## "The Lord is a Warrior" – "The Lord Who Shatters Wars"
## Exodus 15:3 and Judith 9:7; 16:2

The Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-18) celebrates God's victory over Pharaoh. At some point it became the first entry in the collection of odes attached to the Septuagint Psalter. Within this 'psalm' the Hebrew text (15:3) defines Yahweh as איש מלחמה -- "man of war".[1] The Old Greek translation rendered this phrase as κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους – "the Lord, shattering wars." Several scholars[2] propose that the Greek translator in fact has reversed the meaning of his Hebrew text with this rendering, arguing that the Greek translation signifies God is a peace-maker. In this paper I argue, conversely, that the context of LXX Exodus 14-16 requires us to interpret 15:3 as a statement of Yahweh's ability to win battles for His people. While the obvious outcome ultimately of Yahweh's warring efforts brings peace to His people, this was not the immediate focus of the Greek translator's rendering of Exodus 15:3. The usage of this terminology in Judith 9:7 and 16:2 communicates the same perspective. We will explore the implications of this conclusion for the use of this Greek expression in Isaiah 42:13 and several other Septuagint texts.

Several methodological issues must be addressed before we come to discuss the text of interest. First, it is generally assumed that the Pentateuch was the first section of the Jewish Scriptures to be translated into Greek, probably in the early decades of the third century B.C.E. and most likely in Alexandria. In terms of chronological development, the Greek translation of Exodus precedes that of Isaiah probably by as much as a century.[3] Within the Greek tradition, then, the earlier Exodus translation could potentially influence the later translations of Isaiah,

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[1] The Samaritan text reads גבור במלחמה -- "a valiant man of war".

[2] Willem Van Leeuwen, *Eirene in het Nieuwe Testament* (Wageningen: H. Veenman & Zonen, 1940). Georg Bertram, "συντρίβω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Volume VII*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B.Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1971), 920-922. Isac Leo Seeligmann, "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of Its Problems," in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, ed. by Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 119-294. J. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique du Judaïsme antique d'après les témoins textuels d'Isaïe* (Supplement Vetus Testamentum 33) (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1982), 59-64. Roger Le Déaut, "La Septante, Un Targum?" in *Études Sur Le Judaïsme Hellénistique,* ed. R. Kuntzmann and J. Schlosser (Paris, France: Les Editions du Cerf, 1984), 147-95. Alain le Boulluec & Pierre Sandevoir, *La Bible D'Alexandrie. L'Exode* (Paris, France: Éditions du Cerf, 1989). Johannes Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint. Collected Essays*, ed. K. Hauspie (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2004), 140ff.

[3] Jennifer Dines, *The Septuagint* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2004) indicates that "For the moment [the prophetic books] are mostly assigned to the mid-second century BCE and later, largely from their supposed reflection of, and, in some cases allusions to, contemporary events (Maccabean, Hasmonean, Roman, etc.)" (46).

Hosea, the Psalter, and Judith[4]. Secondly, I assume that the translator of Exodus 15:1-18 is the same as the translator for the majority of the Exodus text.[5] Although the Song of Moses became part of the collected Odes linked with the Psalter, there is no evidence that Exodus 15:1-18 was translated earlier than the rest of Exodus or by a different hand. Thirdly, the Greek Exodus context should be the primary determiner of meaning for this phrase in Exodus 15:3. Context will include patterns of translation technique in Greek Exodus, including the way the translator describes God and His interactions with humanity. Fourth, our ability to reconstruct theological and hermeneutical perspectives current within the Jewish community of Alexandria in the early third century B.C.E. is extremely limited, outside of the evidence in portions of the Septuagint. Fifth, although the Samaritan Pentateuch reads a different text in 15:3a (גבור במלחמה), it has essentially the same meaning as the MT.[6] I presume that the Hebrew *Vorlage* that the Greek translator used was the same as the current MT. Sixth, there are no significant textual variants in the Greek textual tradition that suggest a different Greek translation for this passage.[7]

Of course many have noted this unusual rendering and theorized as to the reasons why the translator rendered it in this way.

1. The translator is avoiding an anthropomorphism.[8] The juxtaposition of κύριος and ἀνήρ that would occur in a more literal[9] translation, such as κύριος ἀνὴρ πολεμιστής, was presumably too jarring.

[4] Carey Moore, *The Anchor Bible. Judith* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1985). "Regardless of the original language of the Judith-story, the LXX version of Judith gives every indication of being a translation of a Hebrew text. Unfortunately, no such text has survived…." (66).

[5] There is debate about whether the material in Exodus describing the fabrication of the Tabernacle was translated by the same person who rendered the earlier sections. The most recent discussion of this question is by Martha Wade, *Consistency of Translation Techniques in the Tabernacle Accounts of Exodus in the Old Greek* (SBLSCSS 49, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003).

[6] As far as I can determine no Hebrew text for Exodus 15:3 has been found in the Qumran materials. It is important to consider the way the translator of the Psalter also handled this Hebrew construction in Psalm 23(24):8.

[7] In the Odes there is no textual variant shown by Rahlfs for this text. In Exodus F^b has the marginal reading ἀνὴρ πολέμου.

[8] Z. Frankel, *Ueber den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinische Hermeneutik* (Leipzig, Joh. Ambr. Barth, 1851, republished 1972), 85. "Auch manche andere Freiheit wird zur Vermeidung der Anthropomorphismen angewendet." H. St. J. Thackeray in "The Greek Translators of the Prophetical Books," *Journal of Theological Studies* 4(1903):583 notes "the anthropomorphism by which Jehovah is called 'a man of war' is avoided by the same paraphrase συντρίβων πολέμους in Ex.xv.3, Is.xlii 13."

[9] Compare Joshua 17:1 ἀνὴρ πολεμιστὴς.

2. Theological considerations influenced the translator.[10] This works in two directions. First, it was deemed inappropriate to identify God in such martial terms, i.e. as a Warrior God. Second, it is argued that there was a great desire for peace within Hellenistic Judaism and the translator gave expression to his eschatological hope – God would eliminate war and bring peace. To support this argument various scholars propose linkages between Isaiah 42:13,[11] Psalm 75(76):4[12], Hosea 2:20[13] and Exodus 15:3a. Bertram comments on Exodus 15:3 and Isaiah 42:13, insisting that "independently of the Hebr. original the LXX has to be taken in the sense of the destruction of war and its weapons."[14] Boulluec and Sandevoir in their commentary on Exodus 15:3a suggest that the translation has "a messianic flavour, rejecting the idea of a warrior God" (my translation).[15]

3. A third hypothesis suggests that the translator was following known methods of Jewish hermeneutic that used verbal or linguistic analogy to link various texts in scripture.[16] The translator of Exodus, when he came to 15:3a, used one or more of

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[10] Willem van Leeuwen, *Eirene in het Nieuwe Testament*, 25; Bertram, 'συντρίbw', 921; Seeligmann, "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of Its Problems", 123-294. Seeligmann accepts the possibility proposed by Ziegler that the translator of Isaiah "must have had knowledge of older (attempts) at translations, or that, may be, the version now in our possession is composed of a number of 'telescoped' renderings"(6/7), 132.

[11] Isaiah 42:13
κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐξελεύσεται καὶ συντρίψει πόλεμον, ἐπεγερεῖ ζῆλον καὶ βοήσεται ἐπὶ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτοῦ μετὰ ἰσχύος. (The Lord, the God of hosts, shall go forth and shatter war, he shall stir up jealousy and shout with might against his enemies"). יריע אף־יצריח על־איביו יתגבר
יהוה כגבור יצא כאיש מלחמות. The NRSV renders the Hebrew as "The LORD goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes."

[12] Psalm 75(76):4
ἐκεῖ συνέτριψεν τὰ κράτη τῶν τόξων, ὅπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν καὶ πόλεμον. ר רשפי־קשת מגן וחרב ומלחמה
שמה סב. NETS renders the Greek as "there He crushed the power of bows, shield and sword and war." NRSV translates the Hebrew as "There he broke the flashing arrows, the shield, the sword and the weapons of war."

[13] Hosea 2:20(18) in the Greek translation reads:
καὶ τόξον καὶ ῥομφαίαν καὶ πόλεμον συντρίψω ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ κατοικιῶ σε ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίδι. תים לבטח
וקשת וחרב ומלחמה אשבור מן־הארץ והשכב – "And bow and sword and war I will shatter from the land and I will make you dwell in hope" (my translation of the Greek). NRSV translates the Hebrew (vs. 18) as "and I will abolish [break] the bow, the sword, and war from the land and I will make you lie down in safety." This is within an oracle that promises the restoration of Israel after God's judgment has come upon the people for their sin.

[14] Bertram, 'συντρίβω', 922.

[15] Boulluec & Sandevoir, *La Bible D'Alexandrie. L'Exode*, 172. "La version LXX à saveur messianique, rejette la conception d'un Dieu guerrier…" Roger Le Déaut, "La Septante, Un Targum?", page 177 offers a similar evaluation: "…version à saveur messianique qui prend l'exact, contre-pied de l'hébreu."

[16] Lust, *Messianism and the Septuagint. Collected Essays*, 140. He uses the work of Koenig (op.cit.) as the primary basis for his explanation, although not uncritically. Roger Le Déaut similarly seems to be dependent upon Koenig's evaluation as the basis for his understanding of Exodus 15:3 (op.cit., p.177). Le

these principles. He may have linked his Hebrew text with similar ideas expressed in Isaiah 42:13; Psalm 76:4 and/or Hosea 2:20. This gave him warrant to introduce into his translation the idea of God as peace-maker, rather than warrior.[17]

When the arguments proposed in support of these various explanations are examined carefully, we note some significant gaps. Detailed examination of the translation technique of the Exodus translator does not seem to have been conducted. So judgments as to what the translator may or may not have done lack firm foundation. As well, the context of Exodus 15:3 is virtually ignored in these evaluations. Finally, assessing the theological tendencies of the translator is a very difficult enterprise, especially when it lacks detailed study of the translator's method of working. Alternatively, I would suggest that, based on a firm grasp of the translator's technique and a careful evaluation of the context of Exodus 15 and its surrounding chapters, the Greek translation of Exodus 15:3a affirms primarily that God is victorious over His enemies. The unusual translation probably reflects concern for the transcendence of God, i.e. one simply cannot talk of κύριος being ἀνήρ, even if the term ἀνήρ occurs in a phrase designating God's prowess in war. There is no necessary messianic flavour in the rendering and no strategic intention to define God as peace-maker on the part of the translator. How it may have been construed in subsequent reception history is another story.

Exodus 15:1-18, Moses' Song, occurs after Israel's miraculous escape[18] through the Red Sea and the destruction of Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea, all of which is engineered through God's direct intervention. Moses leads Israel in celebrating their liberation. Exodus 14 describes the crisis that Israel faced. God gives very specific instructions to Moses as to where Israel should camp (14:1-2). He tells Moses that he will make Pharaoh's heart hard, with the result that the Egyptians will pursue the Israelites. God's motive in all this is stated in 14:4b:

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Déaut offers no independent analysis of the context to support his views. He suggests that it reveals the trouble that the translator had with anthropomorphisms (op.cit., p. 178).

[17] Cf. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique...*, 59-64. According to his reconstruction, the Greek translator as he interpreted his Hebrew text, was drawn to Isaiah 42:13, where the plural form כאיש מלחמות influenced the translator of Exodus 15:3 to render the singular formula by the plural πολεμούς. Along the way the texts from Psalm 75(76):4 and Hosea 2:20(18) also exercised influence.

[18] As Israel leaves Egypt (12:41) the translator describes them as πᾶσα ἡ δύναμις κυρίου (כל־צבאות יהוה) – "all the host of the Lord" (NETS). Cf. 6:26; 12:17,51. We find the interesting statement in 7:4 that καὶ ἐξάξω σὺν δυνάμει μου τὸν λαόν μου τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου σὺν ἐκδικήσει μεγάλῃ (NETS: "and I will bring out with my host my people, the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt with great vengeance." The Hebrew for σὺν δυνάμει μου in 7:4 is את־צבאתי. In the Hebrew text and the Greek translation Israel at times is identified as Yahweh's host (12:41), i.e. His army. However, as 7:4 indicates, the Greek text (not necessarily the Hebrew text) seems to distinguish Yahweh's host from the people of Israel.

Καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομαι ἐν Φαραὼ καὶ ἐν πάσῃ τῇ στρατιᾷ αὐτοῦ καὶ γνώσον

ται πάντες οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι κύριος καὶ ἐποίησαν οὕτως.[19]

This motif of glorification is emphasized again in 14:17-18. This theme is central to Moses'

Song.[20] When the Israelites see the armies of Egypt encamped behind them, they complain to

Moses that he has led them out of Egypt in order to put them to death (14:11-12). Moses responds

by assuring them that these Egyptians will be destroyed because

κύριος πολεμήσει περὶ ὑμῶν (NETS: "the Lord will fight for you").

The battle God waged began with the pillar of fire/cloud, i.e. the angel of the Lord,

separating the camp of Israel from the camp of the Egyptians (14:19-20) so that there was no

contact. Secondly, Moses, as God commanded, raised his rod over the Red Sea, and it divided.

The Israelites crossed over on dry land (14:21-22). Thirdly, the Egyptian cavalry and chariots

pursued Israel into the middle of the sea, but God "bound together the axles of their chariots and

led them violently" (NETS, 14:25). We read that the Egyptians recognized that "the Lord fights

the Egyptians for them" (NETS, 14:25 ὁ γὰρ κύριος πολεμεῖ περὶ αὐτῶν τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους).

Finally God sent the piled waters crashing down on the Egyptians, drowning them all (14:26-28).

The result was Israel's rescue (14:30)[21] and Israel's restored trust in Yahweh and Moses, His

servant.

We discover the same kind of language in Exodus 17:16 as Israel gains victory over the

Amalekites:

ὅτι ἐν χειρὶ κρυφαίᾳ πολεμεῖ κύριος ἐπὶ Ἀμαλὴκ ἀπὸ γενεῶν εἰς γενεάς (NETS: "because

by a secret hand the Lord fights against Amalek from generations to generations"). Joshua and the

people may have been on the battlefield, but the triumph was due to God's intervention as Moses'

hands extended "the rod of God". In this instance, perhaps, Israel functions as Yahweh's host to

defeat the Amalekites.

For Yahweh to be the subject of the verb πολεμεῖν numerous times in the contexts

surrounding Exodus 15 indicates that the translator has no qualms about God getting involved in

battles. He is Israel's Warrior God by these acts. In his song Moses celebrated the military

prowess of God twice by describing how ἵππον καὶ ἀναβάτην ἔρριψεν εἰς θάλασσαν (NETS:

"horse and rider he threw into the sea" (vv. 1,4)).

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[19] NETS: "And I will be glorified in Pharao and all his army, and all the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord. And they did so."

[20] Exodus 15:1. Ἄισωμεν τῷ κυρίῳ, ἐνδόξως γὰρ δεδόξασται. NETS: "Let us sing to the Lord, for gloriously he has glorified himself;" The terminology of glory in the Greek translation occurs also in 15:2, 6,11.

[21] Καὶ ἐρρύσατο κύριος τὸν Ἰσραὴλ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐκ χειρὸς Αἰγυπτίων.

There is another element worth noting. At the end of the Red Sea event the narrative (14:31) says that

εἶδεν δὲ Ἰσραὴλ τὴν χεῖρα τὴν μεγάλην, ἃ ἐποίησεν κύριος τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις (NETS: "So Israel saw the great hand, things which the Lord did to the Egyptians"). Then after the victory over the Amalekites (17:16) Moses leads Israel in worship of Yahweh

ὅτι ἐν χειρὶ κρυφαίᾳ πολεμεῖ κύριος ἐπὶ Ἀμαλὴκ (NETS: "because by a secret hand the Lord fights against Amalek").[22] The picture of "Yahweh's hand" acting on behalf of Israel to bring about victory in battle also occurs in Exodus 15:6 –

ἡ δεξιά σου χεῖρ, κύριε, ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρούς (NETS: "your right hand, O Lord, crushed enemies"). So within the context of the extended narrative the image of "Yahweh's hand" also functions to define His role in Israel's battles. Yahweh's hand is more powerful than the "hand of the Egyptians".

The surrounding narrative, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek translation, portrays God as One Who does battle for Israel. His 'hand' acts for Him in great and sometimes secret ways. The same ideas are present in Moses' song recapitulating the victory. There is no emphasis at all on the idea of God as peace-maker in this narrative context.[23]

When we consider the imagery and statements in Moses' Song, the theme emerging in the Greek translation expresses the triumph of God over His enemies and His ability to bring His people to the "dwelling place" He has made for them (15:17). God crushed His enemies (ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρούς -- תרעץ אויב) and gained glory for Himself in the process. Despite the plans of the enemy to "overtake, divide spoils, satisfy [his] soul, destroy with the sword, and dominate" (vs.9), God "sends his breath and the sea covered them" (vs.10). Moses describes God's actions as τέρατα (vs. 11), wonders. Other potential enemies learn of God's triumph against the cavalry of Pharaoh and "melt away" in fear – Phylistiim, Edomites, Moabites, Chanaanites (vs. 14-15).[24]

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[22] The meaning of the Hebrew text is uncertain here, but the Greek translator has interpreted it, apparently, as giving the name for the altar "the Lord is my refuge" or "my Lord is a refuge" and then proceeded to explain that Yahweh is a refuge for Israel precisely because He continues to fight 'secretly' for His people against the Amalekites.

[23] The Greek term εἰρήνη and its cognates occur infrequently in Exodus. The translator used the noun only at 18:23 where Jethro promises Moses that if he follows his advice "all this people will go to their own place with peace" (NETS). The Hebrew term occurs in 4:18 but is translated idiomatically by ὑγιαίνων (cf. Genesis 29:6). There is no equivalent in the Greek translation of 18:7 for לשלום.

[24] In Exodus 23:22-23 if Israel obeys God's commands, He promises to be the enemy of Israel's enemies (ἐχθρεύσω τοῖς ἐχθροῖς σου καὶ ἀντικείσομαι τοῖς ἀντικειμένοις σοι. NETS: "I will be an enemy to your enemies and will resist those who resist you." He also promises to destroy the Amorrite, the Chettite, the Pherezite, the Chananite, the Gergesite, the Heuite, and the Iebousite (καὶ ἐκτρίψω αὐτούς - והכחדתיו).

Moses ends by acclaiming κύριος βασιλεύων τὸν αἰῶνα καὶ ἐπʼ αἰῶνα καὶ ἔτι.[25] There does not appear to be any focus on the idea of God ending wars so that He can introduce peace. Rather God triumphs over His enemies and in this way gains glory for Himself, showing that He is sovereign ruler, and fulfills His plans for His people. Not even the mighty Pharaoh can oppose God successfully. Moses makes no reference to God as peace-maker and the Greek translator does not seem, apart from 15:3a as some argue, to change the theme carried forward in the Hebrew text. Even when Moses refers to the final placement of Israel "in the mountain of your inheritance" (vs.17a), there is no explicit sense that peace is the primary goal of such an accomplishment. If the translator emphasizes anything about God, it is His glorification through such warlike activities and His commitment to His promises.

The Targums generally understand Exodus 15:3 as a reference to Yahweh's warrior prowess. Targum Onqelos, for example, renders the Hebrew clause as "The Lord is *the Lord of victory in battles*."[26] Targum Neofiti has "The Lord is a man making wars."[27] And then Targum Pseudo-Jonathan renders it as "The Lord is a *hero who wages our* wars *in every generation*."[28] There does not seem to be any tendency in these Aramaic paraphrases to understand this expression as a statement about Yahweh as peace-maker.[29]

The Hebrew text of 15:3[30] is quite straightforward: יהוה איש מלחמה יהוה שמו. We have two nominal sentences (subject (proper name) followed by complement (bound construction/noun with pronominal suffix). The NRSV renders this as "The LORD is a warrior, the LORD is his name." Only here in Exodus does the epithet איש מלחמה occur.[31] Twice in Exodus we read about אנשי חיל (ἄνδρας δυνατοὺς 18:21,25), but this designation occurs when Jethro advises Moses to appoint additional leaders to help him adjudicate the petitions of the Israelites. The phrase

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[25] NETS: "The Lord, ruling forever and ever and beyond". יהוה ימלך לעלם ועד.

[26] Bernard Crossfield, *The Aramaic Bible. The Targum. Volume 7. The Targum Onqelos to Exodus* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc. 1988),41. Note the use of the plural "battles" here, similar to the Greek rendering, even though the Old Testament text uses the singular. The same occurs in Targum Neofiti and Pseudo-Jonathan.

[27] Martin McNamara and Robert Hayward, *The Aramaic Bible. Volume 2. The Targum. Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 64.

[28] Michael Maher, *The Aramaic Bible. Volume 2. The Targum. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus* (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 203.

[29] Koenig in his discussion of Exodus 15:3 does not seem to make any reference to the renderings of Exodus 15:3 in the extent Targums.

[30] The Samaritan Pentateuch reads יהוה גבור במלחמה. The word גבור, i.e. military man, does not occur in the MT of Exodus. There does not seem to be any evidence that ג and ש could easily be confused in the Hebrew scripts used in the third century BCE (שבר/גבר).

[31] It occurs frequently elsewhere in the Jewish Canon. Usually it is rendered in Greek as ἀνὴρ πολεμιστής (cf. Numbers 31:49; Deuteronomy 2:14,16; Joshua 17:1; Judges 20:17(A); 1 Samuel 16:18; Jeremiah 49:26(30:15); Ezekiel 27:10; Joel 2:7; 4:9). Sometimes the translators use ἄνθρωπος in place of ἀνὴρ (cf. Numbers 31:28; Isaiah 3:2; 1 Chronicles 28:3). Other variations occur occasionally.

probably reflects a military context describing "energetic men, mentally and emotionally strong, resolute and of sound judgment."[32]

The Old Greek translation of 15:3 generally follows the isomorphic technique that characterizes most of Exodus[33]:

| מלחמה | איש | יהוה |
|---|---|---|
| πολέμους | συντρίβων | κύριος |
| ו | שמ | יהוה |
| αὐτῷ | ὄνομα | κύριος. |

Each of the key terms in the Hebrew text is represented by a term in the Greek text. One surprise in the second clause is the use of the dative form of the third person pronoun to signify possession, rather than the genitive.[34] The translator is quite careful normally to render the Hebrew suffixed pronoun by a genitive form[35]. We find a similar rendering at 3:13 where Moses asks Yahweh how he will answer the Israelites' question Τί ὄνομα αὐτῷ - מה־שמו.[36] Perhaps the rendering in 15:3 reflects this earlier passage. 15:2 identifies the "God of my father" as Israel's benefactor and protector, and the appropriate name for Him is Yahweh/LORD (vs.3).

In the first clause of verse 3 the Greek text does not reflect the bound construction in the predicate. Rather it renders it with a participle and noun in the object case. As well it uses the plural form πολέμους to render the singular מלחמה. Πόλεμος is the usual equivalent of מלחמה in Greek Exodus.[37] The exception is the difficult text at 17:16 where the translator used the cognate verb κύριος πολεμεῖ to render מלחמה ליהוה. Πολέμους in contrast to the singular would emphasize that no matter how many battles Yahweh fights, He is always victorious. The singular would suggest that He was victorious over Pharaoh, but future battles are another matter.

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[32] Cornelius Houtman, *Exodus. Volume 2*. Historical Commentary on the Old Testament (Kampen: Kok Publishing House, 1996), 259. He comments on the prior usage of the noun חיל in 14:4 where it describes the army of Pharaoh (στρατία).

[33] I have reordered the Greek text to follow the Hebrew order and so the Greek needs to be read from right to left.

[34] A small number of witnesses have αυτου, but they do not seem to represent the original text. This is the only example within this Psalm of the dative of possession used to render the personal possessive pronoun.

[35] Consider the example of 16:31 where Israel gives the name "Man" to define the bread Yahweh sends. The noun שמו is translated as τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ (cf. 17:15). Usually the Greek dative form of a personal pronoun renders the Hebrew preposition ל with a pronominal suffix. Another exception might be 36:7 where the Greek translated והמלאכה היתה דים by καὶ τὰ ἔργα ἦν αὐτοῖς ἱκανὰ where the pronominal suffix is rendered by αὐτοῖς rather than αὐτῶν, but the use of the adjective ἱκανά is probably determinative here.

[36] Perhaps the Greek translator wanted the emphasis "what is the name for him?"

[37] 1:10; 13:17; 15:3; 32:17.

The mention of potential enemies (Edomites, Moabites, Philistines, Chananites) in vss. 14-15 would argue that the plural covers every contingency. [38]

The major adjustment in the translation, however, is the rendering συντρίβων πολέμους for אִישׁ מלחמה. [39] The Greek present participle modifies the proper name κύριος but in what way is not clear. [40] It could be attributive ("The Lord who shatters wars") or predicative ("the Lord, shattering wars"). The Hebrew bound construction functions as the predicate-complement in a nominal clause. We encounter a similar Greek construction in vs. 18 where the translator has κύριος βασιλεύων τὸν αἰῶνα (for יהוה ימלך לעלם). In this case, however, the Greek present participle renders the Hebrew preformative verb form. If we operate with the assumption that we should seek to understand the Greek syntax in the light of the Hebrew syntax, the translator probably intended the participle in 15:18 to function as the equivalent of a finite verb, i.e. "The Lord rules for ever…." However, it is also possible, since this is the last stanza of Moses' Song and thus the conclusion, that the translator casts it in the form of a final word of praise – "The Lord, ruling for ever…." By translating 15:3a and 18 using the same syntax, perhaps the translator was encouraging the reader/listener to connect these two descriptions of Yahweh occurring at the beginning and the end of Moses' Song.

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[38] H.W. Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1920), 270 (§ 1000). Smyth notes that the plural of abstracts "refers to the single kinds, cases, occasions, manifestations of the idea expressed by the abstract substantive." F. Blass and A. Debrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, translated and revised by R. Funk (Chicago, Ill.: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) notes that "the plural of abstract expressions frequently serves in poetry and in (elevated?) prose in a way foreign to us as a designation of concrete phenomena" (pp.78-79 (142)), referencing Smyth's comment. Whether πόλεμος is an abstract noun is possible, but not usual. Further, we are not sure that the Greek translator attempted to translate Hebrew poetry using Greek poetic conventions. Rather, any observable changes from the translator's usual practice in rendering Hebrew prose may just reflect the poetic conventions found in the Hebrew *Vorlage*.

[39] Cf. Psalm 23(24):8 κύριος κραταιὸς καὶ δυνατός, κύριος δυνατὸς ἐν πολέμῳ (NETS: "The Lord, strong and powerful, the Lord, powerful in battle") יהוה עזוז וגבור יהוה גבור מלחמה (NRSV: "The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle"). Yahweh's warlike prowess seems undiminished in the Greek translation.

[40] As far as I can determine 15:3 and 18 are two of three contexts in Exodus where the anarthrous κύριος is modified by an unarticulated participle. The third occurs in the complex self-declaration by Yahweh when he reveals himself to Moses (34:6-7). Multiple participles complete the description of Yahweh.

34:6-

7 κύριος κύριος ὁ θεὸς οἰκτίρμων καὶ ἐλεήμων, μακρόθυμος καὶ πολυέλεος καὶ ἀληθινός, καὶ δικαιοσύνην διατηρῶν καὶ ποιῶν ἔλεος εἰς χιλιάδας, ἀφαιρῶν ἀνομίας.... יהוה יהוה אל וחנון ארך אפים ורב־חסד ואמת נצר חסד לאלפים נשא עון.

I have found two cases where the anarthrous κύριος is modified by an articulated participle:

15:26 ἐγὼ γάρ εἰμι κύριος ὁ ἰωμενός σε. כי אני יהוה רפאך

31:13 ἵνα γνῶτε ὅτι ἐγὼ κύριος ὁ ἁγιάζων ὑμᾶς. לדעת כי אני יהוה מקדשכם.

However, these occur in copula clauses in which Yahweh is defining Himself in some way. As well in 31:13 the Hebrew *Vorlage* has a participial form as well.

The verb συντρίβω signifies "to shatter, break in pieces, crush."[41] Within Exodus it describes the fracturing of bones in sacrificed animals (12:46)[42], the breaking of an animal's limb (22:10,14), the smashing in pieces of the tablets of the law (32:19; 34:1) or pagan religious icons (23:24; 34:13), or the damage that hail causes to crops (9:25). Συντρίβω rendered every occurrence of שבר in Exodus.[43] However, συντρίβω occurs twice in Exodus 15, but in neither case does it render שבר. We have already provided the text for 15:3. The other context is 15:7:

> Καὶ τῷ πλήθει τῆς δόξης σου συνέτριψας τοὺς ὑπεναντίους
>
> (NETS: "And in the abundance of your glory you shattered the adversaries.")
>
> וברב גאונך תהרס קמיך
>
> (NRSV: "And in the greatness of your majesty you overthrew your adversaries.")

The verb הרס in this context means to throw down.[44] The Piel form occurs in Exodus 23:24 כי הרס תהרסם ושבר תשבר מצבתיהם which the translator rendered ἀλλὰ καθαιρέσει καθελεῖς καὶ συντρίβων συντρίψεις τὰς στήλας αὐτῶν. Because the normal equivalent for שבר was συντρίβω, and the Hebrew verb הרס had already been rendered by καθελεῖς, the translator was free to use συντρίβω for שבר as he normally did.[45] However, 23:24 indicates that the Hebrew verbs הרס and שבר have considerable semantic overlap and so the translator's choice of συνέτριψας as the equivalent for תֶהֶרֹס in 15:7 is not that surprising.[46] The translator uses the cognate ἐκτρίβω four times in Exodus to describe the action God takes to

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[41] T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2002), 540. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique...,* 62 suggests that the use of this verb in contexts such as Exodus 15:3, Psalm 75(76):4, Hosea 2:20(18), and Isaiah 42:13 reflects a formula found in first and second millennium texts (Aramaic, Hittite, and Akkadian) in which elements of war were smashed to cement a political alliance. He cites language in treaties to support this. However, in one case he cites it is a soldier taking an oath to serve a ruler who breaks an arrow and agrees that he will suffer similarly if he breaks his oath of loyalty. In a Sefire inscription again similar language occurs in a political treaty, where the ruling monarch warns the vassal that he will be broken like the implement of war if he proves disloyal. Such actions seem to be a warning against hostilities, not a sign of peace. So the parallels may not be as helpful as Koenig may suggest.

[42] The Greek expression occurs also at 12:10, but it has no equivalent in the MT.

[43] It is a usual equivalent in other sections of the Greek OT as well.

[44] This verb also occurs at Exodus 19:21,24 to describe God's threat against Israel and her priests should they seek to ascend the mountain (vs. 21 μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοῆσαι; vs. 24 μὴ βιαζέσθωσαν ἀναβῆναι πρὸς τὸν θεόν). In these contexts the verb has the sense of "break through".

[45] Συντρίβω and καθαιρέω also occur together in 34:13, again describing the destruction of pagan religious icons. However, in that context καθαιρέω renders the verb נתץ, to tear down, its only occurrence in Exodus. Συντρίβω renders תשברון as it usually does.

[46] Crossfield, *The Aramaic Bible. The Targum, Volume 7. The Targum Onqelos to Exodus*, comments on 15:7 that "The Hebrew has: 'destroy' (*hrs*) which in its numerous occurrences throughout the Biblical text is never rendered 'to shatter' (*tbr*) except here,..." (42). He then makes reference to Exodus 23:24 where *hrs* in the Hebrew appears in conjunction with *šbr*, "to shatter".

erase the Egyptians (9:15; 12:13), the inhabitants of Canaan (23:23) and even Israel (32:10).[47]
These verbs convey in the mind of the translator God's ability to eradicate His enemies
effectively.

The rendering συνέτριψας τοὺς ὑπεναντίους in 15:7 is connected by the Greek
translator (initial καί), as well as by the Hebrew text, with 15:6b which claimed that Yahweh's
right hand "crushed enemies" (ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρούς -- תרעץ אויב)[48]. Yahweh crushed enemies with
the same power by which He shatters wars. In this case (15:7a) Yahweh "shattered the
opponents" with the result that they were consumed. In between vss. 3 and 7 Moses describes in a
series of graphic metaphors how the cavalry of Pharaoh suffered total disaster. Moses enumerates
how Yahweh who "shatters wars" in vs. 3a demonstrates this ability in the case of Pharaoh:

> Yahweh cast Pharaoh's cavalry into the sea;
>
> He drowned the choice officers in the Red Sea;
>
> He covered them with open sea.

Vs. 6-7 affirms the glory Yahweh receives because He has crushed enemies so convincingly. This
is how the translator, reflecting his original, defines the way "Yahweh shatters wars." To interpret
κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους in terms of Yahweh's peace-making role ignores the translational
context of Exodus 15:1-7 and injects a note that is quite foreign.

It may be that individuals who read the translation of Exodus 15:3 subsequently
interpreted it in reference to God as peacemaker, but from every indication in the Song itself and
in its context and from the translation technique of Exodus, this was not what the original
translator intended to communicate. The use and meaning of this same expression in later
portions of the Septuagint must be determined on the basis of those specific contexts. If in other
contexts it may signify that Yahweh destroys war in an eschatological sense, that meaning should
not be used to determine what the translator of Exodus 15:3 signified unless such meaning fits the
larger context of Exodus and the textual-linguistic composition of the translation.

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[47] The translator uses the compound ἐκτρίβω "rub out, destroy" four times in Exodus. Twice it renders
כחד (9:15 as a niphal where God threatens to "erase" Pharaoh and the Egyptians from the earth and in 23:
23 as a hiphil where God promises to Israel that He will cause the inhabitants of Canaan to be erased or
annihilated). In 12:13 the translator rendered the hiphil participle למשחית ('the destroyer') as the
articulated aorist passive infinitive τοῦ ἐκτριβῆναι to describe 'the destroyer' God would send against
Egypt and against which the Passover blood would protect Israel. The other occurrence is 32:10 for the
verb אכל when God threatens to consume, i.e. erase, Israel and create a new people from Moses because of
the Golden Calf episode (ἐκτρίβω αὐτούς).
[48] This is the only occurrence of רעץ and θραύω in Exodus. Note also that the Greek renders the singular
Hebrew noun with a plural form, ἐχθρούς. Perhaps again as in 15:3 with the plural πολέμους the
translator emphasizes that God crushes all enemies, not just any particular one.

It seems clear that the translator by his rendering of 15:3a did not want in any way to diminish the Hebrew text's assertions about Yahweh's ability to triumph over any enemies. Can we discern, however, any reason why he decided not to render the Hebrew text simply as ἀνὴρ πολεμιστής? I think Frankel was on the right track when he proposed the avoidance of anthropomorphism as the essential reason. We know from several other contexts in Exodus that the translator was uncomfortable with the idea of people having direct contact with Yahweh. In the Hebrew text of Exodus 24:9-11 Yahweh invites the Israelite leadership to join him at the top of Sinai. In vss. 10 and 11 the Hebrew says explicitly that these people saw the God of Israel. Yet the Greek translator in both contexts says that they saw only the place of God. Even with this more limited exposure to the divine, the translator notes that "not even one of the chosen of Israel failed."

A second indication of this tendency would be the frequent rendering of יעד "to appoint, meet" by future passive forms of γινώσκω ("I will be known").[49] The translator maintained the Hebrew text's affirmation that Yahweh revealed himself, but left it quite indefinite how this exactly happened. There was no 'meeting' per se between Yahweh and human beings. Perhaps a third situation occurs in 4:24ff. As Yahweh commanded, Moses was returning to Egypt with his family. They stopped at an inn. The Hebrew text indicates that Yahweh sought to kill Moses. However, the translator alters the sense by rendering "the angel of the Lord…sought to kill him."

The translator exercised care in the way he interpreted texts describing Yahweh's interactions with human beings. Yet, his view of God is not that of a distant, uninvolved transcendent being. God sees, hears, and fights directly for his people. However, to suggest that Yahweh is ἀνὴρ πολεμιστής goes too far it seems. He chooses a dynamic equivalent rendering to express Yahweh's ability to conquer all his enemies.[50]

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[49] Exodus 25:22(21); 29:42; 30:36. An exception to this is 29:43 where the translator used τάξομαι (I will give orders).

[50] In my view Seeligmann, "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of Its Problems", 290 goes much too far when he says in reference to Exodus 15:3 that "the phrase איש מלחמה, in contradiction to the Hebrew text, became συντρίβων πολέμους." His suggested translation "God makes war disappear from the world" may be appropriate for Isaiah 42:13, but does not fit Exodus 15:3 (op.cit., 101). Bertram, "συντρίβω", 921 similarly goes beyond the evidence, in my opinion, when he argues that the Greek translator of Exodus has given a rendering that does not reflect the sense of the Hebrew text. He offers no analysis of the context of Exodus 15:3 or translation technique of Greek Exodus to support his position.

Twice in the story of Judith[51] the same Greek description of Yahweh is used. In 9:7 Judith prays that God would use her to take vengeance on the Assyrians and in this way bring his wrath upon those who seek to pollute the temple. While the Assyrians have put their hope ἐν ἀσπίδι καὶ ἐν γαίσῳ καὶ τόξῳ καὶ σφενδόνῃ καὶ οὐκ ἔγνωσαν ὅτι σὺ εἶ κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους. Κύριος ὄνομά σοι. (NRSV: "in shield and spear and in bow and sling. They do not know that you are the Lord who crushes wars; the Lord is your name"). She petitions Yahweh to smash their strength and power. The context indicates that it is Yahweh's ability to triumph over all enemies that gives her confidence to pray in such terms. He is θεὸς πάσης δυνάμεως καὶ κράτους (9:14), which he uses to protect Israel (ὑπερασπίζων τοῦ γένους Ἰσραήλ). When she announces (13:14) her amazing feat at the walls of Bethulia, she praises God and says ἔθραυσε τοὺς ἐχθροὺς ἡμῶν (NRSV: "he has destroyed our enemies").[53] After Judith successfully beheads Holofernes, the Assyrian general leading the siege against Jerusalem, she sings praise to God. She again refers to Yahweh (16:2) as θεὸς συντρίβων πολέμους κύριος (NRSV: "For the Lord is a God who crushes wars"). She concludes by warning rebellious people that κύριος παντοκράτωρ ἐκδικήσει αὐτοὺς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως (NRSV: " The Lord Almighty will take vengeance on them in the day of judgment"). God's triumph through Judith against the enemies of Israel gives them security from similar terror throughout her lifetime (16:25).

The expression κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους in the story of Judith refers to Yahweh's ability to triumph over his enemies in astonishing and unprecedented ways. No matter how great the opposition might be, Yahweh is greater. There is no explicit sense in these two contexts in Judith that this expression is celebrating God's ability to end war, but rather it enforces his power to destroy all opposition. If Moore[54] is correct in his argument that Judith was composed (and presumably translated into Greek) towards the end of the second century BCE, then Judith becomes an important witness to the continued use and understanding of this phrase, during this

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[51] T. Craven, *Artistry and Faith in the Book of Judith*. SBL Dissertation Series 70 (Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1983). "It seems most plausible to me that the author of Judith followed the model of the Exodus story…" (111). "Both speak of God as a divine warrior (notably Jdt 16:2 and Exod 15:3) and as the creator" (111). Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique...,* 61 dismisses the use of this formula in Judith, identified by Ziegler, as "ne sont que des échos de G Ex 15, 3 et donc ne l'expliquent pas." But he provides no argument to support this conclusion. To dismiss this evidence seems to suggest a very selective approach to resolving this question.
[52] The text of Judith follows Exodus 15:3 even to the point of using the dative of possession (αὐτῷ) rather than a possessive form (αὐτοῦ).
[53] This is the same expression found in Exodus 15:6.
[54] Carey A. Moore, *The Anchor Bible. Judith* (Garden City, New York:Doubleday &Company Inc., 1985), 67-68.

period which is somewhat contemporary with the translation of Isaiah, to define Yahweh's ability to triumph over his enemies.[55]

To this point we have shown that κύριος συντρίβων πολέμους in Greek Exodus 15:3a means that "Yahweh shatters wars", i.e. is always victorious over his enemies, as demonstrated primarily in the destruction of Pharaoh's cavalry in the Red Sea. This expression is used in the same way in Judith 9:7 and 16:2, written and translated probably near the end of the second century BCE. What are the implications of these findings for our understanding of the Greek translation of Isaiah 42:13? Van Leeuwen[56] and Koenig[57] argued that the Exodus translator reflected on the Hebrew text of Isaiah 42:13 and other passages such as Hosea 2:18-20(20-22) and Psalm 75(76):4(3) and incorporated this sense into his translation of 15:3. In their view an ideology existed in this period (third century BCE) presenting political peace as a work of the Lord Who will destroy wars through battle. The translator used Jewish hermeneutical principles to derive a meaning from the Hebrew text that reversed its logic and emphasized God's intention to create peace. All wars will be ended. In their view this ideology finds reflection in the translation of Exodus 15:3 and Isaiah 42:13, with support from texts such as Hosea 3:18-20 and Psalm 75(76):4(3).[58]

We can agree that the Greek translation of Isaiah 42:13 is unusual.

> κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν δυνάμεων ἐξελεύσεται καὶ συντρίψει πόλεμον ἐπεγερεῖ ζῆλον καὶ βοήσεται ἐπὶ τοὺς αὐτοῦ ἐχθροὺς μετὰ ἰσχύος.[59]
>
> יהוה כגבור יצא כאיש מלחמות יעיר קנאה יריע אף־יצריח על־איביו יתגבר[60]

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[55] In 1QM (The War Scroll) 12:7ff in the "Hero of War" (וגבור המלחמה 12:9) section, God is described in these terms: "The War Hero is in our congregation, the army of his spirits, with our infantry and cavalry….Get up, hero, take your prisoners, glorious one." The motif is repeated in 19:2-3. The War Scroll describes the events of the "final days" which exercised considerable influence on how the Qumran Community understood itself and its role. Translation of these texts is that found in Florentino Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 106.

[56] Willem van Leeuwen, *Eirene in het Nieuwe Testament*, 25.

[57] J. Koenig, *L'herméneutique analogique…,* 59-64.

[58] Willem van Leeuwen, *Eirene in het Nieuwe Testament*, 26-29. Several observations can be made about van Leeuwen's hypothesis. First, he makes little if any reference to the translated narrative that surrounds Exodus 15 and how God is characterized within that setting and the entire Song of Moses. Secondly, he provides no data to support his contention that a particular eschatological emphasis regarding peace was current in Alexandria or Palestine at the time of this translation. We can agree that within various Jewish writings that come to form the Jewish canon some expectations of this nature existed, but it goes beyond the evidence, I would suggest, to argue that eschatological speculation with this particular focus was being promoted at that time and exerted influence upon the translator of Exodus and his work.

[59] "The Lord God of hosts shall go out and shatter war; he shall stir up zeal and shout mightily against his enemies" (My translation).

[60] NRSV: "The Lord goes forth like a soldier, like a warrior he stirs up his fury; he cries out, he shouts aloud, he shows himself mighty against his foes."

In the context of this verse the prophet praises Yahweh in anticipation of what he is going to do in order to restore his rebellious people. Those who oppose him will be overcome. There is parallelism in the Greek translation between Yahweh's action to "shatter war" and his mighty shouts "against his enemies". If, as we have argued, the translation συντρίψει πόλεμον/πολέμους describes Yahweh's prowess in battle and ability to overcome his enemies, then it is a reasonable equivalent for the epithet "man of war", i.e. warrior, while avoiding the inappropriate application to Yahweh of the noun ἀνήρ. Seeligmann's hypothesis that for some reason, perhaps apologetic, "a war-cry in the text was replaced by a peace-slogan"[61] needs to be reconsidered. Ziegler indicates that the similar renderings in Exodus 15:3 and Isaiah 42:13 suggest that the Isaiah translator had knowledge of the Exodus translation.[62] This in turn suggests that the Isaiah translator, knowing the Exodus translation, when he came to 42:13, used the rendering found in Exodus 15:3 as an appropriate translation, but without any intention of changing the basic sense of the Hebrew text.[63]

The rendering συντρίβω πόλεμον occurs also in the translation of Psalm 75(76):4 and Hosea 2:20. However, in each of these texts, the Hebrew *Vorlage* reads שבר...מלחמה. In the Septuagint συντρίβω is a standard equivalent for שבר and πόλεμος for מלחמה. In both contexts the translators provide a good Greek rendering for their Hebrew text. There is no need to see their translation as incorporating some specific nuance relating to Yahweh's establishment of eschatological peace. It may be that in both of these contexts the hope for eschatological peace generally is being communicated, but this particular expression does not emphasize it in any special fashion. It will not carry that freight.

I would conclude that a contextual understanding of Exodus 15:3 in the Greek translation requires that we interpret συντρίβων πολεμούς as defining God's consistent victory in all battles. It is not a peace slogan, in some way reversing the sense of the translator's Hebrew text. When we follow the evidence provided from the context and from a careful analysis of translation technique of the Old Greek of Exodus, this conclusion seems quite clear. The use of this same phrase in Judith similarly defining God's military prowess, at least a century later and quite probably in a period roughly contemporary with the Greek translation of Isaiah, would support

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[61] Seeligmann, "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of Its Problems", 291.

[62] J. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (Münster: Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1934), 125. "Derselbe hebr. Ausdruck wird Ex 15,3 wiedergegeben mit συντρίβων πολέμους; hier scheint eine Bekanntschaft des Js-Übers. mit Ex vorzuliegen." Earlier in the same volume Ziegler noted: "Es ist schon längst beobachtet worden, dass der Js-Übers. die Pent-LXX gekannt hat und sie öfters als 'Wörterbuch' benützt hat,…" (103).

[63] While this seems to be a probable explanation for the translation of Isaiah 42:13, it does not explain why the Greek translator has the singular πόλεμον for the plural מלחמות, when the Greek rendering in Exodus 15:3 has πολέμους and offers a more 'exact' rendering for the Isaiah Hebrew text.

this interpretation as well. The use of this language in Psalm 75(76):4 and Hosea 2:20 merely reflected the standard rendering of the verb שבר by συντρίβω and מלחמה by πολεμός within the Septuagint corpus. Perhaps in these contexts the shattering of war is the equivalent of peace-making, but this would have to be established from the contexts of Psalm 75 and Hosea 2, not from the lexical choice by the respective translators of these equivalents. And even in the case of Isaiah 42:13, the context would affirm that Yahweh is portrayed as One Who is victorious in battle, rather than a peace-maker. It is quite probable that the Greek translator of Isaiah has employed the same rendering for the Hebrew phrase that he may have discovered in the Greek translation of Exodus 15:3.

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