1. You are probably wondering if there is still a need for another translation of the Septuagint. I also have asked myself the same question on several occasions and thought of the possibility and indeed the opportune reasons for translating the Septuagint into Spanish. In fact, some years ago, we were already in contact with the United Bible Societies of Spain with the view to a possible translation of the Greek Bible into Spanish. But now it would seem that the time is ripe and that the conditions are favourable to carry out such a project, both with enthusiasm and realism. I will briefly mention some of these conditions:

The increasing interest in Septuagint in the post-qumranic period of Biblical studies. For the first time theologians and scholars of the Old and New Testament are aware of the importance of the Greek Bible for the history of the Biblical text in the period preceding the change of era. Scholars are also more and more conscious that the Septuagint was the main source of quotations and inspiration for the authors of the New Testament and of the first Christians.\(^1\)

The fact that it has been translated or is in the process of being translated into many modern languages: English, French, German, Italian or Japanese, while translations into modern Greek, modern Hebrew and Russian\(^2\) have already been announced.

The high standard of Spanish Biblical philology in the last decades with some scholars present on international committees. Some of the Spanish Biblical publications have been translated into English, French, German, Italian or Portuguese.

There is a team in the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) which is able to act as an editorial committee on the project. Moreover, there is a generation of Spanish philologists, doctors in Trilingual Philology, in the Classics and in Semitics, capable of translating the different books. We must take into consideration that this may well be the last generation that can undertake such an enterprise, given the constantly decreasing knowledge of ancient languages among the new generations.

The prestige of the Spanish language around the world and the increasing number of Spanish speakers in the USA, Asia or Brazil, together with Latin America, make up a wide sector of

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readers or addressees. I consider the Septuagint as a Classic. In the same way that Gredos Publishers (Madrid) is translating and publishing the Greek and Latin Classics into Spanish, the Greek Bible should be translated for future generations which may be ignorant of the Greek language. The Alexandrian Jews had the audacity to translate their Scriptures into the common language of their world, the Greek *koiné*. We are faced with the challenge of translating this legacy into our common language, Spanish.

And, last but not least, we are encouraged by the institutional support of the CSIC (Madrid) which acts as the sponsor and also the enthusiastic response displayed by Ediciones Sígueme of Salamanca. This well-established publisher in the realm of high standard Spanish publications, and which, in 2005, received the National Prize for its editorial work, has come to us looking for this translation and is ready to publish it.

2. It will be the first Spanish translation of the Septuagint. Spain has a brilliant tradition of early versions into the languages of our country, Castilian, Catalan or Valencian, the so-called Biblias medievales romanceadas. But all these early translations were made from the Hebrew or from the text of the Vulgate. One of the most famous manuscripts translated into Castilian (1420-1431) by rabbi Moses Arragel of Guadalajara for a Christian patron Luis de Guzmán, Gran Maestre de la Orden de Calatrava, and in collaboration with Christian artists for the 343 miniatures and known as *La Biblia de Alba*, was only printed in 1922. In the sixteenth century other versions appeared in vernacular Spanish, the so-called Spanish Bibles in exile, the Ferrara Bible (1553) translated by the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 (the Hebrew Bible) and the Biblia del Oso (Old and New Testament, Basel 1569) translated by the Spanish reformer Casiodoro de Reyna.

With the Renaissance and the programme of a return to the sources, a new interest and impulse for the original languages arose and which crystallized in the production of the two first Polyglot Bibles, that of Alcalá (1514-1517) and that of Antwerp (1569-1573). Moreover, the *editio princeps* of the Septuagint was printed in the Complutensian Polyglot, but the Greek text for the Old Testament was considered to be secondary in relation to the Hebrew. For Jiménez de Cisneros the sources or originals, as the criteria of authenticity, are the

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Hebrew for the Old Testament, and the Greek for the New, as he declares in the Preface to the reader. Notwithstanding, in my view, the most important is the interlinear version into Latin of the Septuagint, which, to my knowledge, is the first complete Latin translation of the Septuagint after the preserved Old Latin fragmentary. Moreover, the Alcalá Polyglot contains the first Latin translation of 3 Maccabees, absent from the Vulgate.

The well-known translations of Felipe Scio or Petisco/Torres Amat in the 18th century were made from the Vulgate, although Scio, in the notes, takes account of the other versions. Finally, in the 1940s, the Bible was translated for the first time from the Hebrew into Spanish in the Catholic world by Nacar/Colunga (1943) and Bover/Cantera (1947). But up to the second half of the 20th century nobody in the Spanish tradition paid any attention to the Septuagint. The only access to some part of the Septuagint in the Catholic Bibles was the translation of the Deuterocanonical (or Apocryphal) Writings, some of them composed originally in Greek, and incorporated into the Catholic Bibles following the Vulgate since the council of Trent 4.

It was an irony of history that the first translation of the Hebrew Bible made in the Ptolemaic Alexandria by a team of Jewish scholars, learned scribes and bilingual intellectuals in an academic milieu, became, with time, the official Bible of Early Christianity. The new religion adopted a translation as its canonical Scripture and became, in contrast with Judaism and Islam, a religion of translation 5. Consequently, the Septuagint, in turn, was soon translated into the languages of the countries where Christianity had expanded to the East as well as to the West 6.

It is no less paradoxical that at the beginning of the 21st century the Bible of the authors of the New Testament and of the first Christians remains untranslated into the common language of a great community, that of the Spanish-speakers.

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4 In Revista Española de Estudios Bíblicos II (1927), Ensayo de un indice de comentaristas y traductores, p. 59, a Versión latina de los salmos según el texto de los Setenta by Juan Eusebio Nieremberg is mentioned. Likewise the same information is given in Eduardo Felipe Fernández, Ensayo de un indice de autores bíblicos españoles, in Revista Española de Estudios Bíblicos III (enero 1926), p. 88. However, in the Diccionario de Historia Eclesiástica de España III, Edited by T. Marín, Q. Aldea and J. Vives, Madrid, CSIC, 1975, pp. 1773-1775, it is said that Nieremberg was Professor of Biblical exegesis in the Colegio Imperial of the Jesuits in Madrid and published many works in Latin and Castilian. But there is no mention of a translation of the Psalms into Latin from the Septuagint. If he managed to accomplish it, he probably never published it. No mention of such a translation is made either in Ch. E. O’Neill and J. M. Domínguez, Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-Temático III, Roma/Madrid, 2001, p. 2820. In the Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies 34 (2001), p. 23, among the ‘works in progress’ a Spanish translation of LXX Isaiah by David A. Baer is mentioned. So far as I know nothing has been published until now.


The recent discoveries, editions and translations into modern languages of a rich pseudepigraphic literature together with the Discoveries of the Judaean Desert, have demonstrated that the Jewish writings that were in circulation around the change of era were wider than those which were eventually admitted into the canon of the Hebrew Bible at the beginning of the 2nd century of the CE. Moreover, in the Qumran Documents, a notable variety of texts or plural textual traditions have been detected. Some books of the Septuagint witness to a Hebrew Vorlage different from the Proto-Masoretic text, later converted into the standard textus receptus. Scholars have discovered what has been called, paraphrasing Jerome, the Hebraica veritas of the Septuagint, a Hebraica veritas that cannot be identified with the Proto-Masoretic text imposed by the Palestinian rabbinate at the end of the 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century CE7.

But I would like to emphasize that the LXX, apart from being the only witness of a Hebrew text which, for some books or part of books, has been lost, is also the first interpretation of an unvocalized text that might be read differently, although the translators counted with an interpretative tradition or a tradition of reading.

3. Characteristics of the Spanish translation. Taking into account the present debate on the content and orientation of the modern translations of the Septuagint, we shall, for practical reasons, consider as LXX the complete books edited by A. Rahlfs in his manual edition (Stuttgart 1935) followed by several reprints up until the last one of A. Rahlfs/R. Hanhart of 20068.

The Spanish translation will be made from the critical editions of the Göttingen series maior for all the books which have already appeared in this series. For the rest of the books, the manual edition of Rahlfs mentioned above will be followed. In the books edited with a double text or redaction, both texts will be translated in a synoptic view of the page. For the historical books (Samuel-Kings-Chronicles) the Antiochene text edited in Madrid will be that which is followed, in parallel with Rahlfs' edition.

7 Cf. W. Krauss, Hebräische Wahrheit und Griechische Übersetzung, in TL 129 (2004) 990-1007, p. 994 and E. Ulrich, Our Sharper Focus on the Bible and Theology Thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls, in CBQ 66 (2004) 1-24, p. 15: "Insofar as the MT is now seen as not necessarily the best form of the text for each book, and insofar as the canon does not appear to have been in place in the first Christian century, Christian translators of the Bible might more closely question the textual basis for their work", and p. 16: "One may respectfully ask why Christians should use ‘the text established in the eight/ninth century AD by Jewish scholars’, except where that text ‘present insuperable difficulties’, when even Jews at the time of the birth of Christianity did not regard those texts as superior and when we do have alternate manuscripts and translations that preserve superior readings."

In this context it should be emphasized that the name of the Septuagint, the first translation of the Hebrew Bible, was originally applied to the Greek version of the Pentateuch, the only section of the Hebrew Bible translated in Alexandria under Ptolemy II Philadelphos (285-246). This was how it was understood by the Letter of Aristeas, Philo, Flavius Josephus and the Jewish-Hellenistic historians and poets. There were the Christian authors who for the first time extended this name to the rest of the books, including even those produced originally in Greek. The translation of the Prophets and the Writings followed that of the Pentateuch, but we have only sporadic information concerning the authors, place of translation and other singularities. It was a slow collective process of anonymous translators that extended over four centuries until the 1st or 2nd century CE. (for instance, the Song of Songs and Qohelet). Only the translator of Ben Sira informs us of some of the circumstances of his translation and the difficulties of translating from Hebrew into Greek through his prologue written in 130 BCE. Consequently, when we speak of the Septuagint we must be aware that we are dealing with a collection of books or a library, translated by different authors, in different places, under different circumstances and, in general, by anonymous authors. A collective work and process of translation which spreads over four centuries, quite different, for instance, from Jerome's translation of the Hebrew Bible into Latin, made by the same scholar in a couple of decades. Each book is a regular literary unit but we cannot consider the whole Septuagint as a literary unit. It is a heterogeneous work, translated or created by different authors in different times and places. Although the first translation, that of the Pentateuch, probably influenced, in diverse ways, the work of later translators, the extent of this influence has not been clarified.

Our policy of translation can learn from the above-mentioned projects in progress, some of which are already completed. We do not have seventy translators at our disposal as did those mentioned in the Letter of Aristeas for the Pentateuch, or the over seventy translators of the German project, nor even the twenty to forty of the NETS or La Bible d'Alexandrie. Our team will bring together some 10/12 scholars who have completed studies in Biblical Trilingual Philology in Madrid (Complutense) or Salamanca (Pontificia), trained in Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin.

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As for the criteria for the translation we have taken a middle road between the English and French projects with regard to the emphasis put on the source language or in the reception of the Septuagint. In this respect our approach is closer to the German project. We intend to produce a literal translation, faithful to the original Greek, since only with this procedure will the specific features of the Greek Bible emerge. But at the same time it should be in a readable Spanish, that is, literary and even stylistic as far as possible. The archaic or hieratic aura of the original, that characteristic of the biblical language, should be maintained. It should be remembered, however, that the art of translation is to find the adequate equivalences in the target language, and that the meaning does not reside only in the words but in the web of combinations and relationships in which these words are structured. The goal of translation is to assure that the cultivated reader who has no knowledge of the Greek language may have access to the Greek Bible not only in the content but, as far as possible, even in the form and style. We should bear in mind that translating a translation is not simply a translation, it includes an element of research which has to justify the text chosen for the translation - the closest to the original as restored in a critical edition - and the context of its production. Likewise the modern translator needs not only to dominate the target language but also to display a certain amount of fantasy in order to find the appropriate expressions.

The translation will be made from the Greek of the Septuagint as a literary, independent work, despite the fact that it is a version. Some years ago, I considered the possibility of printing the differences with the Hebrew text in italics, in the same way as the English or French translations of the Targumim printed their divergencies from the Hebrew\(^\text{11}\). However, I have now decided against this device, since the singularities, or particular features, of the Greek Bible emerge in a series of nuances and details which are very difficult to reproduce graphically, such as the omissions and re-elaborations, the different aspects of the verbal system in Hebrew and Greek, the new net of meanings created within the Greek system, the semantic shifts of some Greek words, etc. The Septuagint, unlike the Targumim, was a literary work conceived to replace the Hebrew Bible, not an ancillary instrument, pace Pietersma, to read the Hebrew\(^\text{12}\). The audience of the LXX were Greek-speaking Jews who

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12 "Ich bin zwar der Meinung, dass die Septuaginta bald nach ihrer Entstehung die hebräische Schriftlesung ersetzt hat… Ich teile nicht die Auffassung, die vor allem Albert Pietersma in der letzten Zeit vertreten hat, nämlich dass die Septuaginta 'interlinear', d. h. praktisch als Verstehenshilfe zum Hebräischen entstanden ist,” cf. A. Aejmelaeus, *Die Übersetzung einer Übersetzung*, in S. Kreuzer and J. P. Lesch (eds.), *Im Brennpunkt: die
did not understand Hebrew. The translators of the Septuagint have before their eyes a Hebrew consonantastic text, open on many occasions to different readings or interpretations as if it were a musical score.

In translating, it is important to avoid that occasional glance at the current Biblical translations from the Hebrew or the Vulgate into Spanish. As a matter of fact, in difficult passages, one cannot forget that the Septuagint is a translation and that the Hebrew can be, and indeed should be, consulted as part of the context. But it must be translated from the Greek text which we have in front of us, not from the Hebrew text that is behind it; what the Greek says, not what the Hebrew says. In other words, it is the meaning of the Greek text which should be translated in its Jewish-Hellenistic context for a Greek-speaking audience.

It is our purpose that the language and content of the translation be new and fresh, with a feeling of innovation, getting away from the trite nature of the Biblical language which has been handed down to us through the secular use of the Vulgate in the West or the recent Spanish Biblical translations from the Hebrew.

Unlike the NETS that emphasizes the aspects of the LXX as interlinear translation from the Hebrew, subservient to the source language and in which the Hebrew is the arbiter of the meaning13; and unlike La Bible d'Alexandrie that considers the LXX as an independent work and puts the accent on the reception history, our translation views the LXX as a literary work that replaced the Hebrew Bible in the Jewish-Hellenistic world. It will, therefore, emphasize the meaning of this version for the Jewish-Hellenistic readers within the context of the Greek linguistic system. The fact that it is a version forms part of this context. The Jewish-Hellenistic context in which the LXX was produced is the most fitting milieu for the reading of these texts, not the Hebrew background, nor the reception history, that is, the new reading made by the authors of the New Testament in the light of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, or the Christian reading of the Church Fathers.

The addressees of the translation will be the Spanish speaking, cultivated persons and the academic world: classical philologists and historians of Antiquity, theologians, experts in Qumran, teachers and students of the Old and New Testaments, those interested in Hellenistic Judaism and the origins of Christianity, scholars and experts in the Fathers and Church historians.


13 As a matter of fact, in the Septuagint translation there are at times interferences from the source language. But these interferences or dissonances for the most part of the cases are absorbed without difficulty by the context and rendered intelligible. Another thing is the Aquila translation.
4. The goal of the project is to publish the whole Septuagint into Spanish in a reasonable period of time (around ten/fifteen years). The final publication in one volume similar to that of LXX-Deutsch or *Les Écrits intertestamentaires* de la Pléiade\(^{14}\), will be preceded by the publication of four separate volumes: 1) Pentateuch, 2) Historical Books, 3) Wisdom (or Poetical) Books, and, 4) Prophetic Books, according to the distribution of the Greek Bible in the great uncials and, especially, in the *codex Vaticanus*, (followed by Rahlf's manual edition), which, being a Christian Bible, already includes the New Testament at the end of the sequence. The translation of each book will be preceded by a brief introduction and accompanied by a few notes which may be indispensable for the comprehension of the text. The material accumulated during the process of the translation will, hopefully, be brought together for further study in a possible Companion Volume. The Spanish readers want to know first and foremost what the Greek text says, not to be confronted with a set of erudite notes or a wide commentary, already offered in French, English or German.

In the introduction, the main points related to the Greek translation should be discussed: the edition which was followed for the Spanish version; the date and place of the translation; a description of the kind of translation used and of the language employed in the frame of the *koiné*; the characteristics of the book in Greek and the main differences with the Hebrew (title, concepts, cycles, distribution of the material, etc.); a brief history of the main steps of its reception, and a short, commented bibliography for further study.

Each translator will dispose of a copy of the Guidelines and the team of the Greek Bible in the CSIC will revise the different translations in order to ensure that the guidelines have been respected and that there is coherence throughout the translation. But the revisors will be always respectful with the different styles of the translators according to the different books.

It was the German lyric and Jewish freethinker Heinrich Heine (1797-1856) who pronounced this, no doubt, hyperbolic statement: ‘All men are either Hebrews... or Hellenes’\(^{15}\). I would like to paraphrase his sentence by reducing it modestly to all Europeans or people of the Western civilization. Be that as it may, in the Septuagint both roots grow together. In the

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\(^{15}\) "All men are either Hebrews with tendencies to asceticism and to excessive spiritualization and with a hatred of the plastic, or Hellenes with cheerful views of life, with a pride in self-development and a love of reality", cf. Heine by Joseph Jacobs in *The Jewish Encyclopedia* VI, New York/London, Funk and Wagnalls Company, 1916, 329-330.
present political situation of Europe, even the publication of a translation of the Septuagint may contribute not only to a better knowledge of our legacy but also to a better understanding of the foundations and roots of our continent.

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