This volume, twice the size of *XIII Congress of the IOSCS*, contains fifty papers presented at the Helsinki Congress in 2010 (preceded by abstracts). The congress was organized around several themes, in the following order: Women’s Books, Job and Proverbs, History, Books of Kgdms, Isaiah, LXX Lexicon, Jeremiah, Style, Codices, Daughter Versions, The Twelve, Hexapla, Hexateuch, Linguistics, NT, Hymnic Texts, Patristics, and Textual Criticism. I will summarize the articles and make occasional evaluative remarks.

The volume starts with three short contributions from the Panel on Septuagint Origins. A. Aejmelaeus, “The Septuagint and Oral Translation,” explores how far the LXX shows traces of a practice of oral Torah translation preceding the written Septuagint. K. De Troyer, “The Hebrew Text behind the Greek Text of the Pentateuch,” suggests that papyrical evidence (Schøyen Leviticus) might point to the existence of Hebrew texts differing from MT, even in the case of the Pentateuch. A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint and Scribal Culture,” suggests that the Pentateuch translation was made under the responsibility of high-priestly authority and reflects his views.

E. Kellenberger, “Schriftliche und mündliche Weitergabe in der griechischen Susanna-Erzählung,” compares OG and Theodotion. He finds that some passages are identical in
both versions, and others are not. The differences are due to Theodotion’s revisional concerns, whereas the identical passages concern central elements in the story or uncommon Greek. The combination of these two elements may point to oral transmission comparable to that which is often assumed for Gospel stories.

V. Spottorno, “Beyond Genre and Style: Notes on the Greek Esther,” briefly reviews the status quaestionis regarding Esther.

N. LaMontage, “LXX-Ruth: Translation, Interpretation, Characterization,” reviews its contradictory translation style. He also argues that with a number of shifts the translator has changed the characterization of several story participants, notably Boaz and Ruth.


L. Cuppi, “Concerning the Origin of the Addition Found in ProvLXX 1:7,” surveys the different theories concerning Prov 1:7 and argues that the two additional LXX stichs are an authentic rendering by the original translator, added on the spur of the similar Ps 111:10.

D. Gera, “Onias III and the Legitimacy of Judas Maccabaeus,” argues that Onias III is a much more central figure in 2 Maccabees than is commonly thought. In the second part of 2 Maccabees, too, Onias plays the pivotal role. He provides the positive contrast to the bad high priests Jason and Menelaus and legitimizes (through a dream) Judas Maccabaeus’s role.

H. Hacham, “Between Mašûbâ and Mosabâ: On the Status of Diaspora Jews in the Period of Redemption according to the Septuagint and Hellenistic Judaism,” notes that in five cases מַשׁוֹבָה was not translated as “sin, apostasy” but as “dwelling place.” Hacham puts up a convincing argument that the translator was neither ignorant of its meaning nor did he misread it as מַשׁוֹבָה but translated it midrashically. He did so in accordance with his belief that worldwide Jewish settlement should not be seen as a punishment but rather as a fulfillment of divine promises. Similar views can be found in Philo and Josephus. The paper, written in splendid English, represents the best Jerusalem tradition.

R. Kugler, “Uncovering Echoes of LXX Legal Norms in Hellenistic Egyptian Documentary Papyri: The Case of the Second-Century Herakleopolite Nome,” gives examples from P. Polit. Iud. to illustrate that these not only reflect references to the LXX but also testify to the juridical pluralism practiced by Egyptian Judeans.
Z. Talshir, “The Miscellanies in 3 Reigns 2:35a–om 46a–l and the Composition of the Books of Kings/Reigns,” argues that the miscellanies are a loose conglomeration of data extracted from the account of Solomon’s reign. With humor and liveliness she attacks Darshan, who considers them a coherent composition. The paper concludes with a Hebrew retroversion.

P. Torijano Morales, “Different Distribution of Agreements between LXXl and Medieval Hebrew Variants in Kaige and Non-kaige Sections of III–IV Regnorum,” departs from Wevers’s observation that medieval Hebrew variants often agree with the Lucianic text. Torijano Morales shows that these agreements (listed at the end of the paper) occur significantly more often in kaige sections. On the basis of several examples he argues that Luc in the kaige-sections preserves a proto-Lucianic text that is very close or identical to the Old Greek.


J. M. Robker, “The Greek Framework of Kings: Indicators of Recension,” questions the growing consensus that the Antiochene text consistently represents the Old Greek. Robker discusses opening and closing formulas of the reigns of the kings and through a strict application of lectio difficilior and lectio brevior concludes that in many instances Vaticanus reflects the older text. The redactional framework of the kings in the Antiochene text is of a secondary (more systematic, less unwieldy) nature. Textual criticism should not operate on the assumption of ubiquitous priority (of L) but on a case-by-case basis.

J. H. Kim, “Vom hellenistischen Kleinrollensystem zum Kodex: Beobachtungen zur Textgestalt der griechischen Samuel- und Königebücher,” pursues E. Tov’s suggestion that the alternation of kaige and non-kaige material originated when small Greek scrolls of different nature and background were assembled. Kim shows that this is explained by the Hellenistic preference for small scrolls and the requirement that these should contain a coherent unity. Kim calculates which sections could have fitted on such small scrolls and argues that the significant omission in the story of David and Goliath can thus be explained. The essential part of this seemingly groundbreaking paper (238–40) is cryptic.

N. Fernández Marcos, “Translating the Historical Books,” explains the problems the Spanish translators of the Septuagint had to deal with when translating the historical
books. Fernández Marcos explains their main innovation, the use of the Antiochene text as their source, which the Madrid team considers to be close to the Old Greek.

S. Kreuzer, “‘Lukian redivivus’ or Barthelémy and Beyond?” adds a chapter to his defense of the Antiochene text as being close to the original Greek translation, this time by scrutinizing the arguments put forward in S. Brock’s influential “Lucian redivivus.” Kreuzer concludes that Brock’s examples are often doubtful and misleading and do not really disprove Barthelémy’s new evaluation of the Antiochene text.

M. Meiser, “Der Tempelbaubericht 3 Kgdm 6:1–22: Vom Umgang der Übersetzer mit einer schwierigen hebräischen Vorlage,” argues that the translator used transliterations (αἰλάµ for אולם and δαβεῖρ for דביר) because he could not picture how these halls belonged to the temple edifice as a whole. Thus he complied with a requirement from Homeric scholarship by not creating a text where the relationship between description and reality would be questionable. Egyptian architectural terminology plays no role in 3 Kingdoms (as it does in Ezek 40).

W. de Angelo Cunha, “Greek Isaiah 25:6–8 and the Issue of Coherence,” argues that the divergences between the Hebrew and Greek texts may be ascribed to errors, bad knowledge of Hebrew, and a different Vorlage. But the passage constitutes a coherent Greek text. It has a message of its own that differs from a straightforward reading of the Hebrew text and betrays the translator’s sociopolitical context. I would have appreciated an attempt to take issue more thoroughly with van der Kooij’s position on LXX-Isa.

H. Ausloos, “Hapax Legomena, the LXX and Hebrew Lexicography,” gives examples of the way in which Hebrew lexicographers have often been guided by the Septuaagint’s interpretation of hapax legomena. While acknowledging the existence of this practice, I find many examples insufficiently researched. Since, for example, הבצל (Num 11:5) occurs in talmudic Hebrew and have Arabic cognates (HALOT), we cannot claim that their lexicon entries are entirely based on the LXX (298).

P. Danove reviews “The Usages of ∆ίδωµι in the Septuagint” with help of a Case Frame analysis. The paper reads like a monologue, because the author (1) fails to make clear in what respect the thematic roles approach with its inevitable jargon goes beyond traditional lexicography; (2) does not justify a lexicography on the basis of a translational corpus; and (3) does not position his approach vis-à-vis existing LXX or Greek lexica.

H. Debel and E. Verbeke, “The Greek Rendering of Hebrew Hapax Legomena in the Book of Qoheleth,” study “non-absolute hapaxes” in Qoheleth and conclude that its translator often renders them in such a way that shows their relationship with words based on the
same root that do occur more often. The authors claim, surprisingly, that this is untypical for a literal translator (who would have omitted or transliterated, QED) but it reveals his translational creativity. My idea is rather that this type of root-consistency is just what we would expect from literal translations. The Verdeutschung der Schrift by Buber and Rosenzweig is a good example. The assumed contrast between “literal” and “creative” is apologetic (the authors seek to clear “their” translator of the “sins of literalism,” as they call it) and confuses two dimensions of translating. A literal translator can jolly well be creative. Since he or she is not constrained by a concern for target-language naturalness, this opens up new avenues for his creativity. It can shine, for example, in stretching the possibilities of target-language grammar and style. Again, Buber and Rosenzweig illustrate this.

P. Spitaler, “‘Biblical Greek’ in the LXX? The Case of δωρεάν,” argues that δωρεάν means “as a gift, gratis” in the LXX (as in Koine) and critiques the popular view that it acquired the meanings “in vain” or “without cause” as renderings of חנם. Far from expanding the meaning of δωρεάν, the translators narrowed down the various meanings of חנם (with somewhat forced examples). The church fathers’ interpretation of δωρεάν as “in vain” or “without cause” proves that this was not yet its meaning, but their explanation may have set the meaning expansion in motion. It seems that Spitaler does not seriously consider the option that δωρεάν functioned as a kind of automatic equivalent of חנם that sometimes fitted awkwardly into the context.

J. Joosten, “The Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint: A Sample Entry—εὐλογέω,” reviews the classical meaning of εὐλογέω, “to praise.” He supposes a semantic extension to include the meaning “to bless” on account of its use as a rendering of ברך in the Septuagint. This equivalent might have been preexistent in Jewish Greek prayer language. The New Testament continues septuagintal usage; Philo and Josephus scarcely do.

D. M. Moffat, “A Note on Some Προσήλυτος in P. Duk.inv.727R,” challenges the current consensus that προσήλυτος in the LXX means “proselyte.” The occurrence of προσήλυτος in a third-century B.C.E. (non-Jewish) papyrus, its oldest attestation, makes clear it means “newcomer.” This confirms the translations found in NETS and Muraoka’s lexicon.

T. Muraoka, “What after the Lexicon?” looks back on the Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint and outlines his next Herculean plan, a syntax of Septuagint Greek. I fervently hope he will be given the strength to accomplish this task. His first promise is to do this on the basis of the Greek text. In the first specimen of this project, however, in Die Septuaginta—Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte (2012), Muraoka takes frequent recourse to Hebrew, reasonably enough. His second promise, to do his research with due reference to

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the work done in Helsinki, also comes to grief there, but this does an injustice to both Helsinki and his own work. Allow me to ask for promise-keeping on this score.

G. Walser, “Jeremiah 38:31–38 (MT 31:31–34): The History of the Two Versions and Their Reception,” follows Schenker’s footsteps in noting the rendering of (sg.) תורתי as νομούς μου (pl.). Both Jewish sources and Greek fathers quote the text as referring to a singular law but differ in their interpretation of it, whereas the Latin fathers quote both singular and plural (lex/leges). The interpreters’ context rather than the peculiarities of the text influenced them.

C.-B. Amphoux and A. Sérandour, “Le vocabulaire homiletique de Jr 1–20 comparé à 4 Rg 17,7–20,” observe significant affinities in Greek vocabulary between Jer 1–20 and a secondary passage in 4 Kingdoms (the first five of these are ἀκούω, ἀποστέλλω, βασιλεύς, δίδω, εἶδωλον). There are good reasons to date the short form of Jeremiah to the beginning of the Seleucid period (199 B.C.E.), the long form to the Hasmonaean period. The edition of Kingdoms that inserted 17:7–20 must have taken place in the very same period.

J. Dines, “Was LXX Pentateuch a Style Setter for LXX Minor Prophets?” argues that the reproduction of stylistic features already present in Hebrew and the free embellishments found in the Greek Minor Prophets are often paralleled by similar features in the LXX Pentateuch, which could have served as a model. She also identifies elements in the Minor Prophets for which the Pentateuch did not provide a precedent.

D. L. Gera, “Speech in the Book of Judith,” tries to illuminate the question whether Judith was written originally in Hebrew or Greek by investigating the direct speeches. Gera finds these sections are not only written in relatively fluent and idiomatic Greek, but are also rich in literary techniques, themes, and motifs drawn from classical Greek writings. Although this seems to favor an original Greek composition (how would those Greek features be worded in Hebrew?), Gera’s nuanced conclusion is that it is still too early to settle the issue.

M. Fincati, “Some Remarks on the Codex Ambrosianus,” examines paleographical data concerning the codex and its history, especially its restoration in the eleventh-twelfth centuries. Fincati argues it must have taken place in a Christian milieu with a remarkable love for the Hebraica veritas.

E. Perttilä, “Greek variants behind Coptic Readings in 1 Samuel 31?” shows that the Sahidic manuscripts derive from a common ancestor and that M is the most reliable. In some instances, Coptic readings point to Greek variant readings.
G.M. Eidsvåg, “The Rendering of Toponyms in the LXX-Minor Prophets: An Indication of Alexandrian Provenance,” notes peculiarities in the use of transliterations, Hellenized names, and translated names in the Minor Prophets. With respect to Palestine, for example, names of coastal cities are used in their Hellenized forms, whereas inland towns are often unknown to him and translated as if they were content words. This fits with an Alexandrian provenance.

W. E. Glenny, “Ephraim Dwelt in Egypt: Egypt and Assyria in the Septuagint of Hosea,” reviews several passages where Israel’s return to Egypt (a punishment in MT) is located in the past by the LXX translators (to relieve the stigma for Egyptian Jews). Parallel phenomena in books other than Hosea point to a single translator for the Minor Prophets.

R. Ceulemans, “Readings Attributed to “οἱ περὶ α´ and/or σ´” by Theodoret of Cyrrhus,” surveys past interpretations of references to Aquila and Symmachus by Theodoret. The inclusive interpretation makes them refer to the man and his entourage, the exclusive to his followers alone, whereas the third interpretation considers it as nothing more than a periphrasis of Aquila and/or Symmachus by themselves. The periphrastic interpretation was favored by Field, Ziegler, and Wevers, in a sometimes misleading way. Ceulemans reviews all sixteen occurrences of the expression in Theodoret in a very nuanced way, observes it refers to texts, and concludes that different passages seem to point different ways. Because it is impossible to reach clear-cut conclusions, Ceulemans urges the editors of a new Hexapla to provide those data to the apparatus that enable readers to form their own judgment. Ceulemans’s paper is a joy to read in all respects. (A minor comment is that Ceulemans’s seemingly modest imitation of Caesar’s self-designation is almost comically un-English.)

M. N. van der Meer, “Θρησκεία, Terra incognita and Terra devastata: Vocabulary and Theology of Symmachus,” explores the nature and background of Symmachus’s version, especially of Isaiah. Following van der Kooij, van der Meer argues that the translation advocates a policy of quietism and cooperation for Jews and expresses the belief that the Jerusalem cultus (θρησκεία) was of value for all the world. I would like to ask a twofold question to my friend and colleague: How do we justify methologically the detection of ideology (a) when Symmachus’s rendering does deviate from LXX but quite accurately renders the meaning of the Hebrew text (the case of the “quietism”) and also reflects central Old Testament texts (Exod 14:14) or (b) on the basis of a Greek word retroverted from the Syrohexapla (θρησκεία)?

R. J. V. Hiebert and N. Dykstra, “Designing a New Septuagint Commentary: SBLCS and WATER,” introduce a web-based tool designed to enable the efficient handling of large
amounts of data from numerous manuscripts (for the purpose of a critical edition) and various kinds of research resources (to aid in writing an LXX commentary), called Web Application for Textual and Exegetical Research (WATER). It looks very promising, but nothing is said about its availability for other scholars.

D. Büchner, “Writing a Commentary on the Septuagint,” shows how he proceeds in his philologically oriented commentary on Leu 5, with the aim of ascertaining “what a translator may have intended by means of his product for that primary audience” (595). Büchner views the legal outcome, which does not parallel the legal case in Hebrew, as the intentional outcome of the translator’s decisions. He embraces the interlinear hypothesis in concluding that the translator intended to draw attention to the Hebrew material behind the translation.

S. Sipilä, “Some Peculiar Place Names in the LXX of Joshua,” discusses some examples from Josh 15. His assumption that all the name forms are the result of simple processes leads to his conclusion that the textual history of LXX Joshua must have been much more complicated than hitherto thought (editoral activity in LXX Josh).

Ph. Le Moigne, “ICLE καὶ ἀγαλλίαισθε καὶ ψάλατε (Ps 97:4): Présent vs aorist dans les impératifs des Psalms LXX,” uncovers interesting tendencies in the use of imperatives in the Greek Psalms. God is always addressed in the aorist, humans also in the present. In the third person, imperative alternates with the optative. The imperatives of some verbs occur only in either aorist or present (see title). Positive and negative imperatives behave differently. The author treats exceptions judiciously and outlines future research. This is a very sophisticated and equally commendable piece of work.

M. Karrer, “Die Rezeption der Septuaginta im entstehenden Christentum: Das Wuppertaler Forschungsprojekt,” summarizes the project findings of the combined textual criticism of the LXX and New Testament. Several New Testament quotations attest to variants in the transmission of the Septuagint. Contrary to what is commonly thought, the transmissions of the LXX and New Testament proceeded quite independently (with the exception of corrections).

U. Schmid, “Old Testament and New Testament Versions of the Mosaic Law: The Intersection of Oral and Written Tradition,” puts the Wuppertal approach in practice by analyzing all the extant evidence of the second part of the Decalogue in the MT, LXX, and New Testament (and their manuscript traditions). He cogently argues that two sequences, “MT” and “GD” (adultery–murder–stealing) are well attested in both Greek and Hebrew and probably go back to differing Hebrew textual traditions. “GE” (adultery–stealing–murder) is a marginal sequence that can best be explained by “secondary accidental
textual developments” (603) and not by invoking the problematic category of oral transmission of some sort.

G. J. Steyn, “A Comparison of the Septuagint Textual Form in the Torah Quotations Common to Philo of Alexandria and the Gospels of Mark and Matthew,” surveys the variations in the Torah quotations of Mark and Matthew and compares them to the Septuagint and Philo. Steyn finds that Mark’s quotations are generally closer to LXXed and Matthew to Philo’s readings. He suggests that Matthew, while using Mark as a source, aligned the quotations to a text form that was close to the one Philo used. This is an interesting line of research that will sooner or later lead to the claim that the Göttingen Pentateuch testifies to a revised Septuagint.

S. Olofsson, “The Non-dependence of the Psalms Translator in Relation to the Translators of the Pentateuch,” accepts the idea that the Pentateuch served as a lexicon for later translators but suggests that for the complete picture it is necessary to consider that many renderings seem to be independent of it. Olofsson’s general principles are sound, although he pays little attention to context.

C. Dogniez, “Les Odes ajoutées au Psautier dans la Septange comme actes de langage,” shows that the Odes (prayers taken out of their narrative contexts) are decontextualized so as to assume again their original function of universal prayer language. Dogniez views them as “speech acts” in J. L. Austin’s sense and clarifies, inter alia, how several odes can be understood as performative language use. A surprising paper to have originated from Paris!

E. L. Gallagher, “The Septuagint’s Fidelity to Its Vorlage in Greek Patristic Thought,” endeavors to show that, despite recent claims to the contrary, the church fathers took great pains to establish the LXX as a reliable rendering of the Hebrew text. They had to come to terms with the evidence that Origen had compiled and devised various explanations (which are still around) to account for the differences. Epiphanius, to whom Gallagher devotes much attention, did this by appealing to translational processes (implicitation, explicitation).

T. Kauhanen, “Using Patristic Evidence: A Question of Methodology in the Textual Criticism of the LXX,” refines methodology in the use of patristic LXX quotations. In order to assess the text-critical value of the quotations, we should not only determine the nature of the quotation but also take into account the linguistic preferences of the fathers and their translators. With the help of well-chosen examples, Kauhanen shows when and how, for example, some fathers’ favorite words or themes creep into the quotations, which therefore cannot be used to support variants. Latin quotations ask for a study of
the translator’s habitual Greek-Latin renderings, in order to be used profitably. I look forward to more of his work.

A. Piquer Otero, “Hebrew Bible(s) and Greek Witnesses? A First Look at the Makeup of 2 Kings for the Oxford Hebrew Bible,” explains the rationale for the Oxford Hebrew Bible presentation of two Hebrew texts alongside each other. The fuzziness of the network of “original sources” makes decisions of priority nearly impossible. A critical edition should do justice to the reality of plurality.

J. Koulagna, “Les mots ותיהלם סכנת dans 1 Rois 1,2” gives an example of a textual choice in the Oxford Hebrew Bible. Because the Hebrew phrase does not sit well within its present context and is lacking from the Antiochene text, Koulagna surmises it was no part of the Vorlage but was secondarily imported from verse 4 by “the reviser of MT.” This was done for moral reasons, to correct the tendency of giving a sexual interpretation to Abishag’s role with king David.

Turning to a review of the volume as a whole, I find the quality of the papers in general quite good. This book is a treasure trove for any student of the Septuagint. It is a great pity that the access to the wealth of material in this volume is not facilitated by indices.

A big thank you is due to Melvin Peters for his efforts as an editor of three IOSCS volumes.

Having now reviewed seven collections of symposia, congresses, and Tagungen for different journals, I would like to make some observations on general tendencies in the field of Septuagint studies. The first thing that strikes me is that there is a massive specialization going on. The tendency to move into new avenues is a sign of vitality. Cliché topics, such as the interpretation of the Letter of Aristeas, are becoming rare. I welcome this development, since there is no point in endlessly rehashing familiar positions. But the downside of the rapid specialization is, apart from the danger of compartmentalization, that research is also moving away from answering the central questions of LXX studies.

Specialization and neglect of the central questions are two sides of the same coin here. Specialization cannot thrive when there is a general feeling that the central questions of a research field have not been satisfactorily dealt with. But a field that is flowering into new specialisms can behave as if the central questions were solved. Obviously, it is in the interest of a specialist to believe he or she is standing on firm ground. At the same time, specialist papers do not contribute to the solutions of the central questions by their very nature. In principle, thus, the situation perpetuates itself.
This is what I presently observe in Septuagint studies. While research is moving into new avenues, we are still stuck with many of the the same nasty questions as before. During the last seven years or so I have read only few papers that I would call superfluous. Most papers deal with good and worthy research topics, just not with the questions they have in common with the Greek Bible as a whole, especially the Pentateuch.

This is not hard to understand, to be honest. Having read the contributions to the Panel on Septuagint Origins in the present volume, I was left with the feeling how hard it is to break new ground with respect to central questions. But it is still a pity that, for example, the methodological debate (e.g., with respect to the detection of ideology in the translation) still goes unresolved. Also, the phenomenon of segmentation, to which Soisalon-Soininen drew attention, is still awaiting explanation, together with the vexing question why the (Pentateuch and other) translators did not go back to correct mistakes. Another standing question is how we can distinguish between literal translation as an “easy technique” and literalism as a method.

There are many areas of consensus in Septuagint studies, core convictions that are shared by the majority of scholars. A good example is the belief that the LXX Pentateuch was translated by five different scholars. Such beliefs are now rarely being challenged the way James Barr used to challenge cherished assumptions, as in his paper “Did the Pentateuch Really Serve as a Dictionary for the Translation of the Later Books?”

Not only do many core beliefs remain unchallenged; I even see new areas of consensus arise. For example, we are finding more papers that favor Ptolemaic sponsorship of the LXX Pentateuch, whereas hands-on research has long shifted from the Pentateuch to other books, notably 1–4 Kingdoms. Another example is the frequently encountered conviction that the translation in all its details was willed by the translators. The belief that these issues are solved is misleading. Sometimes one gets the impression that repetition rather than research backs these beliefs.

I would like to raise a call to return to the general questions that pertain to the Septuagint as a whole. First and foremost, a renewed attention to the Pentateuch is necessary, since it is there that the central questions first arise. Further, let researchers not ignore the work of rival approaches that do not suit them but engage in dialogue, especially with regard to methodological questions. Third, let us do in papers what we are already doing when applying for academic grants: make clear what our papers ontribute to the central questions of Septuagint studies (of which I have mentioned only a few). Let each paper contain at least one paragraph that makes this clear. I have no doubt that this will benefit the field as a whole.