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The "Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint" (HTLS)

Introduction: The Septuagint as a version of the Old Testament in its own right

Until recently, research on the Septuagint (LXX) has only ever played a secondary role in Old Testament exegesis. When carrying out research on the so-called proto-canonical books of the Hebrew Bible scholars are accustomed to focussing on the Masoretic Text (MT). As is well-known, the MT is the result of a process of textual harmonization and standardisation which began in the first centuries C. E. and ended some centuries later with standardised texts copied and distributed within the Jewish communities[1]. For Western biblical scholars, there is no doubt that the Old Testament text originating from this process is the reference when it comes to the biblical text. In this respect, all of the proto-canonical books share the same fate.

If scholars have attributed a secondary role to the LXX, albeit implicitly, it is because they are influenced, at least to some extent, by two decisions of the Western Church at the time of the Reformation. While the Reformed Churches opted for *hebraica veritas,* the Roman Catholic Church went in the opposite direction. At the Council of Trent in 1546, the Vulgate was declared the normative biblical text for teaching and preaching[2].

It is not overstating it to say that these two decisions had a decisive impact on exegetical practice from the XVI century onwards. Catholic and Protestant exegesis still considered the LXX as one of the textual sources of the Bible, even if they concentrated on the Hebrew or Latin texts. However, in privileging *a priori* the Hebrew or the Latin text, the LXX was denied its own particular place in bib-

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1 For a brief overview of the origins of the Masoretic Text, see the chapter "El Texto bíblico," In Elvira Martín Contreras and Guadalupe Seijas de los Ríos-Zarzosa, *Masora. La transmisión de la tradición de la Biblia Hebrea* (Estella: Verbo Divino, 2010), 23–36.
2 For detailed information on these topics, see e. g. Siegfried Raeder, "The Exegetical and Hermeneutical Work of Martin Luther," In *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation. Volume II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment,* ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 363–406, esp. 368–370; Jared Wicks, "Catholic Old Testament Interpretation in the Reformation and the Early Confessional Eras," In *ibid.,* 617–648, esp. 627–629.

lical studies. As a consequence, most scholars are not used to considering the writings of the LXX as autonomous texts which, though translated from a Hebrew source, do undeniably have their own theological and literary characteristics and which, for this reason, deserve detailed study in their own right.

To return to Western biblical exegesis, it is to be taken *cum grano salis* that it is only legitimate to quote the LXX in the following circumstances:

1. To correct the MT when the latter appears tricky, untranslatable or even wrong[3].
2. To interpret the New Testament, which used the LXX to formulate christological and ecclesiological concepts, quoting the Greek Old Testament very often, e.g. Ps 2; 109 |110][4].

By concentrating on these two allegedly "legitimate" approaches to the LXX, the study of the Septuagint as a significant document in its own right has been neglected. Moreover, traditional approaches to the LXX are too restrictive. This is evident from historical, text-critical and biblical research of the LXX carried out in the last three decades, whose results converge on similar conclusions:

Although most of the LXX texts are translations of an underlying Hebrew text, they display a wealth of literary and theological features which deserve attention. In addition to the literary and theological features of each of the LXX books, it is noteworthy that the entire collection of translated and non-translated texts is a document of Hellenistic Judaism. As such, it is rooted in a social and cultural environment that is different from Palestinian Judaism. Moreover, with respect to certain theological details, the LXX turns out to be a kind of "update" of the existing Hebrew Scriptures.

The LXX is the textual source not only of the New Testament (NT) authors but also of the so-called Intertestamentary literature, of Philo, Josephus and of the Greek Church fathers. Therefore, it has an impact on the diffusion of Jewish

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3 For a fairly nuanced position, see e.g. Ernst Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments. Eine Einführung in die Biblia Hebraica* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 5th edit. 1988). On the one hand, he states (p. 82): "Wohl bleibt sie [the LXX] auch uns ein außerordentlich wichtiger und unentbehrlicher Textzeuge, der die Heilung mancher verderbter Stellen möglich macht". On the other hand, he warns against hastily reconstructing the alleged Hebrew source of the LXX (*ibid.*, p. 82f): "Aber nur nach sorgfältiger Vertiefung in ihren Geist, ihre jeweilige Übersetzungstechnik und ihre Geschichte kann man sie zu textkritischen Operationen heranziehen. Vor vorschnellem Retrovertieren in das Hebräische in der Meinung, damit ohne weiteres die hebräische Vorlage zu gewinnen, muß gewarnt werden".

4 The bibliography is abundant, see e.g. the bibliography in Filippo Belli, Ignacio Carbajosa, Carlos Jódar Estrella, Luis Sáncheu Navarro, *L'Antico nel Nuovo. Il ricorso alla Scrittura nel Nuovo Testamento* (Bologna: Dehoniane, 2008), 181–209.

and Christian belief in ancient societies that should not to be underestimated. Suffice to mention concepts like creation, covenant, law or sin, which vehicle Hebrew thought. In other words, even though something of the original sense of the respective words may have been lost in translation, the intention was to make available Jewish ideas to a Hellenistic public.

In addition to its influence on the New Testament and the Greek Church fathers, the LXX plays an important role in ancient Jewish and Christian epigraphy and iconography[5], and, indirectly, in art, literature and music from Antiquity onwards. On the assumption that a text discloses itself, at least in part, insofar as it has its own *Wirkungsgeschichte*, biblical research cannot completely disregard this issue.

To be sure, recent LXX research has produced important results in the form of translations of and commentaries on the Greek Old Testament texts and numerous studies on specific text-critical and exegetical detail problems[6]. However, there is no doubt that a lexicon of the most important and typical words of the LXX, is still missing.

The aim of this paper is to present a new research tool whose first volume is to be published in 2016. In particular, the following questions will be addressed:

1. Why is there a need for a Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint (HTLS)? How does this lexicon differ from dictionaries of the Septuagint and of the New Testament that are already available?
2. Which issues will be dealt with in the entries of the HTLS? How are these articles structured? What is the underlying understanding of the evolution of the Greek language?
3. What results can be expected? How can the HTLS give us new insights into the terminology of the Septuagint and its impact on later Jewish and Christian theological language?

1. The need for a new research tool

The future "Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint" is meant to close a gap in the available literature on the vocabulary of the LXX and the NT.

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5 See e. g. the wealth of epigraphical evidence in the edition by Antonio Enrico Felle, *Biblia epigraphica. La sacra scrittura nella documentazione epigrafica dell'orbis christianus antiquus* (III-VIII secolo) (Bari: Edipuglia, 2006).

6 For the recent evolution of Septuagint research, see e. g. Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (London / New York: T&T Clark, 2004), 151–156; Martin Rösel, "Die *graphe* gewinnt Kontur. Die Stellung der Septuaginta in der Theologiegeschichte des Alten Testaments", *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 135 (2010), 639–651.

a) For about two centuries, the only LXX dictionary was the *Novus Thesaurus Philologico-Criticus, sive Lexicon in LXX et reliquos interpretes graecos ac scriptores apocryphos Veteris Testamenti,* published about two centuries ago by J.F. Schleusner[7]. In 1992 and 1996, the Belgian scholars Johan Lust, Erik Eynikel und Katrin Hauspie produced a *Greek English-Lexicon of the Septuagint*[8] which is without doubt very useful for LXX research. It provides the English equivalents of all attested words in the LXX, together with statistical data about the distribution of the words and an excellent bibliography. To some extent this dictionary is comparable to Takamitsu Muraoka's *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*[9], which is more comprehensive than the dictionary by Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie and whose bibliographical data is more recent. However, these two dictionaries and Schleusner's Thesaurus have two features in common: on the one hand they take into account the complete vocabulary of the LXX but on the other they provide only the most basic information. Thus, the two recent Greek-English dictionaries of the LXX classify the extant occurrences according to semantic criteria and offer the respective English equivalents. The entries in Schleusner's Thesaurus, written in Latin, provide more information, giving not only the Latin equivalents of the Greek word but their Hebrew equivalents according to the MT. It cannot be denied that the material contained in these lexica is essential for the translator. Nonetheless, their aim was not to provide the user with comprehensive information about the pre-history of a LXX word, or its use in non-biblical Greek or about its possible impact on later Jewish and Christian literature.

b) In a certain sense, the New Testament lexica are able to fill some important gaps. This is the case of Ceslas Spicq's *Lexique théologique du Nouveau Testament*[10]. Without any doubt, this research tool has the avantage of taking into account the LXX use of numerous NT words. However, it focusses on NT vocabulary. *Mutatis mutandis* the same applies for the comprehensive *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (ThWNT) edited by Gerhard Kittel und Gerhard Friedrich[11]. This multi-volume dictionary offers useful information about Greek words attested both in the New Testament and in the LXX. Future research would therefore do well to take into consideration its sections on the LXX. However, the *Kittel* is insufficient for several reasons despite its undeniable merits:

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7 Leipzig: Weidmann, 1820–1821.

8 Revised edition in one volume, Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003.

9 Leuven: Peeters, 2009.

10 Fribourg (Suisse): Éditions universitaires/Paris: Cerf, 1991. An English translation is available: *Theological lexicon of the New Testament*, 3 vols., Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994.

11 10 vols., Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933–1979.

α) It is not necessary to mention the serious objections James Barr has raised against Kittel's dictionary in his book *The Semantics of Biblical Language*[12]. In particular, Barr claimed that the sense of a word is not fixed, but that a given word acquires its meaning only as one element within a sentence. Therefore, caution is needed when authors argue, in particular in the wake of Kittel, that biblical words tend to have the same meaning in different writings or that e.g. the LXX and its vocabulary are to be considered as a *praeparatio evangelii*[13]. A correct methodological approach consists in a more descriptive and unbiased analysis of the linguistic data. More than one scenario is possible: on the one hand, it cannot be ruled out that one and the same word or expression is used in an analogous manner by different writers. On the other hand, it might prove to be the case that different writers used words or expressions in a different manner. Needless to say the situation gets even more complicated if the same author uses one and the same word in various senses.

β) From the point of view of the LXX scholar, the ThWNT is unsatisfactory for another reason. As is well-known, its main purpose was to analyze the NT vocabulary in the context of its specific biblical and Hellenistic background. Therefore, LXX issues are dealt with by Kittel's dictionary only if they contribute to explaining the NT meaning of a given word. However, the LXX contains numerous important words which are absent from the NT, for whatever reason. Other words are attested only rarely in the NT. It is understandable that Kittel's dictionary only mentions them in passing or does not pay attention to them.

This is the case of a series of technical terms of the LXX that appear rarely in the New Testament, e.g. ἀποστάσιον, "certificate of divorce" (e.g. Deut 24:1; Mark 10:4) and γαζοφυλάκιον, "treasury", which is mentioned about 25 times in the LXX and five times in the NT (e.g. 4 Kdgms 23:10; Mark 12:41).

Moreover, some theological or anthropological vocabulary is missing completely from the ThWNT whereas in other cases the entries are very short. E.g., the divine title ἀντιλήμπτωρ "protector", which is very important in the LXX Psalms (e.g. Ps 3:4; 17:3LXX) is not dealt with. Another divine title of the LXX, βοηθός, "helper" (e.g. Exod 15:2; Ps 9:10), which appears only once in the NT (Hebr 13: 6, quotation of Ps 117:6), is the subject of a very short entry by Friedrich Büchsel[14]. As for anthropological terms, no article is devoted e.g. to ἀφθαρσία, "incorruption", a noun which is mentioned en passant in the article φθείρω[15].

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12 First edition: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961.
13 See e.g. Georg Bertram, "Praeparatio Evangelii in der Septuaginta," *Vetus Testamentum* 7 (1957), 225–249, esp. 231.
14 Friedrich Büchsel, art. βοηθέω κτλ., *ThWNT* I, 627–628.
15 Günther Harder, art. φθείρω κτλ., *ThWNT* IX, 94–106, on p. 97, 102.

Interestingly, the article on βιάζομαι, "to urge, to force" written by Gottlob Schrenk[16] does not include a section on the LXX although the verb as well as the corresponding noun βία are attested around 50 times in the LXX (e. g. Exod 1:13; 14:25).

Finally, various key words of Greek culture and religion occur at times in the LXX but do not appear in the NT. In consequence, there was no need to mention them in Kittel's lexicon. E.g., the noun ἄγαλμα, "statue, image" is probably the usual Greek word for the statue of a god. The word is attested only twice in the LXX of Isaiah (Isa 19:3; 21:9), but it is absent from numerous LXX texts which polemicize against images of the gods (e. g. in Isa 44:9–20; Ps 134:14–18[LXX]; Epistle of Jeremiah). For these statues, the LXX prefers to use the word εἴδωλον, which occurs about 90 times (e. g. Exod 20:4). Furthermore, the word ἀρετή, "virtue", a key word in Greek education and ethics, has some scattered attestations in the LXX, at least in books translated from Hebrew (e. g. Isa 42:8; Hab 3:3), and is very rare in the NT as well (e. g. Phil 4:8). Another interesting example is the verb ἀθλέω, "to contend in battle" and the corresponding noun ἄθλον, "prize of contest, struggle". Although the Old Testament reports many struggles and wars, these words nowhere appear in the translated books of the LXX, not even in accounts such as Jacob's struggle with the angel (Gen 32:25) or David's struggle with Goliath (1 Kgdms 17). In these and similar cases the question arises why a very common Greek word did not find its way into the LXX or why it is so rare.

c) Irrespective of whether a word is dealt with by the available biblical lexica, there is no doubt that LXX research has made significant progress in the last decades. One of the major aims of the HTLS is to take into consideration the main achievements of scholarship, especially in the field of the LXX and related disciplines.

α) With regards to LXX studies, nowadays we have at our disposal critical editions which constitute a sound basis for future research. Furthermore, the discovery of the Qumran texts as well as studies on textual criticism and translation techniques shed more light on the differences and divergences between the various editions of the biblical text[17]. As a result, we can define more precisely the literary and theological characteristics of a given edition, over and above the tex-

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16 Gottlob Schrenk, art. βιάζομαι, βιαστής, *ThWNT* I, 608–613.
17 It might suffice to quote here a publication which had a great impact on text-critical studies: Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem: Simor, 1981, ²1997).

tual details. This enables us to take into account concepts and ideas which span more than one biblical book.

β) In the last decades, numerous papyri and inscriptions have been deciphered and made accessible to scholars. It is obvious that many of these scattered documents can contribute to a better understanding of the language of the LXX. This is the case of the divine titles used in the LXX of which many can be better explained against the background of the papyri, e.g. the aforementioned noun ἀντιλήμπτωρ[18]. Something similar might be said of the vocabulary of sin and law. A series of terms appear in the legal language of Ptolemaic Egypt, especially in documents which have been analysed and published in recent time[19]. Generally speaking, the existing lexica do not take into consideration this material in a systematic manner. Both papyri and inscriptions can nowadays be searched easily on the respective electronic databases. Thus, it is possible in only a few minutes to locate words or expressions in a mass of electronically processed data. In the past, word searches of this kind would have been as impossible as looking for a needle in a haystack. Of course, progress is still slow in this field, despite the availability of electronic databases.

In conclusion, current biblical research is aware of the specific place that the LXX has both in the evolution of the text of the Bible and in ancient Jewish and Christian theology. Therefore, we need a research tool which covers a wide range of words and word groups of the LXX, their Greek background and their history in later Jewish and Christian theology.

2. Methodological issues

HTLS articles should address the following questions: 1. Is the word already attested in classical or Hellenistic Greek literature? 2. Is the word attested in the papyri or inscriptions of the Hellenistic or Roman periods? 3. Is the word attested in ancient Jewish literature written in Greek, notably the writings of Philo or Josephus? 4. Is the word attested in the New Testament or in the Early Christian literature up until the end of the II century B.C.E.?

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18 See e.g. the article by Anna Passoni Dell'Acqua, "La metafora biblica di Dio come roccia e la sua soppressione nelle antiche versioni," *Ephemerides Liturgicae* 91 (1977), 417–453.
19 See Anna Passoni dell'Acqua, "La terminologia dei reati nei προστάγματα dei Tolemei e nella versione dei LXX," In *Proceedings of the XVIII International Congress of Papyrology, Athens 25–31 may 1986*, Vol. II (Athens: Greek Papyrological Society, 1988), 335–350.

One crucial question was how to define the criteria for selecting words or word groups to be included in the lexicon. We are very much aware of the fact that clear-cut criteria do not exist. However, the following questions enabled us to draw up a list:

Which LXX words are given a new, specific meaning that they do not have in classical or Hellenistic Greek? By way of an example, in classical Greek, the verb κτίζω denotes the process of founding a city or a building (e. g. Herodotus, *Hist.* I.168, 170). In biblical Greek, however, the verb mostly refers to God's creative act (e. g. Gen 14:19, 22). That is not to suggest that the verb always has the same meaning in every Jewish or Christian Greek text. On the contrary, it has to be established which meaning prevails in a given context. One cannot rule out the possibility that the verb in one instance means "to create" and in another "to found" (e. g. in 1 Esdr 4:53)[20].

Does the LXX introduce technical terms into religious or legal terminology which become common in later Jewish or Christian texts, whereas they do not have this specific meaning in so-called pagan texts? Example: In Greek a βωμός is a hill or a raised platform, sometimes an altar (Homer, *Il.* 4, 48; 8, 249; Herodotus, *Hist.* I.183; Euripides, *Andromache*, 162). In biblical Greek, however, the noun denotes an altar to foreign deities[21] (e. g. Exod 34:13; exceptions: 2 Macc 13:8; Sir 50:12, 14). As for the verb ἀγχιστεύω, it means "to be near" in classical Greek (e. g. Euripides, *Tro.* 224). Sometimes, the words of the same root also have a moral connotation: neighbours have the duty of helping each other (e. g. Herodotus, *Hist.* V.80). The LXX, however, places the word in the context of redemption: "to exercise the rights and responsibilities of a kinsman, to redeem" (e. g. Lev 25:25).

Can the specific LXX meaning of a word be better explained in the Egyptian context of the papyri? Once again, let us quote the noun ἀντιλήμπτωρ, "protector" which the LXX uses to render words such as *misgāḇ* "secure height, stronghold" (e. g. Ps 17:3; 45:8, 12[LXX]). In an Egyptian context, however, an ἀντιλήμπτωρ is normally a person, often a high functionary who is called for assistance by a petitioner (e. g. BGU IV.1139).

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20 For detailed information on the use of κτίζω and its derivatives, see Eberhard Bons and Anna Passoni Dell'Acqua, "A Sample Article: κτίζω – κτίσις – κτίσμα – κτίστης," In *Septuagint Vocabulary. Pre-History, Usage, Reception*, eds. Eberhard Bons and Jan Joosten (SCSt 58; Atlanta, Georgia: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011), 173–187.

21 See Knut Usener, "Die Septuaginta im Horizont des Hellenismus. Ihre Entwicklung, ihr Charakter und ihre sprachlich-kulturelle Position," In *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta. Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der Griechischen Bibel*, eds. Siegfried Kreuzer and Jürgen Peter Lesch (BWANT 161; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2004), 78–118, esp. 108 f.

Does the LXX employ words in new or specific contexts in such a manner that the word is connected to a particular event or reality? E.g. the verb γογγύζω "to mutter" and its derivations refer to the murmuring of the Israelites in the desert.

Does the LXX employ a vocabulary, e. g. philosophical and anthropological terms, which have no direct equivalent in the Hebrew Bible, but which occur in the translated books? As an example, in classical Greek thinking, humans are considered mortal whereas gods are immortal (e. g. Homer, *Il.* I, 339). Biblical Hebrew, however, has no word for "mortal". Nevertheless, the word θνητός occurs here and there in the translated books, e. g. Isa 51:12; Prov 20:24.

As for the evolution of Greek language, we have to reckon with various phenomena: the LXX introduces "new" meanings, whereas the "older" meanings reappear in later Jewish and Christian texts; the LXX introduces new terminology which has no impact on subsequent Jewish and Christian literature; one and the same word has a typical LXX meaning as well as its "traditional" meaning; the LXX employs words and expressions of colloquial Greek etc. In short, we cannot establish a linear relationship by means of which "Biblical Greek" develops from the LXX. Rather, we have to take into consideration interplay of various factors: the meaning of an underlying Hebrew word, the context of Egyptian Greek, the social environment, rhetorical skill, *koiné* Greek, allusions to Greek literature and mythology, etc.

3. Expected results

How can the HTLS give us new insight into the terminology of the Septuagint and its impact on later Christian theological language? It might suffice to quote some examples:

a) The systematic study of the papyri proves useful insofar as it can provide interesting results:

α) For a long time, scholars were convinced that the word προσήλυτος was a LXX neologism[22]. A recently published article, however, raises doubts as to whether this hypothesis is really viable. In Papyrus Duke Inv. 727, which goes back to the 3rd century B.C.E., the term προσήλυτος seems to denote strangers[23].

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22 Karl Georg Kuhn, art. προσήλυτος, *ThWNT* VI, 727–745, on p. 730.
23 C. Jakob Butera/David M. Moffitt, "P.Duk. inv. 727: A Dispute with 'Proselytes' in Egypt," In *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 177 (2011), 201–206.

If this hypothesis is correct, the conclusion is clear: when rendering the Hebrew word *ger* the translators did not invent a new Greek noun or adjective but had recourse to a word already existing in their environment.

β) Sometimes the papyri offer the closest parallels to LXX quotations. E.g., the noun βοηθός as a divine title is very rare outside the LXX, Josephus, and later Christian literature. However, in the papyri we find petitions where a human "helper" and sometimes a god is called βοηθός (e. g. UPZ 1.52)[24].

γ) Among the adjectives whose meaning ranges from "unusual" to "wicked", some LXX texts, especially Job, use the neuter of ἄτοπος, normally as the object of a verb like ποιέω and πράσσω. Once again, the papyri provide some material which enables us to shed light on the background to these expressions, as will be shown by Daniela Scialabba in her forthcoming HTLS article. Interestingly, the clause "he has not done anything wrong", put into the mouth of the repentant thief, appears in Luke 23:41.

b) The idea of divine education or correction (παιδεύω, παιδεία) appears several times in the Book of the Twelve Prophets, although the Hebrew text does not necessarily require such a translation. According to Amos 3:7, God does not reveal his council (*sôd*) to the prophets (as in the MT), but his παιδεία. Of course, this variant might be explained by an error, the translator having read the root *ysr*. Be this as it may, it is striking that the idea of divine correction is closely related to another text, Hos 5:2, where God presents himself as the "educator" of his people (παιδευτής). Therefore, the question is whether these and other LXX occurrences of the idea of divine education reveal a specific theological concept. If so, does this concept undergo development in later texts, e. g. in the Psalms of Solomon and in the New Testament? And how can it be situated in the wider context of Jewish-hellenistic theology and Greek education? A futur HTLS article will trace the development of this idea. Of course, texts and ideas are not to be confused. It is all the more indispensable to show how this idea is shaped in a given context[25].

In conclusion, the articles which have been already submitted allow us to formulate the following expectations: the entries of the lexicon will enable us to place LXX words in the larger context of their hellenistic environment, to de-

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24 For more details, see Eberhard Bons, "The Noun βοηθός as a Divine Title. Prolegomena to a Future HTLS Article". In *The Reception of Septuagint Words in Jewish-Hellenistic and Christian Literature* eds. Eberhard Bons, Ralph Brucker, Jan Joosten (WUNT II/367; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 53–66.

25 See Patrick Pouchelle, *Dieu éducateur. Une nouvelle approche d'un concept de la théologie biblique entre Bible Hébraïque, Septante et Littérature grecque* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2015).

scribe their specific features and the contexts in which they appear, and to give us an idea of their impact on later Jewish and Christian writers.