

## Symmachus at Caesarea

*Abstract:*

Our knowledge of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible by Symmachus ultimately derives from what survives of Origen's Hexapla, especially as mediated by commentaries on books of the Old Testament and noted in the margins of certain Greek biblical manuscripts or of the Syrohexapla. However, it is unclear where and when Origen first encountered and then acquired Symmachus' version. This essay attempts to find some answers from the conflicting information given in various patristic sources. It argues for Caesarea Maritima as the place where Origen obtained Symmachus' version through their mutual acquaintance Juliana, and for a date before 219 for this exchange. It restates the arguments for Symmachus' Jewish identity at the time of translating, and reviews the suggestion that Symmachus may be identified with Sumkhos ben Joseph, disciple of Rabbi Meir. It then discusses the possibility that the name Symmachus had significance for Jews as a Greek approximation to Eleazar. Finally, it gives a brief overview of the extent of the use of Symmachus' translation by scholars associated with Caesarea Maritima, principally Origen, Eusebius, and Jerome.

*Key words:*

Origen, Hexapla, Caesarea, Symmachus, Eusebius, Epiphanius, Palladius, rabbis, Sumkhos

### 1. Introduction: The Sources

Sources that offer biographical information about Symmachus consist of the following patristic testimonies: Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 6.16–17; Epiphanius of Salamis, *Mens. et Pond.* § 16 (cf. also § 18); Palladius, *Lausiaca History* § 64. However, some details in these accounts are not easily reconciled, principally those concerning the implied date for his work and his religious affiliation. The key passages are given below:<sup>1</sup>

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1 The passages are discussed by Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches. Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments* (OBO 35; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 221–30. Later accounts rely to a greater or lesser extent on these earlier testimonies, and especially on that of Eusebius (e.g. in the chapter on Origen in

1.1 Eusebius of Caesarea, *Hist. eccl.* 6.17<sup>2</sup>

Τῶν γε μὴν ἑρμηνευτῶν αὐτῶν δὴ τούτων ἰστέον Ἐβιωναῖον τὸν Σύμμαχον γεγονέναι· αἴρεσις δέ ἐστιν ἡ τῶν Ἐβιωναίων οὕτω καλουμένη τῶν τὸν Χριστὸν ἐξ Ἰωσήφ καὶ Μαρίας γεγονέναι φασκόντων ψιλόν τε ἄνθρωπον ὑπειληφῶτων αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν νόμον χρῆναι Ἰουδαϊκώτερον φυλάττειν ἀπισχυριζομένων, ὡς που καὶ ἐκ τῆς πρόσθεν ἰστωρίας ἔγνωμεν. καὶ ὑπομνήματα δὲ τοῦ Συμμάχου εἰς ἔτι νῦν φέρεται, ἐν οἷς δοκεῖ πρὸς τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον ἀποτεινόμενος εὐαγγέλιον τὴν δεδηλωμένην αἴρεσιν κρατύνειν. ταῦτα δὲ ὁ Ὀριγένης μετὰ καὶ ἄλλων εἰς τὰς γραφὰς ἑρμηνειῶν τοῦ Συμμάχου σημαίνει παρὰ Ἰουλιανῆς τινος εἰληφέναι, ἣν καὶ φησιν παρ' αὐτοῦ Συμμάχου τὰς βίβλους διαδέξασθαι.

Now of these translators [sc. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion] it should be known that Symmachus was an Ebionite. The so-called Ebionite heresy is of those who say that Christ was born from Joseph and Mary and suppose him an ordinary human being. They insist that the Law should be observed in a more Jewish manner, as mentioned earlier in our account [*Hist. eccl.* 3.27]. And commentaries by Symmachus exist to the present, in which he appears to support the aforementioned heresy by attacking the gospel of Matthew.<sup>3</sup> These works, along with other translations of the Scriptures by Symmachus, Origen indicates that he obtained from a certain Juliana. He says that she received the books from Symmachus himself.

1.2 Epiphanius, *Mens. et Pond.* § 16<sup>4</sup>

Ἐν τοῖς τοῦ Σευήρου χρόνοις Σύμμαχος τις Σαμαρείτης τῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς σοφῶν μὴ τιμηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ οἰκείου ἔθνους νοσήσας φιλαρχίαν καὶ ἀγανακτήσας κατὰ τῆς ἰδίας φυλῆς προσέρχεται Ἰουδαίοις καὶ προσηλυτεύει καὶ περιτέμνεται δευτέραν

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Jerome's *Vir. illus.* § 54; and the combined and garbled version in the *Hypomnestikon Biblion*, § 122 [ed. Robert M. Grant and G. W. Menzies, *Joseph's Bible Notes* (Hypomnestikon) [Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press, 1996]]. See Alison Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* (Journal of Semitic Studies Monograph 15; Manchester: Victoria University of Manchester 1991), v–vi, 283–97. Unless otherwise indicated, the renderings are my own.

2 Ed. Gustave Bardy, *Eusèbe de Césarée. Histoire ecclésiastique, Livres V–VII* (Sources chrétiennes 41; Paris: Cerf, 1955). Books 1–8 of *Hist. eccl.* may be dated to the early fourth century, according to Andrew Louth, “The Date of Eusebius’ *Historia ecclesiastica*,” *JTS* 41 (1990): 111–23, esp. 121, where Louth discusses Eusebius’ use of Pamphilus’ Apology for Origen in his biography of Origen in Book 6.

3 See Dominique Barthélemy, “Qui est Symmaque?” *CBQ* 36 (1974): 451–65 = Patrick W. Skehan *Festschrift*; repr. in *Études d’Histoire du Texte* (OBO 21; Fribourg: Éditions universitaires; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht; Paris; J. Gabalda, 1978), 307–21, for this interpretation (458–59).

4 Greek text in E. Moutsoulas, “Τὸ Ἐπιπέρι μέτρων καὶ σταθμῶν ἔργον Ἐπιφανίου τοῦ Σαλαμῖνος,” *Θεολογία* 44 (1973): 157–98.

περιτομήν .... Οὗτος τοίνυν ὁ Σύμμαχος πρὸς διαστροφὴν τῶν παρὰ Σαμαρείταις ἑρμηνειῶν ἑρμηνεύσας τὴν τρίτην ἐξέδωκεν ἑρμηνείαν.<sup>5</sup>

In the time of Severus [193–211 CE] there was a certain Symmachus, a Samaritan, among their sages. He was not honoured by his own race, and craved high status. Out of vexation with his own kind, he approached the Jews, converted, and was circumcised a second time. ... So this Symmachus translated in order to pervert the interpretations of the Samaritans and issued the third translation.

### 1.3 Palladius, *Hist. Laus.* § 64<sup>6</sup>

Ἰουλιανή τις πάλιν παρθένος ἐν Καισαρεία τῆς Καππαδοκίας λογιωτάτη ἐλέγετο καὶ πιστοτάτη· ἥτις Ὀριγένην τὸν συγγραφέα φεύγοντα τὴν ἐπανάστασιν τῶν Ἑλλήνων ἐδέξατο ἐπὶ δύο ἔτη ἰδίους ἀναλώμασι καὶ ὑπηρεσίᾳ ἀναπαύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα. Εὐρον δὲ ταῦτα ἐγὼ γεγραμμένα ἐν παλαισιότῳ βιβλίῳ στιχηρῶ, ἐν ᾧ ἐγέγραπτο χειρὶ Ὀριγένους· Τοῦτο τὸ βιβλίον εὐρον ἐγὼ παρὰ Ἰουλιανῆ τῆ παρθένῳ ἐν Καισαρεία, κρυπτόμενος παρ' αὐτῆ· ἥτις ἔλεγε παρ' αὐτοῦ Συμμάχου τοῦ ἑρμηνέως τῶν Ἰουδαίων αὐτὸ εἰληφέναι.

Furthermore, there was a certain Juliana, a virgin in Caesarea of Cappadocia, who was said to be most learned and devout. When the scholar Origen was fleeing the uprising of the Greeks she provided him with hospitality and repose for two years at her own expense. I found these details written in a very old book in verse, in which there was written in Origen's hand, "I found this book with Juliana

5 Written c. 392. G. Zahn, "Herkunft und Lehrrichtung des Bibelübersetzers Symmachus," *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* 34 (1923): 197–209, argued that much of this passage in Epiphanius derived from a lost testimony by Origen.

See also the Syriac version in J. E. Dean and M. Sprengling, *Epiphanius' Treatise on Weights and Measures* (SAOC 11; Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1935), which gives the reign of "Verus" as the period in which Symmachus was active, i.e. Lucius Verus (161–169 CE). This is the period also supplied in both the Greek and Syriac versions of *Mens.* § 18. However, Epiphanius' lists of emperors are very confused, perhaps because of the inclusion of co-emperors and the problem of variant versions of names. See the attempt to solve the discrepancy by G. Mercati, *L'età di Simmaco e S. Epifanio* (Modena: Tipografia Pontificia, 1892), repr. in Mercati, *Opere minore I* (Studi e Testi 76; Vatican: biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1937), 21–101; and also n. 36 below.

6 Early fifth century. Text from Cuthbert Butler, *The Lausiaca History of Palladius: 1. A critical discussion together with notes on early Egyptian monachism; 2. The Greek text edited with introduction and notes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898–1904). Butler discusses the different order of chapters (including that for §§ 63–65 of the *Laus. Hist.*) found in some manuscripts. However, he argues persuasively for the most original order being that of the Greek non-metaphrastic manuscript witnesses, which he follows in his edition (see xviii–lvi, including tables of comparison, and esp. lvi for his argument supporting the placement of § 64 following the story of the virgin and Athanasius).

the virgin in Caesarea, when I was in hiding in her house. She said that she had received it from Symmachus, the translator of the Jews, himself.”

## 2. Symmachus' Religious Affiliation

The most striking difference between these three accounts concerns Symmachus' religious affiliation. Eusebius says that he was an Ebionite; Epiphanius that he had been a Samaritan but converted to Judaism; Palladius that he was “the translator of the Jews.” How did it happen that the three writers came to such different positions on this important point?

Pierre Nautin believed that Eusebius' source on Symmachus in *Hist. eccl.* 6.17 must have derived from a long preface to Origen's *Commentary on Psalms* that is now lost in full form.<sup>7</sup> Therefore it should be taken seriously. However, Dominique Barthélemy argued that the association between Symmachus and Ebionites arose by mistake in the following way: Eusebius made an incorrect inference from a passage of Irenaeus that he quotes (*Haer.* 3.21.1, cited in *Hist. eccl.* 5.8). Irenaeus had compared the novel and audacious renderings of Isa 7:14 by Aquila and Theodotion, “the young woman (ἡ νεᾶνις) shall conceive and shall bear a son” with the beliefs of the Ebionites about Jesus' paternity from Joseph. Barthélemy believed that because of Irenaeus' remark about similarities between Jewish and Ebionite approaches to the virgin birth, and the resemblance of Symmachus' rendering of Isa 7:14 to that of his predecessors Aquila and Theodotion, Eusebius mistakenly regarded Symmachus as an Ebionite.<sup>8</sup> Eusebius made the same assumption in his slightly later work, the *Demonstration of the Gospel*, where he gave another account that is presumed to depend on some lost comment from Origen (*Dem. ev.* 7.1.33<sup>9</sup>):

παρὰ δὲ τῷ Συμμάχῳ ταῦθ' οὕτως ἔχει (λέγεται δὲ ὁ Σύμμαχος Ἐβιωναῖος εἶναι· αἴρσεις δὲ ἦν οὕτω καλουμένων τινῶν Ἰουδαίων εἰς Χριστὸν πιστεῦειν λεγομένων, ἐξ ὧν ὁ Σύμμαχος ἦν, παρ' ᾧ καὶ αὐτῷ ταῦτα οὕτως ἔχει)· ἀκούσατε οἶκος Δαβίδ, μὴ οὐκ αὐτάρκες ὑμῖν κοποῦν ἀνθρώπους, ὅτι κοποῦτε τὸν θεὸν μου; διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον. ἰδοὺ ἡ νεᾶνις συλλαμβάνει καὶ τίκει υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ.

7 Pierre Nautin, *Origène. Sa vie et son oeuvre* (Christianisme Antique 1: Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), 310, 450–51.

8 Barthélemy, “Qui est Symmaque?”, 459–60.

9 I. A. Heikel, ed., *Eusebius Werke, Band 6: Die Demonstratio evangelica* (GCS 23; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1913).

Now in Symmachus it is as follows (Symmachus is said to be an Ebionite. This was a heresy of certain Jews called by this name who were said to believe in Christ, Symmachus being one of them, and he has the same interpretation): “Hear, house of David, is it not enough for you to trouble men, that you trouble my God? Because of this the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold a young woman conceives and bears a son, and you shall call his name Emmanuel.”

Some surviving fragments of Origen do mention “Ebionites”, defining them as Jews who believe in Christ but who follow Jewish practices and a more material exegesis of the scriptural text.<sup>10</sup> However, Origen himself does not connect Symmachus or his version to Ebionite beliefs.

In contrast, the accounts of Epiphanius and Palladius agree that Symmachus was Jewish and translated from a Jewish point of view: Epiphanius states that he went over to the Jews, and was recircumcised, and then produced his translation, while Palladius gives him the title “the translator of the Jews”. Epiphanius’ claim that Symmachus aimed his translation against his former Samaritan co-religionists seems tendentious, part of his attempt to bolster the authority of the translation of the “Seventy” (he casts similar aspersions on Aquila and Theodotion). Yet Eusebius must be mistaken about the translator being an Ebionite, since what survives from Symmachus’ version displays Jewish exegetical features, and does not support an Ebionite point of view.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Symmachus and His Works

Among other differences between the accounts of Eusebius and Palladius, Nautin noted the discrepancy between the single βιβλίον that Palladius said was acquired by Origen from Juliana, and the plural βίβλοι that Eusebius says Symmachus gave to Juliana.<sup>12</sup> Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 6.17 says that the βίβλοι consisted of two types:

10 E.g. *Cels.* 2.1; 5.61, 65; *Princ.* 4.3.8; *Hom. Jer.* 19.12; *Frag. Luc.* 212; *Comm. Matt.* 11:12, 16.12; *Hom. Pss.* 15.1.

11 Arie van der Kooij, “Symmachus, de ‘vertaler der Joden’”, *NedTT* 42 (1988): 1–20; Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch*, 283–97; Michaël N. van der Meer, “Symmachus”, in *The Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint* (eds. A. Salvesen and T. M. Law: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 470–73.

12 *Origène*, 219–24. Nautin disputes the authenticity of the story in Palladius, which he regards as a mere embellishment of the more reliable one of Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* (esp. 221: “il le récrit à sa façon”, “he rewrites it in his own way”). For Nautin the function of the anecdote in Palladius is to provide a parallel based on Origen’s life to the longer episode in the preceding section of the *Lausiaca History*, on Athanasius of Alexandria taking refuge from Arian persecution with a virgin in Alexandria (*Hist. Laus.* § 63).

ὑπομνήματα, a word that usually refers to “commentaries”,<sup>13</sup> and ἐρμηνεῖαι “translations” or “interpretations”, of the Scriptures.

Palladius describes the book as στιχηρός, “set out in lines.” This adjective is often used in Christian Greek of the fourth century to refer to the format for poetic books of scripture, whether in Hebrew or Greek.<sup>14</sup> While a single βιβλίον would not have contained the whole of Symmachus’ version of the Hebrew Bible, it is possible that what Palladius saw was a translation of a single book from the poetic corpus of the Bible, such as Psalms or Lamentations. His account seems to contradict that of Eusebius, who said that Juliana possessed other works by Symmachus and gave them to Origen. However, Palladius’ focus is on the inscription by Origen in a single book that authenticates the story about Juliana’s generous hospitality towards Origen in a time of need.

Yet if the phrase in *Hist. eccl.* 6.17 μετὰ καὶ ἄλλων εἰς τὰς γραφὰς ἐρμηνειῶν τοῦ Συμμάχου (“along with other translations/interpretations of scripture also”) indicates texts containing Symmachus’ translation, it is a pity that Eusebius does not state this more plainly. Perhaps he was relying on a statement from one of Origen’s many lost works, which itself did not make this clear, and Eusebius was avoiding inferring too much from it.

What became of these other works of Symmachus, the ὑπομνήματα mentioned by Eusebius that apparently attacked the Gospel of Matthew? Were any preserved in the library of Caesarea, as Eusebius’ knowledge of them might imply, or does he again rely on a reference in Origen, now lost to us?

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In contrast, Butler is of the opinion that both Eusebius and Palladius saw the ex-libris written by Origen (*The Lausiaca History of Palladius*, vol. 2, Notes 112–114, pp. 233–35). In addition to Butler’s arguments, one could add that from a literary point of view, § 64 is tame in comparison with the titillating stories that frame it: in § 63, the virgin who looked after Athanasius is described as young and stunningly beautiful, and so she lives in seclusion to avoid scandal, yet looks after Athanasius for six years, washing his feet; in § 65, the episode attributed to Hippolytus describes how a beautiful, aristocratic Corinthian young woman living an ascetic life resists the lustful advances of a pagan magistrate who then takes his revenge on her by forcing her into a brothel. The girl is saved from this terrible fate by a gallant young Christian man who exchanges his clothes for hers. Determined to be a martyr, this youth takes her place and dies. In contrast to §§ 63 and 65, § 64 is short and rather ordinary: the focus is on a learned and pious virgin who supported Palladius’ hero Origen during a crisis, and the book-note that authenticates the event.

13 The term has a number of connotations, from “notes”, “memorandum”, and “treatises”, to “commentaries”, particularly with reference to Hellenistic commentaries on Homer.

14 E.g. Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praep. ev.* 11.5; *Comm. Isa.* 1.24; *Ecl. proph.* passim; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 1.329. Nautin does not mention that the book is described as στιχηρός in his discussion of the differences between Eusebius and Palladius.

#### 4. The Location of Symmachus and His Version

None of the testimonies by Origen, Eusebius, and Epiphanius associate Symmachus with a particular place. This is a little unexpected: even though patristic testimony is confused over where Theodotion and Aquila came from, there is at least an attempt to locate them somewhere, at some stage of their lives.<sup>15</sup>

The only place associated by patristic tradition with Symmachus is Caesarea, and that is by Palladius. He says that it was Caesarea of *Cappadocia* where Origen took refuge with the learned and devout virgin Juliana, though neither Origen's book-note nor Eusebius mention this detail.

Related questions that arise from Palladius' account is what Origen was hiding from, and when was this supposed to have happened. The older suggestion that Origen had fled religious persecution, perhaps of the Emperor Maximinus in 235–38,<sup>16</sup> goes against what we know of Origen's character from Eusebius' account of his life. In his youth he was ready to die a martyr, following the example of his father Leonides who was beheaded in Alexandria during the Severan persecution (*Hist. eccl.* 6.1); he took considerable risks again during the persecution under the governor Aquila (*Hist. eccl.* 6.2); and his life was ended in c. 253 from injuries he received during the Decian persecution (*Hist. eccl.* 6.39). It would be odd if Origen had fled similar persecution in mid-life, having courted it in youth and submitted to it in old age.

Moreover, the word *ἐπανάστασις* in Palladius' account (*Laus. Hist.* § 64) that some have understood to indicate religious persecution, is never used in this sense in Greek, by Christians or others.<sup>17</sup> In fact the term regularly used by Eusebius in the *Church History* to denote the persecution of Christians is *διωγμός*.<sup>18</sup> In contrast,

15 Irenaeus (*Haer.* 3.21.2, cited by Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.8). says that Theodotion was from Ephesus and Aquila from Pontus, and both were converts to Judaism; Epiphanius (*Mens.* § 15) states that Aquila was from Sinope in Pontus, and was appointed by Hadrian as an overseer in Jerusalem, and says in *Mens.* § 17 that Theodotion was also from Pontus.

16 Orlinsky, "Origen's Tetrapla", 116; and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.28. See the refutation of this identification in H. Crouzel, "Origène s'est-il retiré en Cappadoce pendant la persécution de Maximin le Thrace?" *BLE* 64 (1963): 195–203, esp 196–97 and n. 4.

17 Nautin renders the phrase *φεύγοντα τὴν ἐπανάστασιν τῶν Ἑλλήνων* in Palladius as "fuyait l'offensive des païens", "fleeing the onslaught of the pagans". He evidently interprets *Ἕλληνες*, "Greeks", as "pagans", a sense sometimes found among patristic writers. Nautin notes that other scholars have understood *ἐπανάστασις* in this passage to refer to either persecution or civil war (*Origène*, 219–20).

18 A crucial New Testament use of the word is Romans 8:35, a verse often cited in patristic literature, as well as many other passages such as Matt 13:21//Mark 4:17; Mark 10:30; Acts 8:1, 13:50; 2 Cor 12:10; 2 Thess 1:4; 2 Tim 3:11. Maximinus' persecution is explicitly termed *διωγμός* by Gregory of Nazianzus in his funeral oration praising Basil of Caesarea (*orat.* 43, 5.1.1).

ἐπανάστασις refers to some kind of civil unrest or insurrection.<sup>19</sup> The ἐπανάστασις that Palladius says Origen fled can be related to what Eusebius recounts in *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.16, when major unrest in Alexandria caused Origen to leave and settle in Palestine for a few years:

χρόνου δὲ μεταξύ διαγενομένου, οὐ μικροῦ κατὰ τὴν πόλιν ἀναρριπισθέντος πολέμου, ὑπέξελθὼν τῆς Ἀλεξανδρείας, ἦι μὲν ἐπὶ Παλαιστίνης, ἐν Καισαρείᾳ δὲ τὰς διατριβάς ἐποιεῖτο· ἔνθα καὶ διαλέγεσθαι τὰς τε θείας ἐρμηνεύειν γραφὰς ἐπὶ τοῦ κοινοῦ τῆς ἐκκλησίας οἱ τῆδε ἐπίσκοποι, καίτοι τῆς τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου χειροτονίας οὐδέπω τετυχηκότα, αὐτὸν ἤξιουν·

But a while later, significant fighting having broken out in the city, he slipped out of Alexandria and went to Palestine. He spent some time in Caesarea. There the bishops requested him to lecture on and interpret the holy scriptures in public to the church, even though he had not yet received ordination.

Preuschen, followed by Heine, has argued that the event alluded to by Eusebius in the above passage was the Emperor Caracalla's vindictive and bloody campaign against the populace of Alexandria.<sup>20</sup> Dio Cassius gives a very full account of the horrors suffered by the citizens at this time, but it is clear that there was no element of religious persecution.<sup>21</sup>

So it is more than likely that the accounts of Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 6.19 and Palladius in *Hist. Laus.* § 64 refer to the same period in Origen's life. We can reconcile them further if we accept that Palladius was mistaken that it was Caesarea of Cappadocia where Origen fled, since Eusebius states clearly that Origen went to Palestine and settled temporarily in Caesarea. This is verified by Eusebius' inclusion of the request by Alexander, bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus, bishop of Caesarea, that Origen should preach and teach, despite his lack of ordination at that time. This period seems to have lasted around two years, since Origen left Alexandria in 215 and Theoctistus was appointed in c. 217, the year of Caracalla's

19 E.g. Thucydides, *Hist.* 8.21.1; Philo, *Agr.* 46; *Her.* 284; *Fug.* 77; *Mos.* II.16, 169; *Praem.* 73, some of which are metaphorical uses; Cassius Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 71.24.3; Josephus, *B. J.* 1.60, 314, 316, 648; 2.238; 3.3; 5.53; *C. Ap.* 1.85; *A. J.* 19.139; Appian, *Bellum Civile* 2.1.7. The word also occurs in patristic commentaries on scripture referring to rebellions such as Absalom's.

20 E. Preuschen, *Origenes Werke 4: Der Johanneskommentar.* Leipzig; J. C. Hinrichs, 1903, lxxix; Heine, *Origen*, 87–89 and n. 20; also Glanville Downey, "Caesarea and the Christian Church" in *The Joint Expedition to Caesarea Maritima. Volume I. Studies in the History of Caesarea Maritima.* Edited by Charles T. Fritsch. *BASOR* suppl. 19 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 25–26.

21 Dio Cassius [epitome] Book 78.22 1–23.3. According to this lengthy account, Caracalla slaughtered the leading citizens of Alexandria, marched his army into the city, carried out a massacre, expelled foreigners, and plundered property. He also prevented the free movement of the inhabitants of the city and ended their associations.

death. So once again, this would tally with the two years that Palladius says Origen stayed with Juliana. However, it is unclear why Origen would need to be “in hiding” (κρυπτόμενος, *Hist. Laus.* § 64) in Caesarea of Palestine, once he had left Alexandria, unless the Emperor’s “long arm” was able to reach leading citizens of Alexandria there as well? Once Caracalla had died in 217, it was presumably no longer dangerous for Origen to appear in public, and he would no longer need to rely on Juliana’s hospitality and financial support.

This first stay in Caesarea Maritima ended when Bishop Demetrius summoned him back to Alexandria in 219. It is likely to have been a formative experience for the man and his work. The general impression we receive of Caesarea Maritima in the third century is of a crossroads between different religious and ethnic groups in that period: pagan, Jewish, Christian, and Samaritan, in other words, a setting for interreligious encounters in the period before Christianity became the dominant and state-sponsored faith.<sup>22</sup> Given what we know of the prestigious status of Greek even among Jews in Caesarea, the city is a likely setting for the emergence of a rather stylish Greek translation of the Hebrew scriptures;<sup>23</sup> and for contact between the Christian Juliana and the Jewish Symmachus.

It remains to account for Palladius’ apparent error of geography. Location is an important feature of the *Lausiaca History*: the stories Palladius recounts are connected to places in Egypt, Palestine, Rome, and Asia Minor.<sup>24</sup> Perhaps such a travelogue served to emphasise the widespread nature of asceticism throughout the Roman Empire among both rich and poor Christians. It provided interest as well as inspiration for the pious and educated reader. Palladius was acquainted with many of the places himself: he was from Galatia, and he spent long periods in Egypt and shorter stays in Palestine (notably Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives), before becoming bishop of Helenopolis, and later of Aspsundia, in Galatia. It is possible that Palladius confused Caesarea of Cappadocia with Caesarea Maritima in the course of recounting this vivid series of stories set all over the Empire, since in this case the setting was hardly very significant for the story of Juliana and Origen. Correcting Palladius’ account to refer to Caesarea Maritima would harmonise it with the

22 E. g. Lee I. Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule* (Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity 7; Leiden: Brill, 1975), 46–47; and more recently as reflected in the survey in C. M. Lehmann, and K. G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston, Mass.: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2000).

23 See Catherine Hezser, *Jewish Literacy in Roman Palestine* (TSAJ 81. Tübingen; Mohr, 2001), in which she frequently notes the predominance of Greek in Jewish funerary and synagogue inscriptions in Caesarea during this period; also *j. Sot.* 7.1, discussed below in § 6.

24 See Butler’s table setting out the geographical setting of each chapter and his discussion of Palladius’ own career and travel (*The Lausiaca History of Palladius*, vol. 2, 1–liii).

accounts of Eusebius; notably, the book inscription that Palladius cites supposedly verbatim from Origen does not itself specify which Caesarea he was hiding in.<sup>25</sup>

## 5. Origen, the Hexapla, and Symmachus

### 5.1 Origen's early, Alexandrian commentaries on the Old Testament

Having established that Origen probably became acquainted with Juliana in 215–17 in Caesarea Maritima, we should set this in the wider context of Origen's work on the Old Testament. Given the loss of so much of Origen's work, most scholarship relies on Eusebius' biography of Origen in Book 6 of the *Church History*, even to establish a relative chronology of Origen's activities. The most influential reconstruction has been that of Pierre Nautin. However, Nautin himself recognised the difficulties of using Eusebius for a timeline of Origen's life.<sup>26</sup> Eusebius states clearly which exegetical works Origen started in Alexandria: *Hist. eccl.* 6.23.1 says that Origen began these commentaries at the urging of his friend Ambrose, and *Hist. eccl.* 6.24.1 lists the ones pertaining to the Old Testament as Books 1–8 of the *Commentary on Genesis*, the *Commentary on Psalms 1–25*, and the *Commentary on Lamentations*. In the account in *Hist. eccl.* 6.32, describing events once Origen had settled long-term in Caesarea in the 230s, Eusebius says that Origen wrote the *Commentary on Isaiah*, and started the one on Ezekiel, which he finished during a period spent in Athens. In Athens he also started the *Commentary on Song of Songs*. The latter work was then finished on his return to Caesarea.

It is thought that Origen cited readings from the “Three” in the works he composed during the period when he was based in Alexandria, before his definitive break with bishop Demetrius there and his permanent move to Caesarea in 231–2.<sup>27</sup> These works included the *Commentary on Lamentations*, and the *Commentary on Psalms 1–25*, which both apparently cite Symmachus.<sup>28</sup> Yet even when we can be reasonably confident about the relative dates of these commentaries, the excerpted

25 Perhaps Palladius was familiar with the other passages about Origen in Eusebius, and may have been influenced by the reference to Bishop Firmilianus inviting Origen to Caesarea of Cappadocia (*Hist. eccl.* 6.28), though it is unclear from the Eusebian account whether Origen did in fact spend time there.

26 Nautin, *Origène*, 26.

27 See Joseph W. Trigg, *Origen. Early Christian Fathers* (London: Routledge, 1998), 16–17; Heine, *Origen*, 83–4, 115–6.

28 Trigg provides a translation of fragments of the *Comm. Lam.*, including citations from Symmachus (*Origen*, 73–85); also of the Preface from the *Comm. Pss. 1–25* (*Origen*, 69–72). See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.24, and the comments of de Lange, *Lettre*, 494–5 and n.7; Nautin, *Origène*, vol. 1, 250–1, 262–9.

and fragmentary nature of much of the surviving material makes it difficult to determine whether any references to the Three that they contain belong to the original, Alexandrian, form of the work. Some or all of these readings may have been added when Origen had settled in Caesarea after 231 and expanded the *Psalms Commentary* to the rest of the Psalter.<sup>29</sup> In fact Origen only needed to have copies of the Three available in Alexandria in order to cite them in his commentaries on Lamentations and Psalms: he did not need to have completed the columnar form of the Hexapla, despite some statements to the contrary.<sup>30</sup>

## 5.2 The Date of the Hexapla

Eusebius linked the commentaries mentioned above to particular stages and locations in the course of Origen's life. However, although Eusebius describes Origen's synoptic version of Scripture in *Hist. eccl.* 6.16–17, we may question whether such a massive work fits so neatly at this point of his career.

Ronald Heine believes that the Hexapla was the first and foundational work for Origen's other exegetical works, and that it was completed in Alexandria before he left there for good to settle in Caesarea.<sup>31</sup> Peter Martens agrees that the Hexapla was probably begun in Alexandria.<sup>32</sup> Yet it remains unclear whether Origen could have acquired all the versions of the Three in Alexandria. In the case of Theodotion and Aquila, these had been around for some decades (hence Irenaeus' reference to them in *Haer.* 3.25 in the late second century) and were no doubt circulating in Jewish communities in both Palestine and Alexandria,<sup>33</sup> if not even further afield.

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29 See Ronald E. Heine, "Restraining Origen's Broken Harp. Some Suggestions Concerning the Prologue to the Caesarean Commentary on the Psalms", in *The Harp of Prophecy: Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms*, eds. Brian E. Daley, S. J., and Paul R. Kolbet. Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity. (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 47–74. Heine argues that we do not have the early layer of this commentary.

30 E.g. Heine, *Origen*, 76, and see next section.

31 Heine, *Origen*, 74–76, relying on indications in *Comm.Jn* and *Comm.Lam*. Heine believes that the Hexapla was intended as a teaching tool and not to be published.

32 Peter W. Martens, *Origen and Scripture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 45. Trigg, *Origen*, 16, states that Origen took the Hexapla with him to Caesarea, though since he notes that its "massive size" meant it was never copied, it is hard to see how Origen would easily have transported it between the two cities unless it was in a very preliminary state at this point.

33 However, it should be borne in mind that the large Jewish communities that had existed in Alexandria in the early second century had been almost destroyed as a result of the revolts in North Africa against Roman rule, and it is unclear how far they had recovered by Origen's day. See the magisterial account of William Horbury, *Jewish War under Trajan and Hadrian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

And despite Eusebius' description of the versions of the Three as "familiar",<sup>34</sup> his is an early fourth century perspective: when Origen incorporated Symmachus' version in his Alexandrian period, it was the most recent of the "Three" and may not have been "familiar" at that point.<sup>35</sup> It seems unlikely that he could have acquired it before his initial stay in Caesarea in 215–19, and his residence with Juliana, who possessed copies of Symmachus' works.

Eusebius' account of the Hexapla is placed shortly after the mention of Origen's visit to Rome before he returned to Alexandria to resume his duties as a catechetical teacher (*Hist. eccl.* 6.15). On this basis we might place the full compilation of the Hexapla early on in Origen's career. However, given the sheer size of the Hexapla and the question of when Origen acquired each of the versions he included, it does not seem likely that it was completed before he moved permanently to Caesarea in c. 232, even if he had begun work on it in Alexandria. Moreover, Eusebius records information thematically as well as chronologically, so he would have treated such a project in a single section of the *Church History*, even if it took place over the course of many years.

*Hist. eccl.* 6.16–17 famously speaks of Origen's study of Hebrew and his acquisition not only of the "familiar versions" of the Three but also of other "editions" (ἐκδόσεις). According to Eusebius, Origen indicated that he had found one of these versions in Nicopolis near Actium,<sup>36</sup> another from an unknown source, and three further versions for Psalms, of which he noted that one had been found "in a jar in Jericho the time of Antoninus, the son of Severus."<sup>37</sup> This would place the

34 *Hist. eccl.* 6.16 ...τὰς κατημαξευμένας ἑρμηνείας ἐναλλαττούσας, τὴν Ἀκύλου καὶ Συμμάχου καὶ Θεοδοτίωνος, contrasted with the ones Origen discovered in various places: οὐκ οἶδ' ὅθεν ἕκ τινων μυχῶν τὸν πάλοι λαθθανούσας χρόνον ἀνιχνεύσας προήγαγεν εἰς φῶς ("goodness knows from what nooks and crannies he tracked down some that had escaped notice for a long time, and brought them to light").

35 The imperial chronologies given by Epiphanius in relation to the emergence of the versions of the Three are very garbled, as noted above in n.5. According to the Greek text of *Mens.* § 16, Symmachus produced his translation during the reign of [Septimius] Severus (193–211), but the Syriac version suggests it was during (Lucius) Verus' reign (i. e. 160–169, in joint rule with Marcus Aurelius Antoninus). In both the Greek and Syriac versions of *Mens.* 18, however, Epiphanius places Symmachus in the reign of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus (161–180), who was supposedly also known as Verus (161–169) and Commodus Lucius (180–192): this would give a broader period of 160–92 for Symmachus' activity. My thanks to John Meade for noting the differences between the passages.

36 In the province of Epirus, on the western coast of Greece. The Nicopolis that was founded on the ruins of Emmaus in Palestine would make more sense as a location for this find, as Peter Gentry has mentioned (personal communication). However, Origen's preface to his *Commentary on Psalms* specifies that the Nicopolis is near Actium: see the next note.

37 Of course, the Greek does not imply that Origen found this one himself, since the verb is passive (ἐπὶ μᾶς αὐθις σεσημειῶται ὡς ἐν Ἱερικοῖ εὐρημένης ἐν πίθῳ). Eusebius' source may be Origen's *Commentary of the Psalms*, which is mostly lost. However, part of the preface to Origen's *Com-*

latter discovery between 211–217 CE, the reign of the Emperor Antoninus known as “Caracalla,” when Origen was in his late twenties or early thirties. If Eusebius’ information is accurate, it may provide us with a clue to the *terminus post quem* for the Hexapla of Psalms at least, since the version in a jar was presumably included in the columns for that book.

In contrast to previous scholarship, Benjamin Kantor has argued recently that the Hexapla was not even started in its multi-columnar format until Origen moved to Caesarea in 232.<sup>38</sup> He gives a number of reasons:

1. The Secunda Greek transcription column plays a fundamental role in the format of the columnar Hexapla, and this feature was only available in Palestine.
2. The Hebrew of the Secunda represents the Palestinian Jewish pronunciation of Hebrew.
3. It is unclear that Origen had any exegetical contact with Jews in Alexandria.
4. In Caesarea, Origen had discussions with local Greek-speaking Jews who were versed in Hebrew, and who also possessed transcriptions of the Hebrew Bible.
5. Additionally, Kantor notes that most Greek transcriptions of Hebrew words in Origen’s commentaries occur in portions that were likely to have been completed in Caesarea.

Therefore, he concludes, the Hexapla belongs to the period of Origen’s permanent establishment in Caesarea, not to the prior decade in Alexandria.

However, Francesca Schironi suggests that Origen started the columnar, synoptic Hexapla in Alexandria, and perhaps *added* the Hebrew column (and the Secunda) in Caesarea.<sup>39</sup>

It may not be possible without the discovery of new evidence to determine when Origen first embarked on the Hexaplaric format as we know it. However, it seems likely that the process of collecting the various versions was a gradual one, over the course of several years. Aquila and Theodotion may have been known to Origen before 215; on the basis of the reconciliation of the accounts of Eusebius and Palladius, he may have acquired at least some parts of Symmachus’ version in 215–7 from Juliana, to cite it in his commentaries on Lamentations and Psalms 1–25, writ-

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*mentary on Psalms* relating to Quinta and Sexta and apparently citing Origen directly, may be preserved in Mercati’s Psalms catena. G. Mercati, *Note di letteratura biblica e cristiana antica* (Studi e testi 5; Rome: 1901), 29: “I found the Fifth edition in Nicopolis near Actium ...The Sixth edition was found with other Hebrew and Greek books too in a certain jar near Jericho during the reign of Antoninus son of Severus.” Nautin notes that Quinta and Sexta do not appear in the Alexandrian Psalm Commentary and therefore it is possible that neither of these versions was known to Origen before he moved to Caesarea for good (*Origène*, 283).

38 See Benjamin Kantor, “The Pre-Secunda: A Bi-Columnar Transcription Text of the Jews of Caesarea” in the present volume.

39 See Francesca Schironi, “Textual Scholarship in Alexandria—and Beyond” in the present volume.

ten in Alexandria (in fact he states that only the versions of Symmachus and LXX were extant for Lamentations<sup>40</sup>). In this first, short, Caesarean period he may also have acquired the version that had been found in a jar in Caracalla's time. The format for the synoptic version may have been begun in Alexandria, or at least been considered there, while the full version of the Hexapla — Hebrew and Secunda columns included — for all the books of the Old Testament was the work of the longer Caesarean period.<sup>41</sup>

## 6. Symmachus, Caesarea, and the Rabbis?

What about the possible identification of Symmachus with Sumkhos ben Joseph, disciple of Rabbi Meir, an association first suggested by Abraham Geiger in 1862?<sup>42</sup> Though originally from Asia Minor, the fourth generation Tanna Rabbi Meir was based in Palestine around 139–63 CE. And the lack of recorded links between Rabbi Meir and Caesarea would not prevent a disciple of his being located there.

Michaël van der Meer favours the association between Symmachus and Sumkhos, noting that Geiger saw at least a possible Palestinian connection between the two figures — Symmachus' use of Greek, plus the statement in *b. BB* 73a that Sumkhos was a native of Palestine (*bar 'eretz 'Israel*), and had forced his way into R. Judah's court (located in Palestine: *b. Qidd.* 52b, *b. Naz.* 49b). However, van der Meer also cautions that no direct connection can be made between the surviving readings of Symmachus and the interpretations of Sumkhos preserved in rabbinic literature.<sup>43</sup>

40 *Comm. Lam.*, Frag. 3: "Ἐκδοσις δὲ Ἀκύλα καὶ Θεοδοτίωνος ἐν τοῖς Θρήνοις οὐ φέρεται, μόνου δὲ Συμμάχου καὶ τῶν Ἑβδομήκοντα. Oddly, despite this statement, Origen gives a citation from Aquila to Lam 4.20 (Ziegler, App. 2 Πνεῦμα πρὸς ἡμῶν] α' πνευμα μυκτηρων ημων Or. III 276; σ' πνοη μυκτηρων ημων Sy<sup>h</sup> Or. III 276). See Field, *Origenis Hexaplorum ...* vol. 2, 743: he understands the meaning to be that Origen did not include the version of Aquila and Theodotion *in his Hexapla*, and not that no such version existed at all, since other sources do provide readings from Aquila and Theodotion for this book.

John Meade (personal communication) notes the possibility that the book Origen discovered with Juliana that was "set out in verse" (στιχηρός) could relate to Symmachus' version of either Psalms or Lamentations.

41 The related issue of what form the Tetrapla took, and whether it was a preliminary stage or the ultimate goal of the Hexapla, is examined by Peter Gentry in the present volume. (Eusebius is quite vague about the Tetrapla, or Tetrassa, as he calls it: *Hist. eccl.* 6.16.4, ἰδίως τὴν Ἀκύλου καὶ Συμμάχου καὶ Θεοδοτίωνος ἐκδοσιν ἅμα τῇ τῶν ἑβδομήκοντα ἐν τοῖς Τετρασσοῖς ἐπισκευάσας.)

42 Abraham Geiger, "Symmachus, der Übersetzer der Bibel", *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 1 (1862): 39–64.

43 Michaël van der Meer, "Symmachus, the Septuagint and the Sages: An Examination of the References to Sumkhos ben Joseph in the Mishnah, Tosefta and Talmudim", in *Septuagint, Sages and*

More positively, there may be signs of (proto-)rabbinic interpretations in Symmachus, and possible links with the exegesis of Rabbi Meir, as suggested by both Geiger and Barthélemy.<sup>44</sup> I have speculated that Symmachus' renderings in Leviticus 13 may be related to Rabbi Meir's views on the four shades of leprosy marks (*m. Neg.* 1.1 and *Sym. Lev.* 13:4, 13), and to Targum Onkelos in *Lev.* 13:6,7 on skin eruptions. However, the state of preservation of Symmachus' version in passages relating to rabbinic halakah is particularly poor, perhaps because the Christian writers and scribes who transmit readings of the Three had little interest in such matters.<sup>45</sup>

Whether or not Symmachus is the same person as Sumkhos, Caesarea is certainly a suitable location for a stylish Jewish-Greek version of Hebrew scripture. The use of Greek in Caesarea by Jews for religious purposes is attested for the end of the third and early fourth century by tractate *Sotah* of the Jerusalem Talmud,<sup>46</sup> and is likely to have been established some decades prior to that.<sup>47</sup>

## 7. What's in a Name?

In the past I have suggested that "Symmachus" was a common name in the third century, and therefore that the similarity of names Symmachus and Sumkhos was coincidental: the translator and the figure in rabbinic literature were unlikely to be the same person. I cited Levine's reference to a funerary inscription dated to the third century or so from Caesarea:<sup>48</sup> Schwabe had reconstructed this badly dam-

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*Scripture. Studies in Honour of Johann Cook* (ed. R. X. Gauthier, G. R. Kotzé, G. J. Steyn; VTSup 172; Leiden: Brill, 2016), 336–355, esp. 342.

44 Barthélemy, "Qui est Symmaque?", esp. 462.

45 Alison Salvesen, "Did Aquila and Symmachus Shelter under the Rabbinic Umbrella?" in *Greek Scripture and the Rabbis* (ed. T. M. Law and A. Salvesen; BETL 66; Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 107–25.

46 *J. Sotah* 71, 21b:

רבי לוי בר חיתה אזל לקיסרין שמע קלון קריין שמע אלוניסתין בעא מעכבתון. שמע רבי ייסי ואיקפד אמר כד אומר אני מי שאינו יודע לקרות אשורית לא יקרניה כל עיקר. אלא יוצא בכל לשון שהוא יודע.

"R. Levi bar Hita went to Caesarea and heard people reciting the Shema in Greek [*Ellenisti*]. He tried to prevent them. Rabbi Jose heard and was angry. He said, 'I declare: whoever does not know how to recite in Hebrew [*Ashurit*], should he not recite it at all? Rather, he fulfills it in any language he knows."

It would be interesting to know which Greek form of the Shema' these Caesarean Jews were using – LXX, Theodotion, Aquila, or Symmachus?

47 If we correct the Syriac of Epiphanius from "Verus" (i. e. Marcus Aurelius) to "Severus" (i. e. Septimius Severus), as Mercati suggested (G. Mercati, *L'età di Simmaco e S. Epifanio* (Modena: Tipografia Pontificia, 1892), repr. in Mercati, *Opere minore I* (Studi e Testi 76; Vatican: biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, 1937), 21–101.

48 Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch*, 285, citing Levine, *Caesarea under Roman Rule*, 51 n.43; and Salvesen, "Did Aquila and Symmachus Shelter under the Rabbinic Umbrella?," 114. See the criticisms by van der Meer, "Symmachus, the Septuagint, and the Sages", 353–4, who points out

aged plaque depicting a *menorah*, *shofar* and *lulav*, to read “Symmachus son of Samuel, *mechanikos*.”<sup>49</sup> However, the inscription is in fact very fragmentary and I would now be reluctant to place any weight on it as an example of the name being used by Jews in this region.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast, there is a better-preserved epitaph for a “Symmachus of Chios”, dated between the third and sixth centuries CE, and found in the necropolis in Jaffa. The depiction of two palm branches, *lulavim*, on the inscription strongly suggests that this Symmachus was Jewish.<sup>51</sup>

Why might Jewish parents choose this Greek name for a son? Symmachus (and the form Sumkhos) may have been associated with divine aid, God being the ally or helper of the bearer, and thus served as an equivalent of the very common name Eleazar or Eliezer.<sup>52</sup> This connection is made in a number of places:

- (1) In 2 Maccabees the noun σύμμαχος is used of God (2 Macc 8:24; 10:16; 11:10; 12:36: 150–120 BCE).
- (2) In Josephus, *A. J.* 1.229 (c. 90 CE), Abraham says to Isaac before he is to be sacrificed:

*Ant.* 1:229 ἀλλ’ ἐπεὶ θεοῦ τε βουλομένου σὸς πατήρ ἐγενόμην καὶ πάλιν τούτῳ δοκοῦν ἀποτίθεμαί σε φέρε γενναίως τὴν καθιέρωσιν· τῷ θεῷ γάρ σε παραχωρῶ ταύτης ἀξιώσαντι παρ’ ἡμῶν τῆς τιμῆς ἀνθ’ ὧν εὐμενῆς γέγονέ μοι παραστάτης καὶ σύμμαχος νῦν ἐπιτυχεῖν.

But since by God’s will I became your father, and again, as seems good to him, I relinquish you, bear the dedication nobly. For I yield you to God, who requests this honour from me for having shown me kindness as a defender and *ally*.

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that Part 1 of Tal Ilan’s *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity* only lists two Jews named Symmachus from Palestine before 200 CE (TSAJ 91 [2002]). Van der Meer also helpfully provides a complete list of occurrences of the name Sumkhos in rabbinic literature (347–50). I am more reticent about using the apparent rarity of the Greek name to support an identification of the translator Symmachus with the rabbinic Sumkhos, as van der Meer implies (“Symmachus”, 354).

49 See M. Schwabe, “A Jewish Sepulchral inscription from Caesarea Palaestina”, *IEJ* 1 (1950) 49–53, esp. 50.

50 In fact, in their discussion of this text, Lehmann and Holum declare, “The ingenious restorations are too adventurous for us” (*Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea*, 147, § 171).

51 My thanks to Benjamin Kantor for drawing my attention to this epitaph, § 2238 in W. Ameling, H. M. Cotton, W. Eck, et al., eds., *Corpus Inscriptionum Iudaeae/Palaestinae: Volume III: South Coast: 2161–2648*. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014).

52 Lehmann and Holum note examples of Greek names attested in Caesarean inscriptions and taken by Jews because they translated Jewish names or virtues: Paregorios (= Menahem), Leontios (Judah, the “lion”), and Entolios (“obedient”) (*Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima*, 23). See also G. Mussies, “Greek in Palestine and the Diaspora”, ch. 22 in Sh. Safrai and M. Stern, *The Jewish People in the First Century: Historical Geography, Political History, Social, Cultural and Religious Life and Institutions*, vol. 2 (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1976), 1040–64, esp. 1051–2.

(3) Josephus, *A. J.* 1.268, on Isaac's instructions to Esau:

ἐκέλευσεν ἐξελθεῖν ἐπὶ κυνηγέσιον καὶ θηρασάμενον ὅσα ἂν αὐτῷ δυνατὸν γίνηται παρασκευάσαι δεῖπνον, ἵνα μετὰ τοῦτο ἰκετεύσῃ τὸν θεὸν **σύμμαχον** αὐτῷ καὶ συνεργὸν εἰς ἅπαντα παρεῖναι τὸν βίον

[Isaac] ordered [Esau] to go out to hunt, and when he had caught as much game as he could, to prepare a supper, so that after this he might supplicate God to be with him as his *ally* and helper for the whole of his life.

(Of course, this blessing was transferred to Jacob, who became the progenitor of Israel and thus of the Jewish people.)

(4) Josephus, *A. J.* 2.278, on the naming of Moses' two sons:

τῶν δ' ὀνομάτων τούτων Γῆρσος μὲν σημαίνει κατὰ Ἑβραίων διάλεκτον, ὅτι εἰς ξένην γῆν, Ἐλεάζαρος δὲ **συμμάχῳ** τῷ πατρῷ θεῷ χρησάμενον αὐτὸν Αἰγυπτίους διαφυγεῖν. Now of these names, in the Hebrew language Gersos means that he was in a strange land, while Eleazaros (means) that by having his ancestral God as *an ally*, he had escaped from the Egyptians.

(Cf. LXX Exod. 18:4 καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ δευτέρου Ἐλιεζερ λέγων Ὁ γὰρ θεὸς τοῦ πατρός μου βοηθός μου καὶ ἐξείλατό με ἐκ χειρὸς Φαραῶ “and the name of the second [son of Moses], Eliezer, saying ‘The God of my father was my *help*, and he delivered me from Pharaoh’s hand.’”)

Eliezer and Eleazar are similar in meaning. However, it was the prominence of Eleazar son of Aaron in the Hebrew Bible that ensured this form's popularity from the Hasmonean period onwards.<sup>53</sup>

Given Josephus' explanation of the name Eleazar with the Greek word *σύμμαχος* it is possible that Symmachus was regarded as a Greek version of the very popular Hebrew name Eleazar, and that it was used to convey the same notion that God was the “ally” and helper of the bearer.

53 Apart from references in the Hebrew Bible/LXX, the name also appears in Sir. 45:23; 50:27; 1 Macc 2:5, 6:43; 8:17; 2 Macc. 6:18, 24, and 4 Macc 1:8, 5:4,14; 6:1,4,14,16; 7:1, 5, 10, 12; 9:5; 16:15; 17:13 (all referring to the martyred elder), 2 Macc 8:23; 3 Macc 6:1 and 16 (the priest); the name of the high priest in the *Letter of Aristeas*; Lazarus, brother of Martha and Mary in John chs.11–12, and in the parable in Luke ch. 16. See Tal Ilan, *Lexicon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part 2: Palestine 200–650* (TSAJ 141; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 6–7 and 64–69, who records sixty-one instances of the name in this period, and also the various spellings attested in Hebrew and Greek. A few bearers may be Samaritans. Ilan also records five examples of Σύμμαχος, in various forms, and probably used of Jews (ibid. 239).

## 8. Nachleben of Symmachus' version

### 8.1 Origen

Much of Origen's brilliant work was later destroyed or lost. Rufinus removed citations of the "Three" from his Latin renderings of Origen's work. So today we have only a fraction of the Symmachus readings that Origen no doubt once included. A basic search of the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* corpus produces 148 occurrences of "Symmachus" in fragments of Origen, the latter including spurious and dubious works, catena citations, and so on. (The genuine works incorporating Symmachus readings cover commentaries—mainly in catenae fragments — on Job, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Genesis, Numbers, Leviticus, Psalms, and Ezekiel.) This is hardly a reliable means of ascertaining how many Symmachus readings were cited by Origen in his exegetical works, outside his Hexapla, and may indicate the reverse – just how much we have lost, since the total seems very low.

### 8.2 Eusebius

In contrast, a *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* search on the works of Eusebius of Caesarea brings up over a thousand Symmachus readings, mostly in Isaiah and Psalms, and a handful in the *Demonstration of the Gospel* (five examples.). Examples of the more common introductory formulae are κατὰ (δὲ) τὸν Συμμαχον, ὁ δὲ Συμμαχος, Σύμμαχος δὲ, κατὰ τὴν τοῦ Συμμάχου ἑρμηνείαν, παρὰ τῷ Συμμάχῳ, ἀνθ' οὗ ὁ Σύμμαχος ἐξέδωκε, σαφέστερον ἡρμήνευσεν ὁ Σύμμαχος. Thus Symmachus was cited especially as a contrast with LXX and/or Aquila and Theodotion, and selected for that reason. Eusebius wrote commentaries on the christologically important books Isaiah and Psalms, which are also more poetic and harder to translate satisfactorily in a single sense – hence the utility of a wide range of readings.

### 8.3 Jerome

A search on the Library of Latin Texts database yielded 691 references to Symmachus, including mentions of the translator in the prologues, prefaces, and letters, though these are sometimes repeated elsewhere.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Comm. Isa.* 152; *Comm XII* 152; *Comm. Ezek.* 127; *Comm. Jer.* 59; *Comm. Eccles.* 37; *QHG* 30; *Commentarioli Pss* 26 and *Tract. Pss* 10; *Comm. Dan.* 24. (Numbers are approximate only.)

Mentions of Symmachus occur in some of Jerome's prologues and prefaces to the *iuxta Hebraeos*; there are also mentions and citations for exegesis in his letters (51 examples); and in *adv. Ruf.* 8 (often about the Three, but also repeating details found elsewhere, either in commentaries or prefaces).

The first datable reference to Symmachus in Jerome seems to be in *Letter* 18B to Damasus, the continuation of Jerome's explanation of the meaning of the text of Isaiah 6. The letter was apparently written in Constantinople c. 381. Jerome had already cited Aquila's rendering of Ps 23:9 in *Ep.* 18A, and in the very first section of 18B he presents readings from all Three, without fanfare, on Isa 6:6.<sup>55</sup> The citations of the Three do not correspond with Eusebius' *Isaiah Commentary* here, so in this instance Jerome does not appear to have plagiarized Eusebius. Yet since we do not possess Origen's *Isaiah Commentary*,<sup>56</sup> we cannot establish Jerome's source that provided the reading of Symmachus, and also Aquila and Theodotion separately. In this period, Jerome would not have had direct access to the Hexapla or the library of Caesarea since he was as yet no nearer to Palestine than the desert of Chalcis and the city of Constantinople.

Gerard Norton has criticised Nautin's denial that Jerome saw the Hexapla in Caesarea later, in 385–6: Jerome's *Ep.* 108.7–14 shows that he and Paula visited Caesarea at that time. Norton also argues that Jerome could have travelled from Bethlehem to Caesarea from time to time, and had seen the Hexapla before he wrote his commentary on Titus, where he describes the column in Hebrew script.<sup>57</sup>

## 9. Conclusions

- a. Symmachus, the so-called “translator of the Jews” according to Origen's testimony in Palladius, and the origin of the fourth column in Origen's Hexapla, was probably himself associated with Caesarea Maritima at some stage of his life, when he gave Juliana copies of his works. The name Symmachus is attested there for at least one Jewish bearer in the same general period, and it may have been regarded as the Greek equivalent of the popular Jewish name Eleazar.
- b. It cannot be ruled out that Origen first encountered Symmachus' version in Alexandria, not long after it was issued, but that he subsequently acquired “other works by Symmachus” when staying with Juliana. If, as seems most likely, Origen acquired at least some books from Symmachus' version (as well as the version found in the jar near Jericho) during his period in hiding with Juliana in Caesarea in 215–17, this would mean that work on the Hexapla could not have begun until the 220s, after his return to Alexandria in 219.

55 “Septuaginta: et missum est ad me unum de seraphim; Aquila et Theodotion: et uolauit ad me unum de seraphim; Symmachus: et uolauit ad me unus de seraphim” (ed. I. Hilberg, *Hieronymus. Epistulae* [CSEL 54; Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1996]).

56 Heine, *Origen*, 188–89.

57 Gerard J. Norton, “Observations on the First Two Columns of the Hexapla” in *Origen's Hexapla and Fragments* (ed. A. Salvesen; TSAJ 58; Tübingen: Mohr Sieback, 1998), 103–124, esp. 108–9.

- c. Once Origen had moved to Caesarea permanently in 231–2, he embarked on either the six-columned Hexapla (Kantor), or added the Prima and Secunda to a four-columnar format started in Alexandria (Schironi).
- d. The library of Caesarea must have become a major access point to Symmachus' version (as also those of Aquila and Theodotion), through the medium of the Hexapla as well as by means of the circulation of commentaries by Origen. Pamphilus and Eusebius contributed to such promulgation, of course, especially via Eusebius' commentaries and probably by adding readings of the "Three" to the margins of the Caesarean *ekdosis*. The latter circumstance would explain the citations of the "Three" by writers who did not travel to Caesarea or had access to the commentaries of Origen or Eusebius.<sup>58</sup>
- e. Jerome's early reference to Symmachus in *Ep.* 18B, written when he was based in Constantinople and before he arrived in Palestine, may be due to his use of an Origenic or LXX manuscript source (or possibly a commentary) that is now lost to us.
- f. Are we now in possession of every surviving Symmachus reading? It is possible that study of the catena tradition may yield a few more that could be attributed to him. In particular there may be Church Slavonic, Armenian and Georgian sources that have not yet been investigated by scholars of the Hexapla.<sup>59</sup>

## 10. Possible timeline<sup>60</sup>

- c. 160–200: Symmachus produces his version in Palestine (Epiphanius, *Mens.* §§ 16, 18)
- c. 185: Origen born in Alexandria (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.1)
- c. 202: Origen's father Leonides martyred in the Severan persecution (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.1)
- 203–214: Origen teaches in Alexandria (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.3).
- 215–17: Caracalla's massacre and civil unrest in Alexandria; Origen withdraws to Palestine and Caesarea (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.16). He stays with Juliana (Palladius, *Lausiac History* § 64) and acquires Symmachus' version and his other works from her (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.17, Palladius, *ibid.*); possibly also the Sexta which was found in a jar near Jericho in Caracalla's reign (211–217) (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.16)

58 My thanks to John Meade for pointing out this possibility.

59 Alessandro Bruni has identified some readings from the Three in Church Slavonic texts of Daniel, and Theo Van Lint has found comparable instances in the Armenian commentary tradition on Ezekiel (personal communications).

60 Compare Nautin, *Origène*, "Tableau récapitulatif", 409–12, for a different reconstruction.

- 219(?): Origen is summoned back to Alexandria by Bishop Demetrius. (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.19.end)
- 220s: In Alexandria Origen begins writing his scripture commentaries, supported financially by Ambrose (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23–24). He visits Greece via Palestine (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23) – does he acquire Quinta from Nicopolis near Actium on this trip? Earliest, Alexandrian phase of *Comm. Gen.* (ch. 1 only?) and of *Comm. Pss.* 1–25.
- 222–25: Origen’s *Comm. Lam.* cites readings from Sym., but in a fragment from the introduction he says that the version of Aquila and Theodotion “is not available” (οὐ φέρεται).
- 230: Origen is ordained as a presbyter in Palestine (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.23).
- c. 231–2: Origen moves permanently to Caesarea (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.26). He acquires the local bilingual Hebrew text and Greek transcription and uses it as the framework for the multicolumn Hexapla (Kantor), or adds the Prima and Secunda to the basic four Greek columns (Schironi). Later commentaries (and revised, Caesarean version of *Comm. Pss.*) employ the readings of the Hexapla directly from the new tool? (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.32, 36 listing the *Comm. Isa.*, *Comm. Ezek.*, *Comm. XII.*)
- 235: Persecution of Maximinus Thrax (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.28).
- 250–1: Decian persecution (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.39.1)
- c. 253: Origen’s death (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.39.5), in Tyre according to Jerome, *Vir. Illus.* 54.

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