

*Offprint:*

# Jewish Reception of Greek Bible Versions

Studies in Their Use in Late Antiquity  
and the Middle Ages

Edited by

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# The Greek Bible used by the Jews in the dialogues *Contra Iudaeos* (fourth-tenth centuries CE)<sup>1</sup>

by

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In all the periods of the Byzantine empire, literary dialogues *Contra Iudaeos* were written in Greek by Christian authors.<sup>2</sup> These texts have the reputation of being very conservative, borrowing arguments, biblical quotations and, sometimes, larger portions of text from each other, so that one wonders whether there is any chance of finding any valuable information in them about the Jews of their time and, furthermore, about the Bible they used. And indeed, if all these literary dialogues were conceived on Mt Athos by monks who had always lived there, and if all these monks had read or heard was orthodox liturgy, standard Christian biblical texts and writings *Contra Iudaeos* produced in similar conditions, there would be little chance of finding any genuine Jewish biblical tradition in these works.

In order to evaluate any information from Christian literary dialogues relating to the Jewish Bible, one must first remember a few points about the transmission of the Greek Bible and convince oneself that there is at least some theoretical possibility of finding such material in these Christian texts. One must then also ponder how genuine Jewish Greek biblical material can be distinguished from Christian Greek biblical material. This is the first part of this article.

Next, ‘external’ aspects, such as references to Jewish Bibles, polemics against Aquila and questions about the deuterocanonical books are presented. The last three sections exemplify the kinds of biblical variants at-

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the Swiss National Science Foundation, which generously supported this research, the author would like to warmly thank the organisers of the Colloquium for their friendly invitation and their ongoing help in commenting my paper and correcting my English, especially Nicholas de Lange and Cameron Boyd-Taylor. I am of course the only one to be blamed for the too many remaining shortcomings of this article.

<sup>2</sup> For a recent and fresh introduction to polemics *Contra Iudaeos*, see V. Déroche, ‘Forms and functions of anti-Jewish polemics: polymorphy, polysemy’, to be published in *Proceedings of the conference ‘Christians and Jews in Byzantium: Images and Cultural Dynamics’*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 21–24 May 2006 (ed. G. Stroumsa).

tributed to the Jews. This overview is not a thorough catalogue of all relevant instances, and it does not address questions concerning Jewish interpretations of the Bible.

Surprisingly enough, genuine Jewish biblical material can sometimes be found, though very infrequently, in Greek dialogues *Contra Iudaeos* from the first six centuries of the Byzantine empire.

## A. Methodological issues about the production, circulation and possible use of the Jewish Greek Bible

### 1. Jewish translations and Christian Bibles

Between the third and the first century BCE, the books of the Jewish Bible were progressively translated into Greek; the result of this long-lasting work is generally called the Septuagint.<sup>3</sup> This first Greek Bible is clearly a Jewish work. Starting with the first century CE, it was also received by the Christian communities as their Bible, and became the first part of the Christian Bible. In the Christian world, the Septuagint underwent several recensions and revisions (the most famous of them being by Origen in the third century).

Christians acquired the Septuagint in various ways, including the fact that the first generation of Christians was, by far, mostly made of Jewish people; if some of them owned biblical books in Greek, there is no reason why they would not keep on using them and making copies from them.

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<sup>3</sup> Technically, the name Septuagint applies only to the Greek translation of the Pentateuch made at the time of Ptolemy II. However, following common practice, it designates here the whole Greek Bible that was available before the Christian era, then variously used, augmented and revised by Christians. For a discussion of the date of the Septuagint and various theories about its origin see G. Dorival, 'L'histoire de la Septante dans le Judaïsme antique,' in *La Bible Grecque des Septante* (ed. M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich; Paris, 1988), 39–82; N. Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in context: introduction to the Greek versions of the Bible* (trans. Wilfred G. E. Watson; Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2000), 53–86; with a discussion of the Jewish Greek canon, M. Hengel (with R. Deines), 'Die Septuaginta als "christliche Schriftensammlung", ihre Vorgeschichte und das Problem ihres Kanons,' in *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (ed. Martin Hengel; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 72; Tübingen, 1994), 182–284. On the critical editions of the Septuaginta books and their making, P.-M. Bogaert (and partially B. Botte), 'Septante et versions grecques,' *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible* 12 (1993): 536–692. When relevant, the CPG and CPL number of the ancient Greek and Latin works are given: CPG number from M. Geerard and J. Noret, *Clavis Patrum Graecorum* (6 vols.; Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout, 1974–2003); CPL number from E. Dekkers and A. Gaar, *Clavis patrum Latinorum* (Corpus Christianorum; Turnhout, 1995).

This is also true for any later Christian converts from Judaism. Besides, one does not know how far the copying of the Greek Bible was controlled by Jewish authorities, and how easy it was for anyone to acquire those books. Finally, when persecution of the Jewish communities started to spread, from the end of the fourth century onwards, it sometimes happened that Bibles in the synagogues were not fully destroyed, but confiscated, as the story of the sack of the synagogue of Minorca clearly shows.<sup>4</sup>

Taking for granted that the Greek language remained alive among the Romaniotes throughout the Byzantine period and, at least to the eighth century, was also an important written language,<sup>5</sup> one wonders how long the Septuagint was also transmitted in those Jewish circles. It is commonly accepted that the Jews totally abandoned the Septuagint from the second century,<sup>6</sup> but was it so everywhere? Did it totally stop being transmitted in Jewish circles until the sixteenth century? One must be careful not to generalise from the attitude of some major Jewish circles to all the Jewish communities.

On the one hand, several factors played a role in weakening the interest in the Septuagint in Jewish communities.

Firstly, even before the Christian era, the Septuagint underwent criticism because of its discrepancies with the authoritative Hebrew text of the time. Some decades later, Christian apologetics and protreptical writings started making increasing use of the Septuagint, as these texts tried to

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<sup>4</sup> Severus Minoricensis, *Epistula de conversione Iudaeorum apud Minorcam insulam meritis sanctis Stephani facta* (CPL 576), 13.13, ed. S. Bradbury (with Engl. trans.; Oxford Early Christian Texts; Oxford, 1996), 80–125, 94; J. Amengual i Batle, *Els orígens del Cristianisme a les Balears i el seu desenvolupament fins a l'època musulmana* (2 vols.; Palma de Mallorca, 1992), 2:12–64. The text does not say which language the stolen sacred books were written in.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. V. Colorni, 'L'uso del Greco nella liturgia del giudaismo ellenistico e la novella 164 di Giustiniano,' *Annali di storia del diritto* 8 (1964): 19–80 (repr. in *Judaica minora: Saggi sulla Storia dell'Ebraismo Italiano dall'Antiquità all'Età Moderna*, ed. V. Colorni; Milano, 1983); N. R. M. de Lange, 'Sem et Japhet. Les Juifs et la langue grecque,' *Pardès* 12 (1990; trans. J.-C. Attias), 90–107; N. R. M. de Lange, *Greek Jewish texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Texte und Studien zum Antiken Judentum 51; Tübingen, 1996); S. Reif, 'Some changing trends in the Jewish literary expression of the Byzantine world,' in *Literacy, education and manuscript transmission in Byzantium and beyond* (ed. C. Holmes and J. Waring; The medieval Mediterranean 42; Leiden, 2002), 81–110, 84, 97–100, 103, 105–106. J. Niehoff-Panagiotidis, 'Byzantinische Lebenswelt und rabbinische Hermeneutik: die griechischen Juden in der Kairoer Genizah,' *Byzantion* 74 (2004): 51–109.

<sup>6</sup> For example, following D. Barthélemy, G. Dorival, 'L'élimination de la Septante dans les années 90–130,' in 'L'achèvement de la Septante dans le judaïsme. De la faveur au rejet,' in *La Bible grecque des Septante* (ed. M. Harl, G. Dorival and O. Munnich; Initiations au christianisme ancien; Paris, 1988), 119–125, 122–124. See also the quote from Origen, below.

show that the First Testament's prophecies had been fulfilled by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers. These 'demonstrations' sometimes took advantage of peculiarities of the translations, which either depended on a different underlying Hebrew text, or were interpretative or free translations of the standard Hebrew text.

Very soon, again even before Christian era, the Septuagint or part of it was revised.<sup>7</sup> Eventually new translators built on these revisions to produce new Greek Bibles (at least, competing translations of most of its books) that could potentially replace the Septuagint. Theodotion, Symmachus and Aquila are the best known of these new translators, but Aquila's version seems to have been particularly well accepted within Jewish communities. Sources witness also to other translations or revisions.<sup>8</sup>

How many such revisions existed? How extensive and influential were they? How successful were the revisions and new translations against the 'original' translations? These questions still need to be answered. Besides, a recent suggestion that Aquila's translation was not written against the Septuagint but performed the function of a Greek targum<sup>9</sup> makes one think of a possible parallel and peaceful transmission of both versions within 'official' Judaism: the Septuagint as a text for liturgical use and Aquila's version as a support for exegetical use. In any case, for some time, all or most of these different 'forms' of the biblical text must have been used and copied synchronically.

It is very important to note that some of these non-Septuagint Jewish Greek translations were known and used in some Christian circles. For example, Origen's *Hexapla* cited the readings of Theodotion, Symmachus and Aquila; the *Hexapla* are probably the indirect source of most of what is known today from Christian documents about Aquila's readings.

Another factor in the weakening of the Septuagint (and of all the Greek translations), is the growing use of Hebrew as a liturgical language.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> See the discussions of the proto-Lucianic and Theodotionic revisions, in Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint*, 148–153, 232–236.

<sup>8</sup> N. Fernández Marcos, 'Jewish versions into mediaeval and modern Greek,' in *The Septuagint*, 174–187.

<sup>9</sup> G. Veltri, 'Der griechische Targum Aquila,' ch. V in *Gegenwart der Tradition. Studien zur jüdischen Literatur und Kulturgeschichte* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 69; Leiden, Boston, Köln, 2002), 75–103; G. Veltri, 'The targumim of Aquila and Onkelos: canonical substitution,' ch. 3.3 in *Libraries, translations, and 'canonic' texts: the Septuagint, Aquila and Ben Sira in the Jewish and Christian traditions* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 109; Leiden and Boston, 2006), 163–189.

<sup>10</sup> N. R. M. de Lange, 'A Thousand Years of Hebrew in Byzantium,' in *Hebrew study from Ezra to Ben-Yehuda* (ed. W. Horbury; Edinburgh, 1999), 147–161; N. R. M. de Lange, 'The Hebrew language in the European Diaspora,' in *Studies on the Jewish*

However, even if many Jews stopped using the Greek Bible, there is no reason to believe that all the Jews totally rejected it everywhere and to exclude *a priori* that the Septuagint and other Greek versions kept on being copied privately or in some Jewish communities. Rather, the sources tend to testify to an ongoing tradition of the Greek biblical texts and an ongoing interest for a Greek Bible throughout the Byzantine empire, even if clear witnesses to the use of it are scanty.<sup>11</sup> In any case, it would be also a methodological mistake to deduce, from the scarcity of information, that the copying and the use of the Septuagint within Jewish Communities was totally abandoned as soon as the Christians also used it as holy Scripture.

## 2. *Novella 146 of Justinian*

After the fourth century, the most often mentioned, and disputed, external witness to the use of the Greek Bible in Jewish circles is Novella 146 of Justinian, dated 8 February 553.<sup>12</sup> In this decree, Justinian allowed the Jews to use both the Septuagint and Aquila's version in the synagogues, but forbade the use of the oral law. According to a recent study by Giuseppe Veltri, Justinian invented an argument inside the Jewish communities, in order to interfere in their practices and forbid the use of the oral tradition, as a measure within his broader policy of converting the Jews to Christianity;<sup>13</sup> as a result, according to Veltri, one should no longer give credit to what is said in the Novella about the use of the Septuagint and Aquila in the synagogues: it is just a 'scenario' made up by Justinian and his advisers on the basis of a much older reality.

This interpretation of Novella 146 is far from being fully convincing. Did Justinian really need to fake a dispute inside the Jewish community if

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*Diaspora in the Hellenistic and Roman periods* (Tel Aviv, 1996), 111–137. N. R. M. de Lange, 'Sem et Japhet,' 96–98.

<sup>11</sup> N. R. M. de Lange, 'The Jews of Byzantium and the Greek Bible: outline of the problems and suggestions for future research,' in *Rashi 1040–1990. Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach* (ed. G. Sed-Rajna; Paris, 1993), 203–210; Fernández Marcos, 'Jewish versions'; N. R. M. de Lange, 'La tradition des "révisions juives" au Moyen Âge. Les fragments hébraïques de la Geniza du Caire' in *κατὰ τοὺς ο΄. Selon les Septante. Trente études sur la Bible grecque des Septante. En hommage à Marguerite Harl* (ed. G. Dorival and O. Munnich; Paris, 1995), 133–143. Since those publications, other witnesses have surfaced. For a recent example, see N. Tchernetska, J. Olszowy-Schlanger and N. R. M. de Lange, 'An early Hebrew-Greek Biblical glossary from the Cairo Genizah,' *Revue des études juives* 166 (2007): 91–128.

<sup>12</sup> For literature on this Novella, see de Lange, 'The Hebrew language,' 132–135.

<sup>13</sup> G. Veltri, 'Die Novelle 146 περὶ Ἑβραίων. Das Verbot des Targumvortrags in Justinians Politik,' in *Die Septuaginta zwischen Judentum und Christentum* (ed. M. Hengel and A. M. Schwemer; Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 71; Tübingen, 1994), 116–130; new edition with minor changes, 'Justinians Novelle 146 Peri Hebraion,' ch. VI in *Gegenwart*, 104–119.

he wanted to interfere in its affairs? Could Justinian and his advisors be so unaware of the reality of the synagogues that they promulgated this law without knowing that Greek Bibles were no longer used in synagogues? Is there any other instance where the emperor justified himself in such a way while making a law? One may well be convinced by Veltri's suggestions about the goal of Justinian's rule, without following his arguments about the *mise en scène* of his law-making.

As a result, one may still see Novella 146 as echoing a situation where the Septuagint was used in the synagogues.<sup>14</sup>

### 3. *The story of Cosmas the lawyer*

Another indirect witness from the sixth century is the story reported in a well-known text in John Moschos's *Pratum Spirituale*. As discussed below, this text also provides us with an interesting model for the production of literary works *Contra Iudaeos*:

'Concerning this master Cosmas the lawyer, many people told us many things; some one thing, others another. But most people told us a great deal. We shall write down what we saw with our own eyes and what we have carefully examined, for the benefit of those who chance to read it. He was a humble man, merciful, continent, a virgin, serene, cool-tempered, friendly, hospitable, and kind to the poor. This wondrous man greatly benefited us, not only by letting us see him and by teaching us, but also because he had more books than anybody else in Alexandria and would willingly supply them to those who wished. Yet he was a man of no possessions. Throughout his house there was nothing to be seen but books, a bed and a table. Any man could go in and ask for what would benefit him and read it. Each day I would go in to him and I never entered without finding him either reading or writing against the Jews. It was his fervent desire to convert the Hebrews to the truth. For this reason he would often send me to some Hebrews to discuss some point of Scripture with them (ἵνα ἀπὸ Γραφῆς αὐτοῖς διαλεχθῶ), for he would not readily leave the house himself.'<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Incidentally, it is sometimes argued that the Novella was perceived by some Christians as a concession to the Jews, against the Septuagint, and prompted a climate of polemics against Aquila, that would be echoed in such works as the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (see further below); see R. G. Robertson, 'The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila: a critical text, introduction to the manuscript evidence, and an inquiry into the sources and literary relationship' (Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1986), 372–383. This suggestion of Robertson has been widely accepted in the research field. The *Anonymus Declerck* has also been connected with this Novella; see José H. Declerck, *Anonymus dialogus com Iudaeis saeculis ut videtur sexti* (Corpus Christianorum, Series Graeca 30, 1994), xlvi–xlix; see also below.

<sup>15</sup> Iohannes Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale* (CPG 7376), ed. J.-B. Cotelier, *Ecclesiae Graecae Monumenta* 2 (Paris, 1681), repr. in *Patrologia Graeca* (ed. J.-P. Migne), 87.3:2852–3112; trans. by J. Wortley, *The spiritual meadow* (Cistercian Studies Series 139; Kalamazoo, Michigan, 1992); ch. 172 (PG 87.3:3040C–3041A; trans. 141–142). On the story of Cosmas see V. Déroche, 'La polémique anti-judaïque au VIème et au VIIème

There is no reason not to consider this story as a fair witness about Cosmas and John Moschos. It is no cliché, and it does not match any narrative pattern in John Moschos. Without giving *a priori* credit to every detail, it can be used as a relevant historical text.

The text clearly states that John Moschos used to discuss with Jews ‘from’ the Scriptures. In which language did these debates take place? Surely not in Hebrew or Aramaic, since it would imply that John Moschos knew it fairly well. It must then be in the common vernacular language of Alexandria, and Greek is the only reasonable answer. So, in the sixth century, some Jewish people were using the Bible in Greek in discussion with their Christian opponents. Was the Jewish party quoting the Greek Bible according to a specific translator, an oral tradition, or translating it on the spot, because they knew the Hebrew text only? This last option does not make much sense.

To debate effectively with John Moschos about the First Testament, the Jews had to be able to lean on one of their stabilised Greek traditions. It is not clear, however, whether this tradition was all or partially oral, or relayed by written books, whatever they might be: Greek Bibles used in synagogues, private Bibles, non-biblical books containing excerpts from the Bible, such as *Testimonia* books or polemics *Contra Christianos*.

Which Greek text would be reflected in this tradition? Even though Cosmas has been thought of as a possible author of several preserved dialogues, and these dialogues mainly used the Septuagint as the Biblical text of both opponents, it is not possible to deduce that this version was also the standard text of the challenged Jews.

Besides, John Moschos provides here a possible contrastive model for the production of works *Contra Iudaeos*. In a direct link with real debates Cosmas was interested in writing texts *Contra Iudaeos*;<sup>16</sup> according to John Moschos, these texts aimed at converting the Jews and were not mere exercises, or intra-Christian propaganda. Two underlying source types can be pointed out:

Firstly it is stressed that Cosmas was reading books *Contra Iudaeos*. Even though it does not explicitly say he was copying from those texts, the literary link is obvious and Cosmas was necessarily influenced by his read-

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siècle. Un memento inédit, les Képhalaia,’ *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 275–311, 285–286; L. L. Lahey, ‘Jewish Biblical interpretation and genuine Jewish-Christian debate in The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila,’ *Journal of Jewish Studies* 51 (2000): 281–296.

<sup>16</sup> For a discussion of the production of Christian anti-Jewish texts in a context of social conflicts between both communities in the fourth and the fifth century see P. Andrist, ‘Le Dialogue d’Athanasie et Zachée. Etude des sources et du contexte littéraire’ (Ph.D Diss., University of Geneva, 2001: <http://www.unige.ch/cyberdocuments/theses2001/AndristP/these.pdf>), 451–484.



ings. In one sense, these Christian books represent intra-Christian material and tradition.

Secondly, and more interestingly, Cosmas also wanted to test his arguments on contemporary Jews, and used to send John Moschos to debate with them. What John would bring back to Cosmas, and what Cosmas would use from that in his writings can also be considered an indirect contemporary Jewish oral source.<sup>17</sup>

Thirdly one should not exclude the possibility that Cosmas, in his apparently large private library, also possessed Jewish books he could use in his writings. But this potential third source is not explicitly mentioned.

Cosmas was clearly composing literary works which were definitely not faithful transcriptions of real debates with the Jews. Surprisingly, in spite of this fact, his texts potentially contained some genuine Jewish material. Of course, the extent and the nature of this material is not clear: it could be underlying arguments, that are not clearly stated, or large quotations, including Biblical quotations; there is a large range of possibilities and one also wonders how faithfully this possible material was transmitted.

Even though this pattern of production should not be blindly applied to all texts *Contra Iudaeos*, or even all dialogues *Contra Iudaeos*, it forces one to admit that there is a theoretical possibility of finding genuine Jewish material in such Christian works.

#### 4. Recognising a Jewish Greek Bible and Jewish Greek variants

The Cosmas story shows how a Christian author can potentially present his readers with both Christian and Jewish kinds of material together, in a contrastive way. Seen more globally, there are at least three basic ways this could happen:

1) If a Christian author consciously puts in the mouth of his Jewish character biblical text taken from a Jewish source. This can be a written source (a Jewish Bible, Jewish books with biblical material), or an oral source (opponents in discussions or debates, converted Jews). The possibility of a written source is to be seriously taken into account, when one considers how much a Jewish author like Philo of Alexandria was read in later Christian circles. The possibility of an oral source is also to be taken seriously, when one recalls the story of John Moschos;

2) If the author is a converted Jew, who quotes lessons he learned before he became a Christian;

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<sup>17</sup> Incidentally, this could be also a good explanation for the origin of genuine Jewish Biblical interpretation and some Hebrew and Aramaic words in the *Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila* (about this text, see a note below). See the discussion in Lahey, 'Jewish', and L. L. Lahey, 'Hebrew and Aramaic in the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila,' in *Hebrew study*, 106–121, 118–121.

3) If the author uses a Christian source, either a written (treatises *Contra Iudaeos*, *Erotapokriseis*) or an oral source (a learned colleague), that discriminates between Jewish and Christian variants. In the effectively preserved written text there are very few places where a Jewish variant is designated as such; some examples are presented below.

The central question, however, is how to distinguish an authentic Jewish Septuagint reading from its authentic Christian Septuagint diverging counterpart.

On the one hand, the situation seems hopeless. If the Christian's First Testament is originally a Jewish Greek Bible, and if Christians kept on acquiring Jewish Greek Bibles at later times, it follows that any potentially typical Jewish biblical feature or variant could also be found in a Christian Bible or in Christian texts quoting from the Bible. The same is true about the various versions of the new translators, since their texts were also extant in some Christian circles.

On the other hand, it sometimes happens that Christian texts, such as polemical dialogues, set up one or several Jewish character(s) arguing with one Christian character about the content of the Greek Bible (and not only about the interpretation of it). In such cases one naturally wonders whether the Jew is defending an authentic Jewish variant.

In other cases, discrepancies in the Greek biblical texts sometimes appear while comparing biblical quotations by the Christian character with biblical quotations by the Jewish character. These occurrences are not frequent, but when identified, they are also natural places where one wonders whether they offer some genuine information about the Jewish Greek Bible.

If one admits, as a working hypothesis, that Septuagint manuscripts were still copied in Jewish communities after the second century, one must expect that this Jewish text would be (virtually) free from typical variants from Christian revisions of the Bible. So, when the variants quoted by a Jewish character match the text that is critically established today, against a diverging Christian quotation, there is some chance that this text is Jewish. However, if there is no Christian quote to compare it against, nothing can be deduced, because many 'correct' variants also circulated among Christians.

Of course, a Jewish text would also evolve and typical Jewish variants would circulate. As a result, when one finds an otherwise unattested variant cited by a Jewish character, one must ask oneself if one is not dealing in reality with a Jewish variant. The probabilities for such an origin are higher when the Christian character quotes the same text with another variant (see above) and/or the text betrays some Aquilanic or rabbinic influence.

These meagre possibilities are explored below, after presenting some ‘external’ features of the Jewish Bible as pictured in polemical dialogues. This is not a very successful journey, but not a total failure either.

## B. External questions: references to the Bible; polemics against Aquila; the diverging canon

### 1. An awareness of Jewish Bibles

Unsurprisingly, it was common knowledge among Christian authors that the Jews owned Bibles and that some of them had a good knowledge of them. There is an interesting example in the *Trophaea Damasci* (*Troph. Dam.*):<sup>18</sup> the Christian character asks his Jewish opponents to get the Book of Daniel from the Synagogue;<sup>19</sup> when the book is here, the Jews use it, then the monk takes it ‘and opens it at the tenth vision of Daniel and reads’ from Daniel 9.<sup>20</sup> For the current enquiry, it is interesting to ask, what language, from the author’s perspective, this Book of Daniel was supposed to be written in.

The *Troph. Dam.* is a Greek dialogue, that is explicitly held in Greek.<sup>21</sup> As a result, all the biblical quotations are in Greek too. According to the literary setting the Jews are reading from the Bible and not translating from it, and a very large audience from various beliefs – not just a learned

<sup>18</sup> *Trophaea Damasci* (CPG 7797), ed. G. Bardy, ‘Les Trophées de Damas. Controverse judéo-chrétienne du VIIe siècle,’ *Patrologia Orientalis* 15 (1920), 172–292, 189–284. On this text, Déroche, ‘La polémique,’ 280; I. Aulisa and C. Schiano, *Dialogo di Papisco e Filone giudei con un monaco. Testo, traduzione e commento* (Quaderni di Vetera Christianorum 30; Bari, 2005), *passim*, in particular 310–321, 328–339; review by P. Andrist, forthcoming in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*. This text, which mentions the Arabs, has been dated to the seventh century.

<sup>19</sup> *Troph. Dam.* (3.6.4), 3.7.8–9, 4.2.1–2 (ed. Bardy 247, 253, 262). A similar feature appears in the related *Dialogica Anastasiana* (*Dial. Anast.*, CPG 7796; on this name, Andrist, review of Aulisa, Schiano; ed. Aulisa, Schiano, *Dialogo*, 181–210), 7.10–11, (ed. Aulisa, Schiano 187). Interestingly, Augustine relates the story of a bishop who was forced by his congregation to ask the Jews about the Hebrew reading in Jonah; from the answer of the Jews, Jerome concludes the latter did not know Hebrew, or lied (*manifestum est eos aut Hebraeas litteras ignorare aut... voluisse mentiri*); Augustine, Ep. 71.5, 75.21–22 (ed. A. Goldbacher, *S. Aureli Augustini Hipponiensis episcopi epistulae*; pars 1, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 34, 1895), 253, 320–323; = Jerome, Ep. 104.5, 112.21–22 (ed. Isidorus Hilberg, *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi epistulae*; pars 2, *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 55, 1912), 241, 391–393.

<sup>20</sup> *Troph. Dam.* 4.3.1 (ed. Bardy 263).

<sup>21</sup> At the beginning of the second day, the text says that the Jews ask their question in Greek (*Troph. Dam.* 2.1.1; ed. Bardy 215; “καὶ γλώττη ἑλληνίδι, ἐρωτῶσιν τοιάδε”).

Christian scholar – understands the quotations. This is naturally not proof that, in reality, there were Greek Bibles in the synagogues of the time, but this is how the unknown Christian author presents it. The fact that the quoted Daniel text is Theodotionic is not surprising; most probably it was the standard text for the Christian author,<sup>22</sup> who naturally ‘projected’ it onto the Bible of the Jewish opponent.

Also in the *Dialogue of Gregentius and Herban (Dial. GH)*,<sup>23</sup> the discussion and the biblical quotations are clearly supposed to be in Greek, as Herban laments:

*Dial. GH* A.44–45 (ed. Berger 454): ‘It was bad that our fathers consented to translate the books of Israel into the elaborated language of the Greeks, so that you employ them to shut us up.’

## 2. Defending the Septuagint

Even before the period under scrutiny, Justin<sup>24</sup> made a case that the Rabbis rejected the Septuagint, suppressed some verses from the Bible, and kept in the Synagogues unrevised copies of the text.<sup>25</sup> No matter whether Justin’s statements are correct or not, this text witnesses to a Christian belief, or awareness, that Jewish Bibles were undergoing revision in the second century.

In a later time, the author of the *Dialogue of Timotheus and Aquila (Dial. TA)*<sup>26</sup> not only thought that the Jews distorted the Scriptures, but he also felt that the Jews accused the Christians of doing so.

<sup>22</sup> Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint*, 143–145.

<sup>23</sup> Ps. Gregentius, *Disputatio cum Herbaso iudaeo* (CPG 7009), ed. A. Berger, *Life and works of Saint Gregentios, Archbishop of Taphar*, Millenium-Studien zu Kultur und Geschichte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr. – Millennium Studies in the culture and history of the first millenium C.E. 7; Berlin, New York, 2006), 500–803. The text is attributed a date in the tenth century, cf. Berger, *Life*, 100–109.

<sup>24</sup> Iustinus Martyr, *Dialogus cum Tryphone iudaeo* (CPG 1076), ed. P. Bobichon, *Justin Martyr. Dialogue avec Tryphon. Édition critique, traduction, commentaire* (2 vols.; Paradosis 47; Fribourg, 2003), 1:184–562.

<sup>25</sup> Iustinus, *Dialogue*, 71–72, ed. Bobichon 378–380. See the commentary of Bobichon, *Justin*, 2:767–770.

<sup>26</sup> *Dialogue Timothei et Aquilae* (CPG 7794). The text circulated in various recensions:

a) The *versio longior (Dial. TA-long.)* was edited by Robertson, *The Dialogue*, i–cxcix; his text was very usefully published by W. Varner, *Ancient Jewish-Christian dialogues: Athanasius and Zacchaeus, Simon and Theophilus, Timothy and Aquila: Introductions, Texts and Translations* (Studies in the Bible and early Christianity 58, Lewiston (NY), Queenston (Ontario), 2005), 140–280, without the critical apparatus, but with a translation.

b) A new edition of the *versio brevior (Dial. TA-brev.)* was prepared by L. L. Lahey, ‘The Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila: critical text and English translation of the short

*Dial. TA-long*. 39.1–5 (ed. Robertson and trans. Varner in Varner 226–227; cf. *Dial. TA-brev.* 22.2, ed. Lahey 172–173):

39.1–3. ‘The Jew said: You Christians have again distorted the scriptures as you wished! For you have made many points from the books you have brought forth, but these are not contained in the Hebrew but in the Greek only... Have you Christians truly desired to distort the scriptures?’

39.4–5. The Christian said: Unawares you have well asked, truly and accurately, about the plot that took place by Aquila the translator against the divine scriptures. Or rather you have brought up the harm unto himself having distorted the divine scriptures and translated them so badly as it seemed good to him. For this Aquila, because he desired to hide the testimonies about the Messiah, learned thoroughly the Hebrew letters and language in the fortieth year of his life, and then distorted the scriptures!’

*Dial. TA-long*. 40.20 (ed. Robertson and trans. Varner in Varner 234–235):

‘The Christian said: ... So whenever you find something, whether in the Hebrew (for even there he removed it) or in the Greek that covers up the testimonies to the Messiah, know that such was the scheme of Aquila.’

Interestingly, for the Christian author, the Bible of the Jewish character was primarily a Hebrew one, even though the latter was supposed to know the Greek one too. The Christian character argues that his Jewish opponent was in contact with a Greek Bible influenced by Aquila. However, when the author puts a quotation in the mouth of the Jewish character (whose name is also Aquila, which cannot be unintentional) it is not the version of Aquila but the Septuagint. Such is also the case with the other dialogues. In this section, the author tells the story of the miraculous translation of the 72 translators.<sup>27</sup> This story is frequently found in the apologetical and the

recension with an introduction including a source-critical study’ (Ph.D. diss., Cambridge, 2000), 106–186 (publication forthcoming).

c) For other possible versions of this text, P. Andrist, ‘Un témoin oublié du Dialogue de Timothée et Aquila et des Anastasiana antiudaica (Sinaiticus gr. 399),’ *Byzantion* 75 (2005), 9–24, below, this important manuscript is abbreviated ‘S’; P. Andrist, ‘Trois témoins athonites mal connus des Anastasiana antiudaica (et du Dialogus Timothei et Aquilae): Lavra K 113; Vatopedi 555; Karakallou 60 – Essai sur la tradition des Anastasiana antiudaica, notamment du Dialogus Papisci et Philonis cum monacho,’ *Byzantion* 76 (2006): 402–422.

d) For a summarised presentation of the current debates and important works of N. Nilson, J. Pastis and L. Lahey, see Varner, *Ancient*, 4–8, 135–138. The text and its preserved versions are variously attributed a date in to the fifth or the sixth century and, due to the polemics against Aquila, sometimes put in relation with the Novella 146. About the circulation of this text, see P. Andrist, ‘Physionomy of Greek manuscript books contra Iudaeos in the Byzantine era, a preliminary survey’ to be published in the *Proceedings of the Conference ‘Christians and Jews in Byzantium, Images and Cultural Dynamics’, Jerusalem, 21–24 May 2006* (ed. G. Stroumsa; forthcoming).

<sup>27</sup> The polemics against Aquila covers all of chapters 39–40. On earlier polemics against Aquila, see now also Veltri, *Libraries*, 163–168.

*Contra Iudaeos* literature, and is also related in Jewish sources,<sup>28</sup> but it is otherwise not explicitly told in the polemical dialogues.

Another noticeable feature of the *Dial. TA* lies in its mentioning other Greek translations of the Bible, hidden in wine jars (*Dial. TA-long*. 3.9–10, quoted below).

Aquila is also attacked in the *Anonymus Declerck* (*Anon. Decl.*)<sup>29</sup> as having distorted some Scriptures.<sup>30</sup> The author uses expressions like ‘your Aquila’ or ‘Aquila that is much liked by the Jews’.<sup>31</sup> However, these remarks could be influenced by a Christian tradition, whose success could be due to a famous statement of Origen that the Greek Jews prefer Aquila.<sup>32</sup> Notably, in the *Anonymus Declerck* the polemic against Aquila is not sharp, even though the Jewish character is also challenged by the Christian character to answer his question by using the version of Aquila.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the author’s attitude is to demonstrate that the ‘Christian truth’ can be proved whatever version is used. This is probably why he also sometimes presents variants from Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.<sup>34</sup>

Incidentally, Aquila is also mentioned once in a polemical dialogue *Contra Iudaeos* in the Slavonic *Vita Constantini*.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> G. M. Vian, ‘Le versioni greche della Scrittura nella polemica tra giudei e cristiani,’ in *La Bibbia nella polemica antiebraica* (Annali di storia dell’esegesi 14/1; Bologna, 1997), 39–54; Veltri, *Libraries*, 138–141, Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint*, 35–52.

<sup>29</sup> *Anonymus Declerck* = *Anonymus dialogus cum iudaeis* (CPG 7803), ed. Declerck, *Anonymus*, 1–111.

<sup>30</sup> *Anon. Decl.* V.353–369 (ed. Declerck 44).

<sup>31</sup> *Anon. Decl.* V.359, IX.253 (ed. Declerck 44, 86).

<sup>32</sup> Origenes, *Epistula ad Iulium Africanum de historia Susannae* (CPG 1494) 4 (2), ed. N. R. M. de Lange (Sources Chrétiennes 302; Paris, 1983) 526: ‘Οὕτω γὰρ Ἀκύλας δουλεύων τῇ Ἑβραϊκῇ λέξει ἐκδέδωκεν εἰπών· φιλοτιμότερον πεπιστευμένος παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις ἡρμηνευκέναι τὴν Γραφήν· ᾧ μάλιστα εἰώθασι οἱ ἀγνοοῦντες τὴν Ἑβραίων διάλεκτον χρῆσθαι, ὡς πάντων μᾶλλον ἐπιτετευγμένω.’ It would be a methodological mistake to consider the testimony of Origen, that certainly reflects the situation in Caesarea in the middle of the third century, as necessarily reflecting the stance of all the Jewish communities in all the Byzantine empire from the third century on.

<sup>33</sup> *Anon. Decl.* V.366–369 (ed. Declerck 44). An echo with the Novella 146 of Justinian is probable, no matter what the final interpretation of this law is, since several other features of the *Anon. Decl.* also point to the second half of the sixth century (Declerck, *Anonymus*, xlii–li). The link with the Novella is discussed on p. xlviii–xlix. This Dialogue is the only known witness for the Aquilanic translation of Is. 8.3.

<sup>34</sup> Declerck, *Anonymus*, xxviii, xxxiii–xxxiv, xlvi–xlix.

<sup>35</sup> *Vita Constantini Thessalonicensis* (=Cyrilli) 9, ed. A. Vaillant, *Textes vieux-slaves* (2 vols.; Textes publiés par l’Institut d’Études slaves 8; Paris, 1968; ed. 1:1–40; trans. 2:1–25); 1:16 (2:11).

### 3. The Canon

From the polemical dialogues, can we learn which books were contained in the Jewish Greek Bible? (About their order not enough is currently known, and so this question cannot be addressed here.)

It is common knowledge that the Christian Greek canon of the First Testament contains books that are not in the Hebrew canon, such as Tobit or the Wisdom of Solomon. How these books came to be inserted into the Septuagint is not our concern. The question is rather whether any of the polemical dialogues betrays an awareness of any discrepancy between the Jewish Hebrew and the Christian Greek Canon. Some examples of the data from the dialogues are presented below.

#### a) *The book list in the Dialogue of Timothy and Aquila*

In the *Dial. TA*, the Christian character gives a list of the books of the First Testament and points out the ‘apocryphal books’ (ἀπόκρυφα βιβλία = deutero-canonical). The Jewish character does not contradict him. Here are the relevant quotations (see also above):

*Dial. TA-long.* 3.7–18 (ed. Robertson and trans. Varner in Varner 142–145, emphasis mine):

3.7. ‘The Jew said: From what books do you wish to do this debate with me?’

3.8. The Christian said: I mentioned this to you because *there are also some other apocryphal books*.

3.9–10. For there are the ones that are in the Divine Covenant, which also the Hebrew translators translated, and *Aquila, and Symmachus and Theodotion*. Two *other versions were also found hidden*<sup>36</sup> *in wine jars*. One was in Jericho and the other was in Nicopolis, which is Emmaus. Who the translators were we do not know, for they were found in the days of the destruction of Judea that took place under Vespasian.<sup>37</sup>

3.11–16. These, then, are *the divinely inspired books, both among Christians and among Hebrews*. The first is the Book of Genesis. The second is Exodus. The third is Leviticus. The fourth is Numbers. These are the ones dictated through the mouth of God and written by the hand of Moses. And the fifth is the Book of Deuteronomy, not dictated through the mouth of God but was the law given a second time (δευτερονομηθέν) through Moses. (Therefore, it was not placed in the *aron*, that is, the Ark of the Covenant). This is the Mosaic Pentateuch. The sixth is Joshua, son of Nun. The seventh is the Judges along with Ruth. The eighth book is the ‘Things that are left,’ first and second. Ninth is the Book of Kingdoms, first and second. Tenth is the third and fourth Book of Kingdoms. Eleventh is Job. Twelfth is the Psalter of David. Thirteenth is the Proverbs of Solomon. Fourteenth is Ecclesiastes along with the Canticles. Fifteenth is the Twelve Prophets, then Isaiah, Jeremiah. And again, Ezekiel, then Daniel and again, Esdras, twentieth.

<sup>36</sup> The *versio brevior* (*Dial. TA-brev.* 6.3; ed. Lahey 110–111), which merely speaks of something ‘hidden’, is best understood by presupposing a text close to the *versio longior*.

<sup>37</sup> The *versio brevior* (*Dial. TA-brev.* 6.3; ed. Lahey 112–113) adds ‘I reject these’.

3.17. *The twenty first is the book of Judith. Twenty second is Esther. For Tobit and the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach, the 72 translators handed down to us as apocryphal books.*

3.18. These twenty two books are the inspired and canonical ones. There are twenty seven, but are numbered as twenty two, because five of them are doubled. And they are numbered according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and all the rest of them belong to the apocrypha.’

Here is the last part of this statement in the *versio brevior* (TA-brev. 6.4, ed. Lahey 112–113):

‘Timothy says: ...But the God-inspired books are these which are honoured among Hebrews and Christians: First Genesis... Ezra, Judith, Esther, Tobit.’

In the *versio longior* the book of Judith is included among the authoritative books, while Tobit and the two books of wisdom are excluded.<sup>38</sup> In the *versio brevior* the latter two books are not mentioned, while Judith and Tobit are included in the list without any particular comment. However, as far as one knows, there was no debate among the Jews in the Byzantine period about Judith or Tobit, which were clearly not considered scriptural.

Does this list teach us anything about the Byzantine Jewish Greek Bible? Probably not. Instead, the lists teach us something about what the author of the *Dial. TA*<sup>39</sup> knew about the Jewish canon of his time. Probably whoever was responsible for the *versio longior* (or his source) was aware of differences between the Jewish and the Christian canon, but his knowledge was not entirely accurate.

There is no such list in the other preserved polemical dialogues of the time.

#### *b) Some examples about the book of Baruch*

In the *Dialogue of Athanasius and Zacchaeus* (*Dial. AZ*),<sup>40</sup> the characters disagree about the author of the book of Baruch:

<sup>38</sup> Later in the text, the Christian character quotes from apocryphal books, for example from the Wisdom of Solomon or the Book of Sirach, see *Dial. TA-long*. 10.30–31, 24.6 (ed. Robertson in Varner 162, 194); incidentally, in the *Dial. TA-long*. 9.12–13 (ed. Robertson in Varner 156), Aquila rejects an explanation of Timothy, because it derives from the Testament of Solomon.

<sup>39</sup> And/or the author of his sources, and/or the copyist, and/or whoever was responsible for the various versions.

<sup>40</sup> Ps. Athanasius Alexandrinus, *Dialogus Athanasii et Zacchaei* (CPG 2301), ed. Andrist, *Le Dialogue*, 27–61 (improved publication forthcoming in the *Corpus Christianorum*); older ed., F. C. Conybeare, *The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and of Timothy and Aquila* (Anecdota Oxoniensia, Classical Series, Part VIII, Oxford, 1898), 1–64, reprinted, with a translation, by Varner, *Ancient*, 22–84. The text is attributed a date at the end of the fourth century, see P. Andrist, *Les protagonistes égyptiens du débat apollinariste. Le Dialogue d’Athanasie et Zachée et les dialogues pseudoathanasiens* –



*Dial. AZ* 24–25 (ed. Andrist 34; trans. Varner 35, with slight modifications here):

24. ‘Zacchaeus said: And the wisdom of God – was she seen upon earth?’

Athanasius said: And why should this be strange? Hear Jeremiah speaking: “This is our God; no other can be compared to him! He found the whole way to knowledge... Afterward he appeared upon earth and lived among men” (Bar 3:35–38).

25. Zacchaeus said: That was not written in Jeremiah!

Athanasius said: Read the Epistle of Baruch so that you will know and believe that it was so written.

Zacchaeus said: I know that it is written in that epistle, but it was not written in Jeremiah.

Athanasius: Jeremiah along with Baruch and the Lamentations and the Epistle are written in one book. And the four of these books are named “Jeremiah”.’

As there is a parallel text in the *Dial. TA-long.*, one may assume that this story comes from a common source, provisionally named TAZ:<sup>41</sup>

*Dial. TA-long* 10.5–10 (ed. Robertson and trans. Varner in Varner 158–161; not quoted in *Dial. TA-brev.*):

‘The Christian said: ... (10.5) And concerning his incarnation, the same Jeremiah said, “This is our God, no other shall be compared to him. He searched out all the way of knowledge. And he gave to Jacob his servant and to Israel his beloved, and after these things he was seen on earth and dwelt among men” (Bar 3:36–38)...

10.7. The Jew said: The things that you just said are not written in Jeremiah!

10.8. The Christian said: They are in the epistle of Baruch.

10.9. The Jew said: This is so.

10.10. The Christian said: But the epistle of Baruch, and the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and his prophecy are generally designated as one book.’

TAZ is necessarily earlier than the *Dial. AZ*, which was most probably composed at the end of the fourth century. As there is no clear *terminus post quem*, it is not impossible that the underlying work dates from before the Byzantine period. However, the author of the common source, or someone deeper in the source chain, was aware that the Jews (or at least the Jews he knew of) did not have Baruch in their canon. What happened at the beginning of this chain? Was the author of this first source referring to the Hebrew canon, or to a Jewish Greek Canon? How did he get this piece of information? Even though it is difficult to answer these questions, this discussion tells us something about the Jewish Greek Bible in the source TAZ, and also about the awareness of such a question by both the authors of the *Dial. AZ* and the *Dial. TA*.

In other places, the Jewish character is sometimes portrayed quoting from deuterocanonical books. This is for example the case in *Dial. GH*,

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*intertextualité et polémique religieuse en Egypte vers la fin du IVe siècle, Recherches Augustiniennes* 34 (2005), 63–141, 92–93, 121.

<sup>41</sup> On this source, Andrist, *Le Dialogue*, 179–184; see also Lahey, *The Dialogue*, 75–80.

where the Jewish character quotes from Bar 4:4 under the name of Jeremiah.<sup>42</sup>

*Dial. GH* Γ.629–631 (ed. Berger 636–637): ‘Herban: ... and we are intimate friends of God according to what has been said by Jeremiah: ‘We are blessed, he says, Israel, for the things pleasing to God are known to us’ (Bar 4:4), and not, as it appears clearly, to the nations’.

Similarly, in *Troph. Dam.* 1.2.3 (ed. Bardy 196) the Jewish character quotes from Bar 3:36. In the *Doctrina Iacobi (Doctr. Iac.)*<sup>43</sup> Baruch is used un-problematically by Jacob, the pro-Christian Jewish character, but there is a reaction from Joustos when he uses the Wisdom of Solomon or the *agraphon* of Mt 27:3.<sup>44</sup>

All these cases are better explained by admitting that these authors were not aware of any problem with the book of Baruch than by assuming an underlying Greek Jewish canon. The authors were disconnected from the reality of their time and these quotations do not increase our knowledge about the Greek Bible of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire.

### C. Parallel quotations

The following examples illustrate various cases where a biblical reference is quoted by both the Jewish and the Christian characters with noticeable variants in the same text. Only quotations with several words and no obvious paraphrastic renderings are considered here.

In reality, there is not much material to be compared, for several reasons: firstly, the Jewish character usually quotes a much smaller number of biblical verses than his Christian opponent and a good number of them are not common with the latter’s quotations. Secondly, when they do quote the

<sup>42</sup> See also *Dial. GH* Δ.34 (ed. Berger 660), where Herban pretends quoting from Sirach but in reality cites Isaiah (it is generally admitted, that this type of errors are more frequent when an author deals with Testimonia [to be put in italics?]); *Dial. GH* Δ.111 (ed. Berger 666) where Herban quotes from Bar 4:3.

<sup>43</sup> *Doctrina Iacobi nuper baptizati* (CPG 7793), ed. V. Déroche, *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 70–219; commentary by G. Dagron and V. Déroche, *Travaux et Mémoires* 11 (1991), 230–273. Their dating of the text about 640, as suggested by the text itself, a few years after the forced baptism of the Jews by Heraclius in 632, is accepted here as the best explanation for the context of its production. For another interpretation, P. Speck, ‘Die Doctrina Iacobi nuper Baptizati’, in P. Speck, *Varia VI, Beiträge zum Thema Byzantinische Feindseligkeit gegen die Juden im frühen siebten Jahrhundert* (ποικίλα βυζαντινά 15; Bonn, 1997), 267–439.

<sup>44</sup> *Doctr. Iac.* 4.4.35–41 about Wisd 5:4–6, *Doctr. Iac.* 5.10.10 about Wisd 4:19, *Doctr. Iac.* 5.14.8 about the *agraphon* of Jeremiah from Mt 27:9 (ed. Déroche 179, 199, 205).

same text, they normally quote it without significant variants, even when the common text bears major textual peculiarities when compared to the standard biblical text(s). This feature tends to demonstrate that most of the time the Christian author was not making a difference between the Bibles of his Jewish and his Christian characters. Finally, there are also divergent quotations that are difficult to interpret.

The amount of comparable material varies greatly in the various texts. In the *Dial. TA*, for example, once allusions, paraphrases, unclear or small quotations are excluded, only 4–5 parallel biblical passages can be used. However, in other texts, when the characters discuss at length the interpretation of some verses, they often both quote the same verse. As a result, there are about 23 usable parallel quotations in the *Dial. AZ* and about 30 usable parallel quotations in the *Dial. GH*.

Four cases of diverging parallel quotations are presented below.

#### Case C.1: *Is 53:3b*

- a) MT:<sup>45</sup> ‘... he was a man of sorrows (תִּבְרַח מִכָּאָשׁ וְיָדָע עִיֵּבּוּרִים) and acquainted with grief...’
- b) LXX<sup>46</sup> (ed. Ziegler 321): ‘... he was a man in suffering (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὄν), and acquainted with the bearing of sickness...’
- d) *Dial. AZ* 39 (ed. Andrist 38; Athanasius, the Christian character) = LXX.
- c) *Dial. AZ* 40 (ed. Andrist 39; Zacchaeus): ‘... he was a man *in honour* (ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ὄν), and acquainted with the bearing of sickness...’

All the Greek witnesses of the *Dial. AZ* have this variant, but it is not reported among the witnesses of *Is 53:3*. Could it be of Jewish origin? Or is it rather influenced by the following Psalm?

- e) Ps 48:13, 21 LXX<sup>47</sup> (ed. Rahlfs 159, 160; =Ps 49 MT): ‘... a man *in honour* (ἄνθρωπος ἐν τιμῇ ὄν) understands not...’

When one knows how important the Psalms were in the Christian liturgy, on a daily basis, one may reasonably think that the author, his source, or an early copyist confused the texts. A definite answer is difficult to give, but, unless parallels are found in Jewish literature of the time, it is difficult to argue that the author deliberately put a Jewish variant into the mouth of Zacchaeus.

#### Case C.2: *Is 7:14*

- a) MT: ‘...behold, the virgin shall conceive (הִרְהָב) and bear a Son...’
- b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 147): ‘...behold, the virgin shall have (ἔξει) in the womb, and shall bring forth a son...’

<sup>45</sup> Meaningful variants in witnesses are mentioned in the commentary.

<sup>46</sup> Ed. J. Ziegler, *Isaias* (3d ed.; Septuaginta 14; Göttingen, 1983).

<sup>47</sup> Ed. A. Rahlfs, *Psalmi cum Odis* (Septuaginta 10; Göttingen, 1931).

c) *Dial. TA-long*. 8.5, 18.10, 26.6, 34.14 (ed. Robertson in Varner 156, 180, 196, 216; the Christian): = LXX. – Also in the manuscript S of the *Dial. TA*.

d) *Dial. TA-long*. 18.6 (ed. Robertson in Varner 180; the Jew): ‘...behold, the virgin shall be taken (λήψεται) in the womb, and shall bring forth a son...’ – Also in S; well attested in the Origenic, Lucianic and in the chains witnesses of Is 7:14.

e) *Dial. TA-brev*. 17.6 (ed. Lahey 156; corresponding with *TA-long*. 18.10; Timothy): ‘...behold, the virgin shall be taken (λήψεται) in the womb, and shall bring forth a son...’

Considering the *versio longior* one is tempted to see ἕξει as a Christian variant, attested four times, and λήψεται as a Jewish variant, even though the *versio brevior* gives the Christian character the variant λήψεται. However, even if the difference also exists in the original form of the Dialogue, one does not see how the common λήψεται could be considered as a Jewish variant solely on this basis.

### Case C.3: *Is 10:17*

a) MT: ‘And the light of Israel shall be for a fire, and his Holy One for a flame (הַקֹּדֶשׁ יְשׁוּדָה): and it shall burn (וַיִּבְרָק) and devour *his thorns and his briers in one day* (וַיִּשְׂמְרוּ יוֹמַם בְּיוֹם אֶחָד).’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 162): ‘And the light of Israel shall be for (εἰς) a fire, and *he shall sanctify him with burning fire* (καὶ ἀγιάσει αὐτὸν ἐν πυρὶ καιομένῳ) and it shall devour *the wood as grass* (...ὥσει χόρτον τὴν ὕλην).’

The Hebrew and Greek agree in the first part of the quotation; then the LXX introduces the idea of a sanctification through fire that corresponds with the Hebrew second and third parts; in the final parts, they diverge on 3 points: what is devoured; the Greek makes a comparison between wood and grass; the Hebrew mentions ‘the day’.

c) *Dial. GH* Γ.160–163,165–166 (ed. Berger 604); Gregentios, the Christian character): ‘And the light of Israel shall be like (ὡς) a fire, and he shall sanctify him *with a burning flame* (ἐν φλογὶ καιομένη) and it shall burn (καὶ φλέξει) and it shall devour the wood as grass.’

In the second part, the Greek text of the Christian character keeps the idea of the sanctification but ‘with a burning flame’; this recalls the ‘flame’ of the MT and is a frequent variant in the Fathers and in the LXX manuscripts, particularly in the Lucianic tradition. Like the Hebrew and the Lucianic tradition, ‘it shall burn’ is read. The end corresponds with the LXX. One gets the feeling of a mixture of features from the MT and the LXX.

d) *Dial. GH* Γ.90–91 (ed. Berger 598; Herban): ‘And *in the last day* (τῆ ἑσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ), the light of Israel shall be like a fire,

and *God* shall sanctify him with a burning flame,  
and it shall burn  
and it shall devour the wood as grass.’

In general, the Greek text cited by the Jewish character matches the main features of the Greek text by the Christian character. As the author might be using here a lost commentary of Isaiah,<sup>48</sup> there is a very good chance that he would get the Greek text from this source rather than from his Bible or out of memory. As a result, one tends to believe this possible commentary was based on a Lucianic text type.

However, one notes two differences between Gregentios and Herban’s quotations: at the beginning, Herban adds ‘in the last days’; then he clearly insists that God himself shall sanctify him. No other Greek witnesses of Is 10:17 are reported containing these variants. Where do they come from?

Firstly, the idea of the ‘the days’ is found in the Hebrew, at the end of the verse, and later in the Greek, on verse 20. More importantly, Herban, in the context, says that the prophecy is yet to be accomplished. The phrase ‘in the last day’ can be understood as an explanation and not a formal quotation, and the English translator rightly did not write it in italic characters. The word ‘God’ plays the same role: God himself will sanctify Israel.

As the differences can be satisfactorily explained by the context and the chances that the author added genuine Jewish variants to his commentary source are very low, it is not possible to consider these two variants as witnessing to a Jewish Bible text type.

#### Case C.4: Is 11:12

a) MT: ‘He shall set up a banner for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts (יְהִי) of Israel...’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 167): ‘And he shall lift up a sign for the nations, and he shall gather *the lost ones* (τοὺς ἀπολομένους) of Israel...’

c) *Dial. GH* B.665, 689 (ed. Berger 546, 548; Gregentios): ‘And he shall lift up a sign for the nations, and he shall gather *the rejected ones* (τοὺς ἀπωσμένους) of Israel...’

d) *Dial. GH* B.648 (ed. Berger 546; Herban): ‘And he shall lift up a sign for the nations, and he shall gather *those who perish* (τοὺς ἀπολλυμένους) of Israel...’

Both the Jewish and the Christian characters diverge from the standard LXX text and they also diverge from one another. Besides, manuscripts of the *Dial. GH* themselves diverge concerning the Herban and Gregentios text. In five manuscripts, Herban speaks of ‘the rejected ones’, like Gregentios. Also several manuscripts of B.689 give Gregentios the variant ‘those who perish’. Gregentios’s variant is not reported among other LXX witnesses. It is quoted twice the same way, and this can hardly be seen as

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<sup>48</sup> Berger, *Life*, 127.

happening by chance. It could be an influence of the MT, which it is closer to. But it recalls also the following text, from a similar context:

e) Mic 4:7,<sup>49</sup> LXX (ed. Ziegler 215): ‘And I will make her that was bruised a remnant, and her that was rejected (τὴν ἀπωσμένην) a mighty nation...’

Paradoxically, as the Christian character presents a variant close to the MT, the Jewish characters variant is attested in some Bible manuscripts and in the *Catena*. One would like again to know which reading was in the Isaiah commentary used by the author. Does Herban’s variant match this commentary, and Gregentios’s variant derive twice from Micah? Or, was Gregentios’s variant copied twice from the lost commentary and the Herban one quoted by heart? More importantly, would anyone argue that the Christian author consciously put a MT variant in the mouth of the Christian character and left a frequent LXX variant in the mouth of the Jewish character, in a place where it does not play much a role in the discussion? Here again it is hard to recognise a Jewish variant in Herban’s quotation.

As the four examples illustrate, divergent parallel quotations are not easy to interpret. We have so far not found any such place where we could honestly convince ourselves that we might be in the presence of some genuine reading from a Jewish Greek Bible.

#### D. Peculiar readings

In non-paralleled biblical quotations by the Hebrew character, one observes a whole range of phenomena, from standard quotations to strange variants.

##### *Case D.1: Is 11:11*

a) MT: ‘...from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, *and from the islands of the sea.*’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 167): ‘...from Egypt, and from the country of Babylon, and from Ethiopia, and from the Elamites, and from the rising of the sun, and out of Arabia.’

c) Dial. GH B.646 (ed. Berger 546; Herban): ‘...from Egypt, from Babylon and Ethiopia, from the Elamites and from the rising sun, and out of Arabia *and from the islands of the sea.*’

Herban’s text mixes features from the Hebrew and the Greek. This is similar to the case C.3 above, where the quotations by the two characters presented the same feature. As these variants are also found in Lucianic

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<sup>49</sup> Ed. J. Ziegler, *Duodecim prophetae* (3d ed.; Septuaginta 13; Göttingen, 1984).

manuscripts, one feels again that such would be the text type of the possibly underlying Christian commentary.

*Case D.2: Mic 5:2 (=5:1 in ed. Rahlfs)*

a) MT: ‘But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be a ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting.’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 217): close to the MT. Small variants include ‘house of Ephrathah’ at the beginning.

c) *Troph. Dam.* 1.4.7 (ed. Bardy 204; the Jew): ‘But you, Bethlehem, house of Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me a leader, who will shepherd my people Israel.’

This variant is simply explained by New Testament influence:

d) Mt 2:6:<sup>50</sup> ‘But you, Bethlehem, *in the land of Judah*, are *not the least* among the rulers of Judah; for out of you shall come a leader, who will shepherd my people Israel.’

This is part of an ironical situation, where the Jews is pictured as knowing very well one prophecy considered major by the Christians. However, it is interesting that only the third major variant from Matthews’s text is quoted by the Jews, while the first two ones are omitted. No other Greek witness of Mic 5:2 is reported containing this text. Rather than a Jewish variant, the text may reflect that the Christian author of the *Trophaea* was somewhat aware that the Matthew quotation was problematic.

*Case D.3: Is 44:14–17*

a) MT: ‘He cuts down cedars for himself, and takes the cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it. (15) Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. (16) *He burns half of it in the fire*; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, “Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.” (17) *And the rest of it he makes into a god*, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god!”’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 287–288): ‘He cuts wood out of the forest, *which the Lord planted*, even a pine tree, and the rain made it grow, (15) that it might be for men to burn: and having taken part of it he warms himself; yea, they burn part of it, and bake loaves thereon; and of the rest they make for themselves gods, and they worship them. (16) *Half thereof he burns in the fire*, and with half of it he bakes loaves on the coals; and having roasted flesh on it he eats, and is satisfied, and having warmed himself he says, “I am comfortable, for I have warmed myself, and have seen the fire”. (17) And the rest he makes a graven god, and worships, and prays, saying, “Deliver me; for thou art my God”.’

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<sup>50</sup> Ed. “Nestle Aland”, *Novum Testamentum Graece* (27th ed.; Stuttgart, 1993).

c) *Troph. Dam.* 3.6.1 (ed. Bardy 245; the Jew): ‘Since you are quoting Isaiah back and forth... He says about you the gentiles: “I am *the Lord who makes to grow all the trees* of the field. But you, you cut a tree; *half of it you give to the fire*; the other half you tread down with your feet; with the last half (!) *you make an image* and you *worship it*”.’

The Jews in *Troph. Dam.* clearly refer to Isaiah, but no verse of Isaiah has such a text, literally. As the editor already saw, Is 44:14–17 is the only place in Isaiah that would substantially correspond with the quoted text, and one recognises some elements from the Septuagint. However, there is no reason to consider it a Jewish variant rather than a convenient summary.

#### *Case D.4: a composite quotation*

a) *Dial. TA-long.* 37.2 (ed. Robertson in Varner 222; the Jew): ‘The Lord God said: “Whoever breaks this my covenant will certainly die, for he has broken my covenant”.’ Minor difference in S. Not found in the *versio breviar*.

‘Whoever breaks this my covenant’ (ὅς ἂν διασκεδάσει τὴν διαθήκην μου ταύτην):

Curses on whoever breaks the covenant are found in several places in the First Testament, but never with this expression. There is one sentence in the LXX where a punishment is promised to whoever breaks the covenant, with comparable vocabulary, in Lev 26:15; however it is constructed with the infinitive mood (ὥστε διασκεδάσαι τὴν διαθήκην μου) and the punishment is not a death penalty here. Overall, the same expression with other moods or tenses occurs 12 times in the Septuagint.

‘will certainly die’ (θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖται):

The death penalty occurs frequently in the First Testament, sometimes linked to the idea of breaking the covenant (see Lev 26:27; Prov 2:17) but the expressions are very different. Formally, the expression θανάτῳ ἀποθανεῖται occurs three times, in different contexts (Judges 21:5; 1Reg.LXX=1Sam.MT 14:39, 2Reg.LXX=2Sam.MT 12:14). Similar expressions with other moods or tenses are frequent. This second verse recalls somewhat another quote in the *Dial. TA*.

1Reg (=1Sam) 14:39 LXX<sup>51</sup> (ed. Rahlfs, Hanhart 528): ‘if answer should be against my son Jonathan, he shall surely die’.

‘for he has broken my covenant’ (ὅτι τὴν διαθήκην μου διεσκεδάσεν).

A parallel expression occurs at the end of the circumcision commandment:

Gen 17:14 LXX<sup>52</sup> (ed. Wevers 179): ‘And the uncircumcised male, who shall not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin on the eighth day, that soul shall be utterly de-

<sup>51</sup> Ed. A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (2d ed. by Robert Hanhart; Stuttgart, 2006).

<sup>52</sup> Ed. J. W. Wevers, *Genesis* (Septuaginta 1; Göttingen, 1974).



stroyed (ἐξολεθρευθήσεται) from its family, *for he has broken my covenant* (ὅτι τὴν διαθήκην μου διεσκέδασεν).

Overall the sentence recalls common expressions in the Torah that say, ‘Whoever does this and that shall die’ (see Ex 21:11–17; Lev 20:11–12 etc.). As a result, *Dial. TA* 37.2 can be seen as a composite quotation based on a common First Testament sentence structure.

‘Whoever’: general structure.

‘breaks this my covenant’: adapted frequent expression, see in particular Lev 26:15.

‘will certainly die’: other adapted frequent expressions, see above.

‘for he has broken my covenant’: from Gen 17:14.

Nothing makes one think here of a Jewish Biblical quote. More probably, the author, or someone in his sources, faked a Biblical verse.

#### *Case D.5: agrapha*

Sometimes one faces quotations which do not seem to come from the Bible. For example:

*Troph. Dam.* 2.8.2 (ed. Bardy 234; a priest of Jerusalem): ‘You won, but “it is not good for the winner to wage a war”, says God.’

*Dial. GH* B.414–415 (ed. Berger 528; Herban): ‘Behold, does Moses not also say, “Perish you that do not hold up the law for their help”.’

Where do these pseudo-verses come from? It is difficult to say. In polemical dialogues composite Scriptures and *agrapha* are not peculiar to the Jewish characters. Although they are fairly frequent in the literature *Contra Iudaeos*, they are also found in many other texts.<sup>53</sup> This is why one is very reluctant to recognise any Jewish biblical element in them.

### E. Discussed Biblical variants

Seldom, the Jewish and the Christian characters disagree not only on the interpretation of a verse, but also on its content, as the following examples illustrate.

#### *Case E.1: Is 7:14 in the Anon. Decl. V.263*

a) MT: ‘... behold, the young woman (עַלְמָא) shall conceive and bear a Son...’

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 147): ‘... behold, the virgin (παρθένος) shall have in the womb, and shall bring forth a son...’

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<sup>53</sup>See for example A. Resch, *Agrapha, Aussercanonische Schriftfragmente* (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 30, 2/2, 1906). This list must now be completed by many new items to be found in publications about specific works.

c) *Anon. Decl.* 5.263 (ed. Declerck 41; the Jew): ‘Our manuscripts do not have: “Behold the virgin” (παρθένος), but “Behold the young woman” (νεᾶνις). This is also the rendering of the Hebrew, of Aquila and of Symmacus.’

In this text, the sentence makes more sense if the author assumes the Jewish character uses a Septuagint. Unsurprisingly, the Christian character defends a LXX variant while his Jewish opponent defends Aquila’s variant.

However, one cannot draw any conclusion from this exchange, because it is a cliché in Christian literature that the Jews rendered Is 7:14 with ‘νεᾶνις’.<sup>54</sup> Was there ever a Septuagint manuscript with such a reading? The *apparatus criticus* of the current Göttingen edition of the Septuagint does not mention any.

#### *Case E.2: Gen. 19:24 in Dial. AZ 15*

a) MT: ‘Then the Lord rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the Lord out of the heavens.’

b) LXX: ‘And the Lord rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven.’ – A series of manuscripts read ‘And the Lord *God*...’

c) *Dial. AZ 15* (ed. Andrist 31; trans. Varner 29, with slight differences)

‘Athanasius said: The scripture also says: “And the Lord *God* rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew these cities, and all the surrounding country”. Then from what Lord did the Lord God rain brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah?’

Zacchaeus said: It does not say that “The Lord God rained” but “The Lord rained”.’

Athanasius: Many more of the copies (τὰ πλείονα τῶν ἀντιγράφων) have: “Lord God”. Let us grant that “God” is not added...’

The verse is quoted in the parallel passage in the *Dial. TA (TA-long. 6.9)*, and later in the debate (*Dial. TA-long. 28.44*). No manuscript of this text adds ‘God’ at this place, and this variant is not discussed by the characters. It could be a peculiarity of the author of the *Dial. AZ*.

More interestingly, both variants are transmitted in the manuscripts of the Septuagint, and the variant defended by the Jewish character is today considered the ancient one. As explained above this kind of situation is fitting for an intra-Jewish transmission of the Bible. However, we cannot reach any sound conclusion again, because, contrary to what Athanasius claims, most of the manuscripts do not read ‘God’ at this place, and it is not possible to think that all these manuscripts are Jewish. Besides, it is difficult to deduce what was in the source TAZ here. According to a possible scenario, TAZ could be without ‘God’ here (see *Dial. TA*) and the fairly learned author of the *Dial. AZ* himself added the discussion.

<sup>54</sup> For testimonies in early Christian literature, see Bobichon, *Justin*, 2:702 n. 18. In other polemical dialogues, see *Dial. AZ 32a*, *Dial. TA-long. 34.14–15*, *Dial. TA-brev. 17*, *Troph. Dam. 1.5.3* etc.

Case E.3: Ps 118:27 MT = 117:27 LXX, in the Troph. Dam. and the Dial. Anast.<sup>55</sup>

a) MT: ‘God is the Lord, and he has given us light (וַיִּזְרֹק-לָנוּ).’

The *apparatus criticus* of the BHS says that one manuscript, the Peshitta, the Targum and the Old Latin omit the copula, so that one should perhaps read רָאָה.<sup>56</sup> This would allow us to read the jussive mood: ‘Let the Lord God appear to us’ or ‘May the Lord God shine upon us’ (like Driver). Incidentally, this could be an influence of the frequent blessing ‘The Lord make His face shine...’ (Num 6:25; Ps 67:2; 80:4, 8, 20; 119:13 etc.).

b) LXX (ed. Ziegler 287): ‘God is the Lord, and he has appeared (ἐπέφανεῖν ἡμῖν) to us’.

c) *Troph. Dam.* 1.6.1 (ed. Bardy 208):

‘The Christian: ... God is the Lord, and *he has appeared* (ἐπέφανεῖν) to us.

The Jew: “*He will appear* to us (ἐπιφανεῖ),” he says, and not, “he has appeared”...’

The variant ‘He will appear’ is not mentioned in the apparatus of the Septuagint, or in the Bodmer manuscript of the Psalm. It does not seem to be known to the Christian Fathers either.

d) *Dial. Anast.* 8 (ed. Aulisa, Schiano 188):

‘The Christian: ... God is the Lord, and *he has appeared* to us (ἐπέφανεῖν).

The Jews started to shout, “*Let him appear* to us (ἐπιφάνηθι),” he says. It is something future (μελλητικόν ἐστιν).<sup>57</sup> – Among the oldest witnesses of the *Dial. Anast.*, manuscript D omits ‘Let him appear to us’.

The variant ‘Let him appear to us (ἐπιφάνηθι)’ is not mentioned either in the apparatus of the Septuagint or in the Bodmer manuscript of the Psalm. It does not seem to be known to the Christian Fathers either. However, it strikingly matches the jussive variant of the Hebrew. This can hardly be fortuitous and it is difficult to believe that the author or his source invented it.

We have a strong impression here of authentic Jewish Greek Biblical material. Did someone, maybe in the seventh century, argue with a Jew

<sup>55</sup> I thank Thomas Römer, Alessandra Lukinovich and Shifra Sznol for their precious inputs while studying this variant.

<sup>56</sup> D. Barthélemy, *Psaumes* (Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament 4, =Orbis biblicus et Orientalis 50, 4; ed. S. D. Ryan and A. Schenker; Fribourg, 2005), 775–776; G. R. Driver, ‘Ps 118:27 הגירוסה,’ *Textus* 7 (1969): 130–31, Driver states that another Hebrew manuscript supports the jussive mode, even though it includes the copula; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen 60–150*, vol. 2 of *Psalmen* (6th ed.; Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament 15.2; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1989), 977; K. Seybold, *Die Psalmen* (Handbuch zum Alten Testament 1/15; Tübingen, 1996), 458. Latin version, without a copula, published by P. Sabatier, *Bibliorum Sacrorum Latinae versiones antiquae, seu vetus Italica et caeterae quaecunq;ue in codicibus mss...* (3 vols.; Reims, 1743; repr. Turnhout, 1987), 2:231.

<sup>57</sup> Aulisa, Schiano, *Dialogo*, 236.

about Psalm 117, and learn that his opponent was reading that verse with a difference in the word? Or did a converted Jew remember the reading of the Psalm as he used to know it? It is obviously impossible to answer these questions, but the first option seems to be more probable. Thus, if this lesson was transmitted through a direct contact between a Christian and a Jew, it can hardly be argued that they discussed in Hebrew; the Jew would have given the Greek translation ἐπιφάνηθι. Unfortunately, it is not possible to know if he made the translation for the occasion, or if this was the rendering of his Greek Bible, the Septuagint or another translation.

Besides *Troph. Dam.* and *Dial. Anast.* are parallel texts here. However, their different renderings of the reaction of the Jewish character about Ps 118:27 does not shed light on which text has to be given priority. If the author of the *Troph. Dam.* had before his eyes the *Dial. Anast.* or a common source with a similar text, he might have interpreted μελλητικόν grammatically and ‘established’ the variant ἐπιφανεῖ on this basis. On the other hand, one might also think of an original ‘He will appear to us. It is something future’, that was then modified, upon some unassessable Jewish influence, to ‘Let him appear to us. It is something future’.

## Conclusion

As already mentioned several times, it is not easy to identify authentic Jewish material in polemical dialogues with any certainty. The difficulties are not just methodological, as many technical obstacles also hinder progress: critical editions of many books of the Greek Bible and of many dialogues are still lacking. The manuscript tradition of several dialogues is poor; as the copyists tended to normalise the Biblical quotations according to their authoritative text, many peculiar features of these quotations are probably lost. The dating of the dialogues and the analysis of their sources is often unsatisfactory too. Finally it was in the apologists’ best interest to conceal the differences between the Hebrew and the Greek texts, since such differences would weaken the strength of their biblical arguments.

As expected, the harvest is meagre. Most of the time in polemical dialogues *Contra Iudaeos* the Bible of the Jewish characters matches the Christian Bible of the author. The surprise is that, in spite of this fact and of the many technical difficulties, the basket of the researcher is not totally empty: very rarely we have found some material that can reasonably be considered to have a good chance of genuinely reflecting a Jewish biblical text of the time, even possibly a Jewish Greek Bible.

The last examples presented above show that the most interesting results are reached when a peculiarity in the Greek biblical text can be paral-

leled with a non-standard Hebrew one. The lack of tools, however, makes it difficult to find those parallels. As one remembers that *agrapha* are also found sometimes in Jewish literature,<sup>58</sup> a pluridisciplinary systematic comparison of the Greek and the Hebrew (and Aramaic, Latin, Syriac, Coptic etc.) non-standard biblical material in ancient texts could potentially yield very fruitful results. One would not be surprised if such work resulted in discovering much parallel material, and not only among quotations attributed to Jewish characters in polemical literary dialogues. One would then face the questions anew: could a Jewish Greek or a Jewish Hebrew biblical tradition be the source of much of this data? It is, of course, not possible to tell in advance how much one would learn from these studies about the spread of the Jewish Greek Bible or the influence of Jewish 'non-standard' biblical Greek or even Hebrew traditions among Christian authors, particularly on early sources. However, the potentially rich harvest of such a fascinating project makes it urgent for someone to undertake it.

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<sup>58</sup> N. R. M. de Lange, 'A fragment of Byzantine anti-Christian polemic', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 41 (1990), 92–100, 97, at the end of a quotation from Jer 31:33. Composite and *agrapha* are also found in texts like the *Sefer Yosippon*, as I learned from a stimulating discussion with Saskia Dönitz (see also her contribution in this volume).