AQUILA'S KOHELETH*

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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.

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

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 *Kohelet* 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:

תְּלֵהָ - κασαλέθ (11:1; 12:8). 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, נְסָמֵיא (which is regularly transliterated by LXX and Aquila as Σαλαμών or the like) and יִרְדְּאִים (2 Sam. 12:25 – LXX ‘יָדוֹנֵיא, Aq. ‘יוֹדַדְיוֹא), 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 רְצָא as פֹּשְׁהִיתו, נֶפֶשׁ as דֶּצֶרֶא מַטֲזָא, and מֶלֶתא as פָּסְטֵּינַעָא as πιστεύοντος θεον, and in 31:1 he translated מְלֹאק as εὐφημον τοι θεον. We have no information on Aquila’s treatment of the first two cases, but we do know that he transliterated מֶלֶתא as Μελεθ and מְלֹאק as Μελακυνον. It would be in keeping with this practice, then, for

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5 Codices 161 and 248 at 1:1 present κασαλέθ as Aquila’s form of תְּלֵה, while Codex 252 at 12:8 presents κασαλέθ as his rendering; cf. Origen’s transliteration of the Hebrew title of the book as κασαλέθ.
him to transliterate rather than translate the seventh supposed name of Solomon, *viz.* 

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

κόπω (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 αὐτοῖς called for by διὰ τοῦ ἡλίου was missing from LXX and had to be supplied from Aquila.6

κορία (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 ἔδοξεν), Job 20:26 (ἀποκέκρυσται for οἴδας), Dan 9:26 (τέλεσται for τελέσῃ).

λέγω (1:16). Aquila is recorded as rendering λέγω 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 ἃ by a Greek participle, such as βοθήσων for λύειν 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 Aquilian 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.

not rendered by καίγε (1:17; 5:18; 7:22). Out of more than 50 occurrences of בַּ 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 בַּ by καίγε (cf. his employment of

6The pronoun is missing from Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

7Peter 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.
τούγαρον for בַּי 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.\(^8\)

- μεκαβιν – 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 מֵכַבִּים in 2 Chron 6:29,\(^9\) and/or βασανίζειν for בָּחוּר hiphil in Ezek 13:22.\(^10\)

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

- υἱοὶ – 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 Testament 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 ΝΑ not being rendered by καίγε (p. 473). To his second reason, concerning the proportion of agreements to disagreements among the four Greek versions (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 disagreements 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 נֵבֶזַע, but BHS recommends a reading of נֵבֶזַע later in the verse; LXX employs διαστέρεσθαι in both instances, but there is no Aquila rendering recorded for the later instance.
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 κλαί by ἐν οὐ, whereas there is the counter-example of ἀνεω in Is. 55:1.

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 אשר in Ps. 106 (LXX 105):43 (where no Aquila rendering has been recorded), the only other occurrence of this expression in the Bible.

The full Aquila rendering of מַלָּא דָּבָר לֵשׁוֹת may have been מַלָּא דָּבָר לֵשׁוֹת καὶ ἐτολμήσαν oi νεών τοῦ ἀνθρώπον τοῦ ποιήσαι, which is good Greek but has no direct equivalent to בָּר, since this is not required by τολμάω (cf. LXX Est 7:5, ἐτόλμησεν ποιήσαι for מַלָּא דָּבָר לֵשׁוֹת), or it may have been ἐτόλμησαν καρδίαι νεών τοῦ ἀνθρώπον ἐν αὐτοῖς τοῦ ποιήσαι, 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 δινεί to which the singular δὲ refers). LXX’s πληγοφορέω 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.

Cf. Aquila’s use of παρά for בָּר in Ps. 33:14,15. He also employs εἰς, ἐπί, ἐνάντια, περί, and ἐπίρισ for בָּר, so is certainly not restricted to invariably using πρός.

Cf. other occasions on which Aquila rendered a noun in the genitive by an adjective — e.g., Exod 37:17 (ἐλαστήν for מַשֶּה), 2 Ki 4:39 (ἐφρίτοι for דָּל), and the common αἰώνιοι for γένος.

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.

A construction with θυγατρία might be expected from Aquila, but cf. Exod 13:20, where he does not render ἄγω, even

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 τελευταίος or τέλος might be expected. As for φθο, cf. Aquila’s rendering of ἡσύμος by φθο in Isa 5:1.\textsuperscript{13}


ρα σι – ῥθός (12:10). Cf. other occasions on which Aquila rendered a noun in the accusative by an adverb – e.g., Deut 32:35 (καταφάθως for ἀπελευθερώσεις), Isa 33:7 (πρό κρός for ἐπάνω), Ps. 2:1 (κενάς for χερσκά).

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.\textsuperscript{14} In the former category may be listed such standard Aquilan renderings as καυνός for καβαλον, for which Aquila never employs LXX’s πρόσφατον (1:9); μετά for ἔτη, for which he never employs LXX’s ἐν (1:16); ἀγαπάω for ἥσύμος, for which he never employs LXX’s φιλέω (3:8); and λαές for χερσκά, for which he never employs LXX’s ἀνθρώπος (12:9).\textsuperscript{15} Τέλος (4:8,16) is his usual rendering of τῆς, whereas LXX’s περασμός is unattested in the Aquila material. Λόγισμός (7:25) and cognates are employed by Aquila for words from the root βασιλευς, whereas he employs LXX’s ψήφος and cognates for words from the root ρασ. He uses LXX’s πλην (7:29) only for πλην, but has μόνος for τὸ βάλε in 1 Ki 14:13 and τὰ μόνα for χαρίσμα in Ezek 10:2.

Aquila’s typical method of rendering ב with the infinitive by τοῦ with the infinitive is seen in τοῦ συνάντησιν καὶ τοῦ συναγαγεῖν (2:26) and τοῦ υἱοῦ Λαβανοῦ (4:4:13). Moreover, συνάντησιν in 2:26 understands the Hebrew

\textsuperscript{13} According to Reider-Turner, p. 260; Field, \textit{ad loc.}, does not give an Aquila translation of ἡσύμος.

\textsuperscript{14} Of these examples, the following have been previously noted briefly by Hyvärinen, pp. 97,98: καυνός (1:9), κυριεύσει (2:19), συνάντησιν (2:26), ἀγαπάω (3:8), τέλος (4:8,16), καὶ τὸ ἐνιαύτο (4:11), ἔνοχος (7:19), λογισμός (7:25 [mistakenly listed under 7:27, where Aquila’s rendering is not recorded]), παγίδευσε (7:26), μόνον (7:29), καιρός (8:9), and ἐκ τοὺς ἐκτείνων (8:10).

\textsuperscript{15} Rahlfs’ edition of LXX has λαές in the text, on the basis of Codex Venetus.
brew verb as ἡσύς, and is the typical Aquilian translation of this verb, whereas LXX’s προσθείναι has misunderstood it as θείος. Τὸ ποιούμενον for Ἑσύας (2:17) is likewise typical of Aquila, in rendering the perfect with ἔν or Ῥακ by a participle with the article (cf., e.g., Jer 7:1 [ὁ γενόμενος for τίνα Ῥακ], 52:15 [τοῦς ἐμπεπτοκότας for ᾿Ακλίμον Ῥακ]). And καὶ κυριεύσει (2:19) is a straightforward translation of ᾿Ακλίμον, without the un-Aquilian intrusive particle in LXX’s καὶ εἰ ἐξουσιάζεται.16

Two particular readings are well explained by Aquila’s work. In the case of καὶ κυριεύσει (12:5), ἡ ἑταίρεια has been read in terms of ἐν, though it is most likely to be from the root ἔνει; examples abound of Aquila’s etymologizing tendency leading him astray in such a manner.17 In the case of λύτρωσις (12:6), ἡ ἐλήμοδος has been understood as ἐλήμοδος, and rendered in accordance with Aquila’s λυτρῶσις for ἔλημος in Ps 74:2, whereas LXX’s ἀνέθεμον is unattested in the Aquila material.

Probably the best example of Aquila’s methodology is to be found in τρόμω τρωμήσωσιν (12:5), a close representation of the reduplicated form of the Hebrew תרי תרי (cf. other occasions on which Aquila read such Hebrew forms in the same manner – e.g., Isa 18:1 [σκιὰ σκιὰ for ᾿Αλπίς], 27:8 [ἦν σάτω σάτων for ᾿Ανασα, read as Χερσαμάνα, read as ἀνασα], Hos 8:13 [φάρε φάρε for ὅλος, read as βάρ φάρε]).

In the category of renderings in Aquila’s Kohelet which are more in keeping with MT than are those in LXX Ecclesiastes may be listed such translations as πλάνας for πλάνη, where LXX speaks of παραβολάς (1:17);18 θεμοῦ for παῦ, where LXX, apparently reading νῦ, has γνώσεως (1:18); ἀγγελὸς for μίλας, where LXX speaks of θεός (5:5); καρπός for πίνακα, where LXX, perhaps reading ἄρα, has τά (8:9); and ἐκατοχὴντο for γιορτῆς, where LXX, reading ἔρημον, has ἐπεκείσθησαν (8:10). The rendering of καὶ by βασιλέως (2:12) is in keeping with the other ancient versions apart from LXX, which translated the word as βουλής. Τῆς δικαιοσύνης

16 Rahlfis 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 παραβολάς (so Gordis, p. 212; cf. περιφορά and περιφερεῖα for πλάνη elsewhere in Ecclesiastes) or as the deliberate change of a copyist who thought the latter a mistake in this context (so Robert B. Salter, The Book of Ecclesiastes: Studies in the Versions and the History of Exegesis [Ph.D. dissertation; St Andrews 1973] 123).
(3:16) vocalises קִנֵּה as MT does, whereas LXX, reading it as קִנֵּה, renders it by τοῦ δικαίου. Similarly ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ αὐτῷ for ἱερόν, where LXX has ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ αὐτῷ (7:15).

In several cases Aquila’s renderings represent elements of the Hebrew text which are not reflected explicitly in LXX: καὶ τῷ ἐνι takes account of the ב in דַּבָּר, whereas LXX’s καὶ ὁ εἰς does not (4:11); τῆς ἁγιοθεσίας includes the article in the heading missing from LXX’s ἁγιοθεσίας (5:10);19 and ἐκ τοῦ ἁγίου takes account of the γρός in τῷ γρός, 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 τί (6:8); the pronoun on γενέσεως αὐτῷ for γενέσεως (7:1); καρδία for λέ (7:3); the conjunction on καὶ καρδία for καὶ (7:4); and ὁ ἄνθρωπος for ἄνθρωπος (9:1).21

Moreover, Aquila’s ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου is a correct translation of לְבָּב ב, in comparison with LXX’s εἰ ἡ καρδία μου (2:3);22 θυσία is a straightforward translation of να, without the addition of a personal pronoun in LXX’s θυσία σου (4:17); σὸν ὁσα is a straightforward translation of ρασ κ, without the extra elements in LXX’s σο τον οσα εὰν (5:3);23 ἀφῆς is far preferable, as a translation of ἀνα, to LXX’s μιάνης (7:18);24 ἐνισχυόμεναι is a correct reading of ἐνισχύεται as the verb ἐν, whereas LXX’s βοηθήσει has read or postulated ροῦ (7:19); and περιμεταμόλυνοι is a sensible rendering of ἡμετέρῳ, in comparison with LXX’s meaningless πεπερωμένοι (12:11).25

In the case of δορυφορι (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 τοῦν on the basis of the Latin.
21 Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus lack τίς in 6:8 and αὐτῷ 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 ρασ here as a pronoun rather than the Masoretic vocalisation of it as the sign of the direct object. Rahlfs emends LXX to σον ως εὰν, while the Syro-Hexapla’s text indicates σον ως εὰν for LXX.
24 Rahlfs corrects LXX to ἀνής (of which μιάνης may well be a corruption), on the basis of the Latin.
25 Codices Vaticanus and Venetus have περιμεταμόλυνοι, 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 מְזֵד (7:26), Aquila correctly depicts (by means of παχιδεύματα) 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 ἰνωτίσατο καὶ ἠρεύνησε καὶ κατεσκεύασε παρομίας is a rendering more in keeping with MT's מָלֵא קַעָר ḭָרָא than is LXX's καὶ ὁδὸς εξεγινάσται 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 Aquilian version. The remaining question, as to whether LXX Ecclesiastes is actually Aquila's first edition (or a proto-Aquilian version) and Aquila's Koheleth is a second edition, cannot be answered with any certainty.