a short while ago. In our discussion so far we have only analyzed the contribution initially placed in Demetrius's voice concerning the inherent value of the Judean laws. But what of the rest of the conversation? Ptolemy is immediately made to respond to Demetrius's claim, inquiring "What is the hindrance to accomplish this?" (Τί τὸ κωλύον οὖν, εἶπεν, ἐστὶ σε τοῦτο ποιῆσαι). In this setting, the king's interest is clearly piqued with respect to the Judean legislation, and because this is stated to be the normal work of the library, he wishes to know why it is not being completed. The voice of Demetrius follows with the extensive response cited earlier. The texts are written in a peculiar alphabet and a strange language, which is not like Syriac, as it is supposed to be. With this statement we have a reflection of similar sentiments to Dubischar's part 1^b of the problem section of the auxiliary prologues. It is here that the problem with the established and respected text, corpus, or tradition is made clear. It is also here that the scribe responsible for the new performance displays to the audience why, despite the value of the text, it is failing. If we think in terms of the Gricean violations of the cooperative principle, it would seem that the Judean legislation is violating the category of manner. It is expressed in a way that is incomprehensible for a certain audience, that audience being much of the Hellenistic world outside of Judea. This is not the only place such a sentiment

37 Although in this context, where an epistle is being received from a foreign ruler (§§41-46), it is tempting to see the performance of proskynesis as formulaic Ancient Near Eastern epistolary behavior (as in, e.g., ΚΤΥ 2.12) rather than respect paid to the scrolls, the voice of the king clearly explains that he is "giving respect" to the parchments instead of the one who sent them or those delivering them at §179 (Δίκαιον ἦν, θεοσεβεῖς ἄνδρες, ὧν χάριν ὑμᾶς μετεπεψάμην, ἐκείνοις πρῶτον σεβασμὸν ἀποδοῦναι). On the "flopping formula" in Ugaritic epistolary, complete with some examples see: William Schniedewind and Joel Hunt, *A Primer on Ugaritic: Language, Culture, and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40-91, esp. 40-45.

38 Dubischar, "Survival," 47. See also Markus Mülke, "Die Epitome—das bessere Original?" in Horster and Reitz, *Condensing Texts—Condensed texts*, 69-89, esp. 74-76.

is expressed. At §30, in the context of an ostensible memorandum to begin the project, already quoted in part above, we have Demetrius restating the problem of language: “The scrolls of the law of the Judeans along with a few others remain, for it occurs in Hebrew language and script” (τοῦ νόμου τῶν Ἰουδαίων βιβλία σὺν ἑτέροις ὀλίγοις τισὶν ἀπολείπει· τυγχάνει γὰρ Ἑβραϊκοῖς γράμμασι καὶ φωνῇ λεγόμενα). It is interesting to note here, that this problem is not particularly the fault of a performance of the tradition. Unlike the example cited above in Jason of Cyrene’s work, wherein the text is too long and too complicated to read due to its detail, this problem of language is not really under the control of the scribe responsible for its recording. This problem largely arises because of the portability of the text toward a new audience, in this case an audience that is unable to read or understand Hebrew. Nevertheless, the problem is as significant as any other in the auxiliary text corpus.

A second problem with these texts, which is only briefly mentioned, arises just after the statement concerning the language in §30. Not only does the law appear in Hebrew writing and script, but “it has been transcribed carelessly, and is not like it began, as is reported by those in the know” (δέ, καὶ οὐχ ὡς ὑπάρχει, σεσήμανται, καθὼς ὑπὸ τῶν εἰδόντων προσαναφέρεται). Demetrius adds that the reason for this is that it has not obtained royal care. I take this to mean that the Hebrew manuscripts are positioned as being transmitted in a way that does not meet Demetrius’s high standards of quality within the narrative. The issue is hotly debated.³⁹ The discussion centers on whether *σεσήμανται* means “translate” or “record, transcribe, write down,” and whether the context suggests that it is Hebrew or Greek texts being criticized. On one side, are scholars such as Hadas, Kahle, Jellicoe, and Niehoff, who argue that it is poor copies of an older Greek text that are under discussion.⁴⁰ On the other side, scholars such as Bickerman, Zuntz, Wright, and Borchardt defend the position that the whole context dictates the Hebrew manuscripts are being discussed.⁴¹ It would seem any argument for this passage reflecting a discussion of previous Greek

39 David Gooding, “Aristeas and Septuagint Origins: A Review of Recent Studies,” *VT* 13 (1963): 357-79.

40 Hadas, *Aristeas*, 110, argues that it seems unnatural for the king to be interested in any Hebrew editions of the text. Paul Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, 2nd ed. (New York: Praeger, 1961), 213, expresses similar concerns, and wonders whether Demetrius would ever comment on the Hebrew versions. Sidney Jellicoe, “Aristeas, Philo, and the Septuagint *Vorlage*,” *JTS* (1961): 261-71, esp. 267, shares this view. Niehoff, *Jewish*, 33, argues that the verb *σημαίνω* and the adjective *ἀμελέστερον* both indicate a discussion of the Greek text because they were terms particularly employed for text criticism in Alexandrian scholarly circles.

41 Elias Bickerman, “The Colophon of the Greek Book of Esther,” in Tropper, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, 1:218-37, esp. 221 n. 24; Zuntz, “Aristeas,” 117-22; Wright, *Praise*, 306; Borchardt, “LXX Myth,” 13.

translations, in a context in which it has just discussed their Hebrew language and character, requires special pleading.⁴² This means that yet another problem is encountered in the primary corpus from the point of view of Demetrius and the Alexandrian court: the Hebrew texts are in some way considered to be inauthentic or false. It is again made clear that this requirement for accuracy is special to the context of the Alexandrian library. The result is that not only is there a perception of a problem under the category of manner, but there is another under the category of quality. The text is both incomprehensible (due to language), and false (due to poor transmission of the Hebrew). For these reasons it is perceived to be failing due to the species of separation experienced by the written product's portability and demands action within this new context. That is, the Hebrew Pentateuch is not good because it has entered into the Alexandrian court in Egypt where new and different language and exactitude are demanded of the text.

No further passages analogous to problem statements appear, but it is worth mentioning one further passage that could call into question the degree to which the false Hebrew texts are problematic. As mentioned above, at §§176-177, when the king receives the translators at court for the first time, he also receives deluxe Hebrew scrolls of the law, which are described as superior parchments (διαφόροις διφθέραις), inscribed with gold letters (γεγραμμένη χρυσογραφία), marvelously manufactured (θαυμασίως εἰργασμένου τοῦ ὑμένου), and seams from one sheet to another rendered imperceptible (καὶ τῆς πρὸς ἄλληλα συμβολῆς ἀνεπισθήτου κατεσκευασμένης). Wright and David Gooding, for example, have understood this passage as an assurance of the high quality of the Hebrew scroll on which the Greek translation was based.⁴³ Wright, especially, has highlighted the fact that these deluxe Hebrew scrolls are constructed as of high quality precisely because they have been under the care of Eleazar, who is presented as a royal figure, and have now come into the possession of another king in Ptolemy II.⁴⁴ This is certainly a possible interpretation. However, it is significant that all the marks of quality in these Hebrew scrolls are entirely superficial. No mention is made of the quality of the contents or their representation

42 Kahle, *Cairo*, 213, brings up an intriguing possibility when he discusses Theopompus's use of "misleading" or "unstable" or even "dangerous" (ἐπιφαλέςτερον) previous translations (προηρηγηγυμένων) at §314. While it is remotely possible that these translations are the subject of discussion in §30, it remains the case that this would stretch the meaning of σημαίνω beyond its normal usage and makes a mockery of Demetrius's statements in both §11 and §30 as to the language in which the text presently exists.

43 Wright, *Praise*, 283. Gooding, "Aristeas," 360.

44 Wright, *Letter*, 148.

of the true law. Further, once we turn to the passages discussing the solution to the problems cited, one possible interpretation of the practice of the translators is that they are correcting the inaccuracy of even this set of Hebrew scrolls.

To pick up the discussion of passages that are similar to Dubischar's solution section of Greco-Roman prologues we shall again return to that initial conversation between Demetrius and Ptolemy. The solution offered by Demetrius to the problem of the appearance of the Judean legislation in strange characters and language is that "It is in need of translation" (§11, 'Ερμηνείας προσδείται). This is a logical solution to the first problem cited. It responds directly to the issues encountered. We have a valuable text worth being included in the library, but it is not comprehensible because it is written in foreign language and characters. This is a potential travesty because, in its current state, the text of value cannot be properly understood by the king, his scholars, and perhaps even many of the Judeans in Alexandria. The text would fail on this most important stage, the court of cultural meeting and competition. A translation into Greek would allow for the previously incomprehensible text to avoid failure by making it available to greater audiences in the present context. The narrator reports that Ptolemy assents to the plan by ordering a letter to be composed for the accomplishment of the purpose. Both this letter (§§35-40) and a memorandum on the subject (§§29-32) are produced for the narrative. Here the plan for translation is both repeated (§28, §38) and elaborated upon (§32, §39). In its elaboration the solution to the problem of translation is intricately worked out. Six elders from each tribe (§32, πρεσβυτέρους ὄντας ἄνδρας... ἀφ' ἐκάστης φυλῆς ἕξ; §39, ἄνδρας καλῶς βεβιωκότας πρεσβυτέρους) of exceptional experience (§32, ἐμπείρους τῶν κατὰ τὸν νόμον τὸν ἑαυτῶν; §39, ἐμπειρίαν ἔχοντας τοῦ νόμου) and character (§32, τοὺς μάλιστα καλῶς βεβιωκότας; §39, καλῶς βεβιωκότας) will be sought. This elaborate description of the characters, alongside their extensive display of knowledge in the long symposium with the king (§§188-294) has been correctly identified by Dries De Crom as part of an ethical argument contributing to the impression of a high quality translation.⁴⁵ In addition, the response of the Judean population (§308), its priests and elders (§§310-311), and even especially the king himself, who is able to hear the Judean law for the first time (§312), all affirm that the translation is of high quality and solves the problem of potential failure in this new Alexandrian setting. Particularly important in this case is that the solution offered, not only be done, but done well. The reason for this is clear: the proper rescue of a failing text can only be accomplished if it meets the high standards of the one producing it. It may also relate to the perceived divine status of the text highlighted above.

45 De Crom, "Letter," 156-57.

The process by which these exceptional translators accomplish their goal, as dictated by Demetrius under the auspices of the king, is also important for reaching this target. The plan drawn up for the translators by Demetrius is that they should decide by majority opinion what is an accurate representation of the law (§32, ὅπως τὸ σύμφωνον ἐκ τῶν πλειόνων ἐξετάσαντες καὶ λαβόντες τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἑρμηνείαν ἀκριβές; §39, ὅπως ἐκ τῶν πλειόνων τὸ σύμφωνον εὔρεθῆ). The plan is later reported to have been followed at §302, even leading to the pronouncement by the priest, elders, and leaders of the people that the text should remain unchanged (§§310-311). This plan and its accomplishment would seem not only to solve the first problem of translation, but to directly address the challenge of the second problem noted in the text. If the Hebrew manuscripts are characterized by being prepared carelessly, the Greek manuscript being prepared by the royal librarian and with the king's sponsorship have a particular focus on accuracy.⁴⁶ Accuracy has clearly been preserved not only as seen through the response of the Judean community but also through Eleazar's presentation of the Judean laws in Greek to Aristeeus in Jerusalem. The result is in keeping with the general care with which the king (§§27-28, §30, §51) is depicted in accomplishing all tasks. This characterization of Ptolemy helps to establish the level of care that is being claimed for the preparation of the translation, and ultimately for its quality. The depiction would further seem to underline the ways in which scholarly activity such as that in the library contributes to the quality of the auxiliary text being endorsed.⁴⁷ Just as the solution statements in auxiliary prologues typically point out that the new text produced will directly address the problems noted in the primary text, so the Letter of Aristeeus provides us with an analogous view of the Greek translation of the Judean laws with respect to their Hebrew counterparts.

4 Conclusions

The evidence cited above has constituted an attempt to show that the attitude toward texts in general and concerning two explicitly related texts, which Dubischar finds in prologues to auxiliary works, can also be found outside that very particular and limiting setting.⁴⁸ The argument has further tried to expand

46 This is the main conclusion of Borchardt, "LXX Myth," 14-15.

47 Cf. Honigman, *Septuagint*, 119-39; Wright, "Pseudonymous," 49-50; Zuntz, "Aristeeus," 109-26.

48 Dubischar, "Survival," 44-46, only finds 29 such prologues on auxiliary works. Although Francis Borchardt, "Reading Aid: 2 Maccabees and the History of Jason of Cyrene

the concept of auxiliary texts beyond the Greco-Roman and Hellenistic genres treated by Dubischar and into the realm of translation. By specifically examining the evidence from the Letter of Aristeas regarding the Greek translation of the Pentateuch we have shown that, like the auxiliary prologues, Aristeas depicts a wide variety of voices showing deep respect for the Hebrew law. This is likely to meet with our prior expectations of a translation, though not necessarily of all types of text change. However, we have noticed that when the Hebrew law scrolls have entered into the new context of the royal library and the demands of its librarian, the Pentateuch is encountered as faulty, and risks failure in this context if nothing is done. Paradoxically, this finding likely corresponds quite closely to our expectations of text change, but not necessarily to those of translations. A reversal has thus been revealed. I have argued that this is quite similar to the sentiments we see in problem sections of Dubischar's auxiliary prologues. Finally, we have seen that the translation project is crafted as a direct response to the problems the characters within Aristeas have encountered with regard to the Hebrew Pentateuch. The work of translation itself fixes the problem of incomprehensibility due to a foreign language. The method by which the translation is accomplished addresses the problem of quality due to the perception of poor manuscripts.

The depiction of the whole project thus conforms to the attitudes toward changing texts, corpora, or traditions noted by Dubischar. That means, at least in this context and those examined by Dubischar, adaptation is performed on a valued (even sacred?) text, corpus, or tradition. It does not happen when the underlying subject is not valued. Thus, it should not be surprising to encounter so-called sacred texts being adapted. According to the ancient evidence from the adapters themselves, this is the norm.⁴⁹ Second, a text's authority does not imply that it is faultless. This may have to do with qualities inherent to the text itself, such as in the case of the epitomator's criticism of Jason of Cyrene's five-volume history of the Maccabean rebellion, and in the case of Demetrius's criticism of the Hebrew manuscripts in Aristeas. However, other evidence we have encountered suggests that textual adaptation might also be deemed necessary because adapters have a different set of demands from the text than it could possibly be expected to offer. In the case of the Judean laws in Hebrew, for

Reconsidered," *JSJ* 47 (2016): 71-87, adds the possibility of several more, including 2 Macc 2:19-32, the translator's prologue of Greek Sirach, and the preface to the Gospel according to Luke, the number of such explicit auxiliary prologues is still rather small.

49 This, of course, is in agreement with many findings of recent biblical research, as well. On the pluriformity of the pentateuchal traditions, one can go back to Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001).

example, one could not rationally expect it to be written as a polyglot in a single collection.⁵⁰ In either case, these faults might lead to perceived failure in any given context, and so texts are constantly at risk. Third, once an adaptation or auxiliary is created the relationship is not one of clear priority. On the one hand, the auxiliary scribe responsible for the new performance of the text, tradition, or corpus clearly displays evidence that the primary material has been improved. This is most obvious in the presentation of the careful methods of the translators and in the communal acceptance of the Greek Pentateuch that is produced (§308-311).⁵¹ On the other hand, in this case, and in most of those examined by Dubischar, there is an explicit admission of derivation from a primary source, and further, situations in which the primary text is more appropriate to read. For example, for Eleazar and the many of the Judeans living within Judea, the deluxe Hebrew scrolls sent for the translation may well be acceptable. Even outside of this particular translation situation, as in 2 Maccabees, Jason of Cyrene's text is still useful for those interested in the details of the Maccabean history. All three of these conclusions arising from the testimonies (artificial as they might be) of those making auxiliary texts in antiquity, even among Judeans should encourage us to more deeply reflect on our prior convictions.

Let us close by returning to the theoretical framework from which I began. The goal of this paper was to provide some evidence from a particular set of text performances for the unsuitability of the prevalent tendency in Western thought to privilege what is first and what is primary. In this specific case, the aim was to cause us to question the values we place on translations with respect to their original language counterparts. It would seem that the concept of auxiliary texts does just that. Rather than flipping the traditional binary over and claiming that the auxiliary text is better than the primary, or that speech is secondary to writing, the model and the evidence supporting it suggest a much more complex relationship of mutual dependence.⁵² One might

50 We find similar general sentiments to this point in the work of James Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of Canon," in *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God: Essays on the Bible and God in Memory of G. Ernest Wright*, ed. Frank Moore Cross (Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 531-60.

51 Wright, *Praise*, 308-9, argues that this is effectively a declaration of independence for the Greek Pentateuch, which had previously been considered only as a way to access the Hebrew text. On this model, known as the "interlinear paradigm" see Albert Pietersma, "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint," in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI—6 Conference. Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique 'From Alpha to Byte,' University of Stellenbosch 17-21 July, 2000*, ed. Johann Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 337-64.

52 Dubischar, "Survival," 62.

argue that the terminology of “auxiliary” and “primary” still situates the framework within this binary comparison and the values which are ascribed to it. However, to make this claim is to miss two essential points of this framework remarked on only briefly above: (1) Auxiliary and primary are floating terms in that any auxiliary text can become primary and many primary texts can be conceived of as secondary depending upon how they are situated. Even the great epics of Homer are marked off as in some sense secondary when, in the invocation, the bard asks the muse to sing of an already established story. (2) The fact that in any given relationship between texts or traditions one can be marked off as primary and the other as secondary does not mean that one is more dependent on the other. Their relationship is reciprocal. While the Greek translation is dependent on the Hebrew manuscripts for content and for an ostensible connection to the divine, the Hebrew manuscripts are dependent on the Greek translation for a continued life among a wider audience, possibly because what is presented is a more appropriate text for that audience.⁵³ Even as the Greek translation seems to be positioned as independent and most carefully prepared in the text of Aristeas, it does not supersede the Hebrew, nor do those characters responsible for the translation denigrate the original. In fact, when the Judean laws are first introduced, even they are introduced as an interpretation (§3).⁵⁴ That is, even the Hebrew text is auxiliary.⁵⁵ What is left is an admittedly artificial but complex and deconstructed picture that corresponds with many others from the auxiliary texts of the Greco-Roman world.⁵⁶

53 This is in agreement with Derrida's own ideas about translation and its place. See the discussion and distillation of Derrida's views on translation in Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 166-74, esp. 167.

54 *καὶ κατακεκτημένον μεγίστην ὠφέλειαν . . . πρὸς τὴν ἐρμηνείαν τοῦ θείου νόμου, διὰ τὸ γεγράφθαι παρ' αὐτοῖς ἐν διφθέραις Ἑβραϊκοῖς γράμμασιν*; “And he was in possession of greatly valued items . . . for the interpretation of divine law, because for them it is written on parchments in Hebrew characters.” A similar sentiment obtains for all law codes in §240.

55 On the tradition of the Judean law as a copy of divine law, see Hindy Najman, “A Written Copy of the Law of Nature: An Unthinkable Paradox?” *SPhA* 15 (2003): 54-63, and Najman, “The Law of Nature and the Authority of Mosaic Law,” *SPhA* 11 (1999): 55-73.

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