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Arie van der Kooij

The Old Greek of Isaiah 9:6–7 and the Concept of Leadership

I.

In the Hellenistic period, the leadership of the Jewish nation and its legitimation on the basis of the Jewish Scriptures was a major issue. As is apparent from writings of this time, such as the Wisdom of Ben Sira, 1 and 2 Maccabees, this topic was a crucial and sensitive matter. The polemics in Qumran documents – concerning “the wicked priest” and “the teacher of righteousness” – provide yet another example. Unlike the pre-exilic past when kingship was the type of rulership in ancient Israel, the Jewish nation was ruled by priests under the supreme direction of a high-priest, in the period under discussion. This of course raised the question of how to justify this constitution on the basis of the “ancestral” books, as Scripture is referred to in the Prologue to the Wisdom of Ben Sira. Chs 45–50 (Hebrew text) of this writing contain a specific answer to this question by providing a justification of the high priestly rule of the Oniad family, whereas 1 Maccabees testifies to a similar attempt as far as the legitimation of the Maccabean leadership is concerned. A crucial matter at stake was the relationship between kingship (‘monarchy’) and priesthood in the sense of priestly rule (‘aristocracy’). Documents of the time reflect different constitutional models in this regard: while some writings clearly show a preference for a diarchy (dual leadership of ‘priest’ and ‘prince’, such as attested in Dead Sea Scrolls as well as in Jubilees), there are also texts which attest a priestly monarchy (single leadership; see e.g. Ben Sira, AramLevi).¹

In my view, it is worthwhile to study books of the Septuagint from the perspective of this important, constitutional, topic. Do they contain features which are relevant in this regard, and, if so, which model or concept do they reflect?² If one assumes, as I do, that books have been translated

¹ See DAVID GOODBLATT, *The Monarchic Principle. Studies in Jewish Self-Government in Antiquity* (TSAJ, 38; Tübingen, 1994).

² ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, “The Greek Bible and Jewish Concepts of Royal Priesthood,” in *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (ed. by Tessa Rajak, Sarah Pearce, James Aitken, and Jennifer Dines; Hellenistic Culture and Society, 50; Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2007), 255–264; IDEM, “The Claim of Maccabean Leadership and the Use of

by those who belonged to the intellectual elite, i.e., leading priests, or members of the lay nobility,³ this approach may help us to find out in which party or group within Early Judaism the Old Greek version of a given book might have originated.

In the Old Greek version of Isaiah (LXX Isaiah) a most interesting passage on leadership is to be found in ch. 9:6–7 (MT, vv. 5–6). In this contribution, I shall deal with specific elements in this passage in order to see which concept of leadership it might reflect.

II.

LXX Isaiah 9:6–7 as well as MT v. 5–6 read thus:

6 ὅτι παιδίον ἐγεννήθη ἡμῖν, υἱὸς καὶ ἐδόθη ἡμῖν,
οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐγενήθη ἐπὶ τοῦ ὤμου αὐτοῦ,
καὶ καλεῖται τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Μεγάλης βουλῆς ἄγγελος·
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἄξω εἰρήνην ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, εἰρήνην καὶ ὑγίειαν αὐτῶ.
7 μεγάλη ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ, καὶ τῆς εἰρήνης αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ὄριον
ἐπὶ τὸν θρόνον Δαυὶδ καὶ τὴν βασιλείαν αὐτοῦ
κατορθῶσαι αὐτὴν καὶ ἀντιλαβέσθαι αὐτῆς ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ
καὶ ἐν κρίματι ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον·
ὁ ζῆλος κυρίου σαβαωθ ποιήσει ταῦτα.

For a child was born to us, a son was even given to us,
whose sovereignty was (put) upon his shoulder;
and his name is called, ‘Messenger of great counsel’.
For I will bring peace upon the rulers, peace and health to him.
Great is his sovereignty, and his peace has no boundary,
upon the throne of David and his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with righteousness
and with judgment, from now on and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord Sabaoth will do these things.

MT (vv. 5–6)

For a child was born to us, a son was given to us;
and the government came upon his shoulder,
and his name was called, ‘Counsellor of wonderful things,
mighty god, everlasting father, prince of peace’.
Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end,

Scripture.” in *Jewish Identity and Politics between the Maccabees and Bar Kokhba. Groups, Normativity, and Rituals* (ed. by Benedikt Eckhardt; JSJ.S, 155; Leiden, 2012), 29–49.

³ ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, “Perspectives on the Study of the Septuagint: Who are the Translators?,” in *Perspectives in the Study of the Old Testament and Early Judaism. A Symposium in honour of Adam S. van der Woude on the Occasion of his 70th Birthday* (ed. by Florentino García Martínez and Ed Noort; VT.S 73; Leiden, 1998), 214–229.

upon the throne of David and over his kingdom,
to establish it and to uphold it with justice
and with righteousness, from now on and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this

In comparing the two texts the following comments can be made:

“A son was even given to us”: the plus of *καί* before *ἐδόθη* emphasizes the element of being given. The child, son, was not only born but also “given” to us, that is to say, he was also appointed as ruler. The Greek *δίδωμι* here conveys the meaning of “to assign”, “to appoint”, as in Num 14:4; Deut 1:13, and Isa 60:17.

“Whose sovereignty was (put) upon his shoulder”: LXX has a relative clause which is not the case in MT. The idea that the sovereignty was upon his shoulder fits the notion of being appointed in the preceding clause.

“And his name is called”: unlike MT (“and one called his name / his name was called”) the Greek text has the present tense (cf. 13:19; 2 Macc 1:36).⁴

“Messenger of great counsel”: compared to MT, the name of the ruler in LXX is quite different and short indeed.⁵ The expression *μεγάλη βουλή*, which seems to be a free translation of the underlying phrase *פלא יועץ*, “counsellor of wonderful things”,⁶ also occurs in Jer 39(32):19: *κύριος μεγάλης βουλής* (“great counsel” for MT *גדל העצה*). It may well be that the choice of the phrase, “great counsel”, be it in Hebrew or in Greek, was due to this passage.⁷ Just as in Jeremiah, the wording in the Greek of Isa 9 refers to God’s counsel. The underlying phrase in Hebrew has been taken by the translator as a reference to God, as the one who is counseling wonderful things, and not as a reference to the ruler/king as the one being a counsellor of wonderful things, as is the case in MT.⁸ This understanding of the text is in line with Isa 25:1 where both in MT and in LXX the terms *פלא* and *ועץ* are related to God.⁹

⁴ Cf. LXX.D (“und dessen Name lautet”). NETS offers a future rendering (“he shall be named”), as did RICHARD R. OTTLEY (*The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus)*. Vol. I [London, 1904], 97). The latter, however, did so on the basis of the reading of codex A [*καλεσει*] which is not the reading chosen by Rahlfs and Ziegler in their respective editions.

⁵ A reduction of the name is also found in the Targum of the verse where the new ruler is called: “The messiah in whose days peace will increase upon us”.

⁶ A literal rendering of this phrase can be found in 3:3 (*θαυμαστών σύμβουλον*); see ISAC LEO SEELIGMANN, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah. A Discussion of its Problems* (MVEOL, 9; Leiden, 1948), 23.

⁷ In addition, the notion of “great” fits God; cf. LXX Isa 26:4 and 33:22.

⁸ It is interesting to note that the Targum of the verse too takes the phrase “Wonderful Counsellor” as a reference to God.

⁹ As to MT, see also Isa 28:29, but LXX is different here.

Greek ἄγγελος is based on Hebrew אל (cf. Job 20:15), or alternatively on אל גבור. As to the latter option, Ezek 32:21 is of note because the expression אלי גבורים is rendered here likewise by one word only (γίγαντες). The phrase אל גבור is also found in Isa 10:21, in this instance being a reference to God. Here LXX reads θεὸν ἰσχύοντα, so clearly differentiating between the two places as does MT. On the meaning of ἄγγελος, “messenger” or “angel”, see below.

“For I will bring peace upon the rulers, peace and health to him”: this rendition presupposes a specific understanding of the Hebrew text. Unlike in MT the corresponding words have not been taken as part of the name of the new ruler, but as a phrase about what God is going to do. The first two words, ἐγὼ γάρ, are a plus, the former emphasizing the role of God (“I”, just as in 10:24), whereas γάρ links the whole clause with the preceding name. The Greek ἄξω is based on אבי which has been taken as being equal to אביא.¹⁰ The phrase “upon the rulers” reflects עַד שָׂר¹¹, being marked by a collective understanding of the singular “prince” in Hebrew.

The word “peace” occurs twice (“upon the rulers”, and “to him”), representing a double translation of שלום, a phenomenon which is attested more often in LXX Isaiah.¹² Interestingly, also the expression “peace and health (to him)” is best understood as a double rendering of the same word in Hebrew (שלום). The term ὑγίαια which occurs in a few instances in LXX (Gen 42:15, 16; Esther 9:31; Ezek 47:12), is found only here as (second) rendering of שלום. It reminds one of passages where the verb ὑγιαίνω is employed as equivalent of שלום; see e.g. Gen 29:6; 37:14; 43:27; Dan 10:19. It is likely that “to him” (αὐτῷ) is based on the reading לִם at the beginning of the next verse in MT (לִם רַבָּה), interpreted as “to him”.¹³ This explains why the Greek text offers a dative here, and not a prepositional phrase as is the case in the preceding clause (ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, see above). As a result of all this, LXX is marked by a reference to “the rulers” as well as to the leader called “Messenger of great counsel” (cf. “him”).

“Great is his sovereignty”: the rendering μεγάλη is based on the Hebrew רבה, being the second part of לִם רַבָּה being written as one word in codex L whereas codex A displays a space between the two parts (the same is true of 1QIsa^a).

¹⁰ For אבי in the sense of “I will bring”, see 1 Kings 21:21, 29; Micah 1:15. Furthermore, the non-writing of the *aleph* is a well-known feature of spelling practices at the time of the translator; see EDWARD YECHESKEL KUTSCHER, *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll* (1QIsa^a)(STDJ 6; Leiden, 1974), 505, 509–510.

¹¹ For עַד in the sense of אל or על, compare Num 23:18; 1 Sam 9:9, and Job 32:11.

¹² See MIRJAM VAN DER VORM-CROUGHS, *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of its Pluses and Minuses* (unpubl. dissertation Leiden University, 2010), 25–60 (for our case and similar cases where the second rendering is formed into a new clause, see p. 49f.).

¹³ See GESENIUS-KAUTZSCH, § 103f. note 3.

“His peace has no boundary”: Greek ὄριον as equivalent of Hebrew גָּר is not attested elsewhere. Instead of “end” in time (so MT), the choice of ὄριον in LXX implies another meaning: the peace will have no boundary, geographically speaking. The peace of the new ruler, who will sit “on the throne of David”, will be worldwide.

So the Greek text of Isa 9:6–7 is about a leader who has been appointed as ruler, who is called “Messenger of great counsel”, whom will be given peace and health, and who will sit on “the throne of David”. Interestingly, the text does not only refer to a single royal figure as leader, but also to “rulers” in plural. What is the meaning of all this? Or to put it in line with the introduction to this paper, Which concept of leadership may be involved in this passage of LXX Isaiah? In order to deal with this issue I shall not provide a full analysis of the passage under discussion, but will focus on two points: (a) the relationship between the term ἄγγελος (“messenger” or “angel”?) and the phrase “the throne of David”, and (b) the presence of the “rulers” beside the single leader.

III.

Some time ago I suggested that our passage would make good sense if read in the light of the ideology of a priestly leadership being marked by royal power. I did so on the basis of the following arguments: First of all, LXX Isaiah itself contains a passage, ch. 22:15–25, which testifies to this concept. Unlike MT, in LXX this section is about priestly rulers who are also said to get “the glory of David”. Secondly, this concept is also to be found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira, esp. in ch. 45:24–25. Thirdly, the designation ἄγγελος (in the sense of “messenger”) for a priestly figure is not without parallel. The idea of a priest as messenger is known from Mal 2:7, whereas in a passage written by Hecataeus of Abdera it is said that the high priest of the Jews acts as “a messenger (ἄγγελον) of God’s commandments”.¹⁴

However, other suggestions have been made as well, in particular regarding the term ἄγγελος in the verse. In line with the view of Horbury, Collins and De Sousa are of the opinion that it conveys the notion of “angel”, rather than “messenger”.¹⁵ Like Horbury, Collins considers the ruler

¹⁴ ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, “Wie heisst der Messias? Zu Jes 9,5 in den alten griechischen Versionen,” in *Vergegenwärtigung des Alten Testaments. Beiträge zur biblischen Hermeneutik. Festschrift für Rudolf Smend zum 70. Geburtstag* (hrsg. von Christoph Bultmann, Walter Dietrich und Christoph Levin; Göttingen, 2002), 156–163; id., “The Greek Bible,” 260–262.

¹⁵ WILLIAM HORBURY, *Jewish Messianism and the Cult of Christ* (London, 1998), 89–91; JOHN J. COLLINS, “Isaiah 8:23–9:6 and Its Greek Translation,” in *Scripture in Transition. Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sol-*

of our text to be a Davidic king, a royal messiah,¹⁶ and he likes the suggestion, made by Horbury, that the notion of angel is best understood in analogy of the way David is presented in 2 Sam 14:17, 20, namely, “like an angel in insight”. In his view, the choice of “angel” makes good sense if taken as a clarification of the status of the ruler in relation to the Most High (217). Moreover, so he notes, “the messianic king could be conceived as an angelic king in the Hellenistic-Roman period” (218).

De Sousa too is inclined to take the Greek word in the sense of “angel”, in line with Horbury. He does so on the basis of the idea of a correlation between angelic activity and messianic deliverance. So he thinks the translator had an angelic being in mind since angels are often assigned a revelatory function (117). Although, as he admits, the notion of birth in our passage creates a problem in this regard, he nevertheless is of the opinion that ἄγγελος as rendering should not be taken as a reference to a human figure, esp. in the light of a text such as Job 20:15 (118). So in his view our text is best understood as reflecting a correlation between an angelic figure, on the one hand, and a Davidic messiah, on the other (118).

As will be clear, the crucial question in understanding the concept underlying the Greek version of Isa 9:6–7 concerns the relationship between the designation ἄγγελος, on the one hand, and the phrase “the throne of David”, on the other. Is the latter element in our text indeed to be taken as a reference to a Davidic, royal messiah? And what about the term ἄγγελος? Does it convey the meaning of “angel”, in the sense of “like an angel” (Collins), or of “an angelic being” to be distinguished from the Davidic messiah (De Sousa)? Or does the phrase “ἄγγελος of great counsel” rather point to the notion of being a “messenger”? In what follows I would like to present a number of arguments in favour of the view that our passage does not allude to a Davidic messiah, but is better understood from the perspective of the office of high priesthood which also embodies the royal office of Israel’s past.

lamo (ed. by Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta; JSJ.S 126; Leiden, 2008), 217–218; RODRIGO F. DE SOUSA, *Eschatology and Messianism in LXX Isaiah 1–12* (LHB/OTS 516; London, 2010), 113–115, 117–118; see also RODRIGO FRANKLIN DE SOUSA, “Problems and Perspectives on the Study of Messianism in LXX Isaiah,” in *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives* (ed. by Arie van der Kooij and Michaël N. van der Meer; CBET 55; Leuven, 2010), 144–145.

¹⁶ Cf. ROBERT HANHART, “Die Septuaginta als Interpretation und Aktualisierung. Jesaja 9:1(8:23)–7(6),” in *Isac Leo Seeligmann Volume*, III (ed. by Alexander Rofé and Yair Zakovitch; Jerusalem 1983), 345–346; JOHAN LUST, “Messianism in the Septuagint. Isaiah 8:23B–9:6(9:1–7),” in *Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. by J. Krasovec; JSOT.S 289; Sheffield, 1998), 162, and JOACHIM SCHAPER, “Messianism in the Septuagint of Isaiah and Messianic Intertextuality in the Greek Bible,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. by Michael A. Knibb; BETL 195; Leuven, 2006), 372.

1. As noted above (and discussed elsewhere), LXX Isa 22:15–25 testifies to the view of a priestly leadership being vested with royal power (cf. “the glory of David” in v. 22). So the scholar responsible for the Greek version of Isaiah was familiar with this view, but the question is whether this concept also underlies the passage in ch. 9.¹⁷

2. Outside LXX Isaiah, the concept of priestly leadership (high priesthood) having royal status is to be found in the Wisdom of Ben Sira (Hebrew). As has been observed by scholars, Ben Sira conceived the priesthood as the true heir of the Davidic promises.¹⁸ But not only that: In the Praise of the Fathers (chs 44–50), he “does [...] ascribe royal characteristics to the three most important priests in his list: Aaron, Phinehas, and Simon II”.¹⁹ As to this section of his work in Hebrew, scholars have pointed out that ch. 50, containing the praises of the high priest Simon, is to be seen as its climax. This section ultimately serves the legitimation of the high priesthood of the author’s time, the office then being held by members of the Oniad family.²⁰ Important passages are to be found in 45:24–25 and 50:24. To begin with the latter passage, Sir 50:24 reads,

May his (God) kindness toward Simon be lasting;
may he fulfil for him the covenant with Phinehas
so that it may be not abrogated for him or for his descendants,
as (long as) the days of heaven.

The view expressed here makes it clear that the legitimacy of the high priest Simon and his descendants was based on the covenant with Phinehas. This verse is closely related to the other passage, Sir 45:24–25, which is about the covenant God made with Phinehas for an eternal high-priesthood:

¹⁷ Cf. DE SOUSA, *Eschatology*, 110: “this still requires a leap”.

¹⁸ See e.g. MARIA BRUTTI, *The Development of the High Priesthood during the pre-Hasmonean Period. History, Ideology, Theology* (JSJ.S 108; Leiden, 2006), 279; DE SOUSA, *Eschatology*, 144.

¹⁹ BENJAMIN G. WRIGHT III, “Ben Sira on Kings and Kingship,” in *Jewish Perspectives*, 76–91: 86. See also WRIGHT, “Solomon in Chronicles and Ben Sira: A Study in Contrasts,” in *Rewriting Biblical History. Essays on Chronicles and Ben Sira in Honor of Pancratius C. Beentjes* (ed. by Jeremy Corley and Harm van Grol; DCLS 7; Berlin, 2011), 147–154.

²⁰ See e.g. OTTO MULDER, *Simon the High Priest in Sirach 50: An Exegetical Study of the Significance of Simon the High Priest as Climax to the Praise of the Fathers in Ben Sira’s Concept of the History of Israel* (JSJSup 78; Leiden, 2003); JEREMY CORLEY, “A Numerical Structure in Sirach 44:1–50:24”, CBQ 69 (2007), 43–63. See also PANCRATIUS C. BEENTJES, “Happy the One who Mediates on Wisdom “ (*Sir. 14,20*). *Collected Essays on the Book of Ben Sira* (Leuven, 2006), 123–133.

Therefore on him (i.e. Phinehas) too God conferred an ordinance, a covenant of peace,
to provide for the sanctuary,
so that to him and to his descendants
should belong the high priesthood for ever,
and also his covenant with David, the son of Jesse, from the tribe of Judah;
the heritage of fire before His glory,
the heritage of Aaron for all his descendants.

This passage presupposes the story about Phinehas in Num 25 (esp. vv. 12–13), but it strikes one that it also contains a reference to the covenant with David. Some believe that the putting together of the two covenants is merely meant as drawing a parallel between them.²¹ Others have argued, and convincingly so, that, since the syntax of the H text is to be regarded as running on from verse 24 into verse 25, - which explains why there is no verb in the first clause of v. 25 -, the passage as a whole testifies to the view that the covenant of David was considered to be associated with the covenant with Phinehas: God conferred to him the covenant of peace, [...], *and also* his covenant with David.²² For the scholar Jesus ben Sira and his milieu, “the office of high priesthood embodied in his time all the offices of Israel’s history, including the royal office established in the Davidic covenant”, as Pomykala has put it.²³ In sum, the high priest is presented by Ben Sira as someone who is also having royal status and glory. His writing attests a priestly ideology which is characterized by a transference of the Davidic kingship to the high-priesthood.²⁴

²¹ E.g. MARTIN HENGEL, *Die Zeloten. Untersuchungen zur jüdischen Freiheitsbewegung in der Zeit von Herodes I. bis 70 n.Chr.* (AGAJU, 1; Leiden, 1976 [2. verb. und erw. Aufl.], 155; PATRICK W. SKEHAN and ALEXANDER A. DI LELLA, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB; New York, 1987), 514; BENJAMIN G. WRIGHT III, “Eschatology without a Messiah in the Wisdom of Ben Sira,” in *The Septuagint and Messianism* (ed. by MICHAEL A. KNIBB; BETL 195; Leuven, 2006), 318; idem, “Ben Sira on Kings,” in *Jewish Perspectives*, 86.

²² See PANCRATIUS C. BEENTJES, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach* (Unpublished dissertation [Katholieke Theologische Hogeschool, Amsterdam], Nieuwegein, 1981), 188–190. BEENTJES regards the clause about the covenant of David as the continuation of v. 24b (‘so that to him ...’), but it is more likely to consider this clause as a continuation of the main clause of v. 24a (‘God conferred on him ...’). This reading does justice to the word ‘also’ as well as to the use of ‘his’ in the phrase ‘his covenant with David’. See furthermore JAMES D. MARTIN, “Ben Sira’s Hymn to the Fathers: A Messianic Perspective”, *OTS* 24 (1986), 115–116.

²³ KENNETH E. POMYKALA, *The Davidic Dynasty Tradition in Early Judaism. Its History and Significance for Messianism* (SBL Early Judaism and its Literature, 7; Atlanta, 1995), 142. Cf. MICHAEL PIETSCH, *‘Dieser ist der Spross Davids ...’ Studien zur Rezeptionsgeschichte der Nathanverheißung im alttestamentlichen, zwischentestamentlichen und neutestamentlichen Schrifttum* (WMANT 100; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 2003), 168–169.

²⁴ This ideology is also typical of AramLevi; see MICHAEL E. STONE, “Ideal Figures and Social Context: Priest and Sage in the early Second Temple Age,” in idem, *Selected*

3. As Ben Sira offers a concept of priestly leadership which served the interests of the Oniad family, his view most likely represents the ideology of this priestly family. He apparently supported the office of the high priest of his day. He did so as a man of great prestige, as a scholar-scribe who probably was not a priest himself, but belonged to the milieu of the lay nobility (the “elders”).²⁵ I have argued that the Old Greek version of Isaiah originated in the circle of Onias and his people who, in the sixties of the second century BCE, fled from Jerusalem to Egypt.²⁶ From this perspective it is reasonable to assume that the leadership ideology of the Oniad family as presented by Ben Sira is also the underlying view of our passage under discussion, the more so since the same concept is attested in the LXX Isaiah itself (ch. 22).

4. How then to interpret the term ἄγγελος in our text? As stated above, the use of this designation, in the sense of “messenger”, for a priest or high priest is not without parallel. A well-known passage is to be found in Mal 2:7 where it says, “... the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger (ἄγγελος) of the Lord of hosts”. Another important piece of evidence, to which I referred above, is the statement by Hecataeus of Abdera about the high priest of the Jews: “... the Jews never have a king, and authority over the people is regularly vested in whichever priest is regarded superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue. They call this man the high priest, and believe that he acts as a messenger (ἄγγελον) to them of God’s commandments”. In addition to these instances I would like to point to a passage in LXX Exodus, namely, 23:20–23, where the one called “my ἄγγελος” actually refers to the figure of the high priest.²⁷ Interestingly, in the passage of Hecataeus the role of messenger is related to the high priest as being the prime interpreter of the Law, and hence to the one who is said to “expound” the commandments to the Jews. The notion of teaching is also typical of Mal 2:7. This feature sheds light on the name in LXX Isa 9 - ἄγγελος of great counsel - as this designation clearly implies knowledge of the divine counsel, and hence the ability and authority to teach this counsel

Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha, with special reference to the Armenian Tradition (SVTP, 9; Leiden, 1991), 264; Goodblatt, *Monarchic Principle*, 44. See also 1Q21.

²⁵ VAN DER KOUIJ, “Authoritative Scriptures,” 65–66, 70. For the idea of Ben Sira being not a priest himself, see also FRIEDRICH V. REITERER, “Aaron’s Polyvalent Role according to Ben Sira,” in *Rewriting Biblical History*, 52.

²⁶ See ARIE VAN DER KOUIJ, “The Septuagint of Isaiah,” in Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom. On the Provenance of Translators and their Books in the Septuagint Version* (CBET 68; Leuven, 2012), 63–85.

²⁷ ARIE VAN DER KOUIJ, “LXX Exodus 23 and the Figure of the High Priest,” in *On Stone and Scroll. Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies* (ed. by James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell, Brian A. Mastin; BZAW 420; Berlin, 2011), 537–549.

to others. This picture of a leading priest who is also a sage and who has divine knowledge is also attested in other sources as is clear from 4Q541 where it says, “His word is like a word of the heavens and his teaching is like the will of God”.²⁸

5. In the light of the above it makes perfect sense to take ἄγγελος in LXX Isa 9 in the sense of “messenger”. As we know from Jewish sources, not only the messianic king (Horbury, Collins) but also the high priest could be conceived as an angelic being, as a human figure “with otherworldly qualities” (cf. 1QSb 4:25, “like an angel”).²⁹ This also applies to the ruler of our text who is seen as someone having divine knowledge. However, this does not mean that ἄγγελος should be rendered with “angel” because this would suggest that the figure involved is an angel in the strict sense of the word which obviously does not fit the reference to “the throne of David” in the next verse.

6. Finally, an argument from the immediate context of our passage. The preceding verse (v. 5; MT, v. 4) reads in LXX thus: “For they shall repay for every robe acquired by deceit, and for (every) garment (acquired) by usurious price; and they shall be willing if they have been burnt with fire”. This passage supports our exegesis of vv. 6–7 because it alludes to the way leading priests like Jason and Menelaos acquired the high-priestly robe, namely, by deceit and a large amount of money (compare 2 Macc 4:7–8, 23–24).³⁰

In sum, LXX Isa 9:6–7 makes perfect sense if read from the perspective of the view of a priestly leadership being vested with royal power and glory as attested in LXX Isa 22 as well as in Ben Sira (H). Regarding the term ἄγγελος there is evidence that it could be used to designate a high priest as “messenger”. This connotation nicely fits the expression which functions as the name of the leader, “messenger of great counsel”, which characterizes him as a mediator, or teacher, of divine knowledge, as is in line with other sources. The evidence of Ben Sira (H) is important for understanding passages like ch. 9:6–7 in LXX Isaiah because it sheds light on the reference to “David” (9:7; see also 22:22) as being part of a particular concept of priestly leadership. Moreover, it reflects the ideology of the milieu from

²⁸ For this text, see JOSEPH L. ANGEL, *Otherworldly and Eschatological Priesthood in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 86; Leiden, 2010), 78. For a similar view, see the statement by Josephus, C Ap 2,194: “Any who disobey him (i.e., the high priest) will pay the penalty as for impiety towards God himself”.

²⁹ Angel, *Priesthood*, 77.

³⁰ See ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Mode of Reading Prophecies in Early Judaism. Some Comments on LXX Isaiah 8–9,” in *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)*, Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006 (hrsg. von Martin Karrer und Wolfgang Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen, 2008), 609.

which, in my view, the Greek version of Isaiah originated – the Oniad family.

IV.

The next point to be dealt with is the question of how to understand the note on “the rulers”, τοὺς ἄρχοντας (“for I will bring peace to the rulers”). Scholars have suggested to consider them as rulers of the world,³¹ but according to Ziegler the reference to “the rulers” is to be understood in the light of Isa 60:17: “and I will give (appoint) your rulers (τοὺς ἄρχοντάς σου) in peace”.³² Here (new) rulers of Zion are meant. This interpretation is the preferable one as both passages also share the motif of peace. Moreover, the text of Isa 9:6 strongly suggests that the rulers belong together with the single leader because God (“I”, with emphasis³³) will bring peace to both, to the rulers (plural) as well as to the ruler (singular [“him”]). Since the latter is supposed to become leader in Jerusalem, as indicated by the reference to the throne of David, the former too can be regarded as rulers in Zion, in line with 60:17.

If the “rulers” and the ruler are related to each other, the question arises of how to perceive this relationship. I would like to answer this question from the perspective of the constitution of the Jews. Hecataeus of Abdera tells us that “the priests”, under the supreme direction of the high priest, were heading the Jewish nation. A large number of priests, and Levites, were engaged in the temple service, but given the hierarchy involved (see below) only a particular group is to be regarded as representing the leading ones. It stands to reason to think here of the priests who are often mentioned as accompanying the high priest at official occasions. See e.g.:

To our lord Bigvai, the governor of Judaea, *your servants Yedoniah and his colleagues, the priests who are in Yeb the fortress* (CAP 30,1)³⁴

(we sent a letter to your lordship and) to *Johanan the high priest and his colleagues, the priests who are in Jerusalem*, and to Ostanes the brother of Anani, and the nobles of the Jews (CAP 30,18)³⁵

³¹ SEELIGMANN, *Septuagint Version*, 119; HANHART, “Die Septuaginta als Interpretation”, 345; VAN DER KOOUJ, “The Greek Bible,” 261; LXX.D EK, 2528.

³² JOSEPH ZIEGLER, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias* (AA XII,3; Münster, 1934), 135.

³³ For other cases of emphasis relating to God, see 3:13–14; 10:24; 63:9.

³⁴ ARTHUR E. COWLEY, *Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* (Osnabrück, 1967 [reprint of 1923 ed.]), 113.

³⁵ COWLEY, *Papyri*, 114.

(When he – the high priest – learned that Alexander was not far from the city,) *he went out with the priests* and the body of citizens (*Ant.* 11,329).

With his colleagues [συνιερέων] he (i.e., the high priest) will sacrifice to God, safeguard the laws, adjudicate in cases of dispute, punish those convicted of crime (*C.Ap.* 2,194).

From these examples we learn that the high priest together with “the priests” is part of the leadership of the Jewish nation, the other part – in the case of *Ant.* 11,329 - being the nobles, the body of citizens, the latter representing the people in the sense of the lay people.

The “priests” who together with the high priest were heading the nation, are designated, both in the New Testament and by Josephus, ἀρχιερείς (“chief priests”). They were the ones who constituted the highest level of the priests acting in the temple, as we know from Josephus and rabbinic sources.³⁶ To quote Jeremias, the “chief priests permanently employed at the Temple formed a definite body who had jurisdiction over the priesthood and whose members had seats and votes on the council”.³⁷ A writing from Qumran contains a passage which is illuminating in this regard. 1QM 2:1–3 provides the following picture of the priestly hierarchy in the temple:

- The chiefs of the priests behind the High Priest and of his second (in rank), twelve priests to serve continually before God;
- The twenty-six chiefs of the divisions;
- The chiefs of the Levites to serve continually, twelve;
- The chiefs of their divisions.

The “chiefs of the priests”, representing together with the high priest and his deputy the highest rank, are to be equated with the “chief priests” noted above.³⁸ It therefore is likely that they were the ones who, together with the high priest, constituted the priestly rule of the Jewish nation, as described by Hecataeus.

Seen from this perspective, the picture of a leader together with “rulers” in LXX Isa 9:6 can be understood as referring to the high priest who together with the chief priests was making up the most important body of leaders of the people.³⁹ There is one passage in LXX Pentateuch which is most interesting in this regard - Exod 19:6. It reads, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἕσεσθέ μοι

³⁶ See JOACHIM JEREMIAS, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus. An Investigation into Economic and Social Conditions during the New Testament Period* (London, 1976), 147–180.

³⁷ JEREMIAS, *Jerusalem*, 180.

³⁸ Cf. ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35; Freiburg, Göttingen, 1981), 201.

³⁹ For the term ἄρχοντες as referring to the leading priests, see 1 Macc 14:28, and Acts 4:5, 8 (compare v. 23). On 1 Macc 14:28, see VAN DER KOOIJ, “Claim of Maccabean Leadership,” 31.

βασιλειον ιεράτευμα και ἔθνος ἅγιον – “You will be to me a royal priesthood and a holy nation” (MT: “You will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation”). The phrase “royal priesthood” alludes, likely so, to the same body of leading priests.⁴⁰ This feature adds to our understanding of the text in LXX Isa 9 because it sheds light on the presence of the “rulers”, together with the prime leader, in a context which is marked by the notion of royalty.

V.

To conclude, the above is not meant to provide a full analysis of LXX Isa 9:6–7 but is focused on particular elements which are interesting from the perspective of leadership ideology: (a) the term ἄγγελος and the phrase “the throne of David”, and (b) the presence of “rulers” beside the single leader. As to (a) the features involved make perfect sense if read in the light of the concept of leadership attested elsewhere in LXX Isaiah (ch. 22) and in Ben Sira (H) as well. Hence, our text does not refer to a Davidic messiah, but rather to a high priestly leader vested with royal glory and power. Although this leader has superhuman qualities as is indicated by his divine knowledge, the term ἄγγελος is best understood in our text as “messenger”, not angel. Finally, concerning (b) the going together of this leader with “rulers” fits in with what is known about the constitution of the Jews, as this feature makes perfect sense if reflecting the body of leading priests being composed of the chief priests as well as of the high priest.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of this point, see ARIE VAN DER KOOIJ, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom*, 42–52.