

Divine Kingdom
and Kingdoms of Men /
Gottesreich
und Reiche der Menschen

Studies on the Theology of the Septuagint Volume II /
Studien zur Theologie der Septuaginta Band II

Edited by / Herausgegeben von
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ISBN 978-3-16-158201-1/ eISBN 978-3-16-158202-8
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-158202-8

ISSN 0512-1604 / eISSN 2568-7476
(Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at <http://dnb.dnb.de>.

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The book was typeset by epline in Böblingen using Minion typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Buchbinderei Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

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Theocracy and Aristocracy

On divine kingship and royal priesthood in the Septuagint (Pentateuch and Isaiah)

Arie van der Kooij

Abstract: The idea of “theocracy” is usually taken as referring to the rule of religious personnel, esp. the government of priests. Things are different, however, with Josephus Flavius, Jewish scholar of the first century AD, who coined the term (θεοκρατία). He distinguishes between ‘theocracy’ on the one hand, and forms of human government (aristocracy and monarchy) on the other. In this paper the focus is on the concept of theocracy, divine kingship, and aristocracy, i. e., priestly rulership. It shall be argued that parts of the Septuagint – LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah – contain evidence for both concepts. The relationship between these concepts shall be dealt with, including the close relationship between God and the High Priest. In addition, the issue will be touched on why Jewish circles adhering to the model of aristocracy were opposed to monarchy, the rule of human kingship.

1. Introduction

Aristotle and other Greek philosophers of the time were greatly interested in constitutions and laws of several people. As is well known, they distinguished between three forms of government – monarchy (rule of a king), aristocracy (rule of “the best”), and democracy (rule of the people).¹ Josephus Flavius, the Jewish historian of the first century AD, used these labels in his writings, but interestingly, added a new term – “theocracy” (*C. Ap.* 2, 165):

Our lawgiver however was attracted by none of these forms of polity (i. e., monarchies, oligarchies, or political power of the masses [see previous passage, §164]), but gave to his constitution the form of what – if a forced expression be permitted – may be termed a “theocracy” (θεοκρατία), placing all sovereignty and authority in the hands of God.

Usually, and also in the case of Josephus, the idea of “theocracy” is taken as referring to the rule of religious personnel, in particular the government of priests. As has been pointed out by Barclay, as far as Josephus is concerned it is more ap-

¹ On Aristoteles, see *C. Rowe & M. Schofield* (eds.), *The Cambridge History of Greek and Roman Political Thought*, Cambridge 2000, 310–389.

propriate however to distinguish between the idea of theocracy, on the one hand, and the three forms of polity which are also employed and applied by him, on the other.² The former being a statement about God's governance of the universe can be understood as a theological foundation, whereas the issue of forms of human governance belongs to the discourse on political structures.³

Seen this way, one can imagine that the idea of divine kingship goes hand in hand with kingship of men (monarchy).⁴ Josephus however did not like the monarchy as the polity of his people but had a strong preference for aristocracy (cf. *Ant.* IV, 223–224).⁵ The latter form is very likely meant by him as a reference to priestly rule, i. e., the rule of the High Priest and his colleagues.⁶

In this contribution I shall argue that the concept of divine kingship going together with priestly rule is also found in two parts of the Greek Bible – LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah. First, I shall present and discuss passages relevant for the two sides of this concept. Second, I will raise the question of how both elements might be related to each other, in LXX Pentateuch and in LXX Isaiah. In doing so I shall pay particular attention to the relationship between God and the figure of the High Priest.

2. LXX Pentateuch

2.1. Divine kingship

In LXX Pentateuch there is one passage only, which explicitly refers to God as king – Exod 15:18:⁷

The Lord *is ruling as king* (βασιλεύων) forever and ever, and beyond
(MT: The Lord *will reign* [yimlok] forever and ever)

² J. M. G. Barclay, *Against Apionem* (Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary, Vol. X), Leiden 2007, 262. See also O. Gussmann, *Das Priesterverständnis des Flavius Josephus* (TSAJ 124), Tübingen 2008, 315.

³ Cf. Barclay, *Against Apionem*, 262. For a slightly different view, see Gussmann, *Priesterverständnis*, 324.

⁴ For an example, see LXX Chronicles: Solomon is going to “sit on the throne of the Lord's kingdom over Israel” (1Chr 28:5).

⁵ Cf. Gussmann, *Priesterverständnis*, 306–324, and Z. Rodgers, “Monarchy vs. Priesthood: Josephus, Justus of Tiberias, and Agrippa II,” in: Z. Rodgers, M. Daly-Denton & A. Fitzpatrick McKinley (eds.), *A Wandering Galilean: Essays in Honour of Seán Freyne* (JSJSup 132), Leiden 2009, 173–184.

⁶ For a discussion, see Barclay, *Against Apionem*, 261 (“the leadership of the high-priests appears most compatible [...] with ‘aristocracy’” [*Ant.* XX, 251]). See also *Ant.* XI, 111, where beside the term “aristocratic” also “oligarchic” is employed regarding the rule of high priests; the latter one, “oligarchic”, fits the official body being composed of the High Priest and his colleagues, the chief priests. On this institution, see further below.

⁷ Num 23:21 and Deut 33:5 are other passages which are often considered as referring to God as king but in LXX things are different. On the other hand, LXX Deut 9:26 contains the expression “king of the gods” for God, which is not attested in the MT.

This passage is part of the famous Song of the Sea. Unlike MT, which has a *yiqtol* form of the verb involved (ךלמ), LXX has a present participle, denoting a continuous fact: God *ruling as king* forever.⁸ As the Song expresses, he acted as the mighty one who threw the chariots of Pharaoh and his host into the sea (v. 4), crushed the enemies (v. 6), and led and redeemed his people (v. 13), showing in this way his royal power over the nations.

It is interesting to note that the use of the present participle relating to God (βασιλεύων) has parallels elsewhere in LXX Pentateuch: first of all, in v. 3 of the same chapter (Exod 15): the Lord “who shatters wars” (συντριβων πολέμους), and furthermore in Gen 18:25, “the one who judges (ὁ κρίνων) all the earth”, and in Exod 3:15, “I am ὁ ὢν” (cf. Exod 6:3, θεὸς ὢν αὐτῶν) as well.

2.2. Human governance

As to the matter of leadership of the Jewish nation in LXX Pentateuch the following passages are of great interest: Exod 19:6 and 23:21, as well as Deut 17:14–20. In what follows I will concentrate on the two passages in LXX Exodus.⁹

Exod 19:6

You will be to me a royal priesthood (βασιλειον ιεράτευμα) and a holy nation (MT: You will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation)

The expression in Hebrew, “a kingdom of priests” (ממלכת כהנים), has been rendered as βασιλειον ιεράτευμα. It has been suggested to take the phrase in Greek as two substantives, “kingdom” and “priesthood”, but scholars have pointed out that the Greek βασιλειον is better understood here as an adjective: a *royal* priesthood.¹⁰ The other term employed, ιεράτευμα, is an interesting one too. In distinction to the Greek ιερατεία denoting the priesthood and the priestly office in general, the lexeme ιεράτευμα carries a specific meaning, just like στρατευμα and τεχνίτευμα, referring to a particular group of people, that is to say, a body of priests.¹¹

Due to an early Christian tradition the expression “a royal priesthood” is often understood as designating the people as a whole, but in light of the way the text was read in ancient Judaism it is more plausible to understand it as referring to the leadership of the Jewish people. In 2Macc 2:17 the Greek version of Exod 19:6 is quoted as follows: τὸ βασιλειον καὶ τὸ ιεράτευμα. In this text, both terms do

⁸ For this form, see also LXX 1Chr 16:31.

⁹ See also A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” in: J. Cook & A. van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom. On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version* (CBET 68), Leuven – Paris – Walpole, MA 2012, 42–49. I leave aside here LXX Deut 17:14–20. For this passage, see van der Kooij, “Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” 49–54. See also the contribution by Hans Ausloos in this volume.

¹⁰ See e. g., J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Exodus* (SCS 30), Atlanta, GA 1990, 295.

¹¹ Cf. T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Louvain 2009, s. v.

not pertain to the people as a whole, but to the leadership of the nation, albeit in this instance to the “kingship” and the “priesthood” as two distinct institutions. Seen from this perspective the phrase “royal priesthood” makes perfect sense if taken as referring to a body of *leading* priests. On the question which body might be implied, see below.

Exod 23:20–21

And look, I am sending my angel in front of you in order to guard you on the way in order to bring you into the land that I prepared for you

Mind yourself, and listen to him, and do not disobey him. For he shall not hold you in undue awe, for my name is upon him

(MT: Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place which I have prepared.

Give heed to him and hearken to his voice, do not show bitterness towards him, for he will not pardon your transgression; for my name is in him)

In MT the figure of the “angel” (see also v. 23) is commonly understood as a heavenly messenger,¹² but the Greek version, v. 21 in particular, displays features, which point into another direction. As to the divergences between LXX and MT, the following are of note, particularly the third one:

(a) LXX: “Do not disobey (ἀπειθει) him” (MT: “do not show bitterness towards him”).

MT reflects the hifil of מָרַר, whereas LXX presupposes an interpretation via the root מָרָה (for the same rendering of this verb, see Deut 1:26; 9:7, 23, 24).

(b) LXX: “He shall not hold you in undue awe (οὐ γὰρ μὴ ὑποστειληταί σοι)” (MT “he will not pardon your transgressions”). The Greek verb used here (ὑποστέλλομαι) means “to draw, shrink back.” LXX alludes to the role of a judge, as is clear from LXX Deut 1:16–17:

And I commanded your judges at that time, saying: Give a full hearing among your brothers, and judge rightly between a man and between his brother [...] You shall not recognize the person when judging: like the small so you shall judge the great; *you shall not shrink from the face of a person* (οὐ μὴ ὑποστειλή πρόσωπον ἀνθρώπου) [...]

The issue at stake is the sensitive matter of showing partiality in court, pronouncing someone guilty, who is not, or the other way around.

(c) LXX: “My name is *upon* him (τὸ γὰρ ὄνομά μου ἐστὶν ἐπ’ αὐτῶ) (MT: “my name is *in* him”). The rendering “upon” (ἐπί c. dat.) for “in” (בְּקִרְבֵּי) is unusual and is to be seen as an interpretation.¹³ It has been suggested that this difference

¹² Compare the figure in Jos 5:13–15. H. Ausloos, “The Angel of YHWH in Exod xxiii 20–33 and Judg. ii 1–5. A clue to the ‘Deuteronomistic’ puzzle?” VT 58 (2008) 1–12, points to Judg 2:1–5.

¹³ Cf. R. Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint*, Helsinki 1979, 241.

points to a weakening of the role of the angel.¹⁴ It is to be asked however what the phrase, “my name is upon him”, means. To which figure might it apply? In the light of several data, the most likely answer is: to the figure of the High Priest. According to Exod 28:36 and 39:30 (MT), the High Priest is the one who carries the name of the Lord as part of an inscription – “Holy to the Lord” – being engraved on a plate of gold which was fastened on the turban. In the section describing the apparel of the High Priest, the Letter of Aristeas (§98) also refers to the inscription, the difference being that here the focus is on the name (of God) only, as being inscribed, because no reference is made to the term “holiness” (ἁγίασμα) as found in LXX (Exod 28:32; 36:38). The same is true of description of the head-dress of the High Priest by Josephus (*bell. Iud.* V, 235 and *Ant.* III, 178).

Josephus is also the one who provides us with a most interesting illustration of the significance attached to the fact that the name of God is on the High Priest. It is a story about Alexander the Great, who after having taken Tyre and Gaza, went up to the city of Jerusalem (*Ant.* XI, 326). His meeting with the Jewish leaders at Mount Scopus is described as follows:

When Alexander while still far off saw the multitude in white garments the priests at their head clothed in linen, and the high priest in a robe of hyacinth-blue and gold, wearing on his head the mitre with the golden plate on it *on which was inscribed the name of God*, he approached alone and prostrated himself before the Name and first greeted the high priest. [...] the kings of Syria and the others were struck with amazement at his action and supposed that the king’s mind was deranged. And Parmenion [...] asked why indeed, when all men prostrated themselves before him, he had prostrated himself before the high priest of the Jews, whereupon he replied, “It was not before him that I prostrated myself but the God of whom he has the honour to be high priest [...]” (*Ant.* XI, 331–333)

This story, considered legendary by most scholars, offers clear proof of the significance of the “name” of God being carried by the High Priest, underlining in this way the very close relationship between him and God.

In the light of all this it is plausible to assume that LXX Exod 32:21 refers to the figure of the High Priest rather than to the angel of the Lord. It is to be asked however whether this fits the term ἄγγελος in v. 20 and v. 23. Should it not be taken as alluding to the (or, an) angel of the Lord as in MT? This however is not necessarily so because the term can also denote a human messenger (e. g., Gen 32:4), or can also designate a priestly figure, as is the case in LXX Mal 2:7, or even the High Priest as is clear from the following example. In his description of the *politeia* of the Jews, Hecataeus of Abdera, a Greek scholar of ca. 300 BCE, tells his readers: “They (i. e., the Jews) call this man the high priest, and believe that he acts as a messenger (ἄγγελον) to them of God’s commandments.”¹⁵

¹⁴ H. Ausloos, “The Septuagint version of Exod 23:20–33: A Deuteronomist at work?” JSNL 22 (1996) 102.

¹⁵ See M. Stern (ed.), *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism*, Vol. I: From Herodotus to Plutarch, Jerusalem 1974, 28.

To sum up, it can be said that the two passages in LXX Exodus discussed so far allude to a body of leading priests (19:6), on the one hand, and to the High Priest (23:21), on the other. As to the relationship between the High Priest and the body of leading priests there are textual data which are clarifying in this regard. To quote some of them:

Letter from Elephantine, dating to the Persian period (407 BCE):

“we sent a letter [...] to Jehohanan the high priest and his colleagues, the priests who are in Jerusalem” (CAP 30, 18).

Hecataeus of Abdera (ca. 300 BCE)

Concerning the *politeia* of the Jews he tells his readers that “the priests” were selected (by Moses) “to head the entire nation.” They should not only occupy themselves with the temple and the cult, but were also “appointed to be judges in all major disputes.” The one who was “regarded as superior to his colleagues in wisdom and virtue,” was called the high priest.¹⁶

IQM 2,1

The priests representing the highest rank in the priestly hierarchy are described here as follows: “The chiefs of the priests behind the High Priest and of his second (in rank), twelve priests to serve continually before God.”

Josephus, Contra Apionem II, 194

“With his colleagues (συνιερέων) he (i. e., the high priest) will sacrifice to God, safeguard the laws, adjudicate in cases of dispute, and punish those convicted of crime.”

These data indicate that the group of the leading priests was composed of the High Priest and his colleagues, the “chiefs of the priests.”¹⁷ The “chiefs of the priests” (IQM) are the same as those called in other sources, the New Testament and Josephus, the “chief priests” (ἀρχιερείς). They were the (leading) priests who under the supreme direction of the High Priest were heading the Jewish nation. Beside their cultic role they were also acting as judge in the High or Central Court (cf. Hecataeus of Abdera: “judges of major disputes”).¹⁸ Thus, the royal body of priests (LXX Exod 19:6) and the figure of the High Priest (LXX Exod 23:21) closely belonged together, making up the highest official body within the constitution of the Jews.

¹⁶ Stern, Greek and Latin Authors, 28.

¹⁷ Cf. van der Kooij, “Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” 51 f. See also A. van der Kooij, “The Old Greek of Isaiah 9,6–7 and the Concept of Leadership,” in: W. Kraus & S. Kreuzer (eds.), Die Septuaginta – Text, Wirkung, Rezeption (WUNT 325), Tübingen 2014, 343 f.

¹⁸ On this Court, see A. van der Kooij, “Scholars and Officials in Early Judaism: The *Sôfer* of Jesus Ben Sira,” in: R. N. Gauthier, G. R. Kotzé & G. J. Steyn (eds.), Septuagint, Sages, and Scripture. Studies in Honour of Johann Cook (VTSup 172), Leiden 2016, 201 f.

3. LXX Isaiah

3.1. The divine kingship

Regarding the concept of God as king in the book of Isaiah, the text of Isa 6:5 is the one that immediately comes to mind. It reads, in LXX:

(Isaiah who saw the Lord sitting on a throne (v.1), says:) “I have seen the king (τὸν βασιλέα), the Lord Sabaoth, with my eyes!” (cf. MT)

The prophet sees God, the King, sitting on a throne. He is king of the whole earth as is clear from v. 3: “the whole earth is full of his glory”. His kingship is related to the temple on Mount Sion, the place where he is said to “dwell” (“who dwells on Mount Sion” [8:17]).

Another passage which is important in this respect, is to be found in Isa 37:16:

(Hezekiah praying in the temple:) “O Lord Sabaoth, God of Israel, who sits upon the cheroubin, you alone are God of every kingdom of the world (σὺ θεὸς μόνος εἶ πάσης βασιλείας τῆς οἰκουμένης); you have made heaven and earth” (cf. MT).

Although not explicitly designated as “king” the underlying idea is that God is king of all the kingdoms and nations of the world. Notably, in contrast to imperialistic claims of Assyria or other world powers he is said to be the only one (μόνος).

In this connexion it is interesting to note that LXX Isaiah contains the phrase “the great God” (26:4; cf. 33:22 [“my God is *great* [...] the Lord is our king”]). Though not attested in MT Isaiah at both instances, the notion of God being “great” is found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (e. g., Deut 7:21; Jer 32:18), while, more interestingly, it seems typical of sources of the time of LXX Isaiah (second century BCE): Daniel (2:45; 9:4), Wisdom of Sirach (39:6; 43:5, 29) and Book III of the Sibylline Oracles (passim) in particular. The last one also offers the related expression “the great king” (III, 560. 808), which as is well known goes back to Mesopotamian literature (royal inscriptions), conveying the notion of rulership of the whole world.¹⁹

Beside the passages of LXX Isaiah just mentioned, two other places are to be noted:

Isa 24:23

“... the Lord will reign (βασιλεύσει κύριος) in Sion and in Jerusalem, and before the elders he will be glorified”

Isa 52:7

“... I (God) will make your salvation heard, saying to Sion, “Your God shall reign” (βασιλεύσει σου ὁ θεός)

¹⁹ For an example in the book of Isaiah, see Isa 36:4.

These two instances are announcing that God *is going* to rule as king in Sion and Jerusalem. This is related to the idea that he had left, for a while, Sion (see e. g., 54:7–8).²⁰ Thus, after a while, he will come back; cf. LXX Isa 4:5, “he will come” to Sion (MT diff.; see also 35:4), in order to dwell on Mount Sion again.

3.2. Human governance

In the Hebrew version of Isaiah, the passages referring to priests are small in number, indicating that it does not reflect a great interest in priests and priesthood. LXX Isaiah on the other hand displays a different picture because in several instances its vocabulary points to an interest in priests and priesthood.²¹ One of the passages to be mentioned is Isa 40:2, since here the LXX offers the term “priest” where MT (nor 1QIsa^a) does not:

Comfort, O comfort my people, says God.
O *priests* (ιερείς), speak to the heart of Jerusalem, comfort her [...]

Another passage is to be found in LXX Isa 22:15–25, the prophecy about Shebna and Eljakim. In MT these persons are presented as officials of the royal court, but in LXX things are different. The Old Greek version of this passage is marked by vocabulary that points to the concept of priestly leadership being vested with royal power.²²

LXX Isa 9:6–7 (MT vv. 5–6) is yet another interesting passage in this regard, which because of the topic of this contribution deserves our attention. It reads, in translation:

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.

²⁰ In two other passages God is called “king of Jacob” (41:21), or “king of Israel” (44:6). Each of them is part of a disputation with the gods, the idea being that God unlike other gods is the one who has the power (as king) to redeem Israel. See also 33:22.

²¹ Cf. A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood,” in: I. Provan & M. J. Boda (eds.), *Let us Go up to Zion. Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (VTSup 153), Leiden 2012, 69–78.

²² See A. van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35), Freiburg – Göttingen 1981, 56–57.

(MT For a child is born to us, a son is 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,
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.)

This passage differs markedly from MT (as well as from 1QIsa^a), in particular as far as the name of the child is concerned ("Messenger of great counsel" in LXX). As I have pointed out elsewhere,²³ the Greek text does not allude to a Davidic messiah, but makes better sense if read from the perspective of the concept attested in Isa 22:15–25, namely, of priestly leadership (high priesthood), which also embodied the royal office of Israel's past.

This concept is not without parallel in Jewish sources of the time. The Wisdom of Ben Sira (Hebrew) is an important one in this regard. Scholars have observed that Ben Sira perceived the priesthood as the true heir of the Davidic promises. But there is more to it. In the section called the Praise of the Fathers (Sir 44–50), he ascribes, as Wright put it, "royal characteristics to the three most important priests in his list: Aaron, Phinehas, and Simon II."²⁴ Scholars have pointed out that Sir 50 (H [=Hebrew]), containing the praises of the high priest Simon, is to be seen as the climax of the Praise of the Fathers, serving ultimately, as is clear from verse 24 (H), the legitimization of the members of the Oniad priestly family (see also 45:24–25 [H]). The writing of Ben Sira attests to a priestly ideology, which is characterized by a transference of the Davidic kingship to the high-priesthood, an ideology which is also typical of other texts such as Aramaic Levi.

It is to be noted though that LXX Isa 9:6–7 does not only denote a priestly leader ("Messenger of great counsel"), but also speaks of "the rulers:" "For I will bring peace upon *the rulers* (τοὺς ἄρχοντας) peace and health to *him*" (αὐτῷ). Who are "the rulers"? One could regard them rulers of the world, but in light of Isa 60:17 ("and I will give [appoint] your rulers in peace," i. e., the rulers of Sion) and in view of the fact that our text strongly suggests a close relationship between "the rulers" and "him" (cf. peace to both of them), it is more appropriate to read the text from the perspective of the idea of royal priesthood, dealt with above, and to interpret the relationship involved as follows:

"Messenger" + "the rulers" = High Priest + chief priests²⁵

²³ Van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah 9,6–7," 333–345.

²⁴ B. Wright, "Ben Sira on Kings and Kingship," in: T. Rajak, S. Pearce, J. Aitken & J. Dines (eds.), *Jewish Perspectives on Hellenistic Rulers* (Hellenistic Culture and Society 50), Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2007, 86.

²⁵ Cf. van der Kooij, "The Old Greek of Isaiah 9:6–7," 344f.

The interest in priests, and in the high priesthood in particular, as reflected in LXX Isaiah, suggests that this version was produced in a priestly milieu. As I have argued elsewhere, LXX Isaiah originated in Ptolemaic Egypt, in the group of the priest Onias, because there are a number of data, both internal (LXX Isa 10:24; 11:16, and 19:18–19, 24–25) and external (Josephus, *bell. Iud.* VII, 420–432; *Ant.* XIII, 62–73), which “strongly point to a relationship between the Oniad group in Egypt and the Old Greek of Isaiah.”²⁶

4. Theocracy and Aristocracy

In this section I would like to deal, briefly, with the question of how the idea of God as king and the concept of priestly leadership might be related to each other, in LXX Pentateuch as well as in LXX Isaiah. In his writing *Contra Apionem* Josephus, he himself a member of the priestly aristocracy, makes the following significant statement about the figure of the High Priest: “Any who disobey him will pay the penalty as for impiety towards God himself” (*C. Ap.* II, 194). The High Priest is seen here as someone being very close to God, as someone representing in a sense divine authority. This view reminds one of the oriental traditions, also attested in the Hebrew Bible, according to which kings were regarded semi-divine (“son” of God).

The feature outlined above, the High Priest carrying the *name* of God, fits in with this picture. Beside other pieces of evidence, the passage in LXX Pentateuch – Exodus 23:21 –, is most interesting in this regard. It highlights the relationship between God and the High Priest, of which the story about Alexander the Great offers a nice illustration.²⁷ The High Priest carrying the name of God was, one could say, regarded representing God, his delegate.

As for LXX Isaiah, although the data given above do suggest a special relationship between God as king and the High Priest, as well as the High Priest together with his colleagues, the chief priests, I would like to add here two passages which, in my view, shed more light on this – Isa 32:2 and 60:1–2:

Isa 32:2

The man will be hiding his words and will be hidden as from rushing water, and *he will appear* (φανήσεται) in Sion like a rushing river, glorious in a thirsty land

(MT: Each will be like a hiding-place from the wind, a covert from the tempest, like streams of water in a dry place, like the shade of a great rock in a weary land)

²⁶ See van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah,” 85.

²⁷ Compare also Sir 50:20–21: “Then coming down he (the High Priest) would raise his hands over all the congregation of Israel; the blessing of the Lord would be upon his lips, *the name of the Lord would be his glory*. Then again the people would lie prostrate, receiving the blessing from the Most High.”

Isa 60:1–2

Shine, shine, O Jerusalem, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you [...] *the Lord will appear* (φανήσεται) upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you

(MT: Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. [...] the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you)

Isa 32:2 differs from MT (and IQIsa^a) in many respects.²⁸ The Greek is about a figure (“the man”), obviously a leader, who *will appear in Sion*; he then will no longer hide his words, i. e. his words of wisdom (cf. Isa 11:2). Within LXX Isaiah as a whole, “the man” is most likely the same figure as the one alluded to in Isa 9:6–7 – a priestly leader. Isa 60:2 on the other hand is about the Lord who *will appear* in Jerusalem (MT “the Lord will arise”). The Greek version touches here upon the motif of the “coming” of the Lord to Sion (see e. g., 4:5) in order to rule as king in Sion (cf. above).

Both texts are clearly related to each other because they share the verb “to appear,”²⁹ as well as the reference to “Sion/Jerusalem.” The former element lacks an equivalent in MT in both places, while the latter (“Sion”) is without parallel in MT 32:2. Read together both texts point to a close relationship between the Lord and the priestly leader (“the man”). Both are said to appear in Sion, which means that the Lord shall reign as king in Sion as soon as the priestly leader, who is expected to come as well,³⁰ shall exercise his office in Jerusalem.

As to this idea, there is yet another passage in LXX Isaiah, which deserves our attention – Isa 52:6–7. It reads:

Therefore my people shall know my name in that day, because I myself am the one who speaks: I am here (ἄρρημι),
like spring-time upon the mountains,
like the feet of one bringing glad tidings of a report of peace,
like one bringing glad tidings of good things;
because (ὄτι) I will make your salvation heard, saying to Sion: “Your God shall rule as king.”

(MT: Therefore my people shall know my name; therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak: “here am I.”

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings
who proclaims peace, who brings good tidings of good,
who proclaims salvation, who says to Zion, “Your God reigns”)

²⁸ For a more detailed discussion of Isa 32:2 (MT and LXX), see A. van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Issue of Coherence. A Twofold Analysis of LXX Isaiah 31:9b–32:8,” in: A. van der Kooij & M. N. van der Meer (eds.), *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives* (CBET 55), Leuven – Walpole, MA 2010, 37–39.

²⁹ See also M. van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah. An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses* (SCS 61), Atlanta, GA 2014, 345: the agreement as example of anaphoric translation.

³⁰ As a member of the house of Onias, he is expected to come from Egypt.

In comparison with MT, the Greek version displays a most interesting feature. In MT, v. 6 is about the Lord, whereas v. 7 forms the beginning of a new pericope (vv. 7–10: cf. 1QIsa^a), containing a prophecy announcing a messenger who brings good tidings, and proclaims peace and salvation for Zion. The situation in LXX however is quite different: the Lord is said to be present (παρέμι, “having arrived”) *like* [...] (thrice). Obviously, v. 7 is interpreted here as the continuation of v. 6: the Lord is the one who is *like* someone who brings glad tidings. This explains the use of the first person singular “I” in v. 7 (“I will make the salvation heard”), instead of “he” in MT.

Thus, instead of a messenger who will proclaim peace and salvation to Sion (MT), LXX has it that God shall arrive at Sion “like one bringing glad tidings [...] because I will make your salvation heard.” However, the last clause (“because I will make your salvation heard”) strongly evokes the idea that the arrival of the Lord goes together with the coming of a messenger through whom God will make something heard. In the light of 40:2 (“priests” are called upon “to comfort” Jerusalem) it is plausible to think of a priest as the messenger, whereas the Greek version of Isa 9:5–6 (“Messenger of great counsel”) makes one think of the High Priest as the implied messenger in 52:6–7.

Understood this way it is likely that the mention of the name of God in v. 6 (“my people shall know *my name* in that day”) is meant in line with LXX Exod 23:21: “my people,” in Jerusalem, “shall know my name” because the one carrying the name of God, i. e. the High Priest, has arrived. Furthermore and finally, the passage also refers to the kingship of God in Sion (see above, 3.1.).

5. Concluding remarks

In the above we have dealt with passages referring to divine kingship (monarchy) on the one hand, and to royal priesthood (aristocracy) – High Priest together with the chief priests –, on the other, in LXX Pentateuch as well as in LXX Isaiah. Next I have argued that both parts of the Greek Bible reflect a specific image of the relationship between God and the figure of the High Priest: LXX Pentateuch by focusing on the name of God being inscribed on the golden plate as part of the head-dress of the High Priest (cf. LXX Exod 23:21), and LXX Isaiah by emphasizing the coming (“appearing”) to Sion of both God and the High Priest (LXX Isa 32:2 and 60:1–2).

As far as the kingship of God is concerned LXX Isa 52:6–7 turned out to be interesting as it indicates that God will rule as king in Sion as soon as the High Priest has arrived. Because of Mount Sion as the place of Gods kingship and of the priestly rule, LXX Isaiah obviously conveys a theology closely related to the politics of the time.

In this connexion, there is an issue, which has not been touched upon in the above. If the kingship of God pertains to his rule of the whole world, the question arises what this might mean for the position of the High Priest and his colleagues, the chief priests, in Jerusalem. It could imply that they not only were heading the Jewish nation, but also expected to play a leading role in the kingdom of God on earth.

Another issue, which has not been dealt with, concerns the combination of Theocracy and Aristocracy – divine kingship and royal priesthood. LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah, like Josephus, are in favour of this combination. This raises the question of why the scholars who produced both parts of the Greek Bible, like Josephus, did not like the monarchy as form of government of the Jewish nation. This is not meant to deny though that in the view of Josephus a king should not play any role within the constitution of the Jews. *Ant.* IV, 223–224 is most interesting in this regard: “Aristocracy [...] is indeed the best”, he says. He then goes on: “But should you become enamoured of a king, let him be of your race [...], let him do nothing without the high priest and the counsel of the elders.” Josephus rephrasing here the law of the king in Deut 17 is quite clear: if the people would like to have a king, then only in a position under the High Priest. In my view, this subordinate position of the king is also typical of LXX Pentateuch, and of other writings of the time (e. g., Jubilees).³¹ Monarchy however refers to the king as the *primary* ruler of the nation. So the remaining question is why the circles behind LXX Pentateuch and LXX Isaiah did not like this form of government.

³¹ Van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of the Pentateuch,” 51–54.