



Translation and Survival: The Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora

Tessa Rajak

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The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek was the first major translation in Western culture. Its significance was far-reaching but largely forgotten. Without a Greek Bible, European history would have been entirely different - no Western Jewish diaspora and no Christianity. Translation and Survival is a radical new study of the ancient creators and receivers of the translations and of their impact. The Greek Bible sustained Jews who spoke Greek and made the survival of the first Jewish diaspora possible: indeed, the translators invented the term 'diaspora'. The translations were a tool for the preservation of group identity and for the expression of resistance. They devised a new kind of language: many of the words they coined are still with us. The Greek Bible translations ended up as the Christian Septuagint, taken over along with the entire heritage of Hellenistic Judaism when the Church parted from the Synagogue. Here, a brilliant creation is restored to its first owners, and to its historical context among Jews, Greeks and Christians.

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