

Mistranslation and the Death of Christ: Isaiah 53 LXX and Its Pauline Reception

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As traditionally understood, textual criticism is the attempt to recover the text as it left the hand of its author or final redactor. Modern biblical translators and exegetes seek from textual critics a text approximating as closely as possible to that original state of the text. The assumption is that canonical scripture is a singular object with an essentially singular form, which every critical edition or translation seeks to represent as accurately as possible, stripping away the accumulated errors of generations of scribes. This model of the canonical text has great achievements to its credit and remains indispensable for many kinds of exegetical activity. Yet it has its limitations. Above all, it underplays the irreducibly plural forms of canonical scripture that are actually operative within communities of faith.

This essay is devoted to the Septuagintal translation of Isaiah 53, the “Fourth Servant Song,” a text crucially important for early Christian reflection on the death of Jesus.¹ Its importance is evident already in Paul, not just in his explicit citations but also in his use of language drawn from this text. What is striking is that this Christian appropriation of Isaiah 53 is heavily dependent on statements that seem to deviate from and mistranslate the probable underlying Hebrew. The term “mistranslation” is used here in an extended sense, to cover not just the translator’s errors but every feature of the Greek text that could not in principle have been predicted in

1. Throughout this essay I refer for convenience to “Isaiah 53,” meaning “Isa 52:13–53:12.”

advance on the basis of the Hebrew. "Mistranslation" thus covers a wide range of linguistic phenomena — omissions, insertions, or substitutions, grammatical or syntactical modifications, debatable semantic decisions, and so on. Some if not all of these phenomena may be covered by the term "paraphrase." They represent *mis*-translation in the sense that semantic possibilities present in the original Hebrew are obscured or lost in the Greek and are replaced by new semantic possibilities that cannot unambiguously be derived from the Hebrew.

A translation both *represents* an original, whose semantic content it strives to convey in a new linguistic medium, and *displaces* that original. Indeed, it is precisely because the translation represents the original that it also displaces it. Henceforth the text will be associated not with the barely accessible language of its original composition but with the vernacular. The original text is marginalized. For Greek-speaking communities, the Isaianic prophecy announces that "the virgin will conceive and will bear a son" (Isa 7:14): that is what the scriptural text says, for the scriptural text is now the text in Greek. Admittedly, the bilingual may propose that "young woman" would be more in keeping with the semantic range of the Hebrew. Yet the monolingual may prove surprisingly resistant to any suggestion that a translation be modified — and not only when doctrinal issues are at stake. In the case of the Septuagint, the legend of its miraculous origin functions precisely to inhibit the possibility of appealing to the Hebrew against the Greek.² The legend originally related only to the Pentateuch but was extended by Christians to "the prophets," i.e., to scripture as a whole.³ Thus the translators who at Isa 7:14 rendered *'almah* as *parthenos*

2. In its earliest extant form, the legend serves the same function but without appeal to miracle. In the *Letter of Aristeas*, the translators produce an agreed version that is approved by the Jewish community of Alexandria, who pronounce a curse on any who modify it (*Letter of Aristeas* 302, 308-11; cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12.103-109, where the curse is replaced by an exhortation to practice textual criticism). In Philo's *Life of Moses*, however, the translators become inspired prophets who each independently produce the same translation (*Life of Moses* 2.37-40). The Greek and the "Chaldean" versions are to be regarded "as sisters, or rather as one and the same," and the authors of the Greek "not as translators but as hierophants and prophets" (40). It was this "miraculous" version of the legend that was taken up and developed by Greek-speaking Christians.

3. See Justin, 1 *Apol.* 31; Ps-Justin, *Coh. ad Graec.*, 13; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 1.22; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 3.21.1-3 (with particular reference to Isa 7:14). In Pseudo-Justin and Irenaeus, the translators are shut up in individual rooms, thereby ensuring the miraculous status of the common translation. This version of the story recurs in Cyril of Jerusalem,

did so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Even where there is an awareness of a possible discrepancy between translation and original, the inspired translation retains its own autonomous authority; it is this that the appeal to inspiration is intended to safeguard.

If "scripture" is inseparable from the forms in which it functions in particular communities, it is appropriate to follow the early church in regarding Greek Isaiah as a canonical text in its own right. This means that the quest for a singular, "original" text loses its urgency: scripture incorporates various text-forms and is an inherently plural phenomenon. Instances of "mistranslation" will serve only to underline the distinctive, autonomous existence of the new text, which displaces the original and functions as normative scripture in its own right. If Paul and other early Christians appeal to texts where the Greek is an imperfect rendering of the Hebrew, this need not be seen as a problem, to be corrected perhaps by reconstructing a Hebrew original and interpreting Isaiah 53 solely on that basis. A text's original sense may prove to be less significant than what happens to it in the process of its transmission. Isaiah 53 seems to have occasioned little interpretative interest before early Christians found in its Greek form lexical and semantic resources that enabled them to understand Jesus' death in its positive soteriological significance.⁴

The Suffering Servant in Greek

If certain kinds of "mistranslation" occur in the passage from Hebrew to Greek, this presupposes that we have access to relatively stable Hebrew and Greek texts that can be compared with each other. If there are marked divergences between the Masoretic text and the Greek translation as attested in the early uncials, we cannot exclude the possibility that equally significant divergences may have occurred within the Hebrew and Greek textual

Epiphanius, and Augustine and is criticized by Jerome; on this, see M. Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint* (Copenhagen International Seminar 1; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 68-97.

4. It was once widely believed that Isaiah 53 was significant for pre-Christian Jewish messianic beliefs and for Jesus' sense of his own vocation: see for example O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (trans. S. C. Guthrie and C. A. M. Hall; London: SCM Press, 1959), 51-82, and, for a recent restatement, N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (London: SPCK, 1996), 588-91, 601-4.

traditions themselves. That would make it harder to identify mistranslations in the passage from the one to the other, for a discrepancy between the Greek and the Hebrew might represent a discrepancy within the Hebrew tradition itself. In fact, however, it does prove possible to identify relatively stable Hebrew and Greek texts of Isaiah 53, as is clear from a comparison between the Masoretic text and the Qumran Isaiah manuscripts, and between the Greek Isaiah and early Christian citations.

The Hebrew Text

The full text of Isa 52:13–53:12 is found in 1QIsaiah^a (col. XLIV) and 1QIsaiah^b (col. VIII). Fragments of this text are found in three manuscripts from Cave 4, 4QIsaiah^b (fr. 39: Isa 53:11–12); 4QIsaiah^c (fr. 37–39: Isa 52:13–53:3, 6–8); and 4QIsaiah^d (fr. 11 ii: Isa 53:8–12).⁵ These texts produce a total of 14 variant readings (9 of them from 1QIsaiah^a), of which the most significant are the following:

- Isa 53:3 MT “a man of sufferings and known [וידוע] of sickness”; 1QIsa^a,^b “knowing [וי] sickness” (two letters have been transposed, perhaps by being mistaken for each other).
- Isa 53:8 MT “stricken for the transgression of my people [עמי]”; 1QIsa^a “his people [עמו].”
- Isa 53:9 MT “he gave [ויתן] his grave with the wicked”; 1QIsa^a “they gave [ויתנו].”
- Isa 53:10 MT “he has made [him] sick [החלי]” (?); 1QIsa^a “he has pierced him [ויחללהו].”
- Isa 53:11 MT “from the distress of his soul he will see [יראה]”; 1QIsa^a,^b, 4QIsa^d “he will see light [ורא].”
- Isa 53:11 MT “the righteous one, my servant [עבדי] will justify many”; 1QIsa^a “his servant [עבדו].”⁶

5. For the texts from Caves 1 and 4, see D. W. Parry and E. Qimron, *The Great Isaiah Scroll* (1QIsa^a): A New Edition (STDJ 32; Leiden: Brill, 1999); D. Barthélemy and J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 1* (DJD 1; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955); 1QIsaiah^b; E. Ulrich et al., *Qumran Cave 4: The Prophets* (DJD 15; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997); 4QIsaiah^{b,c,d}.

6. The other 8 variants are: 52:14 **משחתי** (MT), **משחת** (1QIsa^a); 52:15 **כי** (MT), **כיא** (4QIsa^c); 53:6 **נבזה** (MT), **ינבזהו** (1QIsa^a); 53:9 **במתיו** (MT), **בומתו** (1QIsa^a); 53:9 **פיו** (MT), **פיהו** (4QIsa^d); 53:10 **יאריר** (MT), **האריר** (4QIsa^d); 53:12 **נמנה** (MT), **נמנא** (1QIsa^a); 53:12 **ולפשעים** (MT), **ולפשעם** (1QIsa^a).

Only two of these variants provide any support for a Septuagintal reading: v. 3, where LXX reads, “and knowing [what it is] to bear weakness” (καὶ εἰδὼς φέρειν μαλακίαν); and v. 11, where LXX reads, “[And the Lord willed to remove] the distress of his soul, to show him light . . .” (δείξαι αὐτῷ φῶς). In vv. 8, 11, a third-person singular pronominal suffix takes the place of a first singular one, resulting in a change of speaker but not of referent. The most significant Qumran variant, “he will pierce him,” is unsupported by the Greek. Conversely, the most significant Greek variant (εἰς θάνατον in v. 8, suggesting “stricken unto death” [למו for למות] in the Hebrew exemplar?) is unsupported by the Qumran textual evidence. Overall, the Greek does not significantly affect the textual criticism of the Hebrew in this passage. While the Qumran Isaiah manuscripts provide a series of interesting variants, their potential impact on the sense of the text is limited. We are dealing here with a relatively stable text: at the turn of the eras, Isaiah 53 was already being read in forms closely corresponding to the Masoretic one. There is no evidence in the Qumran material of a radically different text-form, which could be used to explain the divergences in the Greek.⁷

The Greek Text

The stability or otherwise of the Greek text of Isaiah 53 can best be assessed by way of the earliest Christian citations from this chapter.⁸ A citation that deviates from the Greek text as attested in the major uncials could, of course, simply be a free citation rather than representing a deviant text-form. In fact, however, deviations from the received text are remarkably

7. A. van der Kooij seeks to align 1QIsaiah^a with Isaiah LXX, on the grounds that both texts represent a free approach in relation to their *Vorlagen* (“The Old Greek of Isaiah in Relation to the Qumran Texts of Isaiah: Some General Comments,” in *Septuagint, Scrolls and Cognate Writings: Papers Presented to the International Symposium on the Septuagint and Its Relations to the Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Writings* [ed. G. J. Brooke and B. Lindars; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 195–213, here 198–99). In the case of Isaiah 53, however, the differences between 1QIsaiah^a and MT are of a quite different order of magnitude than the differences between Isaiah LXX and MT.

8. Among the older papyri, material from the Fourth Servant Song is attested only in the fourth century P.Ryl. Gr. 460 (= Rahlfs 958), which consists of fragments of a testimony-book that included Isa 42:3–4; 52:15; 53:1–3, 6–7, 11–12; 66:18–19 (J. Ziegler, *Isaia* [Septuaginta XIV; 2nd ed.; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967], 11).

few. Early Christian citations are extant both of Isaiah 53 as a whole (1 Clem. 16; Justin, *Dial.* 13) and of individual passages:

- Isa 52:10–54:6 = Justin, *Dial.* 13.2–9. In Isa 52:14, there are a transposition⁹ and an abbreviation (*Dial.* 13.3).¹⁰ At 53:7, an explanatory pronoun is added (τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ),¹¹ and a redundant pronoun is omitted (ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος [αὐτόν]) (*Dial.* 13.5). At 53:11, τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν becomes τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν (*Dial.* 13.7).
- Isa 52:15 = Rom 15:21. There are no significant variants either between or within the Pauline or the Septuagintal textual traditions.¹²
- Isa 53:1–12 = 1 Clem. 16.3–14. The citation of the entire chapter shows that early Christian readers could view it as a distinct literary unit.¹³ At v. 3, Clement reads παρὰ τὸ εἶδος τῶν ἀνθρώπων for παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους (Alexandrinus), or παρὰ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Vaticanus; Justin, *Dial.* 13.4), or the harmonizing παρὰ πάντας τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (Sinaiticus). Clement is probably paraphrasing here.¹⁴ In v. 6, it is said that “the Lord gave him up to our sins [ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν]”; Clement’s substitution of ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν (1 Clem. 16.7) is clearly shaped by traditional Christian terminology.¹⁵
- Isa 53:1 = Rom 10:16; John 12:38. No variants.

9. πολλοὶ ἐπὶ σέ for ἐπὶ σὲ πολλοί.

10. τὸ εἶδος καὶ ἡ δόξα σου for τὸ εἶδος σου καὶ ἡ δόξα σου ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

11. Justin thereby harmonizes the first occurrence of this phrase with the second, later in the same verse. Note also the similar explanatory pronoun in v. 8, ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει αὐτοῦ, where Justin’s reading (*Dial.* 13.6) is supported by the majority reading of Acts 8:32 but not by P⁷⁴ & A B.

12. The variation in word order in Ambrosiaster and Vaticanus is an attempt to improve the awkward syntax (so C. R. Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture: Citation Technique in the Pauline Epistles and Contemporary Literature* [SNTSMS; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992], 184 n.). Surprisingly, some commentators take it to be original (e.g., C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans* [vol. 2; ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1979], 765; J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 9–16* [WBC; Dallas: Word Books, 1988], 865).

13. It is an exaggeration to claim that “the modern isolation of the Servant Songs . . . was completely unknown in that day” (J. Jeremias, *TDNT*, 5:682). Note also the citation of the “First Servant Song” in Matt 12:18–21 (= Isa 42:1–4).

14. The additional reference to the servant’s “form” is derived from the opening of v. 3 (ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄξιμον ἐκλείπον).

15. Other variants in Clement’s citation are: the paraphrastic insertion of καὶ πόνῳ after ἐν πληγῇ ὧν (v. 3; 1 Clem. 16.3); the substitution of ἡκεῖ for ἡχθη (v. 8; 1 Clem. 16.9, so also Justin, *Dial.* 13.6); and the transposition of βούλεται κύριος (v. 10; 1 Clem. 16.12).

- Isa 53:4 = Matt 8:17. Here the evangelist reads αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν in place of the LXX’s οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται. Matthew’s rendering appears to represent an independent retranslation from the Hebrew.¹⁶
- Isa 53:5 = Barn. 5.2. Barnabas attests the order διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν/ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, with Alexandrinus and Sinaiticus. The nouns are transposed in 1 Clem. 16.5, Justin, *Dial.* 13.5, and Vaticanus.
- Isa 53:7 = Barn. 5.2. Here ἄφωνος is transposed, so that the text reads ὡς ἄμνός ἄφωνος ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτόν rather than ὡς ἄμνός ἐναντίον τοῦ κείραντος αὐτόν ἄφωνος (B A S). The transposition is not supported by the fuller citation in Acts 8:32–33.
- Isa 53:7–8 = Acts 8:32–33. In the only extended New Testament citation from Isaiah 53, there are no significant variants.
- Isa 53:9 = 1 Pet 2:22. In the first of several allusions to Isaiah 53, the author draws upon v. 9, ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδε εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, but replaces ἀνομίαν with ἁμαρτίαν. In 1 Pet 2:24, τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν derives from Isa 53:4 (οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει) and 53:12 (αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν). Also derived from Isaiah 53 are οὐ τῷ μώλωπι ἰάθητε (1 Pet 2:24; Isa 53:5, τῷ μώλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν), and ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι (1 Pet 2:25; Isa 53:6, πάντες ὡς πρόβατα ἐπλανήθημεν). There is no evidence here of any variants within the text used by the author of 1 Peter.
- Isa 53:12 = Luke 22:37; Mark 15:28 (majority reading). In Luke 22:37, the command to buy a sword is explained by the need to fulfill what is written: καὶ μετὰ ἀνόμων ἐλογίσθη. In Mark 15:28 (not attested in & A B C D etc.), the same citation is applied to Jesus’ crucifixion between the two thieves. It is drawn from Isa 53:12: καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη. The wording of Mark 15:28 is probably dependent on Luke 22:37, and the deviation from the Septuagint is explicable if Luke, like the later copyist of Mark, has in mind the “two other criminals” (Luke 23:32) with whom Jesus was crucified.¹⁷ The Septuagint’s “among the lawless” would imply more than two.

16. On Matthew’s scriptural citations, see most recently M. J. J. Menken, *Matthew’s Bible* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004).

17. On this see J. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel according to Luke X–XXIV* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1985), 1433.

The earliest Christian citations of Isaiah 53 produce few interesting textual variants. Matt 8:17 is an independent translation, intended to exploit the reference to sickness present in the Hebrew but not in the Greek; Luke 22:37 has adapted Isa 53:12 to the realities of the passion narrative. Otherwise, early Christian citations correspond remarkably closely to the text as rendered in the major Septuagintal manuscripts — in spite of the common tendency of short citations to deviate through imprecision or adaptation. Like its Hebrew counterpart, Isaiah 53 in Greek is a relatively stable text by the first century CE — and therefore no doubt earlier as well. Yet there are radical differences *between* the two textual traditions, most of which appear to have arisen in the process of translation rather than representing a deviant Hebrew exemplar.

Divergences

Having established the relative stability of both the Hebrew and the Greek texts of Isaiah 53, we must now identify the major points at which they diverge, verse by verse.¹⁸ Since there is little evidence of fundamentally different Hebrew text-forms in this chapter, we may assume that many (not all) of these divergences will represent “mistranslations,” in the sense that they could not have been predicted in advance on the basis of the Hebrew.¹⁹

- 52:13 Ἰδοὺ συνήσει ὁ παῖς μου καὶ ὑψωθήσεται καὶ δοξασθήσεται σφόδρα.

Here, “my servant” (עֶבֶד) is introduced as ὁ παῖς μου.²⁰ The rendering of עֶבֶד as παῖς is common throughout the Septuagint, although other Greek terms may also be selected (δοῦλος and θεράπων are both used frequently; Aquila and Symmachus replace παῖς here with δοῦλος).²¹ While παῖς nor-

mally represents עֶבֶד and is used only occasionally for the Hebrew terms for “child,” “boy,” or “son,” use of this term may have facilitated the early Christian appropriation of this passage by suggesting a connection with sonship language (cf. Acts 3:13, 26; 4:25, 27, 30).²² In the New Testament, παῖς means “boy” or “child” more often than “servant.”²³ συνήσει (“will understand”) is within the normal semantic range of שָׁכַל hiph. (cf. Gen 3:6; Isa 41:20; 44:18);²⁴ “will prosper” (cf. 1 Sam 18:14, 15) would have been an alternative. The two future passive verbs represent an abbreviation of the Hebrew (וְיָרוּם וְנִשְׂאָ וְגִבָּה מְאֹד)²⁵ and seem to have influenced the Johannine view of the crucifixion (ὑψωθήσεται: cf. John 3:14; 12:32, 34; δοξασθήσεται: John 7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:31); note the proximity of the passage where the two terms coincide (12:23, 32, 34) to a citation from Isa 53:1 (John 12:38).

- 52:14 ὃν τρόπον ἐκστήσονται ἐπὶ σὲ πολλοί — οὕτως ἀδοξήσῃ ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπων τὸ εἶδός σου καὶ ἡ δόξα σου ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνθρώπων —

In MT this refers to a past event (שָׁמַר), in LXX to a future one (ἐκστήσονται, ἀδοξήσῃ).²⁶ The Greek here retains the second-person singular address in the parenthesis; MT reverts to the third person (“his appearance,” “his form”) and is followed in this by Aquila (ὄρασις αὐτοῦ καὶ μορφή αὐτοῦ). The almost identical ἀπό-clauses do not do justice to the Hebrew parallelism (מִבְּנֵי אָדָם // מֵאִשׁ), although the translator elsewhere renders the “son of man” idiom literally (Isa 51:12). Symmachus restores the Hebrew idiom here, reading παρὰ τοὺς υἱοὺς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

22. Jeremias finds an indication of a shift from “servant” to “child” in *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 14.1, where God is described as ὁ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ καὶ εὐλογητοῦ παιδός σου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πατήρ (TDNT, 5:704). Compare *Didache* 9.2.3; 10.2.3.

23. παῖς clearly means “boy” or “child” in Matt 2:16; 17:18; 21:15; Luke 2:43; 8:51, 54; 9:42; John 4:51; Acts 20:12; “servant” in Matt 14:2; Luke 7:7; 12:45. Matthew’s version of the story of the (so-called) centurion’s servant uses παῖς throughout (Matt 8:6, 8, 13), which should perhaps be translated “child”; Luke’s δοῦλος removes the ambiguity (Luke 7:2, 10).

24. Aquila seeks to convey the force of the hiphil by coining a new verb, reading ἐπιστημονισθήσεται here.

25. Thus Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion here read ὑψωθήσεται καὶ ἐπαρθήσεται καὶ μετεωρισθήσεται.

26. W. Zimmerli sees evidence here that the translator understands the Servant as a future messianic figure (TDNT, 5:666-67).

18. The Greek text here is that of Ziegler, *Isaias*, apart from a conjectural emendation in 53:2, which I would reject, and a transposition in v. 5. With the exception of the emendation, Ziegler’s text for Isa 52:13–53:12 is identical to that of A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*.

19. See also the discussion of Isa 52:13–53:12 LXX in K. H. Jobes and M. Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 215–27.

20. As in Isa 41:8, 9; 42:1; 43:10; 44:1, 2, 21, 26; 45:4; 49:6; 50:10.

21. Readings from later translators are derived from J. Ziegler, *Isaias*, ad loc.

- 52:15 οὕτως θαυμάσονται ἔθνη πολλά ἐπ' αὐτῷ, καὶ συνέξουσιν βασιλεῖς τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν. ὅτι οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται, καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν.

θαυμάσονται is synonymous with ἐκστήσονται (v. 14). The translator seems here to guess at the meaning of the Hebrew **וַיִּזְ**, evidently from **וַיִּזְ**, “sprinkle” (cf. Lev 5:9; Num 8:7; Aquila and Theodotion read *ῥαντίσει*; Jerome, *asperget*).²⁷ ἐπ' αὐτῷ (= **וְעַל**) is connected not to “kings shall shut their mouths [at him],” as probably in MT, but to “thus many nations/Gentiles will be amazed [at him].” In v. 15b, “those to whom it was not announced concerning him” (οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ) replaces “that which was not told them” (**הַשֵּׁר לֹא סֵפֶר לָהֶם**). In the same way, “those who have not heard” replaces “what they did not hear.” In the Greek, the emphasis lies on the potential addressees rather than the potential message. περὶ αὐτοῦ (in place of **לָהֶם**) must be seen as a further reference to the servant/child, following ἐπ' αὐτῷ in v. 15a. Future tenses (ὄψονται, συνήσουσιν) replace Hebrew perfects (**וַיִּזְ, וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ**). As we shall see, these modifications are all exploited in Paul's citation of this passage in Rom 15:21.

- 53:1 κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίς ἀπεκαλύφθη;

κύριε is lacking in the Hebrew. Its insertion means that the questions are addressed to God, who is still, however, referred to in the third person. This made it possible for Christian trinitarian theology to find here a distinction within the one divine lordship (cf. Gen 19:24; Ps 110:1).²⁸ The insertion heightens the sense that Isa 53:1 marks a new start and is not in direct continuity with 52:13-15.

- 53:2 ἀνηγγείλαμεν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώση, οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα. καὶ εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος.

27. RSV speculates similarly, reading “so shall he startle many nations” (corresponding to, “As many were astonished at him . . .” v. 14). Jobes and Silva point out that “the translator of Isaiah . . . often harmonizes his text to the context, especially if parallelism is involved” (*Invitation to the Septuagint*, 217). This is probably what has happened here.

28. So Tertullian: *brachium enim tuum, non domini dixisset, si non dominum patrem et dominum filium intellegi vellet* (*adv. Prax.* 13).

ἀνηγγείλαμεν can be connected to ἀκοή in the previous verse, but it is difficult to understand in the present context. J. Ziegler suggests emending to ἀνέτειλε μὲν, which might correspond more closely to the Hebrew **וַיַּעַל** (“and he grew up”). But ἀνατέλλειν is not used (in the LXX or elsewhere) of the growing up of children; it does not elsewhere translate **וַיַּעַל**; and there is no parallel elsewhere to the ἀνέτειλε μὲν construction.²⁹ παιδίον is a possible rendering of **וְנִנְיָ** (from **נָנַ** “suck”; cf. Deut 32:25; Ps 8:3); but in this context the reference is probably to a young plant (a sense attested elsewhere for **וְנִנְיָ**, cf. Job 8:16; Hos 14:7; Symmachus reads καὶ ἀνέβη ὡς κλάδος ἐνὼπιον αὐτοῦ). In the Hebrew, two *waw*-clauses (**וְנִנְיָ, וְנִנְיָ**) should probably have a final sense: “he had no form or comeliness that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him” (RSV); οὐκ εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ ἀξίωμα ἵνα ἰδῶμεν αὐτόν οὐδὲ θεωρία ἵνα ἐπιθυμήσωμεν αὐτόν (Symmachus). The Septuagint seems to intend οὐδὲ κάλλος as a rendering of the second *waw*-clause³⁰ and ignores the final sense of the first one. The result is a new sentence: “And we saw him, and he had neither form nor beauty.” **וְנִנְיָ** and **וְנִנְיָ** are both rendered as εἶδος.

- 53:3 ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον ἐκλείπον παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους, ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὢν καὶ εἰδὼς φέρειν μαλακίαν, ὅτι ἀπέστραπται τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ, ἡτιμάσθη καὶ οὐκ ἐλογίσθη.

The paraphrastic ἀλλὰ τὸ εἶδος αὐτοῦ ἄτιμον represents the Hebrew **וְנִנְיָ** (“he was despised,” pointed as a participle in MT), and results in an unnecessary repetition of what has already been said about the servant/child's appearance (compare the use of εἶδος in 52:14; 53:2 [x2]; Symmachus reads ἐξουδενώμενος). ἐκλείπον παρὰ πάντας ἀνθρώπους renders the difficult **וְנִנְיָ** (“lacking [of] men”?) and might be translated, “found wanting with all men.” The servant/child is ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὢν καὶ εἰδὼς φέρειν μαλακίαν, a slightly paraphrastic translation of **וְנִנְיָ** in comparison to later renderings (e.g., Symmachus: ἀνὴρ ἐπίπονος καὶ γνωστὸς νόσῳ). In the remainder of the verse, active verb forms in the He-

29. But see Ziegler's defense of this emendation (*Isaiah*, 99), citing instances elsewhere in Isaiah where the manuscript tradition confuses the two verbs.

30. Jobes and Silva suspect here “an attempt to make sense of a clause [the translator] did not fully understand” (*Invitation to the Septuagint*, 220).

brew (“as one who turns the face from us,” “we esteemed him not”) are assimilated to the passive נבזה.

- 53:4 οὗτος τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐλογισάμεθα αὐτὸν εἶναι ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει.

οὗτος here corresponds to the emphatic הוּא, but no equivalent is provided for אִכָּן (“surely”), with which this verse opens. The translator thus loses the antithesis between what is now perceived to be the case and a previous perception now seen to be erroneous (cf. Symmachus: ὄντως . . . ἡμεῖς δέ . . .). In the previous verse the translator rendered לִי appropriately as μαλακία (“sickness”); here, however, he offers τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν for לִי, influenced presumably by references to “our sins” and “our transgressions” in vv. 5, 6. Thus the servant/child here “bears our sins” — language that (in conjunction with similar language in v. 12) will later prove significant for early Christian reflection on the death of Christ (1 Pet 2:24; Polycarp, *Phil* 8.1; cf. Heb 9:28). Still more significant is the free rendering of וּמַכָּאֵינוּ סָבַלָם (“and our blows he bore [them]”) as περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται (“he suffered for us”): as we shall see, περὶ ἡμῶν here underlies the Pauline ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν formula. The two parallel statements are more accurately rendered by Symmachus: ὄντως τὰς νόσους ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνέλαβεν καὶ τοὺς πόνους ὑπεμείνεν.³¹ The three ἐν-phrases represent Hebrew passive participles, with the reference to God (מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים) omitted from the second one.

- 53:5 αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν. παιδεία εἰρήνης ἡμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτὸν, τῷ μῶλωπι αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς ἰάθημεν.

The phrases διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν and διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν occur in this order in Vaticanus, 1 Clement, and Justin, but are transposed in Barnabas, Alexandrinus, and Sinaiticus (followed by Rahlfs and Ziegler). The Hebrew equivalents are מַשְׁעָנוּ and מַעֲוֹנֵינוּ. The first-plural pronouns have influenced Paul’s διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν (Rom 4:25), although its primary source is Isa 53:12 (see below).

31. Symmachus according to Eusebius; Aquila according to 86, a ninth- or tenth-century manuscript that contains several inferior readings here. Compare the translation offered in Matt 8:17: αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν.

- 53:6 πάντες ὡς πρόβατα ἐπλανήθημεν, ἄνθρωπος τῇ ὁδῷ αὐτοῦ ἐπλανήθη. καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτὸν ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἡμῶν.

In v. 6a, the awkward repetition of the verb loses the balance achieved by the Hebrew verbs, תַּעֲנֶנּוּ and פְּנִינוּ. In the second half of the verse, the translator freely paraphrases the Hebrew אֶת כָּלנוּ עוֹן יְהוָה הִפְגִּיעַ בּוֹ (“and YHWH has extended to him the transgression of us all”); compare Symmachus, κύριος δὲ καταντῆσαι ἐποίησεν εἰς αὐτὸν τὴν ἀνομίαν πάντων ἡμῶν. παραδίδοναι recurs twice in v. 12, where it translates הִעֲרָה (“he poured out”) and הִפְגִּיעַ (there, “he made intercession”).³² The verb form here corresponds to Rom 8:32, as the verb form in v. 12 corresponds to Rom 4:25.

- 53:7 καὶ αὐτὸς διὰ τὸ κεκακῶσθαι οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα. ὡς πρόβατον ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἤχθη καὶ ὡς ἀμνὸς ἐναντίον τοῦ κείροντος αὐτὸν ἄφωνος οὕτως οὐκ ἀνοίγει τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ.

The Hebrew reads, נִגַּשׁ וְהוּא נַעֲנָה (“he was oppressed and he was afflicted”). The translator provides no equivalent for the first term, but appropriately subordinates the opening clause (“he on account of ill-treatment”) to “opens not his mouth.” This text is probably associated by Luke with Jesus’ silence at his trial before Herod (cf. Acts 8:32; Luke 23:9-10).

- 53:8 ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη. τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ τίς διηγῆσεται; ὅτι αἵρεται ἀπο τῆς γῆς ἡ ζωὴ αὐτοῦ. ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον.

At the opening of v. 8, MT reads מַעֲזָר וּמִשְׁפָּט לִקַּח (“by oppression and judgment he was taken away,” perhaps meaning “by a perversion of justice he was taken away” [NRSV]). The translator has introduced the idea of “humiliation” and made “justice” or “judgment” the subject of ἦρθη, in place of the servant/child. In the question that follows, יְשׁוּחַח should per-

32. As Jobes and Silva note, “the strong Hebrew expression ‘the Lord has struck him with the iniquity of us all’ is softened by means of the verb παραδίδωμι, a term that this translator uses at various times when he needs to get out of a difficulty” (*Invitation to the Septuagint*, 223).

haps be translated “consider”: “His generation who will consider?” which could be an expression of outrage at the servant’s treatment by his contemporaries. In its Greek form the question reads, “His generation who will recount [διηγῆσεται]?” thus prompting the reader to understand τὴν γενεὰν αὐτοῦ as some kind of event. Thus this question could come to serve as testimony to the mystery of the Son’s generation from the Father.³³

In the ὅτι-statement, a Hebrew verb referring to the servant (נגור “he was cut off”) is again given another application, here to “his life.” Thus, “he was cut off from the land of the living [מארץ חיים]” becomes “his life was removed from the land/earth.” Luke, whose citation from vv. 7-8 ends at this point, may see here a reference to the ascension (Acts 8:33). Also to be noted is the Septuagint’s clear reference to the servant/child’s death: ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον represents the difficult נגע למו (“a blow to him” [?]): the translator either read למות in his exemplar (so BHS) or, more likely, decided that this is what למו must mean. ἤχθη is derived from v. 7: as a sheep was led to slaughter, so the servant/child “was led to death.”

- 53:9 καὶ δώσω τοὺς πονηροὺς ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους ἀντὶ τοῦ θάνατου αὐτοῦ. ὅτι ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδέ εὐρέθη δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ.

MT here reads ויתן את רשעים קברו ואת עשיר במתיו (“and he gave his grave with the wicked and with the rich man in his deaths”). In the Septuagint, the statement becomes a divine oracle with a future reference (δώσω for ויתן). The translator takes את not as a preposition (“with”) but as the marker of the definite object — although neither רשעים nor עשיר has the definite article. He must therefore insert another preposition to coordinate the first pair of substantives (קברו/רשעים) and selects ἀντί, giving a sense still more obscure than the Hebrew: “I will give the wicked in place of his tomb,” or perhaps, “I will exchange the wicked for his tomb.” Is this supposed to be a statement in which God promises to avenge the death of his servant/child?³⁴ ἀντί is repeated in the second half of the sentence: “. . . and the rich in place of his death.” The unexpected Hebrew singular עשיר and

plural מתיו are emended, so that τοὺς πλουσίους corresponds to τοὺς πονηροὺς, and ἀντὶ τοῦ θάνατου αὐτοῦ to ἀντὶ τῆς ταφῆς αὐτοῦ. The selection of ὅτι (“for”) for the concessive על (“though”) turns the statement that follows into an explanation of the previous divine action (“I will give”), rather than highlighting the inappropriateness of a human action (MT: “he gave,” but perhaps read with 1QIsaiah^a: “they gave”). ἀνομία represents חמס (“violence”); and εὐρέθη has no equivalent in the Hebrew.

- 53:10a-b καὶ κύριος βούλεται καθαρίσαι αὐτὸν τῆς πληγῆς. ἐὰν δῶτε περὶ ἀμαρτίας, ἡ ψυχὴ ὑμῶν ὀψεται σπέρμα μακρόβιον . . .

The translator here transforms a negative statement into a positive one. MT reads ויהוה חפץ דכאו החלי (“and YHWH wills to bruise him, he has made [him] sick[?]”). The translator takes החלי not as a verb but as a noun with the article; the substantive חלי has already occurred in v. 3 (ידוע חלי) “acquainted with sickness”) and v. 4 (חלינו “our sicknesses”). Its rendering as τῆς πληγῆς alludes to v. 3 (ἄνθρωπος ἐν πληγῇ ὦν) and v. 4 (ἐν πόνῳ καὶ ἐν πληγῇ καὶ ἐν κακώσει). καθαρίσαι αὐτὸν represents דכאו (“to bruise him”), although the translator is aware that דכא normally has a negative sense: in v. 5 the participle מדכא was translated μεμαλάκισται (“he has been weakened”).³⁵ “And the Lord wills to cleanse him of his wound”: this is the first indication of the servant’s vindication. In contrast, Symmachus reads: κύριος ἠθέλησεν ἀλοῆσαι αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ τραυματισμῷ (“The Lord willed to smite him in his wound”). Like the earlier translator, however, Symmachus agrees that החלי is to be construed as a substantive with article, not as a verb.

In v. 10b, MT comprises a subordinate clause (אם תשים אשם נפשו) “if you offer as an offering his soul”), followed by three coordinated statements about the servant: “(1) he will see [his] seed, (2) he will lengthen [his] days, and (3) the will of YHWH shall prosper in his hand.” The translator reduces these to a single statement. He assumes that “his soul” does not belong to the subordinate clause but is the subject of “will see,” and he also assimilates it to the second-plural δῶτε: “If you make a sin offering, your soul will see. . . .” σπέρμα μακρόβιον understands ימים (“he

33. Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 2.28.5, in opposition to the Valentinian genealogy of the aeons. Later this text is cited on both sides of the Arian debate: see Athanasius, *Exp. fid.* 1, *De syn.* 28; Theodoret, *Hist. eccl.* 1.3. Other writers (e.g., Justin, Gregory Thaumaturgus) find here a reference to the incarnation.

34. So Zimmerli, *TDNT*, 5:677.

35. I. Seeligmann suggests that in v. 10 the translator may have confused this verb with חל “to cleanse” (reading י for ד) or (more likely) with its Aramaic equivalent דכא (*The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems* [Leiden: Brill, 1948], 50).

will lengthen [his] days”) as an adjective (“long of days”) qualifying “seed.” The translator attaches the concluding *waw*-clause to v. 11, rewriting it as he does so. Symmachus again gives a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew: καὶ θέλημα κυρίου ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ εὐοδωθήσεται.

- 53:10C-11 . . . καὶ βούλεται κύριος ἀφελεῖν ἀπὸ τοῦ πόνου τῆς ψυχῆς αὐτοῦ, δεῖξαι αὐτῷ φῶς καὶ πλάσαι τῇ συνέσει, δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον εὐ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς καὶ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν αὐτὸς ἀνοίσει.

If the statement that “the will of YHWH will prosper in his hand (וְחַפְצוֹ בְּיָדוֹ יְהוָה)” concludes v. 10, the following verse would open with the difficult phrase, “From the distress of his soul he shall see . . . (מֵעַמְלִי נַפְשׁוֹ יֵרָאֶה).” RSV suggests here: “He shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul . . .” The Greek translator assumes that חַפֵּץ at the end of v. 10 is a verb rather than a substantive and translates it as at the beginning of v. 10: καὶ βούλεται κύριος (rather than Symmachus’s καὶ θέλημα κυρίου). This creates difficulties with the following phrase (בִּידוֹ יִצְלַח), which the translator solves by way of a connection with “from the distress of his soul” in v. 11. “The Lord wills . . . from the distress of his soul”: what is missing from this sentence is clearly the idea of *removal*. Hence ἀφελεῖν is inserted, although it is entirely unrelated to בִּידוֹ יִצְלַח: “And the Lord willed to remove the distress of his soul. . . .” The translator may have surmised that צַלַח was just a variant spelling of שַׁלַח (“send”), and that “in his hand he sent from” (בִּידוֹ צַלַח מִ-) must be a Hebrew idiom meaning “to remove.”

Remarkably, these manipulations of the text produce a stronger and more lucid statement about the servant’s vindication than anything in the Hebrew. This statement is based on the decision to render four Hebrew finite verbs (וַיִּצְלַח, וַיִּרְאֶה, וַיִּשְׁבַּע, וַיַּצְדֵּק) as infinitives dependent on βούλεται (ἀφελεῖν, δεῖξαι, πλάσαι, δικαιοῦσαι). The Lord wills to remove, to show, to form, and to justify. The evidence of 1QIsaiah^{a, b} and 4QIsaiah^d suggests that the translator may well have found יֵרָאֶה אֹר (“he shall see light”) in his exemplar, and not just יֵרָאֶה (MT). Reading in his exemplar that “the Lord wills, . . . he [the servant] will see light,” the translator assumes a *purposive* relationship between the two verbs: hence, “The Lord wills . . . , to show him light.” By analogy with this, וַיִּשְׁבַּע בְּדַעְתּוֹ (“he will be satisfied in his knowledge”) is traced back to the divine will to form the servant in understanding (πλάσαι τῇ συνέσει); and וַיַּצְדֵּק צְדִיק (incorrectly understood

to mean “he will justify the righteous one . . .”) is understood similarly (δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον). The righteous one is characterized as εὐ δουλεύοντα πολλοῖς, on the assumption that עַבְדִּי לְרַבִּים is a distinct semantic unit in which עַבְדִּי must somehow function as a participle. Thus, the probable sense of the Hebrew (“The righteous one, my servant, will justify many”) is replaced in the Greek by “the Lord wills . . . to justify the righteous one who serves many well.” The Hebrew לְרַבִּים (but not the Greek πολλοῖς) is apparently echoed in the Markan Last Supper narrative, where Jesus’ blood is said to be poured out ὑπὲρ πολλῶν (Mark 14:24).

- 53:12 διὰ τοῦτο αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς καὶ τῶν ἰσχυρῶν μεριεῖ σκῦλα, ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη. καὶ αὐτὸς ἀμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνήνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη.

Here, αὐτὸς κληρονομήσει πολλοὺς renders the Hebrew אֶחָד לָו בְּרַבִּים (“I will give him a share with the many”). ἀνθ’ ὧν παρέδοθη εἰς θάνατον ἢ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ renders הִעָרָה לְמוֹת נַפְשׁוֹ (“he poured out his soul to death”). The verb form παρεδόθη recurs at the end of the verse, where καὶ διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη translates וּלְפַשְׁעֵם יִפְגִּיעַ (“and he interceded for transgressors”). The concluding statements about the Servant in relation to the sins of others are respectively echoed in Heb 9:28 (εἰς τὸ πολλῶν ἀνενεγκεῖν ἀμαρτίας) and Rom 4:25 (ὃς παρέδοθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν).

The preceding analysis has highlighted a considerable number of cases in which the translation technique is, to say the least, eccentric — and was perceived as such by later translators such as Symmachus, whose rendering is normally much closer to the plain sense of the Hebrew. If, on some occasions, the Hebrew does not have a “plain sense” and allows for a number of possible translations, elsewhere this is clearly not the case. Whether we prefer to speak of “free translation,” or “mistranslation,” or a combination of the two, the Septuagintal translator goes his own way, producing a text whose semantic content overlaps with the original Hebrew but by no means coincides with it. What is striking is that it is often precisely the points of non-overlap and non-coincidence that proved important for Paul and other early Christian readers.

In the following translation of the Fourth Servant Song in Greek, italics represent the most significant deviations from the probable under-

lying Hebrew. Underlining represents points at which Paul either explicitly cites material from this passage or draws upon its lexical resources in order to interpret the death of Christ in its saving significance. It is notable how often these coincide.

- 52:13 Behold, my servant shall understand, and shall be exalted and glorified greatly.
- 14 Just as many *will be* astonished at you — so disreputable *shall be* your appearance among men and your glory among men —
- 15 so shall many nations [Gentiles] *be amazed at him*, and kings shall shut their mouth. *For those to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and those who have not heard will understand.*
- 53:1 *Lord, who believed our report?* And the arm of the Lord, to whom was it revealed?
- 2 We announced before him [one] like a *child*, like a root in thirsty ground, having no appearance or glory. And we saw him, and he had *neither appearance nor beauty*.
- 3 But his appearance was dishonourable, found wanting with all men, a man stricken and knowing [what it is] to bear sickness. For his face was turned away, he was dishonored and he was not esteemed.
- 4 This one bears our *sins* and *suffers for us*, and we considered him to be in distress and *misfortune* and oppression.
- 5 But he was wounded *on account of our sins*, and was weakened on account of our transgressions. The discipline of our peace was upon him, by his wound we were healed.
- 6 All of us have strayed like sheep, each one *strayed* to his own way. And the Lord *gave him up* to our sins.
- 7 And he opens not his mouth on account of ill-treatment. As a sheep is led to the slaughter and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he does not open his mouth.
- 8 In [his] *humiliation* his judgment was taken away. Who shall tell of his generation? *For removed from the earth is his life*. By the transgressions of my people *he was led to death*.
- 9 And I will give the wicked *in place of his tomb*, and the rich *in place of his death*. *For he committed no transgression*, nor was deceit found in his mouth.

- 10 And the Lord wills to *cleanse him of his wound*. If you [pl.] offer a sin-offering, *your soul will see a long-lived posterity*. And the Lord wills to *remove*
- 11 the distress of his soul, *to show him light and to form [him] in understanding, to justify the righteous one who serves many well; and he will bear their sins*.
- 12 Therefore he shall *inherit many*, and shall share the spoils of the strong, because his soul *was delivered up* to death, and he was reckoned among the lawless. And he bore the sins of many, *and was given up on account of their sins*.

From one perspective, Isaiah 53 in Greek is a seriously flawed representative of the Hebrew original. From another perspective, it can be seen as supplanting that Hebrew original, functioning directly as scripture in Greek-speaking Jewish and Christian communities with no possibility but also no need of recourse to the Hebrew. Thus it is this text that survives in multiple copies, whereas the more accurate translation of Symmachus must be laboriously reconstructed from scattered fragments of evidence. If the Greek text is at some points less lucid than the Hebrew, at other points it is more so — notably in its testimony to the Servant's death and vindication. If each of its "mistranslations" represents the loss of an original semantic content, its place is always taken by a new semantic content, or at least by a semantic *potential* waiting to be realized. Ironically, it is precisely the deviations from the Hebrew that establish this as an independent text in its own right, not as a mere local representative of a distant foreign original. Without recognizing them as such, it was precisely in the deviations that early Christians first glimpsed the possibility of a positive soteriological interpretation of the death of Christ. In the light of such momentous discoveries as this, it is unsurprising that the Septuagint could be viewed as an inspired text in its own right.

Paul, the Servant and the Septuagint

On two occasions, Paul cites material from the Fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:15 = Rom 15:21; Isa 53:1 = Rom 10:16). In addition, at least one probable allusion has been noted (Isa 53:12 = Rom 4:25). There is also a third way in

which Paul and other early Christian writers draw on scripture.³⁶ Citation explicitly refers back to the scriptural text. Allusion does so implicitly; in a strong allusion, the reader or hearer must recognize the reference to the underlying text in order to grasp the full force of the new statement. Yet it is also possible for scripture to function even without this explicit or implicit backward reference. A scriptural text can serve as a lexical and semantic resource or reservoir from which terms, phrases, or concepts can be freely drawn and adapted to new uses. Fully embedded in their new contexts, they do not draw attention to their scriptural origin; and yet the scriptural impact on the new context may be at least as profound here as in the case of citations and allusions. In the case of Isaiah 53, the claims that Christ died “for us” or “for our sins,” that he was “given up” and that he “humbled himself,” and that all this took place for the benefit of “the many” are all apparently derived from this chapter. These claims are Pauline, but they may also be traced back to the common tradition of Hellenistic Christianity. An obvious locus for such a tradition is the church at Antioch, where Isaiah in its Septuagintal form was presumably familiar, and where Paul himself would have participated in the early process of tradition formation.³⁷

Before pursuing this early use of Isaiah 53 any further, there is a preliminary matter to be discussed. It is currently debated whether Paul’s citations retain links with their original scriptural contexts, or whether they are wholly integrated into their new contexts.³⁸ This debate is relevant here because Paul’s citations from the Fourth Servant Song both relate to Christian mission, and it might be argued that they need not entail any identification of the servant with Christ.³⁹ To refute that argument, it must be

shown that the two citations retain links with the scriptural story of the servant from which they have been extracted.

In the first case, Paul uses his citation to confirm the assertion that “not all believed the gospel” and to establish the link between faith and hearing:

But not all believed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who believed our report [τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν]?” So faith comes from hearing [ἡ πίστις ἐξ ἀκοῆς], and hearing through the word of Christ. (Rom 10:16-17, citing Isa 53:1)

In the second citation, Paul says that his ambition is

to preach the gospel where Christ is not named, lest I should build on another’s foundation; but, as it is written, “Those to whom it was not announced concerning him shall see, and those who have not heard will understand.” (Rom 15:20-21, citing Isa 52:15)

The two citations form a contrasting pair. In Isaiah, the second passage (Isa 52:15) directly precedes the first (Isa 53:1). According to Paul, they both articulate the divine intention for Christian mission: its worldwide scope, which includes all who are currently still ignorant of Christ, and, conversely, the intractable fact that, when the gospel is preached, “not all” believe. Contrary to the usual view, there is nothing to suggest that Paul relates Isa 53:1 specifically to “Jewish unbelief.”⁴⁰ The question is whether the two citations entail an identification of the servant/child with Christ, or whether their original context is irrelevant to the new context to which Paul relocates them.

The citation of Isa 53:1 immediately follows a citation from the same context (Isa 52:7, in the abbreviated and modified form: “How timely are the feet of those who announce good things!” [Rom 10:15]). Elsewhere, Paul cites four further passages from this immediate context (Isa 52:5, 11, 15; 54:1). For our present purposes, it is important to highlight both the

rest of this chapter was in St Paul’s mind”; similarly, in the case of Isa 52:15, “there is no indication that he has in mind anything but this one verse” (*Jesus and the Servant: The Influence of the Servant Concept of Deutero-Isaiah in the New Testament* [London: SPCK, 1959], 117).

40. On this see my *Paul, Judaism and the Gentiles: Beyond the New Perspective* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 331-32.

36. Richard Hays proposes “echo” as a third mode of Pauline intertextuality: “Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal” (*Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989], 23). For Hays, “allusion” implies authorial intention and readerly recognition, whereas “echo” lacks these associations and is thus less historically circumscribed (p. 29). My own third mode of Pauline intertextuality is also concerned with the “subliminal” but is broadly historical in orientation.

37. For the importance of Paul’s links with the church at Antioch, see N. Taylor, *Paul, Antioch and Jerusalem: A Study in Relationships and Authority in Earliest Christianity* (JNTS 66; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), 88-110 and passim.

38. For examples of the respective views, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, in which “echoes” frequently derive from the wider contexts of texts Paul cites; and C. Tuckett, “Paul, Scripture and Ethics: Some Reflections,” *NTS* 46 (2000): 403-24.

39. According to Morna Hooker, the quotation from Isa 53:1 “does not mean that the

concentration of material drawn from this section of Isaiah and the modifications apparently introduced by Paul himself.⁴¹ The fact that Paul cites no fewer than six texts from Isa 52:5–54:1 suggests that each one is cited with some awareness of its original context. As we shall also note, Paul (like other early Christian writers) takes particular care to reproduce the exact Septuagintal wording in the immediate vicinity of the Fourth Servant Song (Isa 52:15; 53:1; 54:1).

Isaiah 52:5

δι' ὑμᾶς διὰ παντός τὸ ὄνομά μου βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσι. (Isa 52:5 LXX)

τὸ γὰρ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ δι' ὑμᾶς βλασφημεῖται ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν, καθὼς γέγραπται. (Rom 2:24)

Paul abbreviates slightly (omitting διὰ παντός), transposes the first two clauses, and replaces μου with θεοῦ. γάρ serves to introduce the citation, although, unusually, a fuller citation formula is also added at the end.⁴²

Isaiah 52:7

πάρεμι ὡς ὥρα ἐπὶ τῶν ὄρεων, ὡς πόδες εὐαγγελιζομένου ἀκοὴν εἰρήνης, ὡς εὐαγγελιζόμενος ἀγαθὰ, ὅτι ἀκουστήν ποιήσω τὴν σωτηρίαν σου λέγων Σιών βασιλεύσει σου ὁ Θεός.

(I am present as the spring upon the mountains, as the feet of one announcing a message of peace, as one announcing good things, for I will make your salvation heard, saying to Zion: your God shall reign.)

Paul abbreviates the citation and appears to correct it in light of the Hebrew:

41. For Paul's use of Isaiah as a whole, see the table in J. R. Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul "in Concert" in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 342–43.

42. For detailed analysis, see Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 84–86.

How will they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How timely are the feet of those who announce good things [ὡς ὥραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθὰ]! (Rom 10:15)

How pleasant upon the mountains are the feet of the one who announces a message of peace, who announces good . . . (Isa 52:7 MT)

Paul omits the references to the mountains and to the announcement of the message of peace, but restores MT's "how . . ." (הַכֵּן), which LXX connects to the preceding הַכֵּן, producing the phrase *πάρεμι ὡς* ("I am present as"), which determines the rest of the statement. Paul's ὥραῖοι may be compared to Aquila's ὥραιωθήσαν.⁴³ The plural εὐαγγελιζομένων introduces a new deviation from the Hebrew, however.⁴⁴

Isaiah 52:11

ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε, ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς, ἀφωρίσθητε, οἱ φέροντες τὰ σκεύη κυρίου. (Isa 52:11)

διὸ ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν καὶ ἀφωρίσθητε, λέγει κύριος, καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε. (2 Cor 6:17)

In the Pauline version, ἐξέλθατε ἐκεῖθεν is omitted, and καὶ ἀκαθάρτου μὴ ἄπτεσθε and ἐξέλθατε ἐκ μέσου αὐτῆς, ἀφωρίσθητε are transposed. διὸ and καὶ are added to the new opening phrase, and αὐτῆς is changed to αὐτῶν, assimilating the passage to its new context. λέγει κύριος is inserted, as in the citation of Isa 28:11–12 in 1 Cor 14:21 (which, however, deviates sharply from the LXX).⁴⁵

43. See D.-A. Koch, *Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums: Untersuchungen zur Verwendung und zum Verständnis der Schrift bei Paulus* (BHT; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1986), 67. Eusebius preserves a reading purporting to derive from Theodotion and remarkably similar to Paul's; Koch rightly discounts this (p. 66 n.).

44. See further Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 134–41; Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 170–74.

45. For discussion of the question whether 2 Cor 6:14–7:1 is a Pauline or non-Pauline interpolation, see V. P. Furnish, *II Corinthians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), 371–83. Furnish concludes that "the passage

Isaiah 52:15

οὕτως θαυμάσονται ἔθνη πολλὰ ἐπ' αὐτῷ, καὶ συνέχουσιν βασιλεῖς τὸ στόμα αὐτῶν. ὅτι οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται, καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν. (LXX)

. . . οὕτως φιλοτιμούμενον εὐαγγελίζεσθαι οὐχ ὅπου ὠνομάσθη Χριστός, ἵνα μὴ ἐπ' ἀλλότριον θεμέλιον οἰκοδομῶ, ἀλλὰ καθὼς γέγραπται, οἷς οὐκ ἀνηγγέλη περὶ αὐτοῦ ὄψονται, καὶ οἱ οὐκ ἀκηκόασιν συνήσουσιν. (Rom 15:20-21)

In a citation that coincides exactly with the Septuagint, Paul speaks of his future ambitions for his Gentile mission (cf. Rom 15:16). This application to the Gentiles has surely been suggested by ἔθνη πολλὰ (Isa 52:15a), even though Paul does not cite this. Here, at least, a Pauline citation remains dependent on its original context.⁴⁶ At two points Paul is here dependent on Septuagintal “mistranslation.” First, “that which was not told them” (MT) is rendered as “Those to whom it was not told *about him*.” In the original context, the reference is to the Servant. In its new context, the reference is to Christ, since “about him” is dependent on “not where Christ has [already] been named.” Paul here clearly identifies Christ with the Servant.⁴⁷ Second, a distinction is drawn in the Greek between present ignorance (“those to whom it was not told . . .,” “those who have not heard . . .”) and future knowledge (“... shall see,” “... shall understand”). In Paul’s interpretation, the transformation is to be occasioned by his own mission to places where Christ is not yet named. In contrast, the Hebrew speaks of a miraculous realization that has already taken place without any human agency: “For what was not told them they have seen, and what they did not hear they have understood.” At both points, Paul’s argument is dependent on the Greek rewording.

is of non-Pauline composition, but was incorporated by the apostle himself as he wrote this letter” (p. 383). However, the citation of Isa 52:11 is fully in line with Pauline citational practice elsewhere.

46. So Wagner, *Heralds of the Good News*, 333-34.

47. Dunn’s claim that Paul sees himself as the Servant overlooks the dual reference of περὶ αὐτοῦ to the Servant and to Christ, and thus to Christ as the Servant, the Servant as Christ (*Romans* 9-16, 865-66).

Isaiah 53:1

κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; καὶ ὁ βραχίων κυρίου τίς ἀπεκαλύφθη; (LXX)

κύριε, τίς ἐπίστευσεν τῇ ἀκοῇ ἡμῶν; (Rom 10:16)

As with Isa 52:15 (Rom 15:21), Paul’s wording is identical to that of the Septuagint or Old Greek. The whole verse is cited in John 12:38, again in its exact Septuagintal form; contrast the free rendering of Isa 6:10 LXX that follows in John 12:40.

Isaiah 54:1

Ἐυφράνθητι, στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα, ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα. (LXX)

γέγραπται γάρ, εὐφράνθητι, στείρα ἢ οὐ τίκτουσα, ῥῆξον καὶ βόησον, ἢ οὐκ ὠδίνουσα, ὅτι πολλὰ τὰ τέκνα τῆς ἐρήμου μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς ἐχούσης τὸν ἄνδρα. (Gal 4:27)

Paul’s exact reproduction of Isa 54:1 LXX suggests a pattern. Passages at the beginning and end of the Fourth Servant Song are cited in their precise Septuagintal form (Isa 52:15; 53:1; 54:1). In contrast, passages cited from earlier in Isaiah 52 are subject to expansion (v. 11), abbreviation (vv. 5, 7), transposition (vv. 5, 11), adaptation (v. 11), and emendation (v. 7). Similar phenomena may be found in Paul’s other Isaiah citations in Romans: conflation (Rom 9:33 = Isa 28:16 + 8:14; Rom 11:26-27 = Isa 59:20-21 + 27:9; Rom 14:11 = Isa 45:23 + 49:18); abbreviation (Rom 15:12 = Isa 11:10); transposition (Rom 10:20-21 = Isa 65:1-2); and adaptation (Rom 3:15-17 = Isa 59:7-8; Rom 9:27-28 = Isa 10:22-23).⁴⁸ Apart from the three cases already

48. See the detailed discussion in Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture*, 113-25, 144-47, 166-71, 176-79, 183. Koch offers the following typology for Paul’s modifications: “Abänderung der Wortfolge; Abänderung von Person, Numerus, Genus, Tempus und Modus; Auslassungen; Zufügungen; Austausch von Zitatteilen durch eigene Formulierungen;

noted, it is only in Rom 9:29 that Paul exactly reproduces a text from Isaiah, LXX (Isa 1:9). Yet, with the partial exception of the Isa 52:7 citation, Paul generally seems to presuppose a text corresponding closely to the Septuagint.⁴⁹ Most modifications to this text are manifestly his own. Paul's Isaiah citations contribute to the textual criticism of the Septuagint mainly by confirming the essential reliability of the later manuscripts.⁵⁰

Several conclusions follow from this analysis of the relevant Pauline Isaiah citations.

1. Of the twelve verses between Isa 52:5 and 53:1, five are cited by Paul (52:5, 7, 11, 15; 53:1). On one occasion, two of these are cited together (Rom 10:15-16 = Isa 52:7; 53:1). On another occasion, the use to which Paul puts a text is clearly derived from its original context (Rom 15:21 = Isa 52:15). There are thematic unities in Paul's readings of these texts and of Isa 54:1. Three are applied to positive or negative aspects of Christian mission (Isa 52:7, 15; 53:1). The other three are addressed to the people of God in its old or new forms (52:5, 11; 54:1). In the face of these observations, it is hard to maintain that Paul's citations sever links with the original scriptural context.

2. Paul's reading of Isa 52:15 demonstrates that he can identify the servant with Christ. The significance of this point will become clearer as we uncover the intertextual links that bind Isaiah 53 to Pauline soteriological discourse.

3. It is striking that, at the beginning of the Fourth Servant Song, Paul abandons his habit of free citation and begins to quote texts verba-

tim. As we have already seen, early Christian writers in general were unusually concerned with verbal precision in their citations from this passage, to such an extent that these can be regarded as broadly reliable for text-critical purposes. This concern for verbal accuracy reflects the very great significance that Greek-speaking Christians ascribed to this text; the Pauline citations seem to establish a trend in this respect. They are also compatible with the hypothesis that Paul had at some point intensively studied this text in its Septuagintal form. This hypothesis is suggested by the terminology he employs in speaking of the death of Christ in its saving significance: as we shall now see, much of this terminology is drawn from Isaiah 53.

The Servant and the Death of Christ: Isaiah 53 LXX as Lexical Resource

There are at least four points where Pauline language about the death of Christ is decisively influenced by Isaiah 53 LXX. According to Paul, Christ died "for us," or "for our sins." He was "given up" by God, but it can also be said that he "humbled himself." At each point, Isaiah 53 provides Paul with lexical and semantic resources that enable him to present the death of Christ not primarily as a human act of rebellion (cf. 1 Thess 2:14-16; 1 Cor 2:6-8)⁵¹ but as the saving act of God. It is through Isaiah 53 that the soteriological significance of Jesus' death initially comes to light.

These connections with Isaiah 53 have been proposed before, but they have not always proved persuasive.⁵² In the discussion that follows, several reasons for reopening this issue will come to light. In particular, I shall argue that formulae relating to Christ's death (ὕπὲρ ἡμῶν, ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν) must be traced back to Isaiah 53 LXX *even though* they do not exactly reproduce its wording and cannot be regarded as "allusions."

51. The ἀρχοντες τοῦ αἰῶνος τούτου in 1 Cor 2:6, 8 are probably human rather than demonic (so G. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 103-104). Paul's terminology is perhaps influenced by Ps 2:2, which tells how οἱ ἀρχοντες were gathered together κατὰ τοῦ κυρίου καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ. This passage is applied to the crucifixion in Acts 4:25-28. It would be a mistake to read the later conceptuality of Colossians or Ephesians back into 1 Corinthians.

52. See Hooker, *Jesus and the Servant*, 116-23.

Austausch von Zitateilen durch Formulierungen aus anderen Schriftstellen (Mischzitate)" (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, VIII-IX).

49. The texts surveyed here do not bear out Koch's conclusion, "dass der von Paulus vorausgesetzte LXX-Text bereits eine hebräisierende Überarbeitung erfahren hat" (*Die Schrift als Zeuge des Evangeliums*, 78).

50. Contrast Timothy Lim's claim that "[t]extual variety and pluriformity characterized the scriptural scrolls that [Paul] consulted" (*Holy Scripture in the Qumran Commentaries and Pauline Letters* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997], 160). Lim argues that a Pauline citation can be said to be "septuagintal" only if it agrees with the Greek at places where the Greek diverges from the Hebrew (pp. 140-42). On this criterion, a citation that corresponds exactly to Isa 54:1 LXX would not be "septuagintal," since the Greek here renders the Hebrew with unusual accuracy. But that is to overlook the fact that there may be any number of equally accurate ways to translate a passage of Hebrew into Greek. If Paul (a) cites a text that accurately renders the Hebrew, and (b) cites it in precisely its Septuagintal wording, then he is citing the Septuagint.

Christ Died "for Us"

Paul's *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* formula is apparently derived from Isa 53:4 LXX, "... and he suffered for us [καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται]." It occurs in the following passages:

- ... ὅτι ἔτι ἁμαρτωλῶν ὄντων ἡμῶν Χριστὸς *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* ἀπέθανεν (Rom 5:8)
- ... ἀλλὰ *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* πάντων παρέδωκεν αὐτόν ... (Rom 8:32)
- ... τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν (2 Cor 5:21)
- ... γενόμενος *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* κατάρα ... (Gal 3:13)

Variants of this phrase occur in the following passages:

- ... ἔτι κατὰ καιρὸν *ὑπὲρ ἁσεβῶν* ἀπέθανεν ... (Rom 5:6)
- ... ἐκεῖνον ... *ὑπὲρ οὗ* Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν (Rom 14:15)
- ... τοῦτο μού ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ *ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν* ... (1 Cor 11:24)
- ... κρίναντας τοῦτο, ὅτι εἰς *ὑπὲρ πάντων* ἀπέθανεν ... (2 Cor 5:14, cf. v. 15)
- ... τοῦ ἀγαπήσαντός με καὶ παραδόντος ἑαυτὸν *ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ* (Gal 2:20)

While the Isaianic *περὶ ἡμῶν* must mean "for us" or "for our sake," Paul's substitution of *ὑπὲρ* for *περὶ* makes the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings still clearer. That Paul has the Isaianic phrase in mind is evident from a passage in his earliest extant letter, in which *περὶ ἡμῶν* is apparently what he originally wrote:

- ... through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died *for us* [τοῦ ἀποθανόντος περὶ ἡμῶν] so that whether we wake or sleep we shall live with him. (1 Thess 5:10)
- περὶ ἡμῶν* \aleph^* B 33; *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* P³⁰ \aleph^2 A D F G etc.

Here, a shift from *περὶ* to *ὑπὲρ* would represent a scribal assimilation to normal Pauline usage: *περὶ* therefore qualifies as the harder reading. A similar shift is evident in 1 Cor 1:13 ("Was Paul crucified for you?"), where *περὶ ὑμῶν* is read by P⁴⁶ B D*; and in Gal 1:4 ("... who gave himself for our

sins"), where *περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν* is read by P⁴⁶ \aleph^* A D F G etc. (*ὑπὲρ*: P⁵¹ \aleph^1 B H). The survival of *περὶ* in P⁴⁶ (1 Cor 1:13; Gal 1:4) suggests that it may also have been attested in 1 Thess 5:10, where there is a lacuna.⁵³ In twice replacing *περὶ* by *ὑπὲρ* (1 Thess 5:10; Gal 1:4), the correctors of Sinaiticus seem to represent the tendency of the textual tradition as a whole.

According to Isa 53:4 MT, the servant "bore our sicknesses" [חִלִּינוּ] and "carried our blows" [מַכָּאֵינוּ]. Three ancient Greek translations of this text are extant:

- οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται (LXX)
- αὐτὸς τὰς ἀσθενείας ἡμῶν ἔλαβεν καὶ τὰς νόσους ἐβάστασεν (Matt 8:17)
- ὄντως τὰς νόσους ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνέλαβεν καὶ τοὺς πόνους ὑπέμεινεν (Symmachus)

It is the translation that deviates most clearly from the Hebrew that memorably encapsulates the Servant's significance in the statement: "He suffered for us." Paul ignores the verb: the "for us" formula and its variants are accompanied by a range of verbs (and not just by ἀπέθανεν). While Paul can cite the formula in its original form (*περὶ ἡμῶν*: 1 Thess 5:10; cf. 1 Cor 1:13), he prefers a preposition that underlines its vicarious connotations. Despite this adaptation, however, the formula remains dependent on Isaiah 53 LXX.⁵⁴ Without this text, there would be no basis for the claim that what took place in Christ's death took place "for us."

If Paul's "for us" is Isaianic, it is possible that τὸν μὴ γνόντα ἁμαρτίαν *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν* ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησεν (2 Cor 5:21) is also influenced by ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν (Isa 53:9).⁵⁵ If so, then Isa 53:9 is the source of the belief that Jesus suffered sinlessly, and indeed that his entire life was sinless (cf. 1 Pet 2:22-23). It was the one who committed no sin who suffered for us.

53. The hypothesis that *περὶ* is original to these three texts would be falsified if it could be shown that either P⁴⁶ or \aleph^* is elsewhere in the habit of replacing *ὑπὲρ* with *περὶ*. A survey of fifteen Pauline occurrences of *ὑπὲρ* with the genitive, all extant in P⁴⁶, gives no evidence of any such tendency (Rom 8:31; 9:3; 15:8, 9; 16:4; 1 Cor 4:6; 10:30; 15:29; 2 Cor 1:11; 12:10; Eph 5:2, 20; Phil 1:7; Col 1:7, 24).

54. Against Jeremias, *TDNT*, 5:710.

55. So Furnish, *II Corinthians*, 340.

The Death of the Servant “for Our Sins”

Unlike Hebrews and 1 Peter, Paul does not adopt the language of “bearing sin” (Isa 53:4, 11, 12), but he does draw on prepositional phrases connecting the Servant’s suffering with “our” or “their” sins:

αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν (Isa 53:5)

. . . καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη (Isa 53:12)

The term ἁμαρτία occurs seven times in Isaiah 53 LXX (vv. 4, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12 [x2]), ἀνομία three times (vv. 5, 8, 9).⁵⁶ These figures represent a standardizing of the more diverse Hebrew vocabulary: ἁμαρτία is used to translate חָלִי (v. 4), עוֹן (vv. 5, 6, 11), אָשָׁם (v. 10: *perì* ἁμαρτίας),⁵⁷ חַטָּא (v. 12), and פֶּשַׁע (v. 12); ἀνομία translates עוֹן (v. 5), פֶּשַׁע (v. 8), and חַטָּא (v. 9). In Isaiah 53 LXX more clearly than in MT, the Servant’s vocation is related to “sin.”

In Rom 4:25, it is said of “Jesus our Lord” that he was “handed over on account of our trespasses” (*παρεδόθη διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν*). The verb form is drawn from Isa 53:12 (on which see below), and διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν betrays the influence of διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν and διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν (v. 5; cf. v. 12). Paul here prefers παράπτωμα to ἁμαρτία or ἀνομία; this term occurs nine times in Romans, six of them in 5:12–21. Paul here is neither citing nor alluding; rather, he is adapting Isaianic conceptuality to his own purposes, but without drawing attention to his source.

In Rom 4:25, Paul retains the Isaianic preposition but replaces the noun. Elsewhere he adopts the opposite procedure, retaining ἁμαρτία (pl.) from the Isaianic prepositional clauses but varying the preposition:

. . . τοῦ δόντος ἑαυτὸν *περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν* (Gal 1:4: for the text, see above)

. . . Χριστὸς ἀπέθανεν *ὑπὲρ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν* κατὰ τὰς γραφάς (1 Cor 15:3).

56. The figures would be six and four respectively if ἀνομίας were read in place of ἁμαρτίας at the end of v. 12.

57. It is not clear that ἐάν δῶτε *περὶ* ἁμαρτίας (Isa 53:10) underlies Paul’s use of *περὶ* ἁμαρτίας in Rom 8:3. The second plural δῶτε makes a christological application difficult.

The constant element in the three passages (Rom 4:25; Gal 1:4; 1 Cor 15:3) is the pronoun ἡμῶν; the preposition and the noun may or may not coincide with the Isaianic exemplar.⁵⁸ Yet, in their slightly differing terminology, the three passages are saying the same thing. 1 Cor 15:3 is especially significant in its claim (1) that scripture is the source of the early Christian insight into the saving significance of Jesus’ death; and (2) that this is the view of the early church as a whole, rather than being unique to Paul (cf. v. 11).

The “Giving Up” of the Servant

The LXX translator has recourse to the verb *παρεδίδοναι* on three occasions:

καὶ κύριος *παρέδωκεν* αὐτὸν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν (Isa 53:6). MT: “And YHWH has caused all of our transgression to meet him [הפגיע בו].”

ἀνθ’ ὧν *παρεδόθη* εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ . . . καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν *παρεδόθη* (Isa 53:12). MT: “He poured out [הערה] his soul unto death . . . , and he interceded [יפגיע] for transgressors.”

Paul’s use of *παρεδίδοναι* in connection with the death of Christ is influenced by both active and passive usages in Isaiah 53:

ὃς *παρεδόθη* διὰ τὰ παραπτώματα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡγέρθη διὰ τὴν δικαίωσιν ἡμῶν (Rom 4:25)

ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἣ *παρεδίδοτο* . . . (1 Cor 11:23)

ὃς γε τοῦ ἰδίου υἱοῦ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀλλὰ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν πάντων *παρέδωκεν αὐτόν* (Rom 8:32)

58. In 1 Cor 15:3 the reference to Isaiah 53 is not independent of the LXX, as J. Jeremias claims, appealing to the absence of the Pauline *ὑπὲρ* (*The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* [trans. N. Perrin; London: SCM Press, 1966], 103). The change in the wording does not affect the dependence. Incidentally, there is no sign of *ὑπὲρ* in later translations of Isaiah 53. In v. 5, Aquila reads καὶ αὐτὸς βεβηλωμένος ἀπὸ ἀθεσμιῶν ἡμῶν, συντετριμμένος ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομίων ἡμῶν (ἀπό = -א). In v. 12, Symmachus reads καὶ τοῖς ἀθετοῦσιν ἀντέστη.

Exact correspondences with the verb forms παρέδωκεν and παρεδόθη in Isa 53:6, 12 should be noted; indeed, in each case Paul also reproduces the word following the verb (αὐτόν, διά).⁵⁹ In 1 Cor 11:23, παρεδίδοτο should be translated “given up,” not “betrayed,” since the reference is probably to God’s action rather than Judas’s. In these Pauline statements as in Isaiah 53 LXX, the verb serves to highlight the divine causality at work in the Servant’s death. Also to be noted is the possible dependence of Rom 4:25b on Isa 53:10-11, βούλεται κύριος . . . δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον εὐδουλεύοντα πολλοῖς. For πολλοί (Isa 53:11, 12 [x2]), see Rom 5:15 (x2), 19 (x2).

The “Humiliation” of the Servant

In Isa 53:8 LXX, we are told that ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη (MT: “By oppression and judgment he was taken away”). It is possible that this statement underlies Paul’s ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν (Phil 2:8), where the reference is to the self-humiliation of the human Jesus in subjecting himself to the way of the cross. Yet possible connections between the Philippian Christ-hymn and Isaiah 53 are more persuasive if we suppose an influence from whatever prior translations or revisions underlie the later work attributed to Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion.⁶⁰ In v. 4, both Aquila and Symmachus state that the Servant was reckoned to be πεπλήγωτα ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ καὶ τεταπεινώμενον (the final word here is also attested for Theodotion). This may further support the suggestion that Paul’s ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτόν is formulated under the influence of Isaiah 53. Having humbled himself, Christ became ὑπήκοος μέχρι θάνατον (Phil 2:8). ὑπήκοος could derive from Isa 53:8, where Symmachus may have read: προσήχθη καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπήκουσεν καὶ

οὐκ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ.⁶¹ μέχρι θάνατον may derive from εἰς θάνατον (Isa 53:8, 12). According to Phil 2:7, Jesus took upon himself “the form of a servant” (μορφὴν δούλου) in his incarnation. The παῖς of the Fourth Servant Song is a “slave” as well as a “child,” since he can be described in Isa 53:11 as “the righteous one who serves many well” (δίκαιον εὐδουλεύοντα πολλοῖς). But Paul’s μορφὴ δούλου may also reflect non-Septuagintal translation possibilities. At 52:13, Aquila and Symmachus both read δούλος μου rather than παῖς μου. In 52:14, Aquila reads ὁρασις αὐτοῦ καὶ μορφὴ αὐτοῦ for LXX’s τὸ εἶδος σου καὶ ἡ δόξα σου; in 53:2, οὐ μορφὴ αὐτῷ καὶ οὐ διαπρεπεία for LXX’s οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος (Symmachus here retains εἶδος). It is also plausible that Paul’s ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν (Phil 2:7a) derives from נָפַשׁ . . . הִעָרָה (Isa 53:12: “he poured out his soul”), although unfortunately none of the later translations is extant at this point.⁶²

In addition to his explicit citations, then, Paul draws on a range of material from Isaiah 53 LXX and may also be aware of other translation possibilities. The most important Septuagintal passages are as follows (again, underlining = Pauline use; italics = mistranslation):

οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται (Isa 53:4; cf. 1 Thess 5:10; Rom 5:8; 8:32; 2 Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13)
αὐτὸς δὲ ἐτραυματίσθη διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν καὶ μεμαλάκισται διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν (Isa 53:5; cf. Rom 4:25; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4)
καὶ κύριος παρέδωκεν αὐτόν ταῖς ἁμαρτίαις ἡμῶν (Isa 53:6; cf. Rom 4:25; 8:32; 1 Cor 11:23)
ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει ἡ κρίσις αὐτοῦ ἦρθη . . . ἀπὸ τῶν ἀνομιῶν τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἤχθη εἰς θάνατον (Isa 53:8; cf. Phil 2:8)
ὅτι ἀνομίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν, οὐδὲ εὗρεθῇ δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ (Isa 53:9; cf. 2 Cor 5:21)
βούλεται κύριος . . . δικαιοῦσαι δίκαιον εὐδουλεύοντα πολλοῖς (Isa 53:10-11; cf. Rom 4:25; 5:15, 19; Phil 2:7)
ἀνθ’ ὧν παρεδόθη εἰς θάνατον ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἀνόμοις ἐλογίσθη. καὶ αὐτὸς ἁμαρτίας πολλῶν ἀνῆνεγκεν καὶ διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν παρεδόθη (Isa 53:12; cf. Rom 4:25; 5:15, 19; 1 Cor 15:3; Gal 1:4; Phil 2:7)

61. ὑπήκουσεν is attested by Eusebius; 86 reads ἤκουσεν here and is supported by Jerome (*audiens non aperuit os suum*, attributed to Symmachus and Theodotion).

62. See J. Jeremias, “Zu Phil 2:7: Ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν,” *NovT* 6 (1963): 182-88.

59. These correspondences are overlooked by Hooker, who argues that, for Paul as for Mark, παραδίδομι is “the natural word to use, and it is impossible to link it with any particular Old Testament passage” (*Jesus and the Servant*, 122).

60. The traditional view is that “the Septuagint” (understood as a singular entity) was essentially complete by the time Ben Sira was translated into Greek (late second century BCE); that the translations of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus belong to the second century CE; and that no significant translation took place during the intervening period. This simple picture is called into question by the demonstration that the Daniel translation ascribed to Theodotion is probably pre-Christian, and by the discovery of a Greek Minor Prophets manuscript (8HebXIIgr), differing from the LXX and dating back perhaps to the late first century BCE. See S. Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 74-99.

To these we may add a possible awareness of alternative translations such as the following:

Ἰδοὺ συνήσει ὁ δοῦλος μου (Isa 52:13, Aquila, Symmachus; cf. Phil 2:7)

ὄρασις αὐτοῦ καὶ μορφὴ αὐτοῦ (Isa 52:14, Aquila; cf. Phil 2:7)

οὐ μορφὴ αὐτῷ καὶ οὐ διαπρεπεία (Isa 53:2, Aquila; cf. Phil 2:7)

πεπλήγῃς ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τεταπεινωμένον (Isa 53:4, Aquila, Symmachus; cf. Phil 2:8)

προσέχθη καὶ αὐτὸς ὑπήκουσεν καὶ οὐκ ἤνοιξεν τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ (Isa 53:8, Symmachus [?]; cf. Phil 2:8)

If these connections are plausible, then Paul can be shown to have cited or drawn upon a wide range of material from the Fourth Servant Song. Whether his use of this material was mediated through “pre-Pauline tradition” is doubtful, since its use cannot be reliably traced back behind the Greek-speaking community at Antioch, with which Paul was associated from an early period.⁶³ Christians in Antioch were presumably more likely to study Isaiah in Greek than were Christians in Jerusalem.⁶⁴ If Paul was aware of other translation possibilities, these may conceivably have been mediated through Jerusalem-based Christians who read Hebrew; but that is speculation. It is more plausible to imagine Paul himself as a participant in the early processes of tradition formation at Antioch, in which crucial decisions were taken on the basis of Isaiah 53 LXX about how Jesus’ death was to be understood. As a result of this early preoccupation with this text, traditional formulae were preserved — but rarely if ever elaborated — in Pauline statements dating from some years later.⁶⁵

63. Contra Jeremias, *TDNT*, 5:706.

64. 1 Cor 15:3-5 would demonstrate that the entire early church understood the death of Jesus on the basis of Isaiah 53 LXX only if Paul here quotes a fixed formula verbatim. In spite of the arguments of Jeremias (*The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, 101-103), this seems unlikely.

65. This suggests an answer to the question raised by Richard Hays, why Paul does not more explicitly identify Jesus with the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 (*Echoes of Scripture*, 63). Isaiah 53 was foundational to Paul’s thinking and language about the death of Christ, and its foundational status is evident from the traditional terminology derived from it.

Conclusion

Owing to its “mistranslations” (i.e., its substitutions, emendations, additions, paraphrases, and so on), Isaiah 53 LXX deviates considerably from its Hebrew exemplar. These “mistranslations” are fundamental to the Pauline and early Christian appropriation of this chapter, which provided not only material for citation but — still more importantly — crucial semantic resources for the development of a positive, soteriological understanding of the death of Christ. It is mistranslation that makes it possible to affirm that Christ died for us, or that he died for our sins.

Mistranslation is the substitution of one semantic potential for another — of (for example) “he suffered for us” for “he bore our blows.” Mistranslation highlights the dual relationship of the new text to the original, characterized at the same time by dependence and by autonomy. From one perspective, “he suffered for us” is a mistranslation; from another, its new semantic potential exists not to be corrected but to be realized. If a translation represents the original, it also displaces it and becomes itself an original. For Greek-speaking Christians, Isaiah 53 LXX *is* scripture, in the fullest and most direct sense. Along with the texts from the Psalms that shape the Gospel passion narratives, this passage provides the essential hermeneutical grid or lens through which the death of Jesus is interpreted. The death of Jesus is, as it were, *textualized*. The historical and political factors operative in this event are either subsumed into a scriptural framework (passion narratives: Psalms 22, 69, etc.), or altogether suppressed by it (Paul: Isaiah 53). Thus, in most of the Pauline passages, the sole agents in this event are God and God’s Servant/Son. All others play the part of the onlookers who, in the Fourth Servant Song, retell the story of the Servant and confess the momentous divine saving act that has taken place therein, in spite of all appearances to the contrary. The event of Jesus’ death is truly understood only as it is reinscribed within the scriptural text. To confess that “Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures” is *not* to acknowledge that (as a matter of fact) Christ died for our sins, and that (helpfully for apologetic purposes) scripture provides subsequent confirmation of something we already know. To confess that “Christ died for our sins . . .” is to confess an already textualized event that would become quite another event if detached from its textual matrix.

That, at least, would seem to be the implication of “. . . according to

the scriptures." The event must be reinscribed within scripture; scripture must rewrite the event. And "scripture" here is the text in its Old Greek form, in which it is written not that the Servant bore our sicknesses but that he was delivered up for us and for our sins.