Plant Metaphors in the Old Greek of Isaiah

Septuagint and Cognate Studies

Wolfgang Kraus, General Editor

Number 69

SBL PRESS

Plant Metaphors in the Old Greek of Isaiah

Benjamin M. Austin

SBL PRESS

Atlanta

Copyright © 2019 by Benjamin M. Austin

Printed on acid-free paper.

∞

Contents

Preface

I would like to thank all those who made this project possible. Thanks goes to many people who made my study in Leiden enjoyable and who extended great hospitality to me in various ways. Special thanks must also go to each of the members of the Leiden LXX Seminar—in its fertile discussions my own research germinated, was nourished by their presentations, pruned by their corrections, and trained by their critiques and suggestions—the LXX seminar has greatly enriched this work, and I hope each of its members will enjoy my research's fruit. Also, I would like to thank my parents for supporting me emotionally, financially, and spiritually as I toiled in a distant land.

Abbreviations

α'	Aquila's version
σ'	Symmachus's version
θ'	Theodotion's version
A	Codex Alexandrinus
B	Codex Vaticanus
Eng.	English (when English Bible has different chapter or verse divisions)
LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text
MurIsa	Wadi Murabbaʿat scroll of Isaiah
Rahlfs	The LXX text according to Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*. Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1935.
Syh	Syrohexapla
Ziegler	Ziegler, Joseph. *Isaias*. SVTG 14. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

Primary Sources

1 En.	1 Enoch
Ach.	Aristophanes, *Acharnenses*
Ag.	Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*
Agr.	Cato, *De agricultura (De re rustica)*
Ant.	Sophocles, *Antigone*
Bib. hist.	Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*
Bibl.	Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca*
Caus. plant.	Theophrastus, *De causis plantarum*
CD	Cairo Genizah copy of the Damascus Document

Cho.   Aeschylus, *Choephori*
Cyr.   Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*
DSS   Dead Sea Scrolls
Eloc.   Demetrius, *De elocutione*
Evag.   Isocrates, *Evagoras (Or. 9)*
Hist.   Herodotus, *Historiae*
Hist. plant.   Theophrastus, *Historia plantarum*
Il.   Homer, *Iliad*
Inst.   Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*
Iph. taur.   Euripides, *Iphigenia taurica*
Nat.   Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia*
Oed. col.   Sophocles, *Oedipus coloneus*
Ol.   Pindar, *Olympionikai*
Op.   Hesiod, *Opera et dies*
Phaedr.   Plato, *Phaedrus*
Phil.   Sophocles, *Philoctetes*
Poet.   Aristotle, *Poetics*
Prom.   Aeschylus, *Prometheus vinctus*
Rhet.   Aristotle, *Rhetorica*
Rust.   Columella, *De re rustica*
Sept.   Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas*
Suppl.   Aeschylus, *Supplices*
Subl.   Longinus, *De sublimitate*
t.   Tosefta
T. Jos.   Testament of Joseph
Tg. Est. II   Second Targum of Esther
Tg. Neb.   Targum of the Prophets (Targum Jonathan of the Prophets)

Secondary Sources

AASF.DHL   Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum
ACEBT.S   Amsterdamse cahiers voor exegese van de Bijbel en zijn tradities, Supplement Series
AGJU   Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
ArBib   The Aramaic Bible

ATA	Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen
BDAG	Danker, F.W., W. Bauer, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*. 3rd ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1907.
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BGU	*Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden*. 15 vols. Berlin: Weidmann, 1895–1937.
Bib	*Biblica*
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar, Altes Testament
BO	*Bibliotheca Orientalis*
BRLA	Brill Reference Library of Judaism
BTS	Biblical Tools and Studies
BWAT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series
ClQ	*Classical Quarterly*
ConBOT	Coniectanea Biblica: Old Testament Series
CPJ	Tcherikover, Victor A., and Alexander Fuks, eds. *Corpus Papyrorum Judaicarum*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957–1964.
DCH	*Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DSD	*Dead Sea Discoveries*
ESV	English Standard Version
FAT	Forsuchungen zum Alten Testament
GELS	Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*. Leuven: Peeters, 2009.

GKC   Gesenius, Wilhelm. *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*.
                  Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arther E.
                  Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910.
HALOT   Koehler, Ludwig, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J.
                  Stamm. *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old
                  Testament*. Translated and edited under the supervi-
                  sion of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill,
                  1994–1999.
HBM   Hebrew Bible Monographs
HBT   *Horizons in Biblical Theology*
HRCS   Hatch, Edwin, and Henry A. Redpath. *A Concordance
                  to the Septuagint and Other Greek Versions of the Old
                  Testament*. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1897. 2nd ed.
                  Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998.
HSM   Harvard Semitic Monographs
HSS   Harvard Semitic Studies
HUCA   *Hebrew Union College Annual*
IBHS   Waltke, Bruce K., and Michael Patrick O'Connor. *An
                  Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Winona Lake,
                  IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990.
ICC   International Critical Commentary
Jastrow   Jastrow, Morris. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the
                  Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Liter-
                  ature with an Index of Scriptural Quotations*. London:
                  Luzac; New York: Putnam's Sons, 1903.
JBL   *Journal of Biblical Literature*
JBS   Jerusalem Biblical Studies
JEOL   *Jaarbericht van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootsc-
                  hap: Ex Oriente Lux*
JJS   *Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNSL   *Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages*
JSCS   *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
JSJ   *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Helle-
                  nistic, and Roman Periods*
JSJSup   Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism
JSOTSup   Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supple-
                  ment Series
JTS   *Journal of Theological Studies*

Joüon	Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*. 2nd ed. Translated and revised by Takamitsu Muraoka. SubBi 27. Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2009.
KJV	King James Version
KTU	Dietrich, Manfried, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. *Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit.* Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. 3rd enl. ed. of *KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places.* Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= *CTU*).
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
LEH	Lust, Johan, Erik Eynikel, and Katrin Hauspie, eds. *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint.* Rev. ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003.
LS	Liddell, Henry George, and Robert Scott. *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon: Founded upon the Seventh Edition of Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon.* New York: Harper & Brothers, 1889.
LSJ	Liddell, Henry George, Robert Scott, and Henry Stuart Jones. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. 9th ed. with revised supplement. Oxford: Clarendon, 1996.
LSTS	Library of Second Temple Studies
LXX.D	Kraus, Wolfgang, and Martin Karrer, eds. *Septuaginta Deutsch: Das griechische Alte Testament in deutscher Übersetzung.* Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaf, 2009.
LXX.E	Karrer, Martin, and Wolfgang Kraus, eds. *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament.* 2 vols. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011.
MBPF	Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte
MEOL	Mededelingen en verhandelingen van het Vooraziatisch-Egyptisch Genootschap: Ex Oriente Lux.
MM	Moulton, James Hope, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-literary Sources.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949.

MSU	Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens
NCB	New Century Bible
NETS	New English Translation of the Septuagint
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OTE	*Old Testament Essays*
OTL	The Old Testament Library
OTP	Charlesworth, James H., ed. *The Old Testament Pseude-pigrapha.* 2 vols. New York: Doubleday, 1983–1985.
OTS	Old Testament Studies
PG	Migne, Jacques-Paul, ed. *Patrologia Graeca.* 162 vols. Paris, 1857–1886.
PhA	Philosophia Antiqua
PHSC	Perspectives on Hebrew Scriptures and Its Contexts
RelDis	Religions and Discourse
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SCS	Septuagint and Cognate Studies
Smyth	Smyth, Herbert Weir. *Greek Grammar.* Revised by Gordon M. Messing. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956.
STDJ	Studies in the Texts of the Desert of Judah
SubBi	Subsidia Biblica
SVTG	Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum
SymS	Symposium Series
TDNT	Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament.* Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976.
UBL	Ugaritisch-biblische Literatur
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
YOSR	Yale Oriental Series, Researches
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Introduction and Methodology

In this study, the plant metaphors of the LXX of Isaiah will be analyzed in order to gain further insight into the translation technique of this unique book.[1] This introductory chapter begins with a survey of previous scholarship on the metaphors in the LXX. Then a brief introduction to modern views of metaphor is given, followed by a description of the views of metaphor and the rhetorical training that belong to the context in which the LXX Isaiah translator worked. Finally, the method this study will follow is described, along with its outline.

1.1. Metaphors in the Septuagint

1.1.1. Metaphors in the Septuagint in General

Scholarship on metaphors in the LXX is surprisingly scant. In 1889, Edwin Hatch commented on how differences between Biblical and Classical Greek were in part due to their differences in time, location, and the people using them.[2] These differences among other things, account for the differences in metaphors used. Hatch noted, regarding special differences between the Greek and the Hebrew of the Old Testament, that the LXX

---

1. For the idea that content-related criteria are important for categorizing LXX translation technique, see Hans Ausloos and Bénédicte Lemmelijn, "Content-Related Criteria in Characterising the LXX Translation Technique," in *Die Septuaginta— Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23.–27. Juli 2008*, ed. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer, WUNT 252 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 357–79.

2. Edwin Hatch, "On the Value and Use of the Septuagint," in *Essays in Biblical Greek* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1889), 3–4.

sometimes changes the metaphors, sometimes adds metaphors, and some-times subtracts them.[3]

Most scholarship on the rendering of metaphors in the LXX has been centered on the discussion about the translation of anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms. C. T. Fritsch made the argument in 1943 that many anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms were taken into the Greek with few cases of alteration, yet certain expressions were systematically avoided.[4] Some scholars objected to the idea that the LXX had anti-anthropomor-phic tendencies, most notably Harry M. Orlinsky.[5] His study, which focuses on body parts ascribed to God, concludes: "whether he [the translator] did or did not find anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms offensive, he reproduced the Hebrew terms literally and correctly."[6] He claimed that what are called anti-anthropomorphisms "are the result of nothing more tendentious than mere stylism, with theology and philosophy playing no direct role whatever in the matter."[7] Several of his students conducted further studies, such as Bernard Zlotowitz, who concluded regarding the translations that were not literal: "the sole motive was to make the Hebrew phrase intelligible, but not to avoid any anthropomorphism."[8]

In a study along similar lines, Staffan Olofsson researched metaphors and epithets used of God to investigate the theological exegesis of the LXX, focused mostly on the Psalms.[9] He concluded that most purported examples of anti-anthropomorphisms and "theological toning down" can be otherwise explained. He admitted that the LXX seems reluctant to see God literally, but avoiding anthropomorphic metaphors had more to do with the translator's linguistic understanding of the expression than with

---

3. Hatch, "On the Value and Use of the Septuagint," 9, 17–18.

4. C. T. Fritsch, *The Anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch* (Prince-ton: Princeton University Press, 1943), 62. He even points out exceptions to both the anthropomorphisms that are retained and to those that are usually removed.

5. See, for example: Harry M. Orlinsky, "The Treatment of Anthropomorphims and Anthropopathisms in the LXX of Isaiah," *HUCA* 27 (1956): 193–200; and Orlin-sky, "Studies in the LXX of the Book of Job: On the Matter of Anthropomorphisms, Anthropopathisms, and Euphemisms," *HUCA* 30 (1959): 153–67; 32 (1961): 239–68.

6. Orlinsky, "Treatment of Anthropomorphims and Anthropopathisms," 200.

7. Orlinsky, "Treatment of Anthropomorphims and Anthropopathisms," 194.

8. Bernard M. Zlotowitz, *The Septuagint Translation of the Hebrew Terms in Rela-tion to God in the Book of Jeremiah* (New York: Ktav, 1981), 183.

9. Staffan Olofsson, *God Is My Rock: A Study of Translation Technique and Theo-logical Exegesis in the Septuagint*, ConBOT 31 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990).

conscious exegesis.[10] His analysis of terms used both metaphorically and non-metaphorically showed that the metaphorical passages were "in most passages not creative, living images, but more or less stereotypes for the protection and help of God. This is further emphasized through the interchangeability of some of the terms."[11] The theological factors he found that influenced changing metaphors include a reluctance to use terms similar to those used of pagan gods and also a desire to emphasize God's transcendence over creation.

Since Olofsson's book, there have been a few studies on metaphors in the LXX without reference to anthropomorphisms or language for God. David A. Baer studied the ideology and theology of LXX Isa 56–66 and noted an unsystematic tendency to deflect creatively anthropomorphic language about God.[12] Johann Cook has addressed the issue of LXX Proverbs's translations of the strange woman metaphor. He examined the LXX rendering of Prov 1–9 and argued that while the Greek in places retains the metaphor of the strange woman, it nuances the translation as a whole to point to the metaphor's interpretation as being foreign wisdom, specifically Greek philosophy.[13] Michael V. Fox took up this same issue and argued that the metaphorical or symbolic meanings of the strange woman vary: in chapter 2 she is demetaphorized simply into bad counsel, in chapter 5 she is primarily a trollop but also a symbol for folly, in chapters 6 and 7 she again is an adulteress but with no explicit symbolic interpretation, and in chapter 9 she can represent not foreign philosophy but foreign thought, religion, and ways in general that should be avoided by Jews living in diaspora.[14] Matthew Goff also addressed this issue with his own study of the woman of folly in LXX Proverbs and 4Q184. He concluded that neither text consistently tries to turn the woman into an abstract symbol, but both do move toward abstraction.[15]

---

10. Olofsson, *God Is My Rock*, 149.

11. Olofsson, *God Is My Rock*, 151.

12. David A. Baer, *When We All Go Home: Translation and Theology in LXX Isaiah 56–66*, JSOTSup 318 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 159. He also notes some translations he classifies as "demetaphorization," 66, 110, 222.

13. Johann Cook, "אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1–9 Septuagint): A Metaphor for Foreign Wisdom?," *ZAW* 106 (1994): 474.

14. Michael V. Fox, "The Strange Woman in Septuagint Proverbs," *JNSL* 22.2 (1996): 42–43.

15. Matthew Goff, "Hellish Females: The Strange Woman of Septuagint Proverbs and 4QWiles of the Wicked Woman (4Q184)," *JSJ* 39 (2008): 44.

Jan Joosten investigated how similes are translated in the LXX, focusing on translation technique mostly at the syntactical level. He classified four types of similes[16] used in Hebrew and added a catch-all category for other constructions that occur infrequently.[17] He concluded that the LXX disregards representing the various types of Hebrew constructions and opts instead for rendering "accurately the sense of the source text," largely due to differences in the grammars and syntaxes of the two languages.[18] He also showed the variety of ways Greek can construct similes (which are not used to correspond to the Hebrew constructions, though some are similar) and gave statistics for which constructions various LXX books prefer.[19]

More recently, Antje Labahn researched how the LXX of Lamentations translates and presents the metaphors of 3:1–21. She argued that there is a great variety of ways metaphors are translated and that how the translator treats them is integrated into his understanding of the concepts that extend throughout the chapter.[20] The main concept is that the LXX understands the song explicitly as that of Jeremiah (LXX Lam 1:1) and so interprets it (including the metaphors) to reflect the experience of Jeremiah, particularly his increasing suffering.[21] She made the observation that the translator both receives the Hebrew metaphors and produces new metaphors in Greek, though it is unclear whether the change in the metaphors the translator produces are due to his understanding of the Hebrew or his effort to produce a sound Greek text, so we must be content with observing the shifts in meaning. She also pointed out that the reception process of a metaphor extends its versatility, but once a rendering is given, a limited number of meanings (overlapping, no doubt, the original meanings to some extent) are carried through to the new text.[22]

---

16. The four types are: (1) כאשר + *yiqtol*; (2) כ + infinitive construct; (3) כ + noun + asyndetic relative clause; (4) simple juxtaposition.

17. Jan Joosten, "Elaborate Similes—Hebrew and Greek: A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique," *Bib* 77 (1996): 227–29.

18. Joosten, "Elaborate Similes," 230.

19. Joosten, "Elaborate Similes," 230–36. He distinguishes based on verbal form, since the various comparative particles seem to be nearly synonymous.

20. Antje Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise—das Leiden Jeremias am Schicksal Jerusalems: Metaphern und Metapher-variationen in Thr 3,1–21 LXX," in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, ed. Pierre van Hecke, BETL 187 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005): 147.

21. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 147–49.

22. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 153.

Angela Thomas's study on anatomical idioms for expressions of emotions avoided describing these idioms any more specifically than simply as "figurative language," but nevertheless provided interesting data on how the LXX translators dealt with various nonliteral expressions.[23]

Many studies treat metaphors incidentally while focusing on specific texts. We will discuss some relevant articles below in relation to specific texts we treat. Worth mentioning here is Bénédicte Lemmelijn's study of the translation of plant terminology in the LXX of Song of Songs. This study does not offer much discussion on the metaphors in which these plants are used but is insightful for how the translator dealt with plant terminology. She concluded that the translator rendered terms carefully regarding detail and was faithful to the *Vorlage*, even if the translation is not always completely literal.[24]

1.1.2. Metaphors in Septuagint Isaiah

Besides Orlinsky's article on the antrhopomorphisms of LXX Isaiah, there are very few works that specifically treat the metaphors of LXX Isaiah.[25] G. B. Caird in his book on the imagery of the Bible noted that the LXX occasionally avoids anthropomorphisms that seem irreverent to the translator, such as in Exod 15, 24, and Ps 17.[26] He commented about LXX Isaiah specifically, saying: "On occasion he will take Isaiah's vigorous metaphors with flat-footed literalness. He turns 'Your silver has become dross, your wine mixed with water' into 'Your money is counterfeit, and the merchants

---

23. Angela Thomas, *Anatomical Idiom and Emotional Expression: A Comparison of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint*, HBM 52 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014), 11. See also Thomas's article based on this research: "Fear and Trembling: Body Imagery in the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint," in *The Reception of the Hebrew Bible in the Septuagint and the New Testament: Essays in Memory of Aileen Guilding*, ed. David J. A. Clines and J. Cheryl Exum, HBM 55 (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013), 115–25.

24. Bénédicte Lemmelijn, "Flora in Cantico Canticorum: Towards a More Precise Characterization of Translation Technique in the LXX of Song of Songs," in *Scripture in Translation: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta, JSJSup 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 51.

25. Orlinsky, "Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms," 193–200.

26. G. B. Caird, *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 127.

are diluting the wine with water' (1:22)."[27] Later he explained that while the Hebrew metaphor is about the general moral state of the nation, the LXX understands them to refer literally to coinage and wine.[28] Various other scholars have commented on the translation of metaphors in passing, but their studies did not set out to investigate them.[29]

Joosten's work on similes in the LXX concluded that LXX Isaiah used all four types of syntax to render similes, unlike most LXX translators, who use two or three. He described this as yet more evidence for the well-known independence and freedom of the LXX Isaiah translator.[30]

The most extensive work treating metaphors in LXX Isaiah is chapter 5 of Joseph Ziegler's *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias*.[31] Here Ziegler argued that the translator considered himself authorized to render the text freely: the Greek of Isaiah removes Hebraisms, is often very literal, and is usually in some way related to the *Vorlage*. But at the same time, it is both a translation and an interpretation. Ziegler believed interpretation occurs most strongly in figurative expressions, allegories, and the like. He explained numerous examples to support his argument that metaphors are rendered freely because the translator was interpreting them based on his conception of the passages' meaning and on the context or parallel passages of Isaiah.[32] Ziegler did not claim to offer a complete catalogue of the types of metaphor renderings, nor did he treat all of the metaphors in LXX Isaiah. He simply offered a few examples of ways metaphors are rendered to support his thesis.

---

27. Caird, *Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 126.

28. Caird, *Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 185.

29. For example, Isac Leo Seeligmann, "Problems and Perspectives in Modern Septuagint Research," trans. Judith H. Seeligmann, in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, ed. Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann, FAT 40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 21–80. Ronald L. Troxel, "Economic Plunder as a Leitmotif in LXX-Isaiah," *Bib* 83 (2002): 381; and Baer occasionally points out instances of demetaphorization in his book *When We All Go Home*, 66, 110, 222. A more recent example is J. Ross Wagner, *Reading the Sealed Book: Old Greek Isaiah and the Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics*, FAT 88 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 152–61.

30. Joosten, "Elaborate Similes," 236. For a description of these four types of syntax, see the previous section.

31. Joseph Ziegler, *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias*, ATA 12.3 (Munster: Aschendorff, 1934), 80–103.

32. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80–81, 91.

Ziegler pointed out three specific reasons for metaphors' not being rendered literally: (1) the image is too tangible or coarse and so is ameliorated; (2) unknown references or vocabulary are interpreted by the translator; and (3) impersonal expressions are rendered personally by the translator.[33] He gave several examples for each of these situations, with some examples that can be described by several of these situations and others that do not clearly fit into any of these categories.

He also showed that the translator did not feel obligated to render a word or image literally. For example, the translator knew the definition of כלי, translating it literally with σκεῦος on numerous occasions (10:29 [MT 10:28], 39:2, 52:11, 54:16–17, 65:4).[34] But in nearly as many places he also translated it freely to fit the (perceived) context: for example, in 13:5, וכלי זעמו becomes καὶ οἱ ὁπλομάχοι αὐτοῦ; in 18:2 ובכלי-גמא becomes καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βυβλίνας; and in 61:10 וכבלה תעדה כליה becomes καὶ ὡς νύμφην κατεκόσμησέν με κόσμῳ.[35]

Ziegler finished the section by discussing Isa 22:15–25 and 27:2–5, passages he described as characteristic for the translation technique of LXX Isaiah. Both of these passages are quite different from the Hebrew, though they can in large part be traced back to the Hebrew. Ziegler argued that the metaphors in these two passages are rendered freely because the translator was interpreting in each case based on his conception of the passage's meaning and on the context or parallel passages of Isaiah.[36]

The second part of Ziegler's chapter is on comparisons (*Vergleiche*).[37] He noted that LXX Isaiah usually translates the Hebrew כ with ὡς, ὡσεί, or ὥσπερ. When a whole sentence is used as a comparison, ὃν τρόπον stands for כאשר, and also for the Hebrew construction כ with the infinitive of a verb. Sometimes ב is read as כ and in one place כי is read as כ. Also, כ is read for the preposition ל, especially in the construction: היה ל "to become

---

33. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81.

34. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83–84.

35. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83–84. With regard to וכלי זעמו in Isa 13:5, Ziegler points out that the same phrase in Jer 27:25 (MT 50:25) is rendered τὰ σκεύη ὀργῆς αὐτοῦ. He also discusses the other occurrences of כלי (32:7, 66:20, and the most interesting: 22:24).

36. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 85, 87, 91.

37. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–103.

something." Often, Ziegler noted, the comparative particle ὡς is interjected where something like the Hebrew כ is absent.[38]

Ziegler treated a plethora of comparisons, each in great detail. He argued that free translations have various causes, including: the misunderstanding of vocabulary (or misunderstanding due to the difficulty of the Hebrew), the result of a harmonization (or influence of a parallel text), expansions based on context, expansions to emphasize a theological point better, or modifications to fit the cultural context of the translator's own time.[39] He argued that the translator at times extended similes or added elements (such as adding comparisons or including negations) to create a sensible meaning in Greek.[40]

In the other work that specifically addresses the rendering of metaphors in LXX Isaiah, Arie van der Kooij demonstrated that the interpretation of metaphors is a characteristic of LXX Isaiah that it shares with Targum Jonathan of the Prophets.[41] The LXX in general tends to render metaphors literally, but he mentioned a few examples of interpretive renderings. LXX Isaiah, however, has far more interpretive renderings. He gave various examples of different ways metaphors are interpreted. In Isa 1:25 the LXX interprets the refining metaphor as God removing the wicked. In 5:14b the LXX interprets the metaphors personally, as representing specific groups of people, so "dignity" is rendered as "glorious ones," "multitude" is rendered "great ones," and "uproar" is rendered "rich ones"; Van der Kooij pointed out that this is also how the Targum interprets the passage. Similarly, he showed how Isa 10:33–34 is rendered by the LXX so that the tree metaphors are interpreted as referring to specific people: "the glorious" and "the proud"; the Targum also renders the metaphors personally. In 1:10, the LXX has interpreted the metaphor "a signal," a term the translator knows, by substituting the word "to rule."[42] The LXX interprets many of

---

38. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

39. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–97. See also chapter 8: "Der alexandrinisch-ägyptische Hintergrund der Js-LXX, " 175–212.

40. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 95–96, 100–103.

41. Arie van der Kooij, "The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language: A Characteristic of LXX-Isaiah," in *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*, ed. Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen, JSJSup 82 (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 179–85. In the remainder of this book, "the Targum" refers to the Targum of the Prophets (Tg. Neb.), which is the same as Targum Jonathan of the Prophets.

42. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 179–83.

the metaphors in Isa 22:22–24, as Van der Kooij described, often by substituting individual words.[43] In 22:22 the translator connects the idea of a "shoulder" (על שכמו) to "leading" (as in 9:6) and so interprets the metaphor as "to rule" (ἄρξει). Similarly, in 22:23, "peg" (יתר) is interpreted as "a ruler" (ἄρχοντα), and in 22:24 "to hang" (תלו) on the peg is interpreted as "to trust" (ἔσται πεποιθώς) in the ruler. He showed a similar interpretation in 23:17, where "play the harlot" (וזנתה) is interpreted in the sense of "to trade" (זנה) and so the LXX says Tyre will be a port of merchandise; this is similar to the Targum's rendering. Finally, Van der Kooij gave an example of interpretation, based on similar metaphors in the Hebrew Bible and Mesopotamian literature, where, in 31:9b, "fire" and "furnace" are interpreted by the LXX as "seed" and "kinsmen."[44] This tendency to interpret metaphors is typical of the Targum, so it is interesting to see it at work already in LXX Isaiah. Also of interest are the specific interpretations of metaphors in LXX Isaiah that are similar to those of the Targum.

1.1.3. Metaphor Translation Strategies

While Ziegler has offered a few reasons for *why* a metaphor was translated in a special way, in this section we will look at *how* metaphors can be translated. A few studies have pointed out the various metaphor translation strategies used by LXX translators. The concluding chapter (4.1) will catalogue how LXX Isaiah renders metaphors according to various available translation strategies.

Metaphors often depend on cultural perceptions, and different cultures organize concepts differently.[45] So metaphors cannot always be

---

43. ונתתי מפתח בית־דוד על־שכמו ופתח ואין סגר וסגר ואין פתח: ותקעתיו יתד במקום
נאמן והיה לכסא כבוד לבית אביו: ותלו עליו כל כבוד בית־אביו הצאצאים והצפעות כל כלי הקטן
מכלי האגנות ועד כל־כלי הנבלים: ביום ההוא נאם יהוה צבאות תמוש היתד התקועה במקום
נאמן ונגדעה ונפלה ונכרת המשא אשר־עליה כי יהוה דבר:

καὶ δώσω τὴν δόξαν Δαυιδ αὐτῷ, καὶ ἄρξει, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ὁ ἀντιλέγων. καὶ στήσω αὐτὸν ἄρχοντα ἐν τόπῳ πιστῷ, καὶ ἔσται εἰς θρόνον δόξης τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ. καὶ ἔσται πεποιθὼς ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸν πᾶς ἔνδοξος ἐν τῷ οἴκῳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου καὶ ἔσονται ἐπικρεμάμενοι αὐτῷ ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ. τάδε λέγει κύριος σαβαωθ Κινηθήσεται ὁ ἄνθρωπος ὁ ἐστηριγμένος ἐν τόπῳ πιστῷ καὶ πεσεῖται, καὶ ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ δόξα ἡ ἐπ᾽ αὐτόν, ὅτι κύριος ἐλάλησεν.

44. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 183–85.

45. David Punter, *Metaphor* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 104.

translated literally but require the translator to overcome difficulties both in their source text and in the target text (or culture).[46]

Edwin Hatch noted how differences in culture had an effect on how metaphors were translated in the LXX.[47] Hatch pointed out three different ways in which the translators modified metaphors in their translations:

1.   Sometimes metaphors are changed.
2.   Sometimes metaphors are "dropped."
3.   Sometimes metaphors appear to be added.[48]

More recently, Antje Labahn, in her study of the LXX Lam 3:1–21, found six categories into which LXX Lamentations' renderings of metaphors fit:

1.   Retained metaphors.
2.   Removed metaphors.
3.   Metaphors changed into similes.
4.   Interpreted metaphors.
5.   New metaphors due to intratextual references.
6.   New original metaphors.[49]

That such a short passage has so many different strategies for rendering metaphors shows the versatility and skill of the translator and shows he is willing to reshape the metaphors to serve particular functions in the translated text.[50] Ziegler has made nearly the same observation regarding the

---

46. Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, Benjamins Translation Library 4 (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995), 84.

47. Hatch, "On the Value and Use of the Septuagint," 9–10.

48. Hatch, "On the Value and Use of the Septuagint," 17–18. His examples of each include: (1) Mic 3:2: אהב "he loved" rendered ζητεῖν "to seek" (metaphor changed); (2) Jer 5:17: רשש "he destroyed" becomes ἀλοᾶν "to thresh" (metaphor dropped); (3) Isa 6:6: ויעף "then flew" becomes ἀπεστάλη "was sent" (metaphor added). It is noteworthy that all three of his examples are substitutions of one word.

49. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 147–83. She treats "new metaphors due to intratextual references" and "new original metaphors" as a single category, but I have divided them.

50. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 181.

LXX Isaiah translator, and so we should not be surprised to see a varied and versatile treatment of metaphors in LXX Isaiah.[51]

Theo A. W. van der Louw included a short excursus on the translation of metaphors in his book that bridges translation studies with Septuagint studies.[52] He pointed out that metaphors are often divided into lexicalized metaphors, conventional metaphors, and original metaphors. By lexicalized metaphors he means dead metaphors or those used so often they are no longer recognized as figurative; conventional metaphors are those commonly used by a culture but still are recognized as metaphorical. He suggested that original metaphors, that is, metaphors invented by the author, are often the easiest to translate, since conventional and lexicalized metaphors are often language or culture specific. He claimed that metaphors should not be counted as a separate kind of transformation, but merely a problem area that can be solved in different ways. Van der Louw showed how the various strategies for translating metaphors are essentially the same transformations that are used to translate any kind of text. The strategies he lists are:

1. Reproduction of the same image.
2. Reproduction of the same image plus its sense.
3. Replacement of a stock metaphor with an established metaphor in the same sphere.
4. Translation of a metaphor with a simile.
5. Translation of a metaphor with a simile plus its sense.
6. Translation of a metaphor's sense.
7. Deletion of the metaphor if it is redundant.
8. Rendering nonfigurative language by a metaphor.[53]

From the perspective of descriptive translation theory, Gideon Toury has proposed six ways metaphors could be translated:

1. Translating the metaphor into the "same" metaphor.
2. Translating the metaphor into a "different" metaphor.

---

51. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80–81, 91.
52. Theo A. W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*, CBET 47 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 85–86.
53. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

3. Translating the metaphor into a nonmetaphor.
4. Not translating the metaphor but omitting the line.
5. Translating a nonmetaphor into a metaphor.
6. Adding a metaphor where there is no equivalent in the source text.[54]

These six categories seem complete, but each could be subdivided. The second category, for example, includes two different translation strategies. Using a "different" metaphor could mean using a simile instead of a metaphor (or vice versa) as well as using a completely different metaphor (either a newly invented one for the text or one taken from the common usage of the target language). Likewise, the third category includes simple substitutions ("power" for "hand") or more extended exegetical explanations. The conclusions (4.1) will catalogue the translation strategies used in LXX Isaiah along similar lines, though with narrower categories.

1.1.4. Summary

As this survey has shown, scholarship on the translation of metaphors in the LXX as a whole arose as vague observations and was developed primarily in regard to language for God and as an example of theological exegesis. More recently, along with the general interest in metaphors in biblical scholarship, the translation of metaphors has been considered worthy of study apart from questions of language for God. The situation in LXX Isaiah is similar, except that Ziegler and Van der Kooij were interested in the metaphors as opportunities for the unique qualities of the translator's ideas and methods to manifest themselves. Recently, Van der Louw and Labahn have categorized some translation strategies used in the LXX for rendering metaphors. While much good work has been done on the rendering of metaphors in the LXX, there is still room to expand and elaborate, particularly in the case of the unique work LXX Isaiah.

1.2. Modern Views of Metaphor

Metaphor scholarship is a rapidly growing field of study, expanding from literary studies into linguistics, philosophy, psychology, neuroscience, and

---

54. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, 82–83.

many other areas. While many issues are still being explored and discussed, it is worthwhile to survey the major trends in order to frame how we will approach thinking and talking about metaphors. This section consists of a brief survey of the history of modern metaphor scholarship as well as a survey of how this scholarship has been adopted in Old Testament studies.

1.2.1. A Brief Survey of Modern Metaphor Scholarship

As we will see, modern metaphor theories claim to describe universally how humans use metaphors, and so some features of these theories should be useful in our analysis of LXX Isaiah. Also, these theories provide terminology that will be useful in describing metaphors. Here we will survey the relevant scholarship, then outline this study's approach to metaphors below (1.4.1).

Starting with I. A. Richards's lecture series in 1936, metaphor has been widely recognized as an integral part of how we communicate and how we understand the world around us.[55] In his lectures, Richards challenged many of the dominant theories and practices concerning metaphors. He argued that Aristotle is mistaken in his *Poetics* in his assertions that: (1) having an "eye for resemblances" is a special gift some people have, while in fact this is vital for learning and speaking; (2) good use of metaphor cannot be taught, but we must somehow learn this; and (3) metaphor is something special and exceptional in the use of language, instead of an "omnipresent principle of language."[56] To Richards, metaphors are not simply the replacement of one word with another; they are "two thoughts of different things active together and supported by a single word, or phrase, whose meaning is a resultant of their interaction." For him, metaphors are not a verbal matter, but are an interaction of thoughts, and thought itself is metaphoric. A further contribution is his attempt to offer vocabulary for analyzing metaphors. He called the meaning or topic of the metaphor its *tenor* and the image that is used its *vehicle*. Also, he warned that not being able to describe why or how a metaphor works does not mean that the metaphor does not work.[57]

---

55. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

56. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 89–90.

57. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 93–94, 101–3, 118.

   Max Black was also an important early contributor to the development of modern metaphor scholarship. He offered terminology for describing metaphors as well, calling the image the *focus* and the rest of the statement the *frame*.[58] He described two common views of metaphor and offers his own third view. He called the first the substitution view, in which a metaphor is simply a different way of saying something, so that a metaphor could be paraphrased in literal language.[59] The second view is a variation of the first; he called it the comparison view, which asserts that metaphor is really just "a condensed or elliptical *simile*."[60] Black called his own view the interaction view of metaphor. He described metaphors as highlighting certain commonplaces of the focus and the frame in order to organize our view of the subject of the metaphor; metaphors filter certain aspects, selecting the ones to be emphasized.[61] A metaphor for Black, then, is more than the transfer of meaning between words; it is a way of filtering an interaction between ideas. In Black's other work on metaphors, he continued to fight the idea that metaphors are a matter of saying one thing and meaning another, as well as the opposite tendency of some to turn everything into metaphor.[62] He also offered further vocabulary for describing metaphors, though it does not seem to have been adopted widely. He recognized that metaphors can be restated as similes but emphasized that much is lost in this restatement. Black critiqued attempts to test objectively for the presence of a metaphor, since no test will work all the time, and other rhetorical figures may also be identified by a given test. He also argued that metaphors can be creative in how they can offer us a new knowledge of and insight into something that was not previously available, in the same way that cinema could offer a view of a horse running in slow motion, which no one had seen before.[63]

   Another important moment in the development of metaphor theory was the work resulting from a 1978 symposium that would become the

---

58. Max Black, *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 21.

59. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 33–34.

60. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 35.

61. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 38.

62. Max Black, "More about Metaphor," in *Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Andrew Ortony, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 19–22.

63. Black, "More about Metaphor," 23–31, 33–40.

book *On Metaphor*, edited by Sheldon Sacks.[64] Scholars from a variety of disciplines contributed to the study of metaphors, discussing various aspects of how they are formed and function. For example, Ted Cohen showed how metaphors can create intimacy by using knowledge or experiences common to the speaker and audience.[65] Wayne C. Booth suggested the evaluation of a metaphor needs to take into account its context, which is not only a literary matter but also a cultural one.[66] Paul Ricoeur argued that metaphors convey information in part by stimulating our imaginations and feelings in such a way as to "elicit feelings that we mistakenly hold for genuine information and for fresh insight into reality."[67] Many of the essays in this book contributed to the expansion and clarification of the cognitive view of metaphors.

The most detailed and systematic argument for the cognitive (sometimes called conceptual) view of metaphor is George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's book *Metaphors We Live By*. The idea behind cognitive metaphor theory is that metaphors are not just a feature of our language; they are how we actually conceive of abstract concepts.[68] For example, Lakoff and Johnson show that we typically conceptualize arguments in terms of war. This is why we use metaphors that say: "I won that argument," "we got in a fight," "she shot down my argument," "his claims were indefensible," and so on.[69] The types of metaphors we use reflect how we conceptualize an idea. Lakoff and Johnson go into great detail showing different types of metaphors (such as orientational, ontological, personification, etc.) and how metaphors find coherence, are structured, and are grounded. They demonstrated that many conceptual metaphors are common to many cultures, such as orientational metaphors.[70] Also of note is their assertion that conceptual systems are grounded in our experiences, including physical

---

64. Sheldon Sacks, ed., *On Metaphor* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

65. Ted Cohen, "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy," in Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 1–10.

66. Wayne C. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation," in Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 47–70.

67. Paul Ricoeur, "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling," in Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 141–42.

68. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 5–6.

69. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by*, 4–6.

70. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by*, 24.

and cultural experiences.[71] This last point helps explain why we can understand new metaphors, based on our experiences, and why metaphors from other cultures can be difficult to understand.

The conceptual view of metaphor has become the dominant perspective, though it has been challenged. For example, Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson have tried to put metaphor on a continuum of language somewhere between literal language and hyperbolic language.[72] Also, Donald Davidson has argued that metaphors mean nothing more than what they say literally.[73] The conceptual view has also been expanded in various ways. For example, Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner have elaborated the theory by saying cognitive metaphors involve complex integration networks spanning more conceptual spaces than the simple pairs (source and target spaces) often given.[74] This theory is often called conceptual blending or mapping, and it attempts to describe not only metaphor but how we think and speak.[75]

In the past twenty years, another major shift has taken place in the study of metaphors. This shift is well illustrated by comparing Cambridge's 1993 *Metaphor and Thought* with the 2008 *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*.[76] In the former work, articles are mostly theoretical, written by literary critics, linguists, and philosophers, with a few contributions by psychologists and scientists. The latter work, however, only has a few contributions from the traditional fields in the humanities; is dominated by psychologists, neuroscientists, and biologists; and even has many contributions by those studying artificial intelligence, music, art, and dance. The study of metaphor is now inextricably bound to the study of linguistics and cognition and is benefiting from studies both from the hard sciences and the arts.

It is worth mentioning a few insights metaphor theorists have made regarding the translation of metaphors. Raymond Gibbs Jr. talks about the

---

71. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live by*, 56–60.

72. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson, "A Deflationary Account of Metaphors," in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, ed. Raymond Gibbs Jr. (Cambridge: University Press, 2008), 84.

73. Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," in Sacks, *On Metaphor*, 29–46.

74. See Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner, "Rethinking Metaphor," in Gibbs, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 53–66.

75. Gilles Fauconnier, *Mappings in Thought and Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

76. Andrew Ortony, ed., *Metaphor and Thought*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Gibbs, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*.

paradox of metaphor: metaphors can be creative, novel, and culturally sensitive and still be rooted in experiences common to many people.[77] Indeed, as Lakoff and Johnson note, certain conceptual metaphors do exist across temporal and cultural boundaries, but this does not mean that conceptual metaphors can always explain how a given specific metaphor is used or understood, particularly when dealing with metaphors from another culture.[78] David Punter goes so far as to say, "Metaphors are not universals. They depend upon cultural and social perceptions, but we can also go one stage further than this and say that metaphors *ground* our perceptions."[79] When examining how a metaphor is translated it often becomes clear that different cultures organize concepts differently, as Fauconnier says:

> Different cultures organize their background knowledge differently. Good translation, then, requires a quasi-total reconstruction of the cognitive configurations prompted by one language and a determination of how another language would set up a similar configuration with a radically different prompting system and prestructured background.[80]

But, of course, not all translators bother to do this. Translators who lack a theoretical framework have to deal with difficulties of metaphors both in their source text and in the target text (or culture).[81] This is an important point for our study because the LXX Isaiah translator had to bring metaphors not only into a new language but also into a new culture; to do this effectively, at times he had to depart from a literal translation technique.

1.2.2. Metaphor Scholarship in Old Testament Studies

Studies in the rhetorical features of the Old Testament have benefited from the on-going discussion of conceptual metaphors, but as Pierre van Hecke notes, studies of biblical metaphor take a variety of approaches.[82] In this section, we will survey how Old Testament scholars have adopted

---

77. Raymond Gibbs Jr., "Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art," in Gibbs, *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*, 5.

78. Lakoff and Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 24.

79. Punter, *Metaphor*, 104.

80. Fauconnier, *Mappings in Thought and Language*, 188–89.

81. Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*, 84.

82. Pierre van Hecke, "Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible: An Introduction," in Van Hecke, *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 1–2.

modern theories of metaphor in order to contextualize the current study and to introduce some works that will be useful for our analysis of Hebrew metaphors.

In approaching the metaphors of the Old Testament, one must be aware not only of the benefits metaphor scholarship has for our understanding of metaphors, but also of the very different ideas that ancient writers had about metaphors (ideas probably not explicitly developed or articulated). Biblical scholarship tends to take one of two approaches: from the text toward ancient theory and usage, or from modern scholarship toward the ancient text.[83]

Luis Alonso Schökel in his manual of Hebrew poetics describes imagery in terms that seem to combine traditional views of metaphor with modern theories.[84] His approach is mostly from the biblical text itself, and so his categorization is very helpful for biblical studies. He separately defines metaphor, symbol, allegory, parable, and visions.[85] Of particular interest are his comments describing premetaphor as an opposite extreme of lexicalized images: Schökel notes that what may appear to moderns as a metaphor may have been the way ancients actually thought of things. He gives as examples the ideas that the sun moves across the sky or that various organs are the seat of corresponding emotions.[86]

Another approach to Old Testament metaphors is to draw from New Testament scholarship, in particular, from discussions of parables. Kirsten Nielsen's *There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah* profits

---

83. David Aaron describes the two main ways Old Testament scholars approach metaphors as either subject based or based on Lakoff's theories. See David Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*, BRLA 4 (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 9–11. Another description of the approach to metaphors in Old Testament scholarship can be found in Marc Zvi Brettler, "The Metaphorical Mapping of God in the Hebrew Bible," in *Metaphor, Canon and Community: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Approaches*, ed. Ralph Bisschops and James Francis, RelDis 1 (New York: Lang, 1999), 219–22.

84. Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, trans. and rev. Luis Alonso Schökel and Adrian Graffy (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1988), 95–141.

85. Schökel, *Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 108–14, 118–20. I will discuss these other terms below.

86. Schökel, *Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 101–2. Cf. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities*, 11, who says many Old Testament metaphors are "a modern-made smoke screen to obfuscate truths interpreters would rather not confront when it comes to the religion(s) of biblical literature."

greatly from scholarship on parables, while it also uses some theory from Black.[87] A benefit of this approach is that it reminds us that so-called metaphors in a prophetic book were probably conceived of quite differently than a modern person would conceive of a metaphor. While most metaphors used in a prophetic book are not parables, they do share in common that they were probably considered to be *meshalim*. A drawback to this approach is that some New Testament parable discussion seems largely concerned with departing from detailed, medieval allegorical readings of the parables; this sort of discussion follows a different line than is immediately useful to understanding the nature of metaphors in prophetic discourse.[88] However, much discussion of New Testament parables centers on their nature and that of Old Testament *meshalim*. For example, Stephen Curkpatrick shows how the translation of משל with παραβολή is inadequate, since Aristotle understood παραβολή to have a more specific meaning than the biblical understanding of משל, as we will see below (1.3.2.2).[89]

Some Old Testament scholars have integrated cognitive metaphor theory into their work. For example, Peter W. Macky developed a method for interpreting and cataloging the metaphors in the Bible.[90] Marjo C. A. Korpel compiled many examples of parallel metaphors for the divine in Biblical and Ugaritic literature.[91] While she uses cognitive metaphor theory, her work is more of a compilation than a deep analysis, though

---

87. Kirsten Nielsen, *There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*, JSOTSup 65 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989), 26–68.

88. Indeed, as Marjo C. A. Korpel has shown, the ancients did use "large-scale metaphors approaching purely allegorical composition," as can be seen by early exegesis. See Korpel, "Metaphors in Isaiah 60," *VT* 46 (1996): 54.

89. Stephen Curkpatrick, "Between Mashal and Parable: 'Likeness' as a Metonymic Enigma," *HBT* 24 (2002): 58–71. Robert Lowth long ago commented on this equivalence, "which in some respects is not improper, though it scarcely comprehends the full compass of the Hebrew expression." See Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, trans. G. Gregory (London: Johnson, 1787), 78.

90. Peter W. Macky, *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990). For another method for metaphor criticism, see Göran Eidevall, *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14*, ConBOT 43 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996).

91. Marjo C. A. Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine*, UBL 8 (Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990).

she offers remarks for further study.[92] More recently Alec Basson demonstrated how the Old Testament uses the cognitive metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS.[93] Eric A. Hermanson offers a summary and critique of other scholars' approaches to biblical metaphor.[94] He offers tests to see when metaphors are present, and he praises work that not only looks at the metaphors of a given biblical book, but also contributes to our understanding of the conceptual frameworks of the authors of the book.[95] Olaf Jäkel summarizes the main tenets of cognitive metaphor theory and then shows how it can be applied to the Old Testament by analyzing journey and path metaphors.[96] Similarly, M. Beth Szlos has shown how cognitive metaphor theory "offers the philosophical underpinnings that explain where meaning comes from, how meaning develops and is expressed. This approach treats conventional metaphors as powerful tools of expression of thought, whereas other approaches treat the conventional as dead."[97] Pierre van Hecke has shown how integration networks (conceptual blending) can help us better understand complicated metaphors.[98]

---

92. Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 614–37.

93. Alex Basson, "'People Are Plants': A Conceptual Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible," *OTE* 19 (2006): 573–83. Another recent work dealing with plant metaphors in the Hebrew Bible is Claudia Sticher, "Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras: Zu einigen Pflanzenmetaphern in den Psalmen; Eine kanonische Lektüre," in *Metaphors in the Psalms*, ed. Pierre van Hecke and Antje Labahn, BETL 231 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 251–68.

94. Eric A. Hermanson, "Recognizing Hebrew Metaphors: Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Bible Translation," *JNSL* 22.2 (1996): 67–78.

95. Hermanson, "Recognizing Hebrew Metaphors," 75–77.

96. Olaf Jäkel, "How Can Mortal Man Understand the Road He Travels? Prospects and Problems of the Cognitive Approach to Religious Metaphor," in *The Bible through Metaphor and Translation: A Cognitive Semantic Perspective*, ed. Kurk Feyaerts, RelDis 15 (New York: Lang, 2003): 55–86. For a more recent application of cognitive metaphor theory to "way" metaphors in Deutero-Isaiah, see Øystein Lund, *Way Metaphors and Way Topics in Isaiah 40–55*, FAT 2/28 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007). It is also notable in that he investigates tests for identifying imagery (45–50).

97. M. Beth Szlos, "Body Parts as Metaphor and the Value of a Cognitive Approach: A Study of the Female Figures in Proverbs via Metaphor," in Van Hecke, *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 195.

98. Pierre van Hecke "Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor; Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4:16," in Van Hecke, *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*, 215–31. Similarly, Brettler has called for a metaphorical mapping of metaphors for God in the Hebrew Bible ("Metaphorical Mapping of God," 219–32).

By carefully analyzing a metaphor in terms of its source domain, target domain, the generic domain in which certain common elements are focused, and the blended domain in which the implications of the metaphor interact, Van Hecke shows how biblical metaphors can affect how we think about both source and target domains.[99] Andrea L. Weiss has developed a means for identifying metaphor and has used it to study how metaphors function in the Bible.[100] Isaak de Hulster has proposed an iconographic approach to biblical metaphors for understanding how the ancients understood imagery and for understanding their mental maps better.[101]

While there are many more studies that bring the results of metaphor theory into the realm of Old Testament studies, this brief set of examples has shown the sorts of studies that are being done.[102] It is impossible to adopt a set of theories evenly when they are still in development, but Old Testament scholars have been able to profit from these theories nonetheless.

1.3. Ancient Views of Metaphor

Although cognitive metaphor theory undoubtedly describes how ancient people used metaphors unconsciously, to study properly how the LXX translators dealt with metaphors we must also look at what conscious ideas they may have had about metaphors. In this section, we will first look at what Greek writers had to say about metaphor (and show that it is likely that the LXX translators had some exposure to these ideas); then we will look at what can be said about Jewish views of metaphor at the time of the translator; finally, I will offer a summary and some conclusions.

---

99. Van Hecke, "Conceptual Blending," 220–22.

100. Andrea L. Weiss, *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel*, VTSup 107 (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 32.

101. Izaak J. de Hulster, *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*, FAT 2/36 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

102. See especially the scholarship of the European Association of Biblical Studies research group "Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible"; their publications so far are: Van Hecke, *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*; Van Hecke and Labahn, *Metaphors in the Psalms*; and Antje Labahn, ed., *Conceptual Metaphors in Poetic Texts: Proceedings of the Metaphor Research Group of the European Association of Biblical Studies in Lincoln 2009*, PHSC 18 (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013).

1.3.1. Greek Views of Metaphor

This section will first examine what Greek philosophers were saying about rhetoric and metaphor. Second, it will describe Hellenistic education, particularly the place of rhetoric in learning to write and read. Third, it will look at the highest level of education available, the scholarship in Alexandria, to see the issues the scholars of the day were interested in studying. Fourth, this section will show examples of Jews who were highly educated in classical literature and were doing work like that of the scholars in Alexandria, and who were more or less contemporary with the LXX translators. Finally, it will look at internal evidence in the LXX to show how some translators used what they learned from the Greeks in their own work.

1.3.1.1. Greek Rhetoric and Metaphors

In ancient Greece, rhetoric was an important part of education. Without knowledge of rhetoric, effective participation in the democratic process was much more difficult. As a result, there arose many teachers of rhetoric and eventually books describing rhetoric. This section will describe what was said concerning metaphor.

The earliest known work on rhetoric, written by Protagoras, no longer exists.[103] Likewise only a short fragment of Antiphon's *Art of Public Speaking* has survived.[104] Part of Isocrates's work *Against the Sophists* exists, as does his *Antidosis*, though neither discusses rhetoric and oratory in a technical way that describes tropes and figures of speech. In his *Evagoras*, however, he does list metaphor as one of the devices that poets may use and that distinguishes poetry from prose (Isocrates, *Evag.* 190). The treatise written by Alcidamas, *On the Writers of Written Speeches, or On Sophists*, likewise is not a technical rhetorical handbook, but an essay about the superiority of being able to speak extemporaneously over the ability to write good speeches. Several of Plato's dialogues touch on issues of oratory, rhetoric, and sophistry, such as *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, and *Protagoras*. Plato often uses

---

103. See Cicero, *Brutus* 47, for the claim that Aristotle mentions this book on rhetoric.

104. This fragment can be found in Antiphon and Andocides, *Antiphon; Andocides*, vol. 1 of *Minor Attic Orators*, trans. K. J. Maidment, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941), 308–9.

analogies and models to explain difficult concepts, though he is suspicious of imagery and its ability to deceive.[105]

The earliest surviving works that describe metaphor are Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. These works are to some extent based on the teachings of Gorgias, Antiphon, Licymnius, Theodorus, Isocrates, and others, and they, of course, include Aristotle's own views.[106] In *Poetics*, he defines metaphor as "the application of a word that belongs to another thing [μεταφορὰ δε ἐστιν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορά]: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy" (Aristotle, *Poet.* 1457b7–9 [Halliwell]).[107] The first three types of metaphor in this definition are more proper to metonymy or synecdoche.[108] Aristotle goes on to talk about good diction; he says that good diction should be clear, but impressive diction should use exotic language, such as loan words and metaphor. If one uses too many metaphors, though, one ends up writ-

---

105. For a systematic analysis of Plato's view of imagery, see E. E. Pender, "Plato on Metaphors and Models," in *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions*, ed. G. R. Boys-Stones (Oxford: University Press, 2003): 55–81.

106. William Bedell Stanford, *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1936), 5.

107. It may be worth modern metaphor theorists giving Aristotle a second look. It seems to me he is not just substituting words like he is often accused of doing, but he brings together names for things, which implies a mixing and association of the things or concepts to which the names normally belong. Also of note in this area are Aristotle's comments that contemplating images helps us gain understanding (Aristotle, *Poet.* 1448b4–19). Janet Martin Soskice also doubts the typical descriptions of Aristotle's theories. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 8–10. Eva Feder Kittay likewise says: "The argument can be made that Aristotle pointed out the cognitive importance of metaphor." See Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Function and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 2–3. G. Gregory, in an explanatory footnote to his translation of Lowth, seems to approach cognitive metaphor theory in his description of catachresis: "When a savage experienced a sensation, for which he had as yet no name, he applied that of the idea which most resembled it, in order to explain himself. Thus the words expressing the faculties of the mind are taken from sensible images, as fancy from phantasma; idea in the original language means image or picture; and a way has always been used to express the mode of attaining our end or desire.… The principle advantage which the Metaphor possesses over the Simile or Comparison, seems to consist in the former transporting the mind, and carrying it nearer to the reality than the latter" (Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 106n3).

108. See section 1.4.1 below for definitions of terms.

ing a riddle, and if one uses too many loan words one writes a barbarism (*Poet.* 1458a18–25). He says riddles "attach impossibilities to a description of real things" in his discussion on achieving clarity and exoticness of style (*Poet.* 1458a26–27).

In *Rhetoric*, Aristotle adds little to his definition of metaphor but does define simile and describes how to use each. He says that simile is also a metaphor which has an explanatory word (some form of comparative particle), though simile is more poetic and should be used sparingly in oratory (*Rhet.* 3.4). The main distinction for Aristotle, apart from the comparative marker, seems to be that metaphors are limited to the exchange of words, while similes are more descriptive, and hence poetic (*Rhet.* 3.4.3). This may be because by metaphor he has mostly what we would call metonymy and synecdoche in mind, while by simile he has in mind the long descriptive similes of Homer. Later he also calls proverbs (παροιμίαι) metaphors from species to species (*Rhet.* 3.11.14), and "approved hyperboles" (εὐδοκιμοῦσαι ὑπερβολαί) he also calls metaphors (*Rhet.* 3.11.15–16).

Aristotle is often quoted (and criticized) by modern scholars for his statements that the good use of metaphors cannot be taught but requires a natural ability (*Rhet.* 3.2.8, *Poet.* 1459a5–7).[109] He does, however, describe how to create good metaphors and how to use them effectively, as they are important to good style. For Aristotle, the virtue of style is clarity. Using words in their proper sense makes for clarity, but using tropes makes the discourse elevated, exotic, and charming (*Rhet.* 3.2). Metaphors are important to good style because they help people understand things clearly and because they are charming and give discourse a sense of exoticness (*Rhet.* 3.2.8). He says metaphors need to be appropriate; if one wishes to honor something, one uses metaphors that come from something higher (like saying a beggar prays instead of begs), and to insult, one uses something worse (*Rhet.* 3.2.10).[110] One should take one's language from things proper to the object but not be too obvious either (*Rhet.* 3.11.5). Metaphors should not be too farfetched, but the meaning should be recognizable almost immediately. To illustrate a good, immediately recognizable metaphor he gives the example of "gluing bronze to bronze with fire" (*Rhet.* 3.2.12).[111] He also says metaphors should be reciprocal, so that the elements can be

---

109. See for example Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 89–90.

110. The same is true for epithets.

111. This is more an example of catachresis, giving a name by metaphor to something that is without a name of its own.

interchangeable. He gives as an example of this saying "Dionysus's shield" when one means his goblet or saying "Ares's goblet" when one means his shield (*Rhet.* 3.4.4).[112] Metaphors should come from things that are beautiful, either in sound, meaning, or one of the other senses (*Rhet.* 3.2.13). Using metaphors and epithets to describe things rather than giving their names creates a lofty style, but if used too much the discourse becomes too poetical, which tends to break the illusion and distracts one's audience (*Rhet.* 3.6).

For Aristotle, bad style is characterized by frigidity (ψύχρα). This sort of style uses too many compound words and bad epithets (ones that are too long, unseasonable, or too frequent), as well as inappropriate metaphors (*Rhet.* 3.3).[113] Metaphors are inappropriate if they are ridiculous or overly dignified, and so they fail to persuade (*Rhet.* 3.3.4).

Another function of metaphors, besides aiding in clarity, is that they aid learning, which is a pleasant quality of smart and popular sayings (*Rhet.* 3.10).[114] While similes have the same effect, they are less pleasant for Aristotle because they are longer; also since they do not assert that one thing *is* another, the mind does not examine a simile in the same way (*Rhet.* 3.10.3).[115] Metaphors must avoid the extremes of being too superficial and thus unimpressive or being too strange and thus too difficult to understand at once (*Rhet.* 3.10.6). Of the four kinds of metaphor described in *Poetics* for helping in learning things, the best sort of metaphor is the proportional (that is, what we would call metaphor, as opposed to metonymy or synecdoche; *Rhet.* 3.10.7). This sort of metaphor sets things vividly in the imagination, particularly metaphors that describe inanimate things in animate terms; Homer often does this both with his metaphors and similes (*Rhet.* 3.11).

Aristotle's student Theophrastus also wrote about rhetoric. His work on rhetoric survives only in fragments in the works of other writers.[116]

---

112. This is really an example of what would today be called metonymy.

113. An excess of epithets turns the oratory into poetry, which makes the speaker seem ridiculous or else he may just lose his audience as he lacks perspicuity.

114. Other qualities of these sayings are antithesis and actuality.

115. This is a point often omitted by modern scholars who criticize the ancient view that metaphors can be restated as similes. Aristotle does believe something is lost cognitively by using a simile in place of a metaphor! Cf. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 35–37.

116. William W. Fortenbaugh et al., eds. and trans., *Theophrastus of Eresus:*

Also, a papyrus fragment of Theophrastus has been found that appears to be related to Aristotle's *Poetics*.[117] From what can be gathered in these fragments, Theophrastus appears to describe rhetoric in much the same way as Aristotle does. According to Pseudo-Longinus, Theophrastus, like Aristotle, says bold metaphors can be softened by adding "like" and similar phrases.[118] One improvement from Aristotle (that has been transmitted to us) is that he gives the name μετουσία to metaphors that involve transfers from genus to species or from species to genus.[119] Since this work is based largely on Aristotle, and along with Aristotle is influential on Demetrius, we will move on to Demetrius's work.

The work *On Style* (*De elocutione*) by Demetrius is now largely recognized as being composed not by Demetrius of Phaleron, Theophrastus's student, but by another Demetrius. Nevertheless, the author of this work appears to have known the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus, though perhaps only through intermediaries.[120] The work, as the title suggests, is about how to achieve different styles, namely, the grand, elegant, plain, and forceful styles. In the grand style, metaphor should be used because it makes the prose attractive and impressive and since metaphors can express some things more clearly (Demetrius, *Eloc.* 77–79, 82). Metaphors that are too bold can be made safe by turning them into similes or by adding epithets (*Eloc.* 80, 85). Some metaphors, though, can create triviality rather than grandeur (*Eloc.* 84). Also, common usage of a metaphor can make it a dead metaphor (*Eloc.* 87–88). Demetrius says that in the elegant style, metaphors in single words can create charm, and certain allegories can be used to create saucy colloquialisms (*Eloc.* 142, 151). He also talks about similes, saying they are extended metaphors (*Eloc.* 80) but arguing that adding more than a comparative marker turns the simile into a poetic comparison (*Eloc.* 89–90), which also can add charm in the elegant style (*Eloc.* 160). In the forceful style, varying figures of speech (and presumably

---

Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence, 2 vols., PhA 54 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 2:508–58.

117. Fortenbaugh et al., *Theophrastus*, 2:258–64. For the text and translation, see 2:612–17.

118. Fortenbaugh et al., *Theophrastus*, 2:537.

119. Fortenbaugh et al., *Theophrastus*, 2:615. William W. Fortenbaugh, *Sources on Rhetoric and Poetics (Texts 666–713)*, vol. 8 of *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence; Commentary*, PhA 97 (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 261.

120. Fortenbaugh, *Sources on Rhetoric and Poetics*, 6.

tropes) create forcefulness, as do metaphors and similes, but not detailed poetic comparisons (*Eloc.* 267–74). Demetrius is interesting in that he has clear and prescriptive statements about the use of metaphors to achieve different effects in different styles, yet the selection and use of metaphors is still left to the subjective judgment of the orator.

The discipline of rhetoric continued to develop, taking its most sophisticated and systematic form in the work of Quintilian. Two additional Greek philosophers are worthy of mention in this development. Philodemus was an Epicurean (born around 110 BCE) who wrote about the place of rhetoric in *paidea* or education. He claims to be in line with the founders of his philosophical school but is himself too late for our interests. He is worth mentioning to show that discussion of rhetoric was not limited to peripatetic circles. Unfortunately, his discussion of tropes is too fragmentary to say much about it. He does, though, say metaphor is classified (by some uncited rhetoricians) in four types: those that compare animate with inanimate, animate with animate, inanimate with inanimate, and inanimate with animate.[121] While Aristotle makes this distinction, it is not the four types he describes. Philodemus is rather critical of the work of rhetoricians on metaphor; he thinks they fail to describe why the metaphors they ridicule are faulty and that they do not say how to create a good metaphor or even when exactly to use one.[122] An even later source is Longinus, who mentions not only that you should only use two or three metaphors for emotional effect to achieve the sublime in style; he also mentions Gen 1 in his work *On the Sublime*, showing how noble and powerful it is to have God speak and create (*Subl.* 9.9).

We can conclude from this survey that in the Hellenistic era there were multiple rhetorical handbooks in circulation that discussed metaphor. Among the Peripatetics, there were at least three authors who dealt with metaphor: Aristotle, Theophrastus, and Demetrius. Perhaps also some of the works or at least the teachings of the Sophists were still in circulation. Philodemus seems to suggest that even the Epicureans were still discussing rhetoric (or perhaps again discussing rhetoric), even if in a mostly critical way.

---

121. Harry M. Hubbell, "The Rhetorica of Philodemus: Translation and Commentary," *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 23 (1920): 298 (Philodemus, *Rhet.* 4, P.Herc. 1007 col. 12).

122. Hubbell, "Rhetorica," 298 (Philodemus, *Rhet.* 4, P.Herc. 1007 col. 15).

While terminology for tropes was still developing, we can clearly see distinguished and described in Aristotle what today we would call metaphor, simile, catachresis, metonymy, synecdoche, and hyperbole. Discussion of tropes seems to be concerned mostly with their use in poetry and oratory, though there is acknowledgement of their use in daily life and their usefulness in teaching. In any case, a person educated in rhetoric in this period should have had some knowledge of the various types of metaphor and had some instruction in their proper and improper use.

1.3.1.2. Hellenistic Education

As we have seen, the ancient Greek world had many philosophers thinking about metaphors and more generally about rhetoric and its proper use. James K. Aitken has asserted that the LXX translators, along with any literate writer of Greek, would have been exposed to Greek ideas about rhetoric while learning to write.[123] To evaluate this, in this section we will look at what students would have been taught when they learned to write and read Greek.

There were, of course, various forms of education in the Hellenistic age (including technical and professional training), but our interest is in the ἐγκύκλιος παιδεία, or well-rounded education.[124] The main task of this education in the east seems to be about preserving Greek identity, values, language, and literature in the various Greek cities surrounded by barbarian peoples.[125] As Raffaella Cribiore explains it:

> Education was based on the transmission of an established body of knowledge, about which there was wide consensus. Teachers were considered the custodians and interpreters of a tradition and were con-

---

123. James K. Aitken, "The Significance of Rhetoric in the Greek Pentateuch," in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*, ed. James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell, and Brian A. Mastin, BZAW 20 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011), 508–9.

124. Mark Joyal, Ian McDougall, and John C. Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education: A Sourcebook* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 123–24.

125. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9. This goal corresponds to Jason's goal in building a gymnasium in Jerusalem in 2 Macc 4:7–15 and 1 Macc 1:11–15.

cerned with protecting its integrity. Education was supposed to lead to a growing understanding of an inherited doctrine.[126]

So education was not just about preparing a student vocationally but was about preserving a certain kind of culture and identity.

Education was by no means standardized, but it was quite regular in the things taught (particularly by the grammarian due to the content of the work studied) and the sort of exercises used.[127] Generally, education involved an individual teacher who collected students either at his (or occasionally her) house or in the corner of some public building such as the gymnasium or palaistra.[128] For the wealthy it was also possible to hire tutors (or purchase slaves) to instruct children at home. We find lists of the various kinds of tutors who tormented children in Teles the Cynic and Pseudo-Platonic *Axiochus*. They include the *paidagōgos* (pedagogue), the *paidotribēs* (physical trainer), and the *grammatodidaskalos* (grammar teacher), as well as teachers of music theory, art, arithmetic, geometry, literary criticism, and equestrian skills.[129] It was entirely possible for adults to begin or resume education at various levels, if they had the time and the money.[130] For our purposes, we will skip the other topics of study and focus on issues related to literary and rhetorical learning.

----

126. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 8. The same could undoubtedly apply to priestly training among the Jews.

127. See Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education*, 124; Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 2–3, 37.

128. Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education*, 134–38. Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley say that gymnasiums were public buildings that had some intellectual activities associated with them, but were not themselves schools. A palaistra was a private ground that could be rented or lent to various teachers, philosophers, or instructors when it was not being used as a wrestling yard. Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley also show some evidence that suggests, at least in some places, at various periods, some degree of public education (or at least funds for teachers) was available (*Greek and Roman Education*, 134–35, 138–39). For more on whether intellectual education took place at the gymnasium, see Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 34–35. For women learning to read and write, see Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education*, 142–43. For evidence that some teachers were women, see Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 47.

129. See the relevant passages in translation in Joyal, McDougall, and Yardley, *Greek and Roman Education*, 128–35. In many cases a single instructor could probably handle several of these topics, particularly at the lower levels.

130. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 2, 20.

Literary education can generally be divided into the tasks of three teachers. At the primary level, a *didaskalos* was concerned with teaching letters and literacy.[131] It seems absurd, but the first thing a student would learn was how to write, even before learning the letters or their meaning.[132] Existing student exercises show that students copied their teacher's writing without knowing what it meant.[133] They would do exercises to learn the alphabet, including writing it in reverse order or skipping letters regularly; after this they moved on to writing various permutations of syllables even those that do not occur in any Greek words.[134] Next they would copy words or passages (mostly from Homer) as they learned to read, and they would memorize sections of Homer as well.[135] At first, they would copy texts with various reading aids, such as some space between words, some accent marks, line marks, et cetera, but they would work their way up to reading *scriptio continua*.[136]

By the end of "primary school" a student could recite some texts from memory, copy short texts, sign their names, dictate or copy phrases, and read documents posted in large clear letters.[137] Learning to read Greek, even for a more or less native speaker, involved much more than simply learning the alphabet. As Cribiore says:

> The skill of reading was a complex affair, fragmented into a series of acquisitions that aimed at understanding a text thoroughly. Ancient manuscripts did not make many concessions to readers. A passage made of words written without separation in continuous blocks and containing almost no punctuation was only an ensemble of letters in need of interpretation. Reading at first sight was practically impossible: a text

---

131. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 19–20.

132. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 177–78.

133. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 133–34.

134. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 133–34. This was probably for learning to read and for practicing diction. Vocalists and choirs still warm up by singing various syllables (such as "ma me mi mo mu"). As we will see, reading a word aloud properly is the first part of grammar, according to Dionysius of Thrax.

135. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 133–34. Elsewhere Cribiore says that, based on the papyriological evidence, most of the passages they practiced with came from *Iliad* 1–12 (Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 194).

136. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 140–41, 172–74. Here Cribiore mentions that the exercises with syllables probably also were used for training them to read *scriptio continua*.

137. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 184.

needed to be scrutinized beforehand to identify the relationship between the elements of a sentence and to understand their function in conveying meaning.[138]

Those who did not go on to study with a grammarian, then, could read only with great difficulty and only the shortest and simplest of texts. It is difficult to imagine someone producing a Greek translation of a Hebrew text with such a basic proficiency in writing.

At this stage a student was handed over to the grammarian (if the first teacher's expertise had reached its limit). At this level the curriculum was roughly what is described by Dionysius of Thrax.[139] He defines grammar as "the empirical knowledge of what is for the most part being said by poets and prose writers."[140] What we consider grammar today (parts of speech, paradigms, etc.) was a science still in development and largely did not enter curriculum until the first century CE.[141] Dionysius of Thrax lists six parts to this knowledge: (1) methods for reading the text aloud properly (in terms of clause and word division, accents, and diction); (2) the meaning of tropes; (3) the meaning of obscure words; (4) the subject matter (for example, who the people mentioned are, their family, place of origin, etc.); (5) the etymologies of words and the setting out of analogy (ἀναλογία, ἐκλογισμός); and (6) literary criticism (this last part was done more extensively under the tutelage of the rhetor).[142] To master these six parts, students would mostly copy and memorize excerpts from literature, primarily the writings of Homer but also Hesiod, Euripides (especially his *Phoenissae*), Menander, and the gnomic sayings of Isocrates.[143] The teacher would explain the difficult terms, using synonyms (metalepsis was also practiced by students) and etymology.[144] They would also explain and discuss the figures and tropes

---

138. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 189–90.

139. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 185–86. Rudolf Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968), 272.

140. Translation from Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 268.

141. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 210.

142. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 185–86. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 268–70.

143. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 194–202.

144. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 206–7, 209–10. For the relationship between synonyms and etymology and their didactic uses, see Helen Peraki-Kyriakidou, "Aspects of Ancient Etymologizing," *ClQ* 52 (2002): 481–82, 489.

the text presented.[145] The subject matter (*historia*) was also taught, so students would know all about the various characters and places discussed in their literature, both actual and mythological (though these were not necessarily distinguished).[146] At this level, knowledge of literature was more important than original writing, though students did some composition exercises.[147] They would have copied hundreds of passages of Homer and been thoroughly drilled in interpreting the various grammatical elements of his text.[148] As Cribiore says: "The practice of reading texts closely and of reaching a deep textual experience through careful verbal analysis, as learned in the school of the grammarian, gave students a sound knowledge of language and the ability to use words with dexterity."[149]

Once a student was handed over to a rhetor, the focus of his or her studies shifted from reading to composition and speaking. The focus of what the student read, copied, and memorized was the authors to be imitated. From the rhetors this meant Isocrates, Hyperides, Aeschines, and Demosthenes (and the teacher himself, no doubt), and from the historians this meant Herodotus, Theopompus, Xenophon, Philistus, Ephorus, and, of course, Thucydides.[150] The writing exercises, or *progymnasmata*, were already done under the grammarian but now became longer and more elaborate. They were aimed at letting students apply what they had learned and to prepare the way for larger compositions, chiefly speeches.[151] The exercises included writing fables, simple narratives, discussions about a famous action or quotation (from the literature they had previously studied), confirmations or refutations that a story happened based on possibility and probability, summaries of common opinions about

---

145. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 206.

146. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 206, 208–9.

147. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 215.

148. Folker Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic Style," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Interpretation*, ed. Magne Sæbø (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), 1.1:130–31. As Siegert explains, Homer was not only used as an instructor for reading and grammar, but also searched for insights into every subject of learning and science. Epicureans, on the other hand, thought it was best not to know any Homer. See Elizabeth Asmis, "Basic Education in Epicureanism," in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, ed. Yun Lee Too (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 215.

149. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 248.

150. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 234–35.

151. Ruth Webb, "The Progymnasmata as Practice," in Lee Too, *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, 282–90.

stock characters (such as the murderer, the tyrant, etc.), praise or blame of some action, comparisons of various characters or their actions, imagined speeches of a character at some event, and vivid descriptions of an event.[152] Students would be corrected on these exercises and sometimes would spend considerable effort revising and refining their work.[153] Creativity and originality were not valued as much as careful planning and organization of the work.[154] The goal of these exercises was to build the ability to properly and persuasively use rhetoric in writing and in delivering speeches in court, in municipal councils, or in other public venues.[155]

Few except the most elite would make it all the way through the education described. Only two years (out of the full course of six years) with the rhetor would be sufficient to argue at a court.[156] Many were not able to complete the tutelage of the grammarian. Ancient sources show the existence of "slow writers" who could write little more than their name and read only enough to see if a document was formatted properly.[157] But among the elite, education continued beyond the school days; they would often continue to read whatever they could and listen to the rhetors or philosophers.[158] Some even went on to write their own books and conduct their own scholarship.

This shows, as Aitken has said, that anyone who was competent enough to compose a Greek text (either original or a translation) would have had rigorous training in reading and writing and would have had some exposure to classical ideas of rhetoric in general, including some discussion of tropes.[159]

1.3.1.3. Scholarship in Alexandria

The center of scholarship in the Hellenistic age was Alexandria, and more specifically, the institutions of the Museum (Μουσεῖον) and the library.[160]

---

152. Webb, "Progymnasmata as Practice," 294–95.
153. Webb, "Progymnasmata as Practice," 297–98.
154. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 231.
155. For some of the possible venues for showing off one's rhetorical ability, see Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 239.
156. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 224.
157. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 176.
158. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 249.
159. Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 508–9.
160. Pfeiffer seems to suggest the library was a part of the Museum (*History of*

Neither institution was entirely unique or original, but they became models for similar institutions elsewhere, such as in Pergamum and Ephesus.[161] The Museum was started under Soter and the library under Philadelphus, both under the influence of Peripatetic scholars.[162] The influence of Demetrius of Phaleron, Theophrastus's student and former tyrant of Athens, on the founding of the Museum is nearly certain.[163] The library was an institution based on the practice of Peripatetic scholars; as Fraser argues, Aristotle himself collected a library at the Lyceum.[164]

Indeed, the Peripatetic influence was so great in Alexandrian scholarship that the terms Peripatetic and Alexandrian became synonymous.[165] That is not to say that these scholars were all rigidly Aristotelian. Callimachus and his followers, for example, were somewhat anti-Aristotelian in their poetic sensibilities, rejecting "unity, completeness, and magnitude" and aiming "at a discontinuous form."[166] Even if Aristotle's poetic sensibilities were not always followed, his influence cannot be denied. Indeed, Ptolemy I tried hard to get one of Aristotle's students to come to Alexandria. Theophrastus refused, and Strato came only for a short time, but Demetrius came and stayed once he had to flee Athens.[167] In addition, it seems not only plausible but highly likely that the library had as many of Aristotle's and his followers' works as they could get a hold of in its collection.

In the library, one of their most important tasks of these scholars was to collect and preserve texts. Perhaps related to or based on a catalogue of books, Callimachus wrote his Πίνακες.[168] This monumental work involved organizing all the books by genre (lyrical poetry, epic poetry, comedy,

---

Classical Scholarship, 98). He also distinguishes this library from that of the Serapeum built by Ptolemy II (Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 101–2).

161. Peter M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 3 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 1:312–14.

162. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:315, 320–21.

163. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:315. Pseudo-Aristeas claims that Demetrius of Phaleron was the first librarian (Let. Aris. 9–11), but this is very unlikely, since Philadephus's first act as king was to exile Demetrius for advising Soter to appoint his other son as king (Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:321).

164. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:320.

165. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:320.

166. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 137.

167. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 95–96.

168. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 127–31. Fraser insists it was not a catalogue for the library (*Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:453).

tragedy, etc.) and, in the case of prose writers, organizing them by topic (botany, mathematics, paradoxical writings, geography, etc.) and author.[169] In the Museum scholars were often concerned with studying the ancient poets in order to produce good poetry themselves.[170] Alexandrian scholarship was by no means limited to literary studies; mathematics and what today is called natural science also flourished there.[171] Eratosthenes, for example, besides producing an impressive amount of original poetry and literary criticism, was an accomplished mathematician, geographer, and chronographer, to name just the fields in which he was widely acclaimed.[172] Another genre many worked on was paradoxical writings, which addressed such things as foreign customs, local names for things, and geography.[173]

The most famous work done in Alexandria was its Homeric scholarship. In many ways it was an advanced continuation of the work done under the instruction of the grammarian in secondary school. Critical work on Homer, of course, predates the establishment of the Museum and library; Aristotle and Heraclides Ponticus both wrote books dealing with various problems and solutions in Homer. These books were largely concerned with interpretive questions, as was Demetrius of Phaleron's books on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.[174] To deal with the growing number of textual variations, the first librarian, Zenodotus of Ephesus, edited Homer's texts to produce what we would call a critical edition (ἔκδοσις or διορθώσεις).[175] He included critical marks for passages he believed should be atheticized (set aside). Several other major Alexandrian scholars worked on Homer's (as well as Pindar's and other poets') texts critically, including Apollonius, Callimachus, and Aristophanes of Byzantion.[176] But the most

---

169. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 129–32. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:452–53.

170. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 88.

171. See chapter 7, "Alexandrian Science," in Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 336–446. He says that biology and botany appear to have been essentially the same as what was said by Aristotle and Theophrastus (Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:337–38).

172. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, chapter 4 (132–88).

173. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 134–35. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:453–55.

174. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:448–49.

175. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:449–50. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 107–20.

176. On Apollonius and Aristophanes, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:452, 459. For Callimachus, see Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 124–40.

important editor of Homer was Aristarchus of Samothrace, who appears to have made an impact on many manuscripts of Homer and also greatly developed Zenodotus's text-critical sigla.[177] Many of the scholars doing text-critical work would explain their sigla, as well as the text of Homer, in a separate commentary (ὑπόμνημα).[178] These commentaries would not only discuss text critical issues but other difficulties such as strange words, and Aristarchus even made comments about the function of particular metaphors and other tropes.[179] Aristarchus is also famous for his hermeneutical methods, particularly the maxim "interpret Homer from Homer" (Ομηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου σαφηνίζειν).[180]

As mentioned earlier, many of the other scholarly works done in Alexandria were related to Homer scholarship, such as geographies and the paradoxologies, since they shed light on places mentioned (even mythical places) and on the sometime obscure or obsolete vocabulary used by Homer and other poets. Callimachus, Aristophanes of Byzantion, and Aristarchus are all important for their work with words and grammar.[181]

While scholarship had its center in Alexandria, it did crop up in other places as well, though not as much under the influence of the Peripatetics. For example, Antiochus the Great started a library in Antioch, with Euphorion of Chalcis as librarian.[182] Pergamum, though, was the biggest rival to Alexandria, both in terms of its influence and in its scholarly positions. Pergamum was dominated by Stoic scholars, who were generally more interested in the history and topography of Homer than the philology or literary features.[183] Regarding grammar, they bitterly opposed the idea of analogy, arguing that declensions and verb forms were all anomalous.[184] When they interpreted Homer, they often used

---

177. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:446–47, 463–65.

178. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:447.

179. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:447; Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 232.

180. Pfeiffer believes that Aristarchus never said this but that it does reflect his method (*History of Classical Scholarship*, 225–27).

181. On Callimachus and Aristarchus, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:460, 462–63. Aristartchus is particularly noted for his ideas about grammatical analogy, as opposed to the Stoic idea of anomaly. On Aristophanes, see Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 197–200. Aristophanes studied a word's force and meaning.

182. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 122.

183. Pfeiffer, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 251.

184. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:465–66.

allegory so that Homer taught all their philosophical ideas, particularly their views of physics.[185] Another method that allowed them to advance their own philosophy through Homer was etymology.[186] Etymology was not strictly a Stoic practice, since it was dealt with in Plato's *Cratylus* and was still being employed in the scholia of Homer.[187] Etymology was not about finding the origin or preceding form of words but was largely a didactic exercise aimed at explaining why something has a given name; it is used for the "binding of the meaning of a certain word with cluster(s) of other meaning(s)."[188]

As even this superficial survey has shown, in Hellenistic times, particularly in Alexandria, textual, literary, grammatical, and lexical studies were highly developed and a dominant force in education at all levels. Homer's work was the focus of study, regardless of location, teacher, or philosophical leaning. While we do not know exactly what was said about tropes in the various levels of education, we do know that they were discussed in some detail, and there is reason to believe the topic was discussed largely in Aristotelian terms.

1.3.1.4. Jews Educated in Classical Literature

It is plausible that there were a fair number of Jews with some degree of Hellenistic education, who worked in courts and as magistrates in Egypt, and who were among the elite in Judea. Chaim Rabin thought the Egyptian Jews of the third century BCE would certainly not have had access to schools and so had no practice in writing educated Greek, but he suggests that some of them were literate.[189] As we have seen, most education started with writing before reading, so if they were literate, they undoubtedly could also write to some degree. The question of access to schools is anachronistic since education was typically about hiring a teacher (which required only money), not being accepted into some institution. Even if Rabin is right, the next century would be a different story. John A. L. Lee

---

185. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:465–66.

186. Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 139–40.

187. For an example see Peraki-Kyriakidou, "Aspects of Ancient Etymologizing," 484.

188. Peraki-Kyriakidou, "Aspects of Ancient Etymologizing," 480–82.

189. Chaim Rabin, "The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint," *Textus* 6 (1968): 21–22.

has said, "it cannot be doubted that a Greek education was accessible to Alexandrian Jews of the second Century BC and that they availed themselves of it." He considers the Greek of Aristeas, Sirach, and Ezekiel the Tragedian as sufficient evidence of this.[190] This section will show just how many second-century Jews attained a high degree of Greek education, composed in Greek, and were interested in similar scholarly questions as the scholars of the Museum.

The earliest known such writer is Demetrius the Chronographer.[191] His concern for chronology and various logical problems is consistent with the methods and the work done by Eratosthenes.[192] Maren R. Niehoff has argued that Demetrius quotes from earlier Jewish commentators on the Bible who apply Aristotelian methods of Homer scholarship.[193] This includes using question and answers, as described in Aristotle's fragmentary *Aporemata Homerica*, finding contradictions and filling in gaps in the text, and resolving problems of verisimilitude in the text.[194] These unnamed scholars also used methods similar to Aristarchus to resolve the problems they found in the biblical text.[195]

Several known Jewish authors were interested in historical and textual issues of the Bible and even tried to argue that various aspects of science and learning had their origin in Moses. These include Pseudo-Eupolemus (probably a Samaritan), Artapanus, Cleodemus Malchus (whose existing fragments also glorify the patriarchs while connecting them with Greek heroes: he has Abraham's granddaughter marrying Hercules), Aristeas the Exegete (who wrote *Concerning the Jews* and about Job), and Pseudo-Hecataeus.[196]

---

190. John A. L. Lee, "The Literary Greek of Septuagint Isaiah," *Semitica et Classica* 7 (2014): 145.

191. Carl R. Holladay, *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*, 4 vols. (Chico, CA: Scholars, 1983–1996), 1:51–52.

192. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:691–92.

193. Maren R. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 38–39.

194. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 39–43, 45–49.

195. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 55–56.

196. Pseudo-Eupolemus: Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:158, 170–75. Artapanus: Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:189–90, 192, 208–11. Fraser believes he was a Jew of mixed descent, living in an urban center outside Alexandria where there was more tension between Jews and locals (*Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:706). Cleodemus Malchus: Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:245–46, 255. Aristeas: Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:261–62. For the discussion of

An interesting example of a Jewish historian is Eupolemus son of John, who probably wrote in Judea. He is mentioned as one of the envoys sent to Rome in 1 Macc 8:17–32 by Judas.[197] He was sent, no doubt, along with Jason, because he had some education and could deliver a speech and make negotiations before the Roman senate. He was from the elite, a member of a priestly family, with his father on the council of elders (the *gerousia*) and may have served on it himself.[198] The existing fragments of his work describe the history of Israel in exaggerated terms: David's conquests are much larger and Solomon's temple is much wealthier than seems probable.[199] Moses is given credit for inventing the alphabet and giving it to the Jews, who in turn gave it to the Phoenicians who then gave it to the Greeks.[200] His Greek writing, from the fragments that have survived, seems crude and unusual in its features and constructions, according to Holladay, which should not be surprising if Greek were his second language. Despite this, he was well educated, since his work shows knowledge of the writings of Ctesias and Herodotus.[201] Particularly telling is his use of etymology; he tells us that Jerusalem is named for its temple, and so is called Ἱερουσαλήμ.[202]

Pseudo-Aristeas, the writer of the Letter of Aristeas, should also be mentioned since he was likely a Jew in a high position in the Ptolemaic court who writes in late Hellenistic style comparable to Polybius.[203] Without diving into the many issues associated with this work, it is interesting to note that Let. Aris. 120–122 presents the seventy elders as pious and wise Jews who had carefully studied both Jewish and Greek literature.[204]

Pseudo-Hecataeus's identity, number of fragments, and date, see Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:277–90.

197. For a discussion that they are indeed the same person, see Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 2:962n101.

198. Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:93–95, 100n6.

199. Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:114–31.

200. Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:112–13.

201. Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:95.

202. Holladay, *Fragments*, 1:128–29.

203. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:699, 703.

204. For a recent discussion of the value of this work for LXX origins, see Sylvie Honigman, *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas* (London: Routledge, 2003). See also the extended review: Arie van der Kooij, "The Septuagint and Alexandrian Scholarship," *BO* 68 (2011): 492–509. An alternative explanation for the origin of the LXX is offered in Van der Kooij, "The

Whether or not this is true of the translators, it does show that the author thought it was plausible that these pious Jewish elders could be knowledgeable in Greek literature. This idea of a bilingual Jewish scribe is true of Jesus ben Sira's grandson.[205] Niehoff has argued that Pseudo-Aristeas attempts to make the case that the methods of Homeric scholarship should not be applied to the LXX, since the text is pristine, and even goes so far as to curse those who would suggest emendations using the signs of Aristarchus.[206]

The greatest Alexandrian scholar (γραμματικός or critic) of Jewish stock (before Philo) was Aristobulus. His principal known work is *Explanation of the Book of Moses*, of which only a few fragments survive, which may not all be from this book.[207] All of his fragments show a scholar well versed in Greek learning and literature. In the first fragment Holladay provides, Aristobulus makes rather precise astronomical descriptions of the position of the sun and moon during Passover.[208] In the third fragment, his knowledge of various Greek philosophers is shown by his argument that the ideas of Plato and Pythagoras were derived from the law of Moses.[209] In the fourth fragment we can see more of this argument based on specific ideas, such as the idea of the divine voice which is read about in Genesis, but which Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato claim to have heard by examining the cosmos.[210] He also argues that the law of Moses agrees with the philosophers regarding such things as devotion to God, piety, and justice.[211] In the fifth fragment this theme is also seen, as he quotes classical authors, including Homer, Hesiod, and Solon, who agree with Moses on the holiness of the seventh day.[212] While Clement and Eusebius claim Aristobulus

---

Septuagint of the Pentateuch," in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*, by Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij, CBET 68 (Leuven: Peeters, 2012), 15–62.

205. See Van der Kooij, "Septuagint and Alexandrian Scholarship," 503.

206. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 21–24, 27–30, 33–34, 37.

207. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:694. For the fragments, see Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. 3, *Aristobulus*.

208. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:128–33.

209. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:150–61.

210. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:163. He also quotes at length an alleged poem of Orpheus.

211. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:174.

212. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:176–97. His quotes have various difficulties including that some cannot be found in the authors they allege to be from or have been altered.

was Peripatetic, these fragments show a much more eclectic influence.[213] As Holladay argues, Aristobulus offers a definition of wisdom that sounds similar to what the Stoics would say, his interest in the number seven in the fifth fragment shows signs of Pythagorean influence, and the way he talks about the unity of humanity and deity sounds similar to Cynic doctrine.[214] Niehoff, however, makes a strong case that he is best understood primarily as belonging to the Peripatetic tradition.[215] In any case, this shows he was well versed in classical thought and literature. The second fragment of Aristobulus in Holladay is particularly interesting, in that Aristobulus explains to King Ptolemy (probably VI Philometer) why the law of Moses uses hands, arms, visage, feet, and walking to signify (σημαίνεται) divine power.[216] We will discuss this passage below (1.3.2.2).

According to 2 Macc 1:10, Aristobulus was from the family of the priests. Whether or not this is true is not as important as that it is perfectly plausible to the writer of 2 Maccabees that someone from the priestly family would have learned Greek thought and literature so well and would write the sorts of books Aristobulus wrote.[217]

Philo of Alexandria should also be mentioned as a very well-educated Jew, though he comes from a later period. Niehoff has argued that in some of Philo's writings there is evidence of earlier Jewish scholars who were doing Alexandrian style philology on the LXX, excising texts they thought did not meet certain poetic and ethical standards for being authentic.[218] Unfortunately no fragments of these authors exist outside of Philo to see what they actually said.

These alterations or perhaps even fabrications may have been done by Aristobulus or his sources or by Polyhistor or Eusebius who preserved his fragments. See Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, 1:694–95.

213. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:46–47. Niehoff makes the case that his methods are Aristotelian both directly and in following the model of Aristarchus and style of Apollodorus. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 60, 74.

214. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:72–73.

215. Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 58–74.

216. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:134–35.

217. For discussion of the accuracy of this statement, see Holladay, *Fragments* 3:46n3, 74.

218. Maren R. Niehoff, "Homeric Scholarship and Bible Exegesis in Ancient Alexandria: Evidence from Philo's 'Quarrelsome' Colleagues," *ClQ* 57 (2007): 166–82; Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 77–129.

Besides engaging in Hellenistic style scholarship, some Jews were suf-ficiently educated to compose literary texts in verse. Some fragments of Theodotus survive which show his work on the Jews was written in imi-tation of Homer's epic style, though still biblical in content.[219] Philo the epic poet, on the other hand, wrote his epic praising Jerusalem in a style more like late Hellenic poets, such as Apollonius of Rhodes and Rhianus of Bene.[220] Ezekiel the Tragedian's play about the exodus, written in iambic trimeter, shows his "thorough familiarity with classical authors, most notably Euripides and Aeschylus … Homer, Sophocles, and Herodotus."[221]

Other Jewish poets wrote pseudepigraphal texts in Homeric style, claiming to be Greek religious texts that advocate Jewish religion. One example of this is the rather complicated Orphic literature from the second century BCE written in hexameters.[222] Another example is the third book of Sibylline Oracles, which is associated with the party of Onias, sometime around 163–145 BCE.[223] Without discussing their manifold difficulties and complexities, we can conclude from these texts that there were educated Jews in the second century BCE who were able to write in high registers of Greek and to harmonize Greek myth with the Bible in extended poetic works.

The examples of authors we have surveyed show that well-educated Jews were participating in various disciplines of Alexandrian scholarship, or at least were imitating them. The nature of many of these texts shows that it was not just overly Hellenized Jews who were highly educated, but also pious Jews dedicated to preserving and even promulgating their ancestral traditions (some living in Judea). The apologetic character of the histories they were writing may have made Greek literature safe for Jews with the claim that they are derived ultimately from the wisdom of Abra-ham and Moses.

If the top Hellenistic scholarship had a Jewish counterpart, it is fair to assume there were many more Jews who had received some Hellenis-tic schooling but had ceased their education at various levels. The papyri show that there were various Jewish administrators and tax collectors in Ptolemaic Egypt, most of whom could read and write Greek to some

---

219. Holladay, *Fragments*, 2:61–75.

220. Holladay, *Fragments*, 2:205–9.

221. Holladay, *Fragments*, 2:301–3.

222. Holladay, *Fragments*, vol. 4, *Orphica*.

223. John J. Collins, introduction to Sibylline Oracles, in *OTP* 1:355.

degree.[224] One well-known apostate Jewish administrator (see 3 Macc 1:3), Dositheos son of Drimylos, must have been very skillful in his ability to read and write, since he was made the king's memorandum-writer (ὑπομνηματογράφος) and was later appointed to the highest priestly position in Ptolemaic Egypt.[225]

It would appear, then, that it is perfectly plausible that the translator of Isaiah had received a fair amount of Greek education, though perhaps not enough to compose in verse or harmonize Hesiod to the Torah. It would be much more unexpected for such a large project as translating Isaiah into Greek to be done by someone (even if bilingual) who had no training in Greek writing or literature if someone with training was available. Even composing a work in Greek that closely follows a Hebrew original requires a fair amount of education so that the text can be legible, have proper spelling, and follow the rules of grammar enough to be intelligible. We will see in the next section that internal evidence also suggests that the LXX translators in general had good Greek educations.

1.3.1.5. Evidence of a Hellenistic Education in the Septuagint

James K. Aitken has demonstrated that the translators of the Pentateuch appear to have attained at least the education of one of the more skilled Egyptian bureaucratic scribes.[226] He gives examples that show that the translators paid attention to the genre of their text, and so were more inclined to use rhetorical figures for poetic passages, like Exod 15. There are some examples, as Aitken shows, of rhetorical figures used in prose passages.[227] Aitken compares these examples of the translators' skill in using rhetorical figures with contemporary bureaucratic and official texts from the papyri that show that their authors could use rhetorical devices to some degree.[228] He concludes that the translators were well educated in

---

224. See, for example, Victor A. Tcherikover with Alexander Fuks, *CPJ* 1:221–23. In his example no. 108, the illiterate tax-farmer, Simon son of Jazaros, seems to be the exception, since the other receipts make no note of a third-party scribe being involved.

225. *CPJ* 1:230–36.

226. Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 520. For examples of these translators' knowledge of Classical Greek idioms, see John A. L. Lee, *LXX: A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch*, SCS 14 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983), 34–36.

227. Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 512–15.

228. Aitken, "Significance," 517–18.

Greek and so could use Homeric vocabulary or a rhetorical figure here and there.[229] He also admits this evidence could suggest the translators were much more educated, but their choice in translation style restrains them from using Greek rhetorical figures and style even more.[230]

LXX Isaiah is a freer rendering than the Pentateuch, so there is more potential evidence of the translator's rhetorical knowledge and ability. Various scholars, discussed in the following paragraphs, have shown evidence within LXX Isaiah that suggests the translator had received some degree of Hellenistic education and was concerned about rhetorical issues.

G. B. Caird, who shares the older view that the LXX Isaiah translator was unskilled or incompetent, is surprised by the occasional use of rare words from Homer and Herodotus; he marvels: "It is as though he had learnt his Greek from a manual containing selections from great authors."[231] Based on what we have seen, it is indeed likely that the translator read Homer as he learned to read and write. It should not be surprising that he picked up some high vocabulary from reading the great authors.[232]

Theo van der Louw calls the translator a man of learning but does not go so far as to specifically claim the author was familiar with classical rhetoric.[233] When he discusses the rhetorical style of LXX Isa 1, he frames it as how it would have been understood, not as deliberately put into a certain style.[234] He points out some features of this chapter that explicitly go against what rhetorical handbooks require—namely, the translation contains several *clausulae* (ending a clause or sentence with a poetic foot), which is considered bad form for prose texts.[235] Van der Louw says the translator was not following the rules of a rhetorical handbook but was making common sense changes to make the text natural and understandable. But, he also points out some examples where the translator has made changes that show a concern for eloquence, such as avoiding repeating lexemes in 1:9 and 26, in accordance with Greek style.[236] Van der Louw

---

229. Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 520.

230. Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 521.

231. Caird, *Language and Imagery of the Bible*, 125–26.

232. More recently, Baer has commented on LXX Isaiah's large and diverse vocabulary, which seems to exceed that of other LXX translators (*When We All Go Home*, 281).

233. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 246.

234. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 155–57.

235. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 156.

236. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 244–45.

believes the translator stays close to the Hebrew text as a part of his translation method, not because he is incompetent.[237]

Ronald L. Troxel has examined the scholarship of Alexandria to understand better how the scholarship of the Museum gives insight into LXX translation.[238] He says the translator appears to be well educated, since he knows enough about Greek literature to write in its style.[239] Troxel prefers the view that the LXX Isaiah translator is best understood in terms of a dragoman but does not discuss what this entails about the probable education level of the translator or whether features in LXX Isaiah reflect this.[240] He does, however, discuss some methods used in the translation that are parallel to those used by Alexandrian scholars (γραμματικοί). Troxel talks about etymology and analogy, using the terms nearly synonymously; but as Van der Kooij has pointed out, these are two different techniques used by Alexandrian γραμματικοί.[241] Another method Troxel describes that is parallel to those of the Alexandrian scholars is the principle of *adagium* or Ὅμηρον ἐξ Ὁμήρου, interpreting a text in light of the text or analogous textual parallels.[242] He says:

> The form of contextual interpretation we have seen him [the LXX Isaiah translator] engage in by drawing on passages in the Torah is quite explicable under the hypothesis of his familiarity with the work of the Alexandrian γραμματικοί and accords with the use of intertextuality as an interpretative ploy in other Jewish compositions of the Hellenistic era.[243]

So, Troxel also thinks that the translator was well educated and that he employed some of the methods used by the Alexandrian γραμματικοί in his translation.

---

237. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 246.
238. Ronald L. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah*, JSJSup 124 (Leiden: Brill, 2008). See especially chapter 2, "Alexandria and the LXX" (37–72).
239. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 132.
240. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 71.
241. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 107–13; Arie van der Kooij, review of *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah*, by Ronald L. Troxel, *BIOSCS* 42 (2009), 148.
242. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 150–51.
243. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 151.

Another hint of this is pointed out by Van der Kooij, namely, that LXX Isa 33:18 uses the unusual equivalent γραμματικοί for ספר.[244] This shows the translator's familiarity with these elite scholars, and Van der Kooij suggests that the translator thought of himself as an expert like the Alexandrian γραμματικοί, except he was an elite expert of the Jewish writings.[245] This is similar to how LXX Daniel portrays the training of Daniel and the three youths. They are described as γραμματικοί in Dan 1:4, and in 1:17 are said to be blessed in their ability with the γραμματικῇ τέχνῃ, a technical Alexandrian term for expertise in reading and interpreting texts.[246]

Mirjam van der Vorm-Croughs's exhaustive study of pluses and minus in LXX Isaiah has shown many examples where the translator's concern for good style can be clearly seen.[247] She carefully notes all the pluses that improve rhetorical figures, such as: *inclusio*, anaphora, epiphora, *reduplicatio*, *annominatio*, *polyptoton*, *synonymia*, and so forth.[248] While many of these rhetorical figures described with classical terminology also exist in the Hebrew Bible and could have been known simply through knowledge of biblical literature, the minuses of LXX Isaiah more clearly suggest the translator was influenced by Greek rhetorical sensibilities. As Van der Vorm-Croughs points out, Greek rhetoric tended to avoid over-ornamentation (κακόζηλια), particularly repetition (*homoeologia*), and likewise the translator has removed many examples of different sorts

---

244. Arie van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches: Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments*, OBO 35 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981), 63; Van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision*, VTSup 71 (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 115.

245. Van der Kooij, "Septuagint and Alexandrian Scholarship," 502; Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 63–65.

246. Arie van der Kooij, "The City of Alexandria and the Ancient Versions of the Hebrew Bible," *JNSL* 25.1 (1999): 142; Van der Kooij, "Septuagint and Alexandrian Scholarship," 502; Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 63–65; Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 115.

247. Mirjam van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of its Pluses and Minuses*, SCS 61 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014). See especially chapter 8 (217–97). A short version of this research can also be found in the article, Van der Vorm-Croughs, "LXX Isaiah and the Use of Rhetorical Figures," in *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives*, ed. Arie van der Kooij and Michaël N. van der Meer, CBET 55 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 173–88.

248. For the section on pluses that improve the rhetorical style, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 217–97.

of repetition.[249] Hebrew poetic and rhetorical assumptions, on the other hand, prefer repetition of all sorts. Van der Vorm-Croughs only goes so far as to say that this evidence supports the assumption that the translator had been well instructed in Hellenistic rhetoric, though she admits it could be possible that he knew some rhetorical devices through his study of Hebrew literature.[250]

More recently, John A. L. Lee has shown that LXX Isaiah is written in literary Greek, which indicates the translator "had a *Greek* education to an advanced level."[251] The evidence he gives includes: the use of a phrase common to Greek tragedy (Ὦ τάλας ἐγώ in Isa 6:5), a proverbial phrase (παραρρέον ὕδωρ in Isa 44:4), ten words showing the translator's poetic vocabulary gleaned from the classics, four words that appear to be learned creations of the translator, particles that show the translator's education, some of the many instances where the translator opts to use a more literary word than one more readily available, and a few miscellaneous instances of form, syntax, poetic expression, and vocabulary that betray the translator's familiarity with classical literature.[252] He says there are many examples that could be added to his list, but he gives only the strongest.[253]

These studies show there is good reason to assume that the LXX Isaiah translator (and many of the other LXX translators) received a solid Hellenistic education. They also appear to show that he was even able to apply some of the techniques used by the Alexandrian γραμματικοί, such as analogy, etymology, and *adagium*, in order to understand his Hebrew text and to express its meaning more clearly, and that he can draw upon features of classical literature and his own rhetorical training to improve the style of his translation.

1.3.2. Jewish Views of Metaphor

This section will first briefly describe Jewish scribal culture and its exegesis and, second, will discuss evidence for how different types of metaphor were understood and interpreted in early Judaism.

---

249. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 296.

250. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 297; for her conclusion that he was broadly educated in Greek and Hebrew literature, see 521.

251. Lee, "Literary Greek," 145, emphasis original.

252. Lee, "Literary Greek," 140–44.

253. Lee, "Literary Greek," 140.

1.3.2.1. Jewish Scribal Culture

Just as in Hellenistic culture, there must have been various degrees of literary or scribal skill in Jewish circles. Some may have had to learn the Hebrew language before learning to read it, and others progressed enough even to write in Hebrew. Since we have even less data about Jewish education at this time period, we will touch on it only briefly before shifting focus to the best and most authoritative scribes in our brief discussion.

How exactly reading Hebrew was being taught at this time is worthy of further research. Studies addressing the issue typically survey information from the Talmud and Josephus and assume it applies to this earlier period.[254] Applying this information to the situation in Egypt is even more difficult. The typical description of learning to read Hebrew is that after learning the alphabet backward and forward they would then begin learning to read words and sample exercises (such as the Shema and *Hallel*), learning to read words in their contexts to pick the proper meaning, and also memorizing a sentence, its meaning, and its translation. Then they would move on to reading the Pentateuch, either Gen 1–5 or Lev 1–8, again learning the meaning and how to translate it, and learning the grammar as they proceeded.[255] This seems feasible for boys who spoke Aramaic, heard Biblical Hebrew in the synagogue each week, and perhaps knew some Late Hebrew as well. But it seems doubtful this pedagogy would have worked very well in Egypt if conducted in Greek.[256] A Greek-speaking student lacking knowledge of Aramaic would have a much more difficult time learning vocabulary and understanding how the grammar and syntax worked, since there probably was no systematic description of Hebrew grammar.

The Interlinear Paradigm has sparked some discussion related to the education of the LXX translators and the influence of Alexandrian schol-

---

254. Nathan Drazin, *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. (During the Periods of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim)* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940); Eliezer Ebner, *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel: During the Tannaitic Period (10–220 C.E.)* (New York: Bloch, 1956).

255. Drazin, *History of Jewish Education*, 81–82; Ebner, *Elementary Education*, 75–78.

256. Drazin assumes the situation in Egypt was the same as in Palestine, only in Greek instead of Aramaic. He even thinks Philo knew Hebrew but quotes the LXX because it is more convenient since he is writing in Greek (Drazin, *History of Jewish Education*, 84).

arship upon them. This is not the place to chart the full history of the development and articulation of the Interlinear Paradigm, nor to offer a full assessment and critique; but here we will outline the discussion as it relates to the Jewish scribal culture to which the LXX translators belonged. Albert Pietersma has suggested that the register of LXX Greek could be explained as that of a school, so that the translation mode used was that "of a study aid to a text in another language."[257] He argues that the LXX is dependent and subservient linguistically to the Hebrew text and that it arises out of the need for a crib translation to aid in learning Hebrew.[258] To support this theory, he described some bilingual Greek-Latin texts used in schools in antiquity.[259] More recently proponents of the Interlinear Paradigm have clarified that it is not a model for the origin of the LXX and that it is not essential to the paradigm that the LXX was a school text or crib.[260] Rather, interlinearity is only meant to be a metaphor describing the dependence and subservience of the LXX to the Hebrew.[261] The Interlinear Paradigm has been criticized on several grounds, often because it was understood to be making a historical claim.[262] Relevant to the topic of education, Troxel points out that the bilingual texts mentioned are not

---

257. Albert Pietersma, "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint," in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference; Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique "From Alpha to Byte" University of Stellenbosch 17–21 July, 2000*, ed. Johann Cook (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 357–58.

258. Pietersma, "New Paradigm," 350, 357, 360.

259. Pietersma, "New Paradigm," 346–48.

260. Cameron Boyd-Taylor, *Reading between the Lines: The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies*, BTS 8 (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 95.

261. Albert Pietersma, "Beyond Literalism: Interlinearity Revisited," in *Translation Is Required: The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect*, ed. Robert J. V. Hiebert, SCS 56 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 5.

262. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 65–71; Jan Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm' in Septuagint Studies," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta, JSJSup 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2008): 163–78; Takamitsu Muraoka, "Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography with Special Reference to the So-Called Interlinear Model," in *Die Septuaginta—Text, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006*, ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus, WUNT 219 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 221–35; Joachim Schaper, "The Concept of the Translator(s) in the Contemporary Study of the Septuagint," in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the*

explanations of the parent text but are rhetorical exercises in expressing the same thoughts in vernacular language.[263] Joosten says we have no evidence of any Greek-Hebrew texts, but on the contrary, the earliest Hellenistic Greek writers we know about living in Egypt are already reading the LXX as a text in its own right.[264] Another problem Joosten describes is that if the LXX is a crib for learning the Hebrew, how is it that in some places the Greek is unintelligible on its own (as Pietersma likes to point out) and is dependent on the Hebrew to be understood?[265]

　　Cameron Boyd-Taylor has delineated the presuppositions of the Interlinear Paradigm and provided a theoretical framework for it.[266] He clarifies that the paradigm is not meant to propose the actual existence of an interlinear text, but to be a way of conceptualizing the Greek's dependence on and subservience to the Hebrew.[267] Boyd-Taylor argues that the translators used norms of translation proper to school texts, but he unfortunately does not take Troxel's criticism into account, that the bilingual texts referred to by proponents of the Interlinear Paradigm were written by the students, not used by them as cribs.[268]

　　Takamitsu Muraoka objects to the theory on lexicographical grounds. In passing he jests that he does not assume the LXX was meant to be read as an aid in learning Hebrew, as in a modern university, which raises an important issue: Can we assume Jews in Alexandria would have learned to read Hebrew with Greek instruction (and also already know how to read Greek)?[269] It seems more logical that they would have learned the

---

Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus, ed. Kristen De Troyer, T. Michael Law, and Marketta Liljeström, CBET 72 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 34–39.

　　263. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 68.

　　264. Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm,'" 170–71.

　　265. Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm,'" 172–73. Pietersma strongly states that the Greek in places only makes sense in light of the Hebrew. For example, see Pietersma, "New Paradigm," 350–51.

　　266. Boyd-Taylor, *Reading between the Lines*. Unfortunately, it does not address the criticism of the Interlinear Paradigm.

　　267. Boyd-Taylor, *Reading between the Lines*, 52–54, 91.

　　268. Boyd-Taylor, *Reading between the Lines*, 317, 327, 341–52. Boyd-Taylor sees the translators as using the norms of school translation as opposed to the norms used by dragoman or legal/official translators. For Troxel's criticism, see *LXX-Isaiah*, 68. Even if this criticism falls only on the metaphor and not the reality of the text production, it should be taken into account to make sure the imagery of the metaphor is apt.

　　269. Muraoka, "Recent Discussions," 226. Pietersma's response to Muraoka's cri-

language (if they did not know even Aramaic) before learning to read it.[270] In the case of the LXX translators, they appear not only to have knowledge of Biblical Hebrew, but also of Aramaic and Late Hebrew, since they sometimes give definitions from these languages for Biblical Hebrew words.[271] But for the general Jewish population in Egypt, we do not know if they even learned Hebrew; the success of the LXX is generally believed to be based on the fact that Egyptian Jews mostly could not read Hebrew.

More can be said regarding the elite Jewish scribal culture in this period. While there was a religious element to the literary studies of the Alexandrian scholars, for them the texts they studied were not normative the way the biblical books were for the Jews.[272] Van der Kooij has shown that in the second century BCE "the law, prophets, and other books," as Ben Sira calls them, were highly regarded as the ancient and ancestral basis for the Jewish religion and culture.[273] Van der Kooij shows that part of why these books were held in high esteem is that they were regarded as ancestral and were kept in the temple.[274] In addition, he shows that these books were regarded as objects of study.

_____

tique can be found online in Pietersma, "Response to T. Muraoka, 'Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography with Special Reference to the So-Called Interlinear Model,'" New English Translation of the Septuagint (website), http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/discussion/pietersma-re-muraoka.html. A partial response from Muraoka can be found in Takamitsu Muraoka, "A Methodological Issue in Septuagint Studies with Special Reference to Lexicography," *JSCS* 46 (2013): 101–8.

270. Quintilian, *Inst.* 1.1.12–14, assumes Latin speaking students learn not just to read Greek but to speak it.

271. For the use of Aramaic definitions of Hebrew words, see Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 69. For Late Hebrew definitions of Biblical Hebrew words see Jan Joosten, "The Knowledge and Use of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period: Qumran and the Septuagint," in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*, ed. Takamitsu Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde, STDJ 36 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 115–30; Joosten, "On the LXX Translators' Knowledge of Hebrew," in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998*, ed. Bernard A. Taylor, SCS 51 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 165–79.

272. Remember the Museum was a shrine for the Muses.

273. Arie van der Kooij, "Authoritative Scriptures and Scribal Culture," in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. Mladen Popović, JSJSup 141 (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 55–56.

274. Van der Kooij, "Authoritative Scriptures," 56–57.

To begin studying these books, the reader would need to have some knowledge of Biblical Hebrew and some training besides just how to pronounce the alphabet to make sense of and interpret the unpointed text.[275] Reading, it must be noted, does not mean just understanding what the text says, but is about understanding the text from careful study and being able to read it out loud so that those who hear can understand.[276] This means the reader is not stumbling over words, trying different possible parsings until it makes sense; they can read clearly, putting the pronunciation, pauses, accents, and punctuations where they belong.[277] Van der Kooij shows that this is the case for the Levites reading the Torah in Neh 8:8 and for Jesus ben Sira (Sirach, Prologue 7–11), who developed a thorough knowledge of the ancestral books by reading them.[278] According to the Letter of Aristeas, the translators read the law and interpreted it (Let. Aris. 305), which Van der Kooij has argued is likely a prerequisite for anyone who would be accepted to translate the Jewish scriptures.[279]

Developing a familiarity and knowledge of a text naturally means they developed an interpretation of the text, which requires some sort of authority. Van der Kooij argues that there was a hierarchy of authority in interpreting the scriptures, so that the head of the community (someone like Ezra, the high priest, or the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran) was the leading scholar who had the authority to say what the text means, whereas at lower levels they could teach this interpretation to others.[280] It makes good sense to suppose that the LXX Isaiah translator belonged to the Jewish religious elite and had the authority to interpret the meaning of the text as he translated it. As we have seen above, the Greek interest in Homer was largely in its cultural value, and its study in Greek education

---

275. Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 113; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 108–9. For Seeligmann's suggested sources of Hebrew knowledge, see Isac Leo Seeligmann, "The Septuagint of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems," in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, ed. Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann, FAT 40 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 195–96.

276. Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 112–13.

277. Van der Kooij argues that in Neh 8:8, "reading clearly" refers to pronouncing and "giving the sense" refers to intonation and marking clauses and punctuation (*Oracle of Tyre*, 116).

278. Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 113.

279. Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 114–15.

280. Van der Kooij, "Authoritative Scriptures," 61–66.

was in order to hang on to a sense of Greek identity.[281] The added religious element in the Hebrew classics required not just a skilled critic but someone who had some religious authority.[282]

1.3.2.2. Metaphor in Early Judaism

As far as we know, there was no early Jewish handbook on rhetoric. This brief survey gathers some evidence of ideas about metaphor, or at least their use, from the writings of the contemporaries of the LXX Isaiah translator and in the following generations.

First, it is worth discussing how the Hebrew Bible understands metaphors, but unfortunately, not much can be said about this. The closest thing to a word for metaphor we know of is משל, but this term is too broad and covers too many different phenomena to be very enlightening. Stephen Curkpatrick says משל is used to describe allegory, simile, parable, proverb, riddle, taunt, irony, aphorism, fable, apocalyptic revelation, riddle, similitude, symbol, pseudonym, example, theme, argument, apology, refutation, jest, sovereign saying, and/or word of power.[283] The term at least shows an understanding of the distinction between literal speech and symbolic or representative speech.

The LXX translation of the word משל complicates rather than clarifies the issue. Most often it is rendered with παραβολή (twenty-seven times), the first occurrence being in reference to Balaam's "curse" in Num 23:7. Aristotle describes examples (παραδείγματα) as either coming from things that have happened (such as Persian kings always securing Egypt before attacking Greece) or from things invented (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.20.2–3). An invented example can be either a παραβολή, which is a situation that could happen in real life, or a fable (λόγος), which is a completely made up situation (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.20.4–5). This understanding of parable is much narrower than משל and fits quite poorly the situation in Num 23:7. In Curkpatrick's study showing how unsuitable the translation of משל with παραβολή is, he comments: "Unlike the Hebrew mashal comparison, the rhetorical use of παραβολή does not appear to have the

---

281. Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind*, 8–9.

282. For the argument that this authority could have been the Oniads in Leontopolis, see Van der Kooij, "The Septuagint of Isaiah," in Cook and Van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom*, 63–85.

283. Curkpatrick, "Between Mashal and Parable," 58–59.

same density or resistance to transparent interpretation as the mashal. While the mashal as simile encompasses metonymic opacity, the rhetorical use of παραβολή as simile seeks analogical clarity."[284] A parable should be used to explain and illustrate an idea, whereas a משל is an encoded idea that requires consideration to unravel. This translation equivalent is adequate if both terms are understood to be "similitudes," but given the range of meanings for משל and the rather specific definition of parable, the equivalence is questionable. The LXX Isaiah translator, at least, in the one place משל occurs (Isa 14:4), rendered it based on what exactly it meant in that particular context: θρῆνος, a dirge (this, of course, does not mean he was aware of or concerned about the problems in translating משל with the rhetorical term παραβολή).

For Ben Sira, too, the παραβολή is not a trope that illustrates or communicates an idea but one that encodes and hides an idea and must be engaged and interpreted. This is seen especially in 39:1–3, where the study of the law of God by a sage is described. The sage must seek out the wisdom of the ancients, occupy himself with prophecies (ἐν προφητείαις ἀσχοληθήσεται), treasure the sayings of the famous, penetrate the intricacies of parables (ἐν στροφαῖς παραβολῶν συνεισελεύσεται), search out the hidden meanings of proverbs (ἀπόκρυφα παροιμιῶν ἐκζητήσει), and engage with the enigmas of parables (ἐν αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν ἀναστραφήσεται). This study of the ancestral books is very different from what was done by the Greeks in Alexandria. Ben Sira does not talk about textual criticism, poetics or rhetoric, history, chronology, or the other matters that the γραμματικοί of Alexandria were concerned with (and even the Jewish Hellenistic writers we saw above). For Ben Sira, the study of these books is a search to understand the meaning and wisdom, not which have been lost to time, but which have been preserved by the wise and are gathered by those who seek to be wise. The αἰνίγμασι παραβολῶν (see also the similar phrase in 47:15) is not a trope but a mystery or riddle; Siegert shows that in Hellenistic interpretation, αἴνιγμα is a riddle where "the words do not mean what they seem to mean, but are there for the sake of a hidden meaning to be found through some art of decoding."[285] In Num 21:27 the authors of an ancient song about Heshbon are referred to as המשלים, which the LXX renders as οἱ αἰνιγματισταί. While this is a literal rendering,

---

284. Curkpatrick, "Between Mashal and Parable," 67.
285. Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 139.

it suggests that the song in the following verses was not understood by the translator simply as a fragment of epic poetry but as some kind of riddle containing a hidden meaning.[286]

Another informative piece of information comes from Aristobulus. It should be admitted that the fragments that have come down to us are related by Eusebius of Caesarea, Clement, and Anatolius, who may have paraphrased or adjusted the quotes.[287] According to Siegert, Aristobulus uses μεταφέρειν in the sense of the solutions to tropes, and not allegorization, and uses other vocabulary to talk about allegorical and higher meanings.[288] In fragment two, Aristobulus explains to the king why Moses talks about divine power in terms of hands, arm, visage, feet, and the ability to walk.[289] He warns that these things should be interpreted in their natural (φυσικῶς) sense and not in a mythical or common way of thinking.[290] While he could, in theory, have explained these things rhetorically, as metaphors or anthropomorphisms, perhaps because it is a religious text or due to his purpose in writing this book, he explains them in allegorical terms, saying they signify (σημαίνεται) divine power.[291] He then explains how even in common speech the hands of a king can be used to refer to his power; he says that we can think metaphorically of all men's strength and actions in their hands.[292] Aristobulus then says that Moses did well in speaking metaphorically in an expanded sense, talking about God's deeds as his hands (διόπερ καλῶς ὁ νομοθέτης ἐπὶ τὸ μεγαλεῖον μετενήνοχε, λέγων

---

286. Cf. Ps 78 (MT 77), which describes itself as a *mashal* (parable in Greek) yet is essentially a rehearsal of history from the exodus to the building of the temple.

287. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:43–45. Niehoff accuses Eusebius and Clement of introducing the term "allegory" to the fragments (Niehoff, *Jewish Exegesis*, 59).

288. Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 161.

289. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:135. This fragment comes from Eusebius, *Praep. Ev.* 8.9.38–10.18a.

290. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:135; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.2. See n. 31 for Holladay's explanation of his translation (which I follow) of φυσικῶς.

291. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:135. Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.1. For the idea that this refers not to a trope but to an extended meaning, or *sensus plenior*, see Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 156–57, 161. Niehoff, however, believes Aristobulus is in fact interpreting it as metaphorical speech, and is not interpreting allegorically (*Jewish Exegesis*, 68–71). Cf. Adrian, *Isagoge* (PG 98:1273), who describes these metaphors as stylistic peculiarities characteristic of Hebrew thought.

292. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:139; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.8.

τὰς συντελείας χείρας εἶναι θεοῦ).[293] So it seems that in some ways the difference for Aristobulus between metaphor as simply a way of speaking (a trope) and the words of a text having a spiritual or allegorical meaning is slight; or at least that the relationship between the text and its allegorical meaning is analogous to how metaphors function. In fragment five, after saying the seventh day of rest can be understood in a deeper sense as the first day, since it is the origin of light through which all things are seen, he says that the same can be applied metaphorically to wisdom, since light issues from it.[294] So again a higher, allegorical sense is spoken of next to the possibility of speaking metaphorically in the same terms.

While Aristobulus explains what moderns might call anthropomorphisms as allegories, Pseudo-Aristeas sees allegories where no modern would see any sort of trope. In Let. Aris. 143, he says that the dietary laws were given for a deep or profound reason (λόγον βαθύν) and proceeds to explain how the different sorts of animals permitted or prohibited symbolize (σημειοῦσθαι; Let. Aris. 148), for men of understanding, how to live morally.[295] He also says in Let. Aris. 150 that the regulations concerning what can be eaten are put forth by way of allegory (τροπολογῶν ἐκτέθειται).[296] Aristeas, then, seems to be in line with the sage Ben Sira and is searching out hidden meanings, but he is seeing symbols where no rhetorical device is being employed.

Aristobulus, Ben Sira, and Pseudo-Aristeas were all likely Jews who attained a high level of Hellenistic education, undoubtedly at least as high as the LXX translators. Yet in the material we have from them, they do not approach the Hebrew Bible (or the Greek, as the case may be) with rigid Hellenistic ideas about tropes but with an interest in hidden allegorical meanings to the various symbols used. Metaphors, then, may not have always been understood as tropes (even by those well trained in rhetoric) but as symbols encoding a hidden meaning.

This search for hidden meanings could be connected to some Hellenistic ideas, such as Stoic allegorical exegesis, but it also has strong

---

293. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:138–39; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 8.10.9. Holladay explains that Aristobulus uses τὸ μεγαλεῖον to refer to a greater, that is allegorical, sense (*Fragments*, 209n38).

294. Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:178–79; Eusebius, *Praep. ev.* 13.12.10 and 7.14.1.

295. See also in Let. Aris. 150–51.

296. For more on the exegesis of this letter, see Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 143–54.

affinities with the pesher interpretations of Qumran and the explicating tendencies of the targumim.[297] Michael A. Fishbane has shown that the interpretive techniques used in pesher material are similar to those used for interpreting oracles, scripture, and dreams, and have similar hermeneutical features to those used both in ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia as well as within the Hebrew Bible itself.[298] One technique important in the context of metaphors is that in Pesher Habakkuk symbols are interpreted typologically; for example, לבנון is interpreted as referring to the sect.[299]

Similar to pesher, as mentioned above, is the exegesis of Targum of the Prophets.[300] Unlike the documents so far addressed, the Targum is a translation (of sorts) of the Hebrew Bible and so provides data on how specific metaphors were understood. The metaphors in Targum, to which we will frequently refer to compare alternate translation strategies, have been studied by Pinkhos Churgin.[301] He concludes: "The targumist made it a principle to render not the metaphor but what it represents, the event described and not the description. It is the purpose which is of chief import to him."[302] This feature of the Targum is well known, namely, that it aims to explain the meaning of the text and not simply to translate it. When discussing metaphors, then, we should expect the Targum to translate the metaphor with a nonmetaphor, that is, with what the metaphor represents. But Churgin shows how the Targum still takes up various strategies to render metaphors.

---

297. For an introduction to Stoic allegorical exegesis, see Siegert, "Early Jewish Interpretation," 131–35. On Aristobulus's allegorical method's similarity to Stoic thought, see Holladay, *Fragments*, 3:178–79.

298. Michael A. Fishbane, "The Qumran Pesher and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, ed. Avigdor Shinan (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977), 1:97–98. The six features Fishbane points out can undoubtedly be found in LXX Isa as well, with the exception of *gematria*. The similarity of pesher to oracle and dream interpretation is also pointed out by Johann Maier, "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Literature," in Sæbø, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, 1:127–28; and William H. Brownlee, *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*, SBLMS 24 (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979), 26–31.

299. Fishbane, "Qumran Pesher," 99. This interpretation occurs in 1QpHab XII, 3–4.

300. On the possibility that they both have their root in orally explaining scripture as it is read, see Brownlee, *Midrash Pesher*, 34.

301. Pinkhos Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, YOSR 14 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927).

302. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 85.

Parabolic metaphors, he says, are stripped of their parabolic nature by having their "underpoetical parallels" rendered.[303] That is, the Targum substitutes the vehicle for what it represents; sometimes both are given, the vehicle being introduced by the phrase דהוה דמא ("which is equal").[304] He provides as examples Ezek 19:3, 6, where lions are replaced in the Targum by kings, and Ezek 23:2, 5, where daughters and lovers are replaced by cities and playing the harlot by erring from God's worship. The comparative metaphor, or similitude, in Ezek 31:3–15, which compares Assyria to a cedar in Lebanon, is rendered by the Targum as a description of the greatness and strength of Assyria. The poetical metaphor, "forms of expression given in objects of nature," again has the tenor rendered instead of the vehicle. Sometimes a simile is still present to give the vehicle, though not usually. An example, without simile, is Isa 2:13, where cedars and oaks are rendered as princes and tyrants. The simile is usually rendered with what it is thought to represent, followed by a translation of the simile (Isa 8:6, 7; cf. Van der Louw's strategy number 5 in section 1.1.2 above). Sometimes the Targum assumes a passage is a comparative metaphor, so it is rendered in this same way (Ezek 2:6).[305] Symbolic expressions (Isa 6:6, Ezek 2:8) are rendered literally, yet some metaphors are rendered as if they were allegories in a midrashic way (Amos 4:14).[306] Another common strategy in the Targum is to add exegetical complements to clarify terse metaphoric speech (Mal 1:4, Jer 17:4).[307]

Churgin also points out how certain words, "though not metaphorical, bear a poetical stamp, and in reality convey more or less the *idea* of the meaning than the meaning itself."[308] These words, which seem to be dead metaphors, typically have their underlying value rendered, rather than their surface meaning. The examples given include "bring" becom-

---

303. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 85.

304. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 85. *Vehicle* refers to the language adopted in a metaphor, whereas *tenor* is what the vehicle represents. We will describe this terminology below.

305. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 86–87.

306. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 88.

307. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 88–89. He goes on to describe how this principle is also applied to repetition.

308. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 90.

ing "exile" in Ezek 12:13, and "therefore the land will mourn" becoming "therefore the land will be laid waste" in Hos 4:3, among others.[309]

Comparing these translations to other versions, Churgin says that the LXX does not practice the allegorical or metaphorical strategies the Targum uses. But it does, at times, use exegetical complements as well as the lexical principle (giving the idea of the meaning rather than the word's surface meaning).[310] Further research is needed to determine to what extent the interpretation of metaphors in the Targum is a separate activity or in continuity with how the prophecies themselves are interpreted. Perhaps when the language of the metaphor is preserved in a simile the translator shows he considers the rhetorical figure important though still in need of clarification.

To conclude the brief look at metaphor in early Judaism, it would appear that it did not hold its own place. If we consider deciphering symbols or unraveling mysteries in the context of interpreting a prophetic book, then actualizing exegesis (typology as Fishbane calls it) and giving the meaning of a metaphor could operate along the same continuum of the sage's searching out the meaning of enigmas. An example, which will be discussed below, is the interpretation of the vineyard in Isa 5 versus the interpretation of the vineyard in Isa 27; the first works on the metaphorical level and is explained already in the Hebrew, while the latter is deciphered in the Greek to represent Jerusalem under siege. Making explicit what a metaphor says is an easier solution to a riddle than making reference to the contemporary event the prophet is thought to predict (even if the prophet did not know the *true* interpretation of his prophecy). The Targum's tendencies to interpret and to make explicit both metaphors and the referents of prophecies are likely two closely related parts of the same impulse or interpretive program. As stated above, משל is much broader than the idea of metaphors or tropes, but in practice seems to govern how tropes were understood and interpreted, along with proverbs, allegories, parables, riddles, taunts, irony, aphorisms, fables, apocalyptic revelations, riddles, similitudes, symbols, and so on.

---

309. So instead of rendering the meaning of the word "bring," the Targum gives what it refers to: "exile." Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 90.

310. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 90–91.

1.3.2.3. Early Jewish Views of Metaphor in LXX Isaiah

It is undoubtedly possible to find examples in LXX Isaiah of metaphors
treated in ways consistent with the methods used in Qumran, by Hellenis-
tic Jews, or even within the Hebrew Bible itself.[311] But here we will content
ourselves with the comparison of LXX Isaiah to the Targum. This is a more
suitable comparison since both texts are translations (of sorts) and since
the Targum represents a more developed stage of Jewish exegesis and its
interpretive tendency is very well known. In addition, Van der Kooij, as we
have shown (1.1.2), has already pointed out various similarities between
LXX Isaiah and the Targum's approach to rendering metaphors.[312] This
section, then, will show a few examples Van der Kooij has pointed out
to demonstrate how the LXX at times translates metaphors in a targumic
fashion.

The method described by Churgin, whereby the translator gives the
object represented by the metaphor yet stays close to the words of the
original, is particularly striking.[313] In Isa 1:25 the LXX stays close to many
of the words of the Hebrew and yet interprets the imagery, giving instead
what he thinks the refining metaphor represents: burning to bring purity
and to remove the wicked.[314]

Isa 1:25

ואשיבה ידי עליך ואצרף כבר סיגיך ואסירה כל־בדיליך:

I will turn my hand against you; I will smelt away your dross as
with lye and remove all your alloy.[315]

καὶ ἐπάξω τὴν χεῖρά μου ἐπὶ σὲ καὶ πυρώσω σε εἰς καθαρόν, τοὺς δὲ
ἀπειθοῦντας ἀπολέσω καὶ ἀφελῶ πάντας ἀνόμους ἀπὸ σοῦ καὶ πάντας
ὑπερηφάνους ταπεινώσω.

---

311. With regard to Qumran, we will mention the similarity between LXX Isa
10:33–34 and Damascus Document II, 19 in section 2.6.2. An example of similarity
with Hellenistic Jewish literature includes interpreting the metaphor in Isa 10:12 by
metonymy as does Aristobulus with the hand metaphor in fragment 2.

312. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 179–85.

313. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 86. See below in 4.2.1.3 for more
examples of LXX Isa using this method.

314. For Ziegler's analysis of this passage, see *Untersuchungen*, 81.

315. All MT translations come from the NRSV. All LXX translations come from
NETS.

And I will turn my hand against you and will burn you to bring
about purity. But the disobedient I will destroy, and I will remove
from you all the lawless and humble all who are arrogant.

To do this, he adds a phrase in the first part of the verse that is suggested
in the Hebrew (the destruction of the disobedient) and also adds a clause
in the second part of the verse that explains what he thinks will happen to
the wicked. As Van der Kooij points out, the Targum has a similar inter-
pretation to the passage: that God will cleanse them of the wicked and
remove their sinners (כל בבוריתא דמנקן כמא ואבריר עלך גבורתי מחת ואתיב
חייבך: כל ואעדי רשיעך; Tg. Neb. Isa 1:25), though it uses a different method
of rendering the metaphor.[316] A similar translation technique can be seen
in LXX Isa 8:6–8, where the rendering is close to the Hebrew, but certain
words have been interpreted to give the meaning of the metaphor.[317] This
is seen particularly in 8:7, where once the rising river is said to represent
the king of Assyria in both the Hebrew and the Greek, the LXX interprets
the bursting of the river banks as the king walking over every wall.

> Isa 8:7
>> את־המלך והרבים העצומים הנהר את־מי עליהם מעלה אדני הנה ולכן
>> גדותיו: על־כל והלך על־כל־אפיקיו ועלה את־כל־כבודו ואת אשור
>
> Therefore, the Lord is bringing up against it the mighty flood
> waters of the River, the king of Assyria and all his glory; it will rise
> above all its channels and overflow all its banks.
>
> διὰ τοῦτο ἰδοὺ ἀνάγει κύριος ἐφ᾽ ὑμᾶς τὸ ὕδωρ τοῦ ποταμοῦ τὸ ἰσχυρὸν
> καὶ τὸ πολύ, τὸν βασιλέα τῶν Ἀσσυρίων καὶ τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ
> ἀναβήσεται ἐπὶ πᾶσαν φάραγγα ὑμῶν καὶ περιπατήσει ἐπὶ πᾶν τεῖχος
> ὑμῶν
>
> Therefore behold, the Lord is bringing up against you the mighty
> and abundant water of the River, the king of the Assyrians and his
> glory, and he will go up on your every ravine and walk on your
> every wall.

---

316. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 181.
317. For Ziegler's analysis of this passage, see *Untersuchungen*, 62.

In the next verse, the water rising to the neck (־וחלף ביהודה שטף ועבר עד
צואר יגיע; Isa 8:8) is interpreted in the LXX as the king removing everyone
"who can lift his head" (καὶ ἀφελεῖ ἀπὸ τῆς Ιουδαίας ἄνθρωπον ὃς δυνήσεται
κεφαλὴν ἆραι), and the Targum interprets as the king passing over every-
thing, even the head of the country: Jerusalem (ויעדי בארעא דבית יהודה
כנחל מגבר עד ירושלם ימטי). We have already seen the example of 22:22–25,
which Van der Kooij analyzed (1.1.2).[318] Here again, though, the trans-
lation stays close to the Hebrew while interpreting the metaphors so as
to give their meaning. The Targum gives a similar interpretation: the peg
represents authority.

These examples demonstrate Van der Kooij's assertions that LXX
Isaiah and the Targum share a similar approach to metaphors and some-
times even make similar interpretations of them. This positions LXX
Isaiah within the tradition of Jewish interpretation of metaphors, antici-
pating some methods to be used more extensively later. We will discuss
further similarities in section 4.2.1.

1.3.3. Summary and Conclusions

This brief survey of ancient views of metaphors has attempted to show
some of the Hellenistic and Jewish context of LXX Isaiah's translator.
Here I will summarize what we have seen, first for the Hellenistic con-
text, then the Jewish, and will draw some conclusions about what sort
of assumptions we can make about how the translator probably thought
about metaphors.

The Greeks had sophisticated descriptions of tropes and metaphors in
several schools of philosophy, which remained stable (apart from elabo-
ration of details and a refinement of distinctions) at least from Aristotle
through the time period of the LXX Isaiah translator. Based on what we
know about the process of learning to read and write Greek at this time, it
is likely that the LXX Isaiah translator was exposed to these descriptions
of tropes throughout his Greek education.[319] In addition, in Hellenistic
education, the process of reading was inextricably bound with the process
of interpretation at a certain level; the LXX translators would have been
trained to read very closely, looking at entire sentences and passages as well

---

318. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 183. For Ziegler's
analysis of this passage, see *Untersuchungen*, 86–87.
319. See also Aitken, "Significance of Rhetoric," 508.

as at their individual parts to find the intended meaning. They would have been trained to notice tropes and to interpret their meaning and evaluate their use. They would have learned how to find the meaning of obscure words by examining their context and usage in other passages, and would have been used to having difficult words explained by etymology and synonyms. Then, on top of this training just to read, some students had further training in literary criticism so that they could proficiently read literary and poetic works.

We have also looked at the most elite Greek intellectuals of the time and at the sort of scholarship that was being done and showed some of the known examples of Jews who did similar work and operated in the same circles. That there were Jews in the most elite scholarly circles suggests that there were many more who attained various levels of education short of becoming the kind of scholar who would research in the Museum. We also collected some observations that have been made by LXX scholars who point out features that betray the translators' knowledge of Hellenistic literature and stylistic sensibilities. We can conclude, based on external evidence, that the LXX translators in general would have had access to high levels of Hellenistic education, and, based on internal evidence, that the translator of LXX Isaiah in particular had a solid Greek education.

Having a Greek education entails some knowledge of Greek literature.[320] In this study we will at times compare specific plant metaphors to those found in classical Greek works. We do not intend to imply that the translator necessarily knew these particular pieces of literature, though he may have, but only to show that a given metaphor would not have sounded too absurd or strange in Greek, since a renowned native speaker used a similar metaphor. Likewise we will often mention Theophrastus's works on botany; our intention is not to suggest that the translator had read Theophrastus—though if he had wanted to read a book on botany, Theophrastus would most likely have been the most readily available and complete work—but we refer to it as a source for plant terminology and as an insight into the ideas people in that day had about various plants.

What ideas about tropes and metaphors the LXX Isaiah translator may have had from his Jewish context is a more complex question and requires further research to clarify. Not much is known about Jewish education

---

320. For evidence that suggests the LXX Isa translator knew Greek literature, see Lee, "Literary Greek," 140–44.

or how people learned to read Hebrew in this period. We saw that the highly educated Jewish scribes also read their texts very closely, had extensive knowledge of their texts (and their meaning), and some even had the authority to offer interpretations of the text. Within the Bible and its early interpretive traditions, there appears to be a distinction between literal and representative ways of speaking. Interpreting symbols was very much a part of Jewish scribal culture, even if the difference between a symbolic literary device (or trope) and a symbolic enigma (or allegory) was not explicitly described. Based on some examples comparing how LXX Isaiah and the Targum interpret metaphors, we saw that LXX Isaiah fits within the trajectory of later Jewish interpretive traditions.

The attempt to contextualize the possible ideas about metaphor to which the translator may have been exposed has provided some information about what sort of person the translator may have been. The older view, that the translator was some enthusiastic and determined amateur who managed to produce a complete translation of Isaiah (and have it accepted and copied by others), despite having a rather poor knowledge of Hebrew, has rightly been rejected.[321] Also, it should be considered anachronistic to suppose that the LXX translators approached the Hebrew text one word at a time with no regard for the meaning of the sentence or the passage as a whole; this goes against the way they were trained to read Greek and there is no evidence that this is the way people were being trained to read Hebrew.[322] Likewise the dragoman model has been rightfully criticized; while it helps explain some of the literal translation techniques, a dragoman presumably would have avoided creating difficulties in his translation.[323] Troxel's suggestion that the LXX Isaiah translator should be understood in the milieu of Alexandrian scholarship is helpful.[324] As we have seen, the LXX Isaiah translator appears to have received a good

---

321. Ottley held that the translator's knowledge of Hebrew was deficient. R. R. Ottley, *The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus)*, 2 vols. (London: Clay and Sons, 1904–1906), 1:49–50.

322. Nor does it accord with later methods for reading Hebrew.

323. For discussion of the LXX translators working like dragoman, see Rabin, "Translation Process," 1–26; and Elias J. Bickerman, "The Septuagint as a Translation," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History*, AGJU 9.1 (Leiden, Brill, 1976), 1:167–200. For the critique, see Pietersma, "New Paradigm," 343–44. Another problem with the dragoman suggestion is the wide range of competency dragomen had; some could barely read and write, while others could use sophisticated literary devices.

324. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 20–25, 38–41.

Hellenistic education. We have also seen examples of Jews writing books similar to those written by the elite Alexandrian γραμματικοί, such as the historical and textual investigations written by Demetrius the Chronographer, Eupolemus, Cleodemus Malchus, and the others. But LXX Isaiah, on the other hand, is a translation of a book of prophecy, a very different genre than what interested the Alexandrian γραμματικοί, who were generally not interested in oracles or translation but focused on studying and writing literary, scientific, and historical texts and commentaries.

Regarding the LXX Isaiah translator's knowledge of tropes, we should expect him to know a fair amount about Greek rhetoric, but we should not be surprised if he does not explicitly use it, but rather works like the other Hellenistic Jews we surveyed. If the translator were to think explicitly about metaphors, it is likely that he would think about them in the Hellenistic terms of his time, but he would not have felt compelled to follow rhetorical handbooks rigidly when preparing his translation. He had some concern for Greek style but interpreted primarily as a Jewish scribe.[325] In the conclusions of this study, we will gather some examples that could show the translator was following the suggestions of Greek rhetorical handbooks (4.3). Also, we will give some examples of the translator's using methods or making interpretations that place him within the stream of Jewish exegetical tradition (4.3).

1.4. The Method and Outline of This Study

This section will first describe the terminology adopted in this study, then delimit the scope of the present study, before the study's method is described and, finally, the outline of this study is sketched.

1.4.1. Terminology

Having already attempted to describe the context from which the LXX Isaiah translator most likely derived his understanding of metaphor (to whatever degree he actively engaged in thinking about it), we must now turn to how we will discuss metaphor. We will draw our terminology and framework for understanding what is happening in the texts from the

---

325. Lee says, "my own Impression of the Isaiah translator is that he is a skilled stylist, very conscious of what he is doing, and that the style of his version is a most important, perhaps overriding concern to him" (Lee, "Literary Greek," 138).

stream of cognitive metaphor theory (see 1.2.1), even though the translator undoubtedly did not explicitly think in these terms. Ancient terminology is not completely adequate since Aristotle's definition of a metaphor as the use of a word that belongs to another thing (*Poet.* 1457b7–9) is broad enough to refer to all the figures defined below.

Metaphor: This study will use Janet Martin Soskice's definition of metaphor, which appears to be a nuanced restatement of Aristotle's definition. A metaphor is "speaking about one thing in terms which are seen to be suggestive of another."[326] The parts of a metaphor will be described using Richards's terms: the vehicle and the tenor.[327] The *vehicle* is what Aristotle calls the word that belongs to another thing; it is the figurative language used in a metaphor. The *tenor* is the other thing, what the metaphor refers to and what the vehicle represents. For the purposes of this study, metaphor will be described primarily as a rhetorical figure.

Lexicalized Metaphor: A lexicalized or dead metaphor is one that is used so often it has largely lost its metaphorical value and become an extended meaning of the word. Soskice says dead metaphors can be recognized in that there is less tension or dissonance in them than a living metaphor, they are more easily paraphrased, and they are further removed from the models or cognitive metaphors from which they come.[328]

Simile: While similes often lack the force of metaphors, they operate in a similar way, except they offer both the tenor and the vehicle linked in some way, often by a comparative marker.[329] In the Hebrew Bible it is difficult to separate metaphors from similes, as D. F. Payne has pointed out for passages such as Ps 102:10, Song 7:2–6, and Isa 40:6, where similes

---

326. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 49, 53. This is close to the definition in Schökel, *Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 108. He says of metaphor: "it says one thing, it means another."

327. I use Richards's terms because I find them clear and describe the parts of the metaphor that need to be discussed in this study. Richards, *Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 96–97. Black's terms, "focus" and "frame," are not as useful since they do not address what is meant by the metaphor. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 28. For a critique of Black, see Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 38–43.

328. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 73–74. Kövecses, on the contrary, thinks they are deeply entrenched and closer to how we conceptualize things. Zoltán Kövecses, *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), xi.

329. Schökel, *Manual of Hebrew Poetics*, 106–7, shows that some comparisons can be linked in other ways, such as repeating a word in the two halves as in Prov 25:4–5.

and metaphors seem to mix. That in Hebrew poetry comparative markers can be dropped by ellipsis does not make matters easier.[330] Aristotle did not think metaphors and similes were terribly different,[331] and Soskice says they can have the same function and differ primarily in grammatical form.[332] It is of note and worthy of further research that the LXX Isaiah translator tends to insert a comparative marker if a parallel clause has a simile.[333] In general we will identify similes primarily on the basis of whether there is a comparative marker or not.

Metonymy: I use metonymy broadly to include synecdoche. Metonymy uses a word that belongs in some relationship to the thing it is used for—that is, the vehicle has some kind of relationship to the tenor. This relationship could be such things as giving a part for a whole, source for a product, means for an end, an action for its result, and so forth.

Imagery: For the sake of simplicity, imagery will be used to refer to the tropes in general present in a given text unit, as well as, at times, to the domain from which vehicles are drawn.

These definitions are crude by the standards of metaphor theory but should provide adequate terminology for describing what is happening in the text. Having an overly refined terminology may not be useful in that the translator probably was for the most part working intuitively, unconcerned with whether he was dealing with a dead metaphor or catachresis. Likewise, even if he very carefully followed Aristotle's ideas about rhetoric, it should be remembered that most of Aristotle's examples of metaphor are more properly metonymies or synecdoches.

1.4.2. Scope

The scope of this research is to expand on the findings of Ziegler and Van der Kooij by taking a different cross-section of metaphors from LXX Isaiah. Ziegler noted that the translation of metaphors is often literal, but since he aimed to show how the translator felt free to interpret, the metaphors he presented are mostly those that feature interpretation in their translation.[334]

---

330. D. F. Payne, "A Perspective on the Use of Simile in the OT," *Semitics* 1 (1970): 114.

331. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.4.1.

332. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 59.

333. See Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 91–92.

334. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80.

His treatment of similes is more complete, but again his examples focus on the more unexpected renderings. Van der Kooij pointed out some interesting similarities between how the LXX and the Targum of Isaiah interpret metaphors, which warrants further investigation.[335]

This study takes a cross section of metaphors in LXX Isaiah in order to see what can be observed about the translation strategies used for different sorts of metaphors and what can be observed about how the translator seems to think about metaphors. To accomplish this, a vehicle-based approach has been adopted that focuses on plant imagery. The advantage of this approach is that all figurative language concerning different kinds of plants or their parts will be examined, so that how the translator understands the source domain of plants can be seen against how he understands metaphors drawing vehicles from this source domain. Focusing on plant imagery will also allow for gaining insight into how the translator may understand one plant metaphor in light of a similar metaphor elsewhere in the book. This approach should produce an even treatment of metaphors, showing many of the different translation strategies used by the translator, rather than focusing only on the more interpretive renderings.

To build on Van der Kooij's work with the metaphors of LXX Isaiah, this study will also briefly note how the Targum has rendered each metaphor under consideration. This provides a sort of second opinion for how a metaphor could have been rendered or understood when it differs from the LXX, and where they agree it helps place LXX Isaiah within the trajectory of early Jewish interpretative tradition.[336] In addition, we will attempt to place LXX Isaiah's treatment of metaphors within its Hellenistic context by comparing in the last chapter some of its renderings to the guidelines laid out in Greek rhetorical handbooks.

---

335. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 179–85.

336. Olofsson regarding LXX Isa (and LXX Lam) maintains Swete's view that the translators were not acquainted with Palestinian Jewish interpretations of difficult words and contexts. See Staffan Olofsson, *The LXX Version: A Guide to the Translation Technique of the Septuagint*, ConBOT 30 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990), 30. Comparing LXX Isa with the Targum can aid in evaluating this assertion.

1.4.3. Method

This section will clarify some principles that guide this study. After first discussing the assumptions concerning the translator that are adopted, I will describe the guiding principles for the analysis of the passages that will be treated.

This study will refer to the translator as "he."[337] The singular is used so that it is not thought that I hold to the view that LXX Isaiah was translated in parts by different translators.[338] While this may have been the case, or a team may have been at work in the translation process as described by Van der Louw, this study assumes that the book as a whole was translated as a unified project and has common translation techniques and interpretation throughout and so refers to a singular translator for convenience.[339]

Since this study is about the translation strategies used for metaphors, it seeks to compare the Hebrew and Greek texts in order to understand how the translator read the Hebrew text and understood it. In addition to this comparison, it seeks to investigate how the translator communicates what the metaphor was thought to represent.[340] The question, as each metaphor is analyzed, is this: Has the translator modified the metaphor in some way, and if so, why?

To analyze the various passages, we first consider what the translator thought the Hebrew meant. At this level we consider possible differences in *Vorlage*. It should be stated that this study approaches the question of *Vorlage* from the perspective that, in general, differences between the LXX Isaiah and MT should first be investigated as the possible result of the translator's activity before positing a different *Vorlage*.[341] Relevant differences

---

337. The masculine pronoun is used since there is insufficient evidence of ancient Hellenistic Jewish women scholars to warrant gender-neutral language.

338. For an early exponent of multiple translators, see G. Buchanan Gray, "The Greek Version of Isaiah: Is It the Work of a Single Translator?," *JTS* 12 (1911): 286–93. For a more recent discussion, see Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 30–31, who argues for one translator.

339. Theo A. W. van der Louw, "Dictation of the Septuagint Version," *JSJ* 39 (2008): 211–29.

340. This method is adapted from Arie van der Kooij, "Accident or Method? On 'Analogical' Interpretation in the Old Greek of Isaiah and in 1QIsa," *BO* 43 (1986): 366–76.

341. See Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, 2nd ed., JBS 8 (Jerusalem: Simor, 1997), 18, 39–40.

from the Dead Sea Scrolls will be noted and places where the LXX may
have had a different Hebrew *Vorlage* will be pointed out as we come across
them. If a different Hebrew text was read, or the translator understood it
differently than modern scholarship understands the text, then we must be
careful in evaluating the metaphor as a translation.

Second, we must consider why the Greek translation may have delib-
erately adjusted a metaphor. On this side, there could be cultural or
environmental differences, such as different flora or agricultural practices,
that prompted the translator to make his metaphors match what his audi-
ence would recognize.[342] This is why it is at times necessary to see what the
translator does both for literal passages involving the terms examined as
well as the metaphors that use the terms. An underlying issue is whether
the translator identified the Hebrew term as having the same meaning we
consider it to have and to what extent his own knowledge of the plant may
have affected how he understood the meaning of the metaphor. At this
level, whether a metaphor "works" or makes sense in Greek must be taken
into account.

Third, theological or hermeneutical considerations should be
addressed regarding the translations made. At this level, we look at how a
given metaphor was understood in light of a similar or the same metaphor
used elsewhere in Isaiah. Also at this level, the function of a metaphor in
its context is examined, since a literally translated metaphor could easily
become a bizarre non sequitur if not translated thoughtfully. But on the
other hand, how the translator shapes a metaphor reflects his interpreta-
tion of the passage in which it occurs.

It is not always possible to understand the translation on all these
levels, but they must be considered if we are to attempt to distinguish the
translator's reception of a metaphor from his production of metaphors
in his translation. Often there will be numerous issues affecting how a
metaphor was translated. We must practice caution in discussing how a
particular metaphor is rendered. For example, in Isa 10:33–34 a descrip-
tion of trees being cut down is rendered as high people falling by the
sword. Is this a metaphor being explicated as a rhetorical device, or is it
a prophetic enigma being interpreted? In other places it would be easy to
purport evidence for the translator's ideas about metaphor, such as claim-

---

342. LXX Isaiah's tendency to update to match the culture of his time is the topic
of Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, chapter 8: "Der alexandrinisch-ägyptische Hintergrund
der Js-LXX, " 175–212.

ing that rendering a metaphor as a simile, as in Isa 50:3, is evidence he had a comparison view of metaphor; or that rendering חרה אף with ἐθυμώθη ὀργῇ in 5:25 shows he held the substitution view of metaphor. Caution, then, is key.

The Greek rendering of the metaphor in each passage will then be compared to how the Targum rendered the metaphor. At the end of sections, the different ways metaphors are rendered by the LXX will be summarized and discussed to see how the various vehicles are understood and used by the translator.

1.4.4. Outline for the Study

The second and third chapters contain a vehicle-based study of plant imagery in LXX Isaiah, as described above. In the second chapter metaphors with vehicles from the various parts of plants will be examined, and in the third chapter metaphors that use different kinds of plants as vehicles will be examined. The chapter division between parts of plants and kinds of plants is logical and for simplicity's sake, not because the situation between these kinds of metaphors is drastically different. Nevertheless, this division does allow for some interesting observations. Parts of plants are used in metaphors from many different cultures, as Kövecses pointed out, and so we will make observations at the end of chapter two about how these metaphors should easily cross from Hebrew into Greek. [343] On the other hand, metaphors can be culturally specific, and so the conclusions to chapter 3, dealing with kinds of plants, will remark on how differences in ecology and flora effect how the metaphors cross from Judea into Egypt. A drawback to this vehicle-based approach is that it atomizes the text into verses that use plant language; ideally each metaphor should be taken in the context of the entire textual unit in which it is used. The conclusions to chapters 2 and 3 will contain other general remarks about LXX Isaiah's approach to metaphors.

In the concluding chapter, more global remarks will be made and the various translation strategies used to render metaphors will be catalogued. In addition, a comparison with the Targum's treatment of the metaphors examined will be made to position the LXX Isaiah translator's understanding of metaphors in Jewish tradition. Then I will list possible evidence for

---

343. Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 19.

the translator complying with Hellenistic rhetorical sensibilities regarding the use of metaphors.

2

Parts of Plants

The cognitive metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is well known and can be observed in many cultures. Kövecses points out that in English literature, plants commonly provide the vehicle for metaphors by their various parts, how we cultivate them, and their different stages. More specifically, plant terms are commonly used in metaphors for human relationships.[1] This can also be seen in biblical and Greek literature, as this chapter will show.[2]

This chapter will first examine how *seed*, a common lexicalized metaphor, has been translated. Second, it will discuss another common lexicalized metaphor: *fruit*. While similar, these two lexicalized metaphors are treated quite differently by the LXX Isaiah translator. Third, it will explore metaphors using words for *root* and discuss whether LXX Isaiah understands them the same way the Hebrew does. We will then turn to metaphors using *flowers*, *leaves*, and words for *branch*. Finally, the chapter will draw some general observations about the LXX Isaiah translator's understanding of these metaphors.

2.1. Seeds

The metaphor *seed* standing for offspring is a lexicalized metaphor both in Biblical Hebrew and Classical Greek.[3] Indeed, in lexicons the meaning *off-*

---

1. Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 19, 25.

2. Basson "People Are Plants," 573–83. For humans described metaphorically as plants, see Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*, 590–91, although the larger section is about plant imagery used of God and Ugaritic deities (587–94).

3. To stay focused on plant imagery, this analysis will skip occurrences of verbal forms, except when they come from or are translated as nouns. While sowing is closely related to seed, it is used in quite different metaphors. Agricultural metaphors are worthy of an independent study.

spring is given for both זרע and σπέρμα.[4] We begin the discussion with two extended meanings given by BDB: (1) that it can stand for *offspring* and (2) that it can stand for *family* or *pedigree*. Then we will look at two additional uses of *seed*: (3) for an individual and (4) original uses of *seed* metaphors introduced by the translator. At the end of the section, conclusions will be drawn about the metaphors mentioned.

As Muraoka points out, the singular σπέρμα is often used collectively in the LXX for offspring of humans or animals.[5] Before looking at the metaphorical uses, it is worth mentioning how the LXX understands *seed* in nonmetaphorical uses. The noun זרע is commonly translated with σπέρμα in LXX Isaiah, as in the rest of the LXX.[6] In Isaiah it is only used to refer to actual seed a handful of times: 19:7, 23:3, 30:23, 55:10, and 61:11. In 5:10 the noun becomes the substantive participle ὁ σπείρων for the sake of style.[7] In Isa 55:10 the phrase ונתן זרע לזרע is translated literally as καὶ δῷ σπέρμα τῷ σπείροντι. Both are within the analogy or poetic comparison that God's word does not return to him without achieving its purpose, just as water does not return to the heavens without providing food through agriculture. In 30:23 the phrase ונתן מטר זרעך אשר־תזרע את־האדמה is rendered τότε ἔσται ὁ ὑετὸς τῷ σπέρματι τῆς γῆς σου, probably for style. In both cases seed is associated with rain as the source of grain and food, rain being an important gift from God necessary for food (cf. 19:7).

2.1.1. Seed as Offspring

As mentioned above, σπέρμα in Classical Greek is also a metaphor for offspring. Two examples from LSJ are interesting to note. In *Philoctetes*, Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, is addressed as the "seed of Achilles" (ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως; Sophocles, *Phil.* 364). In *Prometheus Bound*, Io, the daughter of Inachus, is addressed as "Inachus's seed" (Ινάχειον σπέρμα;

---

4. The word σπόρος occurs twice in LXX Isaiah (28:24 for זרע; 32:10 with no clear equivalent), both times in the contexts of sowing. In 28:24 it occurs in an analogy from agricultural activities and is mentioned in the context of the proper order of farming (we discuss the rest of this passage in the section on grain). In 32:10 it is mentioned as an agricultural activity (sowing) that will cease.

5. *GELS*, s.v. "σπέρμα." In LXX Isaiah it is only plural in 61:11 (the Hebrew also is plural), where literal seeds are meant.

6. Two notable exceptions are Num 23:10, where σπέρμα is used for the Hebrew אחרית, and Deut 25:5, where it is used for בן.

7. Here and in the parallel clause, the LXX adds agents.

Aeschylus, *Prom.* 705).[8] In both of these examples, someone is called the ancestor's seed, rather like the common address to the seed of Abraham or seed of Jacob found in the Hebrew Bible (though there it refers to a nation not an individual). The use of the metaphor examined in this section is often used differently in that the context is talking to someone about future seed, rather than referring to someone as an ancestor's seed.

Four good examples of the LXX translating this metaphor literally are Isa 53:10, 54:3, 66:22, and 61:11.[9] Eduard König has claimed that the move in meaning from seed to offspring is by metonymy.[10] In this section we will look at the more interesting renderings of seed metaphors in LXX Isaiah.

Isa 44:3

כי אצק־מים על־צמא ונזלים על־יבשה אצק רוחי על־זרעך וברכתי על־
צאצאיך:

For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your *seed*, and my blessing on your offspring.[11]

ὅτι ἐγὼ δώσω ὕδωρ ἐν δίψει τοῖς πορευομένοις ἐν ἀνύδρῳ, ἐπιθήσω τὸ πνεῦμά μου ἐπὶ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὰς εὐλογίας μου ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου,
Because I will provide water in their thirst to those who walk in a dry land; I will put my spirit on your *seed* and my blessings on your children.

The imagery of this verse creates some interesting blended spaces. God giving water to the thirsty is parallel to God giving his spirit and bless-

<hr>

8. Cf. Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 600, though the situation there is more complicated. Seed may refer to the city; his sons did not drive him away but they did nothing to prevent it. According to lines 765–70, it was his brother-in-law/uncle who drove him from the city, and so "seed" may refer to something like his tribe or peers.

9. In 61:11 the noun זרוע (sowing, thing sown) occurs. The LXX translates with a plural since the Hebrew is plural. This passage is discussed below in the section on flowers (2.4.2). Cf. Lev 11:37.

10. Eduard König, *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur* (Leipzig: Weicher, 1900), 17–19.

11. Here and in all following biblical quotations, italics denote changes to the translations of the MT and LXX from the NRSV and the NETS, respectively.

ing to their seed, as can be seen by the repetition of יצק.[12] While *seed* and *produce* are lexicalized metaphors, the fact that they are objects of the verb יצק in parallel to water makes for a lively image. There is an element of merism at work as well, since seed and produce stand at opposite ends of an agricultural cycle (though of course this is the same place in a cycle).

The Greek aims to be literal, though many of the above nuances are lost in the translation. Rendering אצק with δώσω and ἐπιθήσω is appropriate for the individual contexts but weakens the connection of the two images. Perhaps Greek stylistic sensibilities preferred the use of synonyms to repetition of the same word. The translator seems to have read ונזלים as if it were from the Aramaic אזל and so rendered it τοῖς πορευομένοις.[13]

The Greek also tries to make the image clear by rendering צאצאיך with τέκνα σου.[14] Usually this root is rendered with the slightly more generic ἔκγονος, as in 48:19 and 61:9, where זרע and צאצאים again appear in parallel.[15] In 48:19 זרע is translated literally. The passage alludes to Gen 22:17 in its depiction of how things would have been if Israel had been obedient.

In Isa 44:3, 48:19, and 61:9, the Targum renders זרע as "sons," and צאצאים as "your sons' sons."[16]

Isa 65:23

לֹא יִיגְעוּ לָרִיק וְלֹא יֵלְדוּ לַבֶּהָלָה כִּי זֶרַע בְּרוּכֵי יהוה הֵמָּה וְצֶאֱצָאֵיהֶם אִתָּם:

They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be *seed* blessed by the LORD—and their *offspring* as well.

οἱ δὲ ἐκλεκτοί μου οὐ κοπιάσουσιν εἰς κενὸν οὐδὲ τεκνοποιήσουσιν εἰς κατάραν, ὅτι σπέρμα ηὐλογημένον ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἐστι.

---

12. Cf. 40:24, where "seed" is blasted by the wind.

13. Klaus Baltzer et al., "Esaias," *LXX.E* 2:2653.

14. This equivalence is seen elsewhere only in Job 5:25 and 21:8.

15. Two things to note in these passages: (1) in 48:19 כמעתיו is rendered ὡς ὁ χοῦς τῆς γῆς; (2) in 61:9 there is no rendering of the phrase בתוך העמים. As often done by the translator, the indirect object of the parallel clause is understood distributively (see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 209–10).

16. "For *just as waters are provided* on *the land of* a thirsty *place*, and flow on the dry ground, so I will *bestow* my *Holy* Spirit upon your *sons*, and my blessing upon your *sons' sons*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 44:3). All quotations of the Targum of Isaiah are from Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum*, ArBib 11 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987). The italics are his.

And my chosen ones shall not labor in vain, nor bear children for a curse, because they are *seed* blessed by God.

The Greek οἱ δὲ ἐκλεκτοί μου comes from בחירי in verse 22.[17] Here again זרע and צאצאים occur in parallel. One could think of "seed" being connected to agricultural work, and "offspring" being connected to children, though they both seem to refer to children. The Greek omits the phrase וצאצאיהם אתם, probably for stylistic reasons, since σπέρμα clearly refers to the children that are born and implies their offspring.[18]

Here the Targum renders זרע using the Aramaic cognate זרע, but צאצאים is again בני בניהון.[19] It would have been redundant to render זרע with בנין in a clause that is already clearly describing children.

Isa 59:21

ואני זאת בריתי אותם אמר יהוה רוחי אשר עליך ודברי אשר־שמתי בפיך
לא־ימושו מפיך ומפי זרעך ומפי זרע זרעך אמר יהוה מעתה ועד־עולם:

And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the Lᴏʀᴅ: my spirit that is upon you, and my words that I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouths of your *seed*, or out of the mouths of your *seed's seed*, says the Lᴏʀᴅ, from now on and forever.

καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, εἶπε κύριος· τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμόν, ὅ ἐστιν ἐπὶ σοί, καὶ τὰ ῥήματα, ἃ ἔδωκα εἰς τὸ στόμα σου, οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπῃ ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ σπέρματός σου, εἶπε γὰρ κύριος, ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

And this is the covenant to them from me, said the Lord, my spirit that is upon you and my words that I have put in your mouth shall not fail out of your mouth or out of the mouth of your *seed*, for the Lord has said it, from now on and forever.

---

17. For the rendering εἰς κατάραν, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 133. Baltzer et al. say it is an intensification of the Hebrew ("Esaias," 2:2689).

18. Symmachus and Theodotion, however, have the phrase καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσονται, and it is marked with an asterix in the Syrohexapla. See Ziegler's critical apparatus (*Isaias*).

19. "They shall not *be weary* in vain, or *bring up* children for *death*; for they shall be the seed *which* the Lᴏʀᴅ *blessed*, and their *sons' sons* with them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 65:23).

It would appear that the Greek is smoothing the style. The unusual Hebrew syntax is rendered with a more stylistically pleasing Greek word order, with the eloquent phrase ἡ παρ᾽ ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, as opposed to the more literal possible rendering διαθήκη μοῦ. The emphatic Hebrew reference to both their seed and their seed's seed is rather well rendered with the strong future negation οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπῃ and a reduction just to "seed," since this term already includes the seed's seed.[20] Here the meaning is clearly future generations. The Targum renders each occurrence of "seed" with "son."[21]

In Isa 57:3–4 "seed" is used in parallel with "son."

Isa 57:3–4

ואתם קרבו־הנה בני עננה זרע מנאף ותזנה: על־מי תתענגו על־מי תרחיבו
פה תאריכו לשון הלוא־אתם ילדי־פשע זרע שקר:

But as for you, come here, you children of a sorceress, you *seed* of an adulterer and a whore. Whom are you mocking? Against whom do you open your mouth wide and stick out your tongue? Are you not children of transgression, the *seed* of deceit?

ὑμεῖς δὲ προσαγάγετε ὧδε, υἱοὶ ἄνομοι, σπέρμα μοιχῶν καὶ πόρνης· ἐν τίνι ἐνετρυφήσατε; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἠνοίξατε τὸ στόμα ὑμῶν; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἐχαλάσατε τὴν γλῶσσαν ὑμῶν; οὐχ ὑμεῖς ἐστε τέκνα ἀπωλείας, σπέρμα ἄνομον;

But as for you, draw near here, you lawless sons, you *seed* of adulterers and of a whore. In what have you indulged? And against whom have you opened your mouth wide? And against whom have you let loose your tongue? Are you not children of destruction, a lawless *seed*?

---

20. Ottley suggests the clause is omitted because it was "cumbersome" and "virtually implied" (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:365). Van der Vorm-Croughs calls it the reduction of a nearly identical adjacent phrase (*Old Greek of Isaiah*, 197). 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT, except it omits אמר יהוה.

21. "And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD, my *holy* spirit which is upon you, and *the* words *of* my *prophecy* which I have put in your mouth, shall not *pass* out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your *sons*, or out of the mouth of your *sons' sons*, says the LORD, from this time forth and for evermore" (Tg. Neb. Isa 59:21).

Often the word בן is followed by an attribute or characteristic to refer poetically to people by this attribute.[22] In 57:4 it would appear that this is how the synonyms of בן (ילד and זרע) are being used. The translator seems to have seen no reason to explain or remove this Hebraic idiom (or understood it literally). The renderings of the adjectives are noteworthy, in that the Greek has made them more commonly condemned crimes. In particular, עננה was either read as a form of עון,[23] or interpreted as turning from Torah in general. The rendering μοιχῶν καὶ πόρνης may come from reading the ת before instead of after the conjunction ו.[24] Note that in the Greek both "son" in verse 3 and "seed" in verse 4 are described with the adjective ἄνομος.

The Targum renders "seed" literally with its Aramaic cognate in 57:4, but in 57:3 it expands the second part of the verse into: "*whose plant was from a holy plant, and they are* adulter*ers and* harlots."[25] This is undoubtedly from the idea of the holy seed (Ezra 9:2, Isa 6:13). Similarly, the eternal plant is an important metaphor in the Qumran community for showing that they are God's holy nation.[26]

2.1.2 Seed as Family or People

Another metaphorical use of the vehicle "seed," found in Classical Greek as well as Biblical Hebrew, is for pedigree, family, or one's descent.[27] This meaning is related to the above meaning; it implies the seed from which one grew or whose seed one is; it is the idea of seed as one's source. The classical examples above already pointed back generally to the ancestors of the person addressed. Here are some more clear examples given by LSJ.[28]

---

22. See BDB, s.v. "בֵּן." LXX sometimes renders this idiom literally (e.g., 1 Sam 14:52; 2 Sam 2:7, 13:28, 17:10; Pss 78:11 [MT 79:11], 101:21 [MT 102:21]) but not in Isa 5:1 or 14:12.

23. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:355.

24. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2678.

25. "But you, draw near hither, *people* of *the generation whose deeds are evil, whose plant was from a holy plant, and they are* adulter*ers and* harlots. Of whom are you making sport? *And before* whom *will* you open *your* mouth and *continue speaking great things*? Are you not children of *a rebel, the* offspring of deceit?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 57:3–4).

26. Paul Swarup, *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community: An Eternal Planting, a House of Holiness*, LSTS 59 (London: T&T Clark, 2006).

27. BDB, s.v. "זֶרַע"; LSJ, s.v., "σπέρμα."

28. LSJ, s.v. "σπέρμα." Another example given is Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 1077.

Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 289–290 (Sommerstein)

διδαχθεὶς <δ'> ἂν τόδ' εἰδείην πλέον, ὅπως γένεθλον σπέρμα τ'
Ἀργεῖον τὸ σόν.

If you explain to me, I may understand better how your birth and
descent can be Argos.

In this example, the king is trying to find out how the women can be
from Argos, since they appear to be a different race, such as Libyan or
Egyptian.

Aeschylus, *Cho.* 503 (Sommerstein)

καὶ μὴ 'ξαλείψῃς σπέρμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε· οὕτω γὰρ οὐ τέθνηκας
οὐδέ περ θανών.

And do not wipe out this Pelopid seed; for then, even though
dead, you will not have perished.

Sophocles, *Ant.* 981 (Lloyd-Jones)

ἁ δὲ σπέρμα μὲν ἀρχαιογόνων <ἦν> ἄντασσ' Ἐρεχθειδᾶν.

She by birth was a princess of the ancient house of the sons of the
Erechtheids.

In this case, seed is somewhat collective in that it meets the Erechtheids, as
opposed to saying she is their seed, or they are her seed.

Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 214–15 (Lloyd-Jones)

τίνος εἶ σπέρματος, <ὦ> ξένε, φώνει, πατρόθεν;

Tell us from what seed you come, stranger, on your father's side!

Pindar, *Ol.* 7.93 (Race)

μὴ κρύπτε κοινὸν σπέρμ' ἀπὸ Καλλιάνακτος

Do not bury in obscurity the shared seed of Callianax.

In these last two examples we again see seed as family as in Oedipus, as
well as of a city that is made famous by the athlete's victory. "Seed" stands,
then, for extended family and for a broader group identity, such as tribe
or city. As we will see, LXX Isaiah uses "seed" for some of these broader
family and ethnic relations.

These examples are most similar to biblical uses of the metaphor in
phrases like זרע אברהם, rendered σπέρμα Αβρααμ, in 41:8, and לזרע יעקב

rendered τῷ σπέρματι Ιακωβ in 45:19. A variation is found in 65:9, where
והוצאתי מיעקב זרע is translated καὶ ἐξάξω τὸ ἐξ Ιακωβ σπέρμα.

In 45:25 "seed of Israel" seems to represent the people of Israel, while
the Greek makes it represent their offspring.

Isa 45:25
ביהוה יצדקו ויתהללו כל־זרע ישראל:
In the Lord all the *seed* of Israel shall *be justified* and glory.

ἀπὸ κυρίου δικαιωθήσονται καὶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐνδοξασθήσονται πᾶν τὸ
σπέρμα τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ.
By the Lord shall they be justified, and all the *seed* of the sons of
Israel shall be glorified in God.

The Greek alters this verse, adding the phrase ἐν τῷ θεῷ, to create the
rhetorical figure *synonymia*.[29] Of note for our discussion is that the LXX
translator feels the need to explain כל־זרע ישראל by adding "sons:" πᾶν
τὸ σπέρμα τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ. This addition could simply be a plus, or it
could be a second rendering of זרע.[30] The addition of "sons" adjusts the
metaphor. Rather than the poetic "the seed of Israel," a reference to the
nation as the descendants of their progenitor, the LXX makes the refer-
ence simply to the descendants of the current sons of Israel. Perhaps υἱῶν
was added because of the common phrase υἱῶν Ισραηλ, which occurs two
hundred seventy-five times in the Hebrew Bible.[31] This change could be
to make the promise more immediate to the audience. A similar phrase
with an added term for children can be found in 4 Macc 18:1: Ὦ τῶν
Αβραμιαίων σπερμάτων ἀπόγονοι παῖδες Ισραηλῖται ("O Israelite children,
offspring of the seed of Abraham"; NRSV). It may reflect an attempt to
modify and make interesting commonly heard phrases. The Targum of
Isa 45:25 is literal, except it is in the Memra of the Lord that they are
justified.[32]

---

29. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 252.
30. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 153.
31. This is according to a BibleWorks 7 search.
32. "In *the Memra of* the Lord all the seed of Israel shall be justified and glorified"
(Tg. Neb. Isa 45:25).

Isa 43:5

אל־תירא כי אתד־אני ממזרח אביא זרעך וממערב אקבצך:

Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east, and from the west I will gather you.

μὴ φοβοῦ, ὅτι μετὰ σοῦ εἰμι· ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν ἄξω τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ ἀπὸ δυσμῶν συνάξω σε.

Do not fear, because I am with you; I will bring your seed from the east, and from the west I will gather you.

While to call offspring "seed" is nearly a lexicalized metaphor, in this verse it is given new life by making it parallel with אקבצך, which has connotations of harvesting. The Greek is quite literal (קבץ and συνάγω are common word equivalents); συνάγω also can connote harvesting. Within LXX Greek it takes various words for crops and straw as objects (Exod 5:2; 23:10; Lev 25:3, 20; Hab 1:15; Mic 7:1; Isa 17:5), as Muraoka shows.[33] In the Hebrew and the Greek, the second person singular pronouns refer to Israel or Jacob from 43:1. They can be taken as referring to the person or as metonymies for the people; either way, their seed is their offspring, the people of Israel. The question is: Does the "you" refer to the current people, so that the seed are a future people, or is the "you" general (or addressed to the person Israel), so that the seed are the current population? In the next verse God talks of bringing his sons and daughters from the north and the south. Given the general context and the fact that future events are undoubtedly meant, the latter interpretation seems preferable. The Targum renders "seed" with "your sons," and in the last clause it is "your exiles."[34]

In 1:4 the "seed" refers to the current nation and is used negatively.[35]

Isa 1:4

הוי גוי חטא עם כבד עון זרע מרעים בנים משחיתים עזבו את־יהוה נאצו
את־קדוש ישראל נזרו אחור:

Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, *evil doing seed*, children who deal corruptly, who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged!

---

33. *GELS*, s.v. "συνάγω." Also, the participle is used for "harvesters" in Isa 62:9.

34. "Fear not, for *my Memra is your help*; I will bring your *sons* from the east, and from the west I will *bring near* your *exiles*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 43:5).

35. See also Isa 17:10–11 below.

οὐαὶ ἔθνος ἁμαρτωλόν, λαὸς πλήρης ἁμαρτιῶν, σπέρμα πονηρόν, υἱοὶ ἄνομοι ἐγκατελίπατε τὸν κύριον καὶ παρωργίσατε τὸν ἅγιον τοῦ Ισραηλ.

Ah, sinful nation, people full of sins, evil *seed*, lawless sons, you have forsaken the Lord and provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel!

The expression זרע מרעים is found in 14:20, with the same Greek rendering.[36] These negative uses of seed as a reference to the people as a whole are probably meant to function in contrast to the idea of their being the seed of Abraham (Gen 9:9, Isa 41:8), the seed of Jacob (45:19, 65:9), and the seed of Israel (as we saw in 45:25, above).[37] According to *GELS*, "seed" in 1:4 and 14:20 has a weakened sense of "descendants" and is almost equivalent to λαός or ἔθνος.[38]

The Targum adds positive epithets to contrast with those occurring here.[39] The seed becomes the positive "beloved seed," but they have done evil.

2.1.3. Seed as an Individual

It is also possible for "seed" to refer to an individual (cf. Gal 3:16).

ἔχεν δὲ σπέρμα μέγιστον ἄλοχος, εὐφράνθη τε ἰδὼν ἥρως θετὸν υἱόν,
But his spouse was bearing the greatest seed, and the hero rejoiced to see his adopted son. (Pindar, *Ol.* 9.61 [Race])

The reference to "evil seed" in LXX Isa 14:20 could be read as an epithet for an individual.

---

36. Isa 57:3 also uses seed in a negative context, though the Greek simplifies the construction considerably. Also 57:4 is negative, but the Greek alters the syntax slightly and changes the quality of the seed from "deceit" to "lawless."

37. Cf. also the holy seed in Ezra 9:2 and Isa 6:13.

38. *GELS*, s.v. "σπέρμα."

39. "Woe, *because they were called a holy* people, and sin*ned*; *a chosen congregation have multiplied sins; they were named as a beloved* seed *and they acted* wicked*ly, and it was said of them, "Cherished sons", and they* corrupt*ed their ways! They* have forsaken *the service of* the Lord, they have despised *the fear of* the Holy One of Israel, *because of their wicked deeds* they are turned *about and* backwards" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:4).

Isa 14:20

לֹא־תֵחַד אִתָּם בִּקְבוּרָה כִּי־אַרְצְךָ שִׁחַתָּ עַמְּךָ הָרָגְתָּ לֹא־יִקָּרֵא לְעוֹלָם זֶרַע
מְרֵעִים:

You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have killed your people. May the *seed* of evildoers nevermore be named!

οὕτως οὐδὲ σὺ ἔσῃ καθαρός, διότι τὴν γῆν μου ἀπώλεσας καὶ τὸν λαόν μου ἀπέκτεινας· οὐ μὴ μείνῃς εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον, σπέρμα πονηρόν.
So neither will you be clean, because you have destroyed my land and killed my people. You will not remain forever, you evil seed!

The Greek changes this passage in a few ways. Of note for the present study is that the wish/curse has been rendered as a sort of declaration or judgment. Troxel understands the σπέρμα πονηρόν as an epithet for the king of Babylon, explaining why the sons must die not for the evil king's deeds but his father's sins; they are a wicked dynasty.[40] Another perspective sees this passage as actualizing exegesis, referring to Antiochus IV.[41] According to this reading, the evil seed is not just the king but his whole family. That the grandchildren are to be punished for their grandfather's sin in the next verse may not be due to a specific historical crime. It may be a way of framing the evil of the king and the completeness of his punishment by an oblique reference to Num 14:18, where the third and fourth generations of sinners are said to be punished. The three generations mentioned show the completeness of the punishment, as does 14:22, where they are left with neither name, remnant, nor seed.[42] Also, in 14:29 "root" is rendered as "seed" with the apparent meaning of a family.

The Targum renders the metaphor literally: לא יתקיים לעלם זרע מבאשין ("May the seed of evildoers nevermore be *established*!").[43]

---

40. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 222.

41. Seeligmann, "Problems and Perspectives," 79–80. See also Van der Kooij, *Die alten Textzeugen*, 39–43.

42. We discuss 14:22 below.

43. "You will not be *as one of* them in *the* sepulcher, because you have destroyed your land, you have slain your people. May the seed of evildoers nevermore be *established*!" (Tg. Neb. Isa 14:20).

2.1.4. Original Seed Metaphors

By original seed metaphors, we refer to places where the LXX has "seed" but the MT does not. These places feature either words with the letters זרע, places where the translator uses "seed" for other terms, or places where there is no clear Hebrew equivalent.

The word σπέρμα is used in two places (33:2 and 48:14) where the Hebrew has זרוע (arm, shoulder). This is not surprising since the text the translator worked from was unpointed and may have had many defective spellings.[44] We will discuss 17:5 below in the section on grains (3.3.1.1); there, rather than an arm gathering ears, we find "reaps the seed of the ear," probably due to defective spellings or ו/י confusion.

> Isa 33:2
>
> יהוה חננו לך קוינו היה זרעם לבקרים אף־ישועתנו בעת צרה:
> O Lᴏʀᴅ, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble.
>
> κύριε, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, ἐπὶ σοὶ γὰρ πεποίθαμεν· ἐγενήθη τὸ σπέρμα τῶν ἀπειθούντων εἰς ἀπώλειαν, ἡ δὲ σωτηρία ἡμῶν ἐν καιρῷ θλίψεως.
> O Lord, have mercy on us, for we trust in you. The seed of the disobedient came to destruction, but our salvation came in a time of affliction.

The middle clause is quite different in the Greek. It is clear and unsurprising that זרעם was rendered with τὸ σπέρμα τῶν ἀπειθούντων; 1QIsaᵃ also has a defective spelling here. The LXX has interpreted the pronoun to be the disobedient from the previous verse.[45] The genitive article is noteworthy as it is not used in similar constructions, such as in 57:3–4. Seeligmann questions whether there was a textual variant here that read לרגעים instead of לבקרים.[46] Ottley suggests that if בקרים was read as a participle, it could have

---

44. In most cases context makes it obvious which word is meant. The LXX translates זרוע appropriately in Isa 30:30; 40:10–11 (it is spelled defectively here in the MT); 44:12; 51:5, 9 (it is spelled defectively twice in 51:5, but is full in 51:9 in MT); 52:10; and 63:12.

45. Baltzer et al. suggest these are the same as the ἀπειθοῦντες in verse 1 ("Esaias," 2:2592).

46. The equivalents in Job 20:5 and Ezek 26:16 are based on these words, and the

the opposite meaning from the Greek and that antithetical renderings are
sometimes made in the LXX.[47] Baltzer et al. suggest the translator under-
stood a contrast with the wicked and so thought לבקרים meant the seed of
the wicked would be for the grave diggers, implying the wicked's destruc-
tion.[48] Perhaps בקרת (punishment), which occurs only in Lev 19:20, was
thought, and rendered as εἰς ἀπώλειαν.[49] It is difficult to tell where the rest of
the clause comes from in the Greek. Reading אף as אך may have suggested
that there needed to be a contrast, and so those who did wrong but suffered
no wrong from the previous verse here meet their end. The Targum gives
the meaning of the metaphor "arm" as "strength:" תוקפנא.[50]

The context of 48:14 almost seems to suggest the translation "seed."[51]

Isa 48:14

הקבצו כלכם ושמעו מי בהם הגיד את־אלה יהוה אהבו יעשה חפצו בבבל
וזרעו כשדים:

Assemble, all of you, and hear! Who among them has declared
these things? The LORD loves him; he shall perform his purpose
on Babylon, and his arm shall be against the Chaldeans.

καὶ συναχθήσονται πάντες καὶ ἀκούσονται. τίς αὐτοῖς ἀνήγγειλε
ταῦτα; ἀγαπῶν σε ἐποίησα τὸ θέλημά σου ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα τοῦ ἆραι
σπέρμα Χαλδαίων.

And all of them will be gathered and hear. Who has declared these
things to them? Because I love you, I have performed your will on
Babylon, to do away with the *seed* of the Chaldeans.

Here the LXX shapes the second part of the verse by altering the main verb
and turning third person pronouns into second person. It is interesting

---

two Hebrew roots are parallel in Job 7:18 (Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah,"
219).

47. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:268–69. He also suggests that perhaps a form of מרה
was read.

48. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2592.

49. Though LXX Lev does not understand this word this way.

50. "O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for you*r Memra*. Be *our stronghold on
every day*, our *saviour* in the time of trouble" (Tg. Neb. Isa 33:2).

51. Similarly, the comparison in Isa 17:5 speaks of harvesting and so renders זרוע
with σπέρμα. Rahlfs follows L´``, S*, A´, etc., where the root was doubly translated: καὶ
σπέρμα σταχύων ἐν τῷ βραχίονι αὐτοῦ ἀμήσῃ.

that the translator, having read וזרעו as זרע, did not make "seed of Chaldea" parallel to Babylon but adds a verb to complete the phrase.[52] Here "seed of Chaldea" seems to refer to the people (like in 15:9), though it could refer to an individual, such as the evil seed of 14:20. It is unlikely that this passage or 33:2 was read differently to avoid attributing arms to God, since in 48:13 hands are attributed to God.

The Targum understands the Hebrew to mean arm (דרע), though it expands to make clear that it refers to strength.[53]

In Isa 17:10 the verb זרע becomes a noun, and in 17:11 the noun becomes a verb. In this passage seed is used in imagery that does not represent offspring.

Isa 17:10–11
כי שכחת אלהי ישעך וצור מעזך לא זכרת על־כן תטעי נטעי נעמנים וזמרת
זר תזרענו: ביום נטעך תשגשגי ובבקר זרעך תפריחי נד קציר ביום נחלה
וכאב אנוש:
For you have forgotten the God of your salvation, and have not remembered the Rock of your refuge; therefore, though you plant pleasant plants and set out slips of an alien god, though you make them grow on the day that you plant them, and make them blossom in the morning that you sow; yet the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain.

διότι κατέλιπες τὸν θεὸν τὸν σωτῆρά σου καὶ κυρίου τοῦ βοηθοῦ σου οὐκ ἐμνήσθης. διὰ τοῦτο φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον καὶ σπέρμα ἄπιστον· τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ, ᾗ ἂν φυτεύσῃς, πλανηθήσῃ· τὸ δὲ πρωΐ, ἐὰν σπείρῃς, ἀνθήσει εἰς ἀμητὸν ᾗ ἂν ἡμέρᾳ κληρώσῃ, καὶ ὡς πατὴρ ἀνθρώπου κληρώσῃ τοῖς υἱοῖς σου.
Because you have abandoned the God your savior and not remembered the Lord your helper, therefore you will plant an unfaithful plant and an unfaithful seed. But on the day that you plant them, you will be led astray, and if you sow in the morning, it will blos-

---

som for harvest in whatever day you take possession of it, and like
a man's father you will take possession of it for your sons.

Commentators appear to agree that this passage in the MT is alluding to
the Adonis/Naaman cult to show the futility of this idolatry.[54] A part of
this cult was to plant in a pot plants that quickly spring up and just as
quickly die, in order to symbolize the fertility cycles over which Adonis
was god. The Hebrew then, contrasts this transience with the Lord who
is a rock.

The LXX has interpreted this passage. The rendering καταλείπω for
שכח is also found in 23:15.[55] The rendering of וצור with καὶ κυρίου is con-
sidered an anti-idolatry polemic by Seeligmann.[56] It is noteworthy that the
translator does recognize צור מעזך as a title for God and renders it as such.[57]
The parallel clauses תטעי נטעי נעמנים וזמרת זר תזרענו have been rendered so
that one verb now has two objects φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον καὶ σπέρμα
ἄπιστον.[58] The term זמר for branch or twig occurs only here in Isaiah. The
LXX has not rendered this word, or at least has taken its meaning from the
verb to match the previous clause.[59] The word זר is understood as having
a negative connotation and so is interpreted as meaning ἄπιστον. Troxel
says נעמנים was read as נאמנים, though the fact that both this and זר are
rendered with the same word suggests that the translator was rendering
freely for the sake of his new text.[60]

---

54. See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 3 vols., AB 19–19B (New York: Doubleday, 2000–2003), 1:305–6; George Buchanan Gray and Arthur S. Peake, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*, ICC (Edinburgh: Clark, 1912), 301–3; Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah*, OTL (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 137.

55. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2548. They also point out that this unfaithful plant contrasts with the plant that God plants in 60:21 and 61:3.

56. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 265. The reason for κύριος instead of θεός is that the latter is already in close proximity, as is the usual practice for the translation of this metaphor, according to Olofsson (*God is My Rock*, 44–45; see also 38, 58). See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2548.

57. Olofsson, *God is My Rock*, 58. Here the rendering of מעזך with τοῦ βοηθοῦ σου is explained. Cf. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 245, who comments on the translator's resistance to using צור as an epithet for God.

58. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2548.

59. See Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2549.

60. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94–95, 125.

In 17:11 several of the words have been read differently. Ottley suggests πλανηθήσῃ is the result of reading תשגשגי as a form of שגה or שגג, meaning "to err."[61] 1QIsaᵃ has what appears to be a *hithpalpel* form: תשתגשגי and 1QIsaᵃ תשגשגי. Both forms could be scribal errors. Ottley also suggests that κληρώσῃ is from reading נחלה as נחל; that καὶ ὡς πατήρ comes from וכאב; and that ἀνθρώπου from אנוש.[62]

The meaning of the Greek seems to have both a bad result (being led astray by the false seed) and a good result (passing an inheritance on to sons). It is unclear if "sowing" and "seed" are meant to be metaphorical, or if they refer to actual agricultural activity.

The Targum sees the planting motif and interprets the passage explicitly in the terms of the conceptual metaphor "Israel is God's special *plant*" from Exod 15:17.[63] The same idea is behind the Targum of 1:4, where it adds an adjective to describe בזרעא רחימא.[64] In 17:10–11, however, it maintains the idea of Israel's cultivating idolatry and producing bad works.

LXX Isaiah also uses σπέρμα where nothing like the root זרע occurs. We will discuss Isa 37:30–31 (where פרי is rendered σπέρμα) and 14:29–30 (where שרש is rendered σπέρμα) below.

In two places, the LXX uses "seed" for a term for "remnant." In Isa 1:9 "seed" is used to render שריד.

Isa 1:9

לולי יהוה צבאות הותיר לנו שריד כמעט כסדם היינו לעמרה דמינו:

If the Lᴏʀᴅ of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah.

---

61. Cf. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94, 112.

62. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:192. For the last two, see also Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 65, 95. See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2549.

63. "For you have *forsaken* the God of your salvation, and you have not *remembered the fear of the strong one whose Memra is your help; for* you *were* planted, as a *select* plant, and *multiplied corrupt deeds*, in the *place where you were sanctified to be a people, there you corrupted your deeds, and even when you went into the land of my Shekhinah's house, where it was fitting for you to serve, you forsook my service and served idols;* you *put off* a day *of repentance until the day of your breaking came, then your sorrow was inconsolable*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 17:10–11).

64. This is turning a negative image into a positive one. In contrast, the Targum of 14:20 is very literal: זרע מבאשין.

καὶ εἰ μὴ κύριος σαβαωθ ἐγκατέλιπεν ἡμῖν σπέρμα, ὡς Σοδομα ἂν ἐγενήθημεν καὶ ὡς Γομορρα ἂν ὡμοιώθημεν.
And if the Lord Sabaoth had not left us *seed*,[65] we would have become like Sodoma and been made similar to Gomorra.

The word שריד occurs only here in Isaiah, though its synonym שאר occurs often.[66] The word שריד is rendered in the LXX with nearly as many different words as there are occurrences, though most have a sense of being saved, being left, escaping, or fleeing. The only other place it is rendered with σπέρμα is in Deut 3:3. There the phrase ונכהו עד־בלתי השאיר־לו שריד is rendered καὶ ἐπατάξαμεν αὐτὸν ἕως τοῦ μὴ καταλιπεῖν αὐτοῦ σπέρμα. LXX Isaiah could be following LXX Deuteronomy's precedent or perhaps in both cases they thought the Hebrew implied the idea of having a surviving heir.

The Targum expands and clarifies the passage but understands remnant as a deliverance (שיזבא) which God left for them.[67]

In 15:9 a synonym of שריד is also rendered with σπέρμα.

Isa 15:9

כי מי דימון מלאו דם כי־אשית על־דימון נוספות לפליטת מואב אריה ולשארית אדמה:

For the waters of Dibon are full of blood; yet I will bring upon Dibon even more—a lion for those of Moab who escape, for the remnant of the land.

τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τὸ Ρεμμων πλησθήσεται αἵματος· ἐπάξω γὰρ ἐπὶ Ρεμμων Ἄραβας καὶ ἀρῶ τὸ σπέρμα Μωαβ καὶ Αριηλ καὶ τὸ κατάλοιπον Αδαμα.
And the water of Remmon will be filled with blood, for I will bring Arabs upon Remmon, and I will remove the *seed* of Moab and Ariel and the remnant of Adama.

---

65. NETS reads "offspring."

66. Aquila translates שריד with λεῖμμα.

67. "Had *the abounding goodness of* the Lᴏʀᴅ of hosts not left us a remnant *in his mercies*, then *our sins would have been with us, so that as the men of* Sodom we should have *perished*, and *as the inhabitants of* Gomorrah we should have *been destroyed*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:9).

There are several significant differences in this verse. The place name has changed due to reading the ד as a ר, and Arabs (Ἄραβας) are mentioned, probably under the influence of 15:7.[68] In that passage, ופקדתם על נחל הערבים ישאום is rendered ἐπάξω γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν φάραγγα Ἄραβας, καὶ λήμψονται αὐτήν. Troxel suggests that the translator read in נוספות a form of אסף, which he rendered with ἀρῶ.[69] The name Αριηλ probably comes from reading the subsequent ל.[70] But, what is important for the present study is that לפליטת מואב appears to be rendered with τὸ σπέρμα Μωαβ.[71] Perhaps reading אדמה as the proper name of the city was influenced by Hosea 11:8, where its fate is compared with that of Ephraim.

One explanation for the rendering in 1:9 was offered by Franz Wutz. He believes the LXX was based on a Greek transcription of the Hebrew, and so here the transcription σαρειδ was corrupted into σαρε.[72] This explanation is problematic both due to it being unlikely that the translation was made from a transcription, and since it would be odd to find a Greek word in a transcription of Hebrew. Gottfried Quell gives another explanation that the change was made for dogmatic reasons or as a stage in biblical interpretation where the phrase "holy seed" became important to the ideology of the people of God.[73] This is not an adequate explanation, since it does not explain 15:9, where it is the seed of the Moabites who are facing God's judgment.

In both 1:9 and 15:9, it is unclear if σπέρμα is used without its regular extended meaning "offspring" but means something more like "race" or "tribe," like we saw in Aeschylus, *Suppl.* 289–290, and Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 214–15. In 15:9 σπέρμα is parallel to κατάλοιπον, in 14:22 it is parallel with κατάλειμμα, and in 1:9 it is the object of ἐγκατέλιπεν, which shows the

---

68. Cf. 10:9 and 11:11. See Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 135–36. Seeligmann thinks this addition is due to actualizing exegesis ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 248–49).

69. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 110. Also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2545.

70. For LXX Isaiah's understanding of Ariel as associated with Moab, see: Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 234; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 68; Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 135–36. Baltzer et al. mention Jerome's commentary, which identifies the city Areopolis ("Esaias," 2:2545).

71. Symmachus translates τῷ διασώσματι.

72. Franz Wutz, *Die Transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus*, BWAT 9 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), 76.

73. Gottfried Quell, "σπέρμα κτλ: σπέρμα and Equivalents in the Old Testament," *TDNT* 7:540. Also, it is odd that this theology would be present but the phrase "holy seed" would still be absent from Isa 6:13.

association of these ideas for the translator.[74] Remnant and seed both refer to a living group of people with some shared ethnic or familial identity. A similar idea of remnant and offspring is at work in 1 Esd 8:78, 87, 88, and 89, where פליטח is rendered with ῥίζα.[75] In LXX Isa 14:30, "root" is rendered "seed" in a parallel clause to שאר in the Hebrew and κατάλειμμά in the Greek; we will discuss this below.

The Targum of 15:9 is close to the Hebrew, except the lion is interpreted as a king (מלך) with his army.[76]

In one case, Isa 6:13, the Hebrew זרע occurs referring to a stump as the "holy seed" in reference to a small remnant, but the Greek does not render it. Since "seed" does not occur in the LXX of this passage, we discuss it below in the section on trees (3.6.2.2), which do occur.

In Isa 14:22, "seed" is used instead of a more specific equivalent for the terms for family relations found in the Hebrew and is parallel with "remnant."

> Isa 14:22
>
> וקמתי עליהם נאם יהוה צבאות והכרתי לבבל שם ושאר ונין ונכד נאם־
> יהוה:
>
> I will rise up against them, says the Lᴏʀᴅ of hosts, and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, offspring and posterity, says the Lᴏʀᴅ.
>
> Καὶ ἐπαναστήσομαι αὐτοῖς, λέγει κύριος σαβαωθ, καὶ ἀπολῶ αὐτῶν ὄνομα καὶ κατάλειμμα καὶ σπέρμα· τάδε λέγει κύριος.
>
> And I will rise up against them, says the Lord Sabaoth, and will destroy their name and remnant and *seed*. This is what the Lord says.

The Greek has collapsed the synonyms נין ונכד to σπέρμα.[77] This is reminiscent of Isa 59:21, where in the Greek it is also used once for two terms for relatives (though in that case, offspring), and similarly in 65:23, where

---

74. This is the case in Deut 3:3 also.

75. See below how "root" may be an image for offspring.

76. "For the waters of Dimon are full of *the* blood *of those slain*; yet I will *appoint* upon Dimon *a gathering of armies,* a *king with his armies will go up* for those of Moab who have escaped and *to plunder* the remnant of *their* land" (Tg. Neb. Isa 15:9).

77. Van der Kooij argues that this refers to the sons of Antiochus IV (Van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre,* 99–100).

the offspring of the seed is removed. In Gen 21:23, נין is also rendered with
σπέρμα but נכד is rendered with ὄνομα.[78] There is a conceptual relationship
between having descendants, having a remnant, and having a name (cf.
2 Sam 18:18, where Absalom builds a pillar to carry his name, since he
lacked a son). In the Greek of Sir 47:23, we find the phrase καὶ κατέλιπεν
μετ᾽ αὐτὸν ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτου, which shows even more clearly the
relationship of having a remnant and having a seed.[79] The later recensions
of Isaiah, unsurprisingly, revert to a literal translation: Aquila has γονήν
and Symmachus has ἀπόγονον. In the LXX it is no longer the name and
remnant of Babylon but the sons mentioned in 14:21. Babylon has become
the region Babylonia in 14:23.[80]

The Targum renders ונין ונכד as ובר ובר בר.[81]

In two places, LXX Isaiah replaces an original metaphor with the met-
aphor "seed."

Isa 31:9
וסלעו ממגור יעבור וחתו מנס שריו נאם־יהוה אשר־אור לו בציון ותנור לו
בירושלם:
"His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the stan-
dard in panic," says the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose
furnace is in Jerusalem.

πέτρα γὰρ περιλημφθήσονται ὡς χάρακι καὶ ἡττηθήσονται, ὁ δὲ
φεύγων ἁλώσεται. Τάδε λέγει κύριος Μακάριος ὃς ἔχει ἐν Σιων
σπέρμα καὶ οἰκείους ἐν Ιερουσαλημ.
For they shall be encompassed by a rock, as with a rampart, and
they shall be defeated, and the one who flees will be caught. This is
what the Lord says: "Happy is the one who has a seed in Sion and
kinsmen in Ierousalem."

---

78. Cf. Job 18:19, the third place where both terms occur together. In the LXX, נין
is not rendered, and נכד is rendered with ἐπίγνωστος.

79. Sir 47:23 occurs only in the Hebrew Sirach Manuscript B, according to the
text in Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, VTSup 68 (Leiden:
Brill, 2003), 85.

80. See Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 99–100.

81. "'I will *be revealed to take retribution from* them,' says the LORD of hosts, 'and
I will *destroy* from Babylon name and remnant, *son and son's son*,' says the LORD'" (Tg.
Neb. Isa 14:22).

The entire verse was interpreted differently by the translator, but the correspondences between elements in the two versions are readily visible.[82] Here an unusual metaphor is replaced with one that is easy to understand.[83] The word אשר has been translated twice, once as μακάριος (reading אשרי) and once as ὅς.[84] The translator then introduces a metaphor describing the object of the beatitude. If the phrase has to apply to people, it makes sense for "furnace," or more accurately, "hearth" to stand by metonymy for the family that surrounds it. Most often, οἰκεῖος is used for שאר in the LXX, though three times it is used for בית. Perhaps the analogy of a flame to a furnace being equivalent to offspring from a family led to the translation of אור with σπέρμα. As Van der Kooij has pointed out, the idea of a furnace or oven representing family is common to the ancient Near East, and a last remaining child is represented as a coal in 2 Sam 14:7.[85] A similar image is that of a lamp representing offspring or a remnant. This image is associated only with David. In 1 Kgs 11:36, God says he will leave one tribe to Solomon's son, so that "my servant David may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem" (היות־ניר לדויד־עבדי כל־הימים לפני בירושלם).[86] "Lamp" represents David's offspring or a remnant of his royal line; a similar image is used of David in Ps 132:17.[87] The idea that a remnant is equivalent to a

---

82. Ottley says the translator interpreted, not misread (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:263). Seeligmann says the translator paraphrased and expresses a longing for Zion prevalent among the Alexandrian Jewry ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 149, 284). For an analysis of the first half of the verse, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 102; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2588.

83. In Num 23:10 the odd metaphor "dust of Jacob" is translated as the more familiar "seed of Jacob."

84. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 69.

85. Arie van der Kooij, "The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Issue of Coherence: A Twofold Analysis of LXX Isaiah 31:9B–32:8," in Van der Kooij and Van der Meer, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 36. Cf. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 184–85.

86. The LXX interprets: ὅπως ᾖ θέσις τῷ δούλῳ μου Δαυιδ πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἐνώπιον ἐμοῦ ἐν Ιερουσαλημ. The same image is used in Hebrew in 1 Kgs 15:4 (where LXX has κατάλειμμα); see 2 Kgs 8:18, and 2 Chr 21:7 for David's heirs. In Job 18:6, 21:17, and Prov 24:20 "lamp" could have the meaning of offspring as it is quenched, though it more likely stands for the common image of lamp being related to "paths" and how one lives their life morally, as in Prov 6:23 and 13:9. An alternative metaphorical meaning for ניר has to do with the eyes: Prov 21:4.

87. In 2 Sam 21:17, David's troops urge him not to go out to battle anymore, lest he extinguish the lamp of Israel.

kinsman or offspring is easy to understand, especially now that we have seen several examples.

The Targum interprets the rock as his princes (שלטונוהי) but is literal about the furnace (ותנור בער ליה דאישא בירושלם), adding clauses that specify for whom God's splendor is available and whom the furnace is for.[88]

In Isa 58:7 the translator uses "seed" as a vehicle, since a literal translation of the Hebrew metaphor's vehicle would have been odd in Greek, as we will see.

Isa 58:7

הלוא פרס לרעב לחמך ועניים מרודים תביא בית כי־תראה ערם וכסיתו
ומבשרך לא תתעלם:[89]

Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own *flesh*?

διάθρυπτε πεινῶντι τὸν ἄρτον σου καὶ πτωχοὺς ἀστέγους εἴσαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου· ἐὰν ἴδῃς γυμνόν, περίβαλε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων τοῦ σπέρματός σου οὐχ ὑπερόψῃ.

Break your bread with the one who is hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; if you see one naked, clothe him, and you shall not neglect any of the relatives of your seed.

Here again we see the words οἰκεῖος and σπέρμα in close proximity; here they constitute a sort of explanatory double translation of ומבשרך. It seems as though using either term alone would have been sufficient, though together it makes clear that there is both a relationship of having a common household and a direct biological relation.[90] Ziegler points out a similar translation in Lev 18:6 where אל־כל־שאר בשרו becomes πρὸς πάντα οἰκεῖα σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ; he suggests the phonetic relationship between בשר,

---

88. "'His *rulers* shall pass away *before* terror, and his princes *break up before the standard*,' says the Lᴏʀᴅ, whose *splendour* is in Zion *for those who perform his law*, and whose *burning* furnace *of fire* is in Jerusalem *for those who transgress his Memra*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 31:9).

89. 1QIsaᵃ has the plus בגד following וכסיתו.

90. Seeligmann believes that since the two terms are parallel in 31:9, they may represent two variant readings of 58:7 (*Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 173). For LXX Isaiah's tendency to explicate, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 31–62.

שאר, and זרע may have contributed to the rendering.[91] It is interesting that these two words are also used in parallel to interpret the image in 31:9, as we have seen. Elsewhere, other LXX translators had no problem translating "flesh" literally, as a metaphor for family.[92] For example, in Lev 25:49 the phrase או־משאר בשרו ממשפחתו יגאלנו is translated ἤ ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς αὐτοῦ λυτρώσεται αὐτόν. In LXX Isaiah also, we usually find this translation equivalent. The exceptions are where "flesh" refers to meat, such as Isa 22:13, 44:19, 65:4, and 66:17, in which case the LXX has κρέας.[93] Where it does not refer to the flesh of horses (31:3) and men (49:26), it is typically qualified as "all flesh," and so is more clearly describing all people (40:5, 49:26, 66:16, 66:23–24). The other place בשר occurs is in 10:18, where it is used together with נפש; the LXX translates them both literally with σάρξ and ψυχή respectively. The meaning of σάρξ in this contrast or merism would have been familiar from Greek literature. If the metaphor "flesh" in 58:7 was objectionable to the translator, it seems softening or qualifying it with "household/kinsman" would have been sufficient. The Targum does just this, rendering it: ומקריב בסרך לא תכבוש עינך ("and not *suppress your eye* from *a relative of* your flesh?"). Another possibility is that the translator was concerned that if he translated "flesh" literally, the passage would say to clothe the naked and do not overlook your own body. Symmachus and Theodotion, however, had no problem translating it with καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς σαρκός σου.[94] The only other place בשר was interpreted in LXX Isaiah is 17:4, where the phrase ומשמן בשרו ירזה is rendered καὶ τὰ πίονα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ σεισθήσεται. Baltzer et al. say that the LXX of 58:7 restricts the meaning of the MT to refer only to progeny.[95]

The Targum renders בשר with an Aramaic cognate for flesh, but likewise adds another term to restrict the reference: ומקריב בסרך לא תצבוש עינך.[96]

---

91. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 130.

92. Neither LSJ nor *TDNT* have examples of a classical usage of σάρξ to represent a kinsman or relation.

93. In 44:16 it appears as though בשר was rendered with ἄρτος, and its parallel צלי was rendered with κρέας.

94. See Ziegler's apparatus.

95. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2680.

96. "*Will you* not *nurture from* your bread the hungry, and bring *needy outcasts into the midst of your* house; when you shall see *the* naked, cover him, and not *suppress your eye* from *a relative of* your flesh?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 58:7).

2.1.5. Summary

As we have seen, that "seed" was a lexicalized metaphor in both Hebrew and Greek made the work of the LXX translator quite easy in many places. In two cases the translator prefers "seed" over "remnant." The idea of offspring, an individual in relation to another or a group, a remnant, and a familial or ethnic community are closely related. The metaphor "seed" in Greek had all these nuances and could be easily used by the translator. It is interesting that the translator preferred to use a dead metaphor rather than render literally some of the passages we have discussed. The use of "seed" by the translator could be because it has more "charm" to say σπέρμα than simply "children" or "kinsman" in 14:22, 31:9, and 58:7. While we do not know how the translator or his readers would have understood σπέρμα—whether they thought it was a dead metaphor, just a term, or a metaphor—it represents enough different words in Isaiah to suggest it is not simply a literal explanatory interpretation of the meaning of the Hebrew's imagery but a metaphor in its own right.

Looking at the passages where the LXX adds the word "seed," in 33:2 and 48:14, where the Hebrew had "arm," the LXX seems to describe a wicked group (or ruler) in the former, and in the latter, the seed of Chaldea. In 48:14 we should probably think of the seed of Chaldea as the people (or offspring) as is the case with the seed of Moab in 15:9.[97] In both 1:9 and 15:9, where terms for "remnant" are rendered "seed," it is unclear whether σπέρμα is used with the meaning "offspring" or something more like "race" or "tribe." In 14:22 it seems most likely that offspring is meant by the translator, and in 31:9 and 58:7 more generally a relative.

The Targum's approach is quite different. Although lexicons list "offspring" as a definition of Aramaic זרע, the Targum of Isaiah often interprets the meaning of this metaphor. For example, in 43:5, 44:3, 48:19, 53:10, 54:3, 59:21, and 61:9 it is rendered with בנין ("sons"), though in several places it is rendered with זרע: 57:4, 65:9, and 66:22. This difference in technique between the LXX and the Targum is probably due to the translators' differing purposes. The Targum translator strove for clarity and so was free to explain his text, while the LXX translator was also concerned about style while staying as close as was practical to the Hebrew.

---

97. In theory, "seed of Moab" could mean the offspring of an individual (Gen 19:37) like "seed of Israel."

<div align="center">2.2. Fruit</div>

In the LXX, the word פרי is rendered with καρπός (or words derived from that stem) the vast majority of the time.[98] To most LXX translators, it does not matter if actual fruit is being referred to or if it is mentioned metaphorically (or metonymically); it is still translated καρπός. There are some exceptions to this manner of translation. They occur almost entirely in Deut 7, 28, 30, and in the book of Isaiah.[99] As we will see, these exceptions in Isaiah are unexpected, not only since most other LXX translators did not mind preserving the Hebrew metaphor, but since classical authors also used similar fruit metaphors. In this section we will examine the three ways "fruit" is used metaphorically in Isaiah. First, this section will look at its use as metonymy for produce; second, it will examine its use as a metaphor for offspring; third, it will examine its use as a metaphor for the results of actions; finally, I will draw together some conclusions.

2.2.1. Fruit as Metonymy for Produce

The only place in Isaiah where the word καρπός is used for פרי Isa 37:30.[100] Here and in the next verse פרי occurs twice, once as a metonymy for various agricultural crops, and once as a metaphor for the people. The LXX uses a different word for each occurrence.

> Isa 37:30–31
> וזה־לך האות אכול השנה ספיח ובשנה השנית שחיס ובשנה השלישית
> זרעו וקצרו ונטעו כרמים ואכול פרים: ויספה פליטת בית־יהודה הנשארה
> שרש למטה ועשה פרי למעלה:
> And this shall be the sign for you: This year eat what grows of itself,
> and in the second year what springs from that; then in the third
> year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. The surviving

---

remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.

τοῦτο δέ σοι τὸ σημεῖον· φάγε τοῦτον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἃ ἔσπαρκας, τῷ δὲ ἐνιαυτῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ τὸ κατάλειμμα, τῷ δὲ τρίτῳ σπείραντες ἀμήσατε καὶ φυτεύσατε ἀμπελῶνας καὶ φάγεσθε τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῶν. καὶ ἔσονται οἱ καταλελειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ιουδαίᾳ φυήσουσι ῥίζαν κάτω καὶ ποιήσουσι σπέρμα ἄνω.

And this shall be the sign for you: This year eat what you have sown, and in the second year what is left; then in the third year sow, reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. And those that are left in Judea shall take root downward and bear seed upward.

In 37:30 פרי refers not just to the fruit of the vineyards but also to what is sown; it is lacking in 4QIsaᵇ. Unlike the passages mentioned above, here the Greek translates the metonymy literally with καρπός. The translator interprets several other terms in this passage as well. The word ספיח is rendered with αὐτόματος in its occurrences elsewhere (Lev 25:5, 11; 2 Kgs 19:29). Perhaps the translator has the Sabbath and Jubilee years from Lev 25 in mind; thus, he says that they can eat what they have sown (ἔσπαρκας) in the first year and that it is just the second year that they eat the remnant without sowing or reaping, and in the year after they can sow and reap again normally. The rendering of שחיס with κατάλειμμα may show the translator had the harvest of the previous year in mind; the parallel passage in 2 Kings 19:29 has סחיש (rendered with ἀνατέλλω), rather than שחיס, and 1QIsaᵃ has שעיס.

In the next verse, there has been some condensation: the reference to פליטת בית־יהודה הנשארה is reduced to οἱ καταλελειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ιουδαίᾳ.[101] Baltzer et al. suggest φυήσουσιν comes from reading הנשארה as a form of שגא.[102] But this unique rendering does not need to be posited, since the translator probably provided the verb to make the passage clear. In this verse פרי is used metaphorically to describe the remnant of Judah. In the Greek, though, we find σπέρμα, which still fits the plant language of the metaphor. The avoidance of καρπός in verse 31 may be to distinguish the

---

101. For other examples of synonymous elements reduced, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 194–96.

102. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2604. Cf. 1QIsaᵃ, which has the synonym והנמצא instead.

literal reference to actual produce in 37:30 and the metaphorical reference to fruit in 37:31. In contrast, 2 Kgs 19:30–31 uses καρπός in both verses. Using γένημα in the first instance could have served the same purpose, but it makes more sense to eat the particular "fruit" (cf. Amos 9:14) than to eat the general category "produce." The LXX Isaiah translator elsewhere often preserves and even improves renderings of various figures of word repetition.[103] While it appears that "seed" is a synonymous metaphor for "fruit" meaning "descendant," it could also be an interpretation of שרש. In Isa 14:29–30 שרש is twice rendered with σπέρμα.[104] By using what is usually a lexicalized metaphor, σπέρμα, the translator makes it clearer that offspring is meant.

The Targum in 37:30 is specific about what is meant, specifying that this current year they will eat free growth (כתין), and in the second year the free growth of the free growth (כת כתין).[105] Fruit is translated literally in 37:30 with אב, but in 37:31 it appears to read פרה since it renders it נופיה, although this could be a harmonization in that it may be a more logical counterpart to שרש since it has made explicit that it is a comparison with a tree (כאילן).[106]

In two other places where the root פרי occurs, it refers specifically to the fruit of vines, and LXX Isaiah uses γένημα.

Isa 32:12

על־שדים ספדים על־שדי־חמד על־גפן פריה:

Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields, for the fruitful vine.[107]

καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν μαστῶν κόπτεσθε ἀπὸ ἀγροῦ ἐπιθυμήματος καὶ ἀμπέλου γενήματος.

And beat your breasts for a desired field and for a *productive* vine.

---

103. See Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 221–62.

104. "Root" imagery is dealt with below (2.3).

105. "And this will be the sign for you: *in this* year eat free growth*s*, and in the second year *growth of free growths*; then in the third year sow and reap and plant vineyards and eat their fruit. And the *delivered* of the house of Judah will continue *and will* be left *as a tree which sends its* roots downward, and *raises its top* upward" (Tg. Neb. Isa 37:30).

106. Note that 1QIsaᵃ reads פרי in 37:31.

107. This example actually uses the participle פריה, though it is rendered as a noun. The same can be seen in Ezek 19:10. Targum: "They beat upon breasts for *the* pleasant fields, for *bearing* vines [גופנין טענין]" (Tg. Neb. Isa 32:12).

Isa 65:21

וּבָנוּ בָתִּים וְיָשָׁבוּ וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים וְאָכְלוּ פִּרְיָם׃

They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their *produce*.[108]

καὶ οἰκοδομήσουσιν οἰκίας καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνοικήσουσι, καὶ καταφυτεύσουσιν ἀμπελῶνας καὶ αὐτοὶ φάγονται τὰ γενήματα αὐτῶν·
And they shall build houses and themselves shall inhabit them, and they shall plant vineyards and themselves eat their fruit.

In these contexts, פרי is not used metaphorically but as a metonymy of the genus. The Greek preserves the metonymy by using another general word for produce, γένημα, rather than the specific produce of vines, such as σταφυλή (as in Isa 5:2, 4) or ῥώξ (Isa 65:8).

It seems odd for LXX Isaiah to use a general term for a specific fruit, particularly an even more general term than the Hebrew uses. The reason for this cannot be that it is a Hebraism or that it would be odd in the target language, since in classical literature also a general term is used by metonymy for grapes. Homer uses καρπός in apposition to wine.

Κήρυκες δ᾽ ἀνὰ ἄστυ θεῶν φέρον ὅρκια πιστά, ἄρνε δύω καὶ οἶνον ἐΰφρονα, καρπὸν ἀρούρης.
Meanwhile the heralds were carrying through the city the oath offerings to the gods, two lambs and, in a goatskin bottle, wine that gladdens the heart, the fruit of the earth. (Homer, *Il.* 3.245–246 [Murray and Wyatt])

Homer also refers to grapes with καρπός.

μία δ᾽ οἴη ἀταρπιτὸς ἦεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτήν, τῇ νίσοντο φορῆες, ὅτε τρυγόῳεν ἀλωήν. παρθενικαὶ δὲ καὶ ἠΐθεοι ἀταλὰ φρονέοντες πλεκτοῖς ἐν ταλάροισι φέρον μελιηδέα καρπόν.
… and one single path led to it by which the vintagers went and came whenever they gathered the vintage. And maidens and youths in childish glee were carrying the honey-sweet fruit in wicker baskets. (Homer, *Il.* 18.565–568 [Murray and Wyatt])

---

108. Targum: "They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit [אבהון]" (Tg. Neb. Isa 65:21).

Likewise, Thucydides, in *The Peloponnesian War*, after saying it was in summer before the vintage, refers to grapes by saying "fruit" in 4.84.1–2 and also in 3.88.1.

LXX Isaiah, however, does not understand the fruit of the vine to be grapes, per se, but speaks generally about its produce, probably meaning wine. In the ostraca and papyri we find the word γένημα used in connection with wine regarding on how many years of vintage taxes are owed.

ὑπ(ὲρ) ὧν ὀφείλ(ετε) δημοσίο(υ)
οἶνον [-ου] κολοφώ(νια) δύο γενή(ματος)
ιβ (ἔτους) δι' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐπιτ(ηρητῶν).
Concerning the wine which you owe the district: two kolfonia, the products for twelve years through our tax assessor. (O.Bodl. 2.1693 lines 4–6, my trans.)

κατάγοντι
εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὸν ἐκ Φιλ(αδελφείας) οἶνον, τὸν ἐκ τῶν
γεν(ημάτων) τοῦ δ (ἔτους).
Bring to Alexandria from Philadelphia wine, from the produce of 4 years. (P.Col. 4.89, lines 4–6, my trans.)[109]

LXX Isaiah, it would seem, is using appropriate legal terminology to talk about the produce of vineyards.

Another, more common metonymic use of פרי in the Hebrew Bible is in the phrase פרי הארץ and its synonyms. This expression does not refer to fruit specifically but to all kinds of agricultural products.[110] In the one place where the phrase פרי הארץ occurs in Isaiah (4:2), it does not simply refer to produce but has a metaphorical meaning.[111]

---

109. See also P.Oxy. 8.1141 for an order of wine and P.Oxy. 64.4436 for an account of money and wine; in both sources wine is measured as the "produce" of a certain number of years.

110. See Num 13:26 and Deut 1:25 as well as Deut 26:2 and Mal 3:11 for literal renderings using καρπός. Similar phrases can be found in Homer (*Il.* 3.245–246), Euripides (*Ion* 303), and Herodotus, *History*, 4.198.2.

111. For metaphorical interpretations of 4:2 and the argument that it be taken literally, see Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 3 vols., BKAT 10 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972–1982), 1:151–56.

Isa 4:2

ביום ההוא יהיה צמח יהוה לצבי ולכבוד ופרי הארץ לגאון ולתפארת
לפליטת ישראל:

On that day the branch of the Lᴏʀᴅ shall be beautiful and glori-
ous, and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the
survivors of Israel.

Τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπιλάμψει ὁ θεὸς ἐν βουλῇ μετὰ δόξης ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς
τοῦ ὑψῶσαι καὶ δοξάσαι τὸ καταλειφθὲν τοῦ Ισραηλ.

But on that day God will gloriously shine on the earth with coun-
sel, to uplift and glorify what remains of Israel.

The rest of LXX Isaiah 4 is translated quite literally (except for 4:6), so this
verse's rendering stands out as special in some way. This verse is not par-
ticularly difficult in its language or meaning, but the translator is intent on
saying something specific here.

The verb ἐπιλάμπω appears only here in the LXX, while λάμπω
appears three times (rendering נגה in Prov 4:18 and Isa 9:1 and rendering
צחה in Lam 4:7). The LXX Isaiah translator knows the meaning of צמח,
translating it in Isa 61:11 with αὐξάνω (to grow, cause to grow), in 55:10
with ἐκβλαστάσω (to shoot, sprout), and in 42:9, 43:19, 44:4, 45:8, and
58:8 with ἀνατέλλω (to spring forth, rise).[112] Here, however, the transla-
tor renders it ἐπιλάμψει, meaning "he will shine." This could be because
he thought this was a valid meaning of the Hebrew word, or he may have
used the definition of the Aramaic verb צמח.[113] As Ziegler and Ottley
rightly point out, the translator probably read the Aramaic צבי (desire)
and so translated it with βουλή.[114] These renderings are unique.[115] Ottley

---

112. σ′, θ′, α′ have ἔσται ἀνατολή at Isa 4:2.

113. For the Hebrew word, see *DCH* 7, s.v. "צמח," 4. See also Daniel Grossberg,
"The Dual Glow/Grow Motif," *Bib* 67 (1986): 547–54. He argues that the Hebrew of
Isa 58:8 and 61:1 (as well as other passages not in Isaiah) intend a double meaning for
צמח; in both places LXX uses ἀνατέλλω. Ottley believes it was read as יצח like in Lam
4:7 (Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:121). See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2515.

114. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:121; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 107. Ziegler gives the
example of a similar rendering for a verbal form of the Aramaic in Dan 5:19.

115. צבי translated: ἐλπίς, Isa 24:16, 28:4, 28:5; ἔνδοξος, Isa 13:19. βουλή translates
עצה in Isa 5:19, 8:10, 11:2, 14:26, 19:3, 19:11, 19:17, 25:1, 29:15, 30:1, 44:26, 46:10,
47:13; מחשבה in Isa 55:7, 55:8 (2x); דעת in Isa 44:25; יעץ in Isa 9:5; כילי in 32:7, and כלי
in 32:7; תבלית in 10:25; עצמה in 41:21; מסכה in 25:7; נדיבה in 32:8; צאה in 28:8.

suggests that ἐπί comes from reading ופרי as פני, but this would be a unique equivalence.[116] The preposition probably comes from the prefix of the verb, repeated for the sake of style; the translator simply does not render ופרי. The nouns לגאון ולתפארת are read as infinitives, probably due to the prefix ל. But for this reading we would need something like לגאת ולפארת. The change from "escaped" (לפליטת) to the "remnant" (τὸ καταλειφθέν) is not uncommon, but is a clear choice of the translator and is consistent with his theological concerns.[117]

The Targum interprets the metaphor "branch" as "messiah" and "fruit of the earth" as "those doing the law," and instead of "a remnant of Israel," it is "to save Israel."[118] The LXX, though, does not understand "branch" but reads a verb. Seeligmann suggests the translator was paraphrasing a text that gave him some difficulty.[119] But it seems the translator understood the passage in a certain way and modified this verse to more clearly express his understanding.

In one place, 29:1, γένημα occurs as a plus referring to produce gathered.[120] Troxel suggests it is from reading ספו as פרי,[121] though it seems more likely the translator was simply adding an object for this verb (which he understood as אסף instead of יסף) for the sake of clarity.[122] The object in the Hebrew is "year upon year." Similar to the Greek, the Targum understands אסף and makes the verb reflexive (דמתכנשין) in order to provide an object.

2.2.2. Fruit as Metaphor for Offspring

The Hebrew Bible uses פרי as a metaphor for offspring, often in the phrase פרי־בטן. This phrase occurs once in Isaiah at 13:18.

---

116. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:121. Ziegler suggests פני הארץ (על) (*Untersuchungen*, 108).

117. See Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 286–89.

118. "In that *time the Messiah* of the Lord shall be for *joy* and for glory, and *those who perform the law* for pride and for praise *to* the survivors of Israel" (Tg. Neb. Isa 4:2).

119. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 287.

120. For other features of this verse, see Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2579.

121. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 109–10.

122. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:246.

Isa 13:18

וְקַשָּׁתוֹת נְעָרִים תְּרַטַּשְׁנָה וּפְרִי־בֶטֶן לֹא יְרַחֵמוּ עַל־בָּנִים לֹא־תָחוּס עֵינָם:

Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children.

τοξεύματα νεανίσκων συντρίψουσι καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἐλεήσωσιν, οὐδὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς τέκνοις οὐ φείσονται οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτῶν.
They will crush the arrows of the young men, and they will have no mercy on your children, nor will their eyes be sparing upon the children.

In this case, the translator abandons the metaphor "fruit of the womb," and simply writes "your children." Also, "son" in the parallel phrase is rendered with the same word τέκνον. The translation is appropriate and captures well the meaning of the metaphor, but there is no clear reason to abandon the imagery. It could be a matter of style, since the passage as a whole does not use much metaphorical language but rather uses several similes. It also is unlikely that the translator had a problem with the phrase פרי־בטן, not only because it is rendered literally elsewhere in the LXX, but because elsewhere in LXX Isaiah parts of the typical rendering appear.

The Hebrew phrase פרי־בטן is typically translated with καρπὸν κοιλίας, as in Gen 30:2, Mic 6:7, and Ps 132:11 (LXX 131:11). In Lam 2:20 the phrase אִם־תֹּאכַלְנָה נָשִׁים פִּרְיָם is rendered with this typical translation: εἰ φάγονται γυναῖκες καρπὸν κοιλίας αὐτῶν. A variation is used for פרי־הבטן in Ps 127:3 (LXX 126:3), where the LXX has καρποῦ τῆς γαστρός. Likewise, in Ps 21:11 (LXX 20:11), where פרי occurs parallel to זרע, both referring to children, καρπός and σπέρμα are used. In general, then, the LXX does not mind using the metaphor "fruit of the womb."

The exceptions to this, outside of Isaiah, come from Deuteronomy. Several times in Deuteronomy, the translation of פרי with καρπός is avoided where פרי is used in different metaphors in close proximity. Take, for example, Deut 28:11.

Deut 28:11

וְהוֹתִרְךָ יְהוָה לְטוֹבָה בִּפְרִי בִטְנְךָ וּבִפְרִי בְהֶמְתְּךָ וּבִפְרִי אַדְמָתְךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לַאֲבֹתֶיךָ לָתֶת לָךְ:

The LORD will make you abound in prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors to give you.

καὶ πληθυνεῖ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς ἀγαθὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῆς κοιλίας σου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῶν κτηνῶν σου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς γενήμασιν τῆς γῆς σου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἧς ὤμοσεν κύριος τοῖς πατράσιν σου δοῦναί σοι.

And the Lord your God will make you abound with good things, in the progeny of your belly and in the progeny of your livestock and in the produce of your land in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give you.

The LXX renders פרי in the same way in Deut 7:13; 28:4, 18, 42, 51, 53; and 30:9, where different kinds of offspring (human, animal, and vegetative) are referred to as "fruit" in the Hebrew.[123] In the case of human offspring, LXX Deut prefers to say τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας ("the offspring of the womb"), as in Deut 7:13; 28:4, 11, 18, 53; and 30:9. This Greek phrase appears twice in LXX Isaiah, though not for the same Hebrew phrase. In Isa 48:19, a passage which references God's promise to Abraham and seems to reflect the background of the Deuteronomic blessings for obedience, the phrase ויהי כחול זרעך וצאצאי מעיך כמעתיו becomes καὶ ἐγένετο ἂν ὡσεὶ ἡ ἄμμος τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας σου ὡς ὁ χοῦς τῆς γῆς. In LXX Isaiah τὰ ἔκγονα is the usual word equivalent for צאצאים.[124] The rendering τῆς κοιλίας is probably to tighten the connection to Deuteronomy. In 44:3 צאצאים again occurs parallel to זרע, but this time it is rendered with τέκνον, probably for the sake of clarity in light of the subsequent context, which describes the offspring in metaphorical botanical language. The second place LXX Isaiah has the phrase τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας is Isa 49:15, where the Hebrew says בן־בטנה. Again, the translator probably wanted to use the familiar phrase. The closest parallel to the unique Hebrew phrase is in Prov 31:2, where בר־בטני is translated with τέκνον ἐμῆς κοιλίας. In the Proverbs context, this is a better translation (than, say, υἱός or ἔκγονος) because of the anaphora created by the repetition of τέκνον.

In Isa 13:18, the Targum renders ופרי־בטן with ולד מעין.[125]

---

123. However, the order of these three "fruits" is sometimes changed. Also, in Deut 7:13 τὸν καρπὸν τῆς γῆς σου is specified as referring to grain, wine, and oil in both versions. In Deut 28:4 פרי is rendered as τὰ βουκόλια, probably to harmonize with places like 28:18 where this rendering occurs for שגר אלפיך.

124. Isa 48:19, 61:9, and 65:23. A rendering of צאצאים in Isa 22:24 is lacking, and in 34:1 it is paraphrased to make the text clearer.

125. "And their bows will *cut* young men *asunder*, and they will have no mercy

In light of these examples of how פרי is translated elsewhere in the LXX, the rendering of the phrase פרי־בטן in Isa 13:18 is even more puzzling. There seems to be no reason why the translator could not have rendered the phrase with something like ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας. As we have seen, the translator does not mind referring elsewhere to the womb when talking about offspring. As we will see, he also does not mind using καρπός metaphorically to refer to offspring. In Isa 27:6 we find this word, though it is a rendering of תנובה.

> Isa 27:6
>
> הבאים ישרש יעקב יציץ ופרח ישראל ומלאו פני־תבל תנובה:
> In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit.
>
> οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ιακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ισραηλ, καὶ ἐμπλησθήσεται ἡ οἰκουμένη τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ.
> Those who are coming are the children of Iakob; Israel shall bud and blossom, and the world will be filled with his fruit.

Isaiah 27 has many interesting renderings. We will discuss the rendering of ישרש below in the section on roots (2.3.2). The rendering of ציץ with βλαστάνω here is unique but appropriate. Its most common equivalent is ἐξανθέω, which was used in this verse for פרח.[126] The rendering of תנובה with καρπός is unique; its meaning would be better expressed with γένημα, which is used in all the other places where תנובה occurs (Deut 32:19, Judg 9:11, Lam 4:9, Ezek 36:30). Perhaps καρπός was more appropriate here since it refers to the fruit of a specific tree (or plant) and not produce in general. Also, since the idea of "children" was already explicit in the passage, perhaps there was no need to interpret the fruit metaphor.

The Targum, by contrast, interprets פרח as becoming numerous (יסגון) and תנובה as meaning grandchildren (בני בנין).[127]

---

on the *offspring* of the womb, and their eyes will not pity children" (Tg. Neb. Isa 13:18).

126. For LXX Isaiah's use and nonuse of synonyms, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 17–21.

127. "*They shall be gathered from among their exiles and they shall return to their land, there those of the house of* Jacob *will receive (children), those of the house of* Israel *will grow and increase*, and *sons' sons* will fill the face of the world" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:6).

According to LSJ, καρπός can be used figuratively to represent children in classical literature.[128] The example they give is from Euripides, *Ion*.

> μισεῖ σ᾽ ἁ Δᾶλος καὶ δάφνας ἔρνεα φοίνικα παρ᾽ ἁβροκόμαν, ἔνθα λοχεύματα σέμν᾽ ἐλοχεύσατο Λατὼ Δίοισί σε καρποῖς.
>
> Dalos hates you, as do the shoots of laurel beside the luxuriant palm foliage, where Leto brought you forth, an august child-birth, for Zeus as fruit. (Euripides, *Ion* 919–922 [Lee])

This example, though, is difficult, since the meaning of the phrase is not universally accepted. Some believe the text is corrupt and should read Λατὼ Δίοισί σε κάποις.[129]

The LXX of Isaiah is unique in that it avoids literally rendering פרי with καρπός when representing children, except where the context makes it entirely clear that children are referred to (Isa 27:6). While the phrase פרי־בטן is not rendered following the precedent in LXX Deut, similar phrases are harmonized to match the rendering of the phrase. When פרי is used to refer to the offspring of animals, LXX Isaiah follows the LXX Deut precedent.

Fruit as a metaphor for the offspring of animals only occurs in Deut 28:4, 11, 51; 30:9; and Isa 14:29. The same phrase as we saw in Deut 28:4 above (ובפרי בהמתך rendered καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῶν κτηνῶν σου) occurs in the Hebrew and Greek, respectively, in all the listed places in Deuteronomy.[130] Isaiah 14:29 likewise avoids the language of this metaphor using the same word equivalent for offspring, though the animal is different and is itself a metaphor for a king or ruler.

Isa 14:29

אל־תשמחי פלשת כלך כי נשבר שבט מכך כי־משרש נחש יצא צפע ופריו שרף מעופף:

Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken, for from the root of the snake will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent.

---

128. LSJ, s.v. "καρπός."

129. Euripides, *Ion* 919–922 (K. H. Lee trans., *Ion*, The Plays of Euripides 11 [Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1997], 110–11; see also 264).

130. The LXX lacks a translation for the phrase in Deut 28:4.

Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, πάντες οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι, συνετρίβη γὰρ ὁ ζυγὸς τοῦ
παίοντος ὑμᾶς· ἐκ γὰρ σπέρματος ὄφεων ἐξελεύσεται ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων,
καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι.

May you not rejoice, all you allophyles, for the yoke of him who
struck you is broken, for from the seed of snakes will come forth
the offspring of snakes, and their offspring will come forth as
flying snakes.

This passage has been shaped to offer an interpretation in a few ways. One
thing of note is that פלשת has been generalized to refer to οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι.[131]
The plus ἔκγονα could be to signify that τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν is the same as
the ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων, so only two generations are spoken of, not three, but
this is not obvious. Regarding the plant metaphors of this verse, note that
the metaphor "root" has been replaced with "seed" and "fruit" has been
replaced with "offspring." It is not certain that "root" and "seed" really are
comparable metaphors, but in this case the reference is the same, namely,
that the "snake" will come from the same ancestry. Compared to this
transformation between metaphors, the change from "fruit" to "offspring"
is really an explanation of the metaphor. It is interesting that as in Isa 44:3
and 48:19, "seed" and "offspring" occur together. Apart from the usual
aversion to "fruit" imagery, perhaps in this verse the translator wanted to
move away from mixing botanical and animal imagery. While we still have
"seed" mentioned in the translation, it is a common enough metaphor for
offspring that it is nearly dead.[132]

The idea of "fruit" representing the offspring of animals may not have
been completely foreign to the Greek world. According to Friedrich Hauck,
καρπός in Classical Greek can be figurative for the young of animals.[133] The
example he gives is Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.1.2.

καὶ τοῖς καρποῖς τοίνυν τοῖς γιγνομένοις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐῶσι τοὺς νομέας
χρῆσθαι οὕτως ὅπως ἂν αὐτοὶ βούλωνται. ἔτι τοίνυν οὐδεμίαν πώποτε

---

131. Cf. Isa 2:6. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2543. This passage will be discussed fur-
ther in the section on roots. For the "flying snake" and Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.75, 3.107–
109, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 191.

132. The first occurrence of ἔκγονα in 14:29b could be an explication, or along
with ἐξελεύσεται a double rendering of יצא, since this is a term used to render צאצאים
elsewhere in LXX Isaiah (48:19, 61:9, and 65:23).

133. Friedrich Hauck, "καρπός κτλ," *TDNT* 3:614.

ἀγέλην ἠσθήμεθα συστᾶσαν ἐπὶ τὸν νομέα οὔτε ὡς μὴ πείθεσθαι οὔτε
ὡς μὴ ἐπιτρέπειν τῷ καρπῷ χρῆσθαι.
They allow their keeper, moreover, to enjoy, just as he will, the
profits [καρποῖς] that accrue from them. And then again, we have
never known of a herd conspiring against its keeper, either to
refuse obedience to him or to deny him the privilege of enjoying
the profits [καρπῷ] that accrue. (Xenophon, *Cyr.* 1.1.2 [Miller])

Here "fruit" could mean their offspring in particular, but it seems also to
mean any profit they provide, such as young, milk, meat, wool, skin, and
the like. So Miller's English translation "profit" is appropriate. Perhaps
LXX Deut is too restrictive in rendering פרי with ἔκγονος, although in the
Isaiah context, young or offspring is certainly meant.

The Targum also interprets Isa 14:29, so that the rod is a ruler (שלטון),
the root of the snake is interpreted as the sons of the sons of Jesse (מבני
בנוה דישי), the viper (צפע) is the messiah (משיחה), and its fruit are his
works (עובדוהי).[134]

2.2.3. Fruit as Metaphor for the Results of Actions

Another metaphorical use of פרי is as a metaphor for the results of actions.

Isa 3:10

אמרו צדיק כי־טוב כי־ פרי מעלליהם יאכלו:
Tell the innocent how fortunate they are, for they shall eat the fruit
of their labors.

εἰπόντες Δήσωμεν τὸν δίκαιον, ὅτι δύσχρηστος ἡμῖν ἐστι· τοίνυν τὰ
γενήματα τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν φάγονται.
Saying, "Let us bind the just, for he is a nuisance to us." Therefore
they shall eat the fruit of their works.

The first half of this verse is quite different in the Greek. The word אמרו
appears to have been rendered twice, the second time as the root אסר,

---

134. "Rejoice not, all you *Philistines*, because *the ruler* who was *subjugating* you is
broken, for from *the sons of the sons of Jesse the Messiah* will come forth, and his *deeds*
will be *among you* as a *wounding* serpent" (Tg. Neb. Isa 14:29).

becoming δήσωμεν.[135] Ottley suggests δύσχρηστος comes from טוב in implying the sense that "their goodness is no good to us," and so it is an ironic or antithetical rendering.[136] The LXX reading would not be possible from a text like 1QIsaᵃ, which has לצדיק.

In the second half of the verse. The metaphor is preserved in the Greek, which uses agricultural terminology to say that the results (produce, crops) of one's actions will be enjoyed (eaten). But instead of using "fruit" as a metonymy for all types of agricultural products, the translator uses a general term (γένημα) with that meaning.

The phrase פרי מעללים occurs five other times in the MT. In Jer 21:14 and 39:19 (MT 32:19) it is not rendered. In Micah 7:13 מפרי מעלליהם is rendered ἐκ καρπῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αὐτῶν and in Jer 17:10 כפרי מעלליו is rendered καὶ κατὰ τοὺς καρποὺς τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αὐτοῦ. In Ps 103:13 (MT 104:13) the similar phrase מפרי מעשיך is rendered ἀπὸ καρποῦ τῶν ἔργων σου. Isaiah 3:10, like 65:21 where "fruit" is also said to be eaten, has again shown preference for using the word γένημα. Hos 10:12 also uses γένημα as the products of something abstract: instead of עד־יבוא וירה צדק לכם, the LXX has continued the agricultural metaphor of the verse and rendered it ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῖν.

The Targum leaves the fruit metaphor, translating with the cognate פירי, but interprets "eat" as their being recompensed (ישתלמון).[137]

Fruit is used as a metaphor for the results of a more abstract action in two places in Isaiah.

Isa 27:9
לכן בזאת יכפר עון־יעקב וזה כל־פרי הסר חטאתו בשומו כל־אבני מזבח
כאבני־גר מנפצות לא־יקמו אשרים וחמנים:
Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the

---

135. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:117. See also Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 166, 211n38.

136. Ottley (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:117) and Baltzer et al. ("Esaias," 2:2513) see δύσχρηστος as understanding the Hebrew as irony, while others see it as an antithetical rendering: Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 204; Tov, *Text-Critical Use*, 138–39. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 97, lists 3:10 with a few other examples of antithetical renderings.

137. "Tell the righteous, "*You are blessed*," for the fruits of their deeds will *be repaid*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 3:10).

stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred poles or incense altars will remain standing.

διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία Ιακωβ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ὅταν θῶσι πάντας τοὺς λίθους τῶν βωμῶν κατακεκομμένους ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν· καὶ οὐ μὴ μείνῃ τὰ δένδρα αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν ἐκκεκομμένα ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν.[138]

Because of this the lawlessness of Iakob will be removed. And this is his blessing, when I remove his sin, when they make all the stones of the altars broken pieces like fine dust, and their trees will not remain, and their idols will be cut down like a forest far away.

The Hebrew phrase כל־פרי הסר חטאתו is difficult in terms of how it relates to the surrounding clauses. The metaphor, though, seems to refer to the fullness of the results of the removing of his sin. The Greek translation of the entire chapter is full of interpretation (for more on this verse see the section on trees, 3.6.4). Here it seems to be making a theological judgment, that the results (fruit) are a blessing (εὐλογία); Ottley calls this "a natural interpretation of 'fruit.'"[139] There is no clear lexical warrant for this rendering.[140]

The Targum interprets פרי as works (עובדי) of the removal of sins, but the clause is otherwise rendered literally.[141]

The second place פרי is used as the result of an abstract action is Isa 10:12.

---

138. With reference to ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν here, Ottley points out the phrase ἐν λεπτῇ κονίῃ in Homer, *Iliad,* 23.505 (Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:235).

139. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:235.

140. For more on this verse, see Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2573. For the two similes in 27:9b, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101–2.

141. "Therefore by this the *sins of the house* of Jacob will be *forgiven*, and this will be the full *effectuation* of the removal of his *sins*: when he makes all the stones of *the* altar like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or sun pillars will *be established*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:9).

Isa 10:12

וְהָיָה כִּי־יְבַצַּע אֲדֹנָי אֶת־כָּל־מַעֲשֵׂהוּ בְּהַר צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלִָם אֶפְקֹד עַל־פְּרִי־גֹדֶל
לְבַב מֶלֶךְ־אַשּׁוּר וְעַל־תִּפְאֶרֶת רוּם עֵינָיו:

When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on
Jerusalem, he will punish the *fruit of the greatness of heart* of the
king of Assyria and his haughty pride.

καὶ ἔσται ὅταν συντελέσῃ κύριος πάντα ποιῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σιων καὶ
ἐν Ιερουσαλημ, ἐπάξει ἐπὶ τὸν νοῦν τὸν μέγαν, τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν
Ἀσσυρίων, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ὕψος τῆς δόξης τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν αὐτοῦ.

And it shall be that when the Lord has finished doing all the things
on Mount Sion and in Ierousalem, he will bring his wrath against
the great mind, the ruler of the Assyrians, and against the loftiness
of the glory of his eyes.

The rendering of יבצע with συντελέσῃ probably cannot be called the removal
of a metaphor, since this is the single most common word equivalent. The
Hebrew "heart," standing for the center of thought, is rendered by νοῦς,
an equivalent found also in Isa 10:7 and 41:22.[142] The Greek removes פרי
which stands as an image for the results of the king's thoughts. The ESV and
NRSV understand this to mean speech and boasting. The LXX translator is
not concerned with the idea of the results of the king's mind, but with the
mind itself. He finds no reason to interpret the phrase, since the parallel
clause makes it clear enough that "great mind" refers to pride or arrogance.

The Targum understands it as the works of his lofty heart (על עובדי רם
ליבא).[143]

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, פרי is used for actions such as the fruit
of righteousness (Ps 58:12 [LXX 57:12], Prov 11:30, Amos 6:12, cf. LXX
Hos 10:12), the fruit of paths (Prov 1:31), and the fruit of hands (Prov
31:16, 31).[144] In all these cases פרי is rendered with καρπός.

Classical literature likewise uses "fruit" metaphorically as the results of
actions. For example, consider Aeschylus, *Sept.* 599–600 (Sommerstein):

---

142. Also in Exod 7:23, Josh 14:7, and Job 7:17.

143. "And it will come to pass when the *Lord* has finished *doing* all *that he prom-
ised* on *the* Mount *of* Zion and in Jerusalem I will punish the *deeds* of the *high* heart of
the king of Assyria and the *celebrity* of his haughty eyes" (Tg. Neb. Isa 10:12).

144. See BDB, s.v. "פְּרִי," for a more complete listing of this metaphorical use.

ἐν παντὶ πράγει δ᾿ ἔσθ᾿ ὁμιλίας κακῆς κάκιον οὐδέν, καρπὸς οὐ
κομιστέος.
In every activity there is nothing worse than evil company; it is a
crop best not reaped.

Fruit can also be used for the action itself as the cause or source of the
results. This can be seen in Plato, *Phaedr.* 260c–d (Fowler):

ποῖόν τινα οἴει μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν ῥητορικὴν καρπὸν ὧν ἔσπειρε θερίζειν;
What harvest do you suppose his oratory will reap thereafter from
the seed [καρπόν] he has sown?

LXX Isaiah, then, departs from the typical translation technique used
in the rest of the LXX in rendering fruit metaphors that represent the
results of actions. LXX Isaiah avoids using καρπός in these contexts despite
its being a metaphor known in Greek literature.

2.2.4. Summary

One of the difficulties in translating metaphors has to do with whether
the language of the metaphor is meaningful in the target language. As we
have seen in the case of "fruit" imagery, most LXX translators thought they
could translate these images literally, preserving the vehicle "fruit." There
seems to be good reason for this, since there are some similar uses of fruit
imagery in classical literature. Why, then, does LXX Isaiah consistently
avoid using "fruit" as a vehicle?[145]

Part of the answer seems to lie in the precedent set by LXX Deuter-
onomy. In chapter 28, fruit is repeatedly used to represent the offspring or
produce of people, cattle, and fields. LXX Deut wants to be precise here,
and so interprets each occurrence in light of what it references: children,
young cattle, and crops. In most cases in Isaiah, however, fruit imagery is
used for only one reference in a passage, but the translator still follows the
Deuteronomy precedent of interpreting what exactly the reference is. In
Isa 32:12 and 65:21, LXX uses γένημα for the fruit of vines, even though
Homer himself can refer to grapes with καρπός. On the other hand, in Isa

---

145. Concern about confusion with the homonym καρπός, meaning "wrist, hand"
is not likely, as this word is only used three times in the LXX, and the contexts of the
Isa passages we have discussed would make it clear that "hand" was not meant.

37:30 the produce of vineyards is preserved with the rendering καρπός, while a verse later פרי is rendered with "seed" in reference to children. In 13:18, where fruit is again used in a metaphor for children, the LXX renders פרי־בטן with ἐπὶ τοῖς τέκνοις. In Isa 27:6 a synonym of "fruit" occurs parallel to a reference to children, so the LXX renders the metaphor using καρπός; to interpret the meaning of the metaphor here would have been redundant. In 4:2 the "fruit of the land" is used as a metaphor, probably for the people of the land, but the LXX understands the phrase quite differently. Also following the precedent in LXX Deut 28, in Isa 14:29, where "fruit" is used to refer to the offspring of animals (in this case, snakes), LXX Isaiah renders with ἔκγονος. In 3:10, where the "fruit of works" is mentioned, the LXX uses γένημα instead of καρπός, even though similar uses of καρπός occur in Greek literature. The preference for using γένημα in LXX Isaiah may also be due, in part, to its being a more common term for agricultural produce at the time in Egypt.[146] So while καρπός was appropriate, γένημα was more commonly used.[147]

Two original uses of "fruit" metaphors are interpreted, based more on the translator's ideas about the passage than the context of the passage itself. These occur in 27:9 and 10:12. To properly understand the rendering of these metaphors, a more thorough investigation of the passages in their full contexts is needed.

For the Targum, we see a variety of translations, but the three categories of produce, offspring, and results are generally seen. In 32:12 the literal reference to vines is preserved, though with the adjective "bearing" instead of a construct phrase, and in 65:21 they still literally eat the vines' fruit. In 37:30, fruit is still mentioned, but in the next verse, since trees are explicitly added in the translation, it is the roots and the top rather than roots and fruit that are used in the merism. In 4:2, the metaphorical usage of the common phrase "fruit of the land" is interpreted as referring to "those who perform the law." For the metaphors that refer to offspring in Hebrew, the Targum renders 13:18 with "offspring of the womb," much like the LXX of other books, and in 27:6 fruit is rendered as "sons' sons," as opposed to

---

146. MM, s.v. "γένημα." They note that most occurrences of γένημα come from Egyptian sources.

147. If the preference for using γένημα instead of καρπός has to do with the Egyptian convention, perhaps an analogy could be imagined if an American translator wanted to resist calling dessert "pudding" unless he or she was certain it was actual pudding that was meant.

just "sons," where the Hebrew has "seed," as we have seen above. In 14:29 the fruit of the serpent becomes a person's "deeds," and in 3:10 the phrase "fruits of their deeds" is rendered literally. Where fruit metaphors occur as the results of actions, the Targum is more original. In 27:9, "the full fruit of the removal of their sins," "fruit" is rendered as "works/effectuation." The king's "great fruit" in 10:12 is rendered as the deeds of his high heart.

2.3. Root

The word שרש (root) is used figuratively in the Hebrew Bible to refer to people, denoting their permanence and firmness in tree-related imagery (Amos 2:9, Hos 9:16, 14:6, Mal 3:19)[148] or their familial stock (Dan 11:7), to the source or cause of something (e.g. Deut 29:17), or to the bottom of something such as a mountain (Job 28:9) or a sea (Job 36:30).[149] In classical Greek literature many of these metaphorical uses can also be found; we will discuss some relevant examples below.

Outside Isaiah, the LXX always translates שרש with ῥίζα when used metaphorically, except in Judg 5:14 (where it is rendered with the verb ἐκριζόω) and Job 8:17 (where the entire verse is rendered quite differently).[150] In Isaiah, שרש is usually rendered literally with ῥίζα but often with a different metaphorical meaning.

2.3.1. Root as Family or Familial Stock

One use of metaphors with "root" as a vehicle in Isaiah seems to intend something like family or familial stock as the tenor.[151] It is not always clear if the idea of a family's source is intended, but this is certainly the case in the Hebrew of Isa 11:1.

Isa 11:1

ויצא חטר מגזע ישי ונצר משרשיו יפרה:

---

148. In some of these examples, children or family could be meant.

149. BDB, s.v. "שֹׁרֶשׁ." Cf. *HALOT*, s.v. "שֹׁרֶשׁ." For "root of the mountain," compare Aeschylus, *Prom.* 365–366.

150. Christian Maurer points out that only four out of fifty-seven occurrences of this word in the LXX refer to actual roots; the rest are metaphorical or transferred meanings (Maurer, "ῥίζα κτλ," *TDNT* 6:985).

151. For a classical Greek use of this metaphor, see Euripides, *Iph. taur.* 609–610.

A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

Καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ιεσσαι, καὶ ἄνθος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης ἀναβήσεται.
And a rod shall come out of the root of Iessai, and a blossom shall come up out of his root.

The word ῥάβδος is used for חטר (which occurs in Isaiah only here); this equivalence may be under the influence of 10:5, 15, 24 where a "rod" (though here it is שבט) is mentioned. While in Ezek 37:16–20 עץ is repeatedly rendered with ῥάβδος, the meaning is clearly some sort of "stick," "staff," or "rod." Also of note is Ezek 19:11–14, where מטה is repeatedly rendered with ῥάβδος. The only other occurrence of חטר is in Prov 14:3, where it is rendered with βακτηρία, meaning "staff," or "cane." It appears that the LXX Isaiah translator meant something like "stick" or "staff" and so was interpreting the passage in terms of the coming authority from Jesse. However, there is a chance that he was simply using precise botanical terminology, as was the translator of Ezek 19. In his botanical works, Theophrastus uses ῥάβδος to refer to date palm branches. For example:

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα περιτέμνουσιν, ὁπόταν ἁδρός ἤδη γένηται καὶ πάχος ἔχη. ἀπολείπουσι δὲ ὅσον σπιθαμὴν τῶν ῥάβδων.
At a later stage they prune it, when it is more vigorous and has become a stout tree, leaving the slender branches only about a handsbreadth long. (Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 2.6.4 [Hort])[152]

It appears as though the rendering of חטר with ῥάβδος could be an appropriate use of botanical terminology.[153] According to Ziegler's apparatus, Eusebius mentions that Aquila here has ῥαβδίον, which means "little branch," perhaps since he felt the need to clarify the LXX word.

The rendering of מגזע with ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης may be due to the parallel משרשיו or perhaps to the similarity in assonance. The only other place this

---

152. See also *Hist. plant.* 2.1.4; *Caus. plant.* 1.2.1.
153. MM, s.v. "ῥάβδος," does not list a meaning like shoot or branch for ῥάβδος in the papyri, nor does Friedrich Preisigke, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden mit Einschluß der griechischen Inschriften, Aufschriften, Ostraka, Mumienschilder usw. aus Ägypten*, 4 vols. (Berlin: Selbstverlag der Erben, 1925–2000), 2:439.

root occurs in Isaiah, 40:24, it is rendered the same way.[154] Karrar points out that in Greek, ῥίζα can refer also to the stump, as is seen in Homer, *Od*. 23.173–204, and so LXX Isaiah interprets this word well.[155] This change in 11:1 moves the metaphor away from referring to Jesse as the familial source (stock or stump as the Hebrew says) and instead allows the "root of Jesse" potentially to be an individual, as is made clear later in the passage.[156] The Greek ἄνθος may sprout from יפרה, which is a root that could mean "blossom" (ἄνθος is equivalent to פרח in Isa 5:24 and 18:5).[157] Also, this rendering could be partly under the influence of 5:24, where in the Hebrew root and flower are parallel. Ottley points out that ἄνθος is used for a twig or shoot in Homer (πολὺ πρῶτος νέμεαι τέρεν' ἄνθεα ποίης; *Od*. 9.449), so it is a high register rendering of נצר.[158] This equivalence also occurs in the Theodotion's version of Dan 11:7, which describes a king that will be born from a particular daughter of a king: ועמד מנצר שרשיה כנו is rendered καὶ στήσεται ἐκ τοῦ ἄνθους τῆς ῥίζης αὐτοῦ τῆς ἑτοιμασίας αὐτοῦ.[159] Only here in Isa 11:1 is the word ἀναβαίνω an equivalent to פרה, though their meaning is similar. The association with Num 17:8 (LXX 17:23), where Aaron's staff sprouts flowers to show he is the rightful high priest, could be what the translator intends with this verse's rendering, having both a rod and a flower coming from the root. If the translator really was using an obscure word for branch (ῥάβδος) and a Homeric defi-

154. The third place גזע appears, Job 14:8, it is rendered στέλεχος (stump, crown of the root).

155. Martin Karrer, "῾Ρίζα-Wurzel und Geschlecht: Ein Motiv zwischen griechischer Antike, Septuaginta und Neuem Testament," in *Voces Biblicae: Septuagint Greek and Its Significance for the New Testament*, ed. Jan Joosten and Peter J. Tomson, CBET 49 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 63, 68–69. He points out that ῥίζα is used of a bed, which must be carved from a stump yet is still fixed deep in the earth. H. L. Ginsberg claims שרש refers to the root up until where the branches come out, thus also the trunk. See Ginsberg, "'Roots Below and Fruit Above' and Related Matters," in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies: Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, 20 August 1962*, ed. D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963)," 74–75.

156. According to Maurer, based on Sir 47:22, the phrase ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ιεσσαι was already a messianic formula ("ῥίζα," 6:987).

157. For more on the rendering of this word, see the passage in the section on "flowers" below (2.4.1). Baltzer et al. suggest the root פרח was read ("Esaias," 2:2535).

158. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:166.

159. See Baltzer et al., who point this out and the connection to Aaron's staff in Num 17:23 ("Esaias," 2:2534). The LXX of Dan 11:7 has φυτὸν ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης αὐτοῦ.

nition of ἄνθος to create an allusion to Num 17:8 (LXX 17:23), then it was a brilliant conceit, the sort that the Alexandrian γραμματικοί loved.[160]

While the translator appears to have taken some liberties, or at least misidentified some roots, the translation of שרש is literal (though it is rendered in the singular, and the pronominal suffix is dropped). A word in a parallel clause meaning not "root" but "stump" has also been rendered with ῥίζα. The translator seems to believe this metaphor could be easily understood and needs no explanation beyond what already appears in the context. In the Greek it is not clear in this verse whether the root of Jesse is the stock from which the ruler described in the passage comes or whether the root of Jesse is the person himself who will have kingly functions, establishing justice, etc. It is not until 11:10 that it is made clear that the "root of Jesse" is a person (a ruler); the "root" then shifts in 11:10 away from Jesse and to Jesse's descendent.[161]

The Targum interprets the rod as a king (מלכא), the stump as sons, the shoot as a messiah (משיחא), and the root as grandchildren (בני בנוהי).[162]

Isa 11:10

והיה ביום ההוא שרש ישי אשר עמד לנס עמים אליו גוים ידרשו והיתה מנחתו כבוד:

On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious.

Καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ιεσσαι καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσι, καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἀνάπαυσις αὐτοῦ τιμή.

And there shall be on that day the root of Iessai, even the one who stands up to rule nations; nations shall hope in him, and his rest shall be honor.

---

160. See Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 31.

161. Maurer believes the two verses have a different meaning ("ῥίζα," 6:986). In 11:1 it is a genitive of apposition (root that is Jesse), while in 11:10 it is a genitive of origin (root from Jesse). This explanation is likely because there is a parallel and synonymous term for some individual (the one arising to rule), as seen by the singular ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ. However, Karrer argues that the LXX is attempting to make the image in both places about lineage ("Ῥίζα-Wurzel und Geschlecht," 90–91).

162. "And a *king* shall come forth from the *sons* of Jesse, and *the Messiah* shall *be exalted* from the *sons of* his *sons*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 11:1).

As in 11:1, LXX Isaiah again renders the metaphor "root of Jesse" literally. Much of the context, however, is carefully reshaped. It interprets "to be a sign/ensign" (לנס) as "to rule" (ἄρχειν). This could be an interpretation of the metaphor "ensign," or it may be the interpretation of what it means for the root to be one "standing to test [נסה] the peoples," or perhaps as a verbal form corresponding to the Aramaic title נסיא was thought.[163] In Isa 11:12, 13:2, 18:3, and 33:23, נס is rendered with σημεῖον.[164] The metaphor is further interpreted in that the nations no longer seek the ensign (perhaps like mobilizing troops trying to find their commander's rallying point), but put their hope in the one ruling them.[165] The Greek speaks more concretely than the Hebrew but does not find it necessary to elaborate on what the root of Jesse means. The singular שרש of this verse is probably why the Greek made it singular in 11:1.[166] It seems clear from the Greek passage as a whole that the root of Jesse refers to the royal Davidic line. That the Greek in 11:1 removes the idea of the "stump" may express more continuity in this royal line than the Hebrew, which seems to suggest that the line was cut off but will be restored from the old root.

In the Targum of Isa 11:1 and 11:10, שרש has been rendered as grandson (בר בריה דישי and מבני בנוהי).[167]

The use of "root" as a metaphor for an individual, found in LXX Isa 11:10, can also be found in 1 Macc 1:10, where an evil root comes from the kings of Greece: καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ῥίζα ἁμαρτωλὸς Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανής. In Sir 47:22–23 David is said to be given a "root," meaning a descendent. A root can also be an individual in classical Greek literature. Aeschylus

---

163. For this last possibility, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. He also suggests the homonym נסיך, which is rendered with ἄρχων in Josh 13:21. See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2535. In Epicurus, fragment 409, we find the phrase ἀρχὴ καὶ ῥίζα πανὸς ἀγαθοῦ (Maurer, "ῥίζα," 6:985).

164. See Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 182–83.

165. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. He says it is another example of an image being interpreted personally.

166. For the relationship between משרשיו in 11:1 and שרש ישי in 11:10, see: Ginsberg, "Roots Below and Fruit Above," 72–76; Joachim Becker, "Wurzel und Wurzelsproß: Ein Beitrag zur hebräischen Lexikographie," *BZ* 20 (1976): 22–44; and Jacob Stromberg, "The 'Root of Jesse' in Isaiah 11:10: Postexilic Judah, or Postexilic Davidic King?" *JBL* 127 (2008): 655–59. Cf. Maurer, "ῥίζα," 6:986–87.

167. "And it will come to pass in that *time* that to the *son of the son* of Jesse *who is about to* stand as an ensign to the peoples, to him shall *kingdoms be obedient*, and his *resting place* will be glorious" (Tg. Neb. Isa 11:10).

makes a metaphor that if a certain individual is still alive his house can again be rebuilt.

ῥίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ᾽ εἰς δόμους, σκιὰν ὑπερτείνασα Σειρίου κυνός.
For while the root remains, foliage comes to a house, spreading shade over it against the dog-star Sirius. (Aeschylus, *Ag.* 965–966 [Sommerstein])

The vehicle "root" is also used to refer to family origins, as well, as we will see below.

In Isa 14:29–30 שרש is twice rendered with σπέρμα, but it appears with different ideas about what "seed" represents.

Isa 14:29–30
אל־תשמחי פלשת כלך כי נשבר שבט מכך כי־משרש נחש יצא צפע ופריו שרף מעופף: ורעו בכורי דלים ואביונים לבטח ירבצו והמתי ברעב שרשך ושאריתך יהרג:
Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken, for from the root of the snake will come forth an adder, and its fruit will be a flying fiery serpent. The firstborn of the poor will graze, and the needy lie down in safety; but I will make your root die of famine, and your remnant I will kill.

Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, πάντες οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι, συνετρίβη γὰρ ὁ ζυγὸς τοῦ παίοντος ὑμᾶς· ἐκ γὰρ σπέρματος ὄφεων ἐξελεύσεται ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων, καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι. καὶ βοσκηθήσονται πτωχοὶ δι᾽ αὐτοῦ, πτωχοὶ δὲ ἄνδρες ἐπ᾽ εἰρήνης ἀναπαύσονται· ἀνελεῖ δὲ λιμῷ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὸ κατάλειμμά σου ἀνελεῖ.
May you not rejoice, all you allophyles, for the yoke of him who struck you is broken, for from the seed of snakes will come forth the offspring of snakes, and their offspring will come forth as flying snakes. And the poor will graze through him, and poor men will rest in peace, but he will wipe out your *seed* with famine, and your remnant he will wipe out.

The Greek of this passage has adjusted several of the metaphors by changing their vehicles. First of all, שבט has become ὁ ζυγός, an unusual equivalent

seen only here and twice in Isa 14:5.[168] In both passages the change from
"rod" to "yoke" is not due to the issue of striking but to the connotations of
the word. Yoke is a rather common image of hardship and oppression; BDB
lists thirty-two occurrences of על with this figurative sense. It is also used
several other times in Isaiah with this meaning (9:3, 10:27, 14:25, and 47:6).[169]
The word שבט can be used with a similar figurative meaning, according to
BDB, but is more a figure of national chastisement (as in Isa 10:5, 24; 14:29;
30:31; Lam 3:1) or a symbol of conquest.[170] The LXX translator seems to
have favored in Isa 14:29 a more common image of oppression and so chose
"yoke," which also harmonizes it with the image in 14:25.

Important in 14:29–30, for our purposes, is that "root" has twice been
rendered "seed." As a metaphor for offspring, "seed" is a clearer and more
common vehicle than "root," both in Greek and Hebrew.[171] But it seems
that clarity would have been achieved in 14:29 simply with the phrase
ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων.[172] We have already seen LXX Isaiah's aversion to "fruit" as
a metaphor for offspring, preferring to use the more general ἔκγονος. The
additional ἔκγονος in this verse may be for clarity's sake, to show three gen-
erations: the seed, the asps, and the flying snakes. In addition, the change
from "root" to "seed" may be because a dead metaphor is less bold and
avoids turning the thick imagery of this passage into a riddle. The Tagum
also understands three generations, since it interprets כי־משרש נחש יצא
צפע with ארי מבני בנוהי דישי יפוק משיח.[173]

---

168. Here too, שבט (along with מטה) has been rendered with ζυγός. Notice that in
the Greek it is not the rod/yoke that was striking, but God has broken it (the yoke in
the Greek) by striking it in anger, etc. Later in 14:29, likewise, the yoke does not strike,
but the one who owned the yoke or put it on Philistia.

169. BDB, s.v. "עֹל."

170. BDB, s.v. "שֵׁבֶט," also lists some examples where it refers to individual chas-
tisement, though none occur in Isaiah. For שבט as a symbol of conquest, see Num
24:17, Ps 2:9, Ps 125:3, Prov 22:8. The word מטה can similarly be used figuratively of
oppression, but always in close association with שבט and only in Isaiah 10:5, 24; 14:5;
30:32 (see BDB s.v. "מַטֶּה").

171. Also at work could be that "seed" is associated with remnant, as we have
seen. But on the other hand, in 1 Esd 8:78, 87, 88, and 89, "remnant" is rendered "root."
For "root" referring to an individual, see Dan 4:26 and 1 Macc 1:10, though in these
places the metaphor is used a bit differently. Karrer points out that "seed" is a more
common metaphor than "root" for progeny in Classical Greek ("Ῥίζα-Wurzel und
Geschlecht," 72–73).

172. This Greek phrase also occurs in 11:8 and 59:5 (Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:182).

173. "Rejoice not, all you *Philistines*, because *the ruler* who was *subjugating* you is

In verse 30, "seed" again is used rather than "root." In the Hebrew the root being destroyed probably shows the totality of the destruction, such that the "plant" will have no chance to grow back. The Greek translator probably thinks "seed" better represents the totality of the destruction in that all the seed will be destroyed; as we have seen, σπέρμα is sometimes used as a rendering of words meaning "remnant." That in the Greek they are in synonymous parallelism strengthens the argument that the translator understood "seed" to represent in some way the idea of a remnant. A similar metaphor is found in Sophocles *Ant.* 600, though there he uses "root" to talk about the last family member of Oedipus's house.

The Targum of 14:29 was mentioned in the section on fruit, above. In 14:29 "root" is interpreted as "your son" (בנך), and "remnant" is rendered with the Aramaic cognate שאר.

2.3.2. Root as Permanence or Firmness

In several places Isaiah uses roots to talk about people being established or being firm; this occurs along with other plant imagery. Basson describes this metaphorical use of root as denoting "the foundation of a person in a specific location."[174]

Isa 27:6

הבאים ישרש יעקב יציץ ופרח ישראל ומלאו פני־תבל תנובה:

In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, and fill the whole world with fruit.

οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ιακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ισραηλ, καὶ ἐμπλησθήσεται ἡ οἰκουμένη τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ.

Those who are coming are the children of Iacob; Israel shall bud and blossom, and the world will be filled with his fruit.

We have examined this passage already in the section on fruit (2.2.2). The phrase הנה ימים באים is more common than what we have here (הבאים),

---

broken, for *from the sons of the sons of Jesse the Messiah* will come forth, and his *deeds* will be *among you* as a *wounding* serpent. And the *needy of the people* will *be nurtured*, and the poor *in his days* will *dwell* in safety; but *he* will kill your *sons* with hunger and *the* remnant *of* your *people* he will slay" (Tg. Neb. Isa 14:29–30).

174. Basson, "People Are Plants," 578.

though as Van der Kooij has pointed out, all the ancient versions under-
stand the phrase in 27:6 to be about people.[175] In 41:22, the substantive
participle הבאות is translated literally with τὰ ἐπερχόμενα. In Isa 27:6 it is
also translated literally, but in a substantive rather than temporal sense.
Trying to read this participle with the rest of the clause, the translator
created a predicative clause (or at least an explanation via a clause in appo-
sition) by rendering ישרש with a noun.[176] In the Hebrew, the verse is a
metaphor describing a whole process, starting with establishment, continu-
ing in development, and climaxing in multiplication (cf. Jer 12:2). A plant
metaphor is perfect for this idea. The LXX preserves this image, except
for the first step. The phrase ישרש יעקב is identified with "those coming,"
and interpreted by the translator to be children (τέκνα).[177] It is somewhat
counterintuitive that the translator would suppose "root" should mean
offspring. The translator was not making a simple substitution of root for
children, based on a substitution view of metaphor, but rather rendered
the intent of the clause based on his understanding of the entire verse. That
Israel will fill the inhabited world with fruit refers to children, so "those
coming" are clearly defined by the translator as "the children of Jacob," to
make the entire image perfectly clear. Likewise, the LXX Isaiah translator
thought "root of Jesse" in 11:10 could refer to a descendent from Jesse,
though there it is an individual. A similar metaphor is used, though in a
curse, in Sir 23:25, where it says a woman's children will not take root nor
her branches bear fruit.

The Targum speaks more broadly in Isa 27:6, describing the return
from exile. The specific phrase becomes יתילדון דבית יעקב.[178]

---

175. Van der Kooij, "Text-Critical Notes," 15. The phrase הנה ימים באים occurs in
1 Sam 2:31; 2 Kgs 20:17; Isa 38:6 (rendered ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται); Jer 7:32, 9:24, 16:14,
19:6, 23:5, 23:7, 30:3, 31:27, 31:31, 48:12, 49:2, 51:47, 51:52; Amos 8:11, 9:13.

176. Cf. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:234. For Isa 27:6, Baltzer et al. suggest the trans-
lator read the plural שרשי ("Esaias," 2:2573). The *hiphil* form of the verb occurs in Ps
80:9 (Eng 80:10), where it is rendered κατεφύτευσας τὰς ῥίζας in the Greek (LXX Ps
79:10). Also, a *hiphil* participle occurs in Job 5:3, rendered ῥίζαν βάλλοντας. The only
other verbal form of שרש occurring in Isaiah is in 40:24, to be discussed below.

177. Similarly, LXX Jer 12:2 has added the idea of bearing children in associa-
tion with taking root, though possibly, if the *Vorlage* was the same, by reading ילכו
as ילדו and then rendering it with ἐτεκνοποίησαν. See Andreas Vonach, "Jeremias,"
LXX.E 2:2758.

178. "*They shall be gathered from among their exiles and they shall return to their*

It seems odd to imagine root denoting offspring instead of source, but Jacob Stromberg shows that this sort of image is possible in surrounding cultures.[179] He shows examples from Ugaritic literature that use *šrš* in synonymous parallelism with *bn*.[180] He also gives some examples from Aramaic literature (though the word for root used is עקר) as well as from Phoenician literature.[181]

Following Becker, Stromberg discusses some possible uses of "root" to mean "offspring" or "root shoot" in the Hebrew Bible.[182] The passages under discussion are Prov 12:3, 7 and Job 5:3. In the case of Prov 12:3, even taken with 12:7, it is too much to say that *root* refers specifically to offspring. The Job passage likewise is not obviously talking about offspring but is more likely about stability and success in general. Stromberg also shows examples of *root* representing offspring in Sirach 47:22 and in the Targum of Isa 11:10 (rendered as "grandson," as we have seen) and of Mal 3:19 (rendered בר).[183]

BDAG offers an example of a Greek author using ῥίζα metaphorically to refer to "that which grows from a root, shoot, scion."[184] The example, from Pseudo-Apollodorus, is quite strong.

> Ἀγήνωρ μὲν οὖν εἰς Φοινίκην ἀπαλλαγεὶς ἐβασίλευσε, κἀκεῖ τῆς μεγάλης ῥίζης ἐγένετο γενεάρχης·
> Agenor departed to Phoenicia and reigned there, and there he became the ancestor of the great stock. (Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.1.4 [Frazer])[185]

In this passage Agenor is implied to be a sort of seed from which his descendants grew. They are roots holding his family firmly in Phoenicia.

---

land, there those of the house of* Jacob will *receive (children), those of the house of* Israel *will grow and increase*, and *sons' sons* will fill the face of the world" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:6).

179. Stromberg, "Root of Jesse," 662–65.

180. Stromberg, "Root of Jesse," 663. He lists *KTU* 1.17 i:20, i:25, ii:14–15.

181. Stromberg, "Root of Jesse," 663–64.

182. Stromberg, "Root of Jesse," 663.

183. Stromberg, "Root of Jesse," 662.

184. BDAG, s.v. "ῥίζα." Cf. Maurer, "ῥίζα," 6:987, for what he calls the "passive" sense of the metaphor.

185. The translation of ῥίζα with "stock" is interesting, since "stock" is the same metaphor as גזע used in Isa 11:1, where LXX rendered ῥίζα.

The metaphor "root" functions not only to refer to offspring but also to show their establishment.

Another figurative use of "root" is by metonymy in a merism. It can be found often in the Hebrew Bible paired with branch, leaves, or fruit. It occurs in a merism in Job 18:16, 29:19; Mal 3:19; and Ezek 17:7, 9.[186] It occurs twice in a merism in Isaiah.

> Isa 37:31
>
> ויספה פליטת בית־יהודה הנשארה שרש למטה ועשה פרי למעלה:
>
> The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward.
>
> καὶ ἔσονται οἱ καταλελειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ιουδαίᾳ φυήσουσι ῥίζαν κάτω καὶ ποιήσουσι σπέρμα ἄνω.
>
> And those that are left in Judea shall take root downward and bear seed upward.

Of note in this verse is that while שרש is rendered literally, the parallel term (which completes a merism in Hebrew) is rendered with σπέρμα. The addition φυήσουσιν clarifies the clause, and is reminiscent of the LXX's translation of *hiphil* verbal forms of שרש.[187] The meaning seems to be in both languages that the remnant will be established in the land (take root) and multiply (bear fruit/seed). The LXX rendering of "seed" may better express the multiplying potential of the remnant. The "house of Judah" is instead the region "Judea." 1QIsaª has two slight differences, though they shed no light on the LXX: instead of ויספה it has ואספה, and instead of הנשארה it has והנמצא.[188] The Targum makes a simile with the image of the remnants being like a tree sending down roots.[189]

---

186. Cf. 2 Kgs 19:30, Isa 14:29, 37:31, Ezek 17:9, Hos 9:16, Amos 2:9. Ginsberg argued that in passages where "fruit" was used, it should be understood to mean "branch" ("Roots Below and Fruit Above," 72–76); this, however glosses over the different nuances of the image root-branch versus root-fruit. For a different critique of Ginsberg, see Becker, "Wurzel und Wurzelsproß," 22–44. See also Sir 23:25.

187. See MT Ps 80:9 (LXX 79:10) and Job 5:3 above. Usually verbal forms are rendered with ῥιζόω.

188. Also, instead of למעלה it has just מעלה.

189. "And the *delivered* of the house of Judah will continue *and will* be left *as a tree which sends* its roots downward, and *raises its top* upward" (Tg. Neb. Isa 37:31).

Isa 5:24

לכן כאכל קש לשון אש וחשש להבה ירפה שרשם כמק יהיה ופרחם
כאבק יעלה כי מאסו את תורת יהוה צבאות ואת אמרת קדוש־ישראל
נאצו:

Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will become rotten, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the instruction of the LORD of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

διὰ τοῦτο ὃν τρόπον καυθήσεται καλάμη ὑπὸ ἄνθρακος πυρὸς καὶ συγκαυθήσεται ὑπὸ φλογὸς ἀνειμένης, ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν ὡς χνοῦς ἔσται, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται·οὐ γὰρ ἠθέλησαν τὸν νόμον κυρίου σαβαωθ, ἀλλὰ τὸ λόγιον τοῦ ἁγίου Ισραηλ παρώξυναν.
Therefore, as stubble will be burned by a coal of fire and burned up by an *unrestrained* flame, so their root will be like fine dust and their blossom go up like dust; for they did not want the law of the Lord Sabaoth but have provoked the oracle of the Holy One of Israel.

We will discuss the first part of this verse below (3.3.2.1.1). The second "panel" of the comparison is not only metaphorical but again is a simile. Ordinarily the comparison would be: "like a tongue of flame consumes …, so their root will become rotten." But here there is another simile: "so their root will become *like* decay." "Root" itself is not meant literally, so why do we need this additional simile? The meaning is clear enough, and the rhetorical power of the construction is self-apparent.

The use of root here is metonymic, in that along with flower it forms a merism standing for the whole people of Israel (or at least all the people who rejected the instruction of the LORD). Root and flower are a logical word pair (verbal forms are in parallel in Hos 14:6), but usually we see either the merism root and fruit (2 Kgs 19:30, Amos 2:9) or root and branch (Job 18:6, 29:19, Mal 3:19). The meaning here is the opposite of establishment—the entire plant will come to an end. The word ἄνθος is used for פרח only here and in Isa 18:5. The more common equivalent is βλαστός, though it does not occur in LXX Isaiah.

The comparison כמק is rendered with χνοῦς, possibly due to the parallel term κονιορτός (see also 17:13, 29:5, where the same Greek terms are parallel, although the former renders מץ). The word χνοῦς is usually used

for מץ.[190] It would seem the exact meaning of the word was not known; in Isa 3:24 it is rendered with κονιορτός. The related verb מקק occurs in Isa 34:4, but the LXX lacks the entire phrase. Otherwise, this panel of the comparison is rendered quite literally. It is unclear if we should understand χνοῦς to refer to "chaff" and continue the grain idea of stubble in the previous image, or if it should mean something more like dust, and agree with the following image. Root is left as the merism root–flower. The comparison, though, has changed from frailty to uncontrollable devastation. The repeated synonyms again make for more unity in the passage. In the Targum, "root" is rendered as the increase of their strength (מסגי תוקפהון כשבז יהי), and their blossom means the "mammon" of their oppression.[191]

The changes in the metaphors of this verse seem primarily due to the understanding of the vocabulary and are not an attempt to interpret or update the imagery. The LXX does not find it necessary to explain or alter the use of "root" as a part of a merism. It is unclear if the root and fruit are again depicting Judah as the vine or vineyard of 5:1–6, or if this is an independent use of the metaphor of Israel as God's special plant.

In classical literature it is also possible to talk about destroying a family or people by attacking their root.

> Ὅτι μετὰ τὴν Ἱερωνύμου τελευτὴν οἱ Συρακούσιοι ἐλθόντες εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἐψηφίσαντο τοὺς συγγενεῖς τοῦ τυράννου κολάσαι καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ὁμοίως τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἀνελεῖν, καὶ μηδὲ ῥίζαν ἀπολιπεῖν τυραννικῆς συγγενείας.
>
> After the death of Hieronymus, the Syracusans, having met in assembly, voted to punish the whole family of the tyrant and to put them all to death, men and women alike, in order to uproot completely the tyrant stock. (Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 26.15 [Walton])[192]

---

190. For an argument that this is what the translator read, see Hugh G. M. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, vol. 1 of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27*, ICC (London: T&T Clark, 2006), 389. We will discuss chaff in the section on grain (3.3).

191. "Therefore *they shall be* devour*ed as the* chaff *in the* fire, and as *stubble* in the flame; *the increase of* their *strength* will be as rottenness, and *the mammon of* their *oppression* as *the* dust *which flies*; for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and have despised the *Memra* of the Holy One of Israel" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:24).

192. This passage is sometimes numbered 26.16a.

The reference to Hieronymus's family does not necessarily imply his descendants; it could be his extended family as well. If that is the case, root does not refer specifically to his offspring, but to his whole family, which produced him. Presumably the entire family is a tyrannical plant that needs to be removed completely, even its roots, so no tyrant again grows from it.

In one place, "root" is used in a simile.

Isa 53:2

ויעל כיונק לפניו וכשרש מארץ ציה לא־תאר לו ולא הדר ונראהו ולא־
מראה ונחמדהו:

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

ἀνέτειλε μὲν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ, οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα· καὶ εἴδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος·[193]

He grew up before him like a child, like a root in a thirsty land; he had no form or glory, and we saw him, and he had no form or beauty.

The Hebrew uses plant imagery to show growth and development. The root out of the dry land expresses "feeble, sickly growth," reinforcing his lack of form and majesty.[194] The change from the root being "from" the dry land to "in" it could be from seeing ב instead of מ, but it is more likely conceptual, since roots grow in the ground, generally, not from it. The Greek alters the image by reading יונק as the participle from ינק (to suck), which means babe or child.[195] The root simile is rendered literally (unlike in 27:6, where "root" was rendered with τέκνον), though it is now explained by the parallel term παιδίον.[196] This parallel is even closer if we take the reading

---

193. The reading ἀνέτειλε μέν (Ziegler, *Isaias*) is a conjecture. The manuscripts and Rahlfs have ἀνηγγείλαμεν.

194. Joseph Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. in 1 vol. (Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1992), 2:291.

195. See *HALOT*, s.v. "יונק." We will discuss this in the section on sprouts (2.6.1).

196. For the free rendering καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 128.

of the manuscripts (ἀνηγγείλαμεν instead of the conjectured ἀνέτειλε μέν), so that it would say: "We announced before him: '[he is] like a child, like a root….'"[197] Here again we have a root referring to an individual.

The Targum adds that they are like a tree sending its roots by streams of water, an image found in Ps 1. Rather than "him" having no special appearance, in the Targum it is the opposite; his appearance is remarkable.[198]

The one remaining use of "root" in Isaiah occurs in an extended metaphor.

Isa 40:24

אַף בַּל־נִטָּעוּ אַף בַּל־זֹרָעוּ אַף בַּל־שֹׁרֵשׁ בָּאָרֶץ גִּזְעָם וְגַם־נָשַׁף בָּהֶם וַיִּבָשׁוּ וּסְעָרָה כַּקַּשׁ תִּשָּׂאֵם:

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their *stock* taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like *chaff*.

οὐ γὰρ μὴ σπείρωσιν οὐδὲ μὴ φυτεύσωσιν, οὐδὲ μὴ ῥιζωθῇ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν· ἔπνευσεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν, καὶ καταιγὶς ὡς φρύγανα ἀναλήμψεται αὐτούς.

For they will not sow, nor will they plant, neither will their root take root in the earth; he blew upon them, and they withered, and a tempest will carry them off like brushwood.

In the Hebrew the metaphor reinforces the frailty and futility of the princes of the earth in 40:23. They barely begin, and they are already at their end. The Greek, however, turns the metaphor into a prophecy that the actions of the princes will be ineffective and that their land will be as nothing. This is a continuation of the Greek understanding of 40:23. This change in the translation is achieved in 40:24 by making the princes and the land the subjects instead of the objects of the verbs. As in Isa 11:1, גֶזַע has been rendered with ῥίζα, perhaps to reduce the number of terms for stylistic reasons. The reversal of the main verbs σπείρωσιν and φυτεύσωσιν may be to

---

197. See notes in LXX.D and Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2666.

198. "And *the righteous shall be exalted* before him, *behold*, like *tufts which sprout*, and like *a tree which sends its roots by streams of waters, so holy generations will increase on the* land *which was needing him; his appearance is* not *a common appearance and his fearfulness is* not *an ordinary fearfulness, and his brilliance will be holy brilliance*, that *everyone who* looks at him will *consider* him" (Tg. Neb. Isa 53:2).

make a more logical progression, from seed sown (falling through the air), to a plant planted, to its making roots under the earth.[199] In the Targum it is interpreted: יתרבון בארעא בניהון.[200]

2.3.3. Summary

Part of the difficulty in understanding a metaphor is that the same vehicle can be used to represent different tenors. In this section we saw how the translator took advantage of this fact (though perhaps not deliberately) to change the "root of Jesse" into an individual (11:1, 10). Also, the translator appears to want to avoid confusion and so renders "root" as "seed" (14:30), since to him it is a metaphor more closely related to the concept of a remnant. In 14:29, where "root" refers to the family or stock from which someone comes, the translator renders it with "seed," since this is a common metaphor, as we saw above. The translator interprets "root" in 27:6 as children, which is the same way the Targum understands the phrase. Similarly, in 53:2 "root" is rendered literally, but the parallel term for a young shoot is understood to mean "child," coloring the meaning of "root." In 37:31 the "root" is rendered literally, but its word pair is changed from "fruit" to "seed"; as we have seen, the translator seems to have an aversion to fruit. In 5:24 "root" is rendered literally for the same purpose as the Hebrew text. In 40:24 the style of the passage is adjusted in translation, but the metaphor is not changed.

Most of the time (11:1, 10; 14:29, 30; 27:6; 40:24) the Targum understands "root" to refer to sons or grandsons. In 37:31 the merism becomes similes to describe a tree metaphor that the Targum has provided. In 5:24 root is interpreted as representing the increase of strength, and its parallel blossom is oppression. In 53:2 the root is the same, but the dry ground has become streams of water.

---

199. Troxel mentions this verse when he says he finds it impossible to attribute every transposition of letters or words to the work of the translator (*LXX-Isaiah*, 75).

200. "*Although* they *grow*, *although* they *increase*, *although* their *sons are exalted* in the earth, he *sends his anger* among them, and they are ashamed and *his Memra*, as the *whirlwind* the chaff, will *scatter* them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 40:24).

2.4. Flowers

2.4.1. Hebrew Words for "Flower"

In Isaiah, the word צִיץ is used to evoke the idea of flowers as something delicate and frail, which quickly withers or is easily crushed. In Classical Greek, ἄνθος can have a metaphorical meaning of something choice or the height of something (bad or good).[201]

> Isa 28:1, 4
> הוי עטרת גאות שכרי אפרים וציץ נבל צבי תפארתו אשר על־ראש גיא־
> שמנים הלומי יין: ... והיתה ציצת נבל צבי תפארתו אשר על־ראש גיא
> שמנים כבכורה בטרם קיץ אשר יראה הראה אותה בעודה בכפו יבלענה:
> *Woe to* the proud garland of the drunkards of Ephraim, and the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of those bloated with rich food, of those overcome with wine! … And the fading flower of its glorious beauty, which is on the head of those bloated with rich food, will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer; whoever sees it, eats it up as soon as it comes to hand.
>
> Οὐαὶ τῷ στεφάνῳ τῆς ὕβρεως, οἱ μισθωτοὶ Εφραιμ· τὸ ἄνθος τὸ ἐκπεσὸν ἐκ τῆς δόξης ἐπὶ τῆς κορυφῆς τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ παχέος, οἱ μεθύοντες ἄνευ οἴνου. ... καὶ ἔσται τὸ ἄνθος τὸ ἐκπεσὸν τῆς ἐλπίδος τῆς δόξης ἐπ᾽ ἄκρου τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ ὡς πρόδρομος σύκου, ὁ ἰδὼν αὐτὸ πρὶν ἢ εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν θελήσει αὐτὸ καταπιεῖν.
> *Woe to* the crown of pride, the hired workers of Ephraim, the flower that has fallen from its glory on the top of the stout mountain—those who are drunk without wine! … And the flower that has fallen from its glorious hope on the topmost of the lofty mountain will be like an early fig; the one who sees it will want to eat it up before he takes it into his hand.

In this passage the imagery is poured on thickly. Perhaps Demetrius would have been pleased with this for creating terrifying riddles and forcefulness of style (see Demetrius, *Eloc.* 267–274). The Greek is close to the Hebrew

---

201. LSJ, s.v. "ἄνθος," II.

but clarifies all the relationships of the various elements. In Hebrew, the conjunction may suggest that the "crown" and the "fading flower" are two different things, but in Greek they are put into direct apposition, thus equating them, along with the hired workers of Ephraim. This closer connection makes the "crown" being trampled in verse 3 resonate more clearly with the idea of a frail flower being crushed. It is worth mentioning that Aristotle says asyndeton is useful for creating amplification (*Rhet.* 3.12.2–4).

The LXX has made some interesting interpretations of this passage, as with the entire chapter. Our main interest, though, is that rather than the "fading/fallen flower" being one image in apposition to others like in the Hebrew, in the Greek it is given a longer description. Many English translations interpret וציץ נבל צבי תפארתו as a single construct chain, but this is difficult grammatically with the adjective where it is.[202] Another reading is as a predicate clause: "a flower doomed to fade is its splendid beauty."[203] That the flower falls at the head of a fertile mountain makes a more dramatic image. If the flower were in the desert, a frail plant in a harsh environment, the flower becomes something resilient and tough. But if it fails even in a fertile place, there is a greater contrast. The Greek of the last clause inserts a negation to make another strong contrast; they are drunk without wine, but perhaps with their own pride.

In verse 4, where nearly the same phrase again occurs, the LXX gives a different rendering. In verse 1, צבי is either not rendered, or as Troxel suggests, was collapsed with תפארתו and became ἐκ τῆς δόξης.[204] The second occurrence, however, like in Isa 24:16 and 28:5, is rendered with ἐλπίς.[205] Also changed from verse 1, ἄκρος is used instead of κορυφή, and ὑψηλός instead of παχύς.[206] This could be for the sake of variety, or the translator may have taken the repetition of the phrase as an opportunity to explain it by using different vocabulary.

Both in 28:1 and 4, the flower image is used to show glory that fades and falls away. This along with the "crown" may be a play on words, refer-

---

202. E.g., ESV and NRSV.
203. Blenkensop, *Isaiah 1–39*, 385–86.
204. Troxel points out a similar case in Isa 13:19 (*LXX-Isaiah*, 270).
205. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:237.
206. Ottley thinks the use of ὑψηλός "looks like positive carelessness" (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:237). For LXX Isaiah's use and nonuse of synonyms, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 17–21.

ring to something like the צִיץ in Exod 28:36 that the high priest is to wear on his turban.[207] The image of a fading flower is easy to understand and is rendered literally in Greek, though the passage is clarified and improved stylistically in Greek. It is also improved by the happy coincidence that ἄνθος in classical literature can work as the superlative of a thing (much like flower in English usage).[208] According to LSJ, ἄνθος can also refer to the "pride" or "honor" of someone, as in Aeschylus.

> τὸ σὸν γὰρ ἄνθος, παντέχνου πυρὸς σέλας, θνητοῖσι κλέψας ὤπασεν.
> For it was your glory, the gleam of fire that makes all skills attainable, that he stole and gave to mortals. (Aeschylus, *Prom.* 7–8 [Sommerstein])

The translator of Exodus knew this superlative meaning of ἄνθος, since in Exod 30:23 he rendered the phrase וְאַתָּה קַח־לְךָ בְּשָׂמִים רֹאשׁ מָר־דְּרוֹר חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת with καὶ σὺ λαβὲ ἡδύσματα, τὸ ἄνθος σμύρνης ἐκλεκτῆς πεντακοσίους σίκλους.

So, as we have seen, the translation of the imagery in 28:1, 4 has been tightened and focused to express more clearly the falling away of the pride and glory of some group of people.

The Targum interprets the verse as referring to the leadership.[209] The crown of the drunkards is interpreted as the crown of the proud and foolish prince of Israel (כתרא לגיוותנא טפשא רבא דישראל), and the fading flower is interpreted as the diadem of the wicked of the house of the sanctuary of his praise (מצנפתא לרשיעא דבית מקדשא תשבחתיה). The valley of fatness is rendered literally, but presumably represents Jerusalem or the temple, since it has become the place where these bad leaders are drunk.

In Isa 40:6–8 we again see in Greek the constellation of terms δόξα, (ἐκ)πίπτω, and ἄνθος.

---

207. Cf. Tg. Neb. Isa 28:1–4, where צִיץ is rendered with מצנפה (turban). See Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 168.

208. LSJ, s.v. "ἄνθος," II.2.

209. "Woe to *him who gives the* crown *to the* proud, *the foolish master of Israel*, and *gives the turban to the wicked one of the sanctuary* of his praise, which is on the head of the rich valley of those *wounded* with wine! … and *he who gives the turban to the wicked one of the sanctuary* of his praise, which is on the head of the rich valley, will be like a first-ripe fig before the summer: when a man sees it, he eats it up as soon as it is in his hand" (Tg. Neb. 28:1, 4).

Isa 40:6–8

קוֹל אֹמֵר קְרָא וְאָמַר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל־הַבָּשָׂר חָצִיר וְכָל־חַסְדּוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה׃
יָבֵשׁ חָצִיר נָבֵל צִיץ כִּי רוּחַ יְהוָה נָשְׁבָה בּוֹ אָכֵן חָצִיר הָעָם׃ יָבֵשׁ חָצִיר נָבֵל
צִיץ וּדְבַר־אֱלֹהֵינוּ יָקוּם לְעוֹלָם׃

A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people
are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass
withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lᴏʀᴅ blows upon
it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades;
but the word of our God will stand forever.

φωνὴ λέγοντος Βόησον· καὶ εἶπα Τί βοήσω; Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ
πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ
ἄνθος ἐξέπεσε, τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
A voice of one saying, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?"
All flesh is grass; all the glory of man is like the flower of grass. The
grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, but the word of our
God remains forever.

In verse 6 the LXX makes a few modifications. It turns ואמר into the first-
person, as does 1QIsaᵃ and some modern translations, since it better fits
the context of the prophet retelling an experience he had.[210] The render-
ing of חסד with δόξα can be found elsewhere in Sir 44:1 and 1 Esd 5:58 for
Ezra 3:11.[211] In the context of 40:6, δόξα is more appropriate than the usual
equivalent ἔλεος, since it can be applied both to the flower and to what it
represents.[212] Brockington argued that the translator of Isaiah has made
the term δόξα his own, using it in such a way as to absorb the meanings

---

210. E.g., ESV and NRSV.

211. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2646. BDB's definition "lovely appearance" is unique
to this passage (BDB, s.v. "חֶסֶד"). It is an unusual use of the word. See L. H. Brocking-
ton, "The Greek Translator of Isaiah and His Interest in ΔΟΞΑ," *VT* 1 (1951): 23–32,
for more on LXX Isaiah's use of this term. See also Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 128–30.

212. If the meaning "opinion" or "judgment" for δόξα is used (see LSJ, s.v. "δόξα"),
it better draws together the contrast between the "judgment of man" and the "word
of our God" in v. 8 and the "glory of God" in v. 5 (Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 150).
The Targum explains the passage this way in 40:8, where it renders נבל ציץ with אבדו
עשתונוהי, "their thoughts/plans perish." Gerhard Kittel, however, says that the mean-
ing "opinion" for δόξα in biblical Greek has "disappeared completely," and that in
40:6–7 its meaning has to do with brightness and glory (cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*,
150). See Kittel, "δόξα: The NT Use of δόξα, I," *TDNT* 2:237. However, Muraoka lists

"brightness, beauty, splendor, majesty" from the many Hebrew terms it represents.[213] Ziegler points out that the use of δόξα may have been under the influence of the fading flower in 28:1.[214] In any case, it is appropriate in the Greek in that it can describe both the flower and humans and draws attention to the contrast with the glory of the LORD in 40:5.

The LXX explicates the pronoun on חסדו by means of the plus ἀνθρώπου; this also explains the meaning of σάρξ.[215] In the Bible, בשר is commonly used to represent by metonymy all of humanity, and most of the LXX translates this literally with σάρξ. In classical Greek, however, σάρξ does not carry this meaning.[216] Another alteration is that the flower is not "of the field," as in Hebrew, but is the flower "of grass." Ziegler calls this a sloppy (*nachlässige*) rendering under the influence of the other references to grass in the passage.[217] But it may have a rhetorical purpose in that it tightens the relationship between the elements and brings the metaphor and the simile together into one compact image. Also of note is that the LXX follows the Hebrew formula of a metaphor followed by a simile and does not make both of them similes.[218]

Verse 7, or a part of it, along with the beginning of verse 8 is not present in the LXX.[219] As we would expect, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion have this text, according to Ziegler's apparatus. The common explanation is that the passage was dropped due to homoioteleuton or parablepsis.[220] This seems to be the case for 1QIsaᵃ, where the phrase is inserted inter-

---

Isa 11:3 and Sir 8:14 for the definition "an opinion which appears to be or commonly held to be right" (*GELS*, s.v. "δόξα").

213. Brockington, "Greek Translator of Isaiah," 31–32.

214. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 150. In 28:1, 4 we also find the flower falling (ἐκπίπτω), as Baltzer et al. point out ("Esaias," 2:2646).

215. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2646.

216. See LSJ, s.v. "σάρξ."

217. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 150.

218. For LXX Isaiah's penchant for inserting comparative markers in clauses parallel to similes, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 90–92.

219. For the possibility that it was dropped due to parablepsis or was not originally in the Hebrew, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 484.

220. See for example Karl Elliger, *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, vol. 1 of *Deuterojesaja*, BKAT 11 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978), 21–22. While not convinced this can explain all the texts related to this verse, he does think there is no sufficient ground to suppose the verse was deliberately omitted.

linearily and in the margin. Ulrich thinks it is a later gloss and was not present in the LXX or the Qumran *Vorlage*.[221]

The verbs of verse 7 are translated in the usual way: aorist for *qatal*. In this case it makes for good Greek, since they work as gnomic aorists that describe a general truth.[222] The passage in the Greek makes for a nice urbane saying, as Aristotle would describe it, that communicates an idea in a compact and easily understood way.[223] It uses a metaphor that is neither too strange nor too difficult to understand. It features an antithesis (contrasting man's frailty with God's eternity). And it has actualization by use of the gnomic aorists depicting the grass withering and the flower falling. These are the three features Aristotle describes: "We ought therefore to aim at three things: metaphor, antithesis, actuality" (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.10.6 [Freese]). Perhaps the possibility is worth considering that the translator has dropped verse 7 because it is too crowded and "frigid," upsetting the succinctness of the urbane statement.[224] Even if it is not accepted that verse 7 was omitted for the sake of rhetoric, the passage as a whole has had its imagery focused and tightened to express better the idea of the frailty of humankind. In Hesiod, we find the image of a withering plant used for humanity losing strength: "and easily he [Zeus] straightens the crooked and withers the manly" (ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει; Hesiod, *Op.* 7 [Most]).

The Targum interprets flower (ציץ) as chaff (מוצא), and the comparison is to strength (תקפהון) instead of חסד.[225] In verses 7–8 it is not the people (העם), but the wicked among the people (רשיעיא בעמא) who are the tenor of the metaphor. As mentioned above, the wicked and their thoughts are said to perish. This effectively changes the metaphor to that of chaff being blown away, seen in Isa 17:13, 29:5, 41:2, 47:14, and so on.[226]

---

221. Eugene Ulrich, "The Developmental Composition of the Book of Isaiah: Light from 1QIsaᵃ on Additions in the MT," *DSD* 8 (2001): 299–301.

222. On the gnomic aorist, see Smyth §1931.

223. Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.10, particularly paragraph 2.

224. Aristotle blames frigid style on the misuse of compound words, strange words, epithets that are too long or crowded, and inappropriate metaphors (*Rhet.* 3.3).

225. "A voice *of one who says, "Prophesy!"* And he *answered and* said, "What shall I *prophesy*?" All *the wicked are as the* grass, and all *their strength* like the *chaff* of the field. The grass withers, *its* flower fades, for the spirit *from* the Lord blows upon it; surely *the wicked among* the people *are reckoned as the* grass. *The wicked dies, his conceptions perish*; but the word of our God stand*s* for ever" (Tg. Neb. Isa 40:6–8).

226. We will discuss chaff metaphors below (3.3.2.1 and 3.3.2.3).

Another word for flower (or perhaps "bud" or "what sprouts" are better definitions) in Isaiah is פרח, rendered with ἄνθος.[227] Here too, it can imply frailty. We have already discussed 11:1 where נצר is rendered with ἄνθος, and is parallel to ῥάβδος. In Isa 5:24 it occurs in a merism with שרש, and is said to become like dust.[228] In 18:5 two terms for flower are each rendered with ἄνθος, namely, פרח and נצה.[229] In 35:1 the LXX uses a specific flower name for a specific flower given in Hebrew, so חבצלת is rendered with κρίνον.[230] In this passage the wilderness is personified and is said to rejoice and blossom like a lily.[231] Verbal forms of פרח are usually rendered with a form of ἀνθέω, as in 17:11, 27:6, and 35:1.[232]

2.4.2. Flower as Greek Translation

In two other passages, 11:1 and 61:11, the LXX uses the word ἄνθος for words that more properly mean "sprout" or "shoot." In 11:1 ἄνθος appears to be used to render נצר, as we discussed above.[233] The meaning of נצר as a sprout may be similar to a meaning of ἄνθος. According to LSJ it can mean "anything thrown out upon the surface, eruption."[234] William Bedell Stanford argues that ἄνθος does not primarily mean "flower" but something that rises to the surface.[235] This meaning of ἄνθος is suggested in Isa 11:1 by the verb ἀναβήσεται. If this is the case, ἄνθος is not a surprising rendering for the context. According to Ziegler's apparatus, Aquila rendered נצר with ἀκρέμων and Symmachus with βλαστός.

---

227. I deal with 5:24 in section 3.3.2.1. In 18:5 it is not a metaphor.

228. See the analysis of this verse in the section on "Roots," above (2.3.2).

229. I will analyze this passage below in the section on "Sprouts" (2.6.1).

230. Cf. Song 2:1 where חבצלת is rendered with ἄνθος. See Lemmelijn, "Flora in Cantico Canticorum," 33–34.

231. In the LXX, it is an imperative: "rejoice and blossom like a lily!"

232. The only other place פרח occurs in Isaiah, it is rendered with ἀνατέλλω (66:14). In 17:11, another term for branch is used: זמורה. It occurs in Isaiah only here and is rendered with σπέρμα. See the section on "Seeds" (2.1.4) for an analysis of this passage.

233. Cf. Dan 11:7 θ′, which uses ἄνθος to render מנצר; LXX uses φυτόν. For a more detailed analysis of this passage, see the section on "Roots" (2.3.1).

234. LSJ, s.v. "ἄνθος." We have already seen that ἄνθος can be used for a twig or shoot.

235. Stanford, Greek Metaphor, 111–14. This meaning cannot be found in Preisigke, Wörterbuch.

In Isa 61:11, the LXX uses ἄνθος for another word that means "what sprouts," or "growth:" צמח.

Isa 61:11

כי כארץ תוציא צמחה וכגנה זרועיה תצמיח כן אדני יהוה יצמיח צדקה
ותהלה נגד כל־הגוים:

For as the earth brings forth its shoots, and as a garden causes what is sown in it to spring up, so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring up before all the nations.

καὶ ὡς γῆν αὔξουσαν τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῆς καὶ ὡς κῆπον τὰ σπέρματα αὐτοῦ, οὕτως ἀνατελεῖ κύριος δικαιοσύνην καὶ ἀγαλλίαμα ἐναντίον πάντων τῶν ἐθνῶν.

And as the earth making its flowers grow, and as a garden its seeds, so the Lord will cause righteousness and gladness to spring up before all the nations.

As we saw above, the use of ἄνθος may carry well the idea of growth and sprouting, and so is an appropriate, though unique, rendering of צמח. The only other place this word occurs, Isa 4:2, the LXX renders it with ἐπιλάμπω, as we saw in section 2.2.1. In the context of 61:11, the use of ἄνθος makes the image more vivid, and the idea of a flower is more closely related to seeds than sprouts are. Unfortunately, we do not know how σ′, α′, and θ′ dealt with this passage. It is noteworthy that the LXX here renders the verbal forms of צמח with ἀνατέλλω (the typical rendering in LXX Isaiah), which is the appropriate verb for its object, but makes for a less tight comparison to the blossomed plants.[236] In 55:10, where the context speaks of vegetation, צמח is rendered with ἐκβλαστάνω, emphasizing the idea of sprouting.

The critical editions of Rahlfs and Ziegler have a difference in this verse: Rahlfs has the nominative κῆπος while Ziegler has the accusative κῆπον. Rahlfs is closer to the Hebrew, but Ziegler has a better manuscript tradition, and in his edition the two similes have the same structure. The LXX omits the verb of the second simile.[237] The distributive rendering of a verb in synonymous parallelism is a kind of condensation often found in

---

236. Cf. 27:6 where the verb פרח is rendered with ἐξανθέω where Israel is the subject, but in 66:14, where bones are the subject, LXX Isa renders פרח with ἀνατέλλω.

237. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:371.

LXX Isaiah.[238] The MT's אדני יהוה is reduced to κύριος in the LXX; 1QIsaᵃ on the other hand has יהוה אלוהים.

The Targum elaborates on the garden, making it irrigated and sown so that it grows (וכגנת שקיא דזירועהא מרביא). Further, the righteousness and praise of Jerusalem is revealed (יגלי זכותה ותשבחתה דירושלם).[239]

2.4.3. Summary

It seems that "flower," in the Hebrew of Isaiah, is used metaphorically to show something delicate and fleeting (Isa 28:1, 4; 40:6–8). In LXX Isaiah this meaning is preserved. Where the term ἄνθος is used for words not primarily meaning "flower" (11:1, 61:11), it seems to be to intensify the vividness of images denoting generation. Perhaps the idea of a blossoming flower is simply more pleasant and vivid in these contexts than that of sprouts or buds. Another possibility, however, is that ἄνθος was used with the generic meaning LSJ and Stanford advocate. LXX Isaiah is unique within the LXX for rendering terms that mean "bud" or "sprout" (פרח, נצר, and צמח) with ἄνθος. Some other books in the LXX use ἄνθος as a rendering for words that do not mean "flower" in Hebrew, but not for words meaning "sprout." The use of ἄνθος in Exod 28:14 is probably a guess from the context, since flowers were a decorative motif in other parts of the temple. Exod 30:23 uses an apt Greek idiom, as we have seen. Zeph 2:2 is not an exception since the translator probably read נץ or צץ for מץ. The only real exception, as we have seen, is Dan 11:7 in Theodotion, which was probably due to the translator's exegesis, as was 11:1.

The Targum tends to interpret flower imagery. In 28:1, 4 it becomes a diadem of the wicked. In 40:6–8 the metaphor is changed into that of the wicked being blown away like chaff, harmonizing to other passages in Isaiah. In 11:1 the flower is interpreted as "king." The Targum of 61:11 leaves the flower, but compares the garden to Jerusalem.

---

238. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 213.

239. "For as the earth *which* brings forth its growth, and as a *channeled* garden *which increases* what is sown in it, so the *Lord God* will *disclose the virtue* and *the* praise *of Jerusalem* before all the *Gentiles*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 61:11).

2.5. Leaves

This section will first review passages where leaves are used metaphorically, then make a summary of the findings.

2.5.1. Leaves

Homer uses leaves in a simile to describe humans in their helplessness.

> εἰ δὴ σοί γε βροτῶν ἔνεκα πτολεμίξω δειλῶν, οἳ φύλλοισιν ἐοικότες ἄλλοτε μέν τε ζαφλεγέες τελέθουσιν, ἀρούρης καρπὸν ἔδοντες, ἄλλοτε δὲ φθινύθουσιν ἀκήριοι.
> If I war with you for the sake of mortals, pitiful creatures, who like leaves are now full of flaming life, eating the fruit of the field, and now again waste away and perish. (*Il.* 21.463–66 [Murray and Wyatt])

Similarly, the image of leaves is used in the Hebrew Bible to contrast the righteous who will flourish to the wicked who will wither and fall. This can be seen in Ps 1:3, Prov 11:28, and Jer 17:8. The negative side of the image is used more commonly to describe what will wither and pass away. In Isaiah leaves are mentioned only three times, all of which describe those that wither and fall.

Isa 1:30

כי תהיו כאלה נבלת עלה וכגנה אשר־מים אין לה:

For you will be like *a terebinth* [*that is*] *withered* [*in regard to*] *its leaves* and like a garden without water.

> ἔσονται γὰρ ὡς τερέβινθος ἀποβεβληκυῖα τὰ φύλλα καὶ ὡς παράδεισος ὕδωρ μὴ ἔχων·
> For they shall be like a terebinth that has shed its leaves and like an orchard that has no water.

The noun עלה is commonly rendered with φύλλον. The withered leaves are used in a simile to describe what the rebels and sinners who will be broken in 1:28 will be like. The Greek has changed from the second person to the third person in this section. The LXX uses the Greek word ἀποβάλλω as an equivalent for נבל only, but as we will see, LXX Isaiah uses other terms in

similar similes.[240] BDB defines נבל as "sink or drop down, languish, wither
and fall, fade."[241] Rendering this with ἀποβάλλω seems to limit the mean-
ing to "drop down," since the Greek term means "to shed."[242] The choice of
this term seems to direct the attention to the tree rather than to the with-
ered leaf. This also is the focus of the Hebrew since נבלת is feminine and
must match the terebinth rather than the masculine עלה.[243] There is good
reason for the tree to be described as a terebinth, since in theory many
other kinds of trees could have been mentioned in a simile about losing
leaves: Lytton John Musselman says that the terebinth, due to its exten-
sive root systems, remains green even in years of drought.[244] Theophrastus
lists the terebinth as an evergreen tree (ἀείφυλλα; *Hist. plant.* 1.9.3, 3.3.3),
though this does not seem to be accurate.[245] The terebinth is mentioned,
then, to make a rather extreme simile: that they will be like a very resil-
ient tree that has nonetheless succumbed to a drought. So, in this simile,
in both languages, leaves are mentioned simply to describe the extremely
dry and unhealthy state of the terebinth tree. This same image is probably
evoked in 6:13, both in the Hebrew and the Greek, as we will discuss in the
section on trees (3.6.2.2).

---

240. According to HRCS, 125, it has no Hebrew equivalent for its other occur-
rences, which are only in the other versions and the Additions to Daniel. Mura-
oka adds the equivalent אבד *piel* for Deut 26:5 (*Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way
Index*, 14).

241. BDB, s.v. "נָבֵל."

242. See *GELS*, s.v. "ἀποβάλλω." Theophrastus uses this term to talk about shed-
ding fig leaves in *Hist. plant.* 1.9.7.

243. In GKC §116.i two ways of understanding נבלת are given: as an absolute
(with leaf then being accusative) or as a construct (and leaf being genitive). Waltke and
O'Connor believe it is a construct (*IBHS* §37.3c). But in light of Isa 34:4, where this
term appears again, I believe it should be understood as absolute.

244. Lytton John Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh: Plants of the Bible
and the Quran* (Portland, OR: Timber, 2007), 267.

245. Theophrastus calls it τέρμινθος, of which τερέβινθος is a variant spelling,
according to LSJ, s.v. "τέρμινθος." The alternate spelling τερέμινθος can be found in Gen
14:6 and 43:11. Arthur Hort identifies the tree to which Theophrastus refers as *Pistacia
terebinthus*. See Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, trans. Arthur Hort, 2 vols., LCL
(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916), 2:480. I can find only modern works
that call this species deciduous, as are its close relatives *Pistacia atlantica* and *Pistacia
palaestina*.

The translation of גן with παράδεισος is common, particularly when an orchard is meant. In this context it is probably because a tree is mentioned, as opposed to vegetables.[246]

The Targum also focuses on the terebinth casting off its leaves (כבוטמא דבמתר טרפוהי).[247]

Isa 34:4
ונמקו כל־צבא השמים ונגלו כספר השמים וכל־צבאם יבול כנבל עלה מגפן וכנבלת מתאנה:
All the host of heaven shall rot away, and the skies roll up like a scroll. All their host shall wither like a leaf withering on a vine, or fruit withering on a fig tree.

καὶ ἑλιγήσεται ὁ οὐρανὸς ὡς βιβλίον, καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄστρα πεσεῖται ὡς φύλλα ἐξ ἀμπέλου καὶ ὡς πίπτει φύλλα ἀπὸ συκῆς.
Heaven shall roll up like a scroll, and all the stars shall fall like leaves from a vine and as leaves fall from a fig tree.

In this passage, the withering leaves are again used in a simile, this time to describe how the hosts of the heavens will fall, after rotting. As Van der Vorm-Croughs notes, the omission of the heavens rotting in the Greek is probably deliberate, since LXX Isaiah will often remove one synonymous element in the translation.[248] 1QIsaᵃ has an additional clause at the beginning of this verse: והעמקים יתבקעו. It lacks ונמקו, but instead has the verb יפולו after "heavens."

The withering leaf is again of a specific plant: a grape vine. In the parallel clause, it is not stated what exactly is withering/falling from the fig tree. It could imply leaves falling from the fig tree, but then it is odd that נבלת is feminine, while עלה is masculine. The Hebrew could be alternating gender for the sake of style (which is why it must drop the masculine noun), like in 3:1 where there is a word repeated in each gender: משען ומשענה. Alternatively, it could be following the example of the construction in 1:30. It could also mean to imply withered figs falling from the fig tree, which is grammatically more likely because then the feminine parti-

---

246. See Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 113, 232.

247. "For you will be like a terebinth *when* its leave*s* fall, and like a *channeled* garden without water" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:30).

248. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 187–88, 192.

ciple would match the feminine תאנה.[249] *HALOT* lists this passage as the only occurrence of a word נבלת, which means "a withered fig."[250] According to Theophrastus, the fig tree is apt to shed its figs before they ripen (*Hist. plant.* 2.8.1–4; 3.3.8); this could be what the Hebrew implies. The fertilization of figs is a somewhat complicated process, involving a certain species of insect that is born in a wild fig and then brings pollen to the cultivated fig when it attempts to lay eggs in it.[251] If a fig is not pollinated, it turns brown and falls away.[252]

The specific plants are mentioned to give a vividness to the image, since the audience should be familiar with these domestic plants and have seen how they lose their leaves and fruit. As Musselman points out, the fig and the grape are often associated with each other in describing peace and blessings of the land (Deut 8:8, 1 Kgs 4:25, Mic 4:4, Zech 3:10).[253]

The LXX leaves out the first clause, though as we would expect, σ′, α′, and θ′ all include it. The rendering of ספר with βιβλίον does not necessarily change the image, since the verb ἑλίσσω still means to roll up, and βιβλίον can mean something like a scroll.[254] The LXX understands the "hosts" of heaven to be the stars.[255]

The translation of the various forms of נבל is worth noting. The imperfect form is translated as a future, as we would expect, but the infinitive in the first simile is not rendered. This is a common feature of LXX Isaiah, to remove paronomasia.[256] The participle in the second simile, however, is rendered as a present indicative verb. The translation equivalent πίπτω for נבל is appropriate, but this is the only verse where it is used in the whole

---

249. While the form is morphologically masculine in the plural, it is a feminine noun. According to BDB, s.v. "תְּאֵנָה," when meaning the fruit as opposed to the tree, the form is always plural.

250. *HALOT*, s.v. "נְבֶלֶת." Cf. Wildberger, who has this reading but thinks it is unproven (*Jesaja*, 3:1326).

251. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 128. This is necessary because cultivated figs do not have male flowers to produce their own pollen. Theophrastus also describes figs needing to be visited by insects in order to ripen (*Hist. plant.* 2.8.1–4).

252. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 128. Musselman lists Isa 34:4 as an example of this phenomenon.

253. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 129.

254. At least according to LS, s.v. "βιβλίον."

255. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2596.

256. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 204.

LXX.[257] However, this definition is consistent with how LXX Isaiah usually understands the word. We have seen in 1:30 the rendering ἀποβάλλω, similar to ἐκρέω in 64:5, and in 28:1, 4 it was rendered with ἐκπίπτω.[258] Given the context, falling is clearly what the similes aim to describe.

The addition of φύλλον in the second simile shows what the translator thought the meaning of the simile was. The translator probably thought it was simply a case of synonymous parallelism with omission. It could, though, be the result of the translator wanting to improve the rhetoric of the passage.[259] While the Greek simile might be different from what the Hebrew implies, it is still appropriate. According to Theophrastus, the fig tree sheds its leaves before its fruit ripens (*Hist. plant.* 1.9.7), which is a somewhat unique trait for a fruit tree. The translator may have misunderstood the Hebrew (if it is indeed talking about unripe figs) but still has an apt simile.

The LXX, then, has simplified this passage rhetorically. It can omit the clause about the hosts of heaven rotting since it is redundant, in that they fall like leaves. The two similes about falling leaves (and withered figs) are cleaned up, so that the first is spoken more straightforwardly as a prophecy and the second is clarified by adding "leaves."

The Targum interprets the second half of the verse as referring to armies.[260] The withering leaf metaphor is maintained, and the fig simile is rendered with cognates: וכנבלא מיתינא; according to Jastrow, נבלא refers to an inferior variety of fig.[261]

---

257. Cf. Isa 28:1, 4, where it is rendered with ἐκπίπτω.

258. Cf. 24:4, where it is interpreted in an emotional sense in the context of the earth being personified.

259. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 246. Perhaps it should be listed as a case of explication.

260. "All the *forces* of heaven shall *melt completely* and *be wiped from under* the skies *just as was said concerning them in* the scroll. All their *armies* shall *come to an end* as leaves fall from a vine, like what is withered from a fig" (Tg. Neb. Isa 34:4).

261. Jastrow, s.v. "נְבְלָה."

Isa 64:5 (Eng. 64:6)

ונהי כטמא כלנו וכבגד עדים כל־צדקתינו ונבל כעלה כלנו ועוננו כרוח
ישאנו:

We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous
deeds are like a *menstrual* cloth. We all fade like a leaf, and our
iniquities, like the wind, take us away.

καὶ ἐγενήθημεν ὡς ἀκάθαρτοι πάντες ἡμεῖς, ὡς ῥάκος ἀποκαθημένης
πᾶσα ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἡμῶν· καὶ ἐξερρύημεν ὡς φύλλα διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας
ἡμῶν, οὕτως ἄνεμος οἴσει ἡμᾶς.

And we have all become like unclean people; all our righteousness
is like the rag of a woman who sits apart. And we have fallen off
like leaves because of our acts of lawlessness; thus the wind will
take us away.

In this passage God's people are described in several similes. The first is
that they have become like the unclean, and that their righteousness or
righteous deeds are like a menstrual cloth (that is, stained and unclean,
something that can make other things unclean too). The second part of
the verse likens them to a withered leaf and their sins to a wind that car-
ries them away. The withered leaf is again used as an image of frailty and
perhaps death as it withers and is blown away.

The Greek has made some changes to this verse. The term ἀποκαθημένης
is not surprising (or here a deliberate euphemism), since it is often used to
describe menstruating women in the LXX.[262] Seeligmann lists this trans-
lation as an example of "standardized expressions relating to traditional
homiletics and religious practice."[263] Both 1QIsaᵃ and 4QIsaᵇ agree with
LXX in omitting the conjunction before כבגד. A much bigger change is how
the LXX reads the clauses. In the Hebrew, their sins carry them away, while
in the Greek their sins are the cause of their falling away.[264] This is achieved
by changing the conjunction ו into διά. MT's וְנָבֶל is problematic; many

---

262. For the various terms ἀποκάθημαι renders, see Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/
Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 14.

263. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 187.

264. Usually עון forms in the plural as עונות, but it appears in a few other places
that it has been pointed as though it formed the masculine plural regularly, as in Jer
14:7, which has אם־עוננו ענו בנו. Our verse, then, must be a defective spelling of an
alternate plural form.

scholars, such as can be seen in the NRSV and in *HALOT*, suggest that it be emended to וְנָבֹּל.[265] *DCH* seems to assume this emendation, listing it as an imperfect with a *vav*.[266] Hatch and Redpath thought the Hebrew was from בלל, but Muraoka deletes this root and suggests instead נבל.[267] The Greek word choice is interesting, since it fits well with the context of the wind blowing the leaf away when it falls. The word πίπτω, as was used in Isa 34:4, could have sufficed here too, but ἐκρέω is much more apt for the image of leaves being shed. Only here is ἐκρέω used as an equivalent for נבל; in the only other place where this word occurs in the LXX (Deut 28:40), it is a rendering of נשל.[268] That ἐκρέω is never used for נפל makes it unlikely that this Hebrew word was read here. נבל was known to some ancient writers, since it is used twice in the Hodayot (1QHᵃ XVI, 27 and XVIII, 34).

In both languages there is a metaphor of people withering or falling, which is then described in terms of the leaf. The Greek appears to drop the second occurrence of כלנו from its rendering and makes their sins the cause of their falling. The choice of ἀνομία for עון is not surprising, given LXX Isaiah's well-known fondness of the term, and since they are common word equivalents. But it is interesting that this word choice creates some assonance with the word ἄνεμος. The word οὕτως, perhaps based on כ, continues the image of the withered leaf. In the Hebrew their iniquities are like a wind, but in the Greek, they have fallen like a leaf because of their lawlessness, and as a consequence the wind will carry them away. So what, then, is the wind that carries them away? Perhaps it could still be understood to be their lawlessness, since they have synonyms for their verbs and there is assonance linking them.

The Targum does not expand this verse.[269]

---

265. See *HALOT*, s.v. "נבל I." See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2687.

266. *DCH* 5, s.v. "נבל I."

267. HRCS, 442; cf. appendix, 235, 300; Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 38.

268. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 132, who thinks the Deuteronomy passage influenced the LXX Isaiah passage.

269. "We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our *virtues* are like a *despised* garment. We all fade like a leaf *fades*, and *before* our *sins*, like the wind, *we are* take*n* away" (Tg. Neb. Isa 64:5).

2.5.2. Summary

As we have seen, in LXX Isaiah the leaf imagery is for the most part pre-served rather literally and עלה is rendered with φύλλον regularly. What makes these metaphors interesting is the care and nuance demonstrated by the translator when rendering the accompanying word נבל. In all three cases, the translator is careful to pick a translation that best fits the context and reinforces the image that the withering leaf is meant to represent. The Targum is literal in these passages.

2.6. Sprouts and Branches

Sprout and branch metaphors are used less commonly in the Hebrew Bible and may be considered original metaphors (as opposed to conventional metaphors or dead metaphors). In Isaiah a variety of terms are used in different contexts.

2.6.1. Sprouts

A rare word for "sprout" or "shoot" is נצר; it occurs only in Isa 11:1, 60:21; Dan 11:7 (which, as we have seen, the OG renders with φυτόν and The-odotion with ἄνθος); and Sir 40:15 (where it is rendered ἔκγονος).[270] As discussed in the section on roots and the section on flowers, in Isa 11:1 נצר is appropriately rendered with ἄνθος, since this Greek term can mean "something that rises to the surface."[271] In 14:19 we also find a word נצר, but here it most likely means "putrefying matter."[272]

> Isa 60:21
> עמך כלם צדיקים לעולם יירשו ארץ נצר מטעו[273] מעשה ידי להתפאר:
> Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land for-ever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified.

---

270. The Hebrew נין ("offspring"), occurring in Isa 14:22 and 57:19, is said to derive from "little shoots" by *HALOT*, s.v. "נִין." But there is no evidence given to support this. The current study agrees with *DCH* 7, s.v. "נִין," that it means simply descendent.

271. LSJ, s.v. "ἄνθος."

272. *DCH* 5, s.v. "נֵצֶר II." See E. Nestle, "Miscellen," *ZAW* 24 (1904): 127–30.

273. *Qere* מטעי.

καὶ ὁ λαός σου πᾶς δίκαιος, καὶ δι᾽ αἰῶνος κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν,
φυλάσσων τὸ φύτευμα, ἔργα χειρῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς δόξαν.

Your people shall all be righteous, and they shall inherit the land
forever, guarding *the* plant, the works of *his* hands, for glory.

The noun נצר in apposition to other terms describing it has been ren-
dered as if it were a participle form of נָצַר, that is, as the singular participle
φυλάσσων. Grammatically, the participle must modify λαός.[274] 1QIsa[b]
omits נצר, though it is present in 1QIsa[a] and appears to have been present
in 4QIsa[m].[275] The rendering of מטעו with just τὸ φύτευμα is interesting,
since in the Greek there is no sign of the pronoun either in first- or third-
person (from the *qere* or the *ketiv*). In the Greek it is described, though, by
apposition to the phrase ἔργα χειρῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς δόξαν. While it could be that
αὐτοῦ also refers to λαός, like NETS understands it, it probably actually
refers to God (as 1QIsa[a] also understands it).[276] The LXX probably makes
the first-person pronominal ending third person because previously, in
60:20, God is spoken of in the third-person. The only other occurrence of
מטע in LXX Isaiah is in 61:3, where a very similar phrase occurs: וקרא להם
אילי הצדק מטע יהוה להתפאר, rendered καὶ κληθήσονται γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης,
φύτευμα κυρίου εἰς δόξαν. The similarity of the rendering also points to the
translator understanding both passages in the same way.

The plant metaphor of this verse, both in its Hebrew and Greek ver-
sions, is that God planted Israel in their land, as in Exod 15:17.[277] The
difference is that the LXX introduces some group of righteous people who
inherit the land and who guard this plant.[278]

The Targum interprets the phrase נצר מטעי with נצבא דחדותי, connect-
ing the plant to that of Isa 5:7 where the same phrase occurs.[279]

As we have seen, the word נצר is never given a literal translation. The
closest we have seen (not counting the recensions of LXX Isaiah) is ἄνθος

---

274. Cf. Isa 26:2–3, where people are again described as guarding, using singular
participles.

275. 1QIsa[a] has a plus instead of the pronoun: נצר מטעי יהוה מעשי ידיו.

276. NETS reads: "guarding their plant, the works of their hands, for glory."

277. Cf. Pss 44:3, 80:9. The Targum also reads Isa 61:11 this way, though it renders
ידי with גבורתי.

278. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2683.

279. "Your people shall all be *virtuous*; they shall possess *the* land for ever, my
pleasant plant, the work of my *might*, that I might be glorified" (Tg. Neb. Isa 60:21).

in LXX Isa 11:1 and Dan 11:7 θ′, or φυτός in LXX Dan 11:7. Also, Ben Sira's grandson, in translating Sir 40:15, opted to interpret the metaphor נצר as offspring: נצר חמס לא יכה בו ושורש חנף על שן צור (following BMarg and the first three words of the sentence in the Masada fragment) was rendered ἔκγονα ἀσεβῶν οὐ πληθυνεῖ κλάδους καὶ ῥίζαι ἀκάθαρτοι ἐπ᾽ ἀκροτόμου πέτρας.[280]

Another term for a young shoot or twig (as we saw in its verbal form in Sir 40:15) is יונקת or יונק. The latter form, יונק, occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible in Isa 53:2 (יונקת does not occur in Isaiah).

Isa 53:2

ויעל כיונק לפניו וכשרש מארץ ציה לא־תאר לו ולא הדר ונראהו ולא־
מראה ונחמדהו:

For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

ἀνέτειλε μὲν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ, οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα· καὶ εἴδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος·[281]

He grew up before him like a child, like a root in a thirsty land; he has no form or glory, and we saw him, and he had no form or beauty.

We have discussed this passage already in the section on roots (2.3.2). The LXX understands יונק as a substantive participle from ינק, as occurs in 11:8.[282] Perhaps the translator recognized the play on words with יונקת (shoot) but thought he should explain it to be clear. As we saw, in Sir 40:15 there is a play on words between the possible meaning "offspring" and "sprout." Ben Sira's grandson also made clear that one term referred to offspring, then maintained the rest of the plant imagery. It is possible, though, that the LXX Isaiah translator rendered יונק with παιδίον at a lexical level, and did not bother to consider the interpretation of a metaphor.

---

280. For the Hebrew text, see Beentjes, *Book of Sira*, 70, 113, 159, for the various texts. MS B reads: נוצר מחמס לא ינקה כי שורש חנף על שן סלע.

281. As noted above, the reading ἀνέτειλε μέν (Ziegler, *Isaias*) is a conjecture. The manuscripts and Rahlfs have ἀνηγγείλαμεν.

282. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2666.

As a result, the parallel simile "like a root in a thirsty land" is more closely tied to "child."

The Targum does not have any difficulty with the word יונק. It renders it with לבלב, "bloom" or "sprout." The rest of the passage, though, has quite a bit of interpretation, as discussed above.[283]

Three more terms for sprouts, or more accurately, tendrils or shoots, are נטישות, זלזלים, and שלחות (this last term is not used in a metaphor in Isaiah). The first two terms occur in Isaiah only in 18:5; in Jer 5:10 נטישות is interpreted as the buttresses of a city, but in Jer 48:32 (LXX 31:32) it is translated with κλῆμα. The word זלזלים occurs only in Isa 18:5.

> Isa 18:5
> כי־לפני קציר כתם־פרח ובסר גמל יהיה נצה וכרת הזלזלים במזמרות ואת־
> הנטישות הסיר התז:
> For before the harvest, when the blossom is over and the flower
> becomes a ripening grape, he will cut off the shoots with pruning
> hooks, and the spreading branches he will hew away.
>
> πρὸ τοῦ θερισμοῦ, ὅταν συντελεσθῇ ἄνθος καὶ ὄμφαξ ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος
> ὀμφακίζουσα, καὶ ἀφελεῖ τὰ βοτρύδια τὰ μικρὰ τοῖς δρεπάνοις καὶ
> τὰς κληματίδας ἀφελεῖ καὶ κατακόψει.
> Before the harvest, when the blossom has been completed and the
> unripe grape blossoms, *producing unripe grapes*[284]—then he will
> take away the little clusters with pruning hooks and take away the
> small branches and cut them off.

Pruning is usually done after the vintage, either in the fall or in the spring.[285] In the summer or here, after the grain harvest, some trimming and thinning (usually of leaves) was done to vines, as we see in the Gezer Calen-

---

283. "And *the righteous shall be exalted* before him, *behold*, like *tufts which sprout*, and like *a tree which sends its* roots *by streams of waters, so holy generations will increase on the* land *which was needing him; his appearance is* not *a common appearance and his fearfulness is* not *an ordinary fearfulness, and his brilliance will be holy brilliance*, that *everyone who* looks *at him will* consider him" (Tg. Neb. Isa 53:2).

284. Both NETS and LXX.D take ὀμφακίζουσα substantively.

285. Cato describes pruning in the fall (*Agr.* 32–33). Columella says that in cold climates, one should prune in the spring before the shoots bud, but in warm sunny climates, one should prune in the fall, the natural season when fruit and leaves drop (*Rust.* 4.10).

dar.[286] But as the context here shows (18:6), this is not a trimming of the vines for their benefit; they are being ruined before the grapes can ripen. The point of the metaphor seems to be that before these nations reach their full potential (and accomplish their aims), they are cut off and destroyed. A similar metaphor can be found in Job 15:32–3, but there the vine itself (as well as the olive tree) casts off its unripe fruit "before their time."

The LXX appears to know most of the specific vine-related terminology and uses the appropriate terms in Greek. Theophrastus describes when to do summer trimming, but describes the state of the budding flower in different terms (*Caus. plant.* 3.16.1). The rendering of פרח with ἄνθος is not surprising; the Greek repeats the same word later probably for the sake of alliteration.[287] The Hebrew בסר could refer more generally to unripe fruit, but the Greek is specific about unripe grapes. The Hebrew גמל יהיה appears to be rendered with ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος, changing the word order; and נצה is rendered ὀμφακίζουσα.[288] This rendering is aimed at describing vines that are finished flowering and beginning to form grape clusters, but also creates some nice alliteration: συντελεσθῇ ἄνθος καὶ ὄμφαξ ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος ὀμφακίζουσα. The word זלזלים may mean something more like a tendril, but the Greek makes it clearly the little clusters of unripe grapes: τὰ βοτρύδια τὰ μικρά. As a whole, the Greek makes the image specific and vivid.

The Targum appears to interpret כתם as referring to a tree (אילנא). The phrase ובסר גמל יהיה נצה is clearer: ובסרא מיניה סמדר (and the unripe fruit [spreads] from its blossom).[289] The second part of the verse, though, abandons the metaphor, making the imagery just a description of the

---

286. Theophrastus talks about thinning the vines in the summer once the flower is complete and before the grapes are formed (*Caus. plant.* 3.16.1). Cato says the leaves should be stripped when the grapes begin to turn (*Agr.* 33). For a discussion of מזמרה, see Aaron J. Koller, *The Semantic Field of Cutting Tools in Biblical Hebrew: The Interface of Philological, Semantic, and Archaeological Evidence*, CBQMS 49 (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2012), 104–12.

287. Cf. Num 17:23 (Eng. 17:8) where גמל is rendered with βλαστάνω. The only other occurrence of נצה in Job 15:33 is rendered with ἄνθος. The word נץ is rendered with ἄνθος in Song 2:12 (see Lemmelijn, "Flora in Cantico Canticorum," 35) but βλαστός in Gen 40:10 (where the context is again a ripening vine).

288. See Baltzer et al., who believe the word ὀμφακίζουσα connects the halves of the verse ("Esaias," 2:2551).

289. "For before *the time of* harvest *comes, the tree to blossom* and *its unripe* grape [to] flower, he will *kill the rulers of the Gentiles* with *the sword*, and *their strong ones* he will *take away and remove*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 18:5).

season and clearly states that rulers will die by the sword and the mighty will be removed.

2.6.2. Branches

While מטה can have the definition "branch of a vine," it occurs only in Ezek 19:11 (LXX uses ῥάβδος). The LXX Isaiah translator never reads this word with this meaning.[290] Although it is still often translated ῥάβδος, in LXX Isaiah it usually refers to scepters and not branches.[291] Another Hebrew term for branch is אמיר. BDB defines it as "top" or "summit," occurring in Isa 17:6, 9, and Gen 49:21.[292] More recent lexicons, however, define it as "branch" or "twig."[293] In Gen 49:21, the context shows that it is discussing a deer, referring to the branching of its antlers.[294]

> Isa 17:6
> ונשאר־בו עוללת כנקף זית שנים שלשה גרגרים בראש אמיר ארבעה
> חמשה בסעפיה פריה נאם־יהוה אלהי ישראל:
> Gleanings will be left in it, as when an olive tree is beaten—two or three berries in the top of the highest bough, four or five on the branches of a fruit tree, says the Lord God of Israel.
>
> καὶ καταλειφθῇ ἐν αὐτῇ καλάμη ἢ ὡς ῥῶγες ἐλαίας δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἐπ' ἄκρου μετεώρου ἢ τέσσαρες ἢ πέντε ἐπὶ τῶν κλάδων αὐτοῦ καταλειφθῇ· τάδε λέγει κύριος ὁ θεὸς Ισραηλ.
> And as if a stalk should be left in it, or like berries of an olive tree—two or three on the topmost height, or four or five left on its branches. This is what the Lord God of Israel says.

In the Hebrew, verse 5 introduces the general concept of a harvest, and verse 6 specifies that conditions will be like the gleanings that are left over. The rather vivid and pictorial image is then used of a few olives left

---

290. Isa 9:3; 10:5, 15, 24, 26; 14:5; 28:27; 30:32.

291. Perhaps, though, a double meaning is meant in Isa 11:1. ῥάβδος can refer to shoots from a tree, as shown in LSJ, s.v. "ῥάβδος."

292. BDB, s.v. "אָמִיר."

293. *HALOT*, s.v. "אָמִיר," only gives the Isaiah passages, while *DCH* 1, s.v. "אָמִיר," gives all three.

294. The ESV and NRSV follow the LXX version: "that bears beautiful/lovely fawns."

clinging out of reach on a tree that has been beaten in order to knock the ripe olives down. According to Pliny, the best way to harvest olives is to gather them from the tree, but this can be expensive due to labor. He says some wait until the olives fall from the tree, but overly ripe olives produce inferior oil. The middle position, he says, is to carefully beat the branches with sticks or reeds to knock down the olives, though he warns that this can hinder the next year's fruit production of the tree (*Nat.* 15.3).[295] The Hebrew image is that after the tree has been beaten, there will still be a few left over that were out of reach or too unripe to fall easily.

The Greek, however, reads the first clause of this verse as a continuation of the previous verse and reads the rest of the verse as an alternative analogy to that of gleaning, as signaled by the addition ἤ. The image of berries remaining in the olive tree is also modified. First, the Greek removes the idea of the tree being beaten. In the Hebrew, the idea of beating the tree makes the image the end of the harvest of that tree's olives, while in the Greek the image is of the tree after the completion of harvest activities. This change is slight, but it makes for a more streamlined image; the image is about what remains, so mentioning the harvesting is distracting. The plural ῥῶγες is not based on נקף but rather on גרגרים.[296] The word order is changed to make it clear that the olives are what is important, not the tree. The rendering of בראש with ἐπ᾽ ἄκρου is usual enough. The rendering of אמיר with μετεώρου is appropriate in the context. Whether the translator was making an educated guess about its meaning, or thought his phrase was better for some reason, is hard to tell. As mentioned above, older lexicons define אמיר as "top," probably based on the LXX. It could be that this is simply what the word was thought to mean at the time of the translation. If the LXX translator knew the meaning, but wanted some variation, he could have used another synonym of κλάδος like κλῆμα, βλάστημα, or κλών. The verb is finally given in the Greek at the end of the verse: καταλειφθῇ. It is probably based on reading פריה as meaning something like "its fruit" as a part of a predicate clause, and so it could be clarified by saying "will remain." Thus, the rendering of פרה with καταλείπω is an explication; that the branch was fruitful is not as relevant in the context as saying

---

295. Musselman says olives are still harvested in this way in Middle Eastern villages. He also says beating the tree appears to damage it but actually stimulates future bud growth (Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 214).

296. 1QIsaᵃ reads גדגרים.

that only four or five olives still remain on it. As a whole, the Greek is quite similar to the Hebrew, though it is expressed in a more focused and succinct manner.

The Targum appears to have known the meaning of אמיר and so rendered it with צנף.[297] It interprets the simile as the righteous (a few olives on a rebellious branch) being left in the midst of the kingdoms of the world.

Isa 17:9

ביום ההוא יהיו ערי מעזו כעזובת החרש והאמיר אשר עזבו מפני בני
ישראל והיתה שממה:

On that day their strong cities will be like *a deserted woodland and the branch* which they deserted *before* the children of Israel, and there will be desolation.

τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἔσονται αἱ πόλεις σου ἐγκαταλελειμμέναι, ὃν τρόπον ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐαῖοι ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ, καὶ ἔσονται ἔρημοι.

On that day your cities will be abandoned, just as the Amorrites and the Heuites abandoned them before the sons of Israel, and they will be desolate.

The Hebrew of this verse is difficult and often partially emended to agree with the LXX version, so that instead of יהיו ערי מעזו כעזובת החרש והאמיר it would have החוי והאמרי יהיו עריך עזובות כעזובת.[298] If it is true that the Hebrew was corrupted, it would have to have taken place before 1QIsaᵃ, since it agrees with MT. The three versions also do not agree with LXX, according to Ziegler's apparatus, though none of them translate אמיר: Jerome's commentary says that α′ had *testa et emir*, σ′ had *silva et amir*, and θ′ had *ars et emir*. The Targum appears to struggle with this passage as well, simply emphasizing that the city will be destroyed without mention of any imagery or Amorites. None of these versions agree with the word order

---

297. "And gleanings will be left in it as the *stripping* of *the* olive tree—two or three berries on the top of the highest bough, four or five on *the rebellious* branch, *thus shall the righteous be left alone in the midst of the world among the kingdoms*, says the Lᴏʀᴅ God of Israel" (Tg. Neb. Isa 17:6).

298. For example, see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 2:634, 637–38. He does not explore the possibility that אמיר could mean branch.

of the LXX,[299] οἱ Αμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Ευαῖοι. But the lists of Canaanite people commonly appear in various orders and with various nations.[300]

If we try to understand the Hebrew as it appears in the MT, it would seem the woodland imagery is used to describe a place where no one lives. The branch which they abandoned is most sensible if understood as an awkward allusion to the branch (אמיר) in 17:6. If this is the case, it alludes to the branch that was left, along with its three olives, finally becoming bare. Ottley believes אמיר is used here to mean mountain top, while in verse 6 it meant tree top.[301]

The LXX, either through an effort to understand a difficult text, or from reading a variant text, no longer has any plant imagery, but instead an allusion to the Israelite conquest of Canaan.[302] Also, the cities are no longer "strong" in the Greek.[303] Another minus in this verse is the lack of an equivalent for אשר עזבו.[304]

The Targum understands החרש והאמיר as meaning "desolation and waste" (דחרוב ואתחמר).[305]

Another word for branch used in Isaiah, פארה, can be found in Isa 10:33.

Isa 10:33

הנה האדון יהוה צבאות מסעף פארה במערצה ורמי הקומה גדועים והגבהים ישפלו:

Look, the Sovereign, the Lord of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low.

---

299. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:192.

300. See Num 13:29, where LXX adds the Hivites; Deut 20:17 where the LXX adds the Gergesites; and Josh 3:10 where two pairs of nations have their orders changed in the LXX.

301. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:192.

302. Baltzer et al. offer the possibility of a different *Vorlage* or the translator's exegesis ("Esaias," 2:2548).

303. Ottley attributes this to the similar letters in the following word (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:192), as do Baltzer et al. ("Esaias," 2:2548).

304. Ziegler suggests the Hebrew is a gloss (*Untersuchungen*, 54).

305. "In that *time their* strong cities will be as a *fortress that is desolate* and *ruined*, *and is* forsaken *before* the children of Israel, and it will become a waste" (Tg. Neb. Isa 17:9).

ἰδοὺ γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης κύριος σαβαωθ συνταράσσει τοὺς ἐνδόξους μετὰ ἰσχύος, καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῇ ὕβρει συντριβήσονται, καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ ταπεινωθήσονται.

For behold, the Sovereign, the Lord Sabaoth, will mightily confound the glorious ones, and the lofty will be crushed in their insolence, and the lofty will be brought low.

The LXX in 10:32 has changed the subject from those coming against Jerusalem into a word to Jerusalem to stay faithful. In this context, 10:33 is about those in Jerusalem. The Hebrew appears to use פארה as a pun, since it is clearly a metaphor, but being parallel to the vague phrase "the lofty heights" suggests it could be understood as "glorious ones" as well, which is its primary meaning.[306] The Greek may not have understood either term in the phrase מסעף פארה. The word פארה is never again used with the meaning "branch" in Isaiah. Elsewhere it occurs only in Ezek 17:6 and 31:5–15 (with a different vocalization). The root סעף, though, occurs in Isa 17:6, rendered with κλάδος (for its rendering in Isa 27:10, see below). The translator also knew its meaning as "cleft," as in a rock or cave, as can be seen in Isa 2:21, though in 57:5 we do not see this in the Greek. The meaning συνταράσσει could have been suggested by other occurrences of this word in contexts of God's intervention, such as Exod 14:24, 2 Sam 22:8, and LXX Ps 17:15 (MT 18:15). Also, it could have been a logical move: for a group of people to "branch" could imply a parting of ways, a division (סעפה), or confusion as they all go different directions.

In the second half of the verse the "high" (רום) and "lofty" (גבה) are translated literally, which, along with the disappearance of a branch in the first part of the verse, removes the possibility of them carrying the double meaning of high branches and the arrogant. These two terms are also found in the Damascus Document in a simile describing the wicked sons of the watchers who fell: ובניהם אשר כרום ארזים גבהם וכהרים גויותיהם (CD II, 19). Also, the LXX interprets הקומה by saying τῇ ὕβρει. In 37:24, קומת is rendered with ὕψος, though this would be too repetitive of a translation in 10:33. The idea of "cutting" was another opportunity to use tree trimming imagery, which the translator missed. The LXX translators seem to believe that גדועים can mean "to break," since it is rendered with συγκλάω five

times (Isa 45:2; Ps 75:11, 107:16; Jer 50:23; Lam 2:3), and in Isaiah, twice with συντρίβω (here and in 14:12).

The translator has interpreted the plant imagery, as Ottley has pointed out, by making high branches stand for the high in arrogance.[307] This is indeed what the Hebrew image is about as well, and it seems to have been used also in the Damascus Document. The translator may have abandoned the imagery in part because he missed the possible double meaning of פארה and was not sure what מסעף meant as a participle, but it seems likely he was deliberately interpreting the metaphor personally.[308]

The Targum has a very different understanding of this verse. It inserts wine treading imagery, similar to Isa 63:2–4.[309] The second part of the verse is much more literal, however.

In Isa 4:2 another term for branch, צמח, is rendered with a word that can mean "to shine": ἐπιλάμπω.[310] As discussed earlier, it appears as though the translator knew the meaning of this Hebrew root (at least when it is a verb) but nevertheless rendered it with its homonym, or at least as if it were the Aramaic word.[311] The Targum, though, here renders it with משיחא.[312]

In Isa 27:10–11 two terms for "branch" in the Hebrew appear (סעף and קציר), though there is no terminology for "branch" in the Greek.

Isa 27:10–11
כי עיר בצורה בדד נוה משלח ונעזב כמדבר שם ירעה עגל ושם ירבץ וכלה
סעפיה: ביבש קצירה תשברנה נשים באות מאירות אותה כי לא עם־בינות
הוא על־כן לא־ירחמנו עשהו ויצרו לא יחננו:

For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calves graze there, there they lie down,

---

307. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:166.

308. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. Seeligmann mentions this phrase as an example of where the translator's social-ethical feelings are evident in his translation ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 270–71). Baltzer et al. ("Esaias," 2:2534) and Van der Kooij ("Metaphorical Language," 182) also believe the translator was interpreting the metaphor.

309. "Behold, the master *of the world*, the LORD of hosts *casts slaughter among his armies as grapes trodden in the press*; and the great in stature will be hewn down and the *strong will be humbled*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 10:33).

310. For a discussion of Isa 4:2, see the fruit section (2.2.1) above.

311. If *DCH*'s second root of צמח is to be maintained (*DCH* 7, "צָמַח II").

312. Cf. 61:11, where the Targum renders צֶמַח with צמח.

and strip its branches. When its boughs are dry, they are broken; women come and make a fire of them. For this is a people without understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion on them, he that formed them will show them no favor.

τὸ κατοικούμενον ποίμνιον ἀνειμένον ἔσται ὡς ποίμνιον καταλε-
λειμμένον· καὶ ἔσται πολὺν χρόνον εἰς βόσκημα, κἀκεῖ ἀναπαύσονται.
καὶ μετὰ χρόνον οὐκ ἔσται ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν χλωρὸν διὰ τὸ ξηρανθῆναι.
γυναῖκες ἐρχόμεναι ἀπὸ θέας, δεῦτε· οὐ γὰρ λαός ἐστιν ἔχων σύνεσιν,
διὰ τοῦτο οὐ μὴ οἰκτιρήσῃ ὁ ποιήσας αὐτούς, οὐδὲ ὁ πλάσας αὐτοὺς οὐ
μὴ ἐλεήσῃ.

The *sheep inhabiting*[313] (*it*) will be left deserted, like a forsaken *flock*; and it will be turned into a feeding place for a long time, and there they will rest. Then after a time there will be nothing green in it, because it will have dried up. You women who come from a spectacle, come here! For it is not a people having understanding; therefore he that made them will not have compassion, nor will he that formed them have mercy.

This passage occurs in a large section marked by freedom of translation. Here the translator interprets and expands the imagery. In the Hebrew an impenetrable city is likened to a wilderness, where what few branches there are are destroyed by grazing cattle and, once dead and dry, burned. The Greek, however, probably based on the cattle grazing (שם ירעה עגל), focuses on the idea of a flock of sheep being abandoned so that they feed and rest for a long time, until there is nothing left to eat, since it dried up.

The Hebrew at the beginning of verse 11 is translated as though it belongs to the end of verse 12. Regarding the plant terminology, it would appear the phrase וכלה סעפיה ביבש קצירה תשברנה has been understood to express all the greenery drying up, and so has been paraphrased with καὶ μετὰ χρόνον οὐκ ἔσται ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν χλωρὸν διὰ τὸ ξηρανθῆναι.[314] Baltzer et al. suggest כלה was read in the sense of "*vergehen*" and so comes to this rendering.[315] The term χλωρός or "greenery" could be based on understanding

---

313. NETS has "the inhabited fold" and "fold," which sounds like the place is meant, while in fact it is the herd of sheep that is meant. See LXX.D for a translation less ambiguous than NETS.

314. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2573.

315. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2573.

the idea of branches (סעפיה),[316] and/or could be because the idea of a pasture drying out entails the greenery turning brown. In Prov 27:25 χλωρός appears to be a rendering for חציר, though that passage is also complicated regarding its rendering. Perhaps the LXX Isaiah translator based χλωρός on the occurrence of קציר. The term קציר meaning branch is translated with κλῆμα in Ps 80:12 (LXX 79:12), but with θερισμός in Job 14:9, 18:16, and 29:19, the only other places it occurs.

The exact relationship between the Greek and Hebrew is difficult to establish in this case, but it is clear that the translator has introduced a metaphor about sheep being abandoned and eating all the plants until they are gone because the place dried up.

The Targum interprets the branches as armies being cut off, confounded, and broken.[317]

2.6.3. Branch as Greek Translation

In a one place, LXX Isaiah has a word for "branch" where the Hebrew does not.

> Isa 55:12
> כי־בשמחה תצאו ובשלום תובלון ההרים והגבעות יפצחו לפניכם רנה וכל־עצי השדה ימחאו־כף:
>
> For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
>
> ἐν γὰρ εὐφροσύνῃ ἐξελεύσεσθε καὶ ἐν χαρᾷ διαχθήσεσθε· τὰ γὰρ ὄρη καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ ἐξαλοῦνται προσδεχόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἐν χαρᾷ, καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐπικροτήσει τοῖς κλάδοις.

---

316. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:236.

317. "For *the* city *which was* fortified *will* dwell alone, *it will be* cast out and forsaken, like the wilderness; *with it the righteous* will *battle* and *plunder* its *possessions, and its armies will cease to go forth. Their force will be shortened, they will be ashamed of their deeds*, they will be broken; women come *to their temple* and *teach them*. For *they are* not discern*ing* people; therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them, and he who formed them will not *pity* them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:10–11).

for you shall go out with joy and *pass through*[318] with happiness;
for the mountains and the hills shall leap forth as they welcome
you with happiness, and all the trees of the field shall clap with
their branches.

The anthropomorphic descriptions of nature have been adjusted to be more
realistic. In Ps 98:8 the same anthropomorphisms are applied to streams
and mountains, but they are rendered more literally: נהרות ימחאו־כף יחד
הרים ירננו. There the LXX has ποταμοὶ κροτήσουσιν χειρὶ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, τὰ ὄρη
ἀγαλλιάσονται.[319] In Isa 55:12, rather than the hills making a joyful noise
(since they cannot properly make any noise), they are said to rise up and
greet them.[320] This is, strictly speaking, not literally possible either, but is
more plausible than that they should make a sound. Of more interest to us
is the description of the trees. The LXX still has the trees clapping, but since
trees do not have hands, the translator has put branches. In the Hebrew,
saying "hand" may be a kind of catachresis, though the action and purpose
of clapping is probably meant more than a description of branches crashing
together. The Greek, in an almost rationalistic manner, has replaced human
hands with an analogous piece of plant anatomy—branches (κλάδος).[321]
This may not, however, be an issue of interpreting a metaphor but could be
under the influence of Lev 23:40, where date palm branches are called כפת
תמרים. There, though, the LXX renders it with κάλλυνθρα φοινίκων (frond of
date palms). Also, the word כפה is used for palm branches in Isa 9:13 and
19:15, though neither place is rendered literally, and the translator may not
have known it could mean branch.[322] Still, LXX Isaiah may not be interpret-
ing the metaphor so much as giving the appropriate obscure meaning of a
word. But it would be odd to consider the palm tree a tree of the field. A
literal, or at least less sophisticated, translation is found in σ′ and θ′, which
have χειρί, while α′ has ταρσῷ.[323] The Targum follows the same line as the

---

318. NETS disagrees with Ziegler, *Isaias*, and instead follows Rahlfs's text:
διδαχθήσεσθε. For διδαχθήσεσθε as the better reading, see Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2672.
1QIsaᵃ reads תלכו.

319. See Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:353.

320. Cf. the traditional Irish blessing which begins: "May the road rise to meet
you, may the wind be always at your back… ."

321. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2672.

322. We will discuss these passages in the section on reeds (3.1.3).

323. LSJ (s.v. "ταρσός") has the definition "mass of matted roots" based on its

LXX, making the trees rustle their branches.[324] Despite the LXX's difference in poetic sensibility, the imagery is still quite similar.

2.6.4. Summary

As we have seen, the sprout and branch imagery, regardless of the word used, has largely been removed in LXX Isaiah, though in each case for unique reasons. In 11:1 the translator appears to understand the meaning of נצר, since he translates it very cleverly. In 60:21, though, he renders it as a verb, but due to other plant terms he maintains the plant metaphor, changing the focus to some human group. In 14:19 he knows the homonym נצר and translates it appropriately. In 18:5 the translator makes it clear that a vine is meant, though the terms are not entirely equivalent. The term אמיר is rendered appropriately in 17:6, though as the top of the tree; it is not clear if the translator knew this word could mean a high branch. In 17:9, where it reoccurs, the translator renders it as a people; again, it is unclear if the LXX had a differing *Vorlage* here or was interpreting a difficult text. In 27:10–11 it is not entirely clear whether the image as a whole has been interpreted or if the terms for branches were not understood.

In three cases, it is difficult to determine whether the translator was interpreting the metaphor or simply using an alternative definition (and even then, whether this was understood as a kind of pun or if the metaphorical possibility was not considered). First, the sprout (יונק) in 53:2 could be considered to have been interpreted as a metaphor for "child" or simply have been understood to mean child in a primary sense. Similarly, in 10:33 פארה could have been understood as a pun for glorious ones through the tree metaphor running through the passage, or it could have been understood in a primary sense of "glorious." In 55:12 the translator may have thought he was rendering a pun that could mean hand or branches, or he may have been interpreting, thinking it too strange for trees to clap their hands.

The Targum has quite a different profile. In 60:21 it explicitly connects the plant image to the special vine in Isa 5:7. In 53:2 it renders literally the

---

occurrence in Theophrastus, *Caus. plant.* 3.7.2. This meaning is probably not what α′ had in mind.

324. "For you shall go out in joy *from among the Gentiles*, and be led in peace *to your land*; the mountains and the hills before you shall *shout* in singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap *with their branches*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 55:12).

sprout, as also the branch in 17:6, although there it adds that it is a rebellious branch. In 17:9, however, it interprets the branch as desolation and waste (though this could be an interpretation of the places if the *Vorlage* matched LXX). In 18:5 the metaphor is kept in the first part of the verse and interpreted in the second half. In 10:33 the branch image is replaced with a wine treading metaphor. In 27:10–11 the branches drying out and being broken are interpreted as armies. One place where the Targum and LXX agree is that the trees in 55:12 clap their branches.

2.7. Conclusions

The cognitive metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is used both in the Hebrew and the Greek of Isaiah, though not in a rigid way. The same metaphor can refer to people in different relationships depending on the context. Seeds, for example, are not always the offspring of some person or group but can also be the origin of some person of group. Since seeds, fruit, roots, a flower, sprouts, and branches are used for individuals or groups in both the MT and the LXX of Isaiah, it is interesting to note that at times the translator prefers one vehicle for the metaphor over what the Hebrew has. For example, while in 11:1, 10 it is clear that "root" refers to a specific offspring in the Greek, in 14:29 the translator prefers to render "root" with "seed." Similarly, the translator usually gives the specific meaning of what "fruit" represents in his renderings, but in 37:30 prefers to use "seed," as opposed to "children" or "offspring." But these shifts are not because "seed" is thought to have a more specific meaning, since as we have seen, it can be used in several ways.

Another quite remarkable feature is apparent when comparing the treatment of the lexicalized metaphor "seed" to that of "fruit." Both metaphors occur regularly in the Hebrew Bible and are routinely rendered literally with equivalent terms in the other books of the LXX. Comparable usages of both "fruit" and "seed" metaphors can be found in classical Greek literature. Despite this, the LXX Isaiah translator approaches these two metaphors quite differently. Not only are metaphors with "seed" maintained, but some are introduced, or other metaphors are turned into "seed" metaphors. "Fruit" on the other hand is routinely interpreted, giving the specific tenor that "fruit" is thought to refer to, or else giving the term more commonly used in his time, γένημα, when used as a metonymy. There is no clear global reason for this difference in approach, unless perhaps the "fruit" metaphors had too great a diversity of meaning and were thought to create potential confusion if rendered literally.

LXX Isaiah on occasion will add or change vehicles, substituting another to carry the same tenor. For example, in 1:9 and 15:9 "seed" is used to render "remnant," and in 37:31 "fruit" is rendered "seed" in the context of a remnant rejuvenating itself. Using "seed" in metaphors for remnants probably has an agricultural background: that a portion of a crop of seeds is eaten, but a small remnant is preserved to be sown and to again multiply. Other times a vehicle has its tenor changed as in 11:1 and 11:10, which subtly suggest that the "root of Jesse" is not the familial source of some individual, but is the individual himself, who will rise to rule.

At times, too, the translator will take a metaphor from the Hebrew and carefully focus and adjust it to communicate more potently in the passage in which it occurs. This was seen in the passages with the withering/fallen flowers (28:1, 4), the tree shedding its leaves (1:30), and the fallen leaves carried by the wind (64:5 [Eng. 64:6]). In these metaphors, the process of fading is intensified to the action of falling or already being loose, dry, and easily carried off by the wind.

This chapter has made clear the independence of the LXX Isaiah translator. He does not seem obliged to follow the example of other LXX translators, and he certainly does not restrict metaphors to one meaning but carefully renders each verse in its context. He occasionally seems to give thought to the meaning of a given metaphor and the best way to express it, but always in the context of the passage and in service to the passage's perceived meaning.

3
Kinds of Plants

Metaphors can be culturally specific, as many theorists have shown, so metaphors that deal with specific kinds of plants may or may not be intelligible to different cultures living in different environments. This chapter will examine metaphors mentioning specific kinds of plants to see how the translator rendered them. While much plant life is common to both Egypt and Judea, there are some significant differences in flora, environment, and landscape. Ziegler has already pointed out many features of LXX Isaiah that reflect an Egyptian provenance.[1] While expanding on this observation, we will also see that in other places the underlying Judean situation will shine through in the translation, and in a few places the translator seems to add features that better describe Judea than Egypt.

This chapter will examine various categories of plants in turn: (1) reeds, (2) grass, (3) types of grain and related terminology, (4) thorns and thistles, (5) vineyards and vines, (6) trees, and (7) a simile where the Greek has a kind of chard. Finally, I will offer some conclusions.

3.1. Reeds

Reeds are mentioned a few times in Isaiah, though in several different ways. The Hebrew terms used are קנה, גמא, אגמון, סוף, and ערות. In this section we will discuss the first three terms in order (the last two occur once each and will be mentioned below), then summarize how reed metaphors are rendered.

---

1. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, chapter 8: "Der alexandrinisch-ägyptische Hintergrund der Js-LXX," 175–212.

3.1.1. קנה

In 19:6 we find the phrase קנה וסוף and it is translated with καλάμου καὶ παπύρου, though this passage is a literal description of Egypt's punishment.[2] In the Greek, these two plants could be considered specific valuable plants that will fail as a crop (or foraged good), or they could simply be two terms for plants that grow in the marshes and are vulnerable to drought. Of note is that the LXX feels the need to add that they are in the marshes, ἕλος, whereas the context could have suggested that they are growing on the river, streams, canals, and pools.[3] The next verse, 19:7, has another word that could mean reed, ערות, which the LXX renders with ἄχι (reed-grass).[4] In the passage as a whole, one cannot help but think of Job 8:11–13, where fools who forget God are compared to reeds that cannot survive without water, since the devastation of Egypt is related to the foolishness of its counsellors in Isa 19:10. But it is not clear that LXX Isaiah has this in mind since, as we will discuss below, the translator misses the chance to connect reeds and fools together in 19:15. The Targum translates 19:6 literally.[5]

> Isa 35:7
>
> והיה השרב לאגם וצמאון למבועי מים בנוה תנים רבצה חציר לקנה וגמא:
> The burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
>
> καὶ ἡ ἄνυδρος ἔσται εἰς ἕλη, καὶ εἰς τὴν διψῶσαν γῆν πηγὴ ὕδατος ἔσται· ἐκεῖ εὐφροσύνη ὀρνέων, ἔπαυλις καλάμου καὶ ἕλη.

---

2. Perhaps the meaning extends beyond a physical drought to political, social, and cultural drought. In the LXX, παπύρος occurs only three times. In Job 8:11 it renders גמא, but in Job 40:16 (MT 40:21) it occurs with two synonyms that together stand for קנה ובצה.

3. The plus in this passage is based on the word מצור, but it is unclear how.

4. *HALOT*, s.v. "עָרָה." But *DCH* 6, s.v. "עָרָה I," seems to have reservations about this meaning of ערות.

5. "And the canals will be *devastated*, and *their deep rivers* will *dry up* and be *desolate*, reed and rush will *not come up*. 7 *The greater part of the river will dry up, and will become as its stones*, and every *place where they* sow *by the river* will dry up, *be desolate* and *not sprout*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 19:6–7).

The dry place shall turn into marshlands, and in the thirsty land
there shall be springs of water; the joy of birds shall be there—a
residence of reed and marshlands.

This verse comes in the context of a restoration which is depicted with the
image of the wilderness sprouting with life. As Van der Kooij has shown,
the LXX links 35:1–2 with Isaiah 32:2 and 25:5 and so uses the idea of the
thirsty land and thirsty people to be references to Zion.[6] While 35:7 is not
necessarily a metaphor, it vividly illustrates the translator's conceptions of
marshes and reeds.

The first half of the verse is translated literally, except for the springs
becoming singular in the Greek and the addition of ἔσται for the sake of
clarity. The second part of the verse is more difficult. Scholars have dis-
puted how to understand this part of the verse, but the LXX reading is
completely different. There is no clear textual warrant for rendering בנוה
תנים רבצה with ἐκεῖ εὐφροσύνη ὀρνέων.[7] Ottley suggests בנוה may have been
read as a form of רנן.[8] Ziegler believes the idea of "joy" may come from
the influence of 32:14.[9] Baltzer, et al suggest that "joy" came from seeing
תנה and "birds" from הצפר, or that LXX Isaiah associated "residence" with
birds, as in Deut 22:6.[10] Perhaps the translator was surprised by the lack
of a contrast in this part of the verse and decided to insert a more positive
image describing what the desert would become. The insertion of "joy"
(εὐφροσύνη) probably comes from the greater context, since it is repeated
three times in 35:10.[11] In 34:11, birds are part of the picture of abandoned
places, but here they are singing for joy in a peaceful marsh scene. This
image seems more at home in Egypt than in Judea, where the scene would

---

6. Arie van der Kooij, "Rejoice, O Thirsty Desert! (Isaiah 35): On Zion in the
Septuagint of Isaiah," in *"Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": The City as Unifying Theme in
Isaiah*, ed. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude, OTS
58 (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 11–20.

7. In 13:22 תנים is rendered with ἐχῖνος, while in 34:13 and 43:20 it is rendered
with σειρήν. The last term is what is found in α′ and σ′ of 35:7. 1QIsaᵃ 35:7 agrees with
MT, except it lacks the ה on רבצה.

8. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:280.

9. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 149.

10. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2599.

11. However, in 35:6 instead of the mute shouting for joy (ותרן לשון אלם) they
speak clearly (καὶ τρανὴ ἔσται γλῶσσα μογιλάλων).

be more likely a river bank than a marsh.[12] One thinks of Egyptian art works, such as the fowling scene depicted in the tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē, where the birds are flying up from a papyrus marsh.[13] Similarly, in a simile used in a text about the dedication of Edfu, the bread is said to be as numerous as the sand on the beach, the oxen like a cloud of locusts, and as many birds as in a swamp.[14] In 35:6, however, in both Hebrew and Greek, the image is much more like a flashflood in the desert. The springs and marsh in 35:7 show that it was a flash flood that permanently transformed the desert.

In the last phrase, חציר appears to have been read with the meaning "an abode" or "residence." This makes good sense, since this is its meaning in 34:13, where we also find the phrase נוה תנים. The most common equivalent for קנה is κάλαμος; this is a good equivalent in that they are both rather general words for reeds or canes.[15] According to Musselman, קנה refers to *arundo donax* as well as generally to other kinds of reeds most of the time in the Old Testament (when one of its extended meanings is not meant), but in five places refers to *Acorus calamus*, or calamus (Exod 30:23, Song 4:14, Isa 43:24, Jer 6:20, Ezek 27:19).[16] In Exod 30:23, the LXX has καλάμου εὐώδους, the same term for *Acorus calamus* as Theophrastus (*Hist. plant.* 4.8.3; 9.7.1, 3) uses: κάλαμος ὁ εὐώδης.[17] In Isa 35:7, then, we should assume

---

12. A wet area full of reeds is possible in the Jordan valley, near Dan, and in a few other river valleys (such as Zin Canyon or ʿEin-Gedi) but is not typical. Remember, though, the Hebrew does say אגם.

13. Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*, vol. 1, The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 11 (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), plate 42.

14. "Zu essen gab es mehr als das Sand auf einem Strand ist,… es wurden mehr Ochsen aller Rassen geschlachtet als eine Wolke von Heuschrecken, so viele Vögel wie in einem Sumpf." See Serge Sauneron and Henri Stierlin, *Die letzten Tempel Ägyptens: Edfu und Philae* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1978), 40.

15. See also Lemmelijn, "Flora in Cantico Canticorum," 47–48.

16. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 73.

17. The word εὐώδης is used in the LXX only in this verse, twice rendering בשם (cf. Tg. Neb. Isa 43:24, where קנה is rendered קני בסם. The two most common renderings of בשם in the LXX are ἄρωμα [15x] and ἥδυσμα [7x]). The other occurrence in this verse modifies cinnamon. For the other verses where Musselman believes calamus is meant: in Song 4:14 the usual translation equivalent is used without any description or elaboration; we will discuss the Isaiah passage below, but there we find θυμίαμα; LXX Jer 6:20 interprets the phrase וקנה הטוב as referring to cinnamon (καὶ κιννάμωμον); there is no equivalent in Ezek 27:19.

a generic meaning for καλάμου, since the LXX often is more specific (usually due to the Hebrew being more specific) when קנה means calamus (even if the LXX does not interpret קנה as meaning calamus).

The rendering of גמא with ἕλος is peculiar. The word occurs only four times in the Hebrew Bible and is treated differently each time. In Exod 2:3 it is not rendered. In Job 8:11 it is rendered with πάπυρος, which is the ideal translation. We will deal with Isa 18:2 below, but it is enough here to note that it is rendered βύβλινος. In 35:7, we could have a textual issue, in that the text (or just the translator) reads אגם instead of גמא, which is elsewhere rendered five times with ἕλος, including the first part of the current verse.[18] Having a word for marsh appears to be an idea that is important for our translator in passages where deserts become wet and green and vice versa (19:6, 33:9, 35:7, 41:18, 42:15); the association of reeds and marshes seems to be appropriate and well known to Egyptians.[19]

The Targum is literal, for the most part, but clarifies the meaning of the second part of the verse by the addition of דהואה ירורין שרין תמן יסגי קני תמן: וגומא, "the place where jackals dwell, there reeds and rushes will increase."[20] In 35:6, however, the disabled people being healed are interpreted as captives returning, and in 35:9 the lion is interpreted as a wicked king.

In the narrative in Isa 36:6, Sennacherib's messenger uses a metaphor of a bruised reed.

Isa 36:6

הנה בטחת על־משענת הקנה הרצוץ הזה על־מצרים אשר יסמך איש עליו
ובא בכפו ונקבה כן פרעה מלך־מצרים לכל־הבטחים עליו:

"See, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him."

ἰδοὺ πεποιθὼς εἶ ἐπὶ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν καλαμίνην τὴν τεθλασμένην ταύτην, ἐπ᾽ Αἴγυπτον· ὃς ἂν ἐπ᾽ αὐτὴν ἐπιστηρισθῇ, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς

---

18. On אגם instead of גמא, see Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:280; and Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2599. גמא is rendered with ἕλος in Exod 7:19, 8:1, Isa 35:7, 41:18, 42:15. ἕλος also renders סוף in Exod 2:3, 5.

19. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 189–90.

20. "[A]nd the parched gound [sic] shall become pool*s of water*, and the thirsty area springs of water; *the place where* jackals *dwell, there* reeds and rushes *will increase*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 35:7).

τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ· οὕτως ἐστὶ Φαραω βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου καὶ πάντες
οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ᾽ αὐτῷ.

"See, you are trusting in Egypt, this *rod of crushed reed*; whoever leans on it, it will go into his hand. Such is Pharao, king of Egypt, and all who trust in him."

In the Hebrew, the image is of using a crushed or damaged reed as a staff, which breaks as soon as you try to put any weight on it, so that it hurts you rather than helps you. The interpretation of this metaphor is given twice in the verse, first in apposition to the reed equating it, then again at the end of the verse in an explanation. The structure, giving the metaphor then the explanation introduced with כן, almost makes it a comparison. In the Greek, the tenses are played with a bit and the passage is turned into good Greek (as seen by the periphrastic construction, the definite articles in the description of the staff, and the rendering of איש with ὃς ἄν). The rendering of the phrase על־משענת הקנה הרצוץ הזה is literal, showing that the staff is made of reed: ἐπὶ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν καλαμίνην τὴν τεθλασμένην ταύτην. Either the LXX's *Vorlage* lacked ונקבה, or the translator thought the idea was already expressed by εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ and so omitted what he thought was a redundant synonym.[21] It is present in the parallel text in Kings, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and is also included in Theodotion's version of the passage.[22]

In all, the rendering of this verse is quite literal. The metaphor is already explained in the Hebrew, so there is no extra work for the translator in rendering it. The reed is probably chosen for the metaphor both because it is typical of Egypt, and also because a reed can be weakened by being crushed and breaks in such a way that it would hurt someone, like in this image. Of note is how much is not rendered, in contrast, in the next verse, 36:7, though that is beyond the scope of this research.

The Targum clarifies the first mention of Egypt by rendering it פרעה מלכא דמצרים.[23] This makes the two interpretations of what the reed staff represents identical. Otherwise the rendering is quite literal.

In Isa 42:3 there is another reference to a bruised reed.

---

21. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 188–89.

22. See Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:284.

23. "Behold, you are relying on *Pharaoh king of* Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of *the* man who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him" (Tg. Neb. Isa 36:6).

Isa 42:3

קנה רצוץ לא ישבור ופשתה כהה לא יכבנה לאמת יוציא משפט:

A bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will
not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.

κάλαμον τεθλασμένον οὐ συντρίψει καὶ λίνον καπνιζόμενον οὐ σβέσει,
ἀλλὰ εἰς ἀλήθειαν ἐξοίσει κρίσιν.

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking wick he will not
quench, but he will bring forth judgment for truth.

The bruised reed here has nothing to do with the use in 36:6. The LXX
renders the verse literally, the biggest difference being the addition of the
contrastive ἀλλά. The translator does not give what he thinks the metaphors
mean, but in the Hebrew there are similar images in 36:6 of a bruised reed,
and in 43:17 where warriors and armies are said to die like an extinguished
wick (כפשתה כבו, ὡς λίνον ἐσβεσμένον). However, these passages do not
seem related in the Hebrew or the Greek; it is merely the reuse of the same
vehicle for different tenors. The meaning here has to do with the servant's
mercy and gentleness toward the weak.

The Targum interprets the two metaphors by making them similes:
the meek are like a bruised reed and the poor are like a smoldering wick
(perhaps to disambiguate them from the metaphors in 36:6 and 43:17).[24]
The Targum renders the second part of the verse literally without any
addition.

In the two places where an extended meaning of קנה is used, LXX
translates appropriately. In Isa 43:24 the plant is mentioned in the context
of sacrifices, so it means specifically the plant *Acorus calamus* or cala-
mus, which has a root used in incense.[25] The LXX renders it with θυμίαμα
(incense), and the Targum clarifies by saying קני בסם. In 46:6 קנה is used
to refer to the beam of a set of scales. The LXX renders it with ζυγός, which
is the appropriate Greek term,[26] and the Targum takes a similar strategy by
rendering it with מוזניא.

---

24. "*The poor who are like* a bruised reed he will not break, and *the needy who
are like* a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will bring forth *judgment* for *his*
truth" (Tg. Neb. Isa 42:3).

25. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 73.

26. LSJ, s.v. "ζυγόν."

3.1.2. גמא

Another term for a reed is גמא, which, as we have seen, means papyrus. We considered its only other occurrence in 35:7.

> Isa 18:2
>
> השלח בים צירים ובכלי־גמא על־פני־מים לכו מלאכים קלים אל־גוי ממשך
> ומורט אל־עם נורא מן־הוא והלאה גוי קו־קו ומבוסה אשר־בזאו נהרים
> ארצו:
>
> Sending ambassadors by *sea* in vessels of papyrus on the waters! Go, you swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.
>
> ὁ ἀποστέλλων ἐν θαλάσσῃ ὅμηρα καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βυβλίνας ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος· πορεύσονται γὰρ ἄγγελοι κοῦφοι πρὸς ἔθνος μετέωρον καὶ ξένον λαὸν καὶ χαλεπόν, τίς αὐτοῦ ἐπέκεινα; ἔθνος ἀνέλπιστον καὶ καταπεπατημένον. νῦν οἱ ποταμοὶ τῆς γῆς...
>
> He who sends hostages by sea and papyrus letters on the water! For swift messengers will go to a high nation, and a foreign and fierce people: who is beyond it? It is a nation without hope and trampled down. Now the rivers of the land…

Our interest in this passage is only in the first parallel clauses. In the Hebrew, the second cola expands on how the messengers will travel on the sea, namely, on papyrus boats on the water. The LXX takes the phrase כלי־גמא not as a description of a kind of boat, but as a circumlocution for an epistle.[27] The LXX seems to have in mind a more specific idea for this passage than the Hebrew expresses. This is seen by the rendering of צירים. This term for some sort of messenger is translated with ἄγγελος three times in the LXX, and in LXX Isaiah it is twice translated with πρέσβυς. Only here is it rendered with ὅμηρος.[28] This rendering shows a much more specific relationship: if they sent only a messenger or envoy it shows they wanted

---

27. Ziegler simply calls it a free rendering in his description of the rendering of כלי (*Untersuchungen*, 84).

28. Van der Kooij points out that this word equivalence is also found in α′ Prov 13:17 and σ′ Isa 57:9 ("City of Alexandria," 147n10). See also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2550.

to talk, but sending hostages shows they already have a certain agreement or obligation and are subordinate. This rendering may be in part under the influence of the translator's understanding of the next clause.

In Hebrew the word כלי is remarkably versatile and often is given specificity by the noun with which it is in construct. Only in this passage is it used to refer to ships.[29] While papyrus boats could undoubtedly be seen on the rivers and canals of Egypt, as indeed they can still be seen today,[30] the only other biblical reference to a papyrus water craft is the אניות אבה in Job 9:26 and the ark in Exod 2:3; in neither place does the Greek render it as a papyrus boat. The translator of LXX Isa 18 could have taken כלי in its most general sense, "an article, object,"[31] and, given the material "papyrus" and the context of sending hostages and messengers, rather naturally assumed the phrase referred to letters. The translator, then, translates by way of metonymy of the genus, exchanging the general "object" to the specific "letter."[32] Only here in the LXX do we find the adjective βύβλινος, though elsewhere we find πάπυρος (Isa 19:6, Job 8:11, 40:21) which refers to the plant, not the material. The idea of ships, however, is still present in the LXX of the passage in 18:1.

Elsewhere LXX Isaiah often renders כלי with the standard σκεῦος.[33] At times, though, LXX Isaiah specifies to what it thinks כלי refers. In 13:5, where weapons are meant, it is rendered with ὁπλομάχος.[34] In 61:10, where the ornaments and jewelry of a bride are meant, it is rendered with κόσμος.

---

29. The closest it gets is "cargo" in Jonah 1:5.

30. F. Nigel Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants: Flowers and Trees, Fruits and Vegetables, Ecology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 69–70.

31. See BDB s.v. "כְּלִי," 1. In personal communication, Muraoka suggested to me that a more specific container or vessel may have been thought, here a letter containing a message.

32. Aristotle might frown on using the metaphor "vessel of papyrus" to mean a letter; while it is a sort of genus for species, the metaphor is not proportional, in that it cannot be reversed; a vessel cannot be called a letter very easily. See Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.4.4.

33. See Isa 10:28, where it refers to baggage; 39:2, where it refers to Hezekiah's valuables; 52:11, where it refers to temple vessels; 54:16, where it refers to something made by a smith; 54:17, where the term is used, but the LXX may change the meaning from a weapon to a generic item; 65:4, where it refers to cooking and eating vessels. Ziegler describes the translation of כלי in LXX Isaiah as an example of the translator's freedom to interpret figurative expressions (*Untersuchungen*, 83–84).

34. The only other place this term is used is in the previous verse, 13:4.

In two places, the translator goes beyond specifying a general word with a specific rendering and actually interprets it. In 66:20, the phrase בכלי טהור becomes μετὰ ψαλμῶν, a rendering due to contextual reasons.[35] We have already discussed Isa 22:24 (1.3.3.4), but in brief, the entire metaphor of the verse is interpreted, and the various vessels have been interpreted by merism for all the people: ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου.

It should be noted that in 18:1 the Greek adds a reference to a boat, πλοῖον, which could be under the influence of 18:2, or may be an equivalent for צלצל, as in Job 40:31.[36] There are undoubtedly other contextual reasons for the LXX translator's decision to translate these phrases the way that he does (see also, for instance, the translation of 18:2b and the same clause in 18:7), but we will leave that to other studies.

The Targum understands the clauses in question in 18:2 to refer to messengers and fishing boats, respectively.[37] Also the people are "robbed and plundered" by the gentiles. But in 18:1 the land is India, not Cush.

3.1.3. אגמון

Another term for reed is אגמון, related to a term for marsh, אגם.

> Isa 58:5
> הכזה יהיה צום אבחרהו יום ענות אדם נפשו הלכף ראשו ושק ואפר
> יציע הלזה תקרא־צום ויום רצון ליהוה:
> Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lᴏʀᴅ?
>
> οὐ ταύτην τὴν νηστείαν ἐξελεξάμην καὶ ἡμέραν ταπεινοῦν ἄνθρωπον τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ· οὐδ' ἂν κάμψῃς ὡς κρίκον τὸν τράχηλόν σου καὶ σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ὑποστρώσῃς, οὐδ' οὕτως καλέσετε νηστείαν δεκτήν.

---

35. Bringing a sacrifice in clean vessels is no longer possible in the Greek, since the sacrifice has become a simile for bringing prisoners.

36. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2550.

37. "Which sends *messengers* by the sea and in *fishing boats* upon the waters! Go, swift messengers, to *the people robbed and plundered*, to *the* people *which was strong before* and *continually, the people robbed and plundered whose* land the *Gentiles plundered*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 18:2).

This is not the fast I have chosen, even a day for a person to humble himself; not even if you bend your neck like a ring and spread under you sackcloth and ashes—not even so shall you call it an acceptable fast.

Our interest in this verse is in the simile. In the Hebrew we have the bowing of the head compared to a reed bending; it is easy to imagine a papyrus reed with its globe of flowers at the top bowing down in the wind. The Greek, however, has changed head to neck and reed to ring.[38] Ziegler points out that κάμπτω is elsewhere associated with necks but never with heads.[39]

The word אגמן occurs only five times in the Hebrew Bible. In the LXX, it is not rendered literally three times in Isaiah (we will discuss the other two occurrences below) and in the two occurrences in Job (in Job 40:26 it appears to be rendered with κρίκον, though Muraoka finds the equivalence implausible,[40] and in Job 41:12 it is rendered with ἄνθραξ, probably due to the context). It could be argued that the translators of all these passages simply do not know what the word means, which is odd, since the LXX knows the meaning of אגם. In both Job passages it appears that the translator has used the context to make a guess (different in each place). BDB and Ottley suggest it could refer to a rope made from reed fiber, which would explain the rendering in Job 40:26 and Isa 58:5.[41] Another explanation can be found in looking at the words more commonly rendered with κρίκος: וו (3x) and קרס (4x), both terms meaning "hook." The translator may have thought a bent hook or ring was a better image for a bowed neck than a bending reed. In either case, while the LXX changes the vehicle of the simile, it is still apt, as Ziegler has said.[42]

The Targum is literal, even using the word אגמון, though it feels the need to explain the simile, adding that the rush is bowed down.[43]

---

38. 1QIsa^b agrees with LXX's second person pronoun: ראשך.

39. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99–100. He points out the close parallel in Sir 30:12.

40. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 71. Rashi, however, says אגמן refers to a bent needle or fishhook.

41. BDB, s.v. "אַגְמֹן"; Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:359.

42. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 100. Here he also discusses how the other versions deal with this passage.

43. "Is this *it*, the fast that I *take pleasure in*, a day for a man to afflict himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush *that is bowed down*, and to *lodge upon* sackcloth

Isa 9:13

וְיַכְרֵת יְהוָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפָּה וְאַגְמוֹן יוֹם אֶחָד׃

So the Lord cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day.

καὶ ἀφεῖλε κύριος ἀπὸ Ισραηλ κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, μέγαν καὶ μικρὸν ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ.

So the Lord took away from Israel head and tail, great and small in one day.

In the Hebrew of the next verse (9:14), the head (LXX: ἀρχή) is said to be the elders, and those following them and the tail are the prophets. In the passage as a whole, however, there is no interpretation for what the branch and reed represent. If the two word pairs are understood as synonymously parallel, or two images of the same thing, we can suppose that the palm branch represents the rulers (just as the Hasmonean kings used the palm branch as their symbol). The reed also, in theory, could represent prophets perhaps by the association of reed flutes (as mentioned with prophets and other instruments in 1 Sam 10:5), though this is a strained speculation. Apart from 9:14, there is no mention of prophets in the passage. The LXX seems to have understood כפה ואגמון not as synonymous to the first image but as further describing it, and so renders it as great and small, so that all the leaders and prophets will be removed.[44] The branches and reeds, then, were seen as a merism for all the leaders. The only place outside Isaiah where the term כפה is used is Job 15:32, where it is rendered ῥάδαμνος; as mentioned in the section on branches above (2.6.3), the LXX Isaiah translator may have thought he saw the word כפה in Isa 55:12 Ziegler believes the translator paraphrases.[45] He does not describe why but says that μέγαν καὶ μικρόν is a proper rendering. Ziegler also points out that the phrase "great and small" occurs many times in the Hebrew Bible, but not in Isaiah. He says LXX Isaiah likes to use the phrase when the text is obscure, such as in 22:5, 24; 33:4, 19, though in

---

and ashes? Do you call this a fast, and a day *that is a pleasure before* the Lord?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 58:5).

44. 1QIsa^a agrees with MT.

45. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84. Ottley calls the translation a "simplified version" (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:157).

all these other places the word order is the reverse.[46] Indeed, the Hebrew phrase that ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου renders in 22:5 is obscure; Baltzer et al. suggest the translator may have read two words, קרקע (ground) and קדקד (top of the head), and rendered the perceived meaning of the metaphor.[47] Here again it functions in Greek as a merism for all the people suffering what is described. In 22:24 the Hebrew is not obscure, yet the translator says ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου as an interpretation of the metaphor "from cups to flagons," prompted by the Hebrew כל כלי הקטן. In 33:4 the Greek phrase could be understood as an interpretation of the Hebrew אסף החסיל if the phrase were understood to show that even the spoil of a small bug will be plundered. In this case saying simply "from small to great" shows the same thing, that the spoil of all people will be plundered. In the last place it occurs in Isaiah, 33:19, it is a plus based on reading the verse a little differently. Moving to where the sentence ends, and taking המגדלים as a *pual* participle and עם in the next sentence in connection with it, the translator adds μικρὸν καὶ μέγαν to modify the λαόν who are growing up. As we have seen, on several occasions the LXX Isaiah translator likes to add "small and great." But it is because of how he reads the Hebrew and appears to be what he thinks the Hebrew intends, and not, as Henry St. John Thackeray believes, because the translator was in doubt of the meaning of the Hebrew.[48]

The Targum interprets these words in 9:13 as kings and governors and such: ריש והגמון שלטון ואטרון.[49]

Isa 19:15

ולא־יהיה למצרים מעשה אשר יעשה ראש וזנב כפה ואגמון:

Neither head nor tail, palm branch or reed, will be able to do anything for Egypt.

καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἔργον, ὃ ποιήσει κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος.

---

46. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

47. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2559.

48. Henry St. John Thackeray, "The Greek Translators of the Prophetical Books," *JTS* 4 (1903): 583n3.

49. "So the Lord *destroyed* from Israel head and *commandant, ruler* and *tyrant* in one day—15 the elder and honoured man is the head, and the *scribe* who teaches deceit is *faint*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 9:13).

And there will not be a work for the Egyptians that will make head
and tail, beginning *and* end.

Here again we have the two word pairs: head and tail, and palm branch
and reed. In the context, 19:12–14, the wise men and princes of Egypt
are depicted as powerless and confused, like staggering drunks. In light
of this, it makes sense to suppose in 19:15 it is the leaders that are meant
by the metaphors, like in 9:13. If this is the case, then the two word pairs
should be the subject of יעשה (as in RSV), the verse meaning the various
leaders are powerless to do anything to help Egypt.

The Greek, however, makes these word pairs the object of the verb.
They no longer represent the leaders being able to do nothing but describe
the state of Egypt itself. In the context of incompetent and confused lead-
ers, these word pairs seem to represent disorder. "Head and tail" here may
be much like the English idiom "I can't make head nor tail of it," meaning
one cannot understand or make sense of it (put it into order); the pair
ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος more clearly has this meaning.[50] To elaborate on Ziegler's
suggestion, the rendering is dependent on the previous pair; it probably is
meant to reiterate or explain "head and tail," in that ἀρχή is a synonym of
κεφαλή (both render ראש in 9:13 and 9:14, though there the leadership is
meant), and τέλος is chosen as a counterpart to ἀρχή.[51]

The Targum interprets these terms exactly as in 9:13.[52]

3.1.4. Summary

In Isaiah, reeds and canes are mentioned only a few times but are used in a
variety of ways. In two places they are mentioned as plants that live where
there is water: in 19:6–7 they die as Egypt dries up but in 35:7 they are used
to describe the desert becoming a marsh. That reeds are closely associated
with marshes, so that a transfer between a place and what grows in it is
possible, is not unique to this passage; in Exod 2:3, 5 the LXX has marsh
(ἕλος) where the Hebrew has reed (סוף). In two places reeds are mentioned
in the Hebrew for their frailty once bruised; the LXX renders these places
literally (36:6 and 42:3). In 18:2 a word for "reed" is rendered literally, but

---

50. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT.

51. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

52. "And the Egypt*ians* will not have a *king who will reign*, head or *commandant,
ruler* or *tyrant*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 19:15).

the phrase is changed from a boat to a letter of papyrus, due to the context. In 58:5 a reed is used in the simile of bowing for its ability to bend, but the Greek uses a simile of a bent ring or hook. In 9:13 and 19:15 the same image is rendered in two different ways. In each of these two places it is rendered to explain the meaning of the previous image; the image itself does not really have a life or meaning of its own to the translator (though in 9:13 the idea of a reed being frail may be at work in the Greek). All in all, reeds are used in Isaiah in a variety of ways, and the Old Greek translator tries to catch and accentuate their meaning in the context in which they occur, though this is not always how modern people would understand the Hebrew.

The Targum generally either interprets or renders literally, though occasionally it will add words to specify the meaning. It expands 19:6–7, emphasizing that the rivers and canals are drying up; the reference to reeds and canes is preserved literally. Isa 35:7 is rendered literally, with only a few clarifying words. The bruised read in 36:6 is rendered literally, though Pharaoh is called king; but in 42:3 the Targum turns the bruised reed metaphor into a comparison describing the poor. In 18:2 the vessel of papyrus is rendered as a kind of fishing boat, explaining the odd epithet. The comparison of a bowed head to a reed in 58:5 is rendered literally, though the Targum clarifies the point of comparison: that the reed is bent. The Targum, like LXX Isaiah, interprets the word pair "branch and reed" in 9:14 and 19:15 but is much more specific, rendering it as rulers and tyrants.

3.2. Grass

In Isaiah we find a variety of terminology for grass and greenery: חציר, עשב, דשא, ירק, and חשש. The various words for grass are used either to express the idea of something that quickly flourishes (44:4 and 66:14) or as something that quickly withers (15:6, 37:27, 42:15, 51:12); often both ideas are implicitly at work (such as 40:6–8, 51:12, or 35:7 where dry grass is used in contrast to a pool of reeds).[53] As a corollary to the idea of wither-

---

53. Basson has two categories of plant metaphors more generally that represent a person flourishing (Isa 11:1, 27:6, etc.) or passing away (Isa 1:30, 3:14, 5:5–6, 14:30, etc.) (Basson, "People Are Plants," 578–79). Sticher, "Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras," 251–52 discusses metaphors where grass is transient, usually a vehicle representing the wicked.

ing, grass is mentioned as something flammable and quickly consumed by fire (5:24 and 33:11).

In the LXX, the rich array of vocabulary is reduced to just three terms: βοτάνη, χόρτος, and ἄγρωστις. Of the ten passages where grass terminology occurs in Isaiah, five are either not rendered or are not metaphors. The term חשש means dry grass or foliage.[54] As Ziegler has pointed out, both occurrences of this word in Isaiah (5:24 and 33:11) are parallel to the word קש but are rendered as verbs.[55] Since this term is not rendered literally, we will discuss these passages in the section on chaff (3.3.2.1.1).[56] The term חציר appears in 35:7; as discussed in the section on reeds (3.1.1), it is rendered, based on its other definition, with ἔπαυλις (residence).[57] Similarly, the Targum renders it with שרי (to dwell). This could be because also in 34:13 חציר appears even more clearly with this meaning. LXX renders it the same way in 34:13, but the Targum has מדור (dwelling place). The term עשב occurs in 42:15, but that clause is not rendered in the LXX, probably because the translator attempted to reduce "(nearly) identical elements that are not joined in coordination."[58] In 15:6, several words for grass are found, and they are again reduced to two nouns (one becomes an adjective), though this verse is not a metaphor but describes how the greenery of Moab will fail. The LXX adds grass terms in three passages; we will discuss 9:17, 10:17, and 32:13 below in the section on thorns (3.4.1).

This section will discuss the remaining five passages, looking first at those concerned with grass that withers and is dry, and then at grass that flourishes.

3.2.1. Withering Grass

Four terms for grass, חציר, דשא, ירק, and עשב, are found together in Isa 37:27.

---

54. *HALOT*, s.v. "חֲשָׁשׁ."
55. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 9–10. However, his attempt to link the Greek rendering to the Aramaic meaning of חשש "to feel, to suffer," is not convincing.
56. Note that 5:24 was already partially discussed in the section on roots (2.3.2).
57. This equivalent is also used in Isa 34:13, 42:11, and 62:9.
58. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 197–99. 1QIsaᵃ has the missing clause. It is noteworthy that LXX Isaiah has removed the clause with geography atypical of Egypt.

Isa 37:27

וישביהן קצרי־יד חתו ובשו היו עשב שדה וירק דשא חציר גגות ושדמה
לפני קמה:

While their inhabitants, *short of hand*, are dismayed and confounded; they have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.

ἀνῆκα τὰς χεῖρας, καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν καὶ ἐγένοντο ὡς χόρτος ξηρὸς ἐπὶ δωμάτων καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις.

I weakened their hands, and they have *dried up*, and they have become like dry grass upon housetops and like wild grass.

This verse can be understood in various ways, and there have been several suggestions for how to understand ושדמה.[59] The parallel to this verse in 2 Kgs 19:26 reads ושדפה, which makes better sense and appears to be the basis of the Targum of Isa 37:27.[60] The LXX of 2 Kgs 19:26 translates all the grass terms. Baltzer et al. suggest that the *Vorlage* of LXX Isaiah read שדפה, which may have contributed to the rendering χόρτος ξηρός.[61] The possibility of this reading being in the *Vorlage* is strengthened by 1QIsaᵃ, which has הנשדף לפני קדים. While it is possible this word was read and contributed to the LXX's understanding, ξηρός could also have been freely added for clarity or under the influence of Ps 129:6, where יהיו כחציר גגות שקדמת שלף יבש is rendered with γενηθήτωσαν ὡς χόρτος δωμάτων, ὃς πρὸ τοῦ ἐκσπασθῆναι ἐξηράνθη. In 9:17 (Eng. 9:18), as we will see, the translator also adds ξηρός (though here it modifies ἄγρωστις, which is a rendering for "thorns") to make it clear that flammability is what is at issue. Likewise in 51:12 the translator clarifies with the verb ξηραίνω modifying grass. In 37:27, the translator understands the grasses mentioned to be illustrative of how the inhabitants will lose strength and vitality. As though the verb ξηραίνω were not enough, the translator also adds the adjective ξηρός to tighten up and focus the comparison, and perhaps to ballast partially the synonyms he has condensed. The Hebrew basis for ἄγρωστις could be דשא (as in Gen 1:11 and Deut 32:2), though it is an equivalent elsewhere for עשב (as in Micah 5:6); this Greek term is not used in 2 Kgs 19:26. As

---

59. See Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 3:1415, 1418–19.

60. The Targum reads דישלוק עד לא מטא למהוי שובלין.

61. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2603.

Ziegler points out, ἄγρωστις is a kind of weed that grows in fields and is mentioned in the papyri.[62]

The Greek has partially interpreted the phrase קצרי־יד to be clearer. The Greek has not rendered חתו.[63] Instead of "being ashamed," the LXX understands ובשו as coming from יבש,[64] probably due to the grasses in the verse, and so renders it with ξηραίνω. 1QIsaᵃ reads: ויבשו; the *yod* may help explain LXX Isaiah's reading. The Greek has also condensed all the synonymous terms for grasses in the enumeration down to one term and put it in a simile, so היו עשב שדה וירק דשא חציר גגות becomes ὡς χόρτος ξηρὸς ἐπὶ δωμάτων;[65] there are no exact equivalents for χόρτος or ἄγρωστις. Most of the Hebrew terms for grass or vegetation suggest fresh green growth, but the LXX makes it dry grass, probably to emphasize the point of the comparison (implied in the Hebrew, but the Greek has a comparative particle): they have become weak. In 2 Kgs 19:26 the Greek renders the same phrase, aiming more for accuracy, as χόρτος ἀγροῦ ἢ χλωρὰ βοτάνη χλόη δωμάτων.

As mentioned above, the Targum agrees with the emendation to שדפה.[66] Apart from clarifying the first part of the verse, that their strength (חיל) is cut off, the Targum renders the verse literally.

> Isa 51:12
>
> אנכי אנכי הוא מנחמכם מי־את ותיראי מאנוש ימות ומבן־אדם חציר ינתן:
>
> I, I am he who comforts you; *who are you that you fear* a mere mortal who must die, a *son of man who is given up* like grass?
>
> ἐγώ εἰμι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ παρακαλῶν σε· γνῶθι τίνα εὐλαβηθεῖσα ἐφοβήθης ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου θνητοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οἳ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν.

---

62. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181; Michael Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, MBPF 7 (Munich: Beck, 1925), 114–15.

63. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 191. She classifies it as an instance of the reduction of synonymous words in coordination (omission of elements from an enumeration).

64. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2603. Cf. Isa 40:7, which has יבש חציר, rendered ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος in LXX Isaiah.

65. See Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 189–91.

66. "while their inhabitants, *their force* shorn, are *shattered* and confounded, and have become *like* plants of the field*s* and *like* tender grass, *and like* grass on the housetops *which is singed* before it *comes* to *be ears*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 37:27).

I am, I am he who comforts you. Acknowledge of whom you were
cautious; you were afraid because of a mortal man and a son of
man, who have dried up like grass.

The Greek has made some modifications to this verse.[67] Of note for our
purposes is that the last clause has been clarified. This use of the Hebrew
verb נתן is unique to this passage.[68] The Greek interprets it to reinforce the
perceived meaning of the passage; it makes it explicitly a comparison by
inserting the comparative marker and interprets the verb to explain the
point of the comparison: οἳ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν. The translator appears
to have prioritized translating with a finite verb over refraining from
adding elements which turn the clause into a simile. This understanding
makes sense in this passage, in that it illustrates how humanity is weak and
feeble. It is probably under the influence of 40:6–8, where the verb ξηραίνω
also occurs in relation to χόρτος, describing the frailty of humans.[69] Part of
the idea in 40:6–8, which may underlie the Greek of 51:12 as well, is that
grass turns green, springs up, and flowers quickly, and so seems to have
great vigor. But it is in fact frail and transitory. Ziegler also points to Isa
40:7 as an influence on 51:12, as well as 42:15.[70]

The Targum also interprets the verb, but it does so in a different way,
and it adds a comparative marker: ומבר אנשא דכעסבא חשיב.[71] The Targum
rendering is more literal than the LXX.

Isa 40:6–8
קול אמר קרא ואמר מה אקרא כל־הבשר חציר וכל־חסדו כציץ השדה:
יבש חציר נבל ציץ כי רוח יהוה נשבה בו אכן חציר העם: יבש חציר נבל
ציץ ודבר־אלהינו יקום לעולם:
A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All people
are grass, their constancy is like the flower of the field. The grass
withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lᴏʀᴅ blows upon

---

67. The plus εὐλαβηθεῖσα is probably under the influence of 57:11, as Ottley has
suggested (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:340). Cf. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 223–
24; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 76.

68. 1QIsaᵃ has the same verb, though in the *qatal*.

69. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2664.

70. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 162.

71. "I, I am he that comforts you; *of whom* are you afraid, of man who dies, of *the*
son of man who is *reckoned as the* grass?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 51:12).

it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.

φωνὴ λέγοντος Βόησον· καὶ εἶπα Τί βοήσω; Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσε, τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
A voice of one saying, "Cry out!" and I said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is grass; all the glory of man is like the flower of grass. The grass has *dried out*, and the flower has fallen, but the word of our God remains forever."

We have discussed this passage at greater length in the section on flowers (2.4.1). Here we will focus on its rendering of "grass." In Isa 40:6–8 חציר appears four times and is twice rendered with χόρτος; the third occurrence of χόρτος is a rendering for השדה. The other two occurrences of חציר are in clauses that are minuses, as was discussed in the section on flowers. The rendering of שדה with χόρτος is unique to this passage; elsewhere in LXX Isaiah it is rendered with ἀγρός.[72] Ziegler suggests this rendering is under the influence of the repetition of χόρτος in this passage,[73] but it could have been a deliberate choice. This rendering tightens the relationship between the image and the reality, so that people and their glory are more closely related to grass and its flower; also, it tightens the relationship between 40:6 and 40:7, since the field is not mentioned again in the Hebrew. This changes the parallelism into a more climatic construction, rather than two parallel ideas. In Ps 103:15, where man's mortality is again compared to grass and to the flower of the field, the LXX Ps 102:15 renders literally, using ἄνθος ἀγροῦ.

The Targum of 40:6–8 interprets that all the wicked are like grass, and their strength like the chaff of the field.[74] Also, in 40:8 grass is replaced with the wicked dying, and the flower with their thoughts perishing.

---

72. 5:5 (2x), 7:3, 32:12, 36:2, 43:20, 55:12.

73. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 150.

74. "A voice *of one who says, "Prophesy*!" And he *answered and* said, "What shall I *prophesy*?" All *the wicked are as the* grass, and all *their strength* like the *chaff* of the field. The grass withers, *its* flower fades, for the spirit *from* the LORD blows upon it; surely *the wicked among* the people *are reckoned as the* grass. *The wicked dies, his conceptions perish*; but the word of our God stand*s* for ever" (Tg. Neb. Isa 40:6–8).

3.2.2. Flourishing Grass

In two passages, grass is used positively to illustrate things that flourish.

> Isa 44:4
>
> וצמחו בבין חציר כערבים על־יבלי־מים:
>
> *And t*hey will spring up *in between grass* like willows by flowing *waters*.
>
> καὶ ἀνατελοῦσιν ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος καὶ ὡς ἰτέα ἐπὶ παραρρέον ὕδωρ.
>
> And they shall spring up like grass in the midst of water and like a willow by flowing water.

The Hebrew text of this passage is often emended in various ways.[75] The main issue is the unusual preposition בבין. LXX and 1QIsaᵃ both have instead כבין (בין becomes ἀνὰ μέσον in LXX).[76] A second textual question is whether חציר refers to "grass" or "reed."[77] *HALOT* lists 44:4 along with Isa 35:7 and Job 8:12 as occurrences where חציר means "reed."[78] But in each of these places, it makes more sense to define it as meaning "grass."[79] In any case, here the LXX renders it as meaning grass, making it a simile like the parallel clause.

A third issue is the LXX's plus: ὕδατος. The LXX *Vorlage* could have been the same as the MT or 1QIsaᵃ; Ziegler suggests that ὕδατος was added for the sake of having a pleasing comparison.[80] Also, ὕδατος provides a nice parallel to ὕδωρ. While this addition could have been already in the *Vorlage*, it makes sense for it to be a deliberate addition, as Ziegler says, since nearly everywhere else in LXX Isaiah, χόρτος occurs in contexts of

---

75. For discussion, see Elliger, *Jesaja*, 363–64.

76. The Syriac attests מבין.

77. See Elliger, *Jesaja*, 364.

78. *HALOT*, s.v. "חָצִיר III."

79. Indeed, in Job 8:12 it would be a rather trivial observation that papyrus without water withers before any other reed. Also, in Isa 35:7 it would make no sense to say that the reed becomes a cane and rush. In both places grass makes better sense.

80. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 73. Cf. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 277. For the plus of the comparative particle, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 90.

dryness (10:17, 15:6, 37:27, 40:6–7, 51:12).[81] The addition here would be to specify that fresh, green grass is meant, contrasting dry land where water is poured in 44:3. In the MT, as it stands, the first clause is metaphorical, likening them to something that springs up in the grass. This metaphor is then made more specific in the parallel clause, where it is described in a simile. The Greek, by the modifications we have discussed and the addition of the conjunction καί, has made two synonymously parallel similes. The image in both texts is that of God pouring out water and his people sprouting up spontaneously, like grass after a rain shower, and that they will be like willows that grow where water is abundant (just as willows, in fact, commonly do grow).[82] In the Greek, more prominence is given to the idea of water.

The Targum makes clear the subject of this verse by saying the righteous (צדיקיא) will grow.[83] It also clarifies in what way they are like grass by writing רכיכין ומפנקין כלבלבי עסב (tender and soft like a sprout of grass).

Isa 66:14

וראיתם ושש לבכם ועצמותיכם כדשא תפרחנה ונודעה יד־יהוה את־עבדיו
וזעם את־איביו:

You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your *bones* shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the Lᴏʀᴅ is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies.

καὶ ὄψεσθε, καὶ χαρήσεται ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία, καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ ὑμῶν ὡς βοτάνη ἀνατελεῖ· καὶ γνωσθήσεται ἡ χεὶρ κυρίου τοῖς σεβομένοις αὐτόν, καὶ ἀπειλήσει τοῖς ἀπειθοῦσιν.

And you shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall grow like grass, and the hand of the Lord shall be known to those who worship him, and he shall threaten those who disobey him.

In this passage, in both languages, there is the peculiar simile that their bones will sprout up like grass. The idea is of dry dormant grass turning

---

81. The other exception is 32:13.

82. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurrel, and Myrrh*, 308. Hepper also says willows love water and take root quickly (*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 72). In Lev 23:40 and Job 40:22 they are called ערבי־נחל.

83. "The righteous shall be exalted, tender and indulged as tufts of grass, like a tree that sends its roots by streams of waters" (Tg. Neb. Isa 44:4).

green and sprouting into luxuriant green pasture grass, seemingly over-night, when it is watered. Bones are mentioned to represent the whole body's renewal whereas the heart refers more to mental or spiritual health.[84] This is a positive image, whereas so far we have mostly seen humans com-pared to grass to emphasize their transience, particularly in 40:6–8 where we saw another metonymy for physical bodies (σάρξ) compared to grass. The meaning of this simile is probably best understood in light of Isa 58:11, where the bones are made strong (fat in Greek, cf. Prov 15:30) in the context of God providing needs in dry places.[85]

While the Hebrew term דשא seems to denote mostly fresh grass, the Greek rendering βοτάνη implies herbage good for pasturing.[86] Both words, though, can be vague terms for vegetation or herbage.[87] They are equiva-lents meaning this in Gen 1:11, where also we can find χόρτος.[88] The word βοτάνη is probably used here in Isa 66:14 because it has more positive con-notations than χόρτος.

The Targum has גויה (body) for עצם (bone), probably by way of meton-ymy, but renders the rest of the simile literally.[89]

3.2.3. Summary

As we have seen, Isaiah uses grass primarily to show something that quickly flourishes and just as quickly withers;[90] grass is quickly consumed

---

84. R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40–66*, NCB (London: Oliphants, 1975), 286. Also, BDB, s.v. "עֶצֶם I."

85. Some manuscripts (א^ca, A, Q, 26, 86, etc.; see Ziegler's apparatus) have an additional explanatory simile in 58:11, and so read: καὶ τὰ ὀστᾶ σου ὡς βοτάνη ἀνατελεῖ καὶ πιανθήσεται. For the rendering of עבד with σέβω, see Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2690.

86. *HALOT*, s.v. "דֶּשֶׁא"; LSJ, s.v. "βοτάνη."

87. Muraoka describes the Greek term as "*growth on land*, 'plant, herbage' " (*GELS*, s.v. "βοτάνη").

88. Perhaps there βοτάνη is used for consonance with βλαστησάτω to compensate for the cognate accusative lost from the Hebrew; the two following cognate accusatives are found also in Greek.

89. "You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your *bodies* shall flourish like grass*es*; and the *might* of the Lord shall be *revealed to do good to* his servants, *the righteous*, and he will *bring a curse to* his enemies" (Tg. Neb. Isa 66:14).

90. Göran Eidvall, studying metaphors in the Psalms, found that plants, particu-larly grass (Pss 90:5, 103:15, 37:2), are used for the brevity of human life (though in Ps 72:16 grass has a positive sense). See Eidvall, "Metaphorical Landscapes in the

by fire and is used to show desolation (e.g. 15:6). Where the LXX does not render grass terms (5:24, 15:6, 33:11, 35:7, 42:15), it is not due to the metaphor but to other considerations. Where the terms are rendered, LXX Isaiah uses fewer terms for grass but will often make explicit whether well-watered grass or dry grass is meant. In two passages where LXX Isaiah introduces terms for grass (9:17, 10:17, both discussed in the section on thorns, 3.4.1), it is mentioned for its flammability; in the third passage, 32:13 (also discussed in the section on thorns, 3.4.2), grass is mentioned in contrast to cultivated plants to describe a field becoming fallow.

Likewise, where grass is mentioned as something that quickly withers, LXX Isaiah maintains the metaphor, often making explicit that dryness is at issue. In 37:27, possibly due to textual issues, LXX Isaiah adds a verb and an adjective to show that dry grass is meant; also, what may be an implied simile in Hebrew is made explicitly a simile in the Greek. In 51:12 a unique usage of a Hebrew word is rendered as meaning dried out; again an implied simile is made explicit. In 40:6–8 grass is rendered several times in an image of human frailty; the LXX adds a reference to grass with the effect of tying together more closely two metaphors in the passage and improving the style of the passage.

Where grass is mentioned as something quickly sprouting and returning to life the LXX makes this clear. In 44:4 the translator adds that the grass is near water to emphasize its greenness and for the sake of the parallel clause. The Hebrew has a metaphor that is expanded by a simile in the parallel clause, but the LXX makes it two synonymously parallel similes (the first simile may have been due to the *Vorlage*). In 66:14 the unique comparison of bones sprouting like greenery is maintained as a simile in the Greek. The choice of βοτάνη may be due to it having more positive connotations of lush healthy vegetation.

LXX Isaiah's conception of grass is largely based on the Hebrew usage. It is noteworthy that the situation in Egypt was quite different from that of Judea in terms of grass lands. While in Judea grass of various qualities was abundant in places, in Egypt pastureland was scarce and typically the result of cultivation. Grass was not a sign of wilderness but a crop important for fodder, which was taxed.[91] Indeed, in the papyri χόρτος is used as a

---

Psalms," in *Metaphors in the Psalms*, ed. Pierre van Hecke and Antje Labahn, BETL 231 (Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 13–22.

91. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 211–18.

general term for fodder.[92] While the qualities of grass flourishing, withering, and being flammable would have been known, LXX Isaiah's negative view of grass is not typical of the Egyptian landscape.

The Targum renders most of these places literally (5:24, 15:6, 42:15, 37:27). Like LXX Isaiah, in 35:7 the Targum understands חציר as meaning "residence." In a few places the imagery is maintained, but is applied to a different subject: in 40:6–8 only the wicked and their strength are like grass; and in 44:4 the righteous are like grass, and the Targum specifies in what way, namely, their softness and tenderness. In 66:14, instead of "bones" sprouting the Targum has "body," but it is otherwise the same. In 51:12 the vague verb "to give" is interpreted as meaning "considered." Of the passages that mention grass, 33:11 is rendered the most freely by the Targum; it interprets the phrase mentioning grass, but still maintains a reference to chaff (see 3.3.2.1).

3.3. Grains

Grains such as wheat and barley are a kind of grass, botanically speaking. Due to their importance to civilized life, considerable terminology is related to them. This section examines how metaphors are used in Isaiah that come from both the different types of grain and the various parts of grain.[93]

3.3.1. Types of Grain

3.3.1.1. Texts

We can find several terms for various grain crops in Isa 28:25.[94]

> Isa 28:25
> הלוא אם־שוה פניה והפיץ קצח וכמן יזרק ושם חטה שורה ושערה נסמן
> וכסמת גבולה:
> When they have leveled its surface, do they not scatter *black cumin*, sow cumin, and plant wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and *emmer-wheat* as the border?

---

92. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 212–13.

93. We have not discussed the parts of grain (chaff, ear, straw, stubble) in the previous chapter, since the way these metaphors are used are more closely related to grass and thorns, which are discussed in this chapter.

94. בר (grain, corn) does not occur in Isaiah.

οὐχ ὅταν ὁμαλίσῃ αὐτῆς τὸ πρόσωπον, τότε σπείρει μικρὸν μελάνθιον καὶ κύμινον καὶ πάλιν σπείρει πυρὸν καὶ κριθὴν καὶ ζέαν ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου;

When he has leveled its surface, does he not then sow *black cumin* and cumin and again sow wheat and barley and *einkorn* in your borders?

The Hebrew lists two herbs: קצח (black cumin) and כמן (cumin); they occur again in 28:27 and are rendered the same as here.[95] The LXX translates these spices accurately; Ziegler points out that they are two spices often mentioned in the papyri. He also says that the LXX addition μικρόν is accurate in that only a small amount of black cumin was sown.[96] Theophrastus does not mention the name μελάνθιον but does talk about a black variety of cumin (*Hist. plant.* 7.3.2). Also, he does not tell us where to plant cumin (κύμινον) in a field but does mention that some say that for an abundant crop one should curse and abuse it while sowing (*Hist. plant.* 7.3.3).

The meaning of two Hebrew terms are uncertain. Three possibilities for שורה are (1) a kind of grain, (2) a row in which the wheat is planted, (3) a dittography of ושערה.[97] The word נסמן likewise has multiple explanations: (1) a *niphal* participle of סמן, meaning to place;[98] (2) it is simply unexplained;[99] (3) a dittography of וכסמת; (4) a scribal sign; (5) Marchalianus and Syh have κέγχρον (millet).[100] Whatever they may mean, the LXX has not rendered them, according to Ziegler, "weil sie nichts mit ihnen anfangen konnte."[101]

While the Hebrew seems to emphasize in the previous verse preparing the fields and in 28:25 how to arrange the crops in the field, this verse does not seem to take timing into account. At least according to Theophrastus, barley is sown before wheat (ζειά, which is not the same species as ζέα but is the same genus, is sown earlier than wheat and barley) (*Hist. plant.* 8.1.2–3).

---

95. KJV renders קצח with "fitches," a kind of vetch used for fodder; NRSV renders it "dill," perhaps following Luther's translation. I follow *HALOT* and LXX, rendering it with "black cumin."

96. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 183–84.

97. These views can be seen in *HALOT*, s.v. "שׁוֹרָה"; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 3:1084.

98. *DCH* 6, s.v. "סמן."

99. *HALOT*, s.v. "סמן."

100. The last three explanations can be found in Wildberger (*Jesaja*, 3:1084). The word is left unrendered in his translation.

101. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184.

Likewise, in Exod 9:31–32 the barley and flax are ruined by the hail, but the חטה and כסמת are not, because they ripen later. Ziegler thinks the translation of כסמת with ζέαν was a last resort but that the translator has chosen a grain variety common to Egypt; he says it is often found in the papyri and that Pliny the Elder mentions it as an Egyptian crop.[102] While ζέα is probably einkorn (*Triticum monococcum*), כסמת is emmer-wheat (*Triticum sativum*) according to *HALOT*, but Musselman thinks it cannot be definitely identified.[103] In any case, one variety of grain has been rendered with another variety, probably from the same genus, used at the time of the translation.[104]

The reason for describing the various tasks and arrangement of agricultural activities is not to give precise instructions as for an almanac, but to show that all these different things are done in a proper way and for a purpose, just like the various things being suffered, and so if they face destruction (28:22) for a time it is part of a greater plan.[105]

The Greek, however, understands the section differently. While much of the passage (28:25–29) is rendered literally, though updated slightly to reflect contemporary Egyptian agricultural practices,[106] in 28:28 the Greek has an explanation of the imagery. As Ziegler points out, the translator has interpreted exegetically.[107]

Isa 28:28

לחם יודק כי לא לנצח אדוש ידושנו והמם גלגל עגלתו ופרשיו לא־ידקנו:

Grain is crushed for bread, but one does not thresh it forever; one drives the cart wheel and horses over it but does not pulverize it.

---

102. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184.

103. *GELS*, s.v. "ζέα"; *HALOT*, s.v. "כֻּסֶּמֶת"; Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 293–94. He is confident that it is not spelt or einkorn. Hepper says that it is a hard wheat related to emmer, but he is not more specific. He does, though, say it was known to the Egyptians as *swt* (*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 86).

104. It is pointless to worry too much about the exact species since they probably changed with cultivation and since the ancients did not have a very good understanding about how they changed. According to Theophrastus, ζειά will turn into πυρός in as little as three years if proper measures are not taken, and likewise wild wheat and barley change with cultivation in the same time period (*Hist. plant.* 2.4.1).

105. Black cumin does need to be threshed but is easily damaged, so it is beaten lightly with a rod (Isa 28:27). See Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 133.

106. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 182–85.

107. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται. οὐ γὰρ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ὀργισθήσομαι,
οὐδὲ φωνὴ τῆς πικρίας μου καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.
Will be eaten with bread. For I will not be angry with you forever,
nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you.

The translator has transformed the meaning of the entire section with
this rendering.[108] Now the entire section is an allegory for Israel. They
are plowed and sown, threshed, but not so long as to completely destroy
them. The rendering seems mostly based on כי לא לנצח, together with
his interpretation of 28:22, where the prophet hears of works cut short.
Ziegler points out a similar rendering in 21:10, where LXX Isaiah renders
"threshed" and "winnowed" with whom he thinks the terms represent.[109]
Ziegler suggests the rendering of 28:28 is under the influence of 57:16,
where God again says he will not punish his people forever (לא לנצח).[110]
Perhaps another hint is found in 28:25 where the Greek changes the third-
to the second-person (ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου), which could be an allusion to Ps
147:14(LXX 147:3).[111] We will discuss 28:27–28 further below in relation
to the threshing of grain (3.3.2.3.1).

The Targum has interpreted the passage allegorically. Most of the
allegorical treatment occurs in 28:24–25 (where it is about the prophets
teaching and the blessing that Israel would enjoy if they would turn to the
law), and the rest of the agricultural imagery is preserved or made into
similes (as in 28:25).[112] In 28:28 the threshing idea is made clear, and win-
nowing is added by mentioning the chaff being blown away.[113]

Isaiah 17:5 is the other passage where grain is mentioned, though here
generically.

---

108. For a detailed analysis of LXX Isa 28:23–29, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 276–86.

109. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

110. Ziegler also points to Jer 3:12 (*Untersuchungen*, 119–20); cf. Seeligmann,
"Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 223.

111. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:224.

112. "If *the house of Israel* set *their* face *to perform the law, would he not repent and
gather them from among the Gentiles among whom they are scattered, behold as* dill and
cumin *which* is strew*n*? *And* he *will bring them near by families to their tribes, behold,
as seeds of* wheat in rows and barley in proper places and spelt *on* the borde*rs*" (Tg.
Neb. Isa 28:25).

113. "*They indeed thresh* grain, but *they* do not thresh it forever; and he *stirs with
the wheels* of his cart and *separates the grain and lets the dust fly*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 28:28).

Isa 17:5

והיה כאסף קציר קמה וזרעו שבלים יקצור והיה כמלקט שבלים בעמק
רפאים:

And it shall be as when reapers gather standing grain and their arms harvest the ears, and as when one gleans the ears of grain in the Valley of Rephaim.

καὶ ἔσται ὃν τρόπον ἐάν τις συναγάγῃ ἀμητὸν ἑστηκότα καὶ σπέρμα σταχύων ἀμήσῃ, καὶ ἔσται ὃν τρόπον ἐάν τις συναγάγῃ στάχυν ἐν φάραγγι στερεᾷ.

And it shall be as if someone were to gather the standing crop and reap the seed of the ears of grain, and it shall be as if someone were to gather an ear of grain in a firm ravine.

This verse continues to describe what it means in the previous verse that Jacob's glory will be brought low and his fat made lean. The harvesting similes are familiar enough, but in what way things will be like a harvest is not made clear in this verse (unless the reference to the Valley of Rephaim had a specific meaning to the audience). It is only in 17:6 that it is made clear that the image describes almost everyone being gathered up and removed from the land, so only gleanings are left, one or two here and there. This is made entirely clear in 17:9.

There are three main explanations for how to understand קציר. It can refer to the time ("gathering at harvest) or to a person ("a harvester"), either as a form of קצר or as a noun forming like פליל and נביא, or as an explanatory gloss for כאסף.[114] The LXX seems to consider it to refer to what was gathered: the standing harvest of grain, and so renders קציר קמה with the two words ἀμητὸν ἑστηκότα. Also of note is that the trans-lator has added subjects for both clauses (τις), and has rendered מלקט with συναγάγῃ. These two changes make the clauses more closely related (though it may serve just for variation, in that the verbs συνάγω and ἀμάω now alternate). Between the two clauses the translator has rendered וזרעו with its homonym, giving us σπέρμα;[115] this clause, σπέρμα σταχύων ἀμήσῃ, explains to what exactly ἀμητὸν ἑστηκότα refers.[116]

---

114. For the scholars who hold to each view, see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 2:636.
115. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:191.
116. Cf. 1QIsaᵃ, which reads: וזרעו שבלים וקציר.

A second peculiarity is the mentioning of the Valley of Rephaim, which according to Josh 15:8 and 18:16 is located outside Jerusalem. Some hold that the text is corrupt, either missing some part, or אפרים has become רפאים.[117] Wildberger suggests the valley was mentioned to give a vividness to the image, naming a nearby place where his audience would have seen harvesting activities.[118] The LXX Isaiah rendering of this phrase is unique. Elsewhere LXX Isaiah only uses στερεός as a plus to modify stone (2:21, 5:28, 50:7, 51:1). Also, in the other places where the Hebrew עמק רפאים occurs, it is rendered literally in LXX (though not always in the same way). Ottley suggests the translator may have understood the Hebrew to mean the valley of healers, so rendered "strong, sound," or that he read רקיע. Ziegler suggests the translator here had Deut 21:4 in mind, where נחל איתן (ever-flowing stream) is rendered with φάραγγα τραχεῖαν (rough valley), which is explained in the verse as a place that is not plowed or sown.[119] The Greek translator may have actually understood רפאים to mean "mighty men" (cf. Targum), as he did in 14:9, but did not find "valley of mighty men" appropriate here, so instead said φάραγγι στερεᾷ ("strong valley").[120] In any case, the meaning of the Greek phrase in Isa 17:5 is that it has hard soil that is unsuitable for cultivation.[121]

The LXX has preserved the two similes and also has the second more specific than the first, though perhaps with a different meaning than in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew the first two describe harvesting while the third describes gleaning. In the Greek, though, the three similes are nearly synonymous.

As mentioned above, the translator does not seem to have understood the term קמה properly. The only other place it occurs in Isaiah, 37:27b, is a minus in LXX Isaiah. The term for an ear of grain, שבלים, however, has been appropriately translated with στάχυς. Where this term appears to occur in 27:12 it is correctly rendered based on its homonym.

---

117. For a few proposals, see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 2:637.

118. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 2:648.

119. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 114. Baltzer et al. concur ("Esaias," 2:2548).

120. The LXX translator also knows the meaning "physician" for this word, as can be seen in Isa 26:14, 19.

121. *GELS*, s.v. "στερεός."

The Targum renders literally: ויהי כמכנש חצר קמא ("and it will be like gathering a harvest of standing crop"); and at the end, במישר גיבריא ("in the plain of mighty men").[122]

3.3.1.2. Summary

Only two passages in Isaiah talk specifically about grains. The use of grains in 28:25 is not properly metaphoric but better categorized by the vague term *mashal*; they are mentioned to make an analogy to which the LXX adds an explicit interpretation in 28:28. In 17:5, however, the LXX preserves three similes, though changes their meaning, seemingly due to the difficulty of some of the vocabulary. It is interesting that the translator does not offer what exactly it means to harvest in the hard valley.

The Targum interprets 28:28, as well as the rest of the passage, as an allegory, giving specific things for the various agricultural terms to represent. In 17:5 the Targum renders literally; its understanding of בעמק רפאים is literal (taking the meaning of the place name) and explains nothing.

3.3.2. Parts of Grain

Apart from types of grain, grain plants have various parts such as the ear (שבלים), the stalk (קש), and the chaff that must be separated from the actual grain in the ear (מץ).[123] Another term for one of the byproducts of threshing is תבן (crushed stalks, straw, chaff).[124] In English, the word "chaff" can refer both to the part that is separated in threshing and to the cut straw that can be used for cattle feed, and so it is often found as a definition of the last three Hebrew terms.[125] The Greek word ἄχυρον means "chaff, bran, husks," as well as "straw."[126] This was not a waste product but a valuable commodity in arid regions such as ancient Egypt; it was used

---

122. "And it will be as a harvester gathers standing grain, and with his arm harvests ears, and as on gleaning ears in the *plain of mighty men*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 17:5). Cf. Targum Gen 6:4, where גיבריא renders נפילים.

123. According to *DCH*, the word קש refers both to the stubble left in the field and the straw left after threshing (*DCH* 7, s.v. "קש"). On מץ, see *HALOT*, s.v. "מץ."

124. *HALOT*, s.v. "תֶּבֶן."

125. As in BDB, and *HALOT*. *DCH*, however, distinguishes קש, תֶּבֶן, and מֹץ more clearly.

126. LSJ, s.v. "ἄχυρον." *GELS* (s.v. "ἄχυρον") has the definition "straw" and for Dan 2:35 "chaff and grain."

as a fuel source (often mixed with manure), as a building material (when mixed with clay or mud), as well as fodder (sometimes mixed with other grains, particularly barley).[127] Chaff was a taxed commodity in the Roman period and can be seen as a payment in kind in papyri receipts already in the Ptolemaic period.[128] The word used by the LXX as a rendering of מץ, namely, χνοῦς in Classical Greek, means dust, fine down, or incrustation, though in the LXX it means chaff.[129] The only use of this word in the papyri is on some sort of receipt (*BGU* 3.921), but there is not enough context to see clearly to what it refers.[130] The LXX seems to want to distinguish chaff as the husks from chaff as the straw, and so uses χνοῦς.[131] But perhaps the minute, dust-like parts that are released in threshing, winnowing, and sieving which cannot be collected for later use but blow away are what is meant by this term. Of the occurrences of מץ, threshing or winnowing is mentioned only in Hos 13:3, Isa 41:15, and possibly Isa 17:3 (though explicitly in the LXX).[132]

---

127. Archeological, ethnographical, and literary evidence is brought together in Marijke van der Veen, "The Economic Value of Chaff and Straw in Arid and Temperate Zones," *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 8 (1999): 212–13; Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 91.

128. For primary and secondary references, see Van der Veen, "Economic Value of Chaff," 216. See P.Tebt. 3.2842 from ca.140 BCE and P.Princ. 2.18 from the late third century BCE. For some second-century examples, see also O.Bodl. 230, 232–34.

129. LSJ, s.v. "χνοῦς"; for the LXX, see *GELS*, s.v. "χνοῦς." It would seem outside of the LXX, according to LSJ, this term is not typically used for chaff, but for dust, powder, and things that are fine and small. In Aristophanes, frag. 78 (a fragment of *Babylonians*), as pointed out by *LSJ Supplement*, we can find the phrase ἔχεις ἄχυρα καὶ χνοῦν, describing stuffing for a bed, though even here "chaff" may not be meant. For the text, see Aristophanes, *Fragments*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey Henderson, LCL (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007). LEH, s.v. "χνοῦς," gives only Hos 13:3 with the definition "chaff" and defines all others as "dust." LSJ's examples from 2 Sam 22:43 and 2 Chr 1:9 are problematic, since in both places it is a textual variant, and Rahlfs's edition prefers the reading χοῦς.

130. This statement is based on a word search of χνοῦς as well as χνόος on http://www.papyri.info/.

131. The choice of this term is appropriate for referring to something small and fluffy, such as grain husks, though the etymology, as "something scratched off or planed" also makes sense for grain husks. This etymology, though the meaning "chaff" is not mentioned, is from Robert Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 2:1639–40. Of course, this etymology was probably not thought of in ancient times.

132. The other passages where מץ occurs are: Pss 1:4, 35:5; Wis 5:14; and Isa 29:5.

In two places LXX takes special effort to describe what is meant by "chaff." In Dan 2:35 the statue breaks and becomes like dust on a summer threshing floor (כעור מן־אדרי־קיט) that is blown away by the wind.[133] The Old Greek feels the need to be more specific than just "chaff" and so has ὡσεὶ λεπτότερον ἀχύρου ἐν ἅλωνι. The Theodotion text is less specific, writing: ὡσεὶ κονιορτὸς ἀπὸ ἅλωνος θερινῆς. The other place is in Isa 17:13, where מץ is rendered χνοῦν ἀχύρου. In these two places it seems the translators felt ἄχυρον on its own did not adequately represent what was meant, but had to be qualified as some smaller part. Perhaps a similar concern is why χνοῦς is typically used for מץ instead of ἄχυρον; this however, does not explain why a double rendering is not used in the other places מץ occurs.

While some of these terms have some degree of overlap, we will first discuss how LXX Isaiah understands קש, then consider תבן and, finally, מץ (including threshing metaphors, since they imply chaff). Each section has its own summary.

3.3.2.1. קש

In LXX Isaiah, קש is rendered once with καλάμη (stubble, straw) in 5:24, which is the common equivalent used elsewhere in the LXX, occurring eight other times.[134] It is rendered in Isaiah most often, three times, with φρύγανον (dry stick), and in 33:11 its metaphorical meaning is made explicit.[135] This section will first examine the passages where קש occurs with חשש, then where it is rendered with φρύγανον, and after that where the more regular equivalent κάλαμη occurs without a Hebrew equivalent; the section will conclude with a summary.

Also χνοῦς renders מק in Isa 5:24, where also there is no sense of winnowing. In Job 21:18 it is rendered with κονιορτός, parallel to ἄχυρον. In Zeph 2:2 it is rendered with ἄνθος, another image of something transient (see Isa 40:6–7).

133. In Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1992), s.vv. "עור," "מוץ," both words are defined simply as "chaff."

134. *GELS*, s.v. "καλάμη."

135. *GELS*, s.v. "φρύγανον." Only one place outside Isaiah uses this as an equivalent for קש: Jer 13:24.

3.3.2.1.1. שק occurring with ששח

Isa 5:24a

לכן כאכל קש לשון אש וחשש להבה ירפה שרשם כמק יהיה ופרחם כאבק
יעלה

Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will become rotten, and their blossom go up like dust.

διὰ τοῦτο ὃν τρόπον καυθήσεται καλάμη ὑπὸ ἄνθρακος πυρὸς καὶ συγκαυθήσεται ὑπὸ φλογὸς ἀνειμένης, ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν ὡς χνοῦς ἔσται, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται·

Therefore, as stubble will be burned by a coal of fire and burned up by an *unrestrained* flame, so their root will be like fine dust and their blossom go up like dust.

We have discussed the second part of this verse in the section on roots (2.3.2). The imagery in the first half of this verse is a rather complex combination of metaphor and simile. Both the basis for the comparison and what is being compared are described in metaphorical terms. Despite this complexity, the passage is remarkably straightforward and easy to understand.

To say that a flame eats stubble could be described as a dead metaphor, or idiomatic, as could saying "tongue of flame." But when both elements are combined it is clearly a vivid living metaphor. The parallel clause is rather pictorial: one can just see how burning grass curls and bends as it turns to bright embers and falls.

The Greek translation modifies this construction, but not because of its complexity. The LXX instead of having "tongue of flame" as the subject, makes "stubble" the subject of a passive verb.[136] The expression "tongue of flame" is not common in Biblical Hebrew but can be found in some later literature.[137] In Tg. Est. II 6:13 the phrase לשנא דנורא occurs, referring to the flame that came out of the furnace into which the three youths were thrown. Also, in 1 En. 14:9–10 the phrase γλώσσης πυρός appears twice. It is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls as ולשנ[י] נור.[138] In a Dead Sea Scroll

---

136. For LXX Isaiah's occasional practice of making active constructions passive, see Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 202–3.

137. The idiom is known in English, no doubt, due to the KJV of Acts 2:3.

138. See J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave*

fragment of the Targum of Job 41:11 (11Q10) we read בלשני אשה where the MT has כידודי אש.

The Greek rendered לשון אש with ἄνθρακος πυρός, which is a word combination that renders גחלת in Prov 6:28, 25:22, and Isa 47:14.[139] This was perhaps under the influence of the phrase גחלי־אש (Lev 16:12, 2 Sam 22:13, Ps 18:13, Ezek 1:13, 10:2). The only other place where fire is described in relation to "tongue" is Isa 30:27, where the Hebrew has ולשונו כאש אכלת, and it is rendered καὶ ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θυμοῦ ὡς πῦρ ἔδεται. The three recensions render 5:24 literally with γλῶσσα πυρός. In Isa 5:24 the transformation of the metaphor is probably due to harmonization to the more familiar phrase גחלי־אש, though in our passage it becomes singular. Also damaging to the "consuming fire" metaphor is that it is rendered as a "burning fire."[140]

Rather than the second image of the simile, the Greek understands a continuation of the image. The Greek simile is stubble burning from a hot coal spreading wildly, let loose, burning things. This interpretation is arrived at by rendering ירפה with the adjectival participle ἀνειμένης.[141] The verb ἀνίημι is one of the most common equivalents of the root רפה in the LXX as a whole.[142] Perhaps חשש was rendered with συγκαίω because it was thought to be synonymous with אכל, which is rendered with συγκαίω in Gen 31:40. The only other occurrence of חשש is in Isa 33:11. In that passage also, fire is said to devour (אכל), but there is no clear translation of חשש. The repetition of verbs for burning creates more unity in 5:24. Hugh G. M. Williamson points out that 1QIsaᵃ reads ואש לוהבת, but this is most likely secondary and does not help with understanding the Greek.[143] 4QIsaᵇ agrees with MT, having וחשש.

Note also, as mentioned in the section on roots (2.3.2), χνοῦς is offered as a rendering of מק, which the translator either did not understand or read as מץ.[144] If the meaning "chaff" is meant, the translator introduces an image.

---

4 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 194. Cf. 4Q206 1 XXI, 3 (4QEnᵉ ar) for the phrase שני]בל נור. Also, the Book of Giants, 4Q530 2 II + 6–12, 9 has לשנין די נור.

139. The rendering in Isa 47:14 is more complicated, as we will discuss below.

140. This rendering is not uncommon (Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2518).

141. α′ has παρίησιν, "to yield," "fall."

142. It occurs ten times as an equivalent, as does ἐκλύω.

143. Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 384. Cf. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2518.

144. Also possible is that it should in fact read χοῦς.

The changes in the metaphors of this verse seem primarily due to the understanding of the vocabulary and are not an attempt to interpret or update the imagery.

The Targum renders literally, making the terms chaff (קשא) and hay (עמיר).[145]

The other place חשש occurs it is again rendered as some kind of verb in the LXX and again occurs with קש.[146]

Isa 33:11

תהרו חשש תלדו קש רוחכם אש תאכלכם:

You conceive *dry grass* and bring forth *straw*, your breath is a fire that will consume you.

νῦν ὄψεσθε, νῦν αἰσθηθήσεσθε· ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, πῦρ ὑμᾶς κατέδεται.

Now you will see; now you will perceive; the strength of your spirit will be vain; fire will consume you.

The metaphor of conceiving and giving birth is used several other times in Isaiah. In 26:18 the people conceive and give birth to wind; the LXX renders this literally, though the wind is made positive in the Greek instead of representing vanity or emptiness. In 59:4 they conceive trouble and give birth to guilt, and in 59:13 they only conceive and ponder lies, but there is no giving birth.[147] The LXX maintains both of these metaphors in its translation. Perhaps the more concrete metaphor of straw, as opposed to something abstract, was considered to be too far-fetched or difficult to understand to be used in this context. Alternatively, the translator may have decided to interpret the metaphor to emphasize further the destruction coming upon the godless in Zion.[148]

---

145. "Therefore *they shall be* devour*ed* as *the* chaff *in the* fire, and as *stubble* in the flame; *the increase of* their *strength* will be as rottenness, and *the mammon of* their *oppression* as *the* dust *which flies*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:24a).

146. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 9–10.

147. The equivalent κύω, κυέω for הרה is marked as doubtful in Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 189. For 59:4's relationship to 33:11, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

148. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2593.

It is unlikely that the Greek is based on a misreading of the Hebrew. 1QIsa[b] has a feminine form חששה, but this does not help us understand what the Greek does. The closest thing to a possible lexical warrant for ὄψεσθε would be seeing חזה instead of תהרו; Ottley suggests perhaps they read תראו or תחזו.[149] Also, it is unlikely that αἰσθηθήσεσθε was from reading תלדו as a form of ידע.[150] There is even less of a lexical warrant for the use of νῦν twice. Rather than simply omit the clause, due to a strange metaphor, the translator has taken inspiration from the previous verse using νῦν in short clauses with just a verb. The translator saw that the verbs were second-person, so he made the clause in the second-person as a response to God in the previous verse. The translator seems to have interpreted the metaphor, rendering תֵּלְדוּ קַשׁ רוּחֲכֶם as ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. Perhaps קשׁ suggested to the translator the idea of emptiness and is the basis for ματαία; according to Muraoka, this passage is one of the three free renderings in LXX Isaiah that use μάταιος.[151] Ziegler suggests the passage has been influenced by Isa 30:15, where תהיה is twice rendered with ματαία, and that both passages are under the influence of Lev 26:20.[152]

The difficulty of the metaphor in this verse is clear in that the three recensions seem to have problems with it as well. Aquila has συλλήψεσθε αἰθάλην ("you will be pregnant with ash"), Symmachus has κυήσεσθε φλόγα ("you will conceive flame"), and Theodotion has γαστρί λήψεσθε σποδόν (σπουδῇ cod.) τέξεσθε καλάμην ("you will grasp ash in your belly, beget stubble").[153] Theodotion is the closest to the Hebrew but still has the idea of ash instead of dry grass, perhaps because of the mention of flames in the verse.

The Targum rendering of this verse is very free, but we can still find in it a reference to chaff in a simile, though it is blown by the wind: מימרי כעלעולא לקשא ישיצי יתכון ("My word, like a storm wind to chaff, will destroy you").[154]

---

149. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:271; Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 118.

150. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 118n172. He points out this equivalence in 49:26.

151. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 76.

152. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

153. See the apparatus of Ziegler, *Isaias*.

154. "You *conceive for yourselves wicked conceptions, you Gentiles,* you *make yourselves evil deeds; because of your evil deeds my Memra, as the whirlwind the* chaff, will *destroy* you" (Tg. Neb. Isa 33:11).

3.3.2.1.2. קש Rendered with φρύγανον

In the other three places קש occurs, it is rendered with φρύγανον.

> Isa 40:24
> אף בל־נטעו אף בל־זרעו אף בל־שרש בארץ גזעם וגם־נשף בהם ויבשו
> וסערה כקש תשאם:
> Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their *stock*
> taken root in the earth, when he blows upon them, and they
> wither, and the tempest carries them off like *straw*.
>
> οὐ γὰρ μὴ σπείρωσιν οὐδὲ μὴ φυτεύσωσιν, οὐδὲ μὴ ῥιζωθῇ εἰς τὴν γῆν
> ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν· ἔπνευσεν ἐπ᾽ αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν, καὶ καταιγὶς ὡς
> φρύγανα ἀναλήμψεται αὐτούς.
> For they will not sow, nor will they plant, neither will their root
> take root in the earth; he blew upon them, and they withered, and
> a tempest will carry them off like *twigs*.

We have discussed this passage in the section on roots (2.3.2). Here our focus is on the simile "the tempest carries them away like straw" or in the Greek "like twigs." If the idea is being slight and easily carried by the wind, straw (καλάμη) seems like it would make more sense than "twigs," though καλάμη could potentially be confused for the stubble still left in the earth. The choice of φρύγανα as a translation, together with the reversal of the voice of the verbs in 40:24a, has changed the image. In the Hebrew the princes are scarcely planted (that they are next said to be scarcely sown is a chronological step backwards, probably as a hyperbole) and barely take root before they are withered. This language is an image of grain (or perhaps any other seed that is sown, or the flower and grass in 40:6–8) being sown, germinating, and being dried out by the wind before it matures. The Greek improves the logic of the word orderand makes the princes the subject of the verbs, though not sowing or planting, then describes them as not taking root but drying out and being carried away like twigs.[155] Their stock taking root in the earth could be an image of planting tree cuttings. In Theophrastus's *De causis plantarum* we can find the same verbal

---

155. Troxel (*LXX-Isaiah*, 75) thinks the transposition of words is not the result of the translator's exegesis.

form describing that transplanted trees should not have their hole filled in right away so that they can strike roots properly: καὶ τοὺς γύρους οὐκ εὐθὺς συμπληροῦσιν ὅπως ῥιζωθῇ τὰ κάτω πρότερον (*Caus. plant.* 3.4.2).[156] In this case, the tiny branches (the princes of 40:23 who become rulers of nothing) do not take root (their rule is not established) before they are dried out and blown away in the tempest as twigs. This is in contrast to the common image of kings as trees (as in Isa 2:12–13 or Dan 4:20–22).

The Targum understands the sowing and taking root as children multiplying in the earth, but the last part has God's word scattering them like chaff כעלעולא לקשא יבדר יתהון.[157]

Isa 41:2
מי העיר ממזרח צדק יקראהו לרגלו יתן לפניו גוים ומלכים ירד יתן כעפר חרבו כקש נדף קשתו:
Who has roused a victor from the east, summoned him to his service? He delivers up nations to him, and tramples kings under foot; he makes them like dust with his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.

τίς ἐξήγειρεν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν δικαιοσύνην, ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὴν κατὰ πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ πορεύσεται; δώσει ἐναντίον ἐθνῶν καὶ βασιλεῖς ἐκστήσει καὶ δώσει εἰς γῆν τὰς μαχαίρας αὐτῶν καὶ ὡς φρύγανα ἐξωσμένα τὰ τόξα αὐτῶν·
Who has roused righteousness from the east, called it to its feet and it will go? He will place it before nations and astonish kings, and he will *give to the earth their swords* and their bows like *twigs* that *are* driven out.

For our purposes, it is only the last clauses that are of note.[158] In the Hebrew the two final similes are describing how the one roused from the

---

156. This is after describing how the tree should be planted in certain seasons, and the hole treated in such a way to make it easy for the tree to take root.

157. "*Although* they *grow, although* they *increase, although* their *sons are exalted* in the earth, he *sends his anger* among them, and they are ashamed and *his Memra*, as the *whirlwind* the chaff, will *scatter* them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 40:24).

158. For the pluses in this and the following verses, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 71–72. See also Arie van der Kooij, "'Coming' Things and 'Last' Things: Isaianic Terminology as Understood in the Wisdom of Ben Sira and in the Septuagint of Isaiah,"

east subdues kings and nations: his sword makes them like dust, and his
bow drives them off as stubble, presumably, is driven by the wind. The
Greek has removed the first simile, and the second simile is different in the
Greek, though it is rendered literally in its own way.[159]

The first simile is removed, possibly, because while כ was taken as ב
(perhaps since his text did indeed read this), the translator rendered עפר
with γῆν by way of metonymy.[160] This is not an unusual rendering of עפר;
it occurs forty-six times, including five other times in LXX Isaiah (2:9,
34:9, 40:12, 47:1, 65:25).[161] The difference between giving them to the
earth instead of to the dust could be very slight. The important change is
that it is no longer "his" sword, but the swords of his enemies. The second
simile is rendered literally, except the verb is made passive and the singu-
lar indirect object "his bow" becomes the plural subject "their bows." The
simile in the Greek is not of driven stubble, but of bows being like feeble
twigs.[162] The simile has changed, but there is a better point of comparison:
bows and twigs. In the Hebrew the sword and bow are the means of sub-
duing kings and nations, while in the Greek they stand metonymically for
the kings and nations, who are killed and expelled. The Greek ἐξωθέω is a
unique rendering for נדף. The translator probably knows what it means (cf.
19:7, where there is a closer equivalent) and has here partially interpreted
the simile.

The Targum understands the difficult Hebrew use of צדק to refer to
Abraham.[163] Also it makes clear that he cast his slain like the dust with his
sword (רמא כעפרא קטילין קדם חרביה) and pursued them like stubble with
his bow (כקשא רדפנון קדם קשתיה).

---

in *The New Things: Eschatology in Old Testament Prophecy; Festschrift for Henk Leene*,
ed. Ferenc Postma, Klaas Spronk, and E. Talstra, ACEBT.S 3 (Maastricht: Uitgeverij
Shaker, 2002), 135–40.

159. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT in this verse.

160. Ottley mentions that ב and כ are easy to confuse in Hebrew, as also εις and ως
are easy to confuse in the Greek transmission of texts (Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:302).

161. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 24.

162. Cf. Jer 13:24 where φρύγανα is again blown in the wilderness as a rendering
of קש.

163. "Who *brought Abraham openly* from *the east, a select one of* righteousness *in
truth*? He *brought him to* his *place, handed over peoples* before him and *shattered* kings;
he *cast the slain* like dust *before* his *sword, he pursued them* like chaff *before* his *bow*"
(Tg. Neb. Isa 40:24).

Isa 47:14

הנה היו כקש אש שרפתם לא־יצילו את־נפשם מיד להבה אין־גחלת לחמם
אור לשבת נגדו:

See, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot
deliver themselves from the hand of the flame. No coal for warm-
ing oneself is this, no fire to sit before!

ἰδοὺ πάντες ὡς φρύγανα ἐπὶ πυρὶ κατακαήσονται καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξέλωνται
τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἐκ φλογός· ὅτι ἔχεις ἄνθρακας πυρός, κάθισαι ἐπ᾽
αὐτούς.

See, they all will be burned like *twigs* on a fire, and they will not
deliver their soul from the flame; since you have coals of fire, sit
on them.

In this passage, the prophet prophesies against the daughter of Babylon
in the second-person. In 47:12–13 she is told sarcastically to consult with
her sorcerers and astrologers, who are described as doomed in 47:14. They
are said to be like stubble, burned by fire, and they cannot save themselves
from the hand of the flame. This image is built on by the next, that the
daughter of Babylon will have no coal to comfort her, since the astrologers
are destroyed quickly like stubble in a fire, instead of providing a slow hot
fire the way burning charcoal would.

The Greek has made several modifications. These modifications
appear to center on the first two clauses becoming one clause with one
verb: κατακαίω. The word היו has been dropped and πάντες added. The
preposition ἐπί is added to clarify and as a part of making the sentence
better Greek. Here the rendering of קש with φρύγανον is appropriate,
since tinder is what is clearly meant. Also of note is that the translator has
changed מיד להבה to the more straightforward, and stylistically superior
ἐκ φλογός. The LXX Isaiah translator has discretely removed it, since there
is no need to personify the fire.[164] Similarly, in 64:7, ביד עוננו is rendered
simply as διὰ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν. Usually the LXX Isaiah translator has no
problem with using hand metaphors and metonymies, at least the more
conventional ones.[165] As mentioned earlier, the phrase אין־גחלת לחמם אור

---

164. Cf. 5:24, where the "tongue" of a flame is removed.

165. In general, the anthropomorphic or idiomatic use of יד is usually not
removed in LXX Isaiah, but the rarer idioms involving hands are removed. Similarly,
Orlinsky argues that all three occurences of the the right hand of God and thirty-

here is collapsed to ὅτι ἔχεις ἄνθρακας πυρός. The end of the verse is understood differently in the Greek and continues into 47:15a.

The Greek, by combining the first two clauses, has changed the simile. In the Hebrew they are like straw, and a fire will burn them, but in the Greek they burn like twigs. In the Hebrew the similes have more interchange between tenor and vehicle, in that they are like tinder, and the fire that burns them is like a person in that it has hands. The Greek has moved further into the metaphorical language by making things more direct.

The Targum takes a different tactic, explaining each of the first two clauses so that they are weak like straw, and the nations are strong like fire that will consume them.[166] The third clause maintains "hand" but flame is rendered as their slayers: מיד קטולין.

Why LXX Isaiah thinks φρύγανον is an appropriate rendering for קש could be understood if we think in terms of use instead of resemblance. Even in arid environments where heating is less important, fuel is still needed for cooking, and in Hellenistic settlements, for the bath house. Beside what wood was available, for fuel people would use manure, straw (chaff), and various small woody desert plants (such as *Zilla spinosa*, *Cornulaca monacantha*, and *Leptadenia pyrotechnica*, all of which have been found burnt in Roman era Egyptian fireplaces).[167] By φρύγανον, then, the translator may have had in mind not dead wood gathered from beneath trees, but the smaller twig-like plants that can be found throughout the Middle East and Egypt. Theophrastus describes these undershrubs with the word φρύγανον, saying they are characterized by being woody and have many branches and stems growing from the root (*Hist. plant.* 6.1.1).[168] One plant in particular, *Zilla spinosa*, exemplifies the qualities which appear in

---

six out of thirty-eight occurrences of the hand of God are rendered literally in LXX Isaiah. The two exceptions, he says, are "rendered freely in accordance with the context" (Orlinsky, "Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms," 195). Likewise, Raija Sollamo detects no antianthropomorphic tendency in the LXX as a whole's rendering of מיד. See Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint*, AASF.DHL 19 (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1979), 191–204.

166. "Behold, they are *faint as the* chaff, *the peoples who are strong as the* fire *destroy* them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of *killers. They have* no *remnant or survivor, not even a place to be rescued in*!" (Tg. Neb. Isa 47:14).

167. Van der Veen, "Economic Value of Chaff," 218–19.

168. LSJ and *GELS* (s.v. "φρύγανον") have two definitions, "dry stick" and "undershrub," which could be two descriptions of the same sorts of plants and the material they produce, which Theophrastus describes.

the LXX Isaiah passages. It grows nearly everywhere, as can be seen in its frequent listing in ecological surveys, and particularly flourishes in grassland communities.[169] An issue for these small desert plants is their taking root: if their roots do not grow deep enough (to reach moist ground) before the wet season ends, they die, like in LXX Isa 40:24.[170] That φρύγανον is carried by the wind also makes more sense if we consider it to refer to such small desert plants, some of which act like a kind of tumble weed (such as *Gundella tournefortii* and *Salsola kali*).[171] They most certainly could easily be blown about if they become detached from the roots.[172]

The LXX Isaiah translator has only followed convention in 5:24, rendering with καλάμη, perhaps because elsewhere in the verse he understood other terms related to kinds of grains: dry grass is mentioned (חשש) and the translator has also chaff (χνοῦς).[173] As mentioned above, there are some hints that may show there was good reason for the strange equivalent favored by LXX Isaiah. In 40:24 the translator has perhaps used φρύγανον to contrast the princes mentioned to the common image of kings as trees.[174] In 41:12 the Greek has changed the metaphor: instead of being driven by the bow (implied to be as driven by a wind), the Greek has their bows expelled like flimsy twigs; once the translator takes bows as the object, it makes much more sense (due to their resemblance) to compare them to twigs than to straw. In 47:14 saying φρύγανον burned in the fire may be preferable to straw because its root already implies it is destined for fire. Also, a twig is a small staff or rod and so could be under-

---

169. M. A. Zahran and A. J. Willis, *The Vegetation of Egypt* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1992), 112–13, 156–57, 200–201, 220. It is mentioned repeatedly throughout the book.

170. See I. Springuel, M. Sheded, and W. Abed, "Plant Growth in Relation to a Rain Incident in Wadi Agag, South Egypt," *Vegetatio* 90 (1990): 159. They note that *Zilla spinosa* is one of the best plants at striking deep roots and so has a comparatively low rate of juvenile mortality.

171. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 281–83. Though as he describes, *Salsola kali* is used for food, not fuel. See also Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 57.

172. *Zilla spinosa*, when mature, "is pulled out of its bed and goes bouncing through the desert," according to "Flowers in Israel," http://www.flowersinisrael.com/Zillaspinosa_page.htm.

173. Though the translator may mean "dust" and not "chaff" here.

174. Cf. Hos 10:7 where a king is compared to a twig (φρύγανα, as rendering for קצף) thrown into the water.

stood as a sort of mocking diminution of these important advisors. While φρύγανον is not an obvious rendering for קש, the translator has been able to use it consistently in a way appropriate to the context he creates in his translations.

LXX Isaiah was not alone in thinking of φρύγανον in this way. Jeremiah 13:24 also renders קש with φρύγανον, writing καὶ διέσπειρα αὐτοὺς ὡς φρύγανα φερόμενα ὑπὸ ἀνέμου εἰς ἔρημον. Here it is an odd comparison, to say they will be scattered in the wind like sticks; while sticks certainly blow in the wind, leaves, straw, chaff, and grass all come more readily to mind and are more dramatically carried by lighter breezes. But again, it makes sense if small desert plants are meant. The word φρύγανον occurs in only two other places in the LXX. In Job 30:7 it is used for חדול, a kind of weed or artichoke, but in any case, referring to some small desert plant.[175] In Hos 10:7 it is used for קצף, a splinter, in a simile describing how the king will be cast down.[176]

3.3.2.1.3. καλάμη Where the Hebrew Lacks a Word for Straw

While καλάμη seems like a better rendering of קש and is used more often elsewhere in the LXX, in LXX Isaiah it is used for קש only once (5:24), as we have seen. The other three places it occurs in LXX Isaiah it modifies the meaning of an image. In Isa 1:31 it is used to further describe נערת (tow), in 17:6 for עללת (gleanings), and in 27:4 as a rendering for שית (thistle). We discuss 17:6 in the section on trees (3.6.3.3) and 27:4 in the section on thorns (3.4.1). We will discuss 1:31 here because the LXX has the plus καλάμη, and there are no other flax-related passages in Isaiah with which to discuss it.

Flax was an important crop in both Palestine and Egypt. Types of linen are mentioned in Isa 3:23 and 19:9, and how the Greek renders them is interesting, but the flax plant or its parts occur in a metaphor only in 1:31.[177]

---

175. Here again, perhaps *Salsola kali* was thought.

176. Muraoka finds this equivalent implausible (*Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 335).

177. For the rendering of the articles of clothing in chapter 3 see Michaël N. van der Meer, "Trendy Translations in the Septuagint of Isaiah: A Study of the Vocabulary of the Greek Isaiah 3:18–23 in the Light of Contemporary Sources," in Karrer and Kraus, *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten*, 581–96.

Isa 1:31

וְהָיָה הֶחָסֹן לִנְעֹרֶת וּפֹעֲלוֹ לְנִיצוֹץ וּבָעֲרוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו וְאֵין מְכַבֶּה׃

The strong shall become like *tow* and their work like a spark; *the two of them* shall burn together, with no one to quench them.

καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς αὐτῶν ὡς καλάμη στιππύου καὶ αἱ ἐργασίαι αὐτῶν ὡς σπινθῆρες πυρός, καὶ κατακαυθήσονται οἱ ἄνομοι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἅμα, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ὁ σβέσων.

And their strength shall be like a *straw* of *tow*, and their works like sparks of fire, and the lawless and the sinners shall be burned together, and there shall be no one to quench them.

Isaiah 1:31 tells how the wicked described in the previous verses, who will be refined out of Jerusalem (1:25), will self-destruct. The word נערת refers to tow, which occurs only here and in Judg 16:9.[178] Tow is a by-product of flax production; when the woody parts of the plant are combed (hackled) out of the flax fibers, some fibers break and are also removed; these short fibers are the tow and can still be used to make coarser cordage, rough fabric, and often wicks.[179] The Hebrew image, then, builds in each clause. First, the strong are said to become tow, that is, something feeble; second, their works become a spark (something short lived, a flash in the pan). In the second part of the verse the image develops further by combining the two previous ideas: their works will set them on fire, and the two of them will burn up; to make matters worse, in the final clause we learn that there is no one to extinguish them.

The Greek of 1:31a has made a few adjustments. The metaphors were made into similes, by interpreting ל as though it were כ, as often happens.[180] "The strong" and "their works" have become in Greek "their strength" and "their works"; "they" must be οἱ ἄνομοι and οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί mentioned in 1:28.[181] The change from "the strong" to "their strength" could be based on a *Vorlage* reading with pronominal suffixes like that

---

178. *HALOT*, s.v. "נְעֹרֶת"; *DCH* 5, s.v. "נְעֹרֶת"; BDB, s.v. "נְעֹרֶת."

179. R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* 9 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1944–1964), 4:30.

180. Ziegler notes that היה ל- is often turned into a simile in LXX Isaiah (*Untersuchungen*, 92). Van der Louw believes the metaphor is made into a simile to underline the metaphoric value of "strength" (*Transformations in the Septuagint*, 233).

181. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:111. Wagner, *Reading the Sealed Book*, 223.

of 1QIsaᵃ, which reads: החסנכם (and also ופעלכם), though the person is still different.[182] The idea that tow is weak can be seen in classical literature, in that στυππέϊνος is used metaphorically for feebleness in *Comica Adespota* 855.[183] The LXX also renders the vehicles of the two similes each with two words, so נערת becomes καλάμη στιππύου, and ניצוץ becomes σπινθῆρες πυρός.[184] The need to specify that it is a single straw of tow may be to distinguish it from a stronger cord of tow, or from tow as a collective material.[185] Ziegler suggests καλάμη was added because it is thrown into fires in metaphors describing the punishment of the wicked (Isa 5:24, Mal 3:19 [Eng. 4:1]).[186] Theodotion and Symmachus use only one word for tow in Isa 1:31: ἀποτίναγμα, while Aquila seems to understand נערת to be from נער (to shake) and so renders with τίναγμα. In Judges 16:9, where again the simile of tow is used, this time snapping in a fire, a cord of tow is expressed by the construct פתיל־הנערת (thread of tow), which is rendered as στρέμμα στιππύο in Vaticanus (B) and κλῶσμα τοῦ ἀποτινάγματος in Alexandrinus (A). As Ziegler points out, in Sir 21:9 a similar idea to LXX Isa 1:31 is expressed: στιππύον συνηγμένον συναγωγὴ ἀνόμων, καὶ ἡ συντέλεια αὐτῶν φλὸξ πυρός (The assembly of the lawless is bundled tow, and their end is a flame of fire).[187]

In Isa 1:31b the LXX adds an interpretation for the metaphor by making clear to whom שניהם refers: οἱ ἄνομοι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοί from 1:28, who again appear being destroyed together, this time by fire instead of crushing. In the Greek, the pronoun could not have referred to "their strength and works," since the LXX understands these as attributes of

---

182. Wagner calls the translation of החסן with ἡ ἰσχὺς "quite reasonable" and aruges that it makes clear the passage is directed against the powerful elite of Zion (*Reading the Sealed Book*, 223).

183. LSJ, s.v. "στυππέϊνος."

184. Baltzer et al. suggest these words point to LXX Isa 5:24 ("Esaias," 2:2509).

185. For στιππύον (which also can have the spelling στυππεῖον, according to LSJ, s.v. "στιππύον") as a collective singular, see P.Cair.Zen. 3.59489. Cf. Van der Louw, who says that καλάμη is added to show that the weakness of tow is meant, as opposed to rope (*Transformations in the Septuagint*, 233).

186. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–93. But it elsewhere (beside 1:31 and 5:24) appears only in Isaiah in 17:6 and 27:4, where it refers to the stubble left in a field after harvest.

187. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

someone else (the lawless and the sinners). Baltzer et al. point out that ὁ σβέσων corresponds to LXX Amos 5:6 and LXX Jer 4:4.[188]

The Targum is similar to LXX in several ways: the strong again becomes strength: תוקפהון דרשיעיא; tow is rendered with two words in a simile: כנעורת כתנא; spark is also rendered with two words in a simile: כניצוץ נורא; and while "the two of them" is not the lawless and sinners but refers to tow and spark, twice we have a reference to רשיעיא.[189]

As mentioned, Ziegler suggests καλάμη is used in 1:31 because it often occurs in descriptions of the wicked being punished in metaphors using fire.[190] But I suggested it is added to make clear that an individual fiber of tow is meant, not tow as a collective singular. While indeed in 1:31 and 5:24 we find καλάμη destined for fire, in the other two places it occurs in LXX Isaiah (17:6, 27:4) the idea is related to what is left in fields after harvest.

3.3.2.1.4. Summary

It is clear that the LXX Isaiah translator knew the meaning of קש, since he translated it with καλάμη in 5:24. In this passage he may have translated with καλάμη because of the idea of the "unrestrained flame"; a flame in a field of stubble or where straw is stored would be difficult to restrain compared with how he usually translates קש: φρύγανον (dry sticks), which needs to be gathered and typically belongs in a controlled cooking or heating fire. In 33:11 the translator renders what he thought the straw metaphor meant: vanity or weakness; this is close to how Targum Isaiah understands straw metaphors in 5:24 and 47:14. In the remaining three occurrences of קש, it is rendered as φρύγανον. In 40:24 the image is of something being carried away; by rendering with φρύγανον, the translator continues the idea of the princes being planted and creates a subtle contrast to the common image of kings as trees. In 41:2 the image is again of something blowing away in the wind; in rendering קש with φρύγανον, the Greek makes a more apt image of the enemies' bows uselessly being scattered. In 47:14 the image is again about fire; φρύγανον implies that they are destined to be burned,

---

188. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2509.

189. "And *the strength of the wicked* shall become as a tow *of flax*, and the deed of *their hands* as a spark *of fire; as when they are brought near to each other* and both of them burn together, *so will the wicked come to an end, they and their wicked deeds*, and there *will be* no *pity for them*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:31).

190. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–93.

which further advances the translator's rendering of the verse. The translator, then, chooses which vehicle, straw or twigs, will better express what he understands to be the meaning of the passage at hand.

The Targum renders the similes literally in 5:24, maintaining the reference to stubble. The rendering of 33:11 is free, so that stubble is interpreted as evil deeds, yet the idea of straw (קש) is added turning the reference to breath into the common image of wind blowing chaff away. In 40:24 the first half of the verse is interpreted, but the simile of wind scattering straw is maintained. The Targum interprets the righteous one in 41:2 to be Abraham and has him pursue his enemies with his bow like stubble, probably before a wind. For 47:14 the Targum understands that one group are weak like straw as opposed to a strong group that destroys them like fire.

3.3.2.2. תבן

Another term that refers to "straw" or "stubble," in this case meaning the cut straw used as cattle feed, is תבן. This term is typically rendered with ἄχυρον, which in Classical Greek referred to the husk or bran of the grain.[191] But in the LXX it refers more to the straw from which the grain is removed at threshing.[192] In this section we will first look at the texts where תבן occurs, then make a short summary.

3.3.2.2.1. Texts

The word תבן only occurs in Isaiah in 11:7 and 65:25.

> Isa 11:7
> וּפָרָה וָדֹב תִּרְעֶינָה יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ יַלְדֵיהֶן וְאַרְיֵה כַּבָּקָר יֹאכַל־תֶּבֶן׃
> The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
>
> καὶ βοῦς καὶ ἄρκος ἅμα βοσκηθήσονται, καὶ ἅμα τὰ παιδία αὐτῶν ἔσονται, καὶ λέων καὶ βοῦς ἅμα φάγονται ἄχυρα.
> And the ox and the bear shall graze together, and their young shall be together, and together shall the lion and the ox eat *straw*.

---

191. LSJ, s.v. "ἄχυρον."

192. *GELS*, s.v. "ἄχυρον." As a second definition, Muraoka has the chaff and grain separated from the straw and grain.

In the Hebrew, this image depicts future tranquility such that even animals will be tame and live together in peace. The predators will be content eating grass and hay together with their former prey. The Greek maintains this image, though it removes the comparison of the lion eating *like* an ox, but instead eats *with* the ox (note also the LXX does not bother with a synonym for βοῦς), harmonizing to the first clause. 1QIsaᵃ, 4QIsaᵇ, and 4QIsaᶜ all have כבקר (though 4QIsaᵇ lacks the ר).

The Greek has made a few minor stylistic adjustments. In the first clause, it moves "together" (ἅμα) to before the verb, and adds it to the subsequent two clauses. The rendering of תבן with ἄχυρον is a good choice, since both refer to cut stalks of grain used for cattle fodder and can also mean chaff.[193]

The Targum renders this verse literally.[194]

In Isa 65:25 very nearly the same image is used again.

Isa 65:25

זאב וטלה ירעו כאחד ואריה כבקר יאכל־תבן ונחש עפר לחמו לא־ירעו ולא־ישחיתו בכל־הר קדשי אמר יהוה:

The wolf and the lamb shall *graze* together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the Lᴏʀᴅ.

τότε λύκοι καὶ ἄρνες βοσκηθήσονται ἅμα, καὶ λέων ὡς βοῦς φάγεται ἄχυρα, ὄφις δὲ γῆν ὡς ἄρτον· οὐκ ἀδικήσουσιν οὐδὲ μὴ λυμανοῦνται ἐπὶ τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ μου, λέγει κύριος.

Then wolves and lambs shall *graze* together, and a lion shall eat *straw* like an ox, but a snake [shall eat] earth *like* bread! They shall not do wrong or destroy on my holy mountain, says the Lord.

This image is shorter than that of 11:6–9 and focuses more on the dangerous animals no longer doing harm. The Greek renders more literally than in 11:7. Note especially the very same phrase ואריה כבקר יאכל־תבן is now rendered literally, preserving the simile καὶ λέων ὡς βοῦς φάγεται ἄχυρα.[195] But in the next sentence, the snake instead of eating dust for its bread has

---

193. *GELS*, s.v. "ἄχυρον"; LSJ s.v. "ἄχυρον."

194. "The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox" (Tg. Neb. Isa 11:7).

195. Cf. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 182.

a new simile in the Greek: it eats earth like bread.[196] This simile is jarring after the previous one; the lion is compared to something else that eats, while the snake has its future food compared to its regular food (bread in the sense of subsistence).[197] Again, תבן is rendered with ἄχυρον.

The Targum also renders this verse literally.[198]

While the term ἄχυρον is used as an equivalent for תבן in 11:7 and 65:25, it also appears in 30:24 and 17:13 (which we will discuss below in our discussion of chaff—מץ). In 30:24 we find a description of how the land will be blessed in the future, and how the cattle will have large pastures and will eat high quality fodder: והאלפים והעירים עבדי האדמה בליל חמיץ יאכלו אשר־זרה ברחת ובמזרה ("And the cattle and donkeys, the workers of the earth, will eat seasoned mixed-fodder, which was winnowed with a winnowing-shovel and winnowing-fork"). The meaning of בליל חמיץ is some sort of special fodder, seasoned somehow and mixed with different kinds of grain and straw.[199] That it is special fodder is made clear in that it has been winnowed, which is not usually necessary for cattle feed. LXX does not render this literally but gives the general sense, that the fodder is ἄχυρα ἀναπεποιημένα ἐν κριθῇ λελικμημένα. The idea of winnowing (or at least it is threshed and crushed) is present, as is that it is a mixture, hay prepared with barley, so it is still a special kind of fodder, or at least more than the most basic fodder of plain hay.

3.3.2.2.2. Summary

To summarize, LXX Isaiah understands תבן to refer to a grain farming byproduct that can be collected and fed to animals, and so renders it with ἄχυρον, which is a term used to render other words related to cattle feed. The Targum renders with the Aramaic cognate.

---

196. Perhaps it is better thought of as a deictic use of ὡς. See Takamitsu Muraoka, "The Use of ΩΣ in the Greek Bible," *NovT* 7 (1964): 55.

197. This would be less jarring if the previous simile were "the lion will eat hay like it eats the ox." 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT.

198. "*The wolf* and *the* lamb shall feed together, *the* lion shall eat straw like an ox; and dust shall be *the* serpent's *food*. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the Lᴏʀᴅ" (Tg. Neb. Isa 65:25).

199. Probably something like the slightly fermented mixture "silage" is meant, as NRSV renders it. For the identification of חמיץ with chick peas, see Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 130.

3.3.2.3. מץ

The last part of grain plants that needs to be considered is the chaff or husk that is separated from the ear of grain by crushing or threshing and then winnowed away. This section will first examine texts where it occurs, then offer a short summary.

3.3.2.3.1. Texts

The Hebrew term for chaff is מץ. It occurs in Isa 17:13, 29:5 and 41:15, and in each case is rendered with χνοῦς (chaff).[200] As discussed above, χνοῦς was probably used as an equivalent of מץ in the LXX to describe the smaller, lighter parts of chaff (ἄχυρον).

> Isa 17:13
> לאמים כשאון מים רבים ישאון וגער בו ונס ממרחק כמץ הרים לפני־
> רוח וכגלגל לפני סופה:
> The nations roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and *tumbleweed* before the storm.
>
> ὡς ὕδωρ πολὺ ἔθνη πολλά, ὡς ὕδατος πολλοῦ βίᾳ καταφερομένου· καὶ ἀποσκορακιεῖ αὐτὸν καὶ πόρρω αὐτὸν διώξεται ὡς χνοῦν ἀχύρου λικμώντων ἀπέναντι ἀνέμου καὶ ὡς κονιορτὸν τροχοῦ καταιγὶς φέρουσα.
> Many nations are like much water, as when much water violently rushes down. And he will damn him and pursue him far away, like the dust of chaff when they winnow before the wind and like *a sudden gust* [*drives*] *dust of a wheel.*

For our purposes, it is important to note that כמץ הרים has been rendered with ὡς χνοῦν ἀχύρου λικμώντων.[201] Baltzer, et al. note that the idea of winnowing comes from Isa 30:22, 24 and 41:16, and that מץ is here ren-

---

200. *GELS*, s.v. "χνοῦς." The word χνοῦς also occurs in Isa 5:24, for מק. The only other place מק occurs is Isa 3:24, where it is rendered with κονιορτός. Each rendering is appropriate for the context in which it occurs, though they may not be very close equivalents for מק.

201. For the LXX's reading of the water similes, see Baltzer, et al., "Esaias," 2:2549.

dered twice: χνοῦν ἀχύρου.[202] This double rendering is probably to specify χνοῦς as chaff, since it could otherwise be misunderstood, being parallel to κονιορτός.[203] Ziegler believes ἀχύρου is added because of λικμώντων.[204] It is interesting to note that this parallel also has two words where the Hebrew has only one: κονιορτὸν τροχοῦ.[205] Another explanation is that the idea of winnowing could have come from the translator supposing הרים should be זרים.[206] Ziegler, however, suggests the translator may have thought mountains are mentioned as a place where they winnowed in Palestine.[207] According to Musselman, גלגל refers to a sort of tumbleweed that dries out and blows in the wind around the same time of year as wheat is harvested.[208] So it would have been seen blowing about when the chaff was also being blown away.[209] The LXX never renders it in this way. Indeed, here the LXX understands the image to be of a passing wheel kicking up a cloud of dust, as in 5:28, where chariot wheels are compared to a blast of wind.[210]

The Targum makes clear that the waters are kings, translates הרים literally, and perhaps understands גלגל, or at least transliterates with גלגלא.[211]

Isa 29:5

והיה כאבק דק המון זריך וכמץ עבר המון עריצים והיה לפתע פתאם:

---

202. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2549. See also Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 153.

203. Ziegler believes the translator inserted κονιορτόν due to the parallel χνοῦν ἀχύρου (*Untersuchungen*, 93). However, cf. 29:5, where τροχοῦ is added to explain κονιορτόν "dust."

204. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:193, believes ἀχύρου is explanatory, pointing to its addition also in 30:24 (as does Ziegler), though that context is different, as we have seen.

205. See Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 153.

206. Ziegler does not think this explanation is necessary (*Untersuchungen*, 93). Ottley thinks the genitive suggests the translator is making a guess, or that he read חרש or זרה (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:193).

207. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

208. This is how Baltzer et al. ("Esaias," 2:2550) understand the Hebrew.

209. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 281–83.

210. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

211. "*Kingdoms* roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke him, and he will flee far away and be chased like chaff on *the* mountains before *the* wind and *the* whirling dust before *the* storm" (Tg. Neb. Isa 17:13). Chilton seems to think גלגלא can mean "whirling dust," but I can only find the definition "wheel" in lexicons.

But the multitude of your foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of tyrants like flying chaff. And in an instant, suddenly…

καὶ ἔσται ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀπὸ τροχοῦ ὁ πλοῦτος τῶν ἀσεβῶν καὶ ὡς χνοῦς φερόμενος, καὶ ἔσται ὡς στιγμὴ παραχρῆμα 6 παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ·
But the wealth of the impious shall be like dust from a wheel and like flying chaff. And it shall be like an instant, suddenly, from the Lord Sabaoth.

Depending on how we understand המון, the enemies' army or royal entourage, or the general confusion they create, it is just like a cloud of dust and chaff passing in the wind, just a temporary little cloud of chaos disappearing quickly and permanently.[212]

The Greek has made several modifications to the verse. Of note first is that the Greek has added the idea of a wheel (ἀπὸ τροχοῦ), which is elsewhere seen in relation to chaff (more specifically, to dust, κονιορτός, as in 17:13, but also generally as we will see, in the Greek of 41:15).[213] The LXX here understands המון to refer to the strangers' abundance of riches, as in 29:7, 8, and 32:14.[214] This fits into the translator's understanding of the passage, since it is also a plus found in 29:2. Also of note is that rather than the idea of strangers or tyrants, the LXX has ἀσεβής, the impious. This equivalence (for זרים) can also be found in Isa 25:2, 5, and is explainable if we understand it as it is used to describe things strange to the law, like the strange incense of Exod 30:9 or the strange fire of Lev 10:1, Num 3:4, and 26:61.[215] Another explanation is that of Muraoka, who suggests the translator understood זד (insolent, presumptuous), which agrees with 1QIsaᵃ, which has זדיך.[216] The Greek omits the synonymous phrase המון עריצים, using the first rendering distributively.[217]

---

212. In how many cartoons is a crowd or chaos illustrated as a cloud of dust and commotion?

213. On the wheel in relation to the chaff or dust, see Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2579. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT in that there is no wheel.

214. This equivalence can also be found in Isa 16:14, Ps 37:16 (LXX 36:16), and, as Muraoka points out, Ps 36:3 (*Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 97).

215. See BDB, s.v. "זור," 2d.

216. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 189.

217. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 207–8.

Nearly the same phrase, πλοῦτος ἀσεβῶν, is found also in the Greek of 24:8.[218]

The equivalent φερόμενος for עבר is elsewhere only found in Jer 13:24.[219] This text is also the only place outside Isaiah that uses φρύγανα for קש.

The last change is that the Greek adds a simile; as Ziegler points out, the translator often does this when he sees the phrase היה ל-.[220] These changes are largely stylistic; they do not change the imagery drastically in content, though their rhetorical effect is different.

The only thing to note about the Targum is that "your multitude of enemies" (המון זריך) are interpreted as "the tumult of those scattering you" (המון מבדרך), understanding perhaps זרע.[221]

> Isa 41:15
> הנה שמתיך למורג חרוץ חדש בעל פיפיות תדוש הרים ותדק וגבעות כמץ תשים:
>
> Now, I will make of you a threshing sledge, sharp, new, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff.
>
> ἰδοὺ ἐποίησά σε ὡς τροχοὺς ἁμάξης ἀλοῶντας καινοὺς πριστηροειδεῖς, καὶ ἀλοήσεις ὄρη καὶ λεπτυνεῖς βουνοὺς καὶ ὡς χνοῦν θήσεις·
> Look, I made you as the threshing wheels of a cart, new and saw-shaped, and you shall thresh mountains and grind hills to powder and make them like *chaff*.

In this passage God comforts Israel saying he will make them a threshing sledge that will reduce mountains and hills to chaff. The metaphor here explains 41:11–12, where Israel's enemies will become like nothing. Here the enemies are mountains and hills but are reduced to chaff which blows away and is gone in 41:16.[222]

---

218. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2565, 2579.

219. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2579. For the translator's preference for this verb, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 142–43.

220. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

221. "But the multitude of your *dispersed* shall be like small dust, and a *tumult* of *strong ones* like chaff *which* pass*es*, and there will be *a tumult* suddenly" (Tg. Neb. Isa 29:5).

222. The Greek renders literally the reference to winnowing in 41:16, while the Targum adds a simile explicitly mentioning chaff.

The term מורג refers to a threshing sledge.[223] Here its high quality is described as being sharp (חרוץ) and new (חדש), that is, all the stones or metal teeth on the bottom are still sharp, and none have fallen out.[224] The meaning of בעל פיפיות is obscure; *HALOT* defines פיפיות as "sharp edges" and *DCH* as just "edge," since it is used to describe double-edged swords.[225] In 1QIsaᵃ it is two words: פי פיות, perhaps thinking a sort of superlative expression like שיר השירים.[226] The strong expression of plurality, פיפיות, undoubtedly denotes an extra amount of stones or metal teeth, since they are already described as sharp and new. Whatever it means exactly, it clearly contributes to the picture of the sledge being a deluxe industrial model with all the accessories; it is a much more elaborate description than Amos 1:3 uses: חרצות הברזל.

The Greek translates the metaphor as a simile, rendering ל with ὡς, and changes the terminology to better fit the Egyptian agricultural context. As Ziegler pointed out, though there is no regular LXX rendering for מורג, here the translator has not rendered it but has changed the threshing sledge into threshing rollers, τροχοὺς ἁμάξης, under the influence of 28:27.[227] In that passage, we find the Greek τροχὸς ἁμάξης literally translating אופן עגלה. Ziegler shows that this, along with the term πριστηροειδεῖς (for בעל פיפיות), reflects the Egyptian milieu, and he gives the example of Cyril of Alexandria, who comments on this verse by mentioning that some Egyptians just use animals to thresh grain with their hooves, while others use wagons with saw-like wheels.[228] Troxel suggests חדש was read as הדש and so rendered ἀλοῶντας, then was read as חדש and rendered καινούς.[229] But it seems the technical terms do not have exact equivalents but are updated to fit the tools of the translator's day.[230] Another change the Greek makes is to move the conjunction on "hills" to before the simile, which improves the parallelism.

---

223. *HALOT*, s.v. "מוֹרַג"; *DCH* 5, s.v. "מוֹרַג."

224. As a noun, חרוץ would also mean a threshing sledge. *HALOT*, s.v. "חָרוּץ II."

225. *HALOT*, s.v. "פִּיפִיּוֹת." *DCH* 6, s.v. "פִּיפִיוֹת."

226. Otherwise 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT regarding the threshing implement, as does 1QIsaᵇ up to חרוץ.

227. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186–87.

228. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186–87. Seeligmann lists the word πριστηροειδεῖς as an example of the translator's large vocabulary ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 184).

229. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 120. He calls this a translation doublet, as opposed to a double translation.

230. Without ἀλοῶντας it could be unclear why this wagon wheel is mentioned.

The Greek does not change the vehicle of the metaphor but makes it a simile, then adjusts the terminology of the vehicle to fit the experience of his audience better. As in 29:5, the Greek has added the idea of a wheel in a passage mentioning chaff.[231]

The Targum renders the verse literally, except it interprets mountains and hills as nations.[232]

The image of chaff is used in the Hebrew to illustrate something that is minute and light and is passing away and disappearing in the wind. The Greek uses it in the same way, though it frequently adjusts the surrounding terminology, often to include a wheel; in 17:13 and 29:5 the wheel is mentioned as kicking up dust for the wind, while in 41:15 it is a threshing tool.

Chaff is implicitly present also wherever threshing (דוש, 21:10, 25:10, 28:27–8, and 41:15) and winnowing (זרה, 30:24, and 41:16, which we have already discussed) are mentioned.[233]

Isa 21:10
מדשתי ובן־גרני אשר שמעתי מאת יהוה צבאות אלהי ישראל הגדתי לכם:
O my threshed and *my son of a threshing-floor*, what I have heard from the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.

ἀκούσατε, οἱ καταλελειμμένοι καὶ οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι, ἀκούσατε ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ· ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ισραηλ ἀνήγγειλεν ἡμῖν.
Hear, you who have been left and you who are in pain; hear the things I have heard from the Lord Sabaoth; the God of Israel has announced them to us.

Here, at the end of an oracle about Babylon's fall to Media and Persia, the audience, Israel/Judah, is addressed metaphorically. The term מדשתי refers to what was threshed and בן־גרני to what is characteristic of a threshing

---

231. It is noteworthy that the translator uses χνοῦς and not χοῦς or κονιορτός, suggesting he has chaff and not simply dust in mind.

232. "Behold, I make you a *strong* threshing sledge, new, *full* of *points*; you shall *kill the Gentiles* and *destroy* [them], and you shall make *the kingdoms* like *the* chaff. You shall winnow them, and a wind shall carry them away, and *his Memra,* as *the whirlwind the chaff,* shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in *the Memra* of the Lord; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory" (Tg. Neb. Isa 41:15–16).

233. Isa 27:12 may contain threshing and gleaning imagery, though synonyms are used: חבט and לקט. In any case, LXX understands it to refer to "fencing" (συμφράσσω) instead of "beating."

floor: threshed grain. The metaphor suggests the people addressed have suffered violence like threshed grain. As Baltzer et al. point out, in Mic 4:13 and Hab 3:12 nations are described as being threshed as a metaphor for them being defeated.[234]

The Greek interprets these terms as also in 28:28 where a similar interpretation is made.[235] The threshed grain metaphor comes out of nowhere in the passage, so it makes sense that the translator would feel the need to interpret it for the sake of clarity.[236] He renders the threshed grain מדשתי as representing the remnants: οἱ καταλελειμμένοι.[237] This is interesting since in 17:5–6 the remnant is what was left in the field, so the grain is presumably what was carried off. But, of course, it is possible to use the same vehicle in different ways for different metaphors. Those remaining in 21:10 are thought of as having suffered some violence or distress, which the translator makes clear by rendering the parallel בן־גרני with οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι.[238] 1QIsaᵃ has גדרי (my fenced one), though the MT reading makes better sense as the basis for the Greek. While threshed grain implies chaff, neither the Hebrew nor the Greek even make an implication regarding whether the chaff is present or has already been winnowed away.[239]

In addition to interpreting the metaphor and giving what it is thought to represent, the translator has further clarified the passage by adding two imperatives (ἀκούσατε) for which the vocatives act as subject. Ziegler suggests this plus follows the relative clause and is similar to Isa 1:10, 7:13, and such passages.[240] The main verb in the Hebrew has changed from first-person to third-person; the prophet no longer announces to the threshed, but it is God who declares to the prophet and the remnant.

The Targum also interprets the metaphor, though by giving what it thinks מדשתי represents, then by expanding the parallel name into a simile.[241] So, the first part represents kings skilled in war who will plunder,

---

234. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2557.

235. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

236. Seeligmann goes too far in saying the translation "is practically independent of the Hebrew text" ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 277).

237. This term appears in 13:12,14; 27:10; 37:4, 31, as Baltzer et al. point out ("Esaias," 2:2557).

238. Baltzer et al. describe it as cruelty suffered by the defeated ("Esaias," 2:2557).

239. NRSV renders בן־גרני as "winnowed one."

240. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 65.

241. "*Kings who are skilled in waging war will come against her to plunder her even as the farmer who is skilled in* thresh*ing the grain. The prophet said,* What I have

and the second part says they plunder like someone skilled to thresh: מלכין
דאומנין לאגחא קרבא ייתון עלה למיבזה הא כאיכרא דאומן למדש ית אידרא.

Isa 25:10

כי־תנוח יד־יהוה בהר הזה ונדוש מואב תחתיו כהדוש מתבן במי[242] מדמנה:
For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain. The Moabites
shall be trodden down in their place as straw is trodden down in
a dung-pit.

ὅτι ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο, καὶ καταπατηθήσεται ἡ
Μωαβῖτις, ὃν τρόπον πατοῦσιν ἅλωνα ἐν ἁμάξαις·
Because God will give us rest on this mountain, and Moabitis shall
be trodden down as they tread a threshing floor with wagons.

The Hebrew uses a more general meaning for the term דוש, simply to
tread. In this case it is straw being trod into dung, either for fuel or fertil-
izer.[243] The metaphor is different from the threshing metaphor, in that it
is less about suffering cruel violence and more about humiliation, though
the reality may have been much the same.

    The Greek removes the anthropomorphism יד־יהוה, saying instead
simply ὁ θεός. This may not be due to the issue of its being an anthropo-
morphism, but a matter of syntax, since the translator appears to have read
תנוח as a *hiphil* (exchanging a י for the ו) and rendered it with ἀνάπαυσιν
δώσει.[244] The Greek changes the image into the more common one of grain
being threshed, though he should have been familiar with mixing straw
and manure for fuel as was common.[245] The *qere-ketiv* of MT is read in

---

heard *before* the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you" (Tg. Neb. Isa
21:10).

    242. *Qere* במו.

    243. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185–86. For an analysis of the Hebrew in light of
Mari texts, see Bob Becking, "'As Straw Is Trodden Down in the Water of a Dung-Pit':
Remarks on a Simile in Isaiah 25:10," in *Isaiah in Context: Studies in Honour of Arie
van der Kooij on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Michaël N. van der Meer
et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 3–14. He argues in favor of the *ketiv* reading, understanding
that straw was used to cover the dung to soak up water and cover the smell. Cf. 1QIsaᵃ,
which has כחדוש.

    244. On תנוח as a *hiphil*, see Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:227. See also Baltzer et al.,
"Esaias," 2:2568. Here they suggest 32:17 as a similar case.

    245. See Van der Veen, "Economic Value of Chaff," 218–19. Cf. Ezekiel 4:11–15.

both ways by various ancient versions: LXX follows the *qere* (במו, rendering it with the preposition ἐν), as does the Peshitta and Vulgate; 1QIsaᵃ, Symmachus, and the Targum follow the *ketiv*.[246] As Ziegler points out, πατέω is a unique rendering for דוש, though it can be found in relation to a threshing floor (ἅλων) in 1 Sam 23:1.[247] As we have seen, תבן is elsewhere in Isaiah always rendered with ἄχυρον, but here מתבן is understood to stand for the grain of the threshing floor; the LXX uses a metonymy putting the threshing floor (ἅλων) for what is trod upon it.[248] The rendering of מדמנה with ἅμαξα is not really a rendering.[249] But, as in other passages related to threshing, the translator includes the idea of wheels or carts (21:10 and 41:15).[250]

The Targum changes "hand" to "power."[251] Of more interest to us is that the Targum also changes the vehicle of the metaphor; instead of treading straw in dung, the straw is trodden into clay (דמידש תבנא בטינא), probably under the influence of Exod 5:7 and Nah 3:14.

In Isa 28:23–29 there is a passage illustrating various agricultural activities that are done in a certain way, and others that are not done in a certain way. We have discussed 28:25, 28 above (3.3.1.1), but now we will look again at 28:27–28, where threshing is discussed, and the passage is interpreted in the Greek.

---

246. See Arie van der Kooij, "Isaiah 24–27: Text-Critical Notes," in *Studies in Isaiah 24–27: The Isaiah Workshop (De Jesaja Werkplaats)*, ed. Hendrik Jan Bosman et al., OTS 43 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 14.

247. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185–86.

248. Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186, where he points out the papyri using the same metonymy.

249. See Wilson de Angelo Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1–26:6 as Interpretation and Translation: A Methodological Discussion*, SCS 62 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014), 102–3, where the suggestion that the translator read במרכבה for במי מדמנה is rejected.

250. Ziegler says it is conditional on the image of the threshing floor (*Untersuchungen*, 97).

251. "For the *might* of the Lᴏʀᴅ will be *revealed* on this mountain, and *the* Moab*ites* will be trodden down in *their* place, as *the* straw is trodden down in the *mire*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 25:10).

Isa 28:27–28

כי לא בחרוץ יודש קצח ואופן עגלה על־כמן יוסב כי במטה יחבט קצח
וכמן בשבט: לחם יודק כי לא לנצח אדוש ידושנו והמם גלגל עגלתו ופרשיו
לא־ידקנו:

Black cumin is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cart
wheel rolled over cumin; but *black cumin* is beaten out with a
stick, and cumin with a rod. [*It*] is crushed for bread, but one does
not thresh it forever; one drives the cart wheel and horses over it,
but does not pulverize it.

οὐ γὰρ μετὰ σκληρότητος καθαίρεται τὸ μελάνθιον, οὐδὲ τροχὸς ἁμάξης
περιάξει ἐπὶ τὸ κύμινον, ἀλλὰ ῥάβδῳ ἐκτινάσσεται τὸ μελάνθιον, τὸ
δὲ κύμινον μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται. οὐ γὰρ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐγὼ ὑμῖν
ὀργισθήσομαι, οὐδὲ φωνὴ τῆς πικρίας μου καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.

For *black cumin* is not *cleaned* with harshness, nor will a cart
wheel roll over the cumin, but *black cumin* is shaken with a rod,
and cumin will be eaten with bread. For I will not be angry with
you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you.

In 28:23–25 the proper order of planting a field is described, and in 28:27–
28 the proper way of preparing various produce is described, first by saying
how herbs are not treated, then by saying how they are treated. In 28:27 two
different threshing implements are mentioned, a sledge (חרוץ) and rollers
(אופן עגלה, perhaps simply cart wheels). Since they are not used on black
cumin and cumin, they presumably are used for something else: the wheat,
emmer, and barley of 28:25. The herbs are simply struck with a rod to shake
the seeds loose. In 28:28 the Hebrew concedes that the cumins are crushed,
even by cart wheels, but it is not ground finely. The meaning of the passage
has to do with Judah suffering, but only for a time and according to the
planned ordering of God's will (28:29). In 1QIsaᵃ a few differences should
be noted. First of all, in 28:29 לחם is missing (4QIsaᵏ has ולחם) and the first
word is ידק. Also, גלגל has been added by a corrector. These changes do not
seem to form the basis for the differences in the Greek.

The Greek in these verses creates a clearer explanation of the whole
passage. It is difficult to tell if σκληρότητος is an interpretation of בחרוץ
as the adjective (with sharpness) or as a noun (with a threshing sledge).[252]

---

252. It appears with little textual warrant in 4:6 and 8:12, as Baltzer et al. point
out ("Esaias," 2:2578).

As we saw in 21:10, the translator associates threshing with harsh treat-
ment causing agony, so he could have interpreted "with a threshing
sledge" to refer to harsh treatment. The rendering of יודש with καθαίρω is
interesting. The translator knows the meaning of דוש, as we saw in 41:15;
Ziegler discusses this rendering and concludes that the translator was
influenced by his culture and rendered with καθαίρω, which refers more
to winnowing or cleaning the seeds rather than threshing, because he
knew it was appropriate to how cumin was treated. This translation, then,
fits the common practice, which in fact reinforces the point the passage
is trying to make, that black cumin is not treated harshly like grains are;
it is simply cleaned by winnowing or sieving.[253] In comparison, the next
clause is rendered very literally, except for the word order being adjusted
by moving the location of the verb περιάγω, and reading it as a *qal* instead
of *hophal*.[254] Likewise the next clause, כי במטה יחבט קצח, is rendered
literally, but the last is understood differently. Presumably וכמן בשבט לחם
יודק is rendered with τὸ δὲ κύμινον μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται.[255] Ottley and
Ziegler suggest the translator understood בשבט לחם as being analogous
to the idiom מטה-לחם (e.g. Lev 26:26) and shortened the phrase just to
μετὰ ἄρτου.[256] Baltzer et al. suggest the word שבט was simply passed
over.[257] This rendering is probably for clarity, since cumin is not crushed
with a rod for making bread, but is crushed so it can be eaten with bread,
as the Greek makes clear, dropping the references to the preparation of
the cumin.

The passage as a whole is interpreted by the Greek in the last lines.
It does not render the horses or wagons. The Greek interprets threshing
(אדוש ידושנו) as God's anger (ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ὀργισθήσομαι).[258] The translator
again sees threshing as an image of harsh, violent treatment, in this case as
a manifestation of God's anger. The last phrase, והמם גלגל עגלתו ופרשיו לא־
ידקנו, appears to be rendered freely. Perhaps והמם was read as והמון and is

---

253. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184–85.

254. This parsing agrees with 1QIsaᵃ (Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578).

255. Baltzer et al. suggest יודק was read as נקד as in Jos 9:5, 12, where βιβρώσκω
is used as an equivalent (Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578). However, it is probably an
equivalent there to express the idea of the bread being worm-eaten.

256. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:245; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 8.

257. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578.

258. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185. That it is brief anger accords with 7:4, 10:25,
54:7, as pointed out in Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578. Ziegler also points to Isa 57:16
and Jer 3:12 (*Untersuchungen*, 120). 1QIsaᵃ has הדש instead of אדוש.

thus the source of the word φωνή; a similar idea to the Greek is expressed in Isa 30:30.[259] The idea of animosity (πικρία) comes from 28:21.[260] The one phrase rendered nearly literally is לא־ידקנו, which becomes οὐδὲ … καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.

The Greek, then, interprets the passage as having to do with how Judah is treated. They suffer hardship for a time, but are not to be destroyed, just as black cumin and cumin are beaten but not crushed.[261] This interpretation is partly the result of reading 28:26 as describing a chastisement followed by rejoicing.

The Targum interprets the passage as a whole already in 28:24–25, so that the rest can be rendered nearly literally. In 28:28 לחם is interpreted as grain (עבורא). The horses, which were omitted in the Greek, are rendered as a verb, and in the context of threshing, the Targum talks about separating the grain from the chaff: ומפריש ית עבורא ומפרח ית דוקא.[262]

3.3.2.3.2. Summary

LXX Isaiah always understands the term chaff (מץ), rendering it literally with χνοῦς. While in 5:24 and 29:5 the translator may have intended χνοῦς to carry a meaning more like "dust," in the other places it clearly refers to chaff. In 17:13 the translator clarifies, rendering it with χνοῦν ἀχύρου, and in 41:15 the context is of threshing. Chaff is mentioned in Isaiah to illustrate something that is chased away by the wind and disperses and disappears. In Aristophanes, we see chaff in a metaphor in reference to the mixed nature of the members of a city: τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω (*Ach.* 508). We do not see chaff as a party in Isaiah, unlike Matt 3:12 and Luke 3:17, where it is a group that needs to be separated.

The LXX does not interpret or replace these chaff metaphors but in each case adjusts and directs the metaphor. In 17:13, perhaps for lexical reasons, the translator has added winnowing, which makes more vivid the

---

259. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578.

260. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2578.

261. Perhaps we could push this to claim that the other nations are like the wheat and barley, which will be completely crushed and ground to flour, like Moab in 25:10.

262. "For *they* do not thresh dill with threshing sledge*s of iron*, nor *do they* turn wheel*s* of a cart upon cumin; for *they* beat dill with the stick, and cumin with the rod. *They* indeed *thresh* grain, but *they* do not thresh it forever; and he *stirs* with the wheel*s* of his cart and *separates the grain and lets the dust fly*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 28:27–28).

idea of the chaff being tossed in the air and blown away by wind. In 29:5 the similes are adjusted in the Greek. Instead of fine dust passing away, the Greek has introduced the idea of a wheel (which is found with chaff in 17:13 and the Greek of 41:15). Also, the similes are interpreted as standing for something different in the Greek; in the Hebrew it is the army of your strangers (המון זריך), but in the Greek it is the riches of the impious (ὁ πλοῦτος τῶν ἀσεβῶν), probably due to the translator's understanding of the passage as a whole. In 41:15, the LXX updates the image to fit his Egyptian context better by describing the kind of threshing sledge commonly used. Also, here the metaphor is turned into a simile.

Threshing metaphors meet more varied treatment in the LXX. In 21:10, the metaphor is interpreted as a remnant that is suffering, perhaps to make clearer who is addressed. In 25:10, the Greek turns a more unique metaphor into a more conventional metaphor: treading straw into a dung-heap becomes treading out grain. Also, the translator again adds contemporary technology, adding the idea of a threshing cart. In 28:28–29, the threshing metaphor is again updated to the translator's contemporary practice (for how cumin is prepared) and the passage is clarified (that cumin is crushed to be eaten with bread). The Greek interprets the passage as a whole here (that they will suffer only for a time), and like in 21:10 interprets threshing, though this time as a manifestation of God's anger. While threshing implies chaff, the threshing metaphors in Isaiah and the Greek rendering do not.

It is noteworthy that the Targum also interprets 29:5 as referring to a different group than the Hebrew, though it understands it in a different way than the Greek. In 41:15, the mountains and hills are interpreted as nations, but the rest of the metaphor is retained. In the next verse, rather than a tempest scattering the chaff, it is made clear that God's word (מימר) scatters them. In 21:10, the Targum interprets the first metaphor, then uses the parallel phrase as a simile to relate the tenor to the vehicle. Like in the Greek of 25:10, the Targum also has used a different metaphor from the Hebrew (and the Greek); instead of treading straw into dung, it is straw trodden into clay. The Targum of 28:28–29 is rendered literally, though mostly due to the passage already being interpreted in 28:24–25. We should mention again here that in the Targum of 40:6, a chaff metaphor is introduced, so that the strength of the wicked is like chaff of the field instead of the flower of the field. This is probably because it is blown away in the next verse and thus harmonizes with the common chaff in the wind imagery.

3.4. Thorns

Various sorts of thorns and thistles are mentioned several times in Isaiah. Sometimes they are metaphorical, but other times they stand in images that work by way of metonymy. Generally speaking, thorns and thistles are mentioned either in connection with inhabited places becoming devoid of people with the result that thorns grow up, or they are mentioned as something flammable.

This section will first look at a word pair unique to Isaiah, then will consider the more common thorn terminology, before a concluding summary.

3.4.1. A Unique Isaianic Word Pair: שמיר ושית

Several times we see the word pair שמיר and שית.[263] These terms only occur in Isaiah, and always occur together except in 32:13, where we find קוץ שמיר. Wildberger believes שמיר refers to the Christ thorn plant, and שית is a generic word for thorny scrub brush. He says they are chosen for the sake of alliteration.[264] The LXX's translation of this phrase is complex.[265] About half of the time, LXX Isaiah renders it in a sense having to do with thorns in uncultivated land, and about half the time it renders it as having to do with grass.

> Isa 5:6
> ואשיתהו בתה לא יזמר ולא יעדר ועלה שמיר ושית ועל העבים אצוה
> מהמטיר עליו מטר:
> I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.
>
> καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου καὶ οὐ μὴ τμηθῇ οὐδὲ μὴ σκαφῇ, καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα· καὶ ταῖς νεφέλαις ἐντελοῦμαι τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι εἰς αὐτὸν ὑετόν.

---

263. Isa 5:6; 7:23, 24, 25; 9:17; 10:17; and 27:4.
264. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 171.
265. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 33, 181.

> And I will *leave my vineyard unused* and it shall not be pruned or
> dug and a thorn shall come up into it as into a *fallow field*, and I
> will command the clouds, that they send no rain to it.

In 5:7 we get the explanation for this allegory, that the vineyard is the house
of Israel and the vine is the man of Judah.[266] This probably does not mean
we have to find an exact interpretation for the thorns and weeds; they
probably simply illustrate symptoms of an abandoned place, like the aban-
doned cities in 5:9. A vineyard being neglected in Prov 24:30–31 (in this
case by a sluggard) is also described in synonymous terms (in the Greek
the land becomes fallow and grassy). The image in 5:6 is of neglect, that the
vines are not pruned and so grow out of control and become unfruitful,
and that thorns and weeds are allowed to grow up without being weeded.
God even commands the clouds to neglect to rain on the vineyard.

The Greek has a slightly different picture. The phrase ואשיתהו בתה
is rendered καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου, which Ziegler says is common
terminology in the papyri for leaving fields so that they become fallow.[267]
This naturally would be disastrous for a vineyard, which requires consid-
erable labor to maintain. The LXX for some reason wants to make explicit
that the vineyard is being abandoned and so gives what is meant by the
pronoun: τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου. The term χέρσος likewise refers to developed
land that is deteriorating.[268] Schnebel shows that the primary meaning of
χέρσος is dry land, but that in Hellenistic Egypt it came to describe arable
land that has become less productive due to lack of irrigation (natural or
artificial), or because it was overgrown with canes or with thorns and scrub
or tamarisks, or covered in sand or salt.[269] John S. Kloppenborg points out
that in Ptolemaic Egypt the failure of vineyards was common enough for
the word χερσάμπελος to be coined.[270] This is a more precise description of
the matter, leaving a vineyard to become a fallow plot of land. Fallow can
sound positive in English, but here we should understand it as describing

---

266. We will consider this passage again in the section on vines and vineyards
(3.5.1).

267. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179–80.

268. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181.

269. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 14–20. Also it can be used with descriptions of
land reclaimed from the wilderness (13–14).

270. John S. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices and the Citation of Isa
5:1–7 in Mark 12:1–9," *NovT* 44 (2002): 152.

a plot of land that requires considerable extra work to be put back to use.[271] In the Egyptian context perhaps the land is even returning to desert. The Greek is literal but more technical in describing the consequences of God's action, that the vines will not be pruned or weeded.

The rendering of the phrase ועלה שמיר ושית with καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα is difficult to unravel. The Greek has added the words εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς and omitted a conjunction. The Hebrew has two subjects, but the Greek has only one and a comparison describing the location for the action. Judging from the rendering of the phrase in 7:23, 24, and 25, it is likely that שמיר is rendered with χέρσος and שית with ἄκανθα.[272] The typical meaning of χέρσος is "dry land," but Ziegler points out that in the papyri it is often used to refer to fallow or undeveloped land.[273] In the Egyptian context, an abundance of thorns growing in a field would render it a χέρσος, though in Judea various thorn plants would also need to be weeded in fields.[274] The addition of the simile may be because in the Greek (5:2, 4), the vine was already producing thorns when it was being properly tended. So here it is necessary to clarify that the vineyard will be left to become fallow and thorns will sprout up. This makes clear that the choice vine that produces thorns will not be left to flourish on its own, bringing an abundant crop of thorns; this difference is also clarified by the use of the plural ἄκανθας in 5:2, 4, whereas everywhere else in LXX Isaiah it is used in the singular.[275] In 7:23, vineyards are again destroyed, but there they become undeveloped land and thorns, without a simile in Hebrew or in the Greek. The rendering of שית with ἄκανθα occurs three other times (Isa 7:23, 24, 25).[276]

The Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.[277] The phrase ועלה שמיר ושית becomes ויהון מטלטלין ושביקין ("And they will be deported

---

271. Such as cutting and burning the wild scrub or repairing irrigation systems; loans were sometimes needed to finance this work (see Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 21–23).

272. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 127, 6.

273. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181.

274. On the Egyptian context, see Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 20–21.

275. As Ken Penner pointed out in personal correspondence, S* and B have ἄκανθαι, which is corrected in stages to ἄκανθα.

276. See HRCS, 43b; Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 364.

277. "And I will make them [to be] *banished; they* will not be *helped* and *they* will not be *supported*, *and they will be cast out* and *forsaken*; and I will command the *prophets* that *they prophesy* no *prophecy* concerning them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:6).

and abandoned"). It is debatable whether this interpretation is of the text as a metaphor or as a prophecy.

The second place the phrase occurs is Isa 7:23–25, where vines (and by metonymy, vineyards) are mentioned three times as becoming a place for שמיר ושית. Strictly speaking this passage is not metaphorical, but it does stand as a sort of hyperbole or metonymy for how even the best farm land will become a fallow waste since no one will be around to take care of it. All three times the words are rendered with χέρσος and ἄκανθα, respectively. While the first two verses are rendered almost completely literally, in 7:25 the Greek renders the clauses differently, making the mountains an exception to the lands that will become dry and overrun with thorns. This is also how the Targum understands the verse. This change seems to lie more on the level of their understanding of the prophecy than their understanding of the metaphor.[278]

In all three verses, the Targum renders שמיר ושית with הובאי ובור, thorn and fallow land.[279] This is the same as the LXX but with the opposite words associated with thorn and fallow land or simply with the word order changed.

In other places LXX Isaiah understands שמיר ושית to refer (in part) to dry grass, usually in the context of fire.

Isa 9:17 (Eng. 9:18)

כי־בערה כאש רשעה שמיר ושית תאכל ותצת בסבכי היער ויתאבכו גאות
עשן:

For wickedness burned like a fire, consuming briers and thorns; it kindled the thickets of the forest, and they swirled upward in a column of smoke.

καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἡ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται ὑπὸ πυρός· καὶ καυθήσεται ἐν τοῖς δάσεσι τοῦ δρυμοῦ, καὶ συγκαταφάγεται τὰ κύκλῳ τῶν βουνῶν πάντα.

---

278. To be precise, their reading is based on taking יראת as the subject of the clause.

279. Chilton renders בור with "briers," but Sokoloff does not have this definition in either lexicon. See Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian*, s.v. "בור"; Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), s.v. "בור." Jastrow seems to arrive at his definition "weed, briers" based on the Targum's use as an equivalent here in Isa 7:23 and from "something waste, wild-growing" (Jastrow, s.v. "בור II").

And the transgression will burn like a fire, and like dry grass will
it be consumed by fire, and it will burn in the thickets of the forest
and devour everything around the hills.

We will discuss this passage further in the section on trees (3.6.4). For
present purposes it is worth noting that the Greek adds a comparative par-
ticle: ὡς. While it could be argued that the simile is implied in the Hebrew
and the comparative particle is omitted because it is poetry, it seems more
likely to read the clause as the fuel wickedness will burn. Wickedness is
burning first the thorns and thistles, then spreading over the hills and for-
ests, burning up everything. This is made clear in the next verse which says
that the land and people of the land are allowed to burn because of God's
wrath. That the thorns and trees are compared to people is also made clear
in 9:18 by the phrase ויהי העם כמאכלת אש.

The Greek understands all of this differently. The translator reads
שמיר ושית as a comparison of the way in which lawlessness burns.
In the next verse, where the connection between the fire's fuel and
people is made, the translator has rendered it with a passive participle
(κατακεκαυμένος), and so instead of being like fuel (ויהי העם כמאכלת
אש), the people are like they have been burned (καὶ ἔσται ὁ λαὸς ὡς ὑπὸ
πυρὸς κατακεκαυμένος).

It is within the context of this transformation of the passage that
the rendering of שמיר ושית can be understood. The translator may have
thought a literal rendering would express thorns in a fallow waste (based
on how these words were translated in the other passages where they
occur) and then chose a rendering that more clearly expresses the essential
quality described, flammability, and so renders with ἄγρωστις ξηρά. Baltzer
et al. similarly believe that these terms were used because they better fit
the verb אכל or βιβρώσκω.[280] As we will see below, thorns are said to be
burned in 32:13 in both Hebrew and Greek, though there the emphasis is
not on the flammability of thorns; they are burned as a method of disposal.
In two other places (10:17 and 32:13) שמיר is rendered as grass (χόρτος)
and so may be the basis here for ἄγρωστις; Muraoka is probably right in
that he does not venture independent word equivalents for the two words
in the phrase.[281]

---

280. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2530.
281. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 4, 128.

The Greek metaphor of a fire spreading from dry grass to thickets and burning everything around the hills sounds just like how fires would spread. F. Nigel Hepper discusses how forests develop and the effects of burning. He says it is unlikely that oak forests would be easy to set on fire, while coniferous trees burn much more easily. Hepper describes how grass and grain fires would spread very quickly and could easily light dry thickets that accompany hill-woodlands, which could then generate the heat to spread to the hardwood trees.[282] This situation was dangerous enough that there was a law in Exod 22:5 making one who lets a fire (started with thorns, as in our passage) get out of control liable for the damage it causes.

The Targum interprets the passage.[283] Thorns and thistles are interpreted as representing the sinners and the guilty (חטאיא וחייביא).

Isa 10:17

והיה אור־ישראל לאש וקדושו ללהבה ובערה ואכלה שיתו ושמירו ביום אחד:

And the light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day.

καὶ ἔσται τὸ φῶς τοῦ Ισραηλ εἰς πῦρ καὶ ἁγιάσει αὐτὸν ἐν πυρὶ καιομένῳ καὶ φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην. τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ...

And the light of Israel will become a fire and it will sanctify him with a burning fire and devour the wood like grass. In that day…

Throughout the context of this passage the translator has made several modifications. This verse is a continuation or expansion of 10:16, in that it continues to describe how God will intervene to humble the king of Assyria and to destroy his stout warriors with a wasting sickness. In 10:17, the language has become much more poetic in that there is no direct reference; God is called the "light of Israel" and "the Holy One"; the king is only a pronoun; and his army or perhaps his pretentions are called thorns and thistles.[284]

---

282. Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 39–40.

283. "For *the retribution of their sins* burns like the fire, it *destroys transgressors* and *sinners*; *and* it will *rule* over *the remnant* of the *people* and *destroy the multitude of the armies*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 9:17).

284. Cf. Obad 18, where Jacob becomes a fire and the house of Joseph a flame to consume the house of Esau, which will become stubble.

The Greek renders the first part of the verse literally, except it reads וקדושו as a verb and so renders ἁγιάσει αὐτόν.[285] It also removes the conjunction on ובערה and makes it a participle describing the previous verb. Finally, the last two words of the verse are understood as the beginning of the next sentence.

The phrase in which we are interested, ואכלה שיתו ושמירו, has again been rendered with an additional simile, like in 5:6, 9:17, and 33:12, though with a completely different meaning. The pronouns have disappeared entirely. It seems likely that שמיר was rendered with χόρτος (which is clearly the case in 32:13), and שית was rendered with ὕλη. It could be argued that in 27:4 שית is rendered with καλάμη, but as we will discuss below, this is not likely.[286] We have seen that elsewhere שית is rendered with ἄκανθα (Isa 5:6; 7:23, 24, and 25), and that in 7:19 a word the translator knew meant thorn is rendered as a thorn tree, so it seems possible that the translator thought he could render שית with ὕλη. The term ὕλη can refer either to fire wood (as NETS appears to understand it, though they just have "the wood," which could have either meaning) or to a collection of trees, a sort of copse (or *Gehölz*, as LXX.D understands it).[287] In the other two places where ὕλη occurs, Job 19:29 has it as a rendering of שדי (as Muraoka suggests), and in Job 38:40 it is a rendering of סכה.[288] In any case, it is not used for wood or firewood elsewhere in the LXX but is used as an equivalent to copse in Job 38:40. In addition to dropping the prepositions, the LXX has reversed the order of שיתו ושמירו, returning them in the translation to their more regular order. The context of woods burning in Isa 10:18–19 probably contributed to this verse's rendering.

So, the rendering φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην should probably be understood as an image of a forest or copse of trees, which should be difficult to ignite,[289] being burned quickly as if they were a clump of inflammable dry grass. This image is similar to that of 9:17 where the same Hebrew phrase has been rendered as dry grass and is said to burn up the

---

285. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2532.

286. Muraoka deletes this equivalent (*Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 61).

287. See Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, s.v. "ὕλη."

288. Hatch and Redpath list יון as an equivalent in Ps 69:3 MT (LXX 68:3) (HRCS, 1405), but both Rahlfs and the Göttingen LXX prefer the reading ἰλύν. ὕλη also occurs in Wis 11:17, 15:13, Sir 28:10, 2 Macc 2:24, and 4 Macc 1:29.

289. Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 39–40.

thickets of the forest, though in that verse synonyms are used for grass and for thicket. This connection is made stronger in the Greek of 9:17, where it adds the idea of hills, which are mentioned in 10:18. The point of this connection would highlight the idea that the destruction the Assyrians bring to Israel and Judea will also come upon them, since in both cases it comes as the result of God's wrath.

The Targum interprets the elements of this passage, so that God is the light of Israel, his word is the flame, and the thorns and thistles are the rulers and tyrants: שלטונוהי וטורנוהי.[290]

Isa 27:4
חמה אין לי מי־יתנני שמיר שית במלחמה אפשעה בה אציתנה יחד:
I have no wrath. *Who endows me with* thorns and briers? I will march to battle against it. I will burn it up.

οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς· τίς με θήσει φυλάσσειν καλάμην ἐν ἀγρῷ; διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν. τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε. κατακέκαυμαι.
There is not *one* that has not taken hold of it; who will set me to watch stubble in a field? Because of this enmity I have set it aside. Therefore because of this the Lord God has done all things, whatever he has ordained. I have been burned up.

In the Hebrew the peace of Israel and God's zeal to defend it is expressed through another vineyard metaphor. God wishes (as expressed by the cohortative verbs) there were thorns and thistles so he could zealously make war on them and destroy them from his vineyard. The Greek has rather drastically changed the entire chapter.[291] We discuss other features of this verse below in the section on vineyards (3.5.1).

The phrase מי־יתנני שמיר שית is translated so as still to contain a metaphor, but the image is entirely different. In the Greek a rhetorical question asks about guarding a field of stubble. Indeed, fields are guarded to protect the harvest from beasts and robbers (like the image in 1:8), but once the field has been stripped, it was not customary to guard the

---

290. "And it will come to pass that *the master of* the light of Israel and his Holy One, *his Memra will be strong as the* fire, and *his words as the* flame; and he will *kill* and *destroy* his *rulers* and his *tyrants* in one day" (Tg. Neb. Isa 10:17).

291. For an analysis of 27:2–5, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87–91.

stubble. The city presumably is the field that has been plundered and emptied and so needs no more protection, since there is nothing left to protect. Often in Isaiah we see the idea of harvesting and gleaning as an image of plundering (such as 24:13); this is made stronger in the LXX in some places (such as 3:12). Unlike much of the verse, this phrase is easy to understand in light of the Hebrew. As Ziegler points out, the translator gives a double reading of שמיר, first as an infinitive of שמר and so rendered with the common equivalent φυλάσσω. The second reading καλάμη is based on reading עמיר.[292] However, this could also have been a reading based on the understanding of שמיר as referring to grass (as in 10:17, 32:13, and 9:17). A second possibility is that it comes from שית, which the translator knew was a kind of thorn plant but in this context thought καλάμη worked better for the image. The addition of ἐν ἀγρῷ is interesting,[293] since as we have seen, usually the idea of a fallow field (χέρσος) is found in connection to שמיר. Ziegler believes ἐν ἀγρῷ is based on reading שית as שדי as in 33:12 where the same rendering is given for שיד.[294] Baltzer et al. agree that שמיר was read as an infinitive and suggests שית is rendered freely as an image of captured Jerusalem.[295] A third possibility is that the translation is based on the idea that שמיר can mean a fallow field (χέρσος), but for the sake of the rhetoric of the image, it is stronger to talk about guarding a harvested field (since the enemies have plundered it) rather than a fallow field of thorns (which would be absurd, since it is devoid of crops by definition). This passage could have a triple rendering of שמיר, but there are of course less exotic explanations for the Greek, as we have seen.

The Targum expands this verse also but makes it about how God would destroy Israel's enemies if they would follow his law, like fire destroys thorns and fallow land: ואשיצינון כמא דמשיציא אשתא הובאי ובור כחדא.[296]

---

292. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

293. Ottley suggests it is an addition or a duplicate misreading of במלחמה (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:234).

294. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

295. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

296. "*Behold, there are many prodigies before me! If the house of Israel set their face to do the law, would I not send my anger and my* wrath *among the Gentiles who are stirred up* against *them and destroy them as the fire destroys* brier*s and thorn together?*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:4).

3.4.2. Other Terms for Thorn: סירה, קמוש, חוח, נעצוץ, קוץ

Isaiah 34:13 mentions three types of thorny plant.

> Isa 34:13
> ועלתה ארמנתיה סירים קמוש וחוח במבצריה והיתה נוה תנים חציר לבנות
> יענה:
> Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its
> fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches.
>
> καὶ ἀναφύσει εἰς τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν ἀκάνθινα ξύλα καὶ εἰς τὰ ὀχυρώματα
> αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔσται ἔπαυλις σειρήνων καὶ αὐλὴ στρουθῶν.
> Thorn trees shall grow up in their cities and in her fortresses. It
> shall be a habitation of sirens and a courtyard of ostriches.

In this passage, God's judgment on Edom is described, which entails how
all the people will be gone, and it will no longer be a kingdom. While it
is not metaphoric speech, it is noteworthy for the translation equivalents
and the translator's conception of thorns. In this verse and the follow-
ing, the abandoned fortresses (rendered as "cities") and strongholds will
be overgrown with weeds and become homes to wild animals and the
demons that live in remote wilderness places. The Hebrew uses three
terms for thorns or thistles in parallelism: סירים קמוש וחוח. The Greek,
however, only has one kind of thorn described with two words: ἀκάνθινα
ξύλα.[297] This is probably a case of condensation of synonymous terms.[298]
In α′, σ′ and θ′, on the other hand, we find renderings for each of the words:
ἄκανθαι καὶ κνίδες καὶ ἄκανες.[299] In Eccl 7:6, סירה is rendered with ἄκανθα
(but with σκόλοψ in Hos 2:8). The word חוח is rendered with ἀκάνθα
three times (Prov 26:9, Song 2:2, Hos 9:6), and twice with ἄκαν in 2 Kgs
14:9. The word קמוש, however, is a more complicated issue. According
to Hatch and Redpath, it might be the basis for the word ὄλεθρος (ruin,
destruction) in Hos 9:6; Muraoka is more confident that it is.[300] The only

---

297. Preisigke (*Wörterbuch*, s.v. "ἀκάνθινος") cites a similar phrase, found among
the wood mentioned in a tax document from the second century CE, where we find:
ξυ^λ [α]καν^θ. P.Lond. 3.1177, line 191.
298. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 207–8.
299. See the apparatus in Ziegler, *Isaias*.
300. HRCS, 986a; they mark it with a question mark; Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/
Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 334.

other place where it occurs is Prov 24:31, though neither index offers an equivalent there. The issue of translation equivalents for the first half of this verse is tricky, but it is interesting to note that there are two words for weeds or thistles in the Hebrew (קמשנים and חרלים), and while they may not be directly the basis of these Greek words, we do find χερσωθήσεται καὶ χορτομανήσει.

Returning to the question at hand, the phrase ἀκάνθινα ξύλα is general and vague for a thorny tree.[301] But as we will see in the section on trees, it is a good description for the acacia tree or perhaps the *Ziziphus spina-christi*. Theophrastus speaks of several specific thorny trees that could just as easily have been mentioned by LXX Isaiah.[302] That the translator decided to make the thorn a tree and not some smaller plant gives the impression of permanence or at least the long passage of time, that trees will be growing there, and not simply some small seasonal weed.

The Targum renders the first and last plant with its Aramaic cognate, and קמוש with קרסולין. No explanation is given.[303]

In Isa 7:19 another kind of thorn is also turned into a tree, though for completely different reasons.

Isa 7:19
ובאו ונחו כלם בנחלי הבתות ובנקיקי הסלעים ובכל הנעצוצים ובכל הנהללים:

And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.

καὶ ἐλεύσονται πάντες καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν ταῖς φάραγξι τῆς χώρας καὶ ἐν ταῖς τρώγλαις τῶν πετρῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς πᾶσαν ῥαγάδα καὶ ἐν παντὶ ξύλῳ.

And they will all come and rest in the ravines of the country and in the clefts of the rocks and into the caves and into every crevice and on every tree.

---

301. Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 8–9.

302. Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 4.2.1: ἄκανθα Αἰγύπτια; 4.2.8: ἄκανθα ἡ λεύκη; 4.7.1: ἄκανθα ἡ διψάς.

303. "Thorns shall grow over its palaces, *and* nettles and thistle*s* in *the stronghold of* its fortresses. It shall be a haunt of jackals, a *place* for ostriches" (Tg. Neb. Isa 34:13).

The last two clauses have been switched in the translation, perhaps to make a more logical sequence coming after other geological features. The word ῥαγάς is only used here in the LXX. In Classical Greek it refers to a fissure, as found in dry soil, or can be used of a crack in the skin.[304] It is an odd equivalent for נהלל. Perhaps we can make sense of it with the suggestion that the translator thought that the affixed ל could make what he read as נחל diminutive.[305] The plus καὶ εἰς τὰ σπήλαια is probably meant to explain why the places are listed.[306] The flies and bees will go everywhere, even the places where people would hide from them. The translator seems to know that נעצוץ refers to a kind of thorn bush, since he translates it with στοιβή in 55:13.[307] But here, rather than give an exact equivalent, he interprets the plant as a metonymy for every tree. Also, the letters עץ may have suggested rendering with ξύλον. That the translator once renders נעצוץ as "thorn" and once as "tree" suggests he identified the plant as something like *Ziziphus spina-christi*, a large thornbush that can approach the size of a small tree, so he rendered it in such a way as to express the features of the plant most salient to the passage in which it occurs.[308] In this passage, the translator thought the places mentioned were hiding places, so trees are chosen since they make better hiding places than small thorn plants.

In 7:19, the Greek makes some adjustments to the metaphor, though probably for style more than for what the specific images represent. In both languages the metaphor of this verse shows the ubiquity of the presence of the flies and bees, not specific places or institutions where they will be (though the places mentioned are where people fleeing them would hide).

---

304. LSJ, s.v. "ῥαγάς."

305. The idea of ל endings being diminutive can be seen in older grammars, such as *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, trans. T. J. Conant, 17th ed. (New York: Appleton, 1855), §30.3, though this misconception may not have arisen yet in antiquity.

306. Ziegler thinks the meaning of הנעצוצים was unclear to the translator and was the basis of εἰς τὰ σπήλαια as a parallel to ἐν ταῖς τρώγλαις τῶν πετρῶν (*Untersuchungen*, 10).

307. Baltzer et al. says the translator understood the words עץ and נחל, and so rendered them with ξύλον and ῥαγάς, respectively ("Esaias," 2:2522).

308. It must be noted that Theophrastus calls this plant παλίουρος (*Hist. plant.* 4.3.1–3); στοιβή is *Poterium/Sarcopoterium spinosum* (*Hist. plant.* 1.10.4, 6.1.3, 6.5.1–2). LSJ (s.v. "στοιβή") and Muraoka (*GELS*, s.v. "στοιβή") identify στοιβή as thorny burnet; this is a low growing plant that could hardly be called a tree.

The Targum interprets this passage. In 7:18 the flies are used as a simile to describe the numbers of an army (לעם קטרי משרית גובריא דסגיאין כדיבביא), and the bee is used in a simile to show the armies strength (ולעזיזי משריתא דאינון תקיפין כדבראיתא). In 7:19 the Targum interprets some of the places as relating to cities. So ונחו כלם בנחלי הבתות is interpreted as וישרון ובכל כלהון ברחובי קריא ("those who dwell in the squares of the city").[309] הנהללים is interpreted as ובכל בתי תושבחתא ("in every house of glory").[310] As mentioned above, the Targum interprets some of the places mentioned but, in the case of נעצוץ, uses the cognate (or loan word) נעצוץ.[311]

An otherwise common (Gen 3:18; Exod 22:5; Judg 8:7, 16; 2 Sam 23:6; Ps 118:12, etc.) word for thorn, קוץ, occurs only twice in Isaiah.

Isa 32:13
> על אדמת עמי קוץ שמיר תעלה כי על־כל־בתי משוש קריה עליזה:
> For the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briers; yes, for all the joyous houses in the jubilant city.

> ἡ γῆ τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἄκανθα καὶ χόρτος ἀναβήσεται, καὶ ἐκ πάσης οἰκίας εὐφροσύνη ἀρθήσεται· πόλις πλουσία...
> As for the land of my people, thorns and grass will come up, and joy will be removed from every house. A wealthy city…

This verse and the passage it is from are not metaphorical but an elaboration expressing how the city and land will be abandoned. We discuss it because the translation gives insights into the Greek and Targum translators' conceptual understandings of thorn terms. In the Hebrew this verse continues to elaborate on why the women in 32:11–12 should be full of sorrow: the farm land is said to be overcome with thorns. Either the joyous houses and exultant town are also overcome with thorns, or it is a new idea, and the women should be full of sorrow because of them, but the exact reason why is not stated until the next verse. The Greek has made many adjustments to this passage, such as the women in 32:9 being said to

---

309. Perhaps thinking בנחלי הבתות referred to the valleys of houses, or the spaces between them.

310. Perhaps thinking הנהללים had to do with praise הלל.

311. "And they will come and all of them *dwell* in the *squares* of the *city*, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all the *deserts of thornbushes,* and in all the *famed buildings*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 7:19).

be rich (perhaps to connect them with the ornamented daughters of Zion in 3:16–26). In 32:13 the Greek has removed the first preposition, making some sort of nominative exclamation, or to introduce the subject of the thought.[312] The word קוֹץ is rendered with its most common equivalent in the LXX, ἄκανθα, but שמיר is rendered with χόρτος.[313] We have discussed this equivalent above. The Greek changes the style of the verse but does not seem to interpret it as anything other than a literal description, though expressed in a rhetorical way, of the destruction that will come upon certain people.

The Targum is also very literal, even being unhelpful with the phrase כִּי עַל־כָּל־בָּתֵּי מָשׂוֹשׂ, rendering it אֲרֵי עַל כָּל בָּתֵּי דֵיץ. The Targum understands קוֹץ שמיר the same way it often (7:23, 24, 25; 27:4) renders שמיר וָשַׁיִת with הוֹבָאֵי וּבוּר.[314]

Isa 33:12

וְהָיוּ עַמִּים מִשְׂרְפוֹת שִׂיד קוֹצִים כְּסוּחִים בָּאֵשׁ יִצַּתּוּ:
And the peoples will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.

καὶ ἔσονται ἔθνη κατακεκαυμένα ὡς ἄκανθα ἐν ἀγρῷ ἐρριμμένη καὶ κατακεκαυμένη.
And the nations will be burned like a thorn cast out and burned in a field.

In the Hebrew we have two phrases that are overly terse. In the first phrase a construct is used where a preposition would be much clearer. It appears to be a sort of genitive of effect, so that the people will be burned until even their bones have become lime.[315] The second clause is probably a simile, though there is no comparative marker due to the terse style of poetry. The

---

312. For the first option, see William W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar,* rev. and enl. (Boston: Ginn & Co, 1900), §1045. For the second, see Smyth §941.

313. Ἄκανθα is an equivalent for קוֹץ twelve times (HRCS, 43).

314. "For the land of my people which will *bring* up *briers and* thorn; yea, for all the joyous houses in *the strong* city" (Tg. Neb. Isa 32:13).

315. On the genitive of effect, see *IBHS* §9.5.2c, though this passage is not listed anywhere in the discussion of the construct state. Lime is made primarily from calcium (it is either calcium oxide or calcium hydroxide), and so the bones are the only part of the body that could produce lime. Cf. Amos 2:1 for bones being burned to lime.

phrase could, though, be understood as a metaphor, that the thorns קוצים are equated to the people עמים, who are burned in fire.

The Greek has taken the two separate ideas and combined them into one. The translator recognized that there was a simile and made it explicit by adding a comparative marker. The idea that this takes place in a field is probably, as Ziegler suggests, from the word שיד, which was read as שדי or שדה.[316] The Hebrew קוצים is the basis of ἄκανθα (like in 32:13), so the Greek has changed the word order. The only other place כסח occurs in the *qal* is Ps 80:17, where it is rendered with ἀνασκάπτω (to dig up). The Greek rendering in Isa 32:12 adds to the picture of thorns that they are discarded from a field and burned. This simile is of particular note because, as we have seen, LXX Isaiah does not usually associate thorns with kindling for a fire in places where we would expect, but renders with "grass."

The Targum is literal, even omitting any comparative marker. The one change of note is that, instead of lime (שיד), the Targum has fire: נור.[317]

3.4.3. Summary

This analysis has shown certain patterns. In the Hebrew, thorns are mentioned to illustrate land that has been neglected because there is no one to tend it properly (5:6; 7:19, 23–25; 32:13; 34:13). In addition, it is used to describe a threat to a vineyard that represents the house of Israel (5:6; in the Greek of 27:4 it represents Jerusalem, as we will argue below [3.5.1]). Thorns are also mentioned for their flammability (9:17, 10:17, 33:12).

The Greek transforms many of these images, sometimes because of the immediate context but also because of some of the translator's underlying assumptions. One such underlying assumption is that שמיר can refer both to a place or habitat (χέρσος, four times) and to what grows in it (χόρτος, twice).[318] This could be a sort of metonymic exchange.[319] A similar conceptualization can be seen in Prov 24:31, where two kinds of weeds are rendered with the infinitives χερσωθήσεται καὶ χορτομανήσει. Similarly,

---

316. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 98. Cf. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:272. The usual equivalent of שיד is κονία (Deut 27:2, 4 and Amos 2:1).

317. "And *the* peoples will be burned *with fire*; thorns cut down are burned in the fire" (Tg. Neb. Isa 33:12).

318. Also, 27:4 has both the concept of grass and a field in the Greek.

319. Perhaps it is an attempt at a midrashic wordplay but in Greek, since the differences between the words are just the vowels and τ has become σ.

in Isa 33:12 the LXX adds a reference to a field (though perhaps for lexical reasons), ἐν ἀγρῷ, as a place where thorns will be. The translator chooses between these concepts for his translation of שמיר, usually, based on the context. When the word is mentioned to describe abandoned places, the meaning "fallow field" is used twice (5:6, 7:23–25), once the thorn is made into a thorn tree to emphasize more permanence (34:13), and once it is made into grass to denote a weed (32:13). When the context has to do with burning or flammability, the meaning "grass" is used (9:17, 10:17, however in 33:12, thorns are removed from a field and burned). In 27:4 we find both a field and stubble, though here the phrase is interpreted much more than usual. It should be noted that while the translator's use of χέρσος in connection to thorns reflects well the Egyptian situation, it would seem, according to the papyri, that χόρτος is not a weed but a cultivated crop.[320] The association of a fallow waste and grass fits more the situation in Judea, though it is also possible for a χέρσος to be used for a pasture in Egypt.[321]

The Greek also associates thorns with trees. There are several species of thorn trees in Judea and Egypt, most notably the acacia, though this is not the tree explicitly named in LXX Isaiah where the Hebrew has only a thorn. In 7:19 a word the translator knew meant "thorn" is rendered with ξύλον. In 34:13 three words for thorns are condensed into the phrase "thorn tree." In 10:17 the idea of a copse is added, somehow under the influence of the phrase שיתו ושמירו.

The immediate context can be seen as affecting the transformation of thorn metaphors in several places. As was just mentioned, in 34:13 the translator turns a thorn into a thorn tree to exaggerate the image. In 5:6, the translator gives more details by using technical vocabulary to describe the vineyard being left to become a fallow plot of land. In 9:17 (Eng. 9:18), the translator uses different terms than he usually does to emphasize the flammability of dry grass in the context of a spreading conflagration.

Also of note is that for three out of the eight occurrences of שמיר, the translator has added a comparative marker (5:6, 10:17, and 9:17, though in the last case it may be implied in the Hebrew).[322] It is interesting that the

---

320. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 212–13.

321. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 16–17.

322. Also a comparative marker is added 33:12, though here it also may be implied in the Hebrew.

Targum adds a comparative marker for 27:4, comparing fire destroying thorns and thistles to how God would destroy enemy nations.

This nuanced contextual and conceptual rendering of thorns in the LXX is markedly different from how the Targum approaches the issue. It is striking how both LXX and the Targum understand 7:23–25 as referring to thorns and fallow land (as also in 27:4 and 32:13), but elsewhere the Targum is either literal or has interpreted the metaphor.[323] In Isa 5:6 שמיר ושית is interpreted as deported and abandoned. In 9:17 it is interpreted as referring to sinners and the guilty, and in 10:17 it is thought to refer to rulers and governors. In the other places, though, there is still a reference to thorns and briars (7:19, 33:12, 34:13).

The Targum interprets the phrase שמיר ושית in various ways. In 5:6 the thorns and thistles coming up are interpreted as the people being cast out and forsaken. In 9:17, the phrase is interpreted as representing transgressors and sinners that are destroyed by the retribution of their sins which burns like fire. In 10:17 the same word pair is interpreted as rulers and tyrants being killed and destroyed. In 27:4 שמיר ושית are rendered literally, but in an added simile of how God's wrath would burn among the gentiles if Israel would obey the law. For the Targum, the context of שמיר ושית is always destruction, but the words themselves can represent different groups of people. This is probably related to 33:12, where thorns being burned are used for a simile of peoples being burned (the Targum is literal, except it renders "lime" with "fire").

The Targum renders other words meaning "thorn" literally (7:19, 32:13, 33:12, 34:13). In 7:19 the thorn becomes "deserts of thornbushes." As mentioned above, in 7:23–25 the Targum and LXX both render one of the words for thorns with a word for fallow land.

That LXX Isaiah adds similes (5:6, 9:17, 10:17) in the exact verses that the Targum feels the need to interpret the meaning of the image is surely significant. These three passages are more poetic and have more imagery than the other places thorns appear. The LXX approach to the imagery in these passages is to reinforce and make more vivid the vehicle of the image, while the Targum interprets the image giving what it feels is the

---

323. As mentioned in a footnote above, Chilton translates בור as "brier," but this definition is not found in either of Sokoloff's lexicons. Jastrow says: "*something waste*, *wild-growing*, whence *weed*, *brier*" (s.v. "בור II"), but he cites only Isa 7:23 and the places where it is an equivalent for the phrase שמיר ושית. It seems safer to suppose that like LXX, the Targum understands this phrase to imply fallow or waste land.

tenor. Perhaps an explanation for this approach is that the LXX translator knows he needs to make a literary text and is concerned about keeping as close as possible to the Hebrew, while the Targum translator assumes his text will be read with the Hebrew and so should offer insights not obvious in the Hebrew text.

3.5. Vineyards and Vines

The language of viticulture is a rich source for imagery in the Bible, particularly in Isaiah. We will focus only on vineyards and vines, leaving images of wine and winemaking to other studies.

3.5.1. Vineyard (כרם)

The word כרם occurs fifteen times in Isaiah and is always translated with ἀμπελών, except in 5:10, which we will discuss below. In many of the passages where it occurs (36:16–7, 37:30, 61:5, 65:21), however, vineyards are spoken of literally, often as a sign of the condition of the nation that is being punished or restored.

> Isa 1:8
> ונותרה בת־ציון כסכה בכרם כמלונה במקשה כעיר נצורה:
> And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.
>
> ἐγκαταλειφθήσεται ἡ θυγάτηρ Σιων ὡς σκηνὴ ἐν ἀμπελῶνι καὶ ὡς ὀπωροφυλάκιον ἐν σικυηράτῳ, ὡς πόλις πολιορκουμένη·
> Daughter Zion will be forsaken like a booth in a vineyard and like a garden-watcher's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.

This verse, along with its similes, is translated literally. The Greek addition of καί agrees with 1QIsaᵃ against MT and MurIsa. The only thing to note, which will be seen again later, is that here a vineyard is used in a simile that describes daughter Zion. To be precise, daughter Zion will be like a tent in a vineyard, which is qualified by saying like a besieged city. As Baltzer et al. point out, the image is probably that the huts are temporary, as in Isa 24:20, where they are as unstable as a drunk and T. Jos. 19:12 where it will be

gone by the end of summer.[324] The verb ἐγκαταλείπω seems to suggest (as the Targum makes clear) that the tent and hut are left alone (disregarded) in a field that has been harvested.[325] The Greek word ὀπωροφυλάκιον is elsewhere used in the LXX in passages relating to Jerusalem (Ps 78:1, Mic 3:12) and Samaria (Mic 1:6) being destroyed, but in these places it renders עי (heap of stones, rubble).[326] The besieged city appears again with the image of a vineyard in LXX Isa 27:3, as will be discussed below.

The Targum is more interesting, specifying that the simile is of a vineyard and a cucumber field after the harvest: ואשתארת כנשתא דציון כמטלתא בכרמא בתר דקטפוהי כערסל מבתותא במקטיא בתר דאבעיוהי.[327] This is probably implied in the Hebrew by the verb יתר. That it is after the harvest shows not only remoteness, but also abandonment and perhaps even desolation in that the plants have been harvested and picked over.

Isa 3:14

יהוה במשפט יבוא עם־זקני עמו ושריו ואתם בערתם הכרם גזלת העני בבתיכם:

The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have *grazed* the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.

αὐτὸς κύριος εἰς κρίσιν ἥξει μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῦ Ὑμεῖς δὲ τί ἐνεπυρίσατε τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου καὶ ἡ ἁρπαγὴ τοῦ πτωχοῦ ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις ὑμῶν;

The Lord himself will enter into judgment with the elders of the people and with their rulers. But you, why have you burned my vineyard, and why is the spoil of the poor in your houses?

---

324. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2507. They also mention Ep Jer 69, where a scarecrow guards nothing.

325. *GELS*, s.v. "ἐγκαταλείπω."

326. For the relationship of these passages, see Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 227. Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 105; Michaël van der Meer, "The Question of Literary Dependence of the Greek Isaiah upon the Greek Psalter Revisited," in Kraus and Karrer, *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse*, 162–200.

327. "And the *congregation* of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard *after they have picked it clean*, like a tent *for staying overnight* in a cucumber field *after they have stripped it*, like a city *which* is besieged" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:8).

In this passage "the vineyard" is probably not a collective singular, since it has a definite article. It could be a metaphor for God's people, as in Isa 5:1–7, but here there is nothing to make clear that it is meant as a metaphor.[328] It could be understood as a general statement, to graze the vineyard meaning they help themselves to what they want from someone else's property, or that they leave no gleanings in their own vineyard. The verb בער could mean more than "graze"; it could mean to destroy the vineyard by allowing cattle to trample it, as in Exod 22:4 and Isa 5:5.[329]

In the Septuagint, the translator has brought emphasis to the fact that the LORD himself will enter judgment, by adding αὐτός; also, it removes the possessive pronoun after "people." Troxel believes that the Lord is not simply entering into litigation, but is coming in a theophanic way to judge the rulers.[330] The interrogative τί anticipates the question in the Hebrew of the next verse and makes the accusation more vivid.[331] The Greek appears to understand the vineyard as a metaphor. This is clear in that it is now God's vineyard, τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου, instead of הכרם, anticipating the song of the vineyard in chapter 5.[332] Further, the leaders do not graze the vineyard (if this limited definition is intended) but burn it.[333] This is not simply stealing for one's own gain but a cruel and malicious act to deprive someone of what is theirs. The idea of burning comes from understanding בערתם as its homonym. LXX Isaiah does know בער can mean something to do with pillage, since in 5:5 it is rendered with διαρπαγή (plunder, the act of plunder), and in 6:13 it is rendered with προνομή (plunder), though as nouns in both places. Ziegler points out that ἐμπυρίζω is found often in the papyri as a method of clearing land and killing weeds, though no sensible person would clear a vineyard of

---

328. Ottley seems to imply this is a metaphor in the Hebrew, since he calls it another hint at the coming parable in 5:1–7 (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:119). Williamson takes the vineyard as a metaphor, in light of chapter 5 (*Isaiah 1–5*, 271).

329. NRSV translates it "devoured." For the scholarly discussion on the root and meanings of בער, see Williamson, *Isaiah 1–5*, 226.

330. Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 378–79.

331. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2513.

332. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2513.

333. Baer suggests these leaders are foreign leaders oppressing God's people. See David A. Baer, " 'It's All about Us!': Nationalistic Exegesis in the Greek Isaiah (Chapters 1–12)," in *"As Those Who Are Taught": The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL*, ed. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull, SymS 27 (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 33–36.

weeds in this way.[334] The Greek metaphor, then, is that the leaders rather than tending God's vineyard are actively destroying it. As Troxel says, the Greek of this verse first gives a metaphor, that the leaders burn God's vineyard, then gives a concrete description of the situation: they plunder the people.[335] Burning the vineyard, then, could mean that they are clearing the plot to put it to their own purposes (and profit), or that they are plundering the people, thoroughly leaving nothing, as if a fire had burned it up. LXX Isaiah is probably interpreting in light of Ps 80:17 (LXX 79:17), where again God's vineyard is facing threats, including being burned (שרף, rendered with ἐμπυρίζω) and cut down.[336]

The Targum interprets the vineyard metaphor, writing ואתון אנסתון ית עמי.[337] The word אנסתון could be understood to mean they attack the people, or that they force them to sell their possessions due to poverty, or even that they seize the people by force.[338] In any case, they are actively harming the people they should be ruling.

Isaiah 5:1–7 is an allegory in the form of a song with an explanation of its meaning in the final verse. Each verse will be examined and the allegory as a whole will be commented on in 5:7.

Isa 5:1

אשירה נא לידידי שירת דודי לכרמו כרם היה לידידי בקרן בן־שמן:

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard: My beloved had a vineyard on a *mountain spur, a son of fertility.*

Ἄισω δὴ τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ ᾆσμα τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ τῷ ἀμπελῶνί μου. ἀμπελὼν ἐγενήθη τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ ἐν κέρατι ἐν τόπῳ πίονι.

I will now sing for the beloved a song of the loved one concerning my vineyard: The beloved *acquired* a vineyard in a *horn*, on a fertile place.

---

334. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 180–81. He mentions vineyards, but his sources, Gustaf Dalman (*Arbeit und Sitte in Palaestina*, 7 vols. [Hildesheim: Olms, 1928–1942], 2:141–42) and Michael Schnebel (*Die Landwirtschaft*, 20–22), do not.

335. Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 381. It is difficult, though, to take ἡ ἁρπαγή as the act of plundering (Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 379). One would expect to plunder the poor in their houses, not in the leaders' houses.

336. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 180.

337. "The LORD will *bring* into judgment the elders and *commanders* of his people: 'You have *robbed my people*, the spoil of the poor is in your houses'" (Tg. Neb. Isa 3:14).

338. Sokoloff, *Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, "אנס," 145–46.

The translator distinguishes ידיד from דוד by using two different parts of speech: ἠγαπημένος and ἀγαπητός. Elsewhere, ἠγαπημένος is used for ידיד only in Jer 11:15, while ἀγαπητός is used for it five times in the Psalms.[339] Nowhere else is ἀγαπητός used for דוד.[340] The definite article suggests the translator has a person in mind, instead of simply an adjective describing what kind of song it is.[341] The ἠγαπημένος could be understood as a collective singular, representing the group to whom the song is addressed, but in light of 5:7, it probably is intended to address the leadership in particular.[342]

The translator, as he does with much of the song, tries to put this verse into first-person. This is complicated in this verse because לידידי is translated literally without the pronominal suffix as τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ. In the Greek, the person sings the song to the beloved (τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ), and it is the singer's vineyard in 1a (ἀμπελῶνί μου), and in the following verses. But in 1b it is the beloved who acquires a vineyard (ἀμπελὼν ἐγενήθη τῷ ἠγαπημένῳ). This could be a careless mistake in trying to turn the voice into the first-person (α′ and θ′ avoid this problem in that they have ἀμπελῶνι αὐτοῦ in 1a, and σ′ has ἀμπελῶνα αὐτοῦ, allowing the song to begin in 5:2). This question in the LXX can be resolved in several ways. The singer could be referring to himself as ἠγαπημένος, though this is least likely. It could be that 1b has a different voice than 1a, though the translator has otherwise tried to remove the Hebrew's alternation between first- and third-person. One could suppose that the song begins in 5:2, and the prophet speaking in verse 1a calls it "my vineyard" not because he owns it but because he is associated with it; it is his vineyard in that it represents his people. Then he refers to God as beloved in 1b, switching to God's voice in the song in 5:2. The best solution is that the beloved in 1a and 1b are the same as the beloved new planting of 5:7; the beloved acquired a vineyard in that it became associated with it: in the metaphor the vine was planted in the vineyard in a good plot of soil. In any case, there remains the question of the identity of the ἀγαπητός. It could be God, though again it would be

---

339. In Isa 44:2 ἠγαπημένος appears in relation to Israel, parallel to Jacob.

340. LXX Isaiah mentions an ἀγαπητός again in 26:17 (as a plus) in what appears to be a messianic interpretation. Seeligmann believes it is a Christian gloss ("Septuagint of Isaiah," 26).

341. Baltzer et al. point out that it is an objective genitive, and that it means an individual, perhaps a particular leader ("Esaias," 2:2515).

342. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2515.

odd to refer to himself this way. It similarly probably does not refer to the prophet (unless God sings the prophet's song) nor to the vineyard as a whole (since the song is about the vineyard). In any case, it is very unclear who it is meant to be.[343]

The translation using γίνομαι is interesting. The translator could have rendered היה ל- with ὡς, as in 1:31; 8:14; 29:5, 17; and 40:23.[344] But if this technique was followed, the comparison would have been backwards: "a vineyard is like my beloved"; also, this would spoil the climax of the allegory when its meaning is finally revealed in 5:7.

The translation of the dead metaphor קרן with κέρας is apt, since in Greek it can also be a geographical term, though usually having to do with rivers or bays, but it can be part of a mountain.[345] Also, it can be simply a horn-shaped object.[346] The use of בֶן in construct with another noun denotes a nature, character, or quality.[347] E. W. Bullinger calls the phrase בן־שמן antimereia, since it is the exchange of one noun for another.[348] The LXX, then, explains the figure by saying "fat place," partially preserving the imagery, while explaining the most difficult part (namely, why this hill is being called a son). By adding τόπῳ ("place"), not only does the LXX clarify what is meant by "horn," but it also allows it to be characterized by the metaphor πίων.[349] A similar description is found in the Greek of 30:23 describing a pasture as τόπον πίονα, but there is no clear Hebrew basis there. As Baltzer et al. point out, the land of Judea is meant.[350]

The Targum tries to make clear both what this allegory represents and who is speaking it.[351] The song is sung by the prophet: אמר נבייא אשבחיה. Also, rather than waiting for the punch line in 5:7, the Targum

---

343. If it should be interpreted in light of 26:17, it may refer to some messianic figure.

344. Ziegler discusses this frequent translation equivalent (*Untersuchungen*, 92).

345. LSJ, s.v. "κέρας." Ottley calls it "a very usual metaphor for a hill or peak" (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:123).

346. *GELS*, s.v. "κέρας." If ram's horns are thought of, then it makes sense that this refers to a terraced hill side.

347. Joüon §129j; *IBHS* §9.5.3b.

348. E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968), 503–4.

349. For the translator's use of τόπος with unusual Hebrew equivalents, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 115–16.

350. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2516.

351. "*The prophet said*, I will sing now for Israel—*which is like a vineyard, the*

states from the beginning that Israel is comparable to a vineyard: לישראל
דמתיל בכרמא. It also makes clear who "my beloved" is: Abraham, perhaps
under the influence of Isa 41:8, where the phrase זרעיה דאברהם רחמי again
occurs. The description of the vineyard is also clarified; קרן means a high
hill (בטור רם), and בן־שמן refers to a fertile land (בארע שמינא).

> Isa 5:2
> ויעזקהו ויסקלהו ויטעהו שרק ויבן מגדל בתוכו וגם־יקב חצב בו ויקו
> לעשות ענבים ויעש באשים:
> He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines;
> he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat
> in it; he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.
>
> καὶ φραγμὸν περιέθηκα καὶ ἐχαράκωσα καὶ ἐφύτευσα ἄμπελον σωρηχ
> καὶ ᾠκοδόμησα πύργον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ προλήνιον ὤρυξα ἐν αὐτῷ·
> καὶ ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι σταφυλήν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀκάνθας.
> And I put a hedge around it and fenced it in and planted a Sorech
> vine, and I built a tower in the midst of it and dug out a wine vat
> in it, And I waited for it to produce a cluster of grapes, but it pro-
> duced thorns.

As with the previous verse, the LXX has rendered the verbs in the first-
person, probably under the influence of the first-person in 5:3.

The *hapax legomenon* עזק ("dug around") is used to refer to tilling the
soil in preparation for planting.[352] BDB relates the word to the same Arabic
root, which means to cleave or furrow the earth with an implement.[353] It is
rendered in Greek by καὶ φραγμὸν περιέθηκα ("and placed a hedge around
[it]"). The word φραγμός is elsewhere used in relation to Jerusalem's wall
(1 Kgs 10:22, 11:27, Ezra 9:9, Ps 80:12), so it may have been chosen with
an interpretation of the allegory in mind. It is also associated with vine-
yards (Num 22:24, LXX Ps 79:13 [MT 80:13]); Ziegler notes that it is a
less common word for a vineyard wall, but that it is found in the papyri.[354]

---

seed of Abraham, my friend—my friend's song for his vineyard: *My people,* my beloved
Israel, I gave them a heritage on a *high* hill *in* fertile *land*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:1).

352. Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel*, HSM
60 (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 97.

353. BDB, s.v. "עָזַק."

354. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. Cf. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 423–24.

It is possible, though, that the translator simply thought this is what was meant. Rashi thinks this Hebrew comes from the Aramaic עיזקא, and so refers to surrounding with a fence like a sort of ring.[355] This sort of reasoning would mean the translator translated עזק with περιτίθημι and added φραγμός to clarify what was meant (and to create more coherence with 5:5).[356] It cannot be ruled out, though, that Rashi was influenced by the LXX at least indirectly. Ibn Ezra also claims the Hebrew refers to a fence or hedge, but based on the Arabic.[357] Both *HALOT* and *DCH* have the possibility of עזק here meaning to build or surround with a wall, both under the influence of LXX, but *HALOT* notes the Arabic *ʿzq*.[358] In any case, the LXX mentioning φραγμός here and fencing creates more coherence in the passage, since a hedge (משוכה, φραγμός) and a wall (גדר, τοῖχος) are removed from the vineyard in 5:5.

The phrase ויסקלהו, "and cleared it [of stones]," becomes ἐχαράκωσα, "I fenced" (the only other usage of this word is for צור in Jer 32:2 [LXX 39:2]). The *piel* of סקל also occurs in Isa 62:10, where סקלו מאבן is rendered καὶ τοὺς λίθους τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ διαρρίψατε. This suggests the translator knew what the term was referring to, but for some reason did not want to use that image here. Again, it could be to harmonize with 5:5, where a hedge and a wall are described as being removed from the vineyard. Ziegler notes the possibility that the translator read the root סלל, since χάραξ renders סללה in Isa 37:33, Ezek 4:2, and 26:8. He says the Greek often means "surround with stakes" or "fence around" in the papyri.[359] Kloppenborg believes, based on papyrological evidence, that this refers to setting stakes for the vines to grow upon, but Ziegler has already dismissed this understanding since they are placed before the vine is planted (which would not make sense) and since it is parallel to the building of a wall.[360]

---

355. Avraham J. Rosenberg, ed. and trans., *Isaiah: A New English Translation*, 2 vols., Judaica Books of the Prophets (New York: Judaica Press, 1982), 1:41. Cf. Sokoloff, *Jewish Palestinian Aramaic,* s.v. "עֲזֵקָה," where the word is defined as a "ring."

356. For Pseudo-Aristeas's use of wall metaphors for God giving Israel the law, see Let. Aris. 139 and 142. In LXX Prov 28:4 those who love the law fortify themselves with a wall. See Johann Cook, ""The Septuagint of Proverbs," in Cook and Van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom*, 126–27.

357. See in Rosenberg, *Isaiah*, 1:41.

358. *HALOT*, s.v. "עזק"; *DCH* 6, s.v. "עזק II."

359. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179.

360. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 147–48; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. LXX.D likewise translates: "umzäunte."

The word שרק is rendered twice. First it is translated "vine" and then transliterated: ἄμπελον σωρηχ.[361] Troxel lists this translation as a feature of the translator—that he transliterates technical terms and proper nouns.[362] Σωρηχ is an unusual transliteration in that ק usually is transliterated with κ, but χ and γ are also possible, if rare.[363] A few other passages use the same transliteration of שרק: in Judg 16:4 בנחל שרק becomes ἐν Αλσωρηχ in B, while A has χειμάρρου Σωρηχ "valley of Sorach." The other passages containing this word offer a rendering: in Jer 2:21 שרק becomes ἄμπελον καρποφόρον (again a double rendering; α′ has just Σωρηχ); in Gen 49:11 ולשרקה becomes καὶ τῇ ἕλικι (tendril); and in Isa 16:8 שרוקיה is translated ἀμπέλους αὐτῆς. The LXX translators know this term has something to do with grapes and vineyards but are inconsistent in being more specific than that. Tov lists Isa 5:2 under "Transliterations of Unknown Words, Transmitted as Collective Readings."[364] It is possible that the definition "vine" was derived from the context in the occurrences in Isa 5:2, Isa 16:8, and Jer 2:21 (especially since it appears parallel to גפן in the last two instances). It is unclear why the transliteration was left in 5:2 and not in any of the other places (apart from where it is a place name). According to Tov, revisers generally reverted guesses of unknown words back to transliterations, suggesting σωρηχ was added later.[365] In some manuscripts of 5:2, σωρηχ is spelled with a κ.[366] It is curious that this transliteration would be improved later in transmission. Seeligmann suggests the transliteration was older, and the explanation ἄμπελον was added later, but Ziegler in his critical edition believes both were original.[367] Aquila and Theodotion have the same

---

361. On its being a double translation, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 154. For translations followed by transliterations of name phrases, see Van der Kooij, "Septuagint of Isaiah," 73–74.

362. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 170.

363. Joseph Ziegler, "Transcriptionen in der Ier.-LXX," in *Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta*, MSU 6 (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 60. See, e.g., קטורה rendered Χεττουρα in Gen 25:1.

364. Emanuel Tov, "Transliterations of Hebrew Words in the Greek Versions of the Old Testament: A Further Characteristic of the *Kaige*-Th. Revision?," *Textus* 8 (1973): 92. Aquila and Theodotion have this reading as well.

365. Tov, "Transliterations of Hebrew Words," 83–84.

366. As reported in Ziegler, σωρηκ Q–106–710 O–88–736 309–cl' Or.X 597. 598 Eus.Cyr. ○↓.

367. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 171, 180, 207.

reading, but Symmachus has ἐκλέκτην.[368] This definition can be found for σωρηχ in Hesychius's lexicon, possibly added by some monk familiar with our text.[369] The Targum agrees with Symmachus, translating the phrase as גפן בחירא, or "choice vine."[370] Baltzer et al. suggest that the Greek of 5:2 does not transliterate שרק but סרח as an allusion to Ezek 17:6, where גפן סרחת (ἄμπελον ἀσθενοῦσαν) is an image for a king.[371] The connection to Ezek 17:6 is interesting in that αʹ has σωρηχ, and for Jer 2:21 αʹ has σωρηχ.[372] To the translators' credit, the precise meaning of the word שרק is still disputed. BDB still lists "choice" as one of its definitions.[373] One definition is that it became a name for a variety of vine due to its red color like the sunrise, which is what the Arabic root means.[374] The best explanation is that it is a specific variety of grape vine which, either because of its fruitfulness (as in LXX Jer 2:21), color, or even its seedless grapes,[375] was recognized as being the best. *HALOT* defines it as "a valued, perhaps bright-red species of grape" and *DCH* says it is a choice vine, perhaps red.[376] That it is a special variety of vine is evident from the contexts where it occurs. As Walsh says, "The infrequency of שרק in the Bible, the fact that Yahweh is the vintner in two out of three contexts, and that Judah as the favored son benefits in the third—probably determined its translation as 'choice.'"[377] The Greek phrase ἄμπελον σωρηχ could denote a particular vine variety; the Ptolemies imported many varieties of vines which are denoted in the papyri by similar constructions, such as ἀμπέλου καπνείου, ἀμπέλος φοινίσση, ἀμπέλος κάπνιος, and ἀμπέλος βούμαστος.[378]

---

368. Ziegler's apparatus is unclear if it is part of a double rendering or not.

369. Kurt Latte and Peter Allan Hansen, eds., *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon* (New York: de Gruyter, 2005–), 3:403. NETS says the Hebrew means "choice" (note to 5:2).

370. Rashi explains they are the best of all branches for planting (Rosenberg, *Isaiah*, 1:41).

371. Baltzer, "Esaias," 2:2516. Also, they ask whether the vine producing thorns may be an allusion to Judg 9:14, where the parable of the trees choosing the thorn for their king occurs.

372. In Ezek 17:6, θʹ has ἀχρ<ε>ῖα and σʹ has ἡπλωμένη (Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2516).

373. BDB, s.v. "שֹׂרֵק I."

374. BDB, s.v. "שרק II."

375. So says Redak; see in Rosenberg, *Isaiah*, 1:41.

376. *HALOT*, s.v. "שֹׂרֵק II"; *DCH*, s.v. "שֹׂרֵק I."

377. Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 106.

378. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 252–53.

The term יקב is typically understood to refer to a wine vat where the must (grape juice) runs after being trod in the גת, though BDB also says that יקב can refer to the winepress where the grapes are trodden.[379] Ziegler notes that the LXX seems to understand the same double meaning, in that it sometimes translates יקב with ληνός (winepress in general) and sometimes with ὑπολήνιον (wine vat).[380] Walsh believes יקב is a general term for the entire winepress complex, while גת refers more specifically to the press itself.[381] In Isa 5:2, however, we have the only LXX instance of the word προλήνιον (vat in front of the winepress),[382] which otherwise does not occur in Greek until this passage is interpreted in Christian commentaries on this passage.[383] In Isa 16:10 יקב is translated with ὑπολήνιον, a vat placed under a winepress.[384] This is probably an alternate winepress and vat configuration from a προλήνιον. Ziegler suggests that Isa 5:2 refers to a *Vorkelter* or a prepress that would produce the finest quality wine.[385]

The sour grapes (באשים) are rendered as thorns (ἀκάνθας). A similar word, באשה, which occurs only in Job 31:40, is rendered by the LXX as βάτος (bramble/thorns). Aramaic באש means to be bad, in the *hiphil* to decay, smell badly; also, the early stage of ripening.[386] The verbal root באש used in Isa 50:2 as תבאש is translated with ξηραίνω (perhaps thinking of the root יבש), which is logical in the context. While the root באש is rare in the Hebrew Bible, the translator could have known its meaning from Aramaic and decided ἄκανθα was more appropriate in the context.

The decision to translate באשים in Isa 5:2 (and also 5:4) with ἀκάνθας (thorns) is probably, in part, conceptual. In Isa 7:23–25 and 32:11–13 vineyards are contrasted with thorns and brambles in the Hebrew and the Greek.[387] The translator may have been influenced by the contrasts in these passages and so felt the opposite of vines and grapes are brambles and their thorns. Interestingly, Ibn Ezra also comments that it was

---

379. BDB, s.v. "יֶקֶב."

380. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179.

381. Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 162–65.

382. Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

383. *GELS*, s.v. "προλήνιον." Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 149.

384. *GELS*, s.v. "ὑπολήνιον."

385. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. For comments on first-press wine, see Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 194–95.

386. Jastrow, s.v. "בְּאַשׁ."

387. Cf. Jer 12:10–13, where someone sows wheat but reaps thorns.

thorns that the vine produced.[388] In Isa 33:12 and 34:13 the land is over-
come by thorns as part of God's judgment for wicked acts, whereas in
LXX Isa 5, thorns metaphorically represent the acts of the wicked. Klop-
penborg believes that since the vineyard is producing thorns there is
implied some negligent human party that should have been tending the
vineyard.[389] But as we saw in our discussion of 5:6 above (3.4.1), this is
unlikely, since it is the vine that produces thorns, not the land the vine-
yard is on.[390]

The overall picture of the vineyard, then, is slightly different in the
LXX. This is in part due to exegetical concerns, as we have seen, as well
as updating to contemporary Egyptian practices. Kloppenborg argues
that the Hebrew describes a new vineyard being cultivated on a hill, while
the LXX describes a plot of land being converted into a vineyard, as was
often done.[391] He draws support, in part, from the use of νεόφυτος in 5:7,
which was a technical term for newly planted vines.[392] However, he does
not explain what it means that the beloved "acquired a vineyard," which
might suggest it already was a vineyard. There was a term for fields being
converted to vineyards: χέρσος ἀμπελῖτις.[393]

The Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.[394] So, the first
three verbs are rendered as וקדישתנון ויקרתינון וקיימתינון ("I sanctified them,
and I glorified them, and I established them"). Since these verbs are inter-
preted, the reference to שרק is turned into a simile: כמיצב גפן בחירא ("like
a planting of a choice vine"). Likewise, the vineyard's features are inter-
preted, so that the watchtower is God's sanctuary (ובנית מקדשי ביניהון),
and the wine vat is the altar for them to atone for their sins (ואף מדבחי
יהבית לכפרא על חטאיהון). The grapes are good works (עובדין טבין), and ויעש

---

388. See in Rosenberg, *Isaiah*, 1:41. He did not get this from the Targum, which
says "made evil their deeds," using the root באש.

389. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 151.

390. 1QIsaᵃ has ויעשה, but even if the ה were a pronominal suffix, it would have
no antecedent, since both שרק and כרם are masculine, though in Isa 27:2 כרם is femi-
nine according to BDB (s.v. "כֶּרֶם").

391. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 146–47.

392. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 152.

393. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 246–47.

394. "And I *sanctified them* and *I glorified them* and *I established them as the plant
of a* choice vine; and *I built my sanctuary* in *their* midst, and *I* even *gave my altar to
atone for their sins; I thought that they would do good deeds, but they made their deeds
evil*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:2).

באשים is cleverly rendered with ואינון אבאישו עובדיהון ("but they caused their works to be bad").

> Isa 5:3
>
> ועתה יושב ירושלם ואיש יהודה שפטו־נא ביני ובין כרמי:
>
> And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard.
>
> καὶ νῦν, ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα καὶ οἱ ἐνοικοῦντες ἐν Ιερουσαλημ, κρίνατε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀμπελῶνός μου.
>
> And now, man of Ioudas and those who dwell in Ierousalem, judge between me and my vineyard.

The order of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and man of Judah are switched in the LXX.[395] For agreement with the LXX order, see 2 Kgs 23:2; 2 Chr 20:15, 18, 20; 2 Chr 21:13; 32:22; 33:9; 34:30; 35:18; Ezra 4:6; Jer 4:4; 11:2; 11:9, 12; 17:20, 25; 18:11; 25:2; 32:32 (LXX 39:32); 35:13, 17 (LXX 42:13, 17); Dan 9:7; and Zeph 1:4. Isaiah 22:21 also has the order seen in the Hebrew of 5:3, and the LXX preserves the order in translation (house of Judah becomes inhabitants, like for Jerusalem). Jeremiah 36:31 (LXX 43:31) has this order as well, but men of Judah becomes land of Judah. When the two terms "House of Israel and Men of Judah" appear in 5:7 the LXX does not change the order. The plural ἐνοικοῦντες agrees with 1QIsaᵃ, which has יושבי ירושלם.

Only here, in 5:7, and Jer 35:13 (LXX 42:13) is the phrase איש יהודה rendered with ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα. Typically, ἀνήρ is used, either in the singular or plural. In Jer 35:13 (LXX 42:13) it is also rendered literally as a singular and is parallel to "inhabitants" in the plural translated with a plural: ואמרת לאיש יהודה וליושבי ירושלם as καὶ εἰπὸν ἀνθρώπῳ Ιουδα καὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ιερουσαλημ. LXX Isaiah's translation is more eloquent, with the definite article (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα), and using the same preposition in the prefix (ἐνοικοῦντες ἐν Ιερουσαλημ). Based on these passages, and Obad 9, it seems ἄνθρωπος can be a collective singular, though it is odd that in Isa and Jer it stands parallel to a plural, especially in Isa, where the parallel collective singular is translated in the plural (assuming the *Vorlage* was like MT,

---

395. Ottley points out that B has the same order as the Hebrew (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:124).

and not 1QIsaᵃ).[396] Since יושב is understood as a collective singular (unless of course the *Vorlage* agreed with 1QIsaᵃ), while איש is not, it seems possible that ἄνθρωπος is intended to be a singular (and not collective). Baltzer et al. take it as a singular with the leadership in mind and compare it to 8:8, 32:2, and 19:20, where a singular ἄνθρωπος is added in the Greek.[397] When the translator intends a plural, he at times adds ἄνθρωποι, as in 25:3–5.[398]

The Targum changes voice in this verse, with נבייא אימר להון ("Prophet, say to them…").[399] Also it interprets the situation by adding הא בית ישראל מרדו מן אוריתא ולא צבן למתב ("Behold, the house of Israel have rebelled against the law, and they are not willing to repent"). Also of note is that ואיש יהודה is rendered ואנש יהודה.

> Isa 5:4
>
> מה־לעשות עוד לכרמי ולא עשיתי בו מדוע קויתי לעשות ענבים ויעש באשים:
>
> What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?
>
> τί ποιήσω ἔτι τῷ ἀμπελῶνί μου καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησα αὐτῷ; διότι ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι σταφυλήν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀκάνθας.
>
> What more might I do for my vineyard, and I have not done for it? Because I waited for it to produce a cluster of grapes, but it produced thorns.

The LXX translates well, using a subjunctive to capture the modal ל + infinitive construct.[400] The translation of מדוע with διότι is unusual (usually מדוע is translated by ὅτι τί or διὰ τί), but this rendering is not unheard of (see Judg 5:28 and Jer 30:6 [LXX 37:6]). In the Hebrew, according to

---

396. On the uses of ἄνθρωπος as a collective singular, see *GELS*, s.v. "ἄνθρωπος"; Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:124.

397. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2516. 19:20 is of particular note. However, in 40:6 ἄνθρωπος is added and is undoubtedly meant to be collective singular, or at least general term for all people.

398. For an analysis of this passage see Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 162–70.

399. "*Prophet, say to them, Behold the house of Israel have rebelled against the law, and they are not willing to repent. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge now my case against my people*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:3).

400. *IBHS* §36.2.3f.

Joüon and Muraoka, the interrogative is the first "of two coordinate members, when, logically, the first member is subordinate and the interrogative relates only to the second member."[401] The translator may have had difficulty with this construction, so he converted the rhetorical question into a causal statement with a contrast. 1QIsaᵃ has בכרמי instead of לכרמי and וישה instead of ויעש, but LXX seems to agree with MT in both places.

Theophrastus discusses all the things that can go wrong if a vine is not tended properly or is exposed to bad weather: the leaves can fall off, the plant can die, the shoots may grow too much, the branches may become too woody, the fruit might not grow at all, or it may fall off before it ripens (*Hist. plant.* 4.14.6–7). Also, in his discussion of spontaneous changes that can happen in plants, he mentions that a vine that produces white grapes may suddenly produce black ones, or vice versa (*Hist. plant.* 2.3.1). The translator has departed from reality and exaggerates what happens in the vineyard. The vines are not failing; they are actively producing a bad crop.

The Targum turns the question about what more could have been done for the vineyard into a question of what promised good was not given to Israel: מא טבא אמרית למעבד עוד לעמי ולא עבדית להון.[402]

Isa 5:5
ועתה אודיעה־נא אתכם את אשר־אני עשה לכרמי הסר משוכתו והיה
לבער פרץ גדרו והיה למרמס:
And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

νῦν δὲ ἀναγγελῶ ὑμῖν τί ποιήσω τῷ ἀμπελῶνί μου· ἀφελῶ τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσται εἰς διαρπαγήν, καὶ καθελῶ τὸν τοῖχον αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσται εἰς καταπάτημα.
But now I will declare to you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be plundered, and I will tear down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.

---

401. Joüon §161k.
402. "What more good did I promise to do for my people that I have not done for them? When I thought they would do good deeds, why did they make their deeds evil?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:4).

The hedge and wall mentioned here in the Hebrew were not included in the Hebrew description of the labor God performed in planting the vineyard in 5:2. The Greek, however, already had there the φραγμός and the act of fortifying (χαρακόω). The first-person ἀφελῶ is probably not due to a reading like 1QIsaᵃ, which has אסיר, but is simply due to the translator turning the whole passage into the first-person.

The rendering of לבער with εἰς διαρπαγήν occurs only here.[403] Troxel suggests this equivalent is based on 3:14, with the idea of economic plunder underlying the decision.[404] The notion of plundering may have been chosen as a possible result of having the fence and wall removed, and it tightens the connection between the vineyard imagery and the reality it represents.[405] The choice of τοῖχος seems appropriate for a wall around a vineyard, though in the papyri, vineyard walls are usually called τεῖχος, πλαστή, or πλάτη.[406]

Like the LXX, the Targum relates the hedge and the wall to 5:2, in that here God says he will remove his Shekinah and they will become plunder (למיבז), and he will break down the house of their sanctuaries (אתרע בית מקדשיהון); in 5:2, though, it was the temple and altar.[407]

Isa 5:6

ואשיתהו בתה לא יזמר ולא יעדר ועלה שמיר ושית ועל העבים אצוה
מהמטיר עליו מטר:

I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns; I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.

καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου καὶ οὐ μὴ τμηθῇ οὐδὲ μὴ σκαφῇ, καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα· καὶ ταῖς νεφέλαις ἐντελοῦμαι τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι εἰς αὐτὸν ὑετόν.

---

403. 1QIsaᵃ has simply בער.

404. Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 389.

405. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2516.

406. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 243–44. See 25:12 for an odd use of τοῖχος. Cf. Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 104–5.

407. "And now I will tell you what I *am about to do* to my *people*. I will *take up my Shekhinah from them*, and *they* shall be for *plundering*; I will break down *the place of their sanctuaries*, and *they will be* for trampling" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:5).

And I will abandon my vineyard, and it shall not be pruned or dug, and a thorn shall come up into it as into a wasteland; And I will also command the clouds, that they send no rain to it.

The section on thorns (3.4.1) discussed how the LXX translator has shaped this verse with language typical of the papyri to describe vividly a vineyard being left to turn into a fallow waste.[408] Note again the singular ἄκανθα, in contrast to the plural form in 5:2 and 5:4.

As mentioned in the section on thorns, the Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.[409]

Isa 5:7

כי כרם יהוה צבאות בית ישראל ואיש יהודה נטע שעשועיו ויקו למשפט
והנה משפח לצדקה והנה צעקה:

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting; he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!

ὁ γὰρ ἀμπελὼν κυρίου σαβαωθ οἶκος τοῦ Ισραηλ ἐστί καὶ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα νεόφυτον ἠγαπημένον· ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι κρίσιν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀνομίαν καὶ οὐ δικαιοσύνην ἀλλὰ κραυγήν.

For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the man of Ioudas is a beloved young plant; I waited for him to produce justice, but he produced lawlessness—nor did he produce righteousness but a cry!

Again, in this verse the LXX has tried to put the verbs into the first-person. This means either the voice changes in 5:7a, or the Lord refers to himself in the third-person. Like in 5:3, we again have the issue of ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα; if we understand it as a collective singular, then the beloved new plant (νεόφυτον ἠγαπημένον) also must be a collective singular. The Hebrew נטע שעשועיו refers to the שרק of verse 5:2. The LXX translates with νεόφυτον ἠγαπημένον, an adequate but unique translation; usually (five times in the

---

408. See also Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181–82.

409. "And I will make them [*to be*] *banished; they* will not be *helped* and *they* will not be *supported*, and *they will be cast out* and *forsaken*; and I will command the *prophets* that *they prophesy* no *prophecy* concerning them" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:6).

Psalms) שעשועים is rendered with μελέτη.[410] In α′ we find φυτὸν ἀπολαύσεως αὐτοῦ and in σ′ φυτὸν τέρψεως, both of which are closer translations. Here the LXX translator is undoubtedly creating coherence with 5:1 (though there the adjective is substantive); if the translator wanted to distinguish the vine from the beloved (ἠγαπημένος) of 5:1, he could have used a different word here. That the translator uses νεόφυτος (used elsewhere for נטע only in Job 14:9) instead of simply φυτός makes sense, since the vine in question was planted in the vineyard in 5:2.[411] The word νεόφυτος was the technical term for newly planted vineyards, though LXX Isaiah wants it to refer to the ἄμπελος σωρηχ.[412] In 5:7b the LXX adds verbs, the same as were used in 5:2: ποιῆσαι … ἐποίησεν, creating yet more coherence with that verse. In the following phrase he does not add verbs, but does add a negation and renders the conjunction with a contrastive ἀλλά to make the contrast more obvious.[413] Here there is still ambiguity whether it is the house of Israel or the man of Judah who is doing lawlessness, though the man of Judah is the immediate antecedent of the verb; this is noteworthy in light of the two having their order switched in 5:3. In 5:3, the man of Judah follows immediately after the thorns produced in 5:2.

The Targum of verse seven replaces vineyard with "people," and elaborates on what God expected and what he found.[414]

Isaiah 5:1–7 is widely recognized as an allegory, as opposed to a parable. A parable is an extended simile, a comparison by resemblance, while an allegory is an extended metaphor, a comparison by representation.[415] The interpretation of this allegory is provided already in the Hebrew in 5:7, making it unnecessary for the LXX translator to explain what the imagery refers to. He can translate literally, allowing 5:7 to interpret the imagery. In both the Hebrew and the Greek, God planted the vineyard, the vineyard is Israel, the beloved planting is the men or man of Judah, grapes are justice

---

410. Other exceptions are Prov 8:30–31, where εὐφραίνω and ἐνευφραίνομαι are used, and Jer 31:20, which uses ἐντρυφάω. In LXX Ps 118:166 (MT 119:166) עשה is rendered with ἀγαπάω, and in LXX 93:19 (MT 94:19) it renders the form ישעשעי.

411. Cf. LXX Ps 143:12 (MT 144:12), where νεόφυτος is used for נטיע.

412. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft*, 245.

413. For the translator's use of negative particles, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94–99.

414. "For the *people* of the Lᴏʀᴅ of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; *I thought that they would perform* judgment, but behold, *oppressors; that they would act innocently,* but behold, *they multiply sins*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 5:7).

415. See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 748–49.

and righteousness, and bad grapes or thorns are lawlessness and cries of distress. Some elements are not explained, such as the wall, the hedge (or the clearing of stones), rain, and so on. But these details function within the allegory and do not need real counterparts, or their counterparts are implied by their function in relation to the parts that are explained. In any case, they show God doing all the proper work necessary to cultivate a perfect vineyard.[416] Perhaps these details were understood to represent specific things, which would be elaborated when the passage was commented on by the Greek translator or his community. The Targum goes into detail, explaining how each element of the allegory relates to Israel's history, with particular interest in the temple.

The LXX for this passage as a whole does not interpret to the extent that the Targum does. It does, as Ziegler points out and as we have seen, update the vineyard terminology to contemporary practices. Also, to some extent it recasts the image as a Hellenistic Egyptian vineyard as distinct from an Israelite vineyard.[417] The biggest difference between vineyards in these regions would be that in Israel, vineyards would be placed on terraces on hillsides, like we see in 5:1 in both languages.[418] Kloppenborg argues that the Greek has the conversion of a plot of land, while the Hebrew has the creation of a new plot.[419] But this seems difficult, since in 5:1 a vineyard is acquired and not simply a plot of land for a vineyard.

As mentioned above, the change in voice in the Septuagint to the first-person has left a difficulty in 5:1: If it is "my vineyard," why does it say "the beloved acquired a vineyard?" Who is speaking when, and about whom? In 5:7 we learn that the vineyard belongs to the Lord of Hosts, so the first-person references to "my vineyard" throughout the passage are presumably made by God. But does the prophet refer to God in 7a, or does God refer to himself in the third person? Likewise, in 1b, is the beloved who acquires a vineyard God, who refers to himself in the third person, or is it someone else? The tempting solution to the last problem is to call the pronoun μου of 5:1 a mistake resulting from the attempt to put the whole passage into the first-person; then we could claim the song only begins in 5:2, where the voice turns to the first-person, as in α′, σ′, and θ′. But assuming the

---

416. See Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 137.

417. Kloppenborg expands on Ziegler in the description of this updating (Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 134–59).

418. See Walsh, *Fruit of the Vine*, 93–99.

419. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 146.

translator was deliberate and careful in his translation, we must suppose either the prophet calls the vineyard his own in 5:1a in that he is somehow associated with it,[420] and in 5:1b the prophet talks about God, his beloved, acquiring the vineyard; or we must suppose God is referring to himself as beloved in 1b, or some other beloved is said to acquire the vineyard. If we do assume the translator was deliberate and consistent, then the beloved of 5:1a–b is probably meant to be the same beloved new planting in 5:7, that is, the man of Judah. If this is the case, the beloved acquired a vineyard in 5:1 by being the sorach vine planted in it (5:2). In the same way we might say a dog from an animal shelter got a good home, not by purchasing the deed to the house, but by being brought to it and settled there. This seems like an odd thing to say at this point in the passage, but the literal translation technique required this phrase to be rendered; indeed, it is rendered quite literally, except for the pronoun and for the last words. The question of the identity of the ἀγαπητός in 5:1, however, remains.

A second difficulty in the translation is the ambiguity created in 5:4 by rendering באשים with ἀκάνθας; in the Greek, it is possible that the vineyard as a whole is growing thorny plants, or that the vines of the vineyard are growing thorns instead of grapes. As mentioned above, Kloppenborg believes there is an implicit criticism of some other party who was negligent in tending the vineyard and did not remove the thorn plants that were growing.[421] But this explanation does not seem likely, as we have said. The owner of the vineyard asks in 5:4 what more could he have done for the vineyard. If he could have weeded out the thorns, the question—and the whole allegory—loses its meaning. Additionally, that the vineyard is no longer pruned or dug in 5:6 shows that it was pruned and the weeds dug out of it before the harvest. Also, in 5:6 when the vineyard is abandoned, thorn (a collective singular, unlike the plural of 5:2 and 5:4) springs up like in a fallow field, as opposed to as in a tended vineyard. But whether the vine or the vineyard produces thorns is beside the point.[422] The point is God did everything he could for his vineyard, but still it produced the opposite of what it was supposed to produce. When we look at what grapes

---

420. A citizen can refer to "my land" in a different way than a king might refer to "my land."

421. Kloppenborg, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 150–51.

422. Cf. Song 2:15, where, as Lemmelijn suggests, the LXX translator has translated כרם as vine to clarify that the vine sprouts (Lemmelijn, "Flora in Cantico Canticorum," 40–42).

and thorns represent in 5:7, it becomes clear that a criticism of the leadership is indeed implied, in that there is no justice but lawlessness. This shows that the ruling authorities are not acting righteously but are causing their people to cry in distress (like in 3:14, where the leadership sets fire to the vineyard, in the Greek).

The allegory is focused in the LXX by the addition of walls and fences in 5:2. In the Hebrew the allegory speaks more broadly of God's deeds on behalf of the vineyard, preparing the land, planting, and cultivating the vineyard. The Greek puts the focus more on the defense of the vineyard (though the other elements are not completely absent), by mentioning twice the wall and fence, and by changing "grazing" into "plundering," which exaggerates the destruction of the vineyard once the walls are gone. By focusing on defense, the allegory hints at the idea of a city but still speaks generally about a people or nation. Ziegler suggests Isa 5:1–7 plays a role in Isa 27:2–5 rendering the vineyard as a city, as we will discuss below.[423]

The LXX of the song of the vineyard, then, follows closely the Hebrew original, bringing the image to the experience of his readers by the use of appropriate terminology. At the same time, by slight adjustments here and there, the translator has focused the allegory to a particular interpretation. That the vineyard produces thorns instead of grapes, and not just bad grapes, makes the vineyard, and those it represents, even more culpable; they are not only disappointing (producing poor quality grapes) but are wicked (producing thorns). The Greek appears to lay extra focus on the leadership, by the way it deals with the "man of Judah."

There is a pesher fragment (4Q162/4QpIsa[b]) of this passage, but not much can be said from it beyond that verse 5 is interpreted as God abandoning his people.

The Targum, on the other hand, interprets each element of the allegory and makes what little imagery survives into similes. In 5:7, where in the Hebrew and Greek the interpretation of the allegory is given, the Targum in part interprets even this: ארי עמיה דיוי צבאות בית ישראל (for the people of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel).

In 5:10 vineyards are mentioned as producing very little wine to illustrate the desolation promised in 5:9. The phrase צמדי־כרם is rendered ζεύγη βοῶν. Ottley says the Greek phrase corresponds in meaning to the unit of

---

423. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 90.

measure צמד.[424] The only other place it occurs, 1 Sam 14:14, it is rendered very differently. There is no need to suppose כרם was thought to be some plural for a word for cattle (such as פרים).[425] The context of plowing a vineyard makes little sense.[426] The translator may have supposed a yoke of oxen was a better rendering and better cohered with the parallel clause.[427]

The Targum renders the Hebrew well, only adding an explanation for why the ten measures of vineyard land yields only one measure of wine: the sin of not giving tithes.

In 27:2–5 a vineyard again is used in a metaphor. In the Hebrew it is implied to represent God's people, but in the Greek it is explicitly interpreted as a besieged city.

Isa 27:2

ביום ההוא כרם חמד[428] ענו־לה:

On that day: "A pleasant vineyard, sing about it!

τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀμπελὼν καλός· ἐπιθύμημα ἐξάρχειν κατ' αὐτῆς.
On that day: a beautiful vineyard—a desire to begin singing *against* it.

The LXX testifies to a textual variant in MT, namely, the reading חמד as opposed to חמר.[429] The LXX read חמד and gave it a double rendering, καλός and ἐπιθύμημα.[430] Ziegler thinks it is questionable that ἀμπελὼν καλός is original, since the passage as a whole is frequently understood to be about a

---

424. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:125.

425. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:125; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2517.

426. A field where a vineyard was to be planted would need the soil loosened, perhaps by plowing, but describing a land being turned into an underperforming vineyard would require considerably more description than a literal rendering style would allow.

427. Ziegler thinks the translator considered it arable land generally and did not need to be restricted to vineyards (*Untersuchungen*, 108). For the units of measure, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 193.

428. Following BHS; the reading of the Aleppo Codex and Leningrad is חמר. 1QIsa^a has חומר; this reading is reflected also in the Vulgate and the Peshitta (see Van der Kooij, "Isaiah 24–27," 15).

429. See Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament: 2 Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations*, OBO 50.2 (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1986), 188–92.

430. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

city, and so the original reading was πόλις πολιορκουμένη (as occurs in 27:3), which the feminine pronoun αὐτῆς would then match.[431] But it is entirely possible that the translator simply maintained the vineyard metaphor in verse 2 (as well as rendering literally the gender of the pronoun) and, once the song began in verse 3, makes clear his interpretation of the metaphor. The feminine pronoun in the Hebrew here and the feminine forms in the next verse undoubtedly contributed to the idea that a city was meant and not a vineyard, which is elsewhere always masculine in Hebrew.

The Targum makes clear that the passage is talking about the congregation of Israel, and it turns the metaphor into a simile.[432] Like the LXX, it gives two renderings of חמד but to a different end: כברם נסב בארע טבא.

Isa 27:3

אני יהוה נצרה לרגעים אשקנה פן יפקד עליה לילה ויום אצרנה:

I, the Lord, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it.

ἐγὼ πόλις ἰσχυρά, πόλις πολιορκουμένη, μάτην ποτιῶ αὐτήν· ἁλώσεται γὰρ νυκτός, ἡμέρας δὲ πεσεῖται τὸ τεῖχος.
I am a strong city, a besieged city; in vain will I water it, for it will be taken by night, and by day the wall will fall.

In this verse, the Hebrew is more concerned about showing God's care for the vineyard than about describing the vineyard itself. That God waters the vineyard is the opposite of 5:6, where he commanded the clouds not to rain. Giving it drink could mean irrigation practices, like in Deut 11:10, where Egyptian fields are watered by foot (והשקית ברגלך).[433] Guarding the vineyard was important for the LXX's understanding of 5:1–7 (where a vineyard representing the house of Israel is destroyed).

For some reason, the Greek has omitted יהוה.[434] Seeligmann suggests it was abbreviated in the *Vorlage* as י and eliminated by haplography.[435] The

---

431. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 88.

432. "In that time, 'The congregation of Israel which is like a choice vineyard in a good land, sing of it!'" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:2).

433. For the use of ποτίζω for irrigation, see Lee, *LXX*, 118–22.

434. Unless עיר יהוה was thought (Isa 60:14, Pss 48:8, 101:8), and, not wanting to use the term in a negative context, the translator opted for πόλις ἰσχυρά, as Van der Kooij tentatively proposed in discussion.

435. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 169.

phrase πόλις πολιορκουμένη elsewhere occurs only in 1:8, where it translates
כעיר נצורה. Ottley suggests that πόλις πολιορκουμένη comes from נצרה, and
πόλις ἰσχυρά is a duplicate.[436] Ziegler holds the opposite view, that the song
in 26:1 contributed to the idea that the song in 27:2 was about a strong city,
though in 26:1 it is πόλις ὀχυρά.[437] Ziegler believes πόλις ὀχυρά was original
and πόλις πολιορκουμένη was secondary.[438] Van der Vorm-Croughs, fol-
lowing Seeligmann, believes this is a case of two coordinate renderings
that reflect distinct readings or interpretations of the Hebrew, as her sec-
tion title says.[439] She explains that both adjectives come from נצרה; first,
πολιορκουμένη comes from reading a *niphal* participle of צור (to enclose);
and second, ἰσχυρά comes from reading בצרה, as in 25:2, 36:1, and 37:26
(though in these places the Greek has ὀχυρά).[440] Seeligmann believes πόλις
is an epexegetic addition that the translator "came to regard as the binding
factor" between his two readings of נצרה.[441]

It seems likely that we have a double translation here. The reason the
translator here uses πόλις ἰσχυρά instead of πόλις ὀχυρά could be to distin-
guish this city from that of 25:2 and 26:1. The term ὀχυρά is better for a
fortified city, though ἰσχυρά is used again in 33:11 to describe the strong
position the righteous will inhabit. The idea that a city was meant at all,
and not a vineyard, is probably in part due to 1:8, where a vineyard is
mentioned and נצורה describes a city.[442] Also, all the feminine forms in
the Hebrew of 27:2–3, as mentioned above, would match עיר, but nowhere
else is כרם feminine. The surrounding context of strong cities undoubt-
edly also contributed to the translator's understanding 27:2–3 to be about
a strong city.

As in Isa 5:1–7, it is confusing concerning who is speaking. In 5:2 the
beloved is said to acquire a vineyard, but then the passage speaks about

---

436. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:234.

437. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87. It would appear that Ziegler preferred this read-
ing for 27:3 when he wrote *Untersuchungen*, but changed his mind when he prepared
the Göttingen LXX text. The reading ἰσχυρά is attested in S, A, and Q*.

438. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

439. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 169. But he believes it is read as
נצרה and בצרה.

440. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 150–51.

441. Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 169. He believes the *Vorlage* had
the Tetragrammaton abbreviated with י, which had fallen out due to haplography.

442. As also in Isa 27:10, but the LXX does not translate in the same way there and
does not even mention a city.

"my vineyard." So too in 27:3, the speaker is the besieged city, but the passage continues to describe what "I" do for "her" (the city). According to LXX.D, 3–4a is all part of one direct speech. It then still remains odd that the city refers to itself as "her," αὐτήν.

The phrase μάτην ποτιῶ αὐτήν for לרגעים אשקנה could be the result of reading לריק or לריקם.[443] Muraoka calls μάτην here a free rendering.[444] Baltzer et al. think the idea is that a continuous effort is a futile effort; if it was efficacious it would stop.[445] To give drink to a city makes sense in the context of a siege, and if the translator believed the city was doomed to fall then indeed providing water to it would be in vain.[446] It seems unlikely that γάρ is meant to render פן, but the two words are otherwise unaccounted for.[447] Troxel calls ἁλίσκω a slot word used by the translator in contexts having to do with battle.[448] But there seems to be some lexical warrant: ἁλώσεται could be a free interpretation of יפקד, since פקד can have negative connotations suggesting a coming punishment, as in Isa 10:12 and Jer 6:15.[449] As Ottley says, πεσεῖται is probably a result of seeing in אצרנה the letters צר, and τεῖχος comes from reading חמה as חומה in the next verse.[450] Van der Vorm-Croughs agrees that חמה is rendered twice, once as τεῖχος and once as ἐπελάβετο (associating the root חמס).[451] Ziegler points out that the phrase πεσεῖται τὸ τεῖχος occurs also in 24:23.[452]

The Targum expands and interprets the verse.[453] There is no mention of a vineyard, but God keeps his covenant. Giving drink refers to the cup

---

443. For the former, see Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:234. Ziegler agrees with the possibility and suggests also the latter (*Untersuchungen*, 89).

444. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 77.

445. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

446. Cf. Sir 24:31 where giving drink (ποτιῶ) to the garden has good results, water here representing instruction. Baltzer et al. suggest this is the meaning of the metaphor "to give drink" in LXX Isa 27:3 as well (Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572).

447. It is even more unlikely that it was thought to be the proclitic particle פ.

448. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 79.

449. Ziegler suggests the root לכד may have been thought (*Untersuchungen*, 89). Baltzer et al. are probably right that it is a paraphrase with the sense of an announcement of judgment ("Esaias," 2:2572).

450. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:234. Cf. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

451. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 170.

452. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89. Cf. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572. For LXX Isaiah's use of τεῖχος and τοῖχος, see Van der Kooij, *Oracle of Tyre*, 67–68; Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 154–55.

453. "I, the Lord, keep *for them the covenant of their fathers, and I will not destroy*

of their punishment (כס פורענותהון). Day and night refers to the constant protection of God's Memra.

> Isa 27:4
>
> חמה אין לי מי־יתנני שמיר שית במלחמה אפשעה בה אציתנה יחד:
>
> I have no wrath. *Who will give* me thorns and briers? I will march to battle against it. I will burn it up.

> οὐκ ἔστιν ἣ οὐκ ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς· τίς με θήσει φυλάσσειν καλάμην ἐν ἀγρῷ; διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν. τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε. κατακέκαυμαι…
>
> There is not *one* that has not taken hold of it; who will set me to watch stubble in a field? Because of this enmity I have set it aside. Therefore because of this the Lord God has done all things, whatever he has ordained. I have been burned up…

The Hebrew expresses the peace of Israel and God's zeal to defend it. God wishes (as expressed by the cohortative verbs) there were thorns and thistles so he could zealously make war on them and destroy them from his vineyard.

The Greek has rather drastically changed this verse along with much of the chapter.[454] Relating Greek clauses to the underlying Hebrew is difficult; there appear to be some double translations in this verse. The identity of the relative pronoun ἣ is translated as referring to "city" by NETS and to "*Macht*" in LXX.D; more literally it refers to the enmity (or the inimical one) mentioned later: πολεμία. This idea, while difficult to extrapolate from the Hebrew, continues from the Greek's understanding of 27:3, where the strong city is taken and the wall falls; every enemy will take hold of the city. Likewise, ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς may come from the general perceived context of an inimical party attempting to seize a city; Baltzer et al. link it to Joel 2:9, where again the word occurs in the context of an attacked city.[455]

---

them, except that in the moment *that they incite to anger before me*, I make them drink *the cup of their retribution. But though their sins already demand that retribution be taken from them*, night and day *my Memra protects them*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:3).

454. For an analysis of 27:2–5, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87–91.

455. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

Van der Vorm-Croughs suggests that ἐπελάβετο is based on linking חמה to חמס by way of root association.[456]

We have already discussed the rendering of the phrase מי־יתנני שמיר שית in the section on thorns (3.4.1).

The phrase διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν presumably comes from the Hebrew. The word πολεμίαν comes from במלחמה. The word פשע elsewhere only occurs in 1 Sam 20:3, where it is rendered ἐμπέπλησται.[457] In Isa 27:4, as Ottley and Baltzer et al. show, the translator understood פשע as in Isa 1:2.[458] The last word, בה, is rendered with αὐτήν.

The next phrase, τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε, has been compared to the similar phrase in Lam 2:17.[459] Ziegler holds that it was a marginal gloss already before the LXX; he shows how the theme of God decreeing things before they happen is addressed elsewhere, as in 37:26.[460] Seeligmann, on the other hand, thinks it was a Christian gloss.[461] Baltzer et al. acknowledge the influence of Lam 2:17 and suggest the following equivalents: עשה = ποιέω, מה = πάντα ὅσα, צוה = συντάσσω.[462] This plus acts as a kind of theological summary, explaining why God's holy city faces such disasters. The phrase אציתנה יחד runs into the next verse in the Greek, as a complaint of the people wanting to make peace with God.

The Targum expands this verse also but makes it about how God would destroy Israel's enemies if Israel would follow his law, like fire destroys thorns and fallow land: ואשיצינון כמא דמשיציא אשתא הובאי ובור כחדא.[463]

---

456. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 170. This is an example of words rendered at the end of one clause and the beginning of the next clause.

457. One manuscript has פשע in Prov 29:6, but LXX has ἁμαρτάνοντι.

458. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:234; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

459. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 91; Seeligmann, "Septuagint of Isaiah," 162.

460. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 90–91. Ziegler convincingly shows the several connections between LXX Isaiah 37 and 27. Van der Vorm-Croughs also offers these passages as an example of elements being adopted from elsewhere in Isaiah (*Old Greek of Isaiah*, 342).

461. Seeligmann, "Septuagint of Isaiah," 162.

462. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572. For the last equivalent, see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 172–73, where she suggests a double rendering of אציתנה, as συντάσσω from צוה and κατακαίω from יצת.

463. "*Behold, there are many prodigies before me! If the house of Israel set their face to do the law, would I not send my anger and my* wrath *among the gentiles who are*

The vineyard metaphor of Isa 27:2–4 has been substantially reworked by the LXX; indeed, after 27:2 there is no hint of a vineyard at all in the Greek but only a besieged city. Thus, the reference to giving drink in 27:3, which in the Hebrew refers to a vineyard, refers to the besieged city. It could literally refer to giving water in the famine of the siege, or it could be a metaphor for instruction.[464] How the vineyard became a besieged city is in part due to lexical issues, in part due to the immediate context, and in part due to the interpretation of the vineyard in Isa 5.

The lexical warrant, such as it is, involves the interpretation of two words in 27:3–4. While opinions differ as to exactly what happened, many agree that נצרה gave way to the idea of a strong or besieged city, as we have seen; נצורה is used to describe a city in Isa 1:8. The second lexical warrant is חמה in 27:4, which was interpreted as a city wall: τεῖχος. In addition to these, the repeated feminine forms in the passage probably suggested to the translator that a city (עיר/πόλις) was meant.

The context likewise probably contributed to the understanding that a city was meant; cities are mentioned numerous times in Isa 24–26. In particular, as we stated above, the song in 26:1 about a strong city (though there a different word for "strong" is used) may have contributed to the song in 27:2 being understood as referring to a city.[465] Also, in the following passage, 27:10, a fortified city (עיר בצורה) is described as deserted (though LXX renders this phrase differently there). Hendrik Leene has argued that in the Hebrew 27:8 invites a comparison between the vineyard of 27:2–6 and the city of 27:10–11.[466] Also, as Ziegler points out, the phrase πεσεῖται τὸ τεῖχος occurs both in 27:3 and 24:23. More specifically, exegesis of LXX Isa 26 shows that it is most likely referring to Jerusalem.[467] So it makes sense that this context would contribute to seeing 27:2–5 as referring to Jerusalem also, despite the fact that it is described as πόλις ἰσχυρά in 27:3 and not as πόλις ὀχυρά as in 26:1.

---

stirred up against *them and destroy them as the fire destroys* briers and thorn together?" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:4).

464. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2572.

465. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87.

466. Hendrik Leene, "Isaiah 27:7–9 as a Bridge between Vineyard and City," in Bosman et al., *Studies in Isaiah 24–27*, 199–225. He shows some connections in the Hebrew between chapters 27 and 24 (216–17), but the LXX does not appear to make these connections.

467. Van der Kooij, "The Cities of Isa 24–27," in Bosman et al., *Studies in Isaiah 24–27*, 195–97; Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 182.

The connection between Isa 5 and Isa 27 does not at first appear to go far beyond their both being songs about a vineyard. While the Greek of Isa 5 still maintains the interpretation that the vineyard represents the house of Israel and the vine the man of Judah, the language of the passage has been changed, making it easier to relate to a city. In LXX Isa 5:2 the additional description of the vineyard as fenced or fortified brings it closer to the besieged city of 27:3. As we saw in the Targum, later tradition understood parts of the vineyard of Isa 5 to represent the temple in Jerusalem. Joseph M. Baumgarten argues that 4Q500 uses botanical imagery from Isa 5 to describe the temple as early as the first century BCE.[468] While identified already as a benediction by Maurice Baillet, Baumgarten shows that it is probably a benediction addressed to God, since it talks of "the gate of the holy height" (לשער מרום הקודש) and the "streams of your glory" (ופלגי כבודכה).[469] In even such a short fragment the connection to Isa 5 is clear: both speak of a wine vat יקב (Kloppenborg points out that there is no point to the fragment saying it is made of stones unless it has in mind the altar, like the Targum), and both use the somewhat rare adjective שעשוע.[470] Additionally, Baumgarten believes the holy height corresponds to the tower in 5:2 and that the word מכה○[can be reconstructed as [וכר] מכה.[471] Perhaps this interpretation, that the song of the vineyard in Isa 5 refers to the temple, was already known to the LXX Isaiah translator; it seems to fit with his understanding of the vineyard as Jerusalem in Isa 27:2. In any case, 4Q500 and the Targum demonstrate that the tradition thought it possible to identify a vineyard with Jerusalem (or more specifically, its temple), as LXX Isaiah does in 27:2–5. Already the Hebrew hints that Jerusalem itself is at times represented by a vineyard. In 1:8 the daughter of Zion is compared to a hut in a vineyard (and to a besieged city), and in 3:14 it could be understood that the leaders grazing the vineyard

---

468. Joseph M. Baumgarten, "4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord's Vineyard," *JJS* 40 (1989): 1–2.

469. Maurice Baillet, *Qumrân grotte 4.III (4Q482–4Q520),* DJD VII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982), 78–79; Baumgarten, "4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord's Vineyard," 1.

470. John S. Kloppenborg, *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine*, WUNT 195 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 90; Baumgarten, "4Q500 and the Ancient Conception," 1–2. Kloppenborg and Baumgarten also compare the fragments' interpretation to that of both the Targum and t. Sukkah 3:15.

471. Baumgarten, "4Q500 and the Ancient Conception," 2.

are helping themselves to the goods in Jerusalem, though nothing explicit makes this connection in the Hebrew or the Greek. While in 1:8 it is only the people who are like a vineyard or like a besieged city, and in 3:14 and 5:1–6 the people and not the city are represented by a vineyard, LXX Isa 27 takes a step further by thinking a vineyard represents the city Jerusalem.[472]

3.5.2. Vines

Grapes or grapevines (גֶּפֶן) are often nearly synonymous with vineyards. We have already discussed 7:23–25 in the section on thorns (3.4.1). For the occurrence in 34:4, see the section on leaves (2.5.1). The occurrences in 32:10–12 and 36:16–17 speak literally about actual grapes and vines. Isaiah 16:8 also talks about a vine in hyperbolic terms, which the LXX makes less extreme, but the Targum interprets it allegorically.[473] In 16:9 there is weeping for vines, though this is probably because they are actually destroyed (and are not a metaphor).

> Isa 24:7
>
> אבל תירוש אמללה־גפן נאנחו כל־שמחי־לב:
> The wine *mourns*, the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.
>
> πενθήσει οἶνος, πενθήσει ἄμπελος, στενάξουσι πάντες οἱ εὐφραινόμενοι τὴν ψυχήν.
> The wine will mourn; the vine will mourn; all who rejoice in their soul will groan.

While in Isa 16:8–9 there was weeping for vines, in 24:7 they are personified as themselves weeping. In the Hebrew, the synonymous parallelism suggests it could be understood to mean simply that wine and vine dry out. According to *HALOT*, אבל II can mean "to dry up," and it has a homonym that means "to mourn," but אמל only means to dry out.[474] The Greek

---

472. Cf. Ezek 15:6 where again the people of Jerusalem are represented by a grape vine in the context of coming destruction.

473. "For the *armies* of Heshbon *are plundered,* the *companies* of Sibmah *are killed*; the *kings* of the *Gentiles* kill *their rulers,* they reached to Jazer, strayed to the desert, *their outcasts cut* [*their way*] *through,* cross over the sea" (Tg. Neb. Isa 16:8).

474. *HALOT* s.vv. "אבל II," "אבל I," "אמל I"; *DCH* 1, s.v. "אבל I," has only the definition "to mourn."

translates both terms with πενθέω.[475] It thus anthropomorphizes the wine and vine, giving them emotions. In 16:8 the translator has also rendered אמל with πενθέω. Earlier in the passage, the earth also is said to mourn (אבל; 24:4), which may have contributed to the Greek reading of 24:7.[476] In 4QIsaᶜ there is a plus, so it reads גפן יצה, which is a closer parallel to תירוש.

Also of note is that שמחי־לב has been rendered with εὐφραινόμενοι τὴν ψυχήν. This translation occurs thirteen times (and twelve times for לבב) in the LXX and διάονια nineteen times, so often this lexicalized metaphor is translated so as to remove the idiom.

The Targum inserts a subject and creates a causal connection, so that those who drink wine mourn because the vines are dying.[477] This is based on the context, particularly 24:9 and 11.

A word associated with grape vines is אשכל, which occurs in Isaiah only in 65:8.

65:8
כה אמר יהוה כאשר ימצא התירוש באשכול ואמר אל־תשחיתהו כי ברכה
בו כן אעשה למען עבדי לבלתי השחית הכל:
Thus says the Lord: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, "Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it," so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all.

Οὕτως λέγει κύριος Ὃν τρόπον εὑρεθήσεται ὁ ῥὼξ ἐν τῷ βότρυϊ καὶ ἐροῦσι Μὴ λυμήνῃ αὐτὸν ὅτι εὐλογία ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ, οὕτως ποιήσω ἕνεκεν τοῦ δουλεύοντός μοι, τούτου ἕνεκεν οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσω πάντας.
Thus says the Lord: As the grape will be found in the cluster, and they will say, "Do not destroy it, because *a blessing*[478] is in it," so I will do for the sake of the one who *serves* me. For the sake of this one I will not destroy them all.

The Hebrew comparison expresses that the destruction declared in 65:1–7 will not be complete, but some remnant will survive. Some commentators

---

475. See Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2565.

476. See Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 57, 61, 131–32.

477. "*All who drink* wine mourn, *for the* vine*s wither,* all the merry-hearted sigh" (Tg. Neb. Isa 24:7).

478. NETS follows Rahlfs with "the blessing of the Lord," though it does not mention that it departs from Ziegler at this point.

understand the Hebrew as the Greek does, that some good grapes are found on a bad bunch, but others that it is a good bunch of grapes among bad bunches.[479] It remains strange, though, that "wine" or "must" is mentioned and that there is nothing to clarify what kind of activity is being done that the bunch would otherwise be destroyed.

The word תירוש is usually translated with οἶνος in the LXX (and in LXX Isaiah). The rendering here with ῥώξ is considered to be free by Muraoka, and indeed, it constitutes an interpretation of the difficult simile.[480] Ziegler suggests the translator had the leftover grapes in mind, which one was supposed to leave for the poor (Lev 19:10: οὐδὲ τοὺς ῥῶγας τοῦ ἀμπελῶνός σου συλλέξεις), similar to the use of ῥώξ in Isa 17:6 (though there it refers to olives); the mention of a blessing, then, is to that promised for keeping such commandments (Deut 24:19).[481] The Targum abandons the language of the comparison, making it about Noah (chosen, perhaps in part, because he was a vintner) being saved in his wicked generation, rather than having to do with grapes.[482]

3.5.3. Summary

In summary, vineyard metaphors in LXX Isaiah could be on their way toward conventionalization, in that they seem to be regularly thought to represent Jerusalem. This is hinted at in the Hebrew already in 1:8 and 3:14, but it is hinted at more strongly in the Greek of 5:1–7 and is made explicit in 27:2–6. The comparison in 65:8 also makes good sense (both in the Hebrew and Greek) if understood in relation to Isa 5:1–7, so that not all the grapes are bad (though they are thorns in the Greek), but a few will be saved.

In 5:10, the removal of the vineyard is probably due to trying to make a more sensible text. The reduction of the hyperbolic size of the vine of Sibmah has to do with the translator trying to describe how Moab will be

---

479. See Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah*, 3:275–76.

480. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 105.

481. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 132.

482. "Thus says the Lᴏʀᴅ: '*As Noah who was* found *innocent in the generation of the flood,* and *I promised not* to *destroy him in order to establish the world from him, so I will do for my servants*', *the righteous', sake, in order not to destroy all'*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 65:8).

ravaged in 16:8–9. In 24:7 the vines are personified as weeping, though this is probably not connected to ideas of Israel as God's vineyard.

The Targum in 1:8 focuses the metaphor, making it clear that the hut and booth are abandoned after the harvest is over. The grazing of the vineyard in 3:14 is interpreted simply as robbing God's people, as the context makes clear. In 5:1–7 the Targum expands, interpreting the language to give an overview of Israelite history and the temple; it explains the exile and the temple's destruction as the result of the people's failure to obey the law. In 27:2–4 the individual elements of the vineyard are again interpreted; the passage becomes about Israel and the covenant and what God would do for His people if they would only follow the law.

Concerning the vine of Sibmah in 16:8–9, the Targum interprets the vine's parts, so that the vine is the armies, the tendrils rulers, and the shoots fugitives. In 24:7, rather than the vine mourning, those who drink wine mourn. In 65:8 the strange "must in the grape cluster" image is replaced by a vintner, Noah, who becomes the basis for the comparison.

3.6. Trees

In Hebrew, עץ is a word for a tree or the material wood. The LXX generally renders it with ξύλον the majority of the time. When the context is appropriate, it uses more specific terms, such as in Gen 18:4 where it has δένδρον (cf. Ezek 37:16–20). Since our interest is in plant imagery, we will skip most of the passages that use עץ as the material wood or speak of trees literally.[483]

This section will first discuss general references to trees; second, it will look at references to oaks or terebinths; third, several other specific kinds of trees will be treated together; and fourth, references to thickets and woods will be examined. Finally, a summary of tree-related metaphors will be offered.

---

483. Isa 10:15, 30:33, 37:19, 40:20, 44:13, 44:19, 45:20, 60:17. Often trees are mentioned literally in relation to cultic sites in Isaiah. Sticher argues that God is not described in tree metaphors out of concern for Canaanite tree cults; she also shows that trees as something permanent usually are used to represent the righteous in the Old Testament; though they can be cut down, they may sprout from the stump and so can be an image of judgment and salvation. She shows trees also can be used negatively as representing the proud and arrogant, and in Ps 37 the wicked are like a tall tree that nevertheless vanishes without a trace (Sticher, "Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras," 253–54).

3.6.1. References to Trees in General: עץ

Often Isaiah uses tree metaphors that do not need to be any particular kind of tree. As we will see, the LXX Isaiah translator sometimes feels the need to adjust these passages in various ways. We will first look at the texts in question, then make a summary.

3.6.1.1. Texts

The first place עץ occurs is in a short narrative section giving historical context to a prophecy.

> Isa 7:2
> ויגד לבית דוד לאמר נחה ארם על־אפרים וינע לבבו ולבב עמו כנוע עצי־
> יער מפני־רוח:
> When the house of David heard that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.
>
> καὶ ἀνηγγέλη εἰς τὸν οἶκον Δαυιδ λέγοντες Συνεφώνησεν Αραμ πρὸς τὸν Εφραιμ· καὶ ἐξέστη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὃν τρόπον ὅταν ἐν δρυμῷ ξύλον ὑπὸ πνεύματος σαλευθῇ.
> And it was reported to the house of Dauid saying, "Aram has made an agreement with Ephraim." And his soul and the soul of his people were agitated as when a tree in the forest is shaken by the wind.

This simile is interesting, first of all, since it is used in a narrative section to describe events, and not in a more poetic prophetic section.[484] In the Hebrew the comparison turns on using the same verb נוע to describe the tenor (their hearts) and the vehicle (trees of the forest). That hearts shake is itself a metaphor for fear, though it also describes the physical sensation of shock and fear. 1QIsaᵃ has only the hearts of the people shake, probably due to haplography: וינע לבב עמו.

The LXX clarifies exactly what is meant by hearts shaking. The word ἐξίστημι is only used here as an equivalent for נוע. The translator wanted to

---

484. For the use of συμφωνέω, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109; Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 195; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2520.

explain what it meant for their heart to shake by saying they were amazed or stunned, as Muraoka defines the phrase.[485] The regular translation, even in LXX Isaiah, for לבב is καρδία, which further shows that the translator was attempting to explain the meaning of the phrase and was not concerned with preserving its imagery. Once the reality represented is clear, the translator is able to translate the simile describing it.

But the simile too has been modified in translation. The comparative particle is rendered with a long but precise phrase, ὃν τρόπον ὅταν, so that the simile can be an entire phrase.[486] The verb σαλεύω (elsewhere used seven times for נוע) is moved to the end of the sentence. Also, the construct relationship עצי־יער has been carefully rendered ἐν δρυμῷ ξύλον, as opposed to just using a genitive; the word order is changed, the plural becomes singular, and a preposition is used to show the relationship.

These changes clarify what the simile means, but they appear to be done for the sake of creating an *inclusio*. The reality and the simile describing it are linked by the term נוע in the Hebrew, but the Greek has sought for clarity in describing the reality and so uses different verbs.[487] By rearranging the simile, the link between the verbs ἐξίστημι and σαλεύω is reestablished by placing them at the beginning and end of the sentence.

The Targum modifies this simile slightly, and like the LXX uses two different verbs for the hearts (זוע: to shake or move) and the tree (שדי *hithpeel*: to be thrown about).[488]

Isa 10:17–19
והיה אור־ישראל לאש וקדושו ללהבה ובערה ואכלה שיתו ושמירו ביום
אחד: וכבוד יערו וכרמלו מנפש ועד־בשר יכלה והיה כמסס נסס: ושאר עץ
יערו מספר יהיו ונער יכתבם:
The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day. The glory of his forest and his fruitful land the Lᴏʀᴅ will destroy, both soul

---

485. *GELS*, s.v. "ψυχή."

486. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

487. For this technique in LXX Isaiah, see Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 182.

488. "And it was made known to the house of David: "*The king of* Syria has *allied himself* with *the king of Israel*," *to come up against him*. And his heart with the heart of his people *quaked* as *the* shak*ing* of trees of the forest before *the* wind" (Tg. Neb. Isa 7:2).

and body, and it will be as when an invalid wastes away.[489] *And the remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.*

καὶ ἔσται τὸ φῶς τοῦ Ισραηλ εἰς πῦρ καὶ ἁγιάσει αὐτὸν ἐν πυρὶ καιομένῳ καὶ φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην. τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἀποσβεσθήσεται τὰ ὄρη καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ καὶ οἱ δρυμοί, καὶ καταφάγεται ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἕως σαρκῶν· καὶ ἔσται ὁ φεύγων ὡς ὁ φεύγων ἀπὸ φλογὸς καιομένης· καὶ οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν ἔσονται ἀριθμός, καὶ παιδίον γράψει αὐτούς.

The light of Israel will become a fire, and it will sanctify him with a burning fire and devour the wood like grass. On that day the mountains and the hills and the woods will vanish, and it will consume them from the soul to the flesh, and the one who flees will be like the one who flees from a burning flame. And those who are left from them will be a cipher, and a child will write them down.

We have already discussed 10:17 in the section on thorns (3.4.1). There we showed that the LXX adjusts the image to be that of a copse of trees going up in flames as quickly as a clump of dry grass.

As Muraoka suggests concerning 10:18, ἀποσβεσθήσεται probably comes from reading וכבוד as though it had the root כבה, possibly due to the perceived need for a verb in the clause.[490] This change turns the imagery of the verse. In the Hebrew we have the king's realm and person becoming a waste, while the Greek has what appears to be metaphorical language (since hills and mountains are destroyed) about the land and about his person. The Greek renders יערו literally, though without the possessive pronoun, but moves it after its rendering for וכרמלו. Ottley suggests that ὄρος is a rendering of יערו understood to be ההרים, but this is not likely.[491] The word כרמל is usually transliterated, though again in Isa 29:17 it is twice rendered with τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ.[492] In 37:34, however, it is not

---

489. Or "as when a banner-holder despairs."

490. Muraoka, *Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index*, 15. This translation is made in Prov 31:18. Cf. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:162; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 110–11. 1QIsaᵃ matches MT in this passage.

491. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:162.

492. The same transliteration (but without mention of a mountain) is used twice in 32:15, while in 32:16, 33:9 and 35:2, the transliteration used is κάρμηλος. Only in 33:9 and 35:2 does the Hebrew mean the place and not the noun.

rendered.[493] In 16:10 it is rendered with ἀμπελών, though probably due to the parallel כרם. The rendering of 10:18 is probably because it made no sense to the translator to call Carmel the Assyrian's, and so he rendered just the mountains and added the hills to make a nice word pair; we see the two terms in synonymous parallelism in 10:32.[494] In 44:23, however, יער is rendered with βουνός (note the parallel ὄρος), so we could have here a double rendering of יער; Ziegler thinks βουνός is original and δρυμός was added later. As Ziegler has shown, the similar passage in Sir 43:21 probably also plays a role in the rendering of this verse.[495]

The Hebrew יכלה may have been understood to come from the root אכל, since κατεσθίω is its most common equivalent. It could also be that the translator took language from the preceding context to interpret specifically how they will be destroyed. The idea of wasting away having been removed, the Greek goes on to transform the comparison from an invalid atrophying to someone fleeing from fire (another element perhaps taken from the context).[496] The basis for this change appears to arise from understanding כמסס נסס to come from the root נוס.[497] Note that the simile maintains some alliteration, though from different sounds than the Hebrew. The translator could have reused the phrase πυρός καιομένου from 10:16 (though in a different case), but he chose a synonym that repeats the φ sound instead.

In 10:19, the LXX replaces the phrase עץ יערו with a pronoun referring back to those fleeing, interpreting the remaining trees as the remaining people.[498] The rest of the verse is translated very literally, rendering the *yiqtol* as simple future, whereas a potential sense is preferred. The trope could be an implicit comparison in Greek and Hebrew, or a metaphor, though it may be considered a sort of prophecy.

The passage as a whole in the Hebrew uses thorn, wood, and tree metaphors to talk about the king, his men, and his glory. The thorns and thistles in 10:17 probably represent his army or works. The forest and land being

---

493. See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

494. For this word pair, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

495. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

496. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:162; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

497. This phrase is still difficult to understand. *DCH* suggests six possible meanings for נסס. It is probably best to understand it either as meaning to be sick (as from Syriac *nassîs*) or to shake (as from Akkadian *nasâsu*) (Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 406).

498. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2523.

consumed could refer to his land, but their being consumed "body and soul" suggests they represent his people. Likewise, the few trees surviving the fire seem to suggest people are meant and not his actual forests. The Greek focuses this imagery by amplifying the burning flame throughout the passage; that people are meant by the tree and forest imagery is made clear by the LXX in 10:19 by making the remnant refer to those who flee the fire.

The Targum also understands the trees in this passage to refer to people.[499] In 10:17 the grass and thorns are rendered as rulers and tyrants. In 10:18 the forest is rendered as people, and in 10:19 the remnant of trees is rendered as the survivors of his army camp.

Isa 44:23

רנו שמים כי־עשה יהוה הריעו תחתיות ארץ פצחו הרים רנה יער וכל־עץ
בו כי־גאל יהוה יעקב ובישראל יתפאר:

Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.

εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ὅτι ἠλέησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ισραηλ· σαλπίσατε, θεμέλια τῆς γῆς, βοήσατε, ὄρη, εὐφροσύνην, οἱ βουνοὶ καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι ἐλυτρώσατο ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ιακωβ, καὶ Ισραηλ δοξασθήσεται.

Rejoice, O heavens, because God has had mercy on Israel; trumpet, O foundations of the earth; shout for joy, O mountains, the hills and all the trees that are in them, because God has redeemed Iakob, and Israel will be glorified!

In this verse the heavens, earth, mountains, forests, and trees are personified and told to rejoice in various manners; we have already treated the

---

499. "And it will come to pass that *the master of* the light of Israel and his Holy One, *his Memra will be strong as the* fire, and *his words as the* flame; and he will *kill* and *destroy* his *rulers* and his *tyrants* in one day. And the glory of his many *armies* and his *warriors, their* soul *with their* body, he will destroy, and he will *be broken* and *fugitive.* And the remnant of the *people* of his *armies* will *come to an end, to become a people* of small number and *they will be esteemed a faint kingdom*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 10:17–19).

similar passage 55:12 where mountains, hills, and trees rejoice (2.6.3). The plus giving the reason to rejoice (ὅτι ἠλέησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ισραηλ) is probably to explain what exactly God did (כי־עשה יהוה) and is provided from the end of the verse.[500] The phrase תחתיות ארץ is unique to this passage. Usually תחתי is used in an attributive position and not in a construct phrase, as we see in Ezek 26:20: בארץ תחתיות.[501] LXX Isaiah uses the familiar phrase, θεμέλια τῆς γῆς, which more properly translates מוסדי ארץ as in Isa 24:18 and 40:21.[502] It also occurs in Isa 14:15 for the phrase ירכתי־בור. The rendering of רוע with σαλπίζω only occurs here. It is probably due to the translator understanding it as meaning a signal or war cry, and so the idea of sounding a trumpet.[503]

A significant change in the translation is found at the end of the verse. In the Hebrew, God shows himself glorified in Israel, but in the Greek Israel is glorified.[504] This change in meaning is achieved by leaving off the preposition ב.

What is important for our study is that the forest (יער) is made into a hill (βουνός).[505] There could be at work here the same issue that led to the addition of βουνοί in Isa 10:18, or it could be a more logical counterpart to mountains than a forest would be (see Isa 40:4, 55:12, etc.).

The Targum is literal, though it specifies that what the Lord has done is accomplish redemption for his people.[506]

Another passage that mentions trees in anthropomorphic language is Isa 55:12. We dealt with this passage in the section about branches (2.6.3), where it was noted that the tree was rendered literally, but in Greek it clapped its branches rather than its hands.

---

500. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:317; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 156.

501. Cf. Jos 15:19, Ps 88:7, Lam 3:44, and Ezek 32:18, 24.

502. Also in Ps 81:5, Prov 8:29, Mic 6:2, and for יסודי תבל in Sir 16:19.

503. See Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2654.

504. See Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2654.

505. Both 4QIsa[b] and 1QIsa[b] correspond to MT, lacking "hills."

506. "Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has accomplished *redemption for his people; break forth, O foundations* of the earth; *shout* into singing, O mountains, O forest and all trees *that are* in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel" (Tg. Neb. Isa 44:23).

Isa 56:3

וְאַל־יֹאמַר בֶּן־הַנֵּכָר הַנִּלְוָה אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הַבְדֵּל יַבְדִּילַנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ
וְאַל־יֹאמַר הַסָּרִיס הֵן אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ:

Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and do not let the eunuch say, "*Behold,* I am just a dry tree."

μὴ λεγέτω ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσκείμενος πρὸς κύριον Ἀφοριεῖ με ἄρα κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ· καὶ μὴ λεγέτω ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὅτι Ἐγώ εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν.

Let not the alien who clings to the Lord say, "So then the Lord will separate me from his people," and let not the eunuch say, "I am a dry tree."

This verse has had some changes made in translation, though the content and rhetorical force has been maintained. Ziegler points out that προσκείμενος is an expression known from the LXX Pentateuch in passages having to do with foreigners.[507] The LXX omits the introduction of direct speech (לאמר), though the second quote has the additional introduction ὅτι. The pleonastic construction of an infinitive absolute and a finite verb is often translated in LXX Isaiah either with just a verb or with a finite verb and a cognate noun in the dative.[508] In this verse, the translator has opted to translate just the verb but has given the statement a similar sense of certainty as the Hebrew construction would, by adding the particle ἄρα.[509] In the second quote, הן is not rendered with its stereotype ἰδού. Perhaps it is meant to be represented at least quantitatively by the word εἰμί. In any case, the quote in Greek has much the same force with the first-person pronoun and the verb, of asserting the reality or certainty of his statement. The quote features terseness and assonance with the ε and ξ sounds.[510]

---

507. Such as Exod 12:49 and Lev 16:29 (Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 129).

508. See Emanuel Tov, "Renderings of Combinations of the Infinitive Absolute and Finite Verbs in the LXX—Their Nature and Distribution," in *Studien zur Septuaginta-Robert Hanhart zu Ehren: Aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages*, ed. Detlef Fraenkel, Udo Quast, and John W. Wevers, MSU 20 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 70.

509. See Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §§2787, 2790.

510. For the importance of metaphors sounding beautiful, see Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.2.13.

In both the Hebrew and the Greek, it is ambiguous whether the eunuch considers himself dry wood or a dry tree; both images are apt.[511] If he is dry wood, then he is presumably attached to the rest of Israel (just like the foreigner in the beginning of the verse) but is dead and has no future or potential for children (contrary to the promise in 56:5) and should be pruned off (perhaps implied by יכרת, as in 56:5). If the image is understood as a tree, it has the connotation of other tree images (such as Judg 9:9–15; Ps 1:2–3; Dan 4:10–12, 20–22), where kings and important people are likened to them. The eunuch, though, is dry and so again, has no future or hope for offspring.

The Targum softens the image, making it a simile: האנא כאע יביש (reading הא אנא: "behold I am like a dry tree").[512] Perhaps the Targum read a text like 1QIsaᵃ, which reads אנוכי עץ, but divided the words differently.

Isa 65:22

לא יבנו ואחר ישב לא יטעו ואחר יאכל כי־כימי העץ ימי עמי ומעשה ידיהם
יבלו בחירי:

They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

καὶ οὐ μὴ οἰκοδομήσουσι καὶ ἄλλοι ἐνοικήσουσι, καὶ οὐ μὴ φυτεύσουσι καὶ ἄλλοι φάγονται· κατὰ γὰρ τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς ἔσονται αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ λαοῦ μου, τὰ ἔργα τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν παλαιώσουσιν.
And they shall not build, and others inhabit; they shall not plant, and others eat, for according to the days of the tree of life shall the days of my people be; they shall make old the works of their labors.

Of special note in this passage is that the simile is interpreted quite dramatically. In the Hebrew, the lifespan of the people is compared to that of a

---

511. The choice of ξύλον over δένδρον could be simply because it is used more commonly (245x versus 14x) or for the sake of assonance. That it is for assonance is strengthened by 57:5 where עץ רענן is rendered δένδρα δασέα. This is the only place in Isa where δένδρον is used for עץ.

512. "Let not a son of *Gentiles* who has *been added to the people of* the Lᴏʀᴅ say, 'The Lᴏʀᴅ will surely separate me from his people'; and let not the eunuch say, 'Behold, I am *like* a dry tree'" (Tg. Neb. Isa 56:3).

tree, most of which live quite a long time. The Greek, though, departs from typical literal translation and specifies that the tree of life is meant.

The rendering of the Hebrew comparative marker with κατά and an accusative is not mentioned by Ziegler in his discussion of comparisons and is found nowhere else in LXX Isaiah. This is, however, a common rendering in Ben Sira.[513] This rendering has changed the comparison into a more literal description of their days. In addition, the translator has understood the definite העץ to refer not to just any tree, but to the tree of life, τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς.[514] In Gen 2–3 the tree of life, עץ החיים, is likewise rendered τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς. Ottley suggests it may have originally read κατὰ γὰρ τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ ξύλου ἔσονται αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ λαοῦ μου, but no manuscript preserves this reading.[515] This interpretation of Isa 65:22 is seen also in the Targum, which reads ארי כיומי אילן חייא יומי עמי. This interpretation is probably based on העץ having the definite article (in 1QIsaᵃ it lacks the article), just as in Jewish tradition המזבח in Gen 22:9 is thought to refer to the altar on which Adam, Cain and Abel, and Noah sacrificed, because it has the definite article.[516]

The Targum, in addition to agreeing with the LXX about the tree of life, also agrees that the last clause is about people living so long that they outlive their various works, which should outlive them.[517]

Before moving on to specific types of trees, two passages that list several specific types of trees are worth mentioning. In 44:14 the LXX gives a general rendering for various types of trees, and in 41:19 the LXX reduces the number of different types of trees.

Isa 44:14

לכרת־לו ארזים ויקח תרזה ואלון ויאמץ־לו בעצי־יער נטע ארן וגשם יגדל:

He cuts down cedars or chooses a holm tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a *laurel* and the rain nourishes it.

---

513. HRCS, appendix 2, 181a.

514. Seeligmann believes the phrase could come from a latter reviser, who also altered 65:3 ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 167–68).

515. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:383.

516. See, for example, Ramban (Nachmanides), *Genesis*, vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Torah*, trans. Charles B. Chavel (New York: Shilo, 1971), 276–77.

517. "They shall not build and other*s* inhabit; they shall not plant and other*s* eat; for like the days of the tree *of life* shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall wear out the works of their hands" (Tg. Neb. Isa 65:22).

ὃ ἔκοψε ξύλον ἐκ τοῦ δρυμοῦ, ὃ ἐφύτευσε κύριος καὶ ὑετὸς ἐμήκυνεν.
He cut wood from the forest, which the Lord planted and the rain
made grow.

This passage occurs within a description of how foolish it is that people take
wood and use some of it for fuel and exert effort to turn some of it into an
object of worship. This verse is not metaphorical, but it is insightful for how
the translator understands tree language and how he deals with poetry.

Here the translator removes parallelism and enumeration of synony-
mous terms.[518] The terms ארזים, אלון, and ארן (cedar, oak, and laurel) are
not difficult or obscure but are all removed in favor of a direct and clear
description of what the person described is after: ξύλον.[519] Van der Vorm-
Croughs lists this verse as an example where LXX Isaiah condenses two
clauses into one.[520] Ottley, however, calls the text mutilated, suggesting
the translator skipped from ארזים to ארן.[521] But this does not explain why
לו was not rendered or why יער and נטע were rendered. Also, the similar
reduction of parallel words and clauses in the surrounding passage, such
as in 44:12, 13, 15, 17, and 25, must be taken into account and suggests that
the condensation was the deliberate work of the translator.[522] The term
תרזה only occurs here; Musselman thinks it could be a species of pistacia,
related to the terebinth.[523] Besides this collapsing of terms for tree for the
sake of clarity and style, the translator adds an agent for the verbs in the
second part of the verse: κύριος. Baltzer et al. suggest the translator read
ארן as אדן.[524] It could be a matter of the translator taking the opportunity

---

518. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT.

519. BDB defines ארן as fir or cedar (s.v. "אֹרֶן I"), while *HALOT* defines it as laurel
(s.v. "אֹרֶן I"). Musselman says that the Old Testament does not mention the laurel
(*Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 170), but he nowhere makes clear what this Hebrew
term refers to. Hepper believes that a laurel (bay) tree is meant (*Illustrated Encyclope-
dia of Bible Plants*, 74). Ziegler agrees that the omissions are the result of a deliberate
free rendering (*Untersuchungen*, 126). Also, Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2654.

520. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 201–2.

521. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:315.

522. On the reductions in 44:12, 13, 15, 17, and 25, see Van der Vorm-Croughs,
Old Greek of Isaiah, 190–93, 210, 212.

523. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 267. *HALOT* (s.v. "תִּרְזָה") prefers
some species of oak, perhaps the holm oak.

524. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2654.

to add the idea that the wood a person works into an idol has its source from the true God.

The Targum is rather literal.[525] It only adds two double translations. The difficult tree תרזה is rendered with תרן תורז (mast of toraz), which acts to specify that it is some sort of tree good for timber, but it does not try to identify or interpret it further. The other double rendering is of ויאמצ־לו with ומתקיף ומתקין ליה, which clarifies the idea of a tree being selected but allowed to mature before being cut down.

> Isa 41:19
> אתן במדבר ארז שטה והדס ועץ שמן אשים בערבה ברוש תדהר ותאשור
> יחדו:
> I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and
> *tree of oil*; I will set in the desert the cypress, *the plane* and the pine
> together.
>
> θήσω εἰς τὴν ἄνυδρον γῆν κέδρον καὶ πύξον καὶ μυρσίνην καὶ
> κυπάρισσον καὶ λεύκην.
> I will put in the dry land a cedar and a box-tree and a myrtle and
> a cypress and a white poplar.

In this passage the Greek has removed the synonymous parallelism and reduced the number of trees listed from seven to five. Van der Vorm-Croughs lists this passage among those where the enumeration of closely associated words is reduced.[526]

The Greek does not have equivalents for עץ שמן, the tree of oil, or either תדהר or תאשור. Assessing the translation of the trees mentioned is difficult, in that it is uncertain to which species some of these terms intend to refer. We will discuss the issue of word equivalents and the species of trees here, since it will be useful for the following sections on specific types of trees.

It is well known that ארז means cedar, so the rendering with κέδρος is appropriate. The rendering of שטה with πύξος is unique to this pas-

---

525. "He cuts down cedars, or chooses a holm or an oak and *establishes* it among the trees of the forest; he plants *the* laurel and rain nourishes it" (Tg. Neb. Isa 44:14).

526. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 188–90. She also lists it among passages where there is condensation by a distributive rendering of parallel clauses (207–13).

sage; in fact, πύξος occurs only here.[527] Elsewhere שטה usually occurs in the construct phrase עצי שטים, as in Exod 25:5, and is rendered ξύλα ἄσηπτα (rot resistant wood).[528] This tree is thought to be the acacia tree, or more specifically *Acacia nilotica* or *albida*.[529] Theophrastus describes both species of acacia, calling them ἄκανθα ἡ Αἰγυπτία and ἄκανθα ἡ λεύκη respectively (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.1, 8). LXX Isaiah's rendering πύξος, however, is a different tree, the *Buxus sempervirens* (Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 1.5.4–5). This is probably not a wild guess, since both the *Buxus sempervirens* and the *Acacia nilotica* are resistant to rot and provide good material for making things.[530] It is worth noting that in the previous chapter, Isa 40:20, we find the phrase המסכן תרומה עץ לא־ירקב יבחר, which could have given another kind of tree as one that does not rot, but the LXX does not make this connection.[531] LXX Isaiah provides a better translation for the acacia tree in 34:13 (though the Hebrew may not intend to imply this), where we find the phrase ἀκάνθινα ξύλα for the Hebrew סירים קמוש וחוח.

The next tree mentioned, הדס, is properly translated as μυρσίνη.[532] The term עץ שמן is not rendered here.[533] The exact tree ברוש refers to is disputed. *HALOT* prefers juniper, of all the various options, while Musselman believes it is a cypress.[534] The LXX outside Isaiah renders it as referring to

---

527. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2649.

528. It is interesting to note that the LXX seems to understand the wood that is meant since it translates its most important quality as a construction material: that it does not rot. A more literal rendering of the phrase would have used the word ἄκανθα, which would have accurately identified the tree, botanically speaking, but would have sounded as though the ark and other vessels were to be made out of thorn trees. The word choice probably had some theological undertones to it.

529. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 38.

530. For the πύξον, see Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 5.3.7; 5.4.1–2. For the acacia, see Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 38–41.

531. This could be because מסכן does not mean a kind of tree. We will discuss this passage below.

532. Compare Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 198–200; and Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 1.3.3; 1.9.3.

533. In 1 Kgs 6:23 it is also not rendered. In Neh 8:15 it occurs after the זית and is rendered with ξύλων κυπαρίσσινων; in 1 Kgs 6:31, 33 it is rendered with ξύλων ἀρκευθίνων, while in 1 Kgs 6:32 it is rendered with ξύλων πευκίνων. The tree עץ שמן is often identified either as a wild olive or a kind of pine tree. See *HALOT*, s.v. "שֶׁמֶן." On its not being an olive tree, see Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 109n1.

534. *HALOT*, s.v. "בְּרוֹשׁ"; Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 110.

juniper twice (ἄρκευθος in Hos 14:9; ἀρκεύθινος in 2 Chr 2:8[7]) and once as cypress (κυπάρισσος in 2 Kgs 19:23).[535] In LXX Isaiah, though, it is always rendered as cypress (Isa 37:24, 41:19, 55:13, 60:13). LXX Isaiah, then, is on the "cutting edge" of scholarship on this issue.

The last two trees mentioned, תדהר and תאשור, occur only here and again together in Isa 60:13. 1QIsaᵃ has תרהר here and תהרהר in 60:13, which does not help. *HALOT* believes the תדהר is best described vaguely as a tree from Lebanon and the תאשור as a cypress.[536] The LXX renders one of these terms for trees with λεύκη (poplar).[537] In Isa 60:13, assuming the three trees mentioned are rendered in the same order: תדהר is rendered as πεύκη (pine) and תאשור as κέδρος (cedar).[538]

In the Hebrew, it is undoubtedly significant that seven trees are mentioned. The acacia could live in the desert, but the cedar, myrtle, olive, and cypress would most likely die there.[539] That they do not live together, and especially in the desert, is probably why they were chosen, which 41:20 makes clear in that they are planted so people will know that the LORD has done it. Since we cannot identify with certainty the תדהר and תאשור, we cannot say whether they could live in the desert. The trees mentioned are all beautiful and useful for various products, so we would expect them in a king's garden, which is probably another reason they were chosen for this image.

As mentioned earlier, the Greek removes the parallelism and two trees, probably for the sake of style and not for symbolism. In the Greek, these trees are still out of place together in the desert. Whether the trees could be planted by cuttings is probably irrelevant to the metaphor in both languages, as it is supposed to be a miraculous planting in any case.

The Targum appears to be rather literal, using Aramaic cognates for most of the trees. For the last two trees it has מורנין ואשכרעין, "planes and pines."[540]

Two passages should be mentioned where the LXX adds a reference to a tree. In 16:9 we read τὰ δένδρα σου, which is probably a result of a differ-

---

535. Also, it renders it six times as referring to a pine tree, and twice as a cedar.

536. *HALOT*, s.vv. "תָּאַשּׁוּר," "תִּדְהָר."

537. Theophrastus discusses the poplar (*Hist. plant.* 1.10.1; 3.1.1; 3.3.1; etc.).

538. I will discuss 60:13 below.

539. See the relevant entires for these trees in Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*.

540. "I will put in the wilderness cedar*s*, acacia*s*, myrtle*s*, olive tree*s*; I will *make great* in the desert cypress*es*, plane*s*, and pine*s*, together" (Tg. Neb. Isa 41:19).

ing *Vorlage* that matched 1QIsaᵃ, which reads ארזיד.[541] In 7:19, discussed in the section on thorns (3.4.2), a type of thorny plant (נעצוץ) is rendered with ξύλον.

3.6.1.2. Summary

In the Hebrew trees are often used in comparisons and metaphors for people. In 7:2, the shaking of the king and his people's hearts is compared to trees shaking in a forest; the Greek improves the style of this verse. In 10:17–19 wood is added and carefully crafted to make it represent people. In 56:3, a eunuch compares himself to a dry tree; the Greek improves the style by adding assonance. In 65:22 people's lifespans are said to be like that of a tree, but the LXX makes it specifically like the tree of life.

The opposite also is true, in that trees are sometimes personified in Isaiah as well as LXX Isaiah. In 44:23, trees and forest sing for joy, and in 55:12 the trees clap.

In 44:14 and 41:19, as we have seen, the LXX does not attempt to render all of the tree types accurately, probably for the sake of style. We will investigate specific types of trees further in the following sections.

The Targum renders similarly to the LXX in some cases. In 7:2, for example, it also uses two different verbs in the comparison, one for the hearts and another for the trees, though not to the same effect as the LXX. Also, the Targum understands the tree of life to be implied in 65:22. The Targum goes further than the LXX in interpreting trees as people in 10:17–19, rendering them as rulers, tyrants, armies, and survivors. In 56:3, though, the metaphor of the eunuch being a dry tree is softened into a simile. But unlike the LXX, the Targum lists all the specific trees in 44:14 (specifying a rare word for a kind of tree) and 41:19,[542] and it renders literally the trees and forests and mountains rejoicing in 44:23.

3.6.2. Oak/Terebinth

The Hebrew term איל occurs three times in Isaiah. BDB defines it as the terebinth (which is also its definition for אלה and אלון), while *HALOT* says

---

541. MT has אריוך דמעתי. The LXX does not seem to understand the trees or vines in this passage as metaphorical.

542. Cf. Zech 11:2, where the Targum interprets cypresses as kings and cedars as princes.

only that it is a mighty but unspecified tree.[543] *DCH* lists אילים as the plural absolute form of אלה, which it defines as terebinth.[544] The Targum believes that they are different words, in that in Isa 1:29 אילים is rendered with אילן (tree) while in the next verse, 1:30, אלה is rendered with בטמה (terebinth). *DCH* defines אלון as an oak or other large tree.[545] In this section we will examine how these trees are rendered; after considering occurrences of איל, אלה, and אלון, I will offer a summary.

3.6.2.1. איל

> Isa 1:29
>
> כי יבשו מאילים אשר חמדתם ותחפרו מהגנות אשר בחרתם:
> For you shall be ashamed of the *terebinths* in which you delighted;
> and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen.
>
> διότι καταισχυνθήσονται ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν, ἃ αὐτοὶ ἠβούλοντο,
> καὶ ἐπῃσχύνθησαν ἐπὶ τοῖς κήποις αὐτῶν, ἃ ἐπεθύμησαν·
> For they shall be ashamed because of their idols, which they them-
> selves wanted, and embarrassed because of their gardens, which
> they desired.

The rendering of איל with εἴδωλον can be explained in various ways. On the level of word analysis, the translator could have read a form of אלהים (as in Num 25:2; 1 Kgs 11:2, 8, 33; Isa 37:19) or אלה (as in Dan 3:12, 18; 5:4, 23) or אליל (as in Lev 19:4, 1 Chr 16:26, Ps 97:7, Hab 2:18), since these words also can be rendered with εἴδωλον.[546] If the *Vorlage* was like 1QIsaᵃ, it would have read מאלים (cf. Exod 15:11 and Isa 57:5) and been rendered this way as an interpretation of "gods."[547] Another explanation, which is probably not mutually exclusive to the first, is that the LXX interprets מאילים as referring to the idols worshiped at sacred trees by way of metonymy. The translator probably wanted to make clear that idolatry is meant

---

543. BDB, s.vv. "אַיִל IV," "אֵלָה I," "אֵלוֹן I"; *HALOT*, s.v. "אַיִל II."

544. *DCH* 1, s.v. "אֵלָה I."

545. *DCH* 1, s.v. "אֵלוֹן I."

546. Ottley suggests the translator read אלילים or אלהים (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:110).

547. See Van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 215–16; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2509. 4QIsaᶠ has only מא[. Wagner thinks it most likely that the translator thought he saw the plural of אל (Wagner, *Reading the Sealed Book*, 219).

here. The same translation technique is used in 57:5, though here we have a defective spelling: אלים. It seems likely, though, that the translator knew the association between sacred trees and pagan worship, since in 27:9 and 17:8 he rendered אשרה with δένδρον, both with contexts of pagan worship places. In the next verse, 1:30, כאלה is rendered with ὡς τερέβινθος (see the section on leaves, 2.5.1).[548]

The Targum explains the verse by making explicit that the trees and gardens are places of idol worship, calling the terebinth מאילני טעותא, and the garden מגניאך טעותא.[549]

Isa 61:3

לשום לאבלי ציון לתת להם פאר תחת אפר שמן ששון תחת אבל מעטה
תהלה תחת רוח כהה וקרא להם אילי הצדק מטע יהוה להתפאר:

To provide for those who mourn in Zion—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.

δοθῆναι τοῖς πενθοῦσι Σιων δόξαν ἀντὶ σποδοῦ, ἄλειμμα εὐφροσύνης ἀντὶ πένθους, καταστολὴν δόξης ἀντὶ πνεύματος ἀκηδίας· καὶ κληθήσονται γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης, φύτευμα κυρίου εἰς δόξαν.

To that to those who mourn for Sion be given glory instead of ashes, oil of joy *instead of mourning*, a garment of glory instead of a spirit of weariness. They will be called generations of righteousness, a plant of the Lord for glory.

For our interests, this passage is notable in that אילי הצדק has been rendered γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης. Perhaps the translator thought אילי was from איל referring to men as in Exod 15:15 (though there the LXX renders it with ἄρχοντες, leaders).[550] Ottley believes γενεαί is an explanation of "oaks" as a symbol for the life of the righteous, but here generations are meant, not

---

548. For a detailed analysis of LXX Isa 1:29–30, see Wagner, *Reading the Sealed Book*, 215–22.

549. "For you shall be ashamed of the oaks *of the idols* in which you delighted; and you shall be *humiliated* for *your* gardens *of the idols in* which you *assemble*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 1:29).

550. 1QIsaᵃ has the first *yod* added above the line; also 4QIsaᵐ matches MT.

a long life or a fruitful or flourishing life.[551] Ziegler rejects the sugges-
tion that אבי was read and suggests that γενεαί was chosen as a parallel to
"planting," but from the examples he gives, 60:21 and 17:10, it is unclear
why it should be fitting.[552] Baltzer et al. suggest that the translator bor-
rowed from 61:4 in an attempt to avoid calling them oaks, since he knows
they are associated with idolatry (as we have seen).[553]

In any case, this rendering fits into the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE
ARE PLANTS. If roots are their ancestry and seeds or fruit are their off-
spring, then the tree itself can be the generations linking the two. The
parallel clause has a literal translation of a plant. Alec Basson believes tree
planting metaphors in the Hebrew Bible represent a person restored.[554] But
this metaphor seems to resonate much more with ideas of Israel's special
covenant relationship with God. They are separated from other nations
(like a vine or tree cutting) and are brought to a piece of land that has been
specially prepared for them, where they are carefully tended.[555] Basson is
partially correct, in that some of these metaphors are those of transplant-
ing a tree, removing it, and bringing it to a different land or back to the
original land.[556]

The Targum understands the oaks to mean the leaders (רברבי קשטא)
and the plant to mean the people (עמיה דיוי).[557] In Exod 15:15, where the
LXX understood the tree in this way, the Targum sees it as the strong,
תקיפי מואב.

3.6.2.2. אלה

The word אלה occurs only twice in Isaiah (1:30, 6:13), though in 41:28
LXX Isaiah renders the demonstrative pronoun אלה with εἴδωλον. We have
discussed 1:30 in the section on leaves (2.5.1). There the specific tree ter-
ebinth is mentioned (and literally translated as a terebinth in the Greek)

551. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:369.
552. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 171.
553. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2683–84.
554. Basson, "People Are Plants," 577–78.
555. Exod 15:17, 2 Sam 7:10, Isa 60:21, Jer 11:17, Jer 24:6, Ps 44:3, Ps 80:9, etc.
556. Ezek 36:36, Amos 9:15.
557. "To *confuse* those who mourn in Zion—to give them a *diadem* instead of
ashes, oil of joy instead of mourning, a prais*ing spirit* instead of *their* spirit *which was*
dejected; that *they* may call *them true princes,* the *people* of the LORD, that he may be
glorified" (Tg. Neb. Isa 61:3).

because it is highly resistant to drought, so the simile is rather strong, saying that its leaves wither and fall away.

Isa 6:13

וְעוֹד בָּהּ עֲשִׂרִיָּה וְשָׁבָה וְהָיְתָה לְבָעֵר כָּאֵלָה וְכָאַלּוֹן אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁלֶּכֶת מַצֶּבֶת בָּם זֶרַע קֹדֶשׁ מַצַּבְתָּהּ:

"Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a ter-ebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled." The holy seed is its stump.

καὶ ἔτι ἐπ᾽ αὐτῆς ἔστι τὸ ἐπιδέκατον, καὶ πάλιν ἔσται εἰς προνομὴν ὡς τερέβινθος καὶ ὡς βάλανος ὅταν ἐκπέσῃ ἀπὸ τῆς θήκης αὐτῆς.
And *again the tithe is* on it, and it will be plundered again, like a terebinth *and like an acorn when it falls from its husk.*

This verse presents interesting interpretive and textual problems. To begin, the second part of this verse is slightly different in 1QIsaᵃ: כאלה וכאלון אשר בשלכת מצבת במה זרע הקודש מצבתה. Brownlee suggests משלכת be read as a *hophal* participle, so the terebinth "is overthrown."[558] The other differ-ence is the reading במה where MT has בם. Brownlee suggests the phrase refers to cultic high places and translates it "the sacred column of a high place."[559] This reading, unfortunately, does not shed light on the LXX. The temporal conjunction ὅταν along with the active ἐκπέσῃ suggests the LXX *Vorlage* agreed with MT against 1QIsaᵃ, at least in this difference.

The LXX's lack of the last phrase has led some to suggest it was a later addition, sometime between the LXX and Qumran.[560] What likely hap-pened is that the LXX translator skipped the phrase מצבת בם זרע קדש by homoiarkton, but did translate מצבתה as ἀπὸ τῆς θήκης αὐτῆς.[561] If the

---

558. William H. Brownlee, "The Text of Isaiah VI 13 in the Light of DSIa," *VT* 1 (1951): 296–97.

559. Brownlee, "Text of Isaiah," 296–97. It seems this spelling could just be a long form of a 3mpl pronoun, as in Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, HSS 29 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 58, 62–64.

560. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 213. However, Seeligmann suggests that the phrase is authentic ("Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 213).

561. J. A. Emerton, "The Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah vi.13," in *Inter-preting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of E. I. J. Rosenthal*, ed. J. A. Emerton and Stefan C. Reif (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 89. See also Wild-berger, *Jesaja*, 234; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 48.

LXX *Vorlage* ended with מצבת בם, we would expect to see a preposition in the translation; so, αὐτῆς is from the pronominal ending on מצבתה.[562]

The Greek is ambiguous. It can mean either "like an oak when it falls from its grave/station" or "as an acorn when it falls from its husk."[563] As Troxel has suggested, the "acorn" reading is more likely, since the other place βάλανος occurs, Isa 2:13, it is in the phrase δένδρον βαλάνου.[564] Troxel finds the meaning of the terebinth simile obscure, but thinks the acorn simile is apt for people being plundered. But he reverses the action, saying "like an acorn deprived of its husk."[565] A better explanation of both similes is that of Van der Kooij, who explains the terebinth by saying it refers to the terebinth of 1:30, which there has shed all its leaves. The parallel simile of the acorn falling from its husk means that it falls from its rightful place; Van der Kooij points out that this is the regular meaning of ἐκπίπτω. He interprets the similes, then, to refer to the loss of position and power of the priesthood (referenced by the "tithe").[566]

According to Theophrastus, there is a tree peculiar to Egypt called ἡ βάλανος (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.1).[567] He says the tree gets its name from its fruit, which though useless in itself, has a husk that perfumers use (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.6). This does not help much with our simile, since the balanos tree's fruit does not fall from its husk. The Greek seems to be thinking of an acorn that falls out of its husk from a tall oak tree. The context is of the remnant in the land multiplying (6:12) only to be plundered again. The image of the terebinth could be that it has been cut and mangled for the resin it produces (Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 4.16.1–2; 9.1.2), but the tree recovered and is plundered of its resin again. The image of the balanos is that the acorns fall and are easily collected. The idea of the "seed" in the

---

562. Emerton, "Translation and Interpretation," 89.

563. For the former translation, see NETS; Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 193, where he says the translation "is rooted in the coagulated equation of מצבה with θήκη = gravestone, monument—which the translator, was, of course, perfectly familiar." For the latter translation, see LXX.D; Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 386–87.

564. Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 386–87. Theophrastus, however, refers to the tree just as ἡ βάλανος (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.1, 6).

565. Troxel, "Economic Plunder," 386–87.

566. Arie van der Kooij, "The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood," in *Let Us Go up to Zion: Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*, ed. Iain Provan and Mark J. Boda (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 74–75.

567. Cf. Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 150.

Hebrew may in part be reflected in the LXX translation's mentioning bala-nos fruit.

The Targum interprets the tenth as the righteous and the tree simile as being dry terebinths and oaks that have lost their leaves (כבוטמא וכבולטא דבמיתר טרפוהי), but which still have enough moisture to produce seed.[568]

3.6.2.3. אלון

We have already seen the two other places that אלון occurs in LXX Isaiah: 44:14 (where it is not rendered) and 6:13 (where it is rendered with βαλάνος). Outside LXX Isaiah, βαλάνος is used to render אלון three times (Gen 35:8 [twice], Judg 9:6 [also Judg A 9:6]),while δρῦς (not occurring in LXX Isaiah) is used eleven times.

> Isa 2:12–13
> כי יום ליהוה צבאות על כל־גאה ורם ועל כל־נשא ושפל: ועל כל־ארזי
> הלבנון הרמים והנשאים ועל כל־אלוני הבשן:
> For the Lord of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up *that he be humbled*; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan.
>
> ἡμέρα γὰρ κυρίου σαβαωθ ἐπὶ πάντα ὑβριστὴν καὶ ὑπερήφανον καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα ὑψηλὸν καὶ μετέωρον, καὶ ταπεινωθήσονται, καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν κέδρον τοῦ Λιβάνου τῶν ὑψηλῶν καὶ μετεώρων καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον βαλάνου Βασαν.
> For the day of the Lord Sabaoth will be against everyone who is insolent and haughty and against everyone who is lofty and high, and they shall be humbled, both against every cedar of Lebanon, of them that are lofty and high, and against every *balanos* tree of Basan.

---

568. "'And *one in ten they will be left* in it and *they* will *again* be for *scorching* like *the* terebinth or *the* oak, which *when their leaves drop off appear dried up, and even then they are green enough to retain from them the seed. So the exiles of* Israel *will be gathered and they will return to their land.' For the* holy seed is *their* stump" (Tg. Neb. Isa 6:13).

In 2:12, the Greek adds high or proud, μετέωρος (taken from the next verse), parallel to high, ὑψηλός, in order to define it.[569] This could have been done also because height, or being high (רום) was interpreted as being proud (ὑπερήφανος) in this verse. The association of height and pride underlies much of the tree imagery in Isaiah (as we saw in 10:33). The LXX may have omitted the second על כל in 2:12 for stylistic reasons or because his *Vorlage* matched 1QIsaᵃ.

In 2:13, the high and proud of the previous verses has now been imagined as tall trees. The LXX renders the metaphors literally. That the two adjectives used of these trees, ὑψηλός and μετέωρον, are used in the previous verse for people (and μετέωρον is an addition in 2:12) suggests the translator probably considered these trees to represent people.

The translation of the trees themselves is worthy of note. The cedar of Lebanon has been rendered literally (we will discuss this tree more below). Usually (ten times), אלון is rendered as oak, δρῦς, in the LXX. The Greek phrase δένδρον βαλάνου or "tree of the acorn," could be understood as a poetic way of talking about an oak, but this would be an unusual turn of phrase for the translator.[570] What seems a more likely explanation is that the translator means just what he says: ἡ βάλανος, the balanos tree which, according to Theophrastus, is native to Egypt (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.1).[571] Theophrastus's description of the tree also makes good sense in the context of this verse, in that he says they are stout and fair in their stature and useful for building ships (*Hist. plant.* 4.2.6).[572] So they are sizable trees and probably more familiar to the experience of readers than the cedars of Lebanon. Perhaps βάλανος is chosen here because it can also refer to part of a gate or its bars, as in Jer 30:9, and so could foreshadow the mention of high towers and walls in 2:15.[573] But it makes more sense to connect the trees with people and the hills and mountains in the following verses to the cities. The Damascus Document uses

---

569. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 61.

570. For the rendering of ברושים with ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου in 14:8, see below.

571. They in fact also live elsewhere in Africa as well as the Levant (Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 55, 150).

572. Hepper says they are stout and grow to a height of three meters (*Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 150). Alfred G. Bircher and Warda H. Bircher, *Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 53, say the timber is compact, easy to work, and resists insects.

573. *GELS*, s.v. "βάλανος."

some similar imagery for the high being laid low; in CD II, 19 we have the phrase ובניהם אשר כרום ארזים גבהם ("their sons who were as tall as cedars").

The Targum understands the lofty and high in 2:12 as proud people (גיותניא ורמי ליבא) and the cedar and oak of Isa 2:13 to refer to the kings of the peoples (מלכי עממיא) and tyrants of the provinces (טורני מדינתא).[574]

3.6.2.4. Summary

The LXX Isaiah translator does not render איל as one specific kind of tree, but does know that it is a kind of tree. In 1:29 he renders it as idols, probably knowing that a tree associated with idolatry is meant. As we mentioned above, in Isa 27:9 and 17:8 he renders אשרה with δένδρον, so he knows about sacred trees. Also, his rendering of איל with γενεά in 61:3 makes good sense as an interpreted metaphor if he thought the Hebrew meant a kind of tree. LXX Isaiah understands אלה to refer to the terebinth tree, translating it this way in 1:30 and 6:13. The word אלון, however, seems to be understood as a tree native to Egypt, the balanos tree, as it is interpreted in 2:12–13, though in 6:13 he uses acorn imagery.

The Targum interprets some references to oaks or terebinths, so that in 2:12–13 and 61:3 they are interpreted as tyrants and kings. Also, for the lofty and high of 2:12 the Targum makes clear that this refers to proud people. In 1:29, like the LXX, the Targum specifies that the trees are associated with idolatry, but rather than replacing the word for tree with "idol," it describes the tree as a "tree of idolatry." In 6:13 the strange terebinth simile is interpreted in light of 1:30 as a terebinth that loses its leaves, then another tree metaphor is added, which, though dry, can still produce seed.

3.6.3. Other Kinds of Trees

There remains several other varieties of trees used in Isaiah. In 60:13, three trees are mentioned: ברוש תדהר ותאשור rendered κυπαρίσσῳ καὶ πεύκῃ καὶ

---

574. "For *the* day *is about to come from* the Lord of hosts against all the proud and lofty *of heart* and against all the *strong-and they will be humbled* 13 and against all the *kings* of the Gentiles, *strong and hard,* and against all the *tyrants* of *the provinces*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 2:12–13).

κέδρῳ.[575] This passage is not metaphorical, but talks about the precious woods that will adorn the temple. The Greek renders לפאר (to beautify) as δοξάσαι, but this can mean nearly the same thing and does not mean the trees represent people.

Another tree that is mentioned in Isaiah is the fig tree: תאנה. We have already discussed the image of the leaves falling from the fig tree (34:4) in the section on leaves (2.5.1) and the early fig that is eaten right away in the section on flowers (2.4.1). The other two places it is mentioned are literal: in 36:16 they are mentioned by Rabshekeh in the context that if Jerusalem surrenders, everyone will enjoy the fruit of their own fig tree and vine; in 38:21 figs are mentioned as an ingredient in the salve Hezekiah is to apply to his boils. The LXX and Targum render both of these passages literally.

In 40:20, the word מסכן occurs, which could be a specific kind of tree or a reference to a poor person.[576] In any case, the LXX does not render the word, probably for stylistic reasons. The Targum renders it with אורן (laurel), perhaps thinking it was related to the word מסוכה (hedge), which occurs in Mic 7:4. This passage is not metaphorical.

The word ערבה, meaning willow, occurs twice in Isaiah. In 15:7 it is used in a place name for a valley, but the LXX renders it as a people: Arabians. We have already discussed 44:4 in the section on grass (3.2.2); willows are mentioned in both languages in a simile to show how the people will flourish; the willow is mentioned because they are commonly found near streams.

This section will discuss the following trees used in metaphors and similes in turn, ארז, ברוש and הדס, and זית, then conclude with a summary.

3.6.3.1. ארז

The cedar tree, ארז, is usually translated literally with κέδρος or κέδρινος in the LXX and also in LXX Isaiah, as we just saw with 2:13.[577] In 9:9 (Eng. 9:10) it is also rendered literally, although the passage is altered, and an

---

575. The only other place תאשור and תדהר occur in Isaiah is in 41:19, which we discussed above.

576. See *HALOT*, s.v. "מְסָכָּן," and *DCH* 5, s.v. "מְסָכָּן."

577. A few times it is rendered as a cypress, κυπάρισσος: Job 40:17, Ezek 27:5, 31:3, 31:8.

allusion to the tower of Babel is inserted.[578] The one exception to this is 16:9, where, assuming the Greek *Vorlage* was the same as 1QIsaᵃ, ארזיך is rendered τὰ δένδρα σου.

> Isa 14:8
> גם־ברושים שמחו לך ארזי לבנון מאז שכבת לא־יעלה הכרת עלינו:
> The cypresses exult over you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, "Since you were laid low, no one comes to cut us down."

> καὶ τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου ηὐφράνθησαν ἐπὶ σοὶ καὶ ἡ κέδρος τοῦ Λιβάνου 'Αφ' οὗ σὺ κεκοίμησαι, οὐκ ἀνέβη ὁ κόπτων ἡμᾶς.
> And the trees of Lebanon rejoiced over you, even the cedar of Lebanon, saying, "Since you fell asleep, *one who cuts* us down has not come up."

Of note for the current study in this passage is that ברושים has been rendered generically as the trees of Lebanon, ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου. The usual rendering of ברוש in LXX Isaiah, as mentioned above, is κυπάρισσος, as in 41:19, which is probably a correct identification of the tree.[579] The two terms for tree in parallel in the Hebrew are both tall conifers (useful for timber) that can be found in Lebanon.[580] Their asyndedic relationship may have seemed odd to the translator, so he rendered the first term generically as the trees of Lebanon, then gave the specific term as the singular (perhaps collective singular) cedar of Lebanon. He may have simply desired to reduce the number of trees mentioned, as in 44:14 and 41:19, so he did not give both specific names here. This passage is probably not a metaphor in the Hebrew, just an anthropomorphism or personification.[581] The actual trees would be glad (as if they were like people with emotions) that the king of Assyria will no longer cut them down (as he presumably boasts of doing in Isa 37:24, only there ברש is rendered with κυπάρισσος). In the Greek, likewise, it is an example of personification or anthropomorphism.

---

578. See Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:156; Seeligmann, "Septuagint Version of Isaiah," 191; Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 147–48; Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2529.

579. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 110.

580. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 112.

581. For the argument that the trees are not figurative, see Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:176.

The Targum sees the trees as representing leaders, and this time, those with property (cf. 9:9): אף שלטונין חדיאו עלך עתירי נכסיא אמרין.[582]

3.6.3.2. ברוש and הדס

We have already mentioned all of the passages that have a cypress, ברוש (14:8, 37:24, 41:19, 60:13), and those that mention the myrtle, הדס (41:19), except 55:13, where both trees occur.

> Isa 55:13
> תחת הנעצוץ יעלה ברוש תחת תחת הסרפד יעלה הדס והיה ליהוה לשם לאות
> עולם לא יכרת:
> Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the *nettle* shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the Lᴏʀᴅ for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.
>
> καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς στοιβῆς ἀναβήσεται κυπάρισσος, ἀντὶ δὲ τῆς κονύζης ἀναβήσεται μυρσίνη· καὶ ἔσται κυρίῳ εἰς ὄνομα καὶ εἰς σημεῖον αἰώνιον καὶ οὐκ ἐκλείψει.
> And instead of the brier shall come up a cypress, and instead of the *flea-bane plant* shall come up a myrtle, and the Lord shall be[583] for a name and an everlasting sign and shall not fail.

This verse speaks metaphorically of the conditions that will obtain if the people seek God again; it is a reversal of the curse from Gen 3. Instead of weeds, pleasant trees will sprout up seemingly spontaneously. The word נעצוץ occurs only twice in the Hebrew Bible, here and Isaiah 7:19. As discussed above, in 7:19 it is rendered simply as "tree." This could be because the translator understood the Hebrew term to refer to the *Ziziphus spina-christi*, which is a large thorny bush that sometimes grows as large as a tree.[584] Here, however, the translator uses στοιβή.[585] This plant, accord-

---

582. "Indeed, *rulers* rejoice *over* you, *the rich in possessions, saying, 'From the time that* you were laid low, no *destroyer* comes up against us'" (Tg. Neb. Isa 14:8).

583. Here NETS follows Rahlfs, which reads καὶ ἔσται κύριος, the preferred reading also of Baltzer et al. ("Esaias," 2:2672).

584. Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 276. It must be noted, however, that this plant is referred to as παλίουρος in Theophrastus, *Hist. plant.* 4.3.1–3.

585. For other meanings and uses of this word, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 10.

ing to Theophrastus, has thorns on the stem and fleshy leaves (*Hist. plant.* 1.10.4, 6.1.3).[586] The Hebrew and Greek terms probably do not refer to the same species, but both refer to a specific sort of thorny plant. The translation of ברוש with κυπάρισσος is accurate. The passage implies that the cypress is more desirable than the thorn bush. Perhaps the point of comparison is in the fact that thorns seem to sprout up everywhere that is untended; Theophrastus says cypress trees spontaneously generate after rain (*Hist. plant.* 3.1.6). Otherwise, the comparison could be of a small undesirable tree being replaced with a large and desirable tree.

The second weed that will be replaced by something better, סרפד, or a spiny nettle, is not the same thing as κόνυζα, a kind of stinky weed: the flea-bane plant.[587] Neither word occurs elsewhere.[588] The translation of הדס with μυρσίνη is accurate, as we saw in 41:19. The point of comparison between the weed and myrtle in the Greek probably has to do with aroma. Theophrastus specially notes how the κόνυζα has a strong smell and keeps animals away (*Hist. plant.* 6.2.6), while the myrtle has a very nice smell (*Hist. plant.* 6.8.5). This passage shows the translator was concerned about what plant or tree is being mentioned and why; for both comparisons he picks plants that have a logical, though antithetical, relationship.

The Targum understands these trees as representing people: חלף רשיעיא יתקיימון צדיקיא וחלף חייביא יתקיימון דחלי חטאה.[589]

3.6.3.3. זית

The olive tree, זית, is mentioned twice in Isaiah (17:6, 24:13) to illustrate the idea of a remnant in the image of the tree being beaten to harvest its olives. We already considered 17:6 in the section on branches (2.6.2).

---

586. While in Isa 55:12 the mountains and hills break into song and the trees clap hands when the people turn to God and he pardons them, Theophrastus says the στοιβή rejoices when put in sandy soil (*Hist. plant.* 6.5.2).

587. See Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2672; *GELS*, s.v. "κόνυζα."

588. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:353.

589. "Instead of *the wicked* shall *the righteous be established*; *and* instead *of sinners* shall *those who fear sin be established*; and it shall be *before* the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not *cease*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 55:13).

Isa 24:13

כִּי כֹה יִהְיֶה בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ בְּתוֹךְ הָעַמִּים כְּנֹקֶף זַיִת כְּעוֹלֵלֹת אִם־כָּלָה בָצִיר׃

For thus it shall be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is ended.

ταῦτα πάντα ἔσται ἐν τῇ γῇ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὃν τρόπον ἐάν τις καλαμήσηται ἐλαίαν, οὕτως καλαμήσονται αὐτούς, καὶ ἐὰν παύσηται ὁ τρύγητος.

All these things shall be on the earth, in the midst of the nations; just as when someone gleans an olive tree, so shall people glean them, even when the *grape* harvest has ceased.

The Hebrew image of this passage refers to the same situation as in 17:6, or even to that passage itself.[590] The idea of the beaten olive tree and the gleaning after the harvest is that just a few will be left. The Greek removes the notion of the tree being beaten and focuses on the idea of gleaning. The Greek, as in 17:6, does not render that the tree is beaten. It could be possible that the translator here understood נקף to mean something like "to go around" and thought it referred to wandering through the orchard looking for the remaining olives.[591] But this does not explain the rendering in 17:6. It seems more likely that the translator has shaped the metaphor to express more clearly what he thought it meant, so he twice talks about gleaning the few remaining olives after the harvest. It is irrelevant how the tree was harvested (e.g. beating the branches). Whereas the Hebrew image is of a few olives abandoned and alone in the orchard, ready to be taken by passing people, the Greek image is of the olives being gleaned by the nations even after most have already been carried off by the harvest. Also, the Hebrew has two similes, while the Greek has a simile and an explanation.[592]

The Targum again, as in 17:6, explains the olive-gleaning image as referring to the righteous being left behind among the nations, using the same phrase: יחידאין צדיקיא בגו עלמא ביני מלכוותא.[593] As in the LXX, though, the tree is not beaten, just gleaned.

---

590. For a detailed analysis of 24:13, see Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 68–70, 138–40.

591. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT.

592. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2565.

593. "For thus shall *the righteous be left alone* in the midst of the *world* among

3.6.3.4. Summary

The LXX Isaiah translator seems to consider why various specific trees are mentioned. While we have seen already that he tends to cut back and generalize lists of trees (44:14, 41:19, 14:8, though not in 60:13) he is still careful in identifying the specific tree that the Hebrew mentions and rendering it accurately. This accuracy is probably because the metaphorical language is often based on features characteristic of the specific tree mentioned, such as figs losing leaves (34:4), willows growing near streams (44:4), cedars being prized for timber (14:8, 37:24), or olive trees holding a few olives despite attempts to harvest them (17:6, 24:13).[594] This is seen even further in 55:13, where the translator specifies generic words for weeds as specific plants that are logically antithetical to the trees mentioned, highlighting the contrast.

These other kinds of trees are all interpreted as people by the Targum: in 14:8 the cypresses are the leaders and the cedars those rich in property; in 55:13 the bad plants are interpreted as wicked people, and the good plants replacing them are good, righteous people; and in 24:13 the olives left in the tree are the righteous.

3.6.4. Thickets and Woods

Related to trees, thickets or woods are also used metaphorically. The word סבך means underbrush or thicket; it always occurs with יער in Isaiah, which also means thicket but can mean wood or forest as well. In this section we will first look at the relevant texts, then offer a summary.

3.6.4.1. Texts

We have already examined the occurrences in Isa 7:2, 10:18–19, 44:14, and 44:23, and the term is not used metaphorically in 21:13.[595]

---

the *kingdoms*, as the *stripping of the* olive tree, as gleanings *after* vintage" (Tg. Neb. Isa 24:13).

594. Cedars are prized for timber also in 9:9 (Eng. 9:10).

595. In 56:9, a forest is mentioned as a place from which wild animals come to prey on Israel (imaged either as a flock or perhaps some sort of a field) because its watchmen are incompetent.

Isa 9:17 (Eng. 9:18)

כי־בערה כאש רשעה שמיר ושית תאכל ותצת בסבכי היער ויתאבכו גאות
עשן:

For wickedness burned like a fire, consuming briers and thorns;
it kindled the thickets of the forest, and they swirled upward in a
column of smoke.

καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἡ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται
ὑπὸ πυρός· καὶ καυθήσεται ἐν τοῖς δάσεσι τοῦ δρυμοῦ, καὶ
συγκαταφάγεται τὰ κύκλῳ τῶν βουνῶν πάντα.

And the transgression will burn like a fire, and like dry grass will
it be consumed by fire, and it will burn in the thickets of the forest
and devour everything around the hills.

We have already discussed this passage partially in the section on thorns
(3.4.1). In the Hebrew, wickedness burns various flammable things (which
we learn are the people in the next verse), but the Greek, due to standard
translation equivalents, makes wickedness into lawlessness, and renders
בערה as passive: καυθήσεται. While the simile "like fire" is preserved, the
action is reversed. The translation of שמיר ושית with ἄγρωστις ξηρά is prob-
ably to make clearer the idea of something very flammable burning.[596]

The picturesque image of columns of smoke is rendered quite differ-
ently in the Greek. Ziegler believes the last phrase was difficult for the
translator, so he rendered it parallel to the previous phrase.[597] He also
points out the related passages in Jer 21:14, LXX 27:32 (MT 50:32), and Ps
82:15 (MT 83:15).[598] The reference to hills probably comes from suppos-
ing גאות could refer to hills (as Ziegler thinks), or perhaps seeing גיא and
thinking the space around hills.[599] As we have seen already, LXX Isaiah
knows that typically forests and hills are related in Judea, so perhaps the
mention of a forest (יער) was warrant enough to add the hills (as in 10:18
and 44:23).[600]

---

596. We discussed the translation of שמיר ושית in the section on thorns (3.4.1).

597. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109. He offers possible readings for the individ-
ual words.

598. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 110.

599. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109. 1QIsaᵃ agrees with MT.

600. As Ziegler notes, *Untersuchungen*, 109. For wooded hills, see Hepper, *Illus-
trated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, 39–40.

The simile of the people being like fuel for a fire has been trans-formed to compare them to fuel that has been burned by a fire. This is probably due to reading כמאכלת as a passive form of a participle instead of as a noun. It could be a part of all the passive verbs the Greek has in this passage.

A result of the transformations in this passage is that the people are not as strongly tied to the thorns/grass and forests that burn. In the Greek the land is more clearly destroyed and the people are burned, while in the Hebrew the people were burned as fuel like thorns and forests.

The Targum understands "wickedness" to mean the retribution for their sins (פורענות חוביהון הטאיא).[601] The rest of the verse is more difficult to equate to the Hebrew, but it seems to interpret the weeds and forests as people (וחייביא תשיצי ותשלוט בשאר עמא ותשיצי סגי משריתא).

Isa 10:34

ונקף סבכי היער בברזל והלבנון באדיר יפול:

He will hack down the thickets of the forest with *iron*, and Leba-non with its majestic trees will fall.

καὶ πεσοῦνται οἱ ὑψηλοὶ μαχαίρᾳ, ὁ δὲ Λίβανος σὺν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς πεσεῖται.

And the lofty will fall by dagger, and Lebanon will fall with the lofty ones.

We have dealt with 10:33 in the section about branches (2.6.2). There the LXX has interpreted the high branches and high trees as the proud rather than as the Assyrians suggested by the Hebrew context (10:24). In 10:34 the LXX continues in this interpretation, calling the thickets and forests simply the high, and it likewise associates the trees of Lebanon with people.[602] It is interesting to note that the metonymy "iron" has been inter-preted explicitly to mean a sword, since people are being cut down, much like the NRSV interprets it to mean axe, since it cuts trees. Also, the Greek is careful to translate the first preposition ב as a dative of means, but the

---

601. "For *the retribution of their sins* burns like the fire, it *destroys transgressors and sinners*; *and* it will *rule* over *the remnant* of the *people* and *destroy the multitude of the armies*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 9:17).

602. If we allow the wisdom of Euthyphro to overtake us, like it overtook Socrates in *Cratylus*, we may suppose ὑψηλός is a fitting word since it contains ὕλη (forest).

second one gets a preposition in Greek to specify that the relationship is different than in the first clause.[603]

The Targum interprets the trees to refer to warriors: ויקטיל גיברי משריתיה דמתגברין בברזלא ועבדי קרביה על ארעא דישראל יתרמון.[604]

> Isa 22:8
>
> ויגל את מסך יהודה ותבט ביום ההוא אל־נשק בית היער:
> He has taken away the covering of Judah. On that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest.
>
> καὶ ἀνακαλύψουσι τὰς πύλας Ιουδα καὶ ἐμβλέψονται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ εἰς τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οἴκους τῆς πόλεως.
> And they will uncover the gates of Ioudas and look on that day into the choicest houses of the city.

In the Hebrew, the phrase בית היער appears to be the name of the building used as an armory, either because of the forest of spears or because it is the house of the forest of Lebanon mentioned in 1 Kgs 7:2. As Ottley notes, the Greek, however, reads it as עיר. This could be an interpretation of the passage, since πύλη seems to explain "covering." Ottley suggests נשק was thought to be something like נשכה, as in Neh 13:7, where it is used of a room in the temple, but this explanation seems unlikely.[605] Baltzer et al. suggest the verb was read and that kissing was somehow associated with the idea "choice."[606]

The Targum understands the phrase as referring to the treasury of the temple: על זין בית גנזי מקדשא.[607]

> Isa 29:17
>
> הלוא־עוד מעט מזער ושב לבנון לכרמל והכרמל ליער יחשב:
> Shall not Lebanon in a very little while become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest?

---

603. See Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:166.

604. "And he will slay the *mighty men of his armies who make themselves mighty* with iron, and *his warriors* will *be cast on the land of Israel*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 10:34).

605. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:211.

606. Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2559.

607. "He has uncovered *the hiding place* of *the house of* Judah, and *he has* looked in that *time upon* a weapon of the *treasure* house of the *sanctuary*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 22:8).

οὐκέτι μικρὸν καὶ μετατεθήσεται ὁ Λίβανος ὡς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ καὶ
τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ εἰς δρυμὸν λογισθήσεται;
Is it not yet a little while, and Lebanon shall be changed like Mount
Chermel, and Mount Chermel shall be regarded as a forest?

As we saw in 10:18, the word כרמל is associated with mountains, though
this time specifically with Mount Carmel.[608] In the Hebrew, the comparison
seems to be about the wild forest becoming a cultivated field and vice versa.
In the Greek, however, there seems to be a downgrade: Lebanon becomes
Carmel, and Carmel becomes just a forest, or perhaps thicket. Similarly,
32:15 says Carmel will be considered a forest, both in Hebrew and Greek,
though there this is after it has become wilderness.[609] In the Hebrew this
cryptic verse probably should be understood in light of the reversals in the
following verses, where the deaf hear, the blind see, and so forth. For the
Greek it makes best sense when understood with 29:20, where the lawless
and proud are destroyed.

The Targum agrees with LXX that it is talking about Carmel.[610] But
instead of it becoming a forest, it is inhabited as many cities: וכרמלא לקרוין
סגיאין יתיב.[611]

In one place, the LXX adds a word for forest where the Hebrew has
something else.

Isa 27:9

לכן בזאת יכפר עון־יעקב וזה כל־פרי הסר חטאתו בשומו כל־אבני מזבח
כאבני־גר מנפצות לא־יקמו אשרים וחמנים:

Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will
be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the
stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred
poles or incense altars will remain standing.

διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία Ιακωβ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία
αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ὅταν θῶσι πάντας τοὺς
λίθους τῶν βωμῶν κατακεκομμένους ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν· καὶ οὐ μὴ

---

608. In Isa 37:24 it has no equivalent in the Greek.

609. In 65:10 the place Sharon is rendered simply as a forest.

610. Chilton translates כרמלא as a fruitful field.

611. "It is not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall return *to be as* a fruitful
field, and the fruitful field will cause *many cities to be inhabited?*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 29:17).

μείνῃ τὰ δένδρα αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν ἐκκεκομμένα ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν.

Because of this the lawlessness of Iakob will be removed. And this is his blessing, when I remove his sin, when they make all the stones of the altars broken pieces like fine dust, and their trees will not remain, and their idols will be cast down like a forest far away.

The word δρυμός appears to be based on the beginning of the next verse: כי עיר בצורה בדד ("for the fortified city is solitary"; 27:10). Opposite from what we saw in 22:8, עיר is read as יער (as also in 32:19). Ottley suggests that ἐκκόπτω was a rendering of בצורה, supposing בצר "to cut off."[612] Or it was confused with נפצות; he also thinks μακράν is from בדד.[613] Ziegler agrees with the last point, but thinks ἐκκόπτω may have come from seeing a form of כרת. He rejects that the phrase could have been a plus in the *Vorlage*, showing other passages that associate the destruction of idols with ideas of cutting them down.[614] The meaning of the simile "like a distant forest" may have to do with the idea of going to great lengths to acquire wood, such as for Solomon's temple; so that the great effort to travel and cut them down would be considered valuable.

The use of δένδρα to render אשרים is unique to LXX Isaiah (also seen in 17:8).[615] The most common equivalent is ἄλσος (a grove). The choice of δένδρα is interesting, since in the next clause we read of the idols being cut down like a forest. The simile כאבני־גר is rendered freely: ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν, a phrase known from classical literature.[616] Ziegler shows that elsewhere גר is rendered with κονία.[617]

The Targum renders אשרים with a cognate and emphasizes that they will not be raised up again. It preserves the city in the next verse, though not as a simile.[618]

---

612. Also Baltzer et al., "Esaias," 2:2573.

613. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:235.

614. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101–2. 2 Chr 15:16, 28:24, 34:7, Mic 1:7, Exod 34:13, Deut 7:5, and 12:3.

615. But in 17:8 in A, ἄλσος is used.

616. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:235. He points out Homer, *Il.* 23.505, and Sophocles, *Ant.* 256.

617. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101.

618. "Therefore by this the *sins of the house* of Jacob will be *forgiven*, and this will be the full *effectuation* of the removal of his *sins:* when he makes all the stones of *the*

3.6.4.2. Summary of Woods and Thickets

The LXX seems to associate hills with forests, adding them in 9:17 (Eng. 9:18), 10:18, and 44:23. Similarly, כרמל is associated in LXX Isaiah with Mount Carmel and forests in 10:18, 29:17, and 32:15. Occasionally, LXX Isaiah turns cities into forests (27:9, 32:19) or forests into cities (22:8), perhaps for lexical reasons. The metaphoric value of a forest can be people, as in 10:34 and perhaps also in 9:17 and 29:17.

The Targum is more likely to associate trees with kinds of people, as in 9:17 and 10:34. On at least one occasion it turns a forest into a city, or rather, a village (29:17). Asherim are rendered with a cognate in the Targum of 27:10, and most of the passage is rendered literally. The forest of weapons in 22:8 is interpreted as the temple treasury.

3.6.5. Summary of Trees

As we can see, the LXX Isaiah translator treats tree metaphors in a variety of ways. Usually he does not change a metaphor simply due to the difficulty of the metaphor itself in the target language, but for other exegetical concerns. The distance the translator takes the image away from being a literal rendering varies.

In some places the translator is willing to preserve the metaphor in his translation or to use it with only slight modifications. For example, in the two places where trees are personified, 44:23 and 55:12, the translator makes some modifications but lets the image stand.

In a few places, the translator appears to make modifications for the sake of style. For example, in 41:19 the translator cares more about a terse style than in listing the seven kinds of trees mentioned (also 44:14). In 56:3 and 57:5, equivalents for trees are made that are unusual in themselves but create alliteration in the translation. In 7:19 the word order is changed to create a better topical logical flow.

Sometimes the translator is a little more active and careful in his translation, shaping it to more effectively express what he thinks it aims to express. For example, in 7:2 the translator clarifies that the people are amazed and adjusts the metaphor to show how the tree shaking repre-

---

alter like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or sun pillars will *be established*" (Tg. Neb. Isa 27:9).

sents this. Likewise, in 1:30 the translator is very careful to show that the people will be like the tree losing its leaves, not like the leaves themselves. In 55:13, the translator is attentive to the different kinds of plants and their relationships and renders with plants that have a logical antithetical relationship (such as the foul- and sweet-smelling plants). Similarly, in some cases the translator appears to render freely for the sake of clarity. In 1:29 and 57:5 trees are rendered as idols to make clear what the passage means (though as we discussed, these could be simply lexical issues). In 2:12–13, the translator appears to use a tree that would have been more familiar to his Egyptian audience than the usual tree would have been. Also, in 24:13 the translator seems to want to avoid equating the cypress with the cedar or to suggest they are the only trees of Lebanon.

The translator sometimes goes further, modifying the passage to better express his understanding of the meaning of the metaphor. In 2:12–13, the translator is less subtle than the MT in equating the high and arrogant with the trees; the LXX adds an adjective which ties these closer together. In 10:19 he makes a similar exegetical move this time by omitting a reference to trees, letting a pronoun refer to people in the sentence instead. In 10:34 the reference to thickets is rendered by a reference to the high, and the iron is made a sword, showing the translator understands these trees to refer to people. The translator goes even farther in 61:3, where he interprets the terebinth tree as representing generations and thus gives what he perceives to be the meaning of the metaphor. In 65:22 the translator changes the simile dramatically from comparing a long lifespan to a tree, to saying people will live like the tree of life.

In 6:13, the translator offers a different simile; rather than describing how the people will be like a tree that is cut down, leaving a stump, the translator talks about an acorn falling from its husk. In 9:17 the LXX may remove the metaphor referring to actual land being ravaged. In 27:9 a simile is added, though it is the result of reading the text differently.

While few of the tree metaphors are rendered in a rigidly literal fashion, usually the translator is subtle in his renderings, clarifying and nuancing them to better express what he thinks they mean. In a few cases, for whatever reason, the translator is bolder in modifying the metaphor or removing it to express his own ideas.

The Targum renders similarly to the LXX in several cases, as we have seen. In 7:2, different verbs are used for the trembling hearts and trees comparison. In 65:22 both believe the tree of life is meant. In 10:17–19, the high and types of trees are interpreted as people, though the Targum

is more explicit than the LXX. In 1:29 the LXX replaces trees with "idols," while the Targum calls them "trees of idolatry" (the Asherim are rendered literally by the Targum in 27:10). And in 29:17 both turn forests into cities.

The Targum has a marked tendency to explicitly interpret tree metaphors as referring to various types of people (often rulers), as can be seen in 2:12–13, 9:9 (Eng. 9:10), 9:17, 10:17–19, 10:34, 14:8, 55:13, 61:3. Similarly, it makes clear that the olives left after gleaning in 24:13 are the righteous (also 17:6).

But the Targum does not have the same stylistic concerns as the LXX, so in 41:19, 44:14, and 44:23 the various types of trees are all listed and rendered literally. In 6:13, where the LXX renders literally and adding assonance, the Targum renders the metaphor as a simile. Two strange metaphors are also dealt with differently in the two translations: the terebinth cut from its station is interpreted in light of 1:30 as losing its leaves (LXX has the acorn fall from its husk), and then a simile is added of a dry tree having moisture enough to produce seed. The house of the forest in 22:8 is interpreted as the temple treasury by the Targum, while the LXX rendered generally as the choice houses of the city.

3.7. Chard

In one place the LXX changes a simile to contain a reference to beets or chard.

> Isa 51:20
> בניך עלפו שכבו בראש כל־חוצות כתוא מכמר המלאים חמת־יהוה גערת
> אלהיך:
> Your sons fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an antelope in a net; they are full of the wrath of the Lord, the rebuke of your God.
>
> οἱ υἱοί σου οἱ ἀπορούμενοι, οἱ καθεύδοντες ἐπ᾽ ἄκρου πάσης ἐξόδου ὡς σευτλίον ἡμίεφθον, οἱ πλήρεις θυμοῦ κυρίου, ἐκλελυμένοι διὰ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ.
> Your sons are the ones perplexed, who lie down at the head of every street like a half-cooked *chard*, who are full of the wrath of the Lord, made feeble by the Lord God.

In the Hebrew, the idea seems to be that the sons fainted from exhaustion, so they lie out at the head of every street like an antelope (if this is the meaning of תוא) that has been chased into a net and is exhausted from the chase and the struggle in the net.

The Hebrew עלף is translated differently in each of its occurrences, so not much can be made of it being rendered with ἀπορέω. Ottley suggests ערפו was read since the same word is used as an equivalent 5:30.[619] Perhaps the term was understood and contributed in part to the use of ἐκλύω below, which is a unique rendering of גערה. The choice of ἐκλύω captures the idea of losing courage that the context of 30:17 suggests, and the word can mean to be weary, perhaps under the influence of עלף. The extending of the divine name in the last clause often occurs in LXX Isaiah.[620]

Of note is that the simile כתוא מכמר was rendered with ὡς σευτλίον ἡμίεφθον. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion all render it literally, though they differ in the word used for net. 1QIsaᵃ has a different spelling but the same text: כתו מיכמר. The only other occurrence of תוא is Deut 14:5, where it is spelled תאו and rendered with ὄρυξ. Ottley seems to like the suggestion that the translator read כתאמד מר, understanding bitter herbs.[621] Ziegler surveys several of the suggestions of how this translation came about. Ziegler prefers the view that תיא (a kind of leafy plant) was read.[622] The word ἡμίεφθος probably comes from understanding מכמר as coming from כמר, which in Rabbinic Hebrew means to heat fruit.[623] In Isa 19:8, the LXX renders nearly the same word consonantally, מכמרת, with σαγήνη, though perhaps it was a guess from the context of fishermen and hooks. The remarkable rendering of this simile in 51:20 is probably due to reading the text differently and not a desire to substitute a new metaphor more accessible to the audience. What is most remarkable is that the translator ends up with a sensible and even vivid image: the exhausted youth lying like blanched chards.

The Targum harmonizes to Nah 3:10, interpreting that the sons will be dashed to pieces (rendering עלפו with מתרפין), thrown (רמן for שכבו)

---

619. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:341. See also Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 128.

620. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 39–40.

621. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:342.

622. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99. The Syriac agrees with LXX.

623. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99. Joosten argues that this could be an example of spoken words being confused for classical words ("Knowledge and Use of Hebrew," 119–20).

in the head of every street.[624] The simile is rendered כמזרקי מצדן ("like those cast in nets"), keeping the construct, but it only seems to understand מכמר. It is interesting that the first part of the verse is interpreted, but not the tricky simile.

3.8. Conclusions

Many individual points have already been made in the section summaries. Here I will reiterate the LXX Isaiah translator's independence and thoughtfulness in how he rendered metaphors. Also, I will point out some tendencies and issues that have arisen in this chapter.

This chapter has again shown that the cognitive metaphor PEOPLE ARE PLANTS is often at work in Hebrew plant metaphors as well as in LXX Isaiah. Of particular note here is how LXX Isaiah at times extends these and uses them to interpret. The clearest example is in 61:3, where the term "trees" is rendered as "generations," but it can also be seen where the translation adjusts the metaphor to express more clearly that people (often arrogant people) are meant, as in 2:12–13; 10:19, and 34. This interpretation is already to an extent in the Hebrew of Isaiah, and can be seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, particularly Judg 9:8–15 and Dan 4:20–22. A more culture specific cognitive metaphor, that Israel (or some subset) is God's vineyard, seems to underlie LXX Isaiah's understanding of many of the passages mentioning vineyards and vines; more specifically, LXX Isaiah often seems to have Jerusalem in mind (1:8; 3:14; 5:1–7, which in the Hebrew explicitly says the vineyard is the house of Israel; and 27:2–6).

The LXX Isaiah translator is very much aware of the relationship between plants and the environment in which they typically flourish. In the Hebrew of Isaiah we often see deserts flourishing with greenery (35:7, 41:18–19) and lush marshlands and cities becoming barren wilderness (19:6, 33:9, 34:9–15, 42:15). Ziegler has already pointed out the Egyptian nature of the translator's understanding of marshlands.[625] We can see this particularly in 19:6, where the translator adds a reference to a marsh

---

624. "Your sons *will be dashed to pieces, thrown* at the head of all the streets like *those cast* in net*s*; they are full of wrath *from* the LORD, rebuke *from* your God" (Tg. Neb. Isa 51:20).

625. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 189–90.

where reeds are mentioned.[626] Similarly, the translator's association of
fallow wastes and thorns reflects an Egyptian milieu.[627] This is particu-
larly apparent in how he rendered שמיר, as we have seen. The association
of grass and fields is not as clearly Egyptian, since grass usually had to
be cultivated in Egypt, while it is abundant in Judea. When discussing
forests, the translator will often add references to hills, both of which are
features more typical of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee (9:17 [Eng. 9:18],
10:18, and 44:23).

The LXX Isaiah translator is often careful to pay attention to the spe-
cific plants mentioned, since the metaphor itself often functions because
of qualities specific to that kind of plant. In 36:6, the LXX specifies that
crushed reed is meant, to emphasize its frailness using the same terminol-
ogy as in 42:3. We have seen that unlike the rest of the LXX, LXX Isaiah
uses χνοῦς for מץ, perhaps to distinguish more clearly between husks of
grain and straw. Lists of specific trees are reduced for the sake of style
(44:14, 41:19), but metaphors with specific species of trees are rendered
carefully with an eye for the quality of the tree in question, so that the tree
losing leaves in 1:30 is a drought resistant terebinth to illustrate extreme
dryness; but in 34:4 it is the fig that drops its leaves (or perhaps fruit) as they
actually tend to do, to illustrate stars falling; and willows are mentioned by
streams (44:4) where they are commonly found. A more dramatic example
of the translator taking qualities of specific plants into account is in 55:13,
where a word for weed is rendered as a specific kind of malodorous plant
to contrast the fragrant myrtle.

In several cases, however, the LXX Isaiah translator changes which
plant is mentioned in a metaphor. In the case of שמיר, as we have seen,
the translator does not seem to know it should mean thorn, but in three
places where fire is involved, renders it with words for grass (9:17, 10:17,
32:13). In 33:12, however, a different word for thorn is rendered literally
and is said to be burned up. In the only other place grass burns, 5:24, the
translator seems to have understood חשש as a verb meaning "to burn."[628]
Another exchange from one plant to another is the case of stubble (קש),
which is rendered literally with καλάμη in 5:24 (where it is burned), but in
47:14 where it is again burned, it is rendered with φρύγανον. In two cases,

---

626. Oddly, LXX Isa 33:9 mentions "marshes" but does not have the MT's "desert"
(they are not equivalents).

627. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179–81.

628. The other occurrence of חשש in 33:11 has no clear equivalent.

stubble is also rendered φρύγανον in the context of being blown by the wind (40:24 and 41:2). As we have argued in 3.3.2.1.4, the translator seems to have taken context into account and so uses φρύγανον to express better the meaning of the passage. So, where the translator does change which plant is mentioned in a metaphor, it is due either to having a different conception of the word's meaning (as is the case for שמיר and חשש) or to his attempt to maintain rich metaphors with connections to the passage in which they occur (as in the case of קש).

This chapter has shown that while there are indeed some probable textual differences in the *Vorlage* and cases where the translator has understood words differently than modern scholars, in many cases the translator adjusts the language of metaphors to communicate clearly in Greek what he believes the image means.

4
Conclusions

This study examined how the plant metaphors of LXX Isaiah were rendered. It has taken a topical approach, focusing on the vehicles used in similes and metaphors. Already each chapter has conclusions of the various features of the translation; what remains to be discussed are the broader issues and implications of this research. In this final chapter we will first review and discuss the various metaphor translation strategies adopted by LXX Isaiah to deal with plant metaphors, then review the findings of Ziegler in light of the present analysis. After this we will attempt to place LXX Isaiah within its Jewish context by noting some of its similarities and differences with Targum Jonathan's way of interpreting metaphors. Finally, we will return to the issue brought up in the introductory chapter regarding to what extent LXX Isaiah reflects Greek ideas about metaphors.

4.1. Metaphor Translation Strategies

The introduction (1.1.3) looked at some metaphor translation strategies proposed by several LXX scholars. We saw that LXX translators used various translation strategies to render metaphors into Greek. This section will look at the strategies the LXX Isaiah translator used to render plant metaphors. I have expanded the categories discussed above in order to describe more precisely how the translator renders metaphors. In addition, I have attempted to describe reasons a given strategy was adopted. As we will see, often there are multiple factors affecting why a given metaphor translation strategy was adopted.

4.1.1. Metaphors Translated with the Same Metaphor

We should begin by noting that often the translator has simply translated metaphors using the same vehicle but in the new language. But even in

places where a metaphor is translated with the same metaphor, there is room for some interpretation. We will list first passages where the metaphors are rendered literally with the same metaphor, then passages that, while preserving the same metaphor, are adjusted in some way, and, finally, passages where the same metaphor is used but has been adjusted for stylistic reasons in translation.

4.1.1.1. Literally Translated Metaphors

In several places the dead metaphor "seed" representing offspring is rendered literally. Often a parallel term for offspring makes clear that this is what is meant by seed, which facilitates this literal rendering, as in 57:3–4 and 61:9. The idea of the "seed of Abraham" is a conventional metaphor that alludes to Gen 12:7, 13:15–16, and other passages, so it is rendered literally in 41:8, as are its variations "seed of Jacob" in 45:19 and "seed that will be brought from Jacob" in 65:9. Similar is the idea that Israel's seed will be gathered from across the world in 43:5. In 1:4 the current people are called an evil seed (cf. 14:20 where the translator makes this an epithet for a particular person and his family), and it is rendered literally. As we have shown, classical Greek literature had analogous metaphors to these, so they are not entirely culturally specific conceptualizations and thus could be easily rendered.

Some more unique metaphors are also rendered literally, but original metaphors are in theory easier to translate, according to translation theorists.[1] In 36:6 a rod of crushed reed is literally translated as an image for unreliable Egypt, together with its explanation. A similar image in 42:3 is likewise preserved, though here the bruised reed will not be broken. In two places forests and trees are personified, being told to rejoice in 44:23 and exulting over a fallen "lumberjack" in 14:8.

A strictly literal translation technique should have resulted in this section being by far the longest, since most metaphors should have been rendered with the same metaphor. But the LXX Isaiah translator, as Ziegler has pointed out, did not feel bound to stay close to the *Vorlage* but would render metaphors freely.[2]

---

1. See Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.
2. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80.

4.1.1.2. Literally Translated Metaphors in Adjusted Passages

Sometimes, while the metaphor we are interested in has been preserved, other metaphorical aspects of the verse have been adjusted. In 44:3 the metaphor of offspring being a "seed" is maintained (perhaps due to explicit terminology mentioning offspring in the parallel phrase), but the metaphor of the spirit being poured out like water is rendered as just being "given" or "placed." In 45:25 a metaphor using "seed" to represent offspring is preserved, but is perhaps rendered twice or interpreted, in that in the Greek it is the "seed of the children of Israel" instead of just "the seed of Israel." In 11:1 the root of Jesse is rendered literally, but the Greek has a blossom grow from it rather than a branch. Similarly, in 37:31 the remnant is said to take root downward in both texts. But in the Greek, instead of bearing fruit above, it produces seed. In 24:7 the personification of the vine mourning is preserved, but the parallel wine languishing is rendered as mourning, probably for lexical reasons.

In two passages, the LXX preserves a metaphor literally but adjusts the language to point to how it should be interpreted. The high trees in 2:12–13 are brought down, but the Greek makes it clearer that people are meant by adding some adjectives that apply to people and not to trees. Also in 2:13, the specific kind of tree is interpreted as a different species. In 5:1–7, as we have seen, the metaphor is literally preserved, but the translator adjusts some elements, most notably adding references to the hedge and fence in 5:2; this creates more coherence with 5:5.

These examples show how imagery can be rendered literally, although the passage in which it occurs may have been shaped by the translator to one end or another. Also, it is a good illustration of the limits of my method; the translation of individual metaphors is truly best understood in the context of the text where it occurs.

4.1.1.3. Stylistic Adjustments

In a few places a metaphor is rendered with the same metaphor but has been improved stylistically. In 40:24 the vocabulary is reduced: גזע is rendered with ῥίζα.[3] A more obvious example is 59:21, where מפיך ומפי זרעך
ומפי זרע זרעך is reduced just to ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ

---

3. This could be considered a lexical issue, if the translator thought the word meant "root," or it could be a metonymic shift from a stump to a root.

σπέρματός σου, since seed can already include all subsequent offspring. Similarly, in 65:23 the LXX preserves the seed metaphor but omits the last clause of the verse "and their offspring as well," since it is unnecessary and prolix.

In Isa 40:6–8 the translator shows his skill in rendering a metaphor (and an accompanying simile) with the same metaphor (and simile) while at the same time improving it stylistically, as we have shown in 2.4.1. In 40:6 the metonymy "flesh" standing for humanity, which is unusual in Greek, is interpreted with subtlety by rendering a third-person pronoun referring back to it with "man." Also, the "flower of the field" is rendered as "flower of grass" to create more coherence in the passage. The passage as a whole features a metaphor, antithesis, and actuality, which are features Aristotle recommends for good style. So perhaps 40:7 was not accidentally dropped by parablepsis or homoioteleuton but was deliberately omitted because it was too crowded and stylistically frigid. In 56:3 the eunuch's metaphor describing him as a dry tree is preserved literally, but the style is improved by featuring assonance. A similar example where Greek word choice improves the metaphor is 55:13, where specific kinds of weeds are mentioned in the Greek that contrast logically with the pleasant plants, such as the spontaneously sprouting thorn and cypress and the fetid flea-bane plant replaced by the fragrant myrtle.

These passages show that the translator, even while staying close to his text by translating metaphors with the same metaphors, at times seeks to explain and make clear his translation to his audience using a pleasing style.

4.1.1.4. Conclusions

Given the number of examples this study has examined, that only the above eleven metaphors are rendered literally with the same metaphor seems like a rather small sample. Generally, even where the translator uses the same metaphor as the Hebrew, he tends to make adjustments to shape the passage or focus the meaning of the metaphor. So, even when the translator did render a metaphor with the same metaphor, he will often leave his mark in the translation.

4.1.2. Metaphors Translated with Different Metaphors

Translating a metaphor with a different metaphor is a well-known translation technique. But this technique can be taken up for different reasons.

Of the examples we have examined, there seem to be five reasons, which we will review in turn. First, a metaphor may be translated with a different metaphor for lexical reasons, understanding different words in the text. Second, the translator may have interpreted the metaphor by a metonymic shift. Third, the translator may wish to use more conventional metaphors known to his readers (or to create conventional metaphors in his text). Fourth, LXX Isaiah at times tries to find more vivid and dramatic metaphors than a purely literal rendering would have made. Finally, in at least one place the translator rendered a metaphor literally yet has altered what the metaphor represents. These categories can overlap to some extent, as I will point out.

4.1.2.1. Metaphors Changed for Lexical or Textual Reasons

In 33:2 and 48:14 it is almost unfair to say the metaphor is translated with a different metaphor, since it is apparent that the translator read זרוע (spelled defectively in MT in both places) as זרע and so rendered it with σπέρμα. In 11:1 and 40:24 the LXX Isaiah translator seems to understand גזע as referring not to a stump but perhaps a taproot, so he renders it in both places with ῥίζα. But the change from stump to root may have been done to make a metaphor that is more specific or clear, or it may even be an attempt at conventionalization toward other metaphors in Isaiah dealing with roots (such as 11:10, 14:29–30, 27:6, etc.), or perhaps it should even be considered a rendering with a metonymic shift.

A few more places should be mentioned here, since there is a lexical warrant to some degree for the translator to have used a different metaphor, though we prefer to classify these passages differently. In 27:4, as we will discuss below, the translator reads שמיר as an infinitive of שמר. In 3:14, the Greek metaphor is more vivid, since the translator understood בער (to graze, in the *piel*) as בער (to burn) and rendered it with ἐμπυρίζω. In 7:19, the word ξύλον could be from seeing נעצוץ and supposing עץ was meant.

4.1.2.2. Metaphors Changed by a Metonymic Shift

In some cases the translator uses a slightly different metaphor by choosing words metonymically associated. For example, in 11:1 and 40:24, as we have seen, there was a shift from "stump" to "root." The most obvious example of this technique was LXX Isaiah's unique interest in using

γένημα rather than the more common equivalent καρπός for rendering פרי when agricultural products are meant. We saw this in 32:12 and 65:21, where "produce" is in fact meant in the Hebrew, but also in 3:10, where a more extended meaning of "the result" is meant. This is interesting since classical Greek literature does have similar metaphors to those in Hebrew, using the word καρπός. Also peculiar is that in 27:9 the word תנובה, which ought to be translated γένημα (like in the other places it occurs in the LXX) is instead rendered with καρπός. Perhaps 11:1 could be classified here (or indeed as a shift with lexical warrant) in that נצר is rendered with ἄνθος.

4.1.2.3. Metaphors Changed to Conventionalize

Here I mean to suggest that at times the translator has rendered a metaphor with a different metaphor in order to create or expand references to a conventional metaphor. That is, the translator replaced some metaphors in his translation with metaphors found commonly elsewhere, either in LXX Isaiah or biblical literature more generally. This conventionalization, by repeating metaphors with similar or standard meanings, allows for his text to be more readily understood.

This tendency is seen most clearly with the use and introduction of metaphors using "seed" as a vehicle, perhaps because it is nearly a lexicalized metaphor. As we have shown, Isaiah uses "seed" in metaphors to represent offspring, families, or individuals (see 2.1). LXX Isaiah introduces "seed" metaphors for each of these already established meanings. In 37:31, where "bearing fruit" is mentioned to represent producing offspring, LXX Isaiah instead says that they will produce "seed." Similarly, in 14:30 the offspring (parallel to remnant) of the Philistines is referred to as their "root," but the LXX substitutes the metaphor "seed." In 14:29, "seed" is used in the Greek as the source of a particular person, while in the Hebrew he comes forth from a "root." In 14:20, while strictly speaking the LXX uses the same metaphor as the Hebrew, in translation the "seed" no longer represents a kind of people (evil seed) but refers to an individual evil seed and his family.

In two places the translator turns somewhat obscure metaphors into "seed" metaphors. In 31:9 the unique "fire" and "furnace" metaphors are rendered instead as the more conventional "seed" metaphor (meaning remnant or family member) and its interpretation: "kinsmen." In 57:7 the reference to "your flesh," meaning one's family, would sound strange in

Greek, so there, too, the translator picks the more conventional metaphor "seed."

In 27:10–11 the Greek abandons the unique metaphor of branches being stripped by calves, drying out, being broken, and being collected by women for a fire. Instead, since the idea of the metaphor is to show an abandoned fortified city, the Greek uses language more commonly occurring in Isaiah: that of lush green places drying up (such as in 15:5–6, 19:6–7, and 42:15).

4.1.2.4. Metaphors Exchanged for More Vivid or Dramatic Metaphors

At times the LXX Isaiah translator likes to substitute a different metaphor that is more vivid or dramatic than the Hebrew. The motivation for these substitutions is not always necessarily to make a more vivid metaphor.

In 3:14, possibly in part due to a lexical issue, as mentioned above, rather than leaders grazing God's vineyard, they burn it. In 27:4, likewise, there is some sort of lexical issue at work (as well as many other alterations in the translation), yet rather than having thorns and briers, the LXX substituted the metaphor of guarding a field of stubble.

In a few places the translator does seem to be deliberately using a more vivid metaphor. In 7:19, as shown above, there may be some lexical warrant; the translator seems to have interpreted a word for a kind of thorn bush as a tree to better fit the context of hiding places. In 11:1 the translator uses ἄνθος to render נצר, which more vividly shows the new life springing up from the root. Similarly, in the simile in 61:11, the earth does not just bring forth shoots, but in the Greek the translator has it grow flowers. In 28:1 and 4 the translator makes the fading flower more vivid by shifting from a description of the process of fading to a description of its having withered and fallen.

4.1.2.5. Metaphors That Have Had Their Tenors Altered

In at least two places the translator has rendered a metaphor with the same vehicle but has managed to change the tenor it represents in his translation. As mentioned above, in 11:10 the "root of Jesse" in the Hebrew could refer either to the royal line or to an individual, but in the Greek it is specifically an individual. A more definite example comes from 14:20; in Hebrew the "evil seed" refers to evil people in general or as a group of evil people, but in the Greek it refers to an individual and his family.

4.1.2.6. Conclusions

While indeed the above subcategories to an extent overlap, we can conclude, based on the sample, that the translator does not typically replace one metaphor with another because it is objectionable in some way but does seem at times to understand his text differently at the lexical level than we would. At times he is careful not to render a metaphor literally that will sound too strange in Greek (e.g., 57:7), though also he will at times avoid metaphors that have Classical Greek precedents and so should have been possible (as we have seen in his avoidance of καρπός). It would be interesting to see if further research showed other ways the translator has conventionalized metaphors in Isaiah. The true genius of the LXX Isaiah translator is his ability to interpret the Hebrew text while translating it largely literally, as can be seen in his altering the tenor of two metaphors while translating their vehicles literally.

4.1.3. Metaphors Translated with Nonmetaphors

Metaphors can be rendered with nonmetaphors in a variety of ways and for different reasons. First, we will look at some examples where idioms and dead metaphors are rendered so as to give a nonmetaphoric meaning, usually by giving the metonymic value of the Hebrew word. Second, we will examine puns and homonyms that are rendered either in line with the Hebrew or the homonym. Third, we will look at places where the LXX has rendered using the perceived meaning of the Hebrew metaphor. These three sections give order to how metaphors are rendered into nonmetaphors, but in nearly each specific example, different factors are at work in determining how the translator renders them.

4.1.3.1. Hebrew Idioms, Dead Metaphors, and Metonymies Rendered

In 4:2 ופרי הארץ is rendered simply with ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Ottley suggests that the LXX reads פני, but this would be a unique equivalence.[4] The translator transforms this entire verse to express his own ideas. The word פרי was probably dropped because of the translator's ideas about the verse or style, and not because of the state of his *Vorlage*.

---

4. Ottley, *Book of Isaiah*, 2:121. Ziegler suggests פני הארץ (על) (*Untersuchungen*, 108).

In 10:12 another idiom using the word פרי is removed. The Hebrew אפקד על־פרי־גדל לבב מלך־אשור is reduced to ἐπάξει ἐπὶ τὸν νοῦν τὸν μέγαν, τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν Ἀσσυρίων. If the fruit of the great heart is its results, pride, then the LXX saw no reason to render it in this clause, since later in the verse this is made clear. While the phrase פרי־גדל לבב is unique, it operates according to the idiomatic use of פרי.

The case of 13:18, however, is a matter of interpreting an idiom. The Hebrew ופרי־בטן לא ירחמו is rendered καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἐλεήσωσιν, though here it has a synonymously parallel phrase. This is a good translation of פרי־בטן, but in Gen 30:2, Mic 6:7, and LXX Ps 131:11 (MT 132:11) we find καρπὸν κοιλίας, and in LXX Ps 126:3 (MT 127:3) καρποῦ τῆς γαστρός.

A similar idiom is also interpreted in 14:29b. This time it is the fruit of snakes. The Hebrew ופריו שרף מעופף is rendered καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι. The verb יצא and the noun פרי are rendered twice by the Greek to balance the parallelism. Again the rendering of פרי with τὰ ἔκγονα is appropriate, and it is used elsewhere for renderings of fruit as the offspring of animals (Deut 28:4, 11, 51; 30:9).

In Isa 27:6 a metaphor of Jacob taking root and blossoming is rendered as a variation of the idioms in 13:18 and 14:29. The Hebrew הבאים ישרש יעקב יציץ ופרח ישראל is rendered οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ιακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ισραηλ. The translator reads ישרש as the noun שרש and renders it τέκνα.

In two places, the LXX Isaiah translator appears to give a literal rendering of what he perceives to be a metonymy. In 55:12 the translator renders וכל־עצי השדה ימחאו־כף with καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐπικροτήσει τοῖς κλάδοις. While the translator may have understood כף to be the same as כפה, meaning "branch" (though he never renders this word literally; see 9:13, 19:15) the translator may have simply thought it odd for trees to clap hands, so he adjusted it to branches, a shift that could be understood as metonymic, from one species to another species. An example quite different is 18:2, where a metonymy of the genus is perceived and the species is given. The Hebrew השלח בים צירים ובכלי־גמא על־פני־מים is rendered ὁ ἀποστέλλων ἐν θαλάσσῃ ὅμηρα καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βυβλίνας ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος. The translator seems to take כלי as meaning something like "an article, an object" and so gives it the more specific meaning "letter," ἐπιστολή, due to the context of sending messengers and hostages; nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is כלי used to refer to a boat. As Ziegler has pointed out, LXX Isaiah often renders כלי freely to

fit what is meant in the specific context, rather than rigidly rendering it with σκεῦος.[5]

While we can point out that LXX Isaiah sometimes interprets idioms, dead metaphors, and perceived metonymic statements, this observation is of limited value, since in most cases the immediate context seems to be the deciding factor for the rendering, not the idiomatic or metonymic nature of the statements themselves.

4.1.3.2. Puns and Homonyms

Puns represent a dilemma for translators: How can they offer both meanings of the word in the new language? Similarly, when presented with a word that has a homonym in an unvocalized text, the translator must choose between meanings.

In 10:33, a metaphor of the Lord trimming high branches is given for the arrogant being brought low. The LXX, however, renders מסעף פארה with συνταράσσει τοὺς ἐνδόξους. The translator seems to have understood מסעף in the sense of "divide" and פארה not as "branch" but "glorious people." Once this reference to branches being trimmed is gone, the remaining metaphor with a dual meaning of the high (branches/trees) must refer only to high people. The translator makes this clear, rendering ורמי הקומה גדועים והגבהים ישפלו with καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῇ ὕβρει συντριβήσονται, καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ ταπεινωθήσονται.

It would be easy to compile a long list of words taken with a meaning different from what modern scholars believe the Hebrew intended, but here are a few examples where the rendering of a word with its homonym has affected a metaphor.

In 60:21 the phrase נצר מטעו is rendered φυλάσσων τὸ φύτευμα. Rather than calling the people a shoot God planted (as in Exod 15:17), in the Greek the righteous people are in the land guarding the plant, the work of God's hands. In the Greek of 61:3, however, the people are called righteous generations, the plant of the Lord for glory, so perhaps in 60:21 the translator sees some group of leaders as those guarding the plant.

The LXX reads the noun צמח as the Aramaic verb צמח in 4:2. The result is that the "branch of the Lord," a metaphor of a messianic figure, is removed in the Greek. Instead of ביום ההוא יהיה צמח יהוה לצבי ולכבוד we

---

5. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83–84.

read τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπιλάμψει ὁ θεὸς ἐν βουλῇ μετὰ δόξης. The metaphor was technically removed, but it was not the result of the translator actively considering what to do about the metaphor.

Only 10:33 could be considered a possible pun. In these other examples the translator reads the text differently than the MT does and removes a metaphor mostly due to how the verse as a whole is understood.

4.1.3.3. Interpreting the Meaning of the Metaphor

In a few cases we can say with confidence that the translator has removed the metaphor and opted instead to state what he believes the metaphor meant.

The translator in 27:9 renders the "fruit" idiom as though it were a metaphor and gives what he believes it represents, so וזה כל־פרי הסר חטאתו is rendered καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

In 33:11 a metaphor of giving birth to straw is rendered with what the translator thinks it means. The Hebrew תלדו קש רוחכם is interpreted as ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. Elsewhere conceiving and giving birth to wind is rendered literally (28:18), and in 59:4 that the people conceive trouble and give birth to guilt is rendered literally. The interpretation of 33:11 is probably under the influence of 30:15 and Lev 26:20, where their strength is vain, as Ziegler points out.[6]

In two passages, 9:13 and 19:15, the same word pair is used in a merism but is interpreted in two different ways by the LXX. Isaiah 9:13 reads ויכרת יהוה מישראל ראש וזנב כפה ואגמון יום אחד and was rendered καὶ ἀφεῖλε κύριος ἀπὸ Ισραηλ κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, μέγαν καὶ μικρὸν ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ. The Greek seems to understand כפה ואגמון not as synonymously parallel to ראש וזנב but as an explanation of it. In the next verse it is explained that the leaders and prophets are meant by this metaphor, so the Greek has made it clear that all will be removed, great and small. But in 19:15 where the Hebrew reads ולא־יהיה למצרים מעשה אשר יעשה ראש וזנב כפה ואגמון, the Greek interprets καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἔργον, ὃ ποιήσει κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος. The Greek has made these word pairs the object of the verb (rather than describing the doer), so they no longer represent the leader's inability to lead but describe the disorderly state of Egypt. In each verse the translator has rendered the meaning of the metaphor in order to clarify what he thinks it means in its immediate context.

---

6. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

In 21:10 two metaphors are interpreted by the translator. The Hebrew מדשתי ובן־גרני is interpreted as οἱ καταλελειμμένοι καὶ οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι. The idea that being threshed is to suffer some sort of violence is clear enough (cf. Mic 4:13 and Hab 3:12, where it is a metaphor for military defeat). Also, the process of winnowing after threshing may have given rise to the idea of a remnant, though in 17:5–6 what is left in the field represents the remnant.

In three places tree metaphors are interpreted as referring to people. In 10:19, after two verses talking about trees of the forest, the phrase ושאר עץ יערו is rendered with καὶ οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἀπ᾽ αὐτῶν, making clear that these trees represented people. In 10:34 the translator interprets "the thickets of the forest" and "the majestic trees" both as "the lofty" (twice), and to make clear that these lofty ones are people, he specifies that they fall by the sword (μάχαιρα) rather than just by iron (ברזל). In 61:3 rather than calling those mourning in Zion "oaks of righteousness" the LXX calls them "generations of righteousness."

In 27:2–4 the vineyard metaphors have nearly all been removed and replaced with discussion of a besieged city. We have discussed this at length in 3.5.1.

4.1.3.4. Conclusions

While I have used the word *metaphor* rather broadly, these examples show that there are a variety of reasons why a metaphor can be rendered with a nonmetaphor. Giving a nonmetaphorical rendering of an idiom or dead metaphor is interpretation on a different level than giving the meaning of a metaphor. But also, some metaphors are removed because the translator reads the passage differently or understands a different definition of a word; this is not the same as interpreting the meaning of a metaphor. In each case the translator is carefully trying to render the verse at hand, looking at the immediate and more remote contexts to interpret. Further study is needed to see which idioms or sorts of idioms and dead metaphors are "acceptable" to be retained in the translation by various LXX translators. For example, as we have seen, idioms involving "fruit" are always removed by LXX Isaiah, but not by other LXX translators, while some other metaphors are conventionalized to "seed" in LXX Isaiah.

4.1.4. Translation of Nonmetaphors with Metaphors

On three occasions the translator introduced a plant metaphor where there was no metaphor in the Hebrew.

Two of these occasions involve words for a remnant being rendered with "seed." In 1:9 the word שריד is rendered with σπέρμα, perhaps following the precedent in Deut 3:3. In 15:9 פליטה is rendered with σπέρμα; usually in Isaiah it is rendered with a form of καταλείπω (4:2 and 37:31, where the parallel "fruit" is rendered "seed"), unless it is parallel to שאר, in which case it is rendered with a participle from σῴζω (10:20 and 37:32). As we discussed in 2.1.4. concerning these passages, LXX Isaiah seems to take seed and remnant as related ideas. In any case, "seed" is very nearly a dead metaphor in the LXX.

The third place a metaphor is introduced is in 24:7, though it is probably because the translator believes אבל means "to mourn," since this is also how he translates it in 24:4 (where it is again parallel to אמל). The addition of this metaphor, then, is most likely due to the translator's understanding of the vocabulary and not due to concern for style or expression.

4.1.5. Merging of Multiple Metaphors

In at least three places the translator merged metaphors together. In 35:7 the Hebrew has four transformations: sand becomes a pool, thirsty ground becomes springs, the haunt of jackals becomes a swamp, and grass becomes reeds. The Greek, however, only has the first two transformations (altered somewhat in translation) then describes what the marshy springs will be like: the joy of birds and a residence for reeds and marshland. Perhaps the translator wanted to reduce the number of parallel images, so he opted instead to describe the pleasant scene resulting from the transformations.

In 37:27, the Hebrew has what may be three implied similes: that the inhabitants become plants of the field, tender grass, and grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. The Greek, however, condenses these down into two similes (perhaps under the influence of היו), so they are like dry grass on housetops and like wild grass.

In 40:6, a passage with several interesting renderings, a metaphor and a simile (all flesh is grass; their constancy like the flower of the field) are merged so that all flesh is grass and the glory of man like the flower of grass. By mentioning grass in the simile instead of the field, the two images are

tied more closely together. This is still implied in the Hebrew (especially in 40:7, where the grass and flower fade), but it is explicit in the Greek.

4.1.6. Metaphors Omitted

In two cases LXX Isaiah omits a plant metaphor, giving no equivalent for it. In 40:7 the metaphor that all flesh is grass is repeated in the Hebrew, but the LXX omits this verse. It could be due to parablepsis or homoioteleuton, but it could also have been done for stylistic reasons. In 42:15 LXX Isaiah omits a clause describing herbage (עשב) drying out, probably for stylistic reasons, that is, to reduce nearly identical elements.[7]

4.1.7. Translation of Metaphors with Similes

As noted in the introduction, Demetrius suggests using similes instead of metaphors if they are "too bold" (*Eloc.* 80, 85). As I will show below (4.3.3), when LXX Isaiah renders metaphors as similes, it is not because they were too bold (with the possible exception of 50:3).[8] Yet the translator does sometimes render metaphors with similes, as Ziegler has discussed.[9] In some cases the simile is implied in the Hebrew. In others the translator has at least some lexical warrant for using a simile. In still other cases the translator has introduced similes due to exegetical considerations.

4.1.7.1. Similes Implied in the Hebrew

The terse style of Hebrew poetry often omits particles and conjunctions, so at times a simile is probably implied even though there is no comparative marker. In 37:27 the Hebrew has no comparative marker, but the LXX adds one, perhaps under the influence of היה, since often היה ל- constructions are interpreted as similes in LXX Isaiah.[10] Even modern English translations (e.g., NRSV, ESV) render these metaphors in 37:27 as similes. The same issue seems to be at work in 33:12, where we find overly terse poetic statements that seem to imply a comparison and also feature the presence of היה, so the Greek has made it into a simile. In 51:12 the phrase ומבן־אדם

---

7. See Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 197–99.

8. And arguably 55:8.

9. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–93.

10. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

חציר ינתן is translated with a simile in modern translations (e.g., NRSV, ESV) as well as in LXX: καὶ ἀπὸ υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οἳ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν. The translator has made this clause clear by making it a simile and explaining what exactly he thinks ינתן means.

In 9:17 (Eng. 9:18) the Greek adds a simile, probably believing it is implied by the parallel clause's having a simile: καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἡ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται ὑπὸ πυρός. Only it is not a parallel clause (unless it is climactic parallelism), but a continuation of the simile in Hebrew: כי־בערה כאש רשעה שמיר ושית תאכל.

4.1.7.2. Lexical Warrants for Translating with a Simile

We have already seen that in 37:27 the translator may have thought he saw a lexical warrant for using a simile. In 1:31 it is clearer, in that ל־ היה is rendered with a simile. Again, some modern translations (e.g., NRSV, ESV) tend to see similes in this verse as well. Similarly, in 41:15 a comparative marker is added where the Hebrew has ל. Perhaps it makes better sense in Greek to say they will be made like threshing sledges than to say they will be made into threshing sledges. The issue of ל־ היה constructions being rendered with ὡς could just be a matter of Greek syntax and not a matter of concern for rhetorical style.

Another example is in 44:4, where וצמחו בבין חציר is rendered as though ב were כ: καὶ ἀνατελοῦσιν ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος. This could be the result of the *Vorlage* matching 1QIsaᵃ, which reads כבין. But as Ziegler has pointed out, sometimes where MT has ב LXX Isaiah has read it as a comparative marker.[11]

4.1.7.3. Similes Introduced Due to Exegetical Considerations

In two places the translator introduces a simile in order to express more clearly what the translator thought the passage meant. In 5:6 the translator introduces a simile that thorns will come up as in a dry land. This is done in part due to the translator's unique ideas about the meaning of שמיר ושית, but also to distinguish the thorns overcoming the abandoned vineyard from those being produced by it in 5:2 and 4. In 10:17 another metaphor with the words שמיר ושית is rendered with a simile. The Hebrew

---

11. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

metaphor emphasizes that God will burn the thorns and briers of the king, but the Greek introduces a simile to show how violently or quickly they will be consumed: like they were dry grass.

4.1.7.4. Conclusions

Generally, LXX Isaiah appears to render metaphors as similes only where he believes a simile is actually meant, either by being implied or because he thought he saw (or did see in his differing *Vorlage*) a comparative marker. The case of the construction ל- היה deserves further investigation; perhaps the translator does in fact render this appropriately by using a comparative marker. In the only two places where the translator's exegesis is the deciding factor, it is probably because of the word pair שמיר ושית, to which he has his own unique approach everywhere it occurs.

4.1.8. Translation of a Simile with the Same Simile

Again, a generally literal translation technique of the translator should have resulted in the majority of similes being translated literally. Also, if similes are "safer" than metaphors, as Demetrius says (*Eloc.* 80, 85), there should be less need to find alternative ways of expressing them in a new language. But as we will see, even where similes are rendered with the same simile, the LXX Isaiah translator will often make slight adjustments to the simile or its passage, and at times he will expand the simile.

4.1.8.1. Literal Renderings of a Simile with the Same Simile

Not much needs to be said about the simile literally rendered. The three similes in 1:8 (like a booth in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city) are all rendered literally. In 48:19, the well-known simile alluding to God's promise to Abraham in Gen 22:17 that "your seed will be like sand" and its parallel "like dust" are rendered literally. In 66:14 a strange simile of bones flourishing like grass is rendered literally; דשא is rendered with βοτάνη probably for its positive connotations. One of the similes in 5:24, ופרחם כאבק יעלה, is rendered literally as καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται. In both the Hebrew and the Greek of 65:25, the lion eats straw like the ox (but the similar simile in 11:7 is not rendered as a simile).

4.1.8.2. Slightly Adjusted Similes

Sometimes the translator makes various sorts of small adjustments while using the same simile in Greek. In three places, rather than "withering" the translator has opted for "fallen." In 1:30 the translator carefully renders the simile to draw attention to the terebinth that sheds its leaves, as opposed to the withering leaves. In 34:4 the translator adjusts the leaves and fruit simile so that they fall rather than just wither. In 64:5 (Eng. 64:6) also, the attention is drawn to leaves that have fallen rather than are withering. In each of these passages the translator has carefully rendered נבל to express the simile more vividly.

In 53:2 a simile is adjusted, probably to make it more sensible (and not just due to confusion about the text); rather than a root growing *out of* dry ground (מארץ), the LXX has it growing *in* a dry land (ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ). In 5:24 the first simile is rendered literally (except that "tongue of fire" is rendered "coal of fire") and the second simile (the comparative marker is implied in the Hebrew but perhaps not in the Greek) is adjusted to be more closely parallel ("sinks down in the flame" is rendered "burned up by an unrestrained flame").

A second simile in 17:5 is slightly adjusted due to lexical reasons; וזרעו was thought to be זרע and rendered with σπέρμα. The simile in 17:6 is slightly adjusted as well; the translator has removed that the tree is beaten and only says that the few olives remain in the tree and makes the simile more succinct. The simile in 7:2, that the heart of the king and the people shake like a tree in the forest, is slightly adjusted in the Greek; the verb נוע is rendered in two different ways (with ἐξίστημι for the people and σαλεύω for the trees) for the sake of clarity.

4.1.9. Translation of a Simile with a Different Simile

The translation of similes should be easier, since they often make explicit the point of comparison. But in several cases the LXX Isaiah translator has seen fit to translate one simile with another. In what follows I will list first similes that differ probably due to a textual or lexical issue, a place where a simile is altered by a metonymic shift, and similes altered for the sake of clarification. Then, after examining similes with the word φρύγανα, I will draw some conclusions.

4.1.9.1. Textual or Lexical Issues

In 5:24 the translator rendered מק as though it were מץ, that is, with χνοῦς, and so has changed the simile. In 17:5 the translator has altered the simile slightly by taking the subject קציר as an object of what was gathered (ἄμητος); also the means of gathering (וזרעו) was read as its homonym (rendering it with σπέρμα) further describing what was gathered. In 53:2 there is something of a pun, where ויעל כיונק לפניו could be understood as referring to a baby growing up until the next clause, וכשרש מארץ ציה, makes it clear that a plant is meant. The translator, though, renders it ἀνέτειλε μὲν[12] ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ.

4.1.9.2. Metonymic Shift

In 61:11 rather than the earth bringing forth sprouts (צמח), the LXX makes the simile about flowers (ἄνθος). This makes a more vivid image. Also, flowers are more closely related to the parallel "seed." This rendering is similar to the shift in 11:1 from נצר to ἄνθος.

4.1.9.3. Clarification

In a few places the LXX Isaiah translator substitutes another simile that is clearer in some way. For the simile of the oak being cut down in 6:13, the translator has instead used the simile of an acorn falling from its husk. We have noted the difficulties of this verse above (3.6.2.2); the falling acorn simile is parallel to the terebinth simile, which seems implied to be about a terebinth shedding its leaves. In 9:17 (Eng. 9:18) thorns are rendered as dry grass that will be burned. We will discuss this below where multiple similes are combined.

In 17:5b, rather than the simile of gleaning grain in the valley of Rephaim (which requires readers to know about this particular valley), the LXX says it is like gathering grain in a firm ravine, where one cannot sow. The unique simile "like chaff on the mountains" in 17:13 is rendered to be clearer: "like the dust of chaff when they winnow." A second simile in 17:13 is also changed. Rather than tumbleweed (גלגל) being blown in a storm, the LXX makes it a gust driving dust kicked up by a wheel. There could be

---

12. All manuscripts read ἀνηγγείλαμεν.

some lexical warrant for this (גלגל), but in 29:5 the LXX again introduces the idea of dust being blown by the wind without any equivalent. In both places the translator's new simile illustrates and makes more vivid a parallel simile of chaff blowing away.

The unique simile of treading straw into dung is clarified to conform to more common images; perhaps we can consider it conventionalization, in 25:10. To an extent the translator may have understood מתבן to mean grain. Then, by metonymy, he associated it with the threshing floor (ἅλων). But there is no clear reason מדמנה should have been rendered with ἅμαξα besides that the translator was transforming the simile into describing threshing.

In 58:5 the image of bowing one's head like a reed is rendered instead with bending the neck like a ring. This appears to be the translator picking a better image, though could be because he did not understand the word אגמן the way we do. In 65:22 the translator rather flagrantly interprets by turning the simile "like a tree" into "like the tree of life." This does in a sense clarify, in that the longevity of the tree is meant in Hebrew; the Greek extends the longevity.

4.1.9.4. Similes with φρύγανον

In several places LXX Isaiah prefers to use similes with φρύγανον, rather than with a word for stubble, since it better expresses the simile. In 40:24 the translator changes the simile from that of straw blowing in the wind to twigs, probably thinking of the frail desert plants that easily come loose from their roots when dried out. This change better connects the simile to the image of the princes' stock not taking root in the earth. The same simile is used in 41:2, though here because comparing bows to dry twigs is a more vivid simile than comparing them to straw. We find the same rendering for a third time in 47:14, where tinder is clearly meant. Instead of saying the astrologers are like straw and they will be burned, the LXX says simply that they will be burned like twigs. The translator may have thought φρύγανον was a valid meaning of קש, but in any cases he renders it with φρύγανον to refer to small woody underbrush that can share many of the characteristics of stubble (e.g., it is flammable and blows in the wind). In 5:24, however, he uses the more standard equivalent: κάλαμη.

4.1.9.5. Conclusions

While there are three cases that look like there may be a textual or lexical issue, most of the above examples show that the translator would sometimes use a different simile or adjust it to what he thought would be a clearer or more appropriate simile. Most of these cases feature a unique simile, which may be why he felt the need to use a different vehicle. If indeed clarity is what is at issue, it is interesting that the translator opts for a different simile so often, rather than using a nonsimile to express what he thought the idea was.

4.1.10. Translation of Similes with Nonsimiles

On three occasions the translator has rendered a simile with a nonsimile. In 41:2 this could be because כעפר was read as בעפר, since the Greek has εἰς γῆν. The change is that rather than the victor making the kings like dust with his sword, now the kings' swords are given to the earth. In 11:7 a simile is removed due to harmonization. Here the three pairs of animals are all said to eat "together" in the Greek, though the Hebrew only has "together" once. The Greek harmonizes what is said about the three pairs, removing a simile in the process. So, in the first case the simile may have been removed because the translator did not see a comparative marker, and in the second place it was removed for the sake of style.

In 17:9 the Hebrew may have been corrupted, though the DSS evidence and the three other versions all agree with MT against LXX. The MT reads יהיו ערי מעזו כעזובת החרש והאמיר אשר עזבו מפני בני ישראל, while LXX has ἔσονται αἱ πόλεις σου ἐγκαταλελειμμέναι, ὃν τρόπον ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐαῖοι ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ. While this passage is technically a simile rendered with a nonsimile, it is clearly not a simple issue of the translator removing imagery. He has read the text quite differently, or even read a different text.

4.1.11. Translation of Nonsimiles with Similes

In one place, the translator introduces a simile were the Hebrew does not have (or imply) one. Earlier I discussed how in LXX Isa 27:9 the phrase בדד כי עיר בצורה (from the beginning of MT Isa 27:10) is rendered ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν (see 3.6.4.1); here it is necessary only to note that כי was taken as a comparative marker.

4.1.12. Merging Multiple Similes

In 24:13 two similes are combined, turning the second simile into an explanation with a metaphor. Rather than "like when an olive is beaten, like at the gleaning when the grape harvest is ended," the Greek has "just as when someone gleans an olive tree, so shall people glean them, even when the harvest has ceased."

4.1.13. Metaphor or Simile with an Explanation

In a few cases a metaphor or simile has an explanation along with it. In 36:6, in what way Pharaoh is a broken reed is explained in both languages by saying it breaks when you lean on it and injures the hand holding it. Similarly, the allegory in 5:1–7 is explained in verse 7 in both languages, though the Greek subtly shapes and interprets other elements. In both languages, the image in 40:6–8 is explained: humanity is like grass in that it quickly withers and fades.

In two places we examined, the translator adds an explanation for the image. Isaiah 27:2–4 has many differences in the Greek from the Hebrew. Most of the vineyard metaphor has been rendered with language about a besieged city. As if this were not enough, the translator adds a sort of theological summary in 27:4 about how God has done all that he has ordained.

Another extended metaphor can be found in 28:23–28. Here various agricultural activities are described in terms of how they typically are and are not done, where various crops are planted, and how they are processed after harvest. In the Greek the translator updates some of the terms and equipment to match more closely the practices of his day in Egypt. More interesting, though, is that the translator interprets by giving his perceived meaning of the metaphor in 28:28, so that threshing means God's anger, and trampling is his bitterness, neither of which will last forever. By interpreting the metaphor in this verse, he provides an explanation for the imagery in the entire passage.

4.1.14. Conclusions

It should come as no surprise that the translator used so many different strategies to render metaphors, given the well-known independent character of LXX Isaiah's translation approach, and since, as Labahn has shown, even within one chapter, Lam 3:1–21, an LXX translator used six

different strategies to render metaphors.[13] It is tempting to draw statistics about how often a metaphor is rendered with the same metaphor versus a nonmetaphor or different metaphor, and so forth, but since we have only surveyed plant metaphors, these statistics may not accurately represent those of all the metaphors in the book. Nevertheless, we can make some observations about how the translator used different metaphor translation strategies.

It is important to note that quite often the translator is content to render a metaphor or simile with the same metaphor or simile. Often it is because the metaphor is a dead metaphor (as in the case of "seeds"). But also, conventional metaphors, which should be more difficult to translate, are maintained in the translation, perhaps since they can be found commonly in biblical literature (such as metaphors about trees, roots, and grass). Some original metaphors are also rendered, as is the case with the bruised reed in 36:6, which has an explanation in the text. The extended metaphor in Isa 5:1–7 is also rendered with the same metaphor, though with some modifications, and it has an explanation. The similes rendered with the same similes are often modified slightly in some way, as we have seen.

Rendering a metaphor with a different metaphor is a good strategy when trying to create vivid and poetic passages that are sensible to the audience and reflect their own experience. Skilled translators can find and use equivalent metaphorical expressions in the target language. Usually, though, when LXX Isaiah renders a metaphor with a different metaphor this does not seem to be his main concern. Often he uses a different metaphor due to lexical or textual issues; he has taken a word to have been a different word or to have had a different definition than we would expect. It is difficult to tell in the cases where the translator has altered the metaphor by making a metonymic shift in the meaning of a word or vehicle of the metaphor, whether the translator was endeavoring to interpret, or if it is simply testimony to a different lexical knowledge of the meaning of the words in question. Translations using metonymy are worthy of more research. It is clearer that the translator is deliberately choosing a different metaphor in cases where he chooses to use dead metaphors (such as "seed," particularly for words whose meanings he clearly knows) or convention-

---

13. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 181. She counts five strategies, but I subdivide one of her categories.

alizes to more common metaphors (such as using the common image of lush places drying out in 27:10–11 or using a threshing simile in 25:10). Sometimes the translator renders a metaphor in such a way as to show the resultant state rather than the process, such as when he talks of flowers instead of shoots, and when he describes leaves, flowers, and fruit as having fallen rather than withering. This approach creates more vividness. Also of interest and worthy of further study are the metaphors that have their vehicles hijacked to carry new tenors in the translation, such as 11:10 and 14:20. These show the translator's skill in interpreting the meaning of a text while rendering many features literally.

The translator renders similes with different similes for many of the same reasons: because of lexical or textual issues, using metonymic shifts, or seeking to clarify the imagery. Often when he feels the need to use a clearer simile, it is because the simile in question is unique (such as treading straw into dung in 25:10), so the translator may conventionalize, picking a simile found elsewhere in biblical literature or even in Isaiah itself. One strange exception is the translator's use of φρύγανον to render similes; while he makes a good simile in each case, it is unclear why he felt the need to clarify the similes with this word.

The translator renders a metaphor with a nonmetaphor for several reasons. As we have shown, he will often remove Hebrew idioms and dead metaphors (particularly using the word פרי). Sometimes he removes a metaphor by way of metonymic shift (55:12 could be an example of this, if the translator knew כפה meant branch; a better example is 18:2 with the vessel of papyrus).[14] Homonyms and puns in the Hebrew at times require the translator to choose a rendering that in effect removes the metaphor but is clearer. When the translator uses a nonmetaphor in an effort to interpret a metaphor, it is usually due to the features of the individual passage at hand. It is in these examples that the LXX Isaiah translator shows himself to be most unique among the LXX translators.

Of the passages we have examined where similes are rendered with nonsimiles, twice it is due to textual or lexical issues, and in the third passage the simile is removed to harmonize to the surrounding clauses.

In only three places the translator introduces a plant metaphor where the Hebrew has no metaphor. In two cases it is because he prefers to say

---

14. The LXX Isaiah translator gives no evidence elsewhere of knowing the meaning "branch" for כפה.

"seed" rather than remnant; it is noteworthy that while he introduces a metaphor, it is a dead or lexicalized metaphor and is consistent with uses of the same metaphor in other places in the Hebrew Isaiah text. The third place it is probably not an exegetical effort but only because he defined a word differently than we do. Where similes are introduced where they are lacking in the Hebrew, it is always due to lexical reasons; the translator only introduced similes where he thought they were present in his *Vorlage*. Similarly, the translator does not seem to render metaphors with similes because where they are too bold or objectionable in some way, but usually because the Hebrew implies a simile or he thought his text had a simile present.[15] The exception to this is where the word pair שמיר ושית occurs, words for which the translator has his own special approach.

In some cases the translator takes other approaches to metaphors for the sake of style. In particular, he at times merges metaphors or similes together or will even omit them, as we have seen, though it is not always clear whether an omission is deliberate or not.

At times the translator feels the need to explain a metaphor or simile. He often explains or renders them in ways similar to other metaphors or similes present already in the Hebrew text.

So, looking generally at these various translation strategies, subdividing them for possible reasons they were adopted, it is clear that some of the same or similar issues are dealt with differently. For instance, lexical or textual issues provide motivation for the translator adopting various different translation strategies, such as rendering with a different metaphor, a nonmetaphor, or a simile with a different simile. In a sense, these are false positives of that strategy being used, since the translator has simply read a different text, read the text differently, or understood a different definition than we would, and was not deliberately trying to modify the expression of the metaphor for his target language.

It is curious also that, while dead metaphors should in theory be the hardest to translate between languages, they do not seem to bother our translator.[16] This could be because many of the dead metaphors we looked at have similar usages in classical Greek literature and can be found elsewhere in biblical literature. The one exception is metaphors involving "fruit," which should have been no harder than the others, since again,

---

15. We will address the issue of metaphors rendered as similes below in 4.4.3.

16. On the difficulty of translating dead metaphors, see Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

they are found commonly in biblical literature (and were rendered literally in the other books of the LXX) and can also be found in classical Greek literature.

Conventional metaphors, likewise, should be difficult to translate, particularly if they are language or culture specific.[17] But again, the translator often has no problem with these metaphors, though he will occasionally modify them in various ways for his translation. Where the translator does make changes to metaphors it is often when they are original, which in theory should be the easiest to translate.[18] As we have seen, though, these original metaphors are often conventionalized in that the translator substitutes for them dead metaphors or metaphors found elsewhere in Isaiah.

The translator shows independence by making some metaphors more vivid, but his independence can be seen most clearly where he adds interpretations of metaphors or renders them with nonmetaphors to give what he believes the metaphor means. Likewise, he feels he has the authority to omit and otherwise adjust metaphors, not only for the sake of clarity and to express their proper meaning in Greek, but even simply for the sake of good style and to render some of the rhetorical force even at the expense of some of the individual words and phrases.

At the same time, the translator is rather moderate. He usually does not change metaphors into similes or vice versa unless he thinks the text intends them. Even where he shows alarming and unique interpretations, he is consistent in how he executes them, so that while he resists metaphors with "fruit," he is systematic and consistent in how he renders them. Likewise, he appears to have a clear conception of the meaning of the word pair שמיר ושית, so he is consistent in how he deals with them in the different contexts in which they appear. His use of φρύγανον also, while unexpected, is always used for the same Hebrew word by him and is always used well to express the metaphor in which it occurs. Further evidence of his moderation is that when he does render a metaphor with a different metaphor, he usually conventionalizes, opting for a metaphor that has already been used in the Hebrew of Isaiah.

With regard to Lam 3:1–2, Labahn has argued that it is unclear whether the metaphors are altered as a result of the translator receiving the metaphors of the MT or of producing metaphors in Greek.[19] This is

---

17. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.
18. Van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.
19. Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 153.

undoubtedly true in some of the examples we examined above. But I think we can go further and suggest that the pluses and minuses of similes are wholly the result of how the LXX Isaiah translator received the imagery of the MT, while some of the places where he renders with a nonmetaphor or adds an explanation are the results of him producing (or rather interpreting) metaphors. A more obvious example of the later are the similes where the translator uses φρύγανον as the vehicle of a metaphor and rendering of קש, since he clearly knows the proper meaning of this Hebrew word.

4.2. Evaluation of Ziegler's Work on the Metaphors in LXX Isaiah

This study has made frequent reference to that of Ziegler and has, I hope, expanded on his work to paint a fuller picture of how the LXX Isaiah translator dealt with metaphors. I summarized Ziegler's chapter on metaphors and comparisons in the introduction (1.1.2). It remains here to evaluate his findings against those of this study. While we have looked primarily at metaphors in passages that have plant terminology, Ziegler based his observations on his work with the entire book. Nevertheless, from our own limited perspective we can confirm that Ziegler's observations are largely sound. Indeed, the translator does feel free to interpret, particularly figurative expressions, while at the same time producing a translation that in some relationship represents the *Vorlage*.[20] Ziegler's chapter on the importance of the papyri for understanding LXX Isaiah is also of great value for the study of metaphors, since they are informative of the realia of the translator from which he sometimes draws to furnish vehicles for the metaphors in his translation. Rather than rehearsing the numerous points of agreement with Ziegler (or the details on which we agree or disagree in the analysis of specific texts), this section will describe a few points that warrant further investigation.

One point that needs further investigation is whether the translator felt the need to ameliorate images that were "*zu real und derb*."[21] The only example Ziegler gives of this is Isa 3:15, where מלכם תדכאו עמי ופני עניים תטחנו is rendered τί ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε τὸν λαόν μου καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τῶν πτωχῶν καταισχύνετε. There is no doubt the translator is interpreting these metaphors, and it is easy to see how, but is it because the image is

20. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80–81, 83–84.
21. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81.

too harsh? Elsewhere in Isaiah דכא is also interpreted, except 57:15, where the second occurrence is rendered with συντρίβω.[22] But synonyms used metaphorically are not interpreted, such as רטש, which is rendered with συντρίβω in 13:16, where infants are the object (also 13:18, though LXX reverses the action). While perhaps less harsh, in 1:28 rebels and sinners are crushed (שבר rendered with συντρίβω), and people are also crushed (with these same words) in 8:15 and 28:13. It does not seem to be an issue of the image being too harsh, since similar images are maintained. We have also seen other examples of the translator rendering metaphors based on homonyms (see 4.1.3.2) or Aramaic definitions of words (as we saw in 8:6–8), which may be at work here. Ziegler also points out that טחן is interpreted literally in 47:2, so the translator knows it means "to grind." But in 3:15 the translator seems to have interpreted it in light of דכא, so he renders it as καταισχύνω ("to humble"). When we look at the larger context in which these metaphors occur, it becomes clear that it is not the individual metaphor that is too harsh, since in 3:7, 12, and 17, metaphors are also interpreted, and the idea of "humbling" is found in 3:8, 17, and 26. The metaphor seems to be interpreted, then, in light of the transla- tor's ideas about the meaning of the passage, not because of its choice of vehicle. Ziegler may well be right that some metaphors are interpreted because they are too vivid and coarse, but the example he gives is not entirely convincing.

Another point Ziegler makes, and which can be found in the present study and requires still further research, is whether some images are inter- preted due to the translator's lack of Hebrew knowledge. On the one hand, some rare words are indeed not literally rendered. Examples Ziegler gives include 3:17, where קדקד ... שפח is rendered with ταπεινώσει ... ἀρχούσας, and 1:22, where לסיגים is rendered ἀδόκιμον.[23] But there are similar inter- pretations of words whose meaning the translator clearly knew, such as we have seen with דכא and טחן in 3:15.[24] There may be two different phe- nomena at work—some metaphors interpreted because the vocabulary was obscure, others with known vocabulary interpreted for some other

---

22. The meaning "humble" (as in the Aramaic) may be thought in 19:10, where it is rendered with ὀδύνη, and 53:5, where it is rendered with μαλακίζομαι. 1 Macc 1:40 similarly interprets דכא, rendering it with ἀτιμάζω. For καθαρίζω in Isa 53:10, cf. 28:27 where this renders דוש, and dill is the object.

23. He also looks at 1:25.

24. We may add also 10:19 and 61:3.

reason—or the translator may have been deliberately interpreting the passages and knew perfectly well the meaning of the words. As shown in the case of שמיר ושית, to which indeed the translator has a unique approach, he is at least consistent in his understanding of the terms and does not reach wildly for a solution in each occurrence. Likewise, the translator knows the meaning of קש, yet on several occasions he renders it with an unexpected equivalent, φρύγανον. In cases where the translator renders based on grammatical theories of analogy or using Aramaic definitions, is there a way to tell the difference between the translator not knowing a word and the translator expounding a possible, perhaps perceived to be hidden, meaning of the passage?

Ziegler is quite right regarding LXX Isaiah's tendency to render metaphors personally.[25] We have seen, for example, metaphors involving trees (2:12–13, 10:19, 61:3) and branches (10:33–34). Baer has expanded on this point at length, showing that this is not only done for metaphorical speech but is a way the translator reads Isaiah for his own time. He gives nearly two hundred examples of personalization in LXX Isaiah.[26]

Ziegler also makes many useful observations about comparisons.[27] One point that is helpful is his discussion of word equivalents for comparative particles. Here further research is needed, not only of the Greek rendering, but of the syntax of the Hebrew itself to show to what extent ל and ὡς overlap in meaning, and whether היה ל- ever marks similes in the Hebrew. Ziegler says the construction היה ל- means "*zu etwas werden*."[28] So based on our distinction between metaphor and simile, it is not comparative, yet LXX Isaiah often renders it as a simile.[29] This use of היה ל- is rendered with ὡς on at least two occasions elsewhere in the LXX.[30] Ziegler

---

25. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81–82.

26. Baer, *When We All Go Home*, 59. See further ch. 3: "'Personalization' in LXX Isaiah" (53–84).

27. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92–103. See the summary in our introduction (1.1.2).

28. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Also Ronald J. Williams, *William's Hebrew Syntax,* 3rd. ed., rev. and exp. John C. Beckman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), §278.

29. By contrast see 1:22 where LXX Isaiah interprets the image and thus does not render it with a simile.

30. Katri Tenhunen, "The Renderings of the Hebrew Preposition ל in Predicate Expressions Denoting Transition and Becoming Something in LXX Genesis and Exodus," in Voitila and Jokiranta, *Scripture in Translation*, 14. Here she says that in

gives as examples from Isaiah 1:31; 8:14; 29:5, 17; 40:23; and 41:2. In theory, ὡς could be intended to mark identity in these constructions and not a comparison.[31] As Muraoka has shown, ὡς originally in Greek had a comparative sense but over time developed some other usages as well, though it is most commonly used for comparisons in biblical literature.[32] It is best, then, to consider the Greek of these examples to be similes, and indeed they make the best sense as similes. Muraoka also points out that some uses of ὡς are close in meaning to some uses of εἰς.[33] This is interesting, since in 41:2 and 1:25 LXX Isaiah renders כ with εἰς, though it is interpreting the simile in both places. Further research is needed to see whether ל-היה should be considered to be marking a simile in some cases, or whether it is closer to a metaphor, and LXX Isaiah simply prefers to use a simile in these places.

In conclusion, Ziegler laid a solid foundation for the study of metaphors and similes in LXX Isaiah. He offered some categories for the rendering of metaphors and more for the rendering of similes. The present study has expanded on his work by categorizing in detail the various translation strategies for rendering metaphors adopted by the translator. We turn now to further contextualizing LXX Isaiah in its Jewish and Hellenistic contexts.

4.3. LXX Isaiah and Jewish Approaches to Rendering Metaphors

This section will position LXX Isaiah within its Jewish context and show that some of its treatments of metaphors fit within the trajectory of Jewish interpretive traditions. To do this, we will focus first on the similarities and then on the unexpected differences in the approaches to rendering metaphors in Targum Jonathan of the Prophets and LXX Isaiah.[34] The

---

Gen 45:8 ὡς functions as a comparative, and in Gen 34:16 it marks identity; in both cases the Greek changes the meaning of the Hebrew.

31. For the use of ὡς to mark identity or similarity, see Muraoka, "Use of ΩΣ," 56–57.

32. Muraoka, "Use of ΩΣ," 53, 71–72.

33. Muraoka, "Use of ΩΣ," 58n3. Ottley says these Greek words are easily confused in the manuscripts, as are כ and ב (*Book of Isaiah*, 2:302).

34. For a recent study comparing LXX Zechariah and Targum Jonathan of the Prophets more generally, see Cécile Dogniez, "Some Similarities between the Septuagint and the Targum of Zechariah," in *Translating a Translation: The LXX and Its Modern Translations in the Context of Early Judaism*, ed. Hans Ausloos et al., BETL 213

introduction (1.3.2.1) has already discussed how the Targum dealt with metaphors and similes. As we have seen in passing, these observations hold for the examples included in this study.

4.3.1. Similarities

We have seen several examples in the introduction (1.1.2) of similarities between how the Targum and LXX Isaiah render metaphors. One similarity in the approach of these two translations is the tendency to translate the meaning or interpretation of a metaphor. We have seen also that sometimes they agree in their interpretation. Sometimes the Targum is even more literal than the LXX. We have found similar examples in the passages we have examined, particularly above where we discussed metaphors or similes rendered with nonmetaphors or nonsimiles. This section will first list places where both translations attempt to clarify the same passage in some way. Second, it will list places where both have the same interpretation of a metaphor or simile. Third, it will list some passages where the LXX uses the otherwise characteristically targumic method of rendering part of the imagery while offering an extended interpretation.

4.3.1.1. Clarifying the Same Passage

In some cases both LXX Isaiah and the Targum agree that a metaphor should be clarified in some way, though they do not always take the same solution. For 1:29, "terebinths" is rendered with "idols" by the LXX, but the Targum says "oaks of the idols." In 10:33–34 both LXX and the Targum interpret the "lofty" and other terms as representing some group of people. In 37:30–31, the second part of the Hebrew's "take root below … bear fruit above" is changed in the LXX to "bear seed upward," while the Targum opts for "raises its top upward," perhaps since it also made clear that a tree is meant. In 27:9 the LXX thinks "the full fruit" means a "blessing," while the Targum puts "effectuation." In 10:12 the "fruit of the greatness of heart" is interpreted by the LXX as referring to "pride," but the Targum interprets it as "deeds." In 28:25–28 both translations try to clarify the metaphor: the

---

(Leuven: Peeters, 2010), 89–102; she also notes bibliography. One significant similarity she points out is that both translations changed the metaphor in Zech 12:6 from "pot of fire" to "firebrand."

Targum clarifies in the first verse, while the LXX adds an explanation in the last. In 51:20 the antelope simile is turned into a half-cooked chard by the LXX translator, but the Targum renders it personally: "those cast in nets." In 58:7, where the metaphor "flesh" would have sounded strange in Greek, the LXX opted instead for "seed," whereas the Targum rendered it literally while adding, as does the LXX, that it is a relative. The epithet "oaks of righteousness" used of the people in 61:3 is interpreted by the LXX as "generations of righteousness," but the Targum is more specific, saying: "true princes."

4.3.1.2. Offering a Similar Explanation

In some places LXX Isaiah and the Targum offer a similar explanation for a metaphor, as Van der Kooij has pointed out.[35] For example, in 1:31 both add very nearly the same explanation: that the wicked are meant, though in different ways. In 7:2, where the hearts of the people shaking are compared to trees in the wind, both LXX and the Targum use different verbs for the hearts and the trees. In 13:18 both remove "fruit," opting instead for a word for offspring, though the Targum still has the added word in construct with "womb." In 24:7 both translations believe אבל means "mourn," though the LXX personifies the wine as mourning, and the Targum makes it the drinkers of wine who mourn. In 55:12, despite other additions, the Targum and the LXX both have the trees clap their branches. And the comparison of the lives of the people to a tree in 65:22 is interpreted by both the LXX and the Targum as the "tree of life."

4.3.1.3. LXX Isaiah's Targumic Translations

At times LXX Isaiah employs methods for rendering metaphors that are extensively used later in the tradition by the Targum, as Van der Kooij has noted.[36] For example, Churgin describes one of the Targum's methods of rendering metaphors as giving the object represented, often staying close to the original, maintaining "a circumscription of phraseology." This can include a simile using the vehicle of the Hebrew, either before or after an explanation.[37]

---

35. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 181–82, 184.
36. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 179–85.
37. Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 86–88.

One example where LXX Isaiah uses this approach, and as we have just mentioned has a similar interpretation as the Targum, is Isa 7:2. Not only do LXX and Targum have the same interpretation, LXX Isaiah also follows the targumic method of interpreting imagery then giving the imagery. Here the Hebrew makes a simile by repeating the same word: the hearts are shaken by certain news like trees are shaken by wind. LXX Isaiah interprets the first part of the simile by rendering the meaning of the simile, saying that the people are amazed, but then preserves the imagery of the simile of the trees.

Looking at the Targum of Isa 27:2–4, we see that the metaphor has become just a simile in the first verse, followed by an explanation of the imagery (that it is a description of the covenant with its blessings and curses) in the rest of the passage.[38] The LXX is similar, only it does not use a simile in 27:2 but has the metaphor of the Hebrew, followed in the rest of the passage by only what the imagery is thought to represent (a fortified city).

Similarly, in 28:24–28 the LXX stays close to the Hebrew text rendering closely all the various agricultural activities (with some cultural updating of terms). In the final verse, LXX Isaiah offers a theological explanation to make clear the point of mentioning the agricultural activities (that God will not be angry forever, presumably just like the activities are only done for a time and to a certain degree and in a certain manner). The Targum renders the text differently, making clear in the first verse what the passage means by explaining with similes.

Further analysis of the translation of metaphors in LXX Isaiah is needed to determine why some images are interpreted this way, while others are rendered literally in Greek. Possible reasons are that the translator had a special interest in expressing clearly the idea he thought these texts described. Also, it could be a matter of rarer images being clarified, as we have seen is sometimes the case among plant metaphors. In any case, LXX Isaiah is clearly using techniques for rendering metaphors that were to be used more extensively later in Jewish tradition, as Van der Kooij has shown.[39]

---

38. This approach is also seen in Tg. Neb. Isa 5:1–6. Another nice example is found in 21:10, where an interpretation is given before offering the vehicle recast in a simile.

39. Van der Kooij, "Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 179–85.

4.3.1.4. Conclusions

This comparison has shown that the LXX does indeed adopt some methods of metaphor interpretation as well as specific interpretations that are used more extensively later in Jewish tradition by the Targum. This conclusion is not limited to Isaiah (or the study of metaphors), but LXX Isaiah interprets to a much greater extent than other books. L. H. Brockington has already shown a variety of similarities between the LXX and the Targum, including similar theological interests (such as adding soteriological interpretations in Isaiah), other interpretations with verbal similarity, and instances where they exhibit similar expository traditions.[40] Further study of these features should shed light on how metaphors were thought to function in early Judaism and fill in the trajectory of this tradition.[41] In the case of the more expanded interpretations, it is interesting that LXX Isaiah feels authorized to replace the imagery with its meaning. Although the Targum does this often, the Targum assumes the Hebrew text is being read with it, while the LXX probably does not make this assumption.[42] This is the same explanation given by Dogniez in her study of similarities in general between the LXX and the Targum of Zechariah.[43]

4.3.2. Differences

While there are many well-known and expected differences, due to the differences in time, place, language, and purpose of the two translations, there are some differences that are worthy of note, as they serve to temper and balance our perspectives on the translators. First, I will show some places where the Targum is actually more literal than the LXX in some way.

---

40. L. H. Brockington, "Septuagint and Targum," *ZAW* 25 (1954): 80–86. Passages of note he lists for Isaiah are 8:7, 11:4, 17:4, 18:1, 36:2, 38:18, and 52:4.

41. Brockington believes the similarities are due to a shared oral tradition and that the interpretations are made to meet the expository needs of the synagogues in the respective milieus ("Septuagint and Targum," 82, 86). The idea of shared oral tradition and expository methods are undoubtedly at work, but there is no need to tie them specifically to the synagogue (we do not know enough about what was done and read in synagogues in the second century BCE), since they can be attributed to a shared scribal and exegetical tradition.

42. For a discussion of the "Interlinear Model" of the LXX, see the introduction (1.3.2.1).

43. Dogniez, "Some Similarities," 90–91.

Second, I will compare how the two translations conventionalize imagery, resort to stock interpretations, or make classical allusions. Finally, I will make some concluding comments about their differences.

4.3.2.1. Places the Targum Is More Literal Than LXX Isaiah

Sometimes the Targum is actually more literal than the LXX, rendering a metaphor or simile with the same metaphor or simile. For example, in 1:9 and 15:9, where the LXX renders "remnant" with "seed," the Targum agrees with MT (despite its other expansions). Similarly in 14:20 the Targum is closer to the MT than LXX, which makes the "evil seed" an individual. In 14:22 a word for offspring becomes "seed" in the LXX, but "grandson" in the Targum. In 11:7 the Targum keeps the simile, while the LXX removes it. The "vessels of papyrus" in 18:2 become "fishing boats" in the Targum, while the LXX makes them letters. In 25:10, the straw trodden in dung is rendered nearly literally in the Targum (it is trodden in a mire), while the LXX replaces it with a threshing metaphor. In 31:9, God's "fire" and "furnace" is interpreted as "seed" and "kinsmen" by the LXX, but the Targum renders the vehicle of the image literally, though explains it as a threat for the wicked. In 35:7 the Targum is closer to the MT than the LXX is, though neither are exactly the same nor extensive in their interpretation. In 40:24, 41:2, and 47:14, the Targum renders literally, despite other additions, with "chaff," while the LXX prefers "twigs." Whereas the LXX cuts back the number of trees mentioned in 41:19 and 44:14, the Targum lists them all. The bent reed describing how they bow their heads in 58:5 is rendered literally by the Targum, but LXX Isaiah changes the metaphor to a ring. The Targum's ability to render the vehicles of these metaphors and similes literally is probably because the translator felt freer to expand and explain the imagery. LXX Isaiah, on the other hand, generally does not like to expand the text much and thus usually restrains himself to the choice between rendering the vehicle of the metaphor, or using what he thinks will be a clearer vehicle, or giving what he thinks is its tenor.

4.3.2.2. Conventionalization

Another difference is how the two translations conventionalize imagery. We have seen that LXX Isaiah will sometimes conventionalize unique metaphors, instead using more commonly found metaphors. The conventionalization in the Targum is quite different. We have seen that the

Targum often introduces explicit references to the metaphor that Israel is God's special plant, an idea that probably underlies much plant imagery in the Bible. For example, in 57:2–4 the metaphor "seed," rendered literally in LXX, is replaced in the Targum by a description of Israel as an evil people who come from a holy plant. In 17:10–11 the "alien slips" that were meant as literal plants used for pagan worship are replaced in the Targum by a description of Israel as God's select plant. In 60:21 the MT indeed has this meaning, and the Targum adds that it is a "pleasant plant."[44] In 61:3, though, the Hebrew "planting of the Lord" becomes "people of the Lord."

A difference in their exegetical approach that has a bearing on the rendering of metaphors is that LXX Isaiah tends to render metaphors according to the context in which they occur, while the Targum is prone to offer stock interpretations for images, as if they were established symbols. So in the Targum, "root" is sometimes rendered with "sons of sons," as in 11:1, 10; 14:29 (but not 14:30 and 40:24, where it is just "sons," or 5:24 and 53:2, where other interpretations are made). Sometimes words for "trees" are interpreted for rulers. In 2:13 the trees become "kings" and "tyrant." The trees (and bricks) of 9:9 (Eng. 9:10) also become rulers, and again in 14:8. In 61:3, "oaks of righteousness" becomes "true princes." Similarly, the recurring phrase in 9:13 and 19:15 (palm branch and reed) is interpreted by the Targum in both places as representing rulers. Alternatively, trees are sometimes rendered as referring to armies or warriors, as in 10:19 and 10:34. A well-known example from the targumim in general is the tendency to make water metaphors refer to Torah.

The Targum will sometimes insert what could be called "classical allusions," interpreting a metaphor or redesigning it to refer to some biblical character or event to illustrate what is meant. Sometimes Abraham is mentioned, as in 5:1 and 41:2. In 65:8, the tricky metaphor about not destroying the grape cluster is replaced with the analogy of righteous Noah being spared from the flood.

4.3.2.3. Conclusions

These differences are in part due to LXX Isaiah's attempt to stay close to the *Vorlage*, while the Targum is freer to expand. When LXX Isaiah does offer

---

44. See also 5:2, where the Targum expands that "*I established them as the plant of a* choice vine," perhaps just to tighten the connection to the explanation in 5:7.

an explanation of a metaphor, it is often in place of some text and not an expansion of it (such as in 28:22–28). The Targum has the luxury of being able to give both the vehicle of the metaphor and offer its explanation. The different sort of conventionalization in the two translations is probably due to LXX Isaiah being more concerned with rhetoric in expressing the meaning of his passage (so it conventionalizes to well-known metaphors), while the Targum is trying to systematize the theology of the text (so it conventionalizes to certain stock meanings of metaphors).

4.4. Evidence of Greek Views of Metaphors in LXX Isaiah

To some extent, the use of metaphors in the Hebrew of Isaiah already conforms to Hellenistic requirements of good style. As Lowth long ago pointed out:

> If the Hebrew poets be examined by the rules and precepts of this great philosopher and critic [Aristotle], it will readily be allowed, that they have assiduously attended to the sublimity of their compositions by the abundance and splendour of their figures; though it may be doubted whether they might not have been more temperate in the use of them. For in those poems at least, in which something of uncommon grandeur and sublimity is aimed at, there predominates a perpetual, I had almost said continued use of the Metaphor, sometimes daringly introduced, sometimes rushing in with imminent hazard of propriety.[45]

As demonstrated in the introduction (1.3.1.5), there is evidence that the translator was concerned about proper Greek style, but to assess his use of metaphors against Hellenistic rhetorical manuals is tricky. For one thing, the manuals teach that metaphors should be used differently in different genres. So, does our translator understand Isaiah as a book of divine oracles that speak in poetry full of riddles and enigmas?[46] Or is it the prose oratory of the prophet, which employs lofty, heroic, and subdued styles to persuade his audience to repentance? Or would the translator have rec-

---

45. Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 121. Lowth's comment that the use of figures should almost be more temperate is interesting in light of Van der Vorm-Croughs's observation that LXX Isaiah at times omits content to avoid over-ornamentation (*Old Greek of Isaiah*, 203)!

46. Note the literal (and unique) choice of αἰνιγματιστής to render משל in Num 21:27, where perhaps some word for a poet (such as ποιητής) is better suited.

ognized different genres in different passages? This issue is beyond the scope of the current study, but it could explain differences in translation technique and the rendering of metaphors in different passages. A second difficulty was highlighted already in antiquity by Philodemus, as we have seen (1.3.1.1). He points out that the rhetoricians do not give any practical working instructions and do not describe why the metaphors they condemn are faulty or how to create good metaphors.[47] He adds that rhetorical training does not account for good or bad speech, and that what the rhetoricians condemn is not typical of the uneducated but of those lacking common sense.[48] If this really is the case, then what instructions, exactly, do we expect to see the translator following? And whether he was educated in rhetoric or not may be less important than his natural ability and feel for good style.

Despite this, to see if any evidence can be gleaned from this study, I will here first look for evidence of the so-called Aristotelian substitution view of metaphor. Second, I will list metaphors that are adjusted in some way to show how they are in line with what the rhetorical handbooks suggest. Third, I will discuss whether metaphors are rendered as similes because they are too bold, as Demetrius's handbook says bold metaphors should be treated.

4.4.1. Substitution View of Metaphor

The introduction mentioned that many modern theorists of metaphor believe Aristotle advocates what they call the "substitution view" of metaphor.[49] According to this view, a metaphor simply substitutes one word for another and can be paraphrased in literal language. More recently, scholars have questioned whether Aristotle held to this view.[50] Nevertheless, Aristotle's definition states that a metaphor is "the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or by analogy" (*Poet.* 1457b7–9 [Halliwell]). As such, the removal or interpretation of a metaphor could, in theory, be done by applying the proper word to a thing by the same relationships described.

---

47. Hubbell, "Rhetorica," 298 (Philodemus, *Rhet.* 4, P.Herc. 1007 cols. 12–16).

48. Hubbell, "Rhetorica," 299–300 (Philodemus, *Rhet.* 4, P.Herc. 1007 cols. 5a–11a).

49. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 33–34.

50. See Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 8–10.

Caution is due, though, for two reasons. First, even in the Hebrew, many metaphors seem to function merely by the substitution of one word for another, such as the eunuch in 56:3 saying he is a "dry tree" instead of an "infertile man."[51] Second, if the translator simply substitutes one word for another (as opposed to paraphrasing the statement, or otherwise explaining it), it may not necessarily be because he has adopted the substitution theory of metaphors from Aristotle, but because he is generally aiming to follow a literal translation technique and wants to maintain a quantitative representation of the words in the Hebrew text.[52]

With these caveats in mind, it is possible to list some examples of places where the translator interprets (or simply clarifies) a metaphor by substituting a word with another word more proper to the thing described. This is clearest in 61:3, where "oaks of righteousness" is rendered instead with "generations of righteousness." Some other examples include: "palm branch and reed" is rendered "great and small" in 9:13 (Eng. 9:14) and "beginning or end" in 19:15; in 21:10 "threshed one" is rendered "remnant," and "son of a threshing floor" is rendered "those suffering;" in 27:6 "children" is substituted for "root;" in 27:9 the "full fruit" is rendered with "blessing;" and in 31:9 "seed" is substituted for "light" and "kinsmen" for "furnace."

Another part of Aristotle's definition, that this substitution can be from genus to species, or species to genus, species to species, or by analogy, also describes how some metaphors are rendered by LXX Isaiah, as we have seen. For instance, some renderings are from genus to species, such as in 10:34, where "sword" is substituted for "iron." The phenomena Ziegler pointed out, whereby the translator substitutes כלי with what he believes it represents is an interpretation from genus to species.[53] Others are from species to genus, such as 3:10, 27:6, 32:12, and 65:21, where the species פרי is rendered as the genus γένημα; also, the simile in 17:5 has the species "Valley of Rephaim" replaced by the genus "hard valley." Most common are substitutions of species for species, often just changing the vehicle of

51. It is particularly common with dead metaphors, such as uses of "seed," "fruit," and "root." To an ancient Hellenistic Jew, it would have seemed plausible that Aristotle learned something about rhetoric from Moses and the prophets, even if indirectly, so they would not have been surprised to see metaphors in Isaiah functioning in line with Aristotle's descriptions.

52. See Tov, *Text-Critical*, 23–24.

53. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83–84.

the metaphor: in 11:1 the LXX substitutes a "blossom" for the Hebrew's "branch"; in 14:29–30 "seed" is twice substituted for "root"; in 37:31 a "seed" is substituted for the Hebrew's "fruit;" and "root" is substituted for "stump" in 11:1 and 40:24; likewise for the simile in 61:11, where "flower" is substituted for "sprout" (though the terms may be synonymous); and in 40:24, 41:2, and 47:14, where φρύγανον is substituted for קש. Analogous substitutions are seen where LXX Isaiah introduces a metaphor in 15:9, so that "remnant" is replaced by "seed;" and 14:22 where "seed" is substituted for "descendent and offspring."[54] Similarly, Thomas has also shown that various LXX translators substitute body parts when rendering anatomical idioms expressing emotions.[55]

4.4.2. Adjustments to Metaphors in Line with Rhetorical Handbooks

We have seen that many metaphors and similes are adjusted in some way or interpreted; in this section we will look at some of these adjustments that appear to be in line with what Aristotle describes. While many of their comments seem vague or subjective in their sensibilities, there are some examples from LXX Isaiah that appear to conform to what these teachers of rhetoric advocate and condemn. It is unconvincing to argue that metaphors are rendered literally (with the same metaphor) due to concern for good style, so we will focus primarily on metaphors and similes that are changed by the translator in some way.

One of the things Aristotle suggests is that metaphors should be derived from beautiful things, selecting words that either sound beautiful or are beautiful in sense, and the same is true for ugly things (*Rhet*. 3.2.13). LXX Isaiah seems to take this into account in translating the eunuch's speech in 56:3, saying with assonance: ἐγώ εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν. Perhaps the ugly sense of the metaphor in 25:10 contributed to replacing "like treading straw in dung" with the more conventional threshing language.

One of the causes of frigid style is epithets that are too long or unseasonable or too crowded. Aristotle complains about Alcidamas's crowded style, giving examples of what he should have said:

---

54. For Aristotle the analogies are more direct, such as Ares's shield being analogous to Dionysius's cup (*Poet*. 1457b16–32).

55. Thomas, *Anatomical Idiom and Emotional Expression*, appendix 3, 346–47.

> For instance, he does not say "sweat" but "damp sweat"; not "to the Isth-
> mian games," but "to the solemn assembly of the Isthmian games"; not
> "running," but "with a race-like impulse of the soul"; not "museum," but
> "having taken up the museum of nature"; and "the scowling anxiety of
> the soul"; "creator," not "of favour, "but all-popular favour"; and "dis-
> penser of the pleasure of the hearers"; "he hid," not "with branches," but
> "with the branches of the forest"; "he covered" not "his body," but "the
> nakedness of his body" (Aristotle, *Rhe.* 3.3.3 [Freese, LCL]).

In a few places LXX Isaiah removes epithets and statements that are too
long or crowded. In 4:2 LXX Isaiah says just "upon the earth" instead of
the Hebrew's "and the fruit of the land." A clearer example is in 10:12,
where LXX Isaiah has "great mind" instead of "the fruit of the greatness
of heart," an epithet both too long and unseasonable. In 13:18 the transla-
tor puts just "your children" instead of "the fruit of the womb." Perhaps
the epithets were too crowded in 14:29 with all the snake imagery, so
that "root" becomes "seed" and "fruit" is rendered with "offspring."[56] The
frigid epithet in 27:9, "and this is the full fruit of the removal of their
sin," is rendered "and this is their blessing when I remove their sin."[57] In
59:21, LXX Isaiah stops after the word not departing "from your mouth
nor from the mouth of your seed," omitting the superfluous "nor from the
mouth of the seed of your seed." Aristotle would approve of omitting the
last statement, "for when words are piled upon one who already knows,
it destroys perspicuity by a cloud of verbiage" (*Rhet.* 3.3.3 [Freese, LCL]).
In 65:23 the blessed seed is rendered literally. Then the LXX omits the
superfluous last clause "and their descendants as well," since seed already
includes their descendants.[58]

To achieve loftiness of style, Aristotle suggests using descriptions
instead of the name of things; but for conciseness, to do the reverse (*Rhet.*
3.6.1). This could be at work in why some metaphors are interpreted,
besides to make them clearer. For instance, in 33:11 the two strange meta-
phors, "you conceive dry grass and bring forth straw," are reduced and

---

56. Also "rod" becomes "yoke." The verse is made clearer, which is the chief merit
of good style, according to Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.2.1.

57. The issue may not be that it is too long, but that the metaphor is too far-
fetched (Aristotle, *Rhet.* 3.3.4). One example he disapproves of is: "you have sown
shame and reaped misfortune."

58. Note also the compound word τεκνοποιέω; compound words are to be used in
moderation according to Aristotle, *Rhet.*, 3.3.3.

interpreted just as "the strength of your spirit will be vain."[59] This metaphor may also have been interpreted for being too far-fetched. Similarly in 21:10 "O my threshed and my son of a threshing-floor," is rendered with the names (which the translator thought were described metaphorically): "Hear, you who have been left and you who are in pain." Again, it is unclear if the metaphor was too far-fetched or just too long and needed to be clearer and more concise.

Aristotle likes metaphors that set things before the eyes (τῷ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν) (*Rhet*. 3.11.1). By this he means metaphors that express actuality as opposed to abstract ideas; so saying a man is "four-square" is a metaphor, but to say "his life is in full bloom" expresses actuality in a metaphor (*Rhet*. 3.11.2). Perhaps related to this concern for actuality is LXX Isaiah's adjustment of metaphors that make for a more vivid image. In particular, the translator seems to prefer to describe things in their final state, rather than in intermediate processes. We can see this in 11:1, where the sprouting shoot is translated with the fully developed flower that will come up from the root. Similarly, rather than describing withering, the translator prefers to describe that leaves have fallen in several passages (perhaps due to his understanding of the word נבל). In 28:1 and 4 the flower is described as "fallen" rather than "fading." In 1:30 the tree's leaves are not withering, but in the Greek the tree sheds (ἀποβάλλω) them. Again in 34:4 the stars fade like leaves on the vine and the fig in the Hebrew, but the Greek says they will fall. Falling is more animated than withering, which is observed slowly over time. Aristotle suggests motion is important for achieving actuality (*Rhet*. 3.11.3–4).[60] The same thing is seen in 64:5, where we do not fade like a leaf, but in the Greek we fall like a leaf, which better sets up the image of the wind carrying the leaves away. In one place, 3:14, the translator, perhaps due to reading a word as its homonym, makes a much more vivid metaphor: rather than "graze my vineyard" the LXX has "burn my vineyard."

I have already argued (2.4.1) that Isa 40:6–8 may have been modified in the Greek to make an urbane saying, since in the Greek it has antithesis,

---

59. LXX Isaiah also adds some clauses to this verse to ballast this omission and to interpret the passage.

60. Aristotle shows a preference for using animate vehicles for metaphors of inanimate things; since our study is of plant metaphors, we have not seen many examples of this.

metaphor, and actuality, the three features Aristotle says should be aimed for to make an urbane saying (*Rhet.* 3.10.6).

It cannot be shown that the translator was deliberately following Aristotle; as Philodemus suggests, good style could be just as much about having good sense and not a good rhetorical education. But as shown in the introduction, the discussion and analysis of tropes was an important part of learning to read and conduct literary criticism under the tutelage of a grammarian, and this training with tropes would largely be in Aristotelian terms. So, it should not be surprising that LXX Isaiah at times modifies his translation to conform to what the rhetorical teachers of his day thought about how metaphors should be used. Likewise, we should not be surprised that his Greek education does not come out more in his translation, since he was in no way obliged to follow Greek rhetorical rules. His translation method is largely literal, though he may at times take liberties and use some of the techniques he learned from his Greek education.

4.4.3. Bold Metaphors Ameliorated by Using Similes

Demetrius in his manual on style says that metaphors that are too bold can be made safe by turning them into similes (*Eloc.* 80, 85). We can easily see if this advice is followed by searching LXX Isaiah for pluses that are comparative markers.[61]

Ziegler suggests that sometimes the translator removed imagery that was too strong or harsh.[62] The only example he gives is 3:15, where the image is interpreted but not made into a simile. As Van der Vorm-Croughs has shown, most of the time when the translator adds ὡς it is to harmonize a clause to the previous or subsequent clause which has a simile.[63] In Hebrew poetics, similes and metaphors can be hard to distinguish, since the comparative particle can be implicit. LXX Isaiah makes implicit simi-

---

61. ὡσεί is used with no equivalent in 10:17, but LXX Isaiah often uses similes with the word pair שמיר ושית. The word ὥσπερ is used without an equivalent only twice in Isaiah: in 55:8 the Hebrew implies a comparison between God's thoughts and our thoughts; in 27:9 the LXX reads the text differently and does not add the simile to ameliorate a bold metaphor. The only place ὃν τρόπον is added is 62:5, where a simile is implied in the Hebrew.

62. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81. See 4.2, above for an analysis of this claim.

63. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 90–92. She shows Isa 4:5, 5:29, 10:17, 16:1, 16:11, 17:11, 23:3, 27:9, 30:22, 44:4, and 50:9.

les explicit in 55:8 and 66:3.[64] In 52:7 a rhetorical statement (introduced with מה) is rendered as a simile, probably in an attempt to better capture the force of the statement in Greek and for the sake of clarity.[65] The translator turns 37:27 into a simile, probably because of the occurrence of היה; Ziegler has shown that היה ל- is commonly rendered with ὡς.[66] Also, we cannot consider the comparative marker a plus where it is an equivalent of ב or ל, since the translator often renders these with ὡς, as Ziegler has shown.[67] In one place, though, the translator may have added a comparative marker to avoid a statement that is otherwise absurd.

Isa 50:3

אלביש שמים קדרות ושק אשים כסותם:

I dress the heavens in darkness, and sack cloth I make its clothing.

καὶ ἐνδύσω τὸν οὐρανὸν σκότος καὶ θήσω ὡς σάκκον τὸ περιβόλαιον αὐτοῦ.

And I dress heaven with darkness and I put as sackcloth its cloak.

Typically, as we have seen, when there is a metaphor followed by a simile, or vice versa, LXX Isaiah makes them both similes. Here, however, the translator lets the first metaphor remain but makes the second a simile. If the translator simply thought the simile was implicit, we should have found both parts of the verse rendered as similes.[68] The second part of the verse is a much bolder metaphor, to say the heavens are covered in sackcloth, but as a simile it is more acceptable.

Another possible example comes from 2 Sam 17:10. Thomas shows that idioms of the heart melting are always removed by the LXX translators except in 2 Sam 17:10, where it occurs in a simile. She suggests that

---

64. It could be argued that 55:8 is not a simile in the Hebrew, but the LXX wanted to make the statement safe.

65. The rendering of rhetorical questions in LXX Isaiah is worthy of further study. Compare 5:4b, 27:4, 28:25, 29:17, 51:12, 58:5, etc.

66. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Here too it could be argued that the simile is implicit in the Hebrew.

67. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Or they may have been read as ב.

68. Cf. The Targum, which finds it necessary to add a comparative marker to both clauses: אכסי שמיא כיד בקבלא וכסקא אשוי כסותהון ("I will *cover* the heavens *as* with *darkness*, and make *as* sackcloth their covering"; Tg. Neb. Isa 50:3).

since it was only a simile, it was more acceptable to the translator and so could be maintained as a simile in translation.[69]

LXX Isaiah, does not seem to take Demetrius's advice for dealing with bold metaphors by making them similes very often. He much seems to prefer making difficult metaphors clear by interpreting them.

4.4.4. Conclusions

This section has aimed to show what appears to be evidence that the translator took to heart some of his rhetorical training concerning metaphors and used it to improve the style of his translation. As I have admitted, there could be other explanations for many of the examples given. But as seen in the introduction, other scholars have already shown further evidence that the translator was concerned at times with making his translation conform to Greek standards of good style. Further research is needed to see if there is more evidence among the other renderings of metaphors not examined in this study. Also, it would be noteworthy if other studies could show examples where the translator has made his text not stylistically better but worse. One possible example may be 45:25, where "seed of Israel" is rendered with the unnecessarily long "seed of the sons of Israel."[70]

4.5. Conclusion

This study has shown how LXX Isaiah dealt with metaphors, filling in more details to the picture started by Ziegler and Van der Kooij. We have not taken a comprehensive look at all the metaphors in Isaiah, but only a cross-section: the plant metaphors. Still, we have seen a variety of translation and interpretive methods from different sections of the book while being able to see the relationship of related metaphors within the book. But why individual metaphors are treated the way they are and how they are intended to function is probably best understood in light of the passage in which they occur. Future research is needed in order to take a

---

69. Thomas, *Anatomical Idiom and Emotional Expression*, 113–14.

70. This rendering is in line with other examples of LXX Isaiah making double translations (see Van der Vorm-Croughs, *Old Greek of Isaiah*, 153–55), but often elsewhere "seed" metaphors are used without explanation in LXX Isaiah.

more contextual approach to metaphor, seeing how they are translated and interpreted along with the discourse and passage in which they occur.

We have seen that LXX Isaiah is independent of other LXX translators, not only with his freedom to interpret metaphors but also in what metaphors he is willing to use or wishes to avoid (such as fruit metaphors). He interprets metaphors both in their small details and large, both making slight adjustments to shape their meaning and blatantly stating instead of the metaphor what he believes it represents. He at times updates the vehicles of metaphors to reflect the practices of his own day and conditions in Egypt, as Ziegler has shown. LXX Isaiah's freedom to render metaphors is not an isolated phenomenon but seems to be one dimension of his approach to the book and his method of interpretation in general.

The study has shown that LXX Isaiah at times appears to be taking into account Hellenistic sensibilities about the proper use of metaphors. At the same time, he often interprets using methods and interpretations that clearly belong to Jewish scribal traditions and that are further developed in the following centuries. To some degree, then, he resembles the scholars Let. Aris. 120–122 describes: a scholar familiar with both Jewish and Greek literary traditions. Further research is warranted to better position LXX Isaiah among Jewish as well as Greek traditions in terms of the translator's methods of exegesis and sensibilities of style.

Bibliography

Aaron, David. *Biblical Ambiguities: Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery*. BRLA 4. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Aeschylus. *Oresteia: Agamemnon; Libation-Bearers; Eumenides*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

———. *Persians; Seven against Thebes; Suppliants; Prometheus Bound*. Edited and translated by Alan H. Sommerstein. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

Aitken, James K. "The Significance of Rhetoric in the Greek Pentateuch." Pages 507–21 in *On Stone and Scroll: Essays in Honour of Graham Ivor Davies*. Edited by James K. Aitken, Katharine J. Dell, and Brian A. Mastin. BZAW 20. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011.

Alexander, Joseph A. *Commentary on Isaiah*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. in 1 vol. Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1992.

Antiphon and Andocides. *Minor Attic Orators, Volume I: Antiphon; Andocides*. Translated by K. J. Maidment. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1941.

Apollodorus. *The Library*. Translated by James George Frazer. 2 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921.

Aristophanes. *Acharnians; Knights*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Henderson. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.

———. *Fragments*. Edited and translated by Jeffrey Henderson. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007.

Aristotle. *The Art of Rhetoric*. Translated by John Henry Freese. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

———. *Poetics*. Edited and translated by Stephen Halliwell. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Asmis, Elizabeth. "Basic Education in Epicureanism." Pages 209–39 in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*. Edited by Yun Lee Too. Leiden: Brill, 2001.

Ausloos, Hans, and Bénédicte Lemmelijn. "Content-Related Criteria in Characterising the LXX Translation Technique." Pages 357–79 in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23.–27. Juli 2008.* Edited by Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer. WUNT 252. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Baer, David A. "'It's All about Us!': Nationalistic Exegesis in the Greek Isaiah (Chapters 1–12)." Pages 29–48 in *"As Those Who Are Taught": The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL.* Edited by Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull. SymS 27. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006.

———. *When We All Go Home: Translation and Theology in LXX Isaiah 56–66.* JSOTSup 318. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2001.

Baillet, Maurice. *Qumrân grotte 4.III (4Q482–4Q520).* DJD VII. Oxford: Clarendon, 1982.

Baltzer, Klaus, Jürgen Kabiersch, Klaus Koenen, Arie van der Kooij, and Florian Wilk. "Esaias." *LXX.E* 2:2484–690.

Barthélemy, Dominique. *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament: 2 Isaïe, Jérémie, Lamentations.* OBO 50.2. Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1986.

Basson, Alex. "'People Are Plants': A Conceptual Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible." *OTE* 19 (2006): 573–83.

Baumgarten, Joseph M. "4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord's Vineyard." *JJS* 40 (1989): 1–6.

Becker, Joachim. "Wurzel und Wurzelsproß: Ein Beitrag zur hebräischen Lexikographie." *BZ* 20 (1976): 22–44.

Becking, Bob. "'As Straw Is Trodden Down in the Water of a Dung-Pit': Remarks on a Simile in Isaiah 25:10." Pages 3–14 in *Isaiah in Context: Studies in Honour of Arie van der Kooij on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday.* Edited by Michaël N. van der Meer, Percy van Keulen, Willem Th. van Peursen, and Bas ter Haar Romeny. VTSup 138. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Beekes, Robert. *Etymological Dictionary of Greek.* 2 vols. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

Beentjes, Pancratius C. *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew.* VTSup 68. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Bickerman, Elias J. "The Septuagint as a Translation." Pages 167–200 in vol. 1 of *Studies in Jewish and Christian History.* AGJU 9.1. Leiden: Brill, 1976.

Bircher, Alfred G., and Warda H. Bircher. *Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics*. Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000.

Black, Max. *Models and Metaphors: Studies in Language and Philosophy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962.

———. "More about Metaphor." Pages 19–41 in *Metaphor and Thought*. Edited by Andrew Ortony. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Blenkinsopp, Joseph. *Isaiah: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*. 3 vols. AB 19–19B. New York: Doubleday, 2000–2003.

Booth, Wayne C. "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation." Pages 47–70 in *On Metaphor*. Edited by Sheldon Sacks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Boyd-Taylor, Cameron. *Reading between the Lines: The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies*. BTS 8. Leuven: Peeters, 2011.

Brettler, Marc Zvi. "The Metaphorical Mapping of God in the Hebrew Bible." Pages 219–32 in *Metaphor, Canon and Community: Jewish, Christian and Islamic Approaches*. Edited by Ralph Bisschops and James Francis. RelDis 1. New York: Lang, 1999.

Brockington, L. H. "The Greek Translator of Isaiah and His Interest in ΔΟΞΑ." *VT* 1 (1951): 23–32.

———. "Septuagint and Targum." *ZAW* 25 (1954): 80–86.

Brownlee, William H. *The Midrash Pesher of Habakkuk*. SBLMS 24. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979.

———. "The Text of Isaiah VI 13 in the Light of DSIa." *VT* 1 (1951): 296–98.

Bullinger, E. W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1968.

Caird, G. B. *The Language and Imagery of the Bible*. 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997.

Childs, Brevard S. *Isaiah*. OTL. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001.

Chilton, Bruce D. *The Isaiah Targum*. ArBib 11. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987.

Churgin, Pinkhos. *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*. YOSR 14. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927.

Cohen, Ted. "Metaphor and the Cultivation of Intimacy." Pages 1–10 in *On Metaphor*. Edited by Sheldon Sacks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Cook, Johann. "אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1–9 Septuagint): A Metaphor for Foreign Wisdom?" *ZAW* 106 (1994): 458–76.

———. "The Septuagint of Proverbs." Pages 87–174 in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*. By Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij. CBET 68. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

Cribiore, Raffaella. *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Cunha, Wilson de Angelo. *LXX Isaiah 24:1–26:6 as Interpretation and Translation: A Methodological Discussion*. SCS 62. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Curkpatrick, Stephen. "Between Mashal and Parable: 'Likeness' as a Metonymic Enigma." *HBT* 24 (2002): 58–71.

Davidson, Donald. "What Metaphors Mean." Pages 29–46 in *On Metaphor*. Edited by Sheldon Sacks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Davies, Norman de Garis. *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes*. Vol. 1. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition 11. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943.

Dalman, Gustaf. *Arbeit und Sitte in Palaestina*. 7 vols. Hildesheim: Olms, 1928–1942.

Demetrius, *On Style*. Translated by W. Rhys Roberts. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965.

Diodorus Siculus. *Library of History*. Vol. 11: *Books 21–32*. Translated by Francis R. Walton. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957.

Dogniez, Cécile. "Some Similarities between the Septuagint and the Targum of Zechariah." Pages 89–102 in *Translating a Translation: The LXX and Its Modern Translations in the Context of Early Judaism*. Edited by Hans Ausloos, Johann Cook, Florentino García Martínez, and Bénédicte Lemmelijn. BETL 213. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

Drazin, Nathan. *History of Jewish Education from 515 B.C.E. to 220 C.E. (During the Periods of the Second Commonwealth and the Tannaim)*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1940.

Ebner, Eliezer. *Elementary Education in Ancient Israel: During the Tannaitic Period (10–220 C.E.)*. New York: Bloch, 1956.

Eidevall, Göran. *Grapes in the Desert: Metaphors, Models, and Themes in Hosea 4–14*. ConBOT 43. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1996.

———. "Metaphorical Landscapes in the Psalms." Pages 13–22 in *Metaphors in the Psalms*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke and Antje Labahn. BETL 231. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

Elliger, Karl. *Jesaja 40,1–45,7*. Vol. 1 of *Deuterojesaja*. BKAT 11. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1978.

Emerton, J. A. "The Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah vi.13." Pages 85–118 in *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of E. I. J. Rosenthal*. Edited by J. A. Emerton and Stefan C. Reif. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982.

Euripides. *Ion*. Translated by K. H. Lee. Vol. 11 of *The Plays of Euripides*. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1997.

———. *Trojan Women; Iphigenia among the Taurians; Ion*. Edited and translated by David Kovacs. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Fauconnier, Gilles. *Mappings in Thought and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Fauconnier, Gilles, and Mark Turner. "Rethinking Metaphor." Pages 53–66 in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Edited by Raymond W. Gibbs Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

———. "The Qumran Pesher and Traits of Ancient Hermeneutics." Pages 97–114 in vol. 1 of *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*. Edited by Avigdor Shinan. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1977.

Forbes, R. J. *Studies in Ancient Technology*. 9 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1944–1964.

Fortenbaugh, William W. *Sources on Rhetoric and Poetics (Texts 666–713)*. Vol. 8 of *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence; Commentary*. PhA 97. Leiden: Brill, 2005.

Fortenbaugh, William W., Pamela Huby, Robert Sharples, and Dimitri Gutas, eds and trans. *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence*. 2 vols. PhA 54. Leiden: Brill, 1992.

Fox, Michael V. "The Strange Woman in Septuagint Proverbs." *JNSL* 22.2 (1996): 31–44.

Fraser, Peter M. *Ptolemaic Alexandria*. 3 vols. Oxford: Clarendon, 1972.

Fritsch, C. T. *The Anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek Pentateuch*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1943.

Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar. Translated by T. J. Conant. 17th ed. New York: Appleton, 1855.

Gibbs, Raymond, Jr., ed. *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

———. "Metaphor and Thought: The State of the Art." Pages 3–16 in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Edited by Raymond Gibbs Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Ginsberg, H. L. "'Roots Below and Fruit Above' and Related Matters." Pages 72–76 in *Hebrew and Semitic Studies: Presented to Godfrey Rolles Driver in Celebration of His Seventieth Birthday, 20 August 1962*. Edited by D. Winton Thomas and W. D. McHardy. Oxford: Clarendon, 1963.

Goff, Matthew. "Hellish Females: The Strange Woman of Septuagint Proverbs and 4QWiles of the Wicked Woman (4Q184)." *JSJ* 39 (2008): 20–45.

Goodwin, William W. *Greek Grammar*. Revised and enlarged. Boston: Ginn & Company, 1900.

Gray, George Buchanan. "The Greek Version of Isaiah: Is It the Work of a Single Translator?" *JTS* 12 (1911): 286–93.

Gray, George Buchanan, and Arthur S. Peake. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah*. ICC. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1912.

Grossberg, Daniel. "The Dual Glow/Grow Motif." *Bib* 67 (1986): 547–54.

Hatch, Edwin. "On the Value and Use of the Septuagint." Pages 1–35 in *Essays in Biblical Greek*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1889.

Hauck, Friedrich. "καρπός κτλ." *TDNT* 3:614–16.

Hecke, Pierre van. "Conceptual Blending: A Recent Approach to Metaphor; Illustrated with the Pastoral Metaphor in Hos 4:16." Pages 215–31 in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke. BETL 187. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.

———. "Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible: An Introduction." Pages 1–17 in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke. BETL 187. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.

———, ed. *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. BETL 187. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.

Hecke, Pierre van, and Antje Labahn, eds. *Metaphors in the Psalms*. BETL 231. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

Hepper, F. Nigel. *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants: Flowers and Trees, Fruits and Vegetables, Ecology*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992.

Hermanson, Eric A. "Recognizing Hebrew Metaphors: Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Bible Translation." *JNSL* 22.2 (1996): 67–78.

Hesiod. *Theogony; Works and Days; Testimonia*. Edited and translated by Glenn W. Most. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006.

Holladay, Carl R. *Fragments from Hellenistic Jewish Authors*. 4 vols. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983–1996.

Homer. *The Iliad*. Translated by A. T. Murray. Revised by William F. Wyatt. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999.

Honigman, Sylvie. *The Septuagint and Homeric Scholarship: A Study in the Narrative of the Letter of Aristeas*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Hubbell, Harry M. "The Rhetorica of Philodemus: Translation and Commentary." *Transactions of the Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences* 23 (1920): 243–382.

Hulster, Izaak J. de. *Iconographic Exegesis and Third Isaiah*. FAT 2/36. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009.

Jäkel, Olaf. "How Can Mortal Man Understand the Road He Travels? Prospects and Problems of the Cognitive Approach to Religious Metaphor." Pages 55–86 in *The Bible through Metaphor and Translation: A Cognitive Semantic Perspective*. Edited by Kurk Feyaerts. RelDis 15. New York: Lang, 2003.

Joosten, Jan. "Elaborate Similes—Hebrew and Greek: A Study in Septuagint Translation Technique." *Bib* 77 (1996): 227–36.

———. "The Knowledge and Use of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period: Qumran and the Septuagint." Pages 115–30 in *Diggers at the Well: Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira*. Edited by Takamitsu Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde. STDJ 36. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

———. "On the LXX Translators' Knowledge of Hebrew." Pages 165–79 in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Oslo, 1998*. Edited by Bernard A. Taylor. SCS 51. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001.

———. "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm' in Septuagint Studies." Pages 163–78 in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*. Edited by Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta. JSJSup 126. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Joyal, Mark, Iain McDougall, and John C. Yardley. *Greek and Roman Education: A Sourcebook*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Karrer, Martin. "Ῥίζα-Wurzel und Geschlecht: Ein Motiv zwischen griechischer Antike, Septuaginta und Neuem Testament." Pages 63–98 in *Voces Biblicae: Septuagint Greek and Its Significance for the New Testament*. Edited by Jan Joosten and Peter J. Tomson. CBET 49. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.

Karrer, Martin, and Wolfgang Kraus, eds. *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Sep-*

tuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006. WUNT 219. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

———, eds. *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23.–27. Juli 2008*. WUNT 252. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

Kittay, Eva Feder. *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Function and Linguistic Structure*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989.

Kittel, Gerhard. "δόξα: The NT Use of δόξα, I." *TDNT* 2:237.

Kloppenborg, John S. "Egyptian Viticultural Practices and the Citation of Isa 5:1–7 in Mark 12:1–9." *NovT* 44 (2002): 134–59.

———. *The Tenants in the Vineyard: Ideology, Economics, and Agrarian Conflict in Jewish Palestine*. WUNT 195. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006.

Koller, Aaron J. *The Semantic Field of Cutting Tools in Biblical Hebrew: The Interface of Philological, Semantic, and Archaeological Evidence*. CBQMS 49. Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 2012.

König, Eduard. *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur*. Leipzig: Weicher, 1900.

Kooij, Arie van der. "Accident or Method? On 'Analogical' Interpretation in the Old Greek of Isaiah and in 1QIsa." *BO* 43 (1986): 366–76.

———. *Die alten Textzeugen des Jesajabuches: Ein Beitrag zur Textgeschichte des Alten Testaments*. OBO 35. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1981.

———. "Authoritative Scriptures and Scribal Culture." Pages 55–71 in *Authoritative Scriptures in Ancient Judaism*. Edited by Mladen Popović. JSJSup 141. Leiden: Brill, 2010.

———. "The Cities of Isaiah 24-27 according to the Vulgate, Targum and Septuagint." Pages 183–198 in *Studies in Isaiah 24–27: The Isaiah Workshop (De Jesaja Werkplaats)*. Edited by Hendrik Jan Bosman et al. OTS 43. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

———. "The City of Alexandria and the Ancient Versions of the Hebrew Bible." *JSNL* 25.1 (1999): 137–49.

———. "'Coming' Things and 'Last' Things: Isaianic Terminology as Understood in the Wisdom of Ben Sira and in the Septuagint of Isaiah." Pages 135–40 in *The New Things: Eschatology in Old Testament Prophecy; Festschrift for Henk Leene.* Edited by Ferenc Postma, Klaas Spronk, and E. Talstra. ACEBT.S 3. Maastricht: Uitgeverij Shaker, 2002.

———. "The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language: A Characteristic of LXX-Isaiah." Pages 179–85 in *Jerusalem, Alexandria, Rome: Studies in Ancient Cultural Interaction in Honour of A. Hilhorst*. Edited by Florentino García Martínez and Gerard P. Luttikhuizen. JSJSup 82. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

———. "Isaiah 24–27: Text-Critical Notes." Pages 13–15 in *Studies in Isaiah 24–27: The Isaiah Workshop (De Jesaja Werkplaats)*. Edited by Hendrik Jan Bosman et al. OTS 43. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

———. *The Oracle of Tyre: The Septuagint of Isaiah XXIII as Version and Vision*. VTSup 71. Leiden: Brill, 1998.

———. "Rejoice, O Thirsty Desert! (Isaiah 35): On Zion in the Septuagint of Isaiah." Pages 11–20 in *"Enlarge the Site of Your Tent": The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah*. Edited by Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude. OTS 58. Leiden: Brill, 2011.

———. Review of *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah*, by Ronald L. Troxel. *BIOSCS* 42 (2009): 147–52.

———. "The Septuagint and Alexandrian Scholarship." *BO* 68 (2011): 492–509.

———. "The Septuagint of Isaiah." Pages 63–85 in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*. By Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij. CBET 68. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

———. "The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood." Pages 69–78 in *Let Us Go up to Zion: Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday*. Edited by Iain Provan and Mark J. Boda. Leiden: Brill, 2012.

———. "The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Issue of Coherence: A Twofold Analysis of LXX Isaiah 31:9B–32:8." Pages 33–48 in *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives*. Edited by Arie van der Kooij and Michaël N. van der Meer. CBET 55. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

———. "The Septuagint of the Pentateuch." Pages 15–62 in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom: On the Provenance of Translators and Their Books in the Septuagint Version*. By Johann Cook and Arie van der Kooij. CBET 68. Leuven: Peeters, 2012.

Korpel, Marjo C. A. "Metaphors in Isaiah LV." *VT* 46 (1996): 43–55.

———. *A Rift in the Clouds: Ugaritic and Hebrew Descriptions of the Divine*. UBL 8. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1990.

Kövecses, Zoltán. *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Labahn, Antje. "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise—das Leiden Jeremias am Schicksal Jerusalems: Metaphern und Metapher-variationen in Thr 3,1–21 LXX." Pages 147–83 in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke. BETL 187. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.

———, ed. *Conceptual Metaphors in Poetic Texts: Proceedings of the Metaphor Research Group of the European Association of Biblical Studies in Lincoln 2009*. PHSC 18. Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2013.

Lakoff, George, and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Latte, Kurt, and Peter Allan Hansen, eds. *Hesychii Alexandrini Lexicon*. New York: de Gruyter, 2005–.

Lee, John A. L. "The Literary Greek of Septuagint Isaiah." *Semitica et Classica* 7 (2014): 135–46.

———. *LXX: A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of the Pentateuch*. SCS 14. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.

Leene, Hendrik. "Isaiah 27:7–9 as a Bridge between Vineyard and City." Pages 199–225 in *Studies in Isaiah 24–27: The Isaiah Workshop (De Jesaja Werkplaats)*. Edited by Hendrik Jan Bosman et al. OTS 43. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Lemmelijn, Bénédicte. "Flora in Cantico Canticorum: Towards a More Precise Characterization of Translation Technique in the LXX of Song of Songs." Pages 27–51 in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*. Edited by Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta. JSJSup 126. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Louw, Theo A. W. van der. "Dictation of the Septuagint Version." *JSJ* 39 (2008): 211–29.

———. *Transformations in the Septuagint: Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies*. CBET 47. Leuven: Peeters, 2007.

Lowth, Robert. *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*. Translated by G. Gregory. London: Johnson, 1787.

Lund, Øystein. *Way Metaphors and Way Topics in Isaiah 40–55*. FAT 2/28. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007.

Macky, Peter W. *The Centrality of Metaphors to Biblical Thought: A Method for Interpreting the Bible*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1990.

Maier, Johann. "Early Jewish Biblical Interpretation in the Qumran Literature." Pages 108–29 in vol. 1.1 of *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The*

History of Its Interpretation. Edited by Magne Sæbø. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Maurer, Christian. "ῥίζα κτλ." *TDNT* 6:985–91.

Meer, Michaël N. van der. "The Question of Literary Dependence of the Greek Isaiah upon the Greek Psalter Revisited." Pages 162–200 in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 23.–27. Juli 2008*. Edited by Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010.

———. "Trendy Translations in the Septuagint of Isaiah: A Study of the Vocabulary of the Greek Isaiah 3:18–23 in the Light of Contemporary Sources." Pages 581–96 in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006*. Edited by Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

Milik, J. T., ed. *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1974.

Moulton, James Hope, and George Milligan. *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and Other Non-literary Sources*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1949.

Muraoka, Takamitsu. *A Greek ≈ Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint*. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

———. "A Methodological Issue in Septuagint Studies with Special Reference to Lexicography." *JSCS* 46 (2013): 101–8.

———. "Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography with Special Reference to the So-Called Interlinear Model." Pages 221–35 in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten: Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20.–23. Juli 2006*. Edited by Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus. WUNT 219. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008.

———. "The Use of ΩΣ in the Greek Bible." *NovT* 7 (1964): 51–72.

Musselman, Lytton John. *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh: Plants of the Bible and the Quran*. Portland, OR: Timber, 2007.

Nestle, E. "Miscellen." *ZAW* 24 (1904): 122–38.

Niehoff, Maren R. "Homeric Scholarship and Bible Exegesis in Ancient Alexandria: Evidence from Philo's 'Quarrelsome' Colleagues." *ClQ* 57 (2007): 166–82.

———. *Jewish Exegesis and Homeric Scholarship in Alexandria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Nielsen, Kirsten. *There Is Hope for a Tree: The Tree as Metaphor in Isaiah*. JSOTSup 65. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1989.

Olofsson, Staffan. *God Is My Rock: A Study of Translation Technique and Theological Exegesis in the Septuagint*. ConBOT 31. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990.

———. *The LXX Version: A Guide to the Translation Technique of the Septuagint*. ConBOT 30. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1990.

Orlinsky, Harry M. "Studies in the LXX of the Book of Job: On the Matter of Anthropomorphisms, Anthropopathisms, and Euphemisms." *HUCA* 30 (1959): 153–67; 32 (1961): 239–68.

———. "The Treatment of Anthropomorphims and Anthropopathisms in the LXX of Isaiah." *HUCA* 27 (1956): 193–200.

Ortony, Andrew, ed. *Metaphor and Thought*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Ottley, R. R. *The Book of Isaiah according to the Septuagint (Codex Alexandrinus)*. 2 vols. London: Clay and Sons, 1904–1906.

Payne, D. F. "A Perspective on the Use of Simile in the OT." *Semitics* 1 (1970): 111–25.

Pender, E. E. "Plato on Metaphors and Models." Pages 55–81 in *Metaphor, Allegory, and the Classical Tradition: Ancient Thought and Modern Revisions*. Edited by G. R. Boys-Stones. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Peraki-Kyriakidou, Helen. "Aspects of Ancient Etymologizing." *ClQ* 52 (2002): 478–93.

Pfeiffer, Rudolf. *History of Classical Scholarship: From the Beginnings to the End of the Hellenistic Age*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.

Pietersma, Albert. "Beyond Literalism: Interlinearity Revisited." Pages 3–21 in *Translation Is Required: The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect*. Edited by Robert J. V. Hiebert. SCS 56. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010.

———. "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint." Pages 337–64 in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference; Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique "From Alpha to Byte" University of Stellenbosch 17–21 July, 2000*. Edited by Johann Cook. Leiden: Brill, 2002.

———. "Response to T. Muraoka, 'Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography with Special Reference to the So-Called Interlinear

Model.'" New English Translation of the Septuagint (website). http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/discussion/pietersma-re-muraoka.html.

Pindar. *Olympian Odes; Pythian Odes*. Translated by William H. Race. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997.

Plato. *Euthyphro; Apology; Crito; Phaedo; Phaedrus*. Translated by Harold N. Fowler. LCL. London: Heinemann, 1913.

Preisigke, Friedrich. *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyrusurkunden mit Einschluß der griechischen Inschriften, Aufschriften, Ostraka, Mumienschilder usw. aus Ägypten*. 4 vols. Berlin: Selbstverlag der Erben, 1925–2000.

Punter, David. *Metaphor*. New York: Routledge, 2007.

Quell, Gottfried. "σπέρμα κτλ: σπέρμα and Equivalents in the Old Testament." *TDNT* 7:538–42.

Qimron, Elisha. *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. HSS 29. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986.

Rabin, Chaim. "The Translation Process and the Character of the Septuagint." *Textus* 6 (1968): 1–26.

Ramban (Nachmanides). *Genesis*. Vol. 1 of *Commentary on the Torah*. Translated by Charles B. Chavel. New York: Shilo, 1971.

Richards, I. A. *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979.

Ricoeur, Paul. "The Metaphorical Process as Cognition, Imagination, and Feeling." Pages 141–57 in *On Metaphor*. Edited by Sheldon Sacks. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Rosenberg, Avraham J., ed. and trans. *Isaiah: A New English Translation*. 2 vols. Judaica Books of the Prophets. New York: Judaica Press, 1982.

Sacks, Sheldon, ed. *On Metaphor*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Sæbø, Magne, ed. *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Interpretation*. 3 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996–2015.

Sauneron, Serge, and Henri Stierlin. *Die letzten Tempel Ägyptens: Edfu und Philae*. Zürich: Atlantis, 1978.

Schaper, Joachim. "The Concept of the Translator(s) in the Contemporary Study of the Septuagint." Pages 31–46 in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus*. Edited by Kristen De Troyer, T. Michael Law, and Marketta Liljeström. CBET 72. Leuven: Peeters, 2014.

Schnebel, Michael. *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*. MBPF 7. Munich: Beck, 1925.

Schökel, Luis Alonso. *A Manual of Hebrew Poetics*. Translated and revised by Luis Alonso Schökel and Adrian Graffy. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1988.

Seeligmann, Isac Leo. "Problems and Perspectives in Modern Septuagint Research." Translated by Judith H. Seeligmann. Pages 21–80 in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*. Edited by Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann. FAT 40. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

———. "The Septuagint Version of Isaiah: A Discussion of Its Problems." Pages 119–298 in *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*. Edited by Robert Hanhart and Hermann Spieckermann. FAT 40. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004.

Siegert, Folker. "Early Jewish Interpretation in a Hellenistic style." Pages 130–98 in vol. 1.1 of *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. Edited by Magne Sæbø. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Sokoloff, Michael. *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods*. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002.

———. *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period*. Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1992.

Sollamo, Raija. *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint*. AASF.DHL 19. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1979.

Sophocles. *Ajax; Electra; Oedipus Tyrannus*. Edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

———. *Antigone; The Women of Trachis; Philoctetes; Oedipus at Colonus*. Edited and translated by Hugh Lloyd-Jones. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Soskice, Janet Martin. *Metaphor and Religious Language*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1985.

Sperber, Dan, and Deirdre Wilson. "A Deflationary Account of Metaphors." Pages 84–106 in *The Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*. Edited by Raymond Gibbs Jr. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Springuel, I., M. Sheded, and W. Abed, "Plant Growth in Relation to a Rain Incident in Wadi Agag, South Egypt." *Vegetatio* 90 (1990): 159–65.

Stanford, William Bedell. *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1936.

Sticher, Claudia, "Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras: Zu einigen Pflanzen-metaphern in den Psalmen; Eine kanonische Lektüre." Pages 251–68 in *Metaphors in the Psalms*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke and Antje Labahn, BETL 231. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

Stromberg, Jacob. "The 'Root of Jesse' in Isaiah 11:10: Postexilic Judah, or Postexilic Davidic King?" *JBL* 127 (2008): 655–69.

Swarup, Paul. *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community: An Eternal Planting, a House of Holiness*. LSTS 59. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

Szlos, M. Beth. "Body Parts as Metaphor and the Value of a Cognitive Approach: A Study of the Female Figures in Proverbs via Metaphor." Pages 158–95 in *Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible*. Edited by Pierre van Hecke. BETL 187. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2005.

Tenhunen, Katri. "The Renderings of the Hebrew Preposition ל in Predicate Expressions Denoting Transition and Becoming Something in LXX Genesis and Exodus." Pages 1–16 in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*. Edited by Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta. JSJSup 126. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Thackeray, Henry St. John. "The Greek Translators of the Prophetical Books." *JTS* 4 (1903): 578–85.

Theophrastus. *De Causis Plantarum*. Translated by Benedict Einarson and George K. K. Link. 3 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976–1990.

———. *Enquiry into Plants*. Translated by Arthur Hort. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1916.

Thomas, Angela. *Anatomical Idiom and Emotional Expression: A Comparison of the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint*. HBM 52. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2014.

———. "Fear and Trembling: Body Imagery in the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint." Pages 115–25 in *The Reception of the Hebrew Bible in the Septuagint and the New Testament: Essays in Memory of Aileen Guilding*. Edited by David J. A. Clines and J. Cheryl Exum. HBM 55. Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2013.

Toury, Gideon. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Benjamins Translation Library 4. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1995.

Tov, Emanuel. "Renderings of Combinations of the Infinitive Absolute and Finite Verbs in the LXX—Their Nature and Distribution." Pages 64–73 in *Studien zur Septuaginta-Robert Hanhart zu Ehren: Aus Anlaß seines*

65. Geburtstages. Edited by Detlef Fraenkel, Udo Quast, and John W. Wevers. MSU 20. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990.

———. *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research.* 2nd ed. JBS 8. Jerusalem: Simor, 1997.

———. "Transliterations of Hebrew Words in the Greek Versions of the Old Testament: A Further Characteristic of the *Kaige*-Th. Revision?" *Textus* 8 (1973): 78–92.

Troxel, Ronald L. "Economic Plunder as a Leitmotif in LXX-Isaiah." *Bib* 83 (2002): 375–91.

———. *LXX-Isaiah as Translation and Interpretation: The Strategies of the Translator of the Septuagint of Isaiah.* JSJSup 124. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

Ulrich, Eugene. "The Developmental Composition of the Book of Isaiah: Light from 1QIsaᵃ on Additions in the MT." *DSD* 8 (2001): 288–305.

Veen, Marijke van der. "The Economic Value of Chaff and Straw in Arid and Temperate Zones." *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 8 (1999): 211–24.

Vorm-Croughs, Mirjam van der. "LXX Isaiah and the Use of Rhetorical Figures." Pages 173–88 in *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives.* Edited by Arie van der Kooij and Michaël N. van der Meer. CBET 55. Leuven: Peeters, 2010.

———. *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of Its Pluses and Minuses.* SCS 61. Atlanta: SBL Press, 2014.

Voitila, Anssi, and Jutta Jokiranta, eds. *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo.* JSJSup 126. Leiden: Brill, 2008.

Vonach, Andreas. "Jeremias." *LXX.E* 2:2696–814.

Wagner, J. Ross. *Reading the Sealed Book: Old Greek Isaiah and the Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics.* FAT 88. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013.

Walsh, Carey Ellen. *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel.* HSM 60. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000.

Webb, Ruth. "The Progymnasmata as Practice." Pages 289–316 in *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity.* Edited by Yun Lee Too. Leiden, Brill: 2001.

Weiss, Andrea L. *Figurative Language in Biblical Prose Narrative: Metaphor in the Book of Samuel.* VTSup 107. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Whybray, R. N. *Isaiah 40–66.* NCB. London: Oliphants, 1975.

Wildberger, Hans. *Jesaja.* 3 vols. BKAT 10. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972–1982.

Williams, Ronald J. *William's Hebrew Syntax,* 3rd. ed. Revised and expanded by John C. Beckman. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007.

Williamson, Hugh G. M. *Isaiah 1–5*. Vol. 1 of *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1–27*. ICC. London: T&T Clark, 2006.

Wutz, Franz. *Die Transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus*. BWAT 9. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933.

Xenophon. *Cyropaedia*. Translated by Walter Miller. 2 vols. LCL. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914.

Zahran, M. A., and A. J. Willis. *The Vegetation of Egypt*. London: Chapman & Hall, 1992.

Ziegler, Joseph. *Isaias*. SVTG 14. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967.

———. "Transcriptionen in der Ier.-LXX." Pages 59–86 in *Beiträge zur Ieremias-Septuaginta*. MSU 6. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958.

———. *Untersuchungen zur Septuaginta des Buches Isaias*. ATA 12.3. Munster: Aschendorff, 1934.

Zlotowitz, Bernard M. *The Septuagint Translation of the Hebrew Terms in Relation to God in the Book of Jeremiah*. New York: Ktav, 1981.

Ancient Sources Index

Modern Authors Index