Ruth

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Editions

(a) Standard Greek Editions

Göttingen, vol. IV.3, *Ruth* (Quast, 2006).
Cambridge, vol. I.4, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Brooke and McLean, 1917).
Rahlfs-Hanhart, vol. I, pp. 495–501.
Swete, vol. I, pp. 538–44.

(b) Other Greek Editions

Rahlfs, *Das Buch Ruth griechisch* (1922).

(c) Modern Translations

NETS (Knobloch, 2007), pp. 239–43.
LXX.D (Bons, 2009), pp. 294–99.
Bd'A 8 (Assan-Dhôte and Moatti-Fine, 2009).
La Biblia Griega, vol. II (Fernández Marcos *et al.*, 2011), pp. 171–86.

I. General Characteristics

The Greek translation of the book of Ruth for the most part follows its Hebrew *Vorlage* closely. It has affinities with the *kaige* tradition, and therefore is usually dated sometime after the earliest evidence for this tradition, namely the Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (see *Les devanciers*). Its translation technique does not permit much in the way of exegesis by the translator, but by close attention to the vocabulary and translation choices some sense of the translator's setting and theology may be gleaned.

II. Time and Place of Composition

LXX Ruth exhibits some stylistic peculiarities which have been cited in recent attempts at dating the text (*Les devanciers*, pp. 34, 47, 49, 69; *Bd'A* 8, pp. 29–32). In particular, certain Hebraising tendencies can be seen as typical evidence of the so-called *kaige* revision, that is a translation or revision activity that is usually attributed to Jewish scribes in Palestine. Distinctive among the translation features are the following:

a) Hebrew איש with the meaning of 'someone' rendered by Greek ἀνήρ 'man' (Ruth 3.14; 4.7);
b) the conjunction גם(ו) rendered by καί γε (1.5; 2.15, 21; 3.12; 4.10);
c) the pronoun ואנכי by (καί) ἐγώ (or κἀγώ) εἰμί (2.10; 3.9, 12; 4.4; differently 2.13; 3.13);
d) the unusual construction in Ruth 4.4 of ἐγώ εἰμί ἀγχιστεύσω 'I am the one, I will act as next of kin' (NETS).

It used to be held that in the first century C.E. a number of biblical translations were revised to be brought more into line with their Hebrew source texts, as evidenced in the *kaige* layer identified by Thackeray in Kings (Thackeray, 'Greek Translators'). New translations in the first century also displayed such tendencies, as seen in books such as Canticles and Ecclesiastes (see *Les devanciers*), and in the book under discussion here, Ruth. Some questions have now been raised as to how far such a theory can be maintained of a first-century Hebraising translation. First, given our present state of knowledge, it is difficult to offer more precise theories regarding the origins of LXX Ruth. It could derive from either Palestine, Alexandria, or even elsewhere (see Fernández Marcos, *Septuagint*, p. 152; Bons, 'Le vocabulaire', p. 163). Similarly, one could postulate an earlier dating for the *kaige* revision, because it is attested as early as the first century B.C.E.—at least for the Book of the Twelve (Fernández Marcos, *Septuagint*, p. 152; Kreuzer, 'Übersetzung', p. 112). Finally, it is questionable whether the text associated with the *kaige* revision represents the first Greek translation of the book of Ruth (*BGS*, p. 159), or whether at the time an older Greek version of the book was known but is now lost.

A critical edition of the text of LXX Ruth has been available since 2006, a volume which has become indispensable for research (Göttingen;

ed. U. Quast). Among the questions that require further investigation, the problem of the dating and the origin of the translation are prominent. This is particularly the case given the debate as to how far we can still speak of a *kaige* tradition at all (see Janz, 'Second Book'). Each book that has been so categorised displays its own methods and variation in translation equivalents. Accordingly, each translation should be evaluated on its own terms. In the case of Ruth such evaluation can be divided into three sub-questions: Is it possible to identify an Egyptian milieu for LXX Ruth on the basis of the terminology, such as the terms from the semantic field of slave and slavery? What are the consequences of this question for the dating of the translation and its place within the origins and history of the LXX? How are the theological innovations and emphases in LXX Ruth situated within the wider context of contemporary Jewish theology?

III. Language

Since the Greek translation of Ruth for the most part closely follows its Hebrew *Vorlage*, the language displays interference from the source text and language. The influence of the Hebrew source on the translation is particularly evident in the areas of syntax, word order and use of prepositions. LXX Ruth can be described as typical translation-Greek (see Mussies, 'Greek in Palestine', pp. 1048–49; on Ruth see Bons, 'Septuaginta-Version', pp. 206–207; Ziegert, 'Das Buch', pp. 223–24; 'Wiedergabe'), characterised by a range of phenomena. Understandably, parataxis is frequent, while by contrast subordinate clauses are rare (Ruth 1.13, 16; 2.9; 3.11). The genitive absolute and accusative with infinitive are entirely absent, while it is only in very rare instances that use is made of *participium coniunctum* where the Hebrew text has finite verbs (Ruth 1.18; 2.18; 4.15). For the most part there is a lack of particles. Exceptions are the particle δέ, particularly with change of case (see below § IV); δή, after requests (1.8, 11, etc.); and γε (§ IV). One may note in addition the adoption of nominal phrases from the Hebrew (1.16; differently 2.6, 10; 3.11); the construction ἐγένετο (+ optional parts of a sentence) + καί + finite verb (1.1; 3.8); the rendition of the Hebrew verb with inf. abs. by a Greek verb with participle (2.16; similarly 2.11); the use of εἰς after

forms of εἶναι (instead of the nominal, 4.15); pleonastic ἐκεῖ in a relative clause (1.7); the comparative with ὑπέρ (3.12, where a comparative form appears in the LXX as well; 4.15) as well as the possessive dative (1.2; 2.1). Furthermore, the typical biblical Greek formula of καί ἰδού is a characteristic translation equivalent for Hebrew הנה[ו] (see 2.4, 13; 3.2; 4.1).

IV. Translation and Composition

It appears from the close correspondence of the Greek to its presumed Hebrew *Vorlage* that the Hebrew text probably corresponded for the most part to the consonantal text of the later MT. The tendency to translate the Hebrew text as literally as possible is evident in the literal reproduction of such phrases as כה יעשה יהוה לי וכה יוסיף, 'May the Lord do thus for me and thus may he add' (1.17, Greek using προστίθημι). A Hebrew model also lies behind the expressions ποιέω ἔλεος μετά + gen. 'to treat mercifully' (1.8), ἐπαίρω τὴν φωνήν + gen. 'raise the voice (in weeping)' (1.9, 14), εὑρίσκω χάριν ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς + gen. 'to find favour' (2.2, 10, 13), and ἀποκαλύπτω τὸ οὖς + gen. 'to tell (you)' (4.4).

Nevertheless, the translation of Ruth is not a mere copy of the original source, but differs in several respects from the Hebrew text. It appears that the translator tried as best he could to render the text in the target language with as much clarity and intelligibility as possible, aiming to be systematic in his choice of renderings (see Bons, 'Septuaginta-Version', p. 221; Ziegert, 'Das Buch', pp. 234, 248). Two examples can be cited. First, especially when there was a change of subject he added a proper name to make it clear which person was speaking (1.15, 18; 2.14, 18). He also on several occasions highlighted the change of subject by the use of the particle δέ (1.16, 18) in places where the Hebrew employs a *waw*. Furthermore, at the beginnings of speeches he occasionally added an addressee to clarify who was who (e.g., 1.15; 3.15; 4.1; full surveys in Bons, 'Septuaginta-Version', pp. 208–209; Ziegert, 'Das Buch', pp. 227, 230–34). Minor additions can also be found in 1.14 (καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν εἰς τὸν λαὸν αὐτῆς 'and she returned to her people'), 4.7 (καὶ τοῦτο τὸ δικαίωμα 'and this was the statute') and 4.8 (τὴν ἀγχιστείαν μου 'my right of inheritance'). All these techniques serve to provide clarity and

understanding to a tight narrative and alleviate any difficulties for the reader. It is, however, impossible to decide whether the translator himself made the additions, or whether he already found them in a *Vorlage* that differed from the later MT (Quast, Göttingen, p. 125). The same is true for some minor omissions. Absent from the LXX are translations for 'and it happened when they arrived in Bethlehem' (1.19) and 'hold it [the garment] out' (3.15). The translator might well have felt that these formulations were redundant—in the case of 3.15 she does hold out her garment afterwards anyway—or they were already missing from his *Vorlage* (so Göttingen, p. 125). Alternatively, they were only added later in the proto-MT.

Second, when speaking of people, their functions and characteristics, the LXX tends to introduce distinctions that are foreign to the Hebrew text. Thus Ruth has δύναμις (3.11; 4.11), while Boaz has ἰσχύς (2.1) where the MT has the same noun in both cases (חח). Also striking is the vocabulary of the semantic field of service/slavery which is used in chs. 2–3 in the description of the subordinates of Boaz (see further Bons, 'Le vocabulaire'). The MT uses six different nouns without apparently any logic to their use. The LXX translates these terms by a range of equivalents without aiming at a concordant translation. Instead, the translator through his very choice of words draws a precise differentiation between Ruth and the other women. Those women working in the field for Boaz are described as κοράσια 'maids' (2.8, 22, 23; 3.2). Ruth, however, is designated as a νεᾶνις 'young lady' (2.5) or as a παῖς 'child/slave' (2.6). However, she identifies herself as Boaz's δούλη 'slave' (2.13; 3.9 *bis*); indeed she announces herself as being one of Boaz's παιδίσκαι 'young girls' (2.13). This designation is not meaningless when 2.13 is read in the light of 4.12 (see below § VI).

As for legal terminology, the word δικαίωμα in 4.7 has no equivalent in the MT (see above). This *terminus technicus* in documentary papyri designates documents, especially contracts and legal texts, that have been legally certified (see Cadell, 'Vocabulaire', p. 214; Montevecchi, 'La lingua', p. 80). The LXX uses δικαίωμα for most rules of divine law (Exod. 15.25 and often), more rarely—as in the book of Ruth—for rules or customs of a human origin (see also 3 Kgdms 8.11).

V. Key Text-Critical Issues

In comparison with other books of the Septuagint, manuscripts and papyri containing, in part or in whole, the Greek text of the book of Ruth are relatively recent. Of the manuscripts found in Qumran and the surrounding area of the Judean desert none for Ruth are in Greek, and only four are in Hebrew (2QRuth^{a} = 2Q16, 2QRuth^{b} = 2Q17, 4QRuth^{a} = 4Q104; 4QRuth^{b} = 4Q105). However, these fragments do not seem to represent a Hebrew text that would confirm the limited number of variant readings of the LXX (see Bons, 'Septuaginta-Version'; 'Le vocabulaire'; *Bd'A* 8, pp. 34–35). At present the oldest text witnesses are the well-known leaves from St Catherine's monastery on Sinai (fourth century C.E.; see Quast, Göttingen, p. 11) as well as Codices B (fourth century C.E.) and A (fifth century C.E.), which have preserved the text of the book of Ruth in its entirety. Codex B is regarded as 'a principal witness for the old LXX text' (so Quast, Göttingen, p. 19), since this manuscript proves to be unaffected by the subsequent revisions and has not been adjusted towards the MT, which would be typical of later revisions (see Göttingen, p. 19). Rahlfs draws a distinction between the revisions (*Das Buch Ruth*, pp. 15–18), differentiating between the Hexaplaric, the antiochene and one additional recension that he designated by the letter R. Already in antiquity the Greek text of the book of Ruth was translated into other languages of the Mediterranean region (Latin, Coptic, Syriac, etc.).

Since the Sixtine edition (1587), Ruth has been included in the critical editions of the LXX with Codex B as its basis. In his text edition of 1922 Rahlfs largely used Codex B as his base text (cf. *Das Buch Ruth*, pp. 18–19), as well as in the manual edition of the LXX from 1935. Quast (Göttingen) provides a critical text that corresponds largely with that of Rahlfs. The few deviations (Göttingen, pp. 132–36) have no impact on the understanding of the text (with the exception of 4.11, ποίησαι).

Differences between the LXX and MT have already been noted (§ IV), but it is not easy to determine whether they represent a differing *Vorlage* or are moments of exegesis and clarification on the part of the translator. In a translation that follows so faithfully its Hebrew source, representing syntactic and clausal elements of the Hebrew, it might seem unlikely that the translator would introduce whole phrases. Nevertheless, the translator also shows a degree of freedom and variation in his renderings,

indicating it could have been possible for him to innovate. The question therefore whether small additions and omissions are the work of a translator or result from a differing *Vorlage* must remain open.

VI. Ideology and Exegesis

The structure of LXX Ruth does not deviate from the Hebrew text as transmitted in the MT. The narrative sequences and passages remain unchanged in the translation, and yet at times the translator imparts his own understanding into the text. These are subtle changes since the translation technique does not allow much room for exegetical embellishment.

The reading in 1.15 of the ambiguous Hebrew (singular or plural 'gods') is given specification in identifying the gods, to whom Orpah returns, clearly in the plural (πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς αὐτῆς 'to her gods'). Unlike her polytheistic sister-in-law Ruth endorses the God of her mother in the singular ('your God my God'; 1.16; cf. 2.12). The God of Israel is nowhere explicitly referred to in the singular, but is referenced in the rare translation of the Hebrew divine title 'Shaddai' as 'the sufficient one' (ὁ ἱκανός, 1.20, 21). This divine title, elsewhere in Job 21.15; 31.2 and *4 Bar.* 6.3, arises from the derivation of the Hebrew word on the basis of Aramaic די + ש 'which [is] sufficient'.

Three small deletions remove from the text elements that could perhaps be regarded as scandalous (for details see De Waard, 'Translation Techniques', pp. 511–12; Bons, 'Septuaginta-Version', pp. 213–15). Thus, no equivalent is given in Ruth 1.12 for הלילה '[still] in [that] night', in the testimony that Naomi could have sons by any man. In 3.7 it is not stated Boaz had been drinking, in case he be accused of acting irresponsibly as a result of alcohol consumption. Furthermore, the translation at 3.7 is silent on whether Ruth 'lay down' or not—suspicion is avoided that Ruth provoked a sexual encounter with Boaz.

In the choice in 2.13 of the noun παιδίσκη 'young woman' (also sharing the sense of 'wife') Ruth proleptically anticipates her adoption of the title that she only receives in 4.12 after her marriage to Boaz. As such a woman she is to fulfil the hope that remains unfulfilled since ch. 1: to give birth to offspring (see Bons, 'Le vocabulaire', pp. 161–62).

VII. Reception History

A detailed, and yet at the same time very free rewriting of the book of Ruth is offered by Flavius Josephus (*Ant.* 5.318-37). This dispensed with much of the dialogue and instead emphasised the obedience of Ruth towards her mother (5.329). Josephus explains that he recounted the story because he wanted to show God's capability, how God is able to elevate ordinary people to a great status and grant them a great reputation (5.337; for further details see also *Bd'A* 8, pp. 54–56), as he did to David, whose genealogy according to Ruth 4.18-22 makes Ruth a descendant. This same genealogical information is adopted by Mt. 1.5; Lk. 3.32 and read in the context of the familial line of Jesus. In Patristic literature, from the time of Hippolytus of Rome, certain aspects are emphasised, such as Ruth's non-Jewish ancestry, which is seen as a type for the church consisting of Jews and Gentiles. Ruth's non-Jewish origin and her voluntary subjecting to the law (see the paraphrase of 1.16 in the Targum) is likewise an important element in Rabbinic interpretation of the book. For a comprehensive analysis and gathering of sources for the reception history, see Fischer, *Rut*, pp. 95–111; Scaiola, *Rut*, pp. 229–40.

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