AQUILA'S *KOHELETH**

John Jarick

It has often been noted that the translation which goes by the title of *Ecclesiastes* in the Septuagint collection looks suspiciously like the work of Aquila. But if *Ecclesiastes* is from the Aquilan "school," so to speak, the question arises as to what is to be made of the alternative Greek renderings, beginning with the transliteration of the original Hebrew sage's name as *Koheleth*, which have come down to us under the name of Aquila.

A number of scholars have proposed, as the answer to this question, that Aquila had made two editions of this book (as he is known to have done with some other biblical books), one being incorporated into the Septuagint collection and thus surviving intact, the other being preserved fragmentarily (as is the case with most of Aquila's work).[1] But an alternative answer has also been proposed, namely that the Septuagint version of *Ecclesiastes* is indeed from the hand of Aquila, but the renderings which have come down to us under the name of Aquila for this book are from an entirely different hand.

[1]See the discussion in A. H. McNeile, "The Greek Version of Koheleth," pp. 115-134 of his *An Introduction to Ecclesiastes* (Cambridge 1904); and the judgments of George A. Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes* (ICC; New York 1908) 8-11, and Robert Gordis, *Koheleth – The Man and His World: A Study of Ecclesiastes* (3rd ed.; New York 1968) 135-136.

This latter view was presented by Dominique Barthélemy in *Les devanciers d'Aquila*.[2] It has been opposed by Kyösti Hyvärinen in *Die Übersetzung von Aquila*,[3] but there is yet more evidence which may be brought forward to challenge Barthélemy's contention.[4]

In the first place it is worth re-examining the renderings which Barthélemy presented as evidence for his contention that what purports to be Aquila's version of *Koheleth* is not at all the work of Aquila (or his "school"). For each of these allegedly un-Aquilan renderings, there are reasonable grounds for supposing that they may indeed be from Aquila's hand. The renderings in question, together with relevant considerations, are as follows:

קהלת – κωελέθ (1:1; 12:8).[5] Cf. Aquila's treatment of the other six names of Solomon (in the rabbinic view). Aside from the two names passed down by the historical sources, שלמה (which is regularly transliterated by LXX and Aquila as Σαλωμών or the like) and ידידיה (2 Sam. 12:25 – LXX Ἰδεδί, Aq. Ἰεδιδία), the others are four names mentioned in the book of Proverbs. The LXX translator of Proverbs did not treat these as names, and so in 30:1 he translated אגור as φοβήθητι, יקה as δεξάμενος αὐτούς, and איתיאל as πιστεύουσιν θεῷ, and in 31:1 he translated למואל as εἴρηνται ὑπὸ θεοῦ. We have no information on Aquila's treatment of the first two cases, but we do know that he transliterated איתיאל as Ἐθιήλ and למואל as Λαμμοῦν. It would be in keeping with this practice, then, for

[2]Dominique Barthélemy, "La 'Septante' de l'Ecclésiaste," pp. 21-30 of his *Les devanciers d'Aquila* (SVT, vol. 10; Leiden 1963). A similar case had previously been made by M. Salzberger, "Septuagintalübersetzung zum Buche Kohelet," in *MGWJ* 22 (1873) 168-174.

[3]Kyösti Hyvärinen, "Die LXX-Übersetzung des Ecclesiastes," pp. 88-99 of his *Die Übersetzung von Aquila* (Coniectana Biblica, Old Testament Series, no. 10; Lund 1977). Hyvärinen argues that the Aquila fragments of this book do indeed display Aquilan characteristics – while the LXX version betrays some un-Aquilan traits.

[4]The sources for this evidence are Frederick Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt* (Oxford 1867); Joseph Reider, *Prolegomena to a Greek-Hebrew and Hebrew-Greek Index to Aquila* (Philadelphia 1916); Joseph Reider and Nigel Turner, *An Index to Aquila* (SVT, vol. 12; Leiden 1966); and Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament* (Oxford 1897).

[5]Codices 161 and 248 at 1:1 present κωλέθ as Aquila's form of קהלת, while Codex 252 at 12:8 presents κωελέθ as his rendering; cf. Origen's transliteration of the Hebrew title of the book as κωέλθ.

him to transliterate rather than translate the seventh supposed name of Solomon, *viz.* קהלת.

הבל – ἀτμός (1:2,14; 2:1,11; 7:15; 9:9; 12:8). Cf. Aquila's use of ἀτμός for הבל in Ps 144:4 (LXX ματαιότης), a verse which the Rabbis connected with Eccl 1:2. The rendering of הבל in a physical sense rather than in an exclusively figurative sense is in keeping with the midrashic exposition of הבל הבלים as indicating that there is even less substance in a human being than there is in the הבל from an oven or in the הבל from a stove.

עמלו – κόπῳ (1:3). LXX *Ecclesiastes* did not have a rendering for every suffixed pronoun, either, as may be seen in 7:1, where the Syro-Hexaplaric critical signs indicate that the αὐτοῦ called for by הולדו was missing from LXX and had to be supplied from Aquila.[6]

יגעים – κοπιῶσιν (1:8). This attests to a reading of the Hebrew word as a participle rather than an adjective. Cf. other occasions on which Aquila rendered a participle by a finite verb – e.g., 1 Sam 28:9 (ἐγκρούεις for מתנקש), Job 20:26 (ἀποκέκρυπται for טמון), Dan 9:26 (τέτμηται for נחרצת).

לאמר – λέγων (1:16). Aquila is recorded as rendering לאמר by λέγων on a number of occasions, such as Jer 3:1 and 27:1;[7] there are also other instances of him rendering an infinitive with ל by a Greek participle, such as βοηθήσων for לעזר in Jos 10:33. His more usual method of employing the infinitive with τοῦ is seen in the Aquila fragments of this book at 2:26 and 4:13. LXX *Ecclesiastes* does not always render in the expected Aquilan fashion, either, as may be seen at 2:3; 3:18; and 9:1; where the Hebrew infinitive is not rendered by a Greek infinitive – not to mention the many times in which the Greek article does not appear in front of the infinitive.

גם not rendered by καίγε (1:17; 5:18; 7:22). Out of more than 50 occurrences of גם in this book, we have three recorded cases of Aquila failing to use the characteristic Aquilan rendering of καίγε, and no recorded cases of him actually employing it. But in the case of 7:22, LXX also fails to employ it, so there are only two known instances of Aquila disagreeing with LXX *Ecclesiastes* on this matter. It may be argued that Aquila does not always render גם by καίγε (cf. his employment of

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[6] The pronoun is missing from Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

[7] Peter Katz cautions that this evidence may be doubtful – see p. 270 of Peter Katz and Joseph Ziegler, "Ein Aquila-Index in Vorbereitung," *VT* 8 (1958) 264-285.

τοιγαροῦν for גם in Job 7:11), and that a mere two cases out of so many in this book is not an overwhelming statistic, given that the sources were more interested in preserving disagreements with LXX rather than agreements with it.[8]

מכאוב – βάσανος (1:18; 2:23). This is not an impossible rendering on the part of Aquila, particularly if he is the translator who offered βάσανος for מכאוב in 2 Chron 6:29,[9] and/or βασανίζειν for כאב hiphil in Ezek 13:22.[10]

את – σύν (4:3). While this is the only extant example in the Aquila fragments of this book of the characteristic Aquilan rendering of את by σύν when it is fol-lowed by the article, examples are to be found in 2:24; 3:15; 7:18; and 11:8 of the equally characteristic Aquilan rendering of את by the article when the Hebrew has no article, and there are no examples in the fragments of את not being ren-dered in an Aquilan fashion (in 5:3 LXX and Aquila agree, against the Masoretes, that את is to be read as a personal pronoun).

מה היה – διὰ τί (7:10). This is perhaps not what might have been expected from Aquila, but there is no extant data on how he rendered this particular expression elsewhere in the Bible.

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[8]This same argument may be put forward in response to Roger Beckwith, *The Old Tes-tament Canon of the New Testament Church* (London 1985), whose Appendix on "The Four Greek Versions of Ecclesiastes in Origen's 'Hexapla'" (pp. 472-477) presents two reasons for considering "Aquila's" version of this book to be the original LXX version, the first reason being these three recorded cases of גם not being rendered by καίγε (p. 473). To his second reason, concerning the proportion of agreements to disagreements among the four Greek ver-sions (pp. 474-476), it may be said that "Aquila" fits into Beckwith's charts more or less where we would expect if he were indeed Aquila: his disagreements with Symmachus outweigh his agreements with that translator more in Ecclesiastes than in Ezekiel, but less in Ecclesiastes than in Psalms; his agreements with Theodotion outweigh his disagree-ments with that translator more in Ecclesiastes than in Ezekiel or Psalms, but so do Theodotion's disagreements with Symmachus outweigh his agreements with him more in this book than in those two books. A statistical variation such as this, with the "Aquila and Symmachus" proportion falling above the "Theodotion and Symmachus" proportion, is not at all startling nor conclusive.

[9]Cf. Field *ad loc.*; McNeile, p. 124; Barthélemy, p. 28.

[10]Reider-Turner, p. 40, list this as Aquila's rendering, though Field, *ad loc.*, lists it as Symmachus' rendering and brings forward alternative renderings as Aquila's. MT has הכאת, but BHS recommends a reading of הכאיב (cf. הכאבתיו later in the verse; LXX employs διαστρέφω in both instances, but there is no Aquila rendering recorded for the later in-stance).

בלא – πρό (7:17). Although LXX's ἐν οὐ might appear to be more Aquilan than the better Greek usage of πρό in this context, there are no known examples of Aquila actually rendering בלא by ἐν οὐ, whereas there is the counter-example of ἄνευ in Is. 55:1.

פעמים רבות – πλεονάκις καιροῦ (7:22). LXX has a doublet for this expression, and it may be that the second version there given, *viz.* καθόδους πολλάς, was really Aquila's rendering, he then having been credited with a rendering that was not his. But if πλεονάκις καιροῦ is admitted as Aquilan, it can be seen that it takes account of both Hebrew words, unlike LXX's πλεονάκις for פעמים רבות in Ps. 106 (LXX 105):43 (where no Aquila rendering has been recorded), the only other occurrence of this expression in the Bible.

מלא לב בני־האדם בהם – ἐτόλμησαν (8:11). The full Aquila rendering of לעשות may have been ἐτόλμησαν οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοῦ ποιῆσαι, which is good Greek but has no direct equivalent to לב, since this is not required by τολμάω (cf. LXX Est 7:5, ἐτόλμησεν ποιῆσαι for מלאו לבו לעשות), or it may have been ἐτόλμησαν καρδίαι υἱῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ ποιῆσαι, which is perhaps less elegant Greek but might be thought to be a more Aquilan rendering (translating a singular by a plural is common enough in Aquila,[11] and is here well warranted by the plural בנים to which the singular לב refers). LXX's πληροφορέω is not a particularly good rendering in this context,[12] and appears nowhere else in LXX, nor (as is the case with τολμάω) anywhere in the Aquila material.

אלי – παρ' ἐμοί (9:13). Cf. Aquila's use of παρά for אל in Ps. 33:14,15. He also employs εἰς, ἐπί, ἕως, κατά, περί, and ὑπέρ for אל, so is certainly not restricted to invariably using πρός.

קרב – πολεμικά (9:18). Cf. other occasions on which Aquila rendered a noun in the genitive by an adjective – e.g., Exod 37:17 (ἐλατήν for מקשה), 2 Ki 4:39 (ἄγριος for שדה), and the common αἰώνιος for עולם.

עצב – σπάω (10:9). This is the only case in biblical Hebrew of עצב being used of physical pain, and it may be that Aquila wished to denote this difference of meaning by the use of a different Greek verb than his normal rendering.

כל־בנות השיר – πάντα τὰ τῆς ᾠδῆς (12:4). A construction with θυγάτηρ might be expected from Aquila, but cf. Exod 13:20, where he does not render קצה, even

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[11]See Reider, p. 36.

[12]LSJ gives only LXX Eccl. 8:11 for a meaning of "be fully bent (on doing)."

though a construction with τελευταῖος or τέλος might be expected. As for ῷδή, cf.
Aquila's rendering of שירה by ῷδή in Isa 5:1.[13]

חקר – ἠρεύνησε (12:9). Cf. Aquila's use of ἐξερευνάω for חקר in 1 Sam 20:12.

משל – παροιμία (12:9). Cf. Aquila's use of παροιμία for משל in Ezek 18:2 and
παροιμιάζω for the cognate verb in 24:3 (LXX employed παραβολή in both verses).

ישר – ὀρθῶς (12:10). Cf. other occasions on which Aquila rendered a noun in the
accusative by an adverb – e.g., Deut 32:35 (καιρίως for עתדת), Isa 33:7 (πικρῶς for
מר), Ps. 2:1 (κενῶς for ריק).

The discussion thus far has been concerned with renderings in Aquila's *Koheleth*
which might appear to be un-Aquilan, but which upon further examination can be
seen to be defensibly Aquilan after all. However, a discussion of the authorship
of these fragments should also take into account the positive evidence, namely
the greater number of renderings which are eminently Aquilan and/or more in
keeping with MT than is LXX *Ecclesiastes*.[14]

In the former category may be listed such standard Aquilan renderings as καινός
for חדש, for which Aquila never employs LXX's πρόσφατον (1:9); μετά for עם, for
which he never employs LXX's ἐν (1:16); ἀγαπάω for אהב, for which he never
employs LXX's φιλέω (3:8); and λαός for עם, for which he never employs LXX's
ἄνθρωπος (12:9).[15] Τέλος (4:8,16) is his usual rendering of קץ, whereas LXX's
πειρασμός is unattested in the Aquila material. Λογισμός (7:25) and cognates are
employed by Aquila for words from the root חשב, whereas he employs LXX's
ψῆφος and cognates for words from the root ספר. He uses LXX's πλήν (7:29) only for
אך, but has μόνος for לבד in 1 Ki 14:13 and τὰ μόνα for בדים in Ezek 10:2.

Aquila's typical method of rendering ל with the infinitive by τοῦ with the in-
finitive is seen in τοῦ συλλέγειν καὶ τοῦ συναγαγεῖν for לאסוף ולכנוס (2:26) and
τοῦ φυλάξασθαι for להזהר (4:13). Moreover, συλλέγειν in 2:26 understands the He-

[13] According to Reider-Turner, p. 260; Field, *ad loc.*, does not give an Aquila translation
of שירה.

[14] Of these examples, the following have been previously noted briefly by Hyvärinen,
pp. 97,98: καινός (1:9), κυριεύσει (2:19), συλλέγειν (2:26), ἀγαπάω (3:8), τέλος (4:8,16), καὶ
τῷ ἑνί (4:11), ἐνισχύσει (7:19), λογισμός (7:25 [mistakenly listed under 7:27, where Aquila's
rendering is not recorded]), παγιδεύματα (7:26), μόνον (7:29), καιρός (8:9), and ἐκ τόπου
ἁγίου (8:10).

[15] Rahlfs' edition of LXX has λαός in the text, on the basis of Codex Venetus.

brew verb as אסף, and is the typical Aquilan translation of this verb, whereas LXX's προσθεῖναι has misunderstood it as יסף. Τὸ ποιούμενον for שנעשה (2:17) is likewise typical of Aquila, in rendering the perfect with ש or אשר by a participle with the article (cf., e.g., Jer 7:1 [ὁ γενόμενος for אשר־היה], 52:15 [τοὺς ἐμπεπτωκότας for אשר נפלא]). And καὶ κυριεύσει (2:19) is a straightforward translation of וישלט, without the un-Aquilan intrusive particle in LXX's καὶ εἰ ἐξουσιάζεται.[16]

Two particular readings are well explained by Aquila's work. In the case of καὶ καρπεύσει (12:5), ותפר has been read in terms of פרי, though it is most likely to be from the root פרר; examples abound of Aquila's etymologizing tendency leading him astray in such a manner.[17] And in the case of λύτρωσις (12:6), גלת has been understood as גאלת, and rendered in accordance with Aquila's λυτρόω for גאל in Ps 74:2, whereas LXX's ἀνθέμιον is unattested in the Aquila material.

Probably the best example of Aquila's methodology is to be found in τρόμῳ τρομήσουσιν (12:5), a close representation of the reduplicated form of the Hebrew חתחתים, read as חת חתים (cf. other occasions on which Aquila read such Hebrew forms in the same manner – e.g., Isa 18:1 [σκιὰ σκιά for צלצל, read as צל צל], 27:8 [ἐν σάτῳ σάτον for בסאסאה, read as בסאה סאה], Hos 8:13 [φέρε φέρε for הבהבי, read as הב הב]).

In the category of renderings in Aquila's *Koheleth* which are more in keeping with MT than are those in LXX *Ecclesiastes* may be listed such translations as πλάνας for הוללות, where LXX speaks of παραβολάς (1:17);[18] θυμοῦ for כעס, where LXX, apparently reading דעת, has γνώσεως (1:18); ἄγγελος for מלאך, where LXX speaks of θεός (5:5); καιρός for עת, where LXX, perhaps reading את, has τά (8:9); and ἐκαυχήσαντο for ישתכחו, where LXX, reading ישתבחו, has ἐπῃνέθησαν (8:10). The rendering of מלך by βασιλέως (2:12) is in keeping with the other ancient versions apart from LXX, which translated the word as βουλῆς. Τῆς δικαιοσύνης

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[16]Rahlfs has omitted εἰ from his LXX text.

[17]See Reider, pp. 38-40.

[18]LXX's rendering is conceivable as a Greek scribal error for παραφοράς (so Gordis, p. 212; cf. περιφορά and περιφέρεια for הוללות elsewhere in Ecclesiastes) or as the deliberate change of a copyist who thought the latter a mistake in this context (so Robert B. Salters, *The Book of Ecclesiastes: Studies in the Versions and the History of Exegesis* [Ph.D. dissertation; St Andrews 1973] 123).

(3:16) vocalises הצדק as MT does, whereas LXX, reading it as הצדיק, renders it by τοῦ δικαίου. Similarly ἐν δικαιοσύνη αὐτοῦ for בצדקו, where LXX has ἐν δικαίῳ αὐτοῦ (7:15).

In several cases Aquila's renderings represent elements of the Hebrew text which are not reflected explicitly in LXX: καὶ τῷ ἑνί takes account of the ל in ולאחד, whereas LXX's καὶ ὁ εἷς does not (4:11); τῆς ἀγαθωσύνης includes the article in הטובה missing from LXX's ἀγαθωσύνης (5:10);[19] and ἐκ τόπου ἁγίου takes account of the מקום in ממקום קדוש, while LXX's ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου does not (8:10).[20] And the Syro-Hexaplaric critical signs indicate further renderings which were missing from LXX and had to be supplied from Aquila: τίς for מה (6:8); the pronoun on γενέσεως αὐτοῦ for הולדו (7:1); καρδία for לב (7:3); the conjunction on καὶ καρδία for ולב (7:4); and ὁ ἄνθρωπος for האדם (9:1).[21]

Moreover, Aquila's ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου is a correct translation of בלבי, in comparison with LXX's εἰ ἡ καρδία μου (2:3);[22] θυσία is a straightforward translation of זבח, without the addition of a personal pronoun in LXX's θυσία σου (4:17); σὺ ὅσα is a straightforward translation of את אשר, without the extra elements in LXX's σὺ οὖν ὅσα ἐάν (5:3);[23] ἀφῇς is far preferable, as a translation of תנח, to LXX's μιάνῃς (7:18);[24] ἐνισχύσει is a correct reading of תעז as the verb עזז, whereas LXX's βοηθήσει has read or postulated עזר (7:19); and πεφυτευμένοι is a sensible rendering of נטועים, in comparison with LXX's meaningless πεπυρωμένοι (12:11).[25]

In the case of ברכות (2:6), the context clearly indicates that the purpose of the water-storages was for irrigation and not for swimming, such that Aquila's

[19]Rahlfs' text includes the article, though it is missing from all three codices.

[20]Rahlfs corrects τοῦ to τόπου on the basis of the Latin.

[21]Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus lack τίς in 6:8 and αὐτοῦ in 7:1, and Vaticanus also lacks καρδία in 7:3.

[22]Rahlfs' text has corrected LXX on the basis of the Latin. Field's citation of Aquila does not have a *iota* subscript on καρδία.

[23]Both versions read את here as a pronoun rather than the Masoretic vocalisation of it as the sign of the direct object. Rahlfs emends LXX to σὺν ὅσα ἐάν, while the Syro-Hexapla's text indicates σὺ ὅσα ἐάν for LXX.

[24]Rahlfs corrects LXX to ἀνῇς (of which μιάνῃς may well be a corruption), on the basis of the Latin.

[25]Codices Vaticanus and Venetus have πεφυτευμένοι, the reading adopted by Rahlfs, but all other manuscripts read as above.

λίμνας is a far more appropriate translation than LXX's κολυμβήθρας. And in the case of מצודים (7:26), Aquila correctly depicts (by means of παγιδεύματα) the instruments which are used to do the trapping, whereas LXX incorrectly depicts (by means of θηρεύματα) the objects which are caught in a trap. Finally, in 12:9, Aquila's καὶ ἠνωτίσατο καὶ ἠρεύνησε καὶ κατεσκεύασε παροιμίας is a rendering more in keeping with MT's ואזן וחקר תקן משלים than is LXX's καὶ οὓς ἐξιχνιάσεται κόσμιον παραβολῶν.

Thus it appears that there are no firm grounds for denying that Aquila was the instigator of the renderings transmitted as his, while on the contrary there are good grounds for accepting that those renderings are drawn from an Aquilan version. The remaining question, as to whether LXX *Ecclesiastes* is actually Aquila's first edition (or a proto-Aquilan version) and Aquila's *Koheleth* is a second edition, cannot be answered with any certainty.