

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

DID THE SEPTUAGINT TRANSLATORS ALWAYS UNDERSTAND THEIR HEBREW TEXT?

The (correct) understanding of the biblical text is an abstract concept. *We* do not understand all words in MT, and therefore modern translations often suggest alternative renderings of individual words, add question marks, or note that the translation is conjectural (see, e.g., the notes in NJPST). Furthermore, ancient translators should not be judged according to our standards, but must be viewed within the framework of their own world. Turning, then, to the question posed in the title of this study, we are not focusing on renderings which are mistranslations according to our standards, but on renderings which show the translators' ignorance of words through an analysis of the inner dynamics of the translation. That lack of knowledge may be reflected in various types of renderings, especially in conjectural translations.

Conjectural translations must be understood within the framework of the translation process, in particular with relation to the choice of equivalents. The whole process of translating in antiquity is often conjectural, for, to the best of our knowledge, translators had no lexica or word-lists at their disposal. They therefore had to turn to other sources of information: the translators' direct and living knowledge of Hebrew and Aramaic (including their etymological understanding of these languages; see *TCU*, 172–180); exegetical traditions; the context; and for the later translators, the translation of the Pentateuch (see Tov, "Pentateuch"*).

The present study focuses on conjectural renderings. The recognition of such a rendering is not certain, because it is always possible that it reflects an exegetical tradition or a Hebrew variant. If these *caveats* are taken into consideration, several types of conjectural renderings may be recognized:¹

1. Untranslated words

¹ According to some scholars, translators sometimes simply omitted difficult words when they did not know how to render them: Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 52–53; Allen, *Chronicles* 1, 61–62.

2. Contextual guesses
3. Contextual manipulation
4. Reliance on parallelism
5. Employment of general words
6. Etymological renderings

1. *Untranslated words*

One group of renderings demonstrates beyond doubt that at least some words in the Hebrew Bible were unknown to the translators. These are words which were left untranslated because the translators did not know their meaning. Most of these words are objectively difficult, because they are *hapax legomena* in the Bible or in the book under consideration. Probably the translators hoped to return to the transliterated Hebrew words and to replace them with Greek translations, or else they expected others to do this (see Tov, "Transliterations"*). Within the realm of the biblical translations, these transliterations are found especially in the 'LXX' of 2 Kings and in the sections and fragments attributed to *kaige-Th*.²

Examples of individual words which were left untranslated because they were unknown to the translators are listed in Tov, "Transliterations,"* and some are repeated here in their respective contexts:

Judg 5:7	חדלו פרזו בִּישְׂרָאֵל
LXX ^A	ἐξέλιπεν φραζων ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ
Judg 5:16	למה ישבת בי הַמְשַׁפְּתִים
LXX ^A	ἵνα τί μοι κάθῃσαι ἀνὰ μέσον τῶν μοσφαθαιμ
Judg 8:7	וּדְשַׁתִּי אֶת בְּשָׂרְכֶם אֶת קֹוצֵי הַמְדַּבֵּר וְאֶת הַבְּרַקָּנִים
	καὶ ἐν ταῖς βαρκονυμ
Judg 8:16	וַיִּקַּח אֶת זַקְנֵי הָעִיר וְאֶת קֹוצֵי הַמְדַּבֵּר וְאֶת הַבְּרַקָּנִים
	καὶ ταῖς βαρακηνυμ
1 Kgs 5:25(11)	עֲשָׂרִים אֶלֶף כֶּרֶם חֲטִימִים מַכְלֵל לְבֵיתוֹ
	καὶ μαχιρ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ
2 Kgs 8:15	וַיִּקַּח הַמְּכַבֵּר
	καὶ ἔλαβεν τὸ μαχμα
1 Chr 21:20	וַאֲרַבְעַת בָּנָיו עָמוּ מִתְּחַבְּאִים
	καὶ τέσσαρες υἱοὶ αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτοῦ μεθαχαβιν

As a rule, unknown words were transliterated in their exact Hebrew form, including prefixes and suffixes, e.g.,

² The anonymous reviser who produced these two translation units preferred to leave some difficult words untranslated rather than to indulge in translation guesses.

Judg 5:22	מדהרות דהרות אביריו
LXX ^A	αμαδαρωθ δυνατω εν αυτου
Ezek 41:8	וראיתי לבית גבה סביב סביב
	καὶ τὸ θραελ τοῦ οἴκου ὕψος κύκλω
Ezra 8:27	וכפרי זהב
	καὶ καφουρη χρυσοῖ
1 Chr 28:11	(וית...ואת בתיו) וגנזיו
	καὶ τῶν ζακχω αυτου (cf. v. 20 LXX)

All these transliterations reflect Hebrew words which are either *hapax legomena* (in the Bible or a given book) or were understandably problematic for the translators.

In Tov, "Transliterations,"* 77 words are listed which were left untranslated in the LXX (once or more). A further 32 common nouns have been treated as proper nouns, probably because they were not known to the translators. A similar list is provided there for *kaige*-Th. Since the translators did not know the meaning of these words, it is conceivable that also other words may have been unknown to one or all of the translators.

2. Contextual guesses

Since the preceding section demonstrated that several words were left untranslated, it should not be hard to accept that in other cases the translators resorted to contextual guesses.

a. Recurring patterns

Some Hebrew words were understandably difficult for the translators, and if in such cases we meet different renderings in accordance with the different contexts, it stands to reason that the translators adapted the translation of the 'difficult' word to the different contexts.

A case in point is the translation of ארמון.³ This word, which occurs some 30 times in the Bible, is usually translated as 'palace.' The word occurs rarely in postbiblical Hebrew, and this situation may account for the wide range of its renderings in the LXX showing that the translators were unaware of its meaning, using the context as their guide.

³ For details on the renderings of this word, see R.P. Blake, "Khanmeti Palimpsest Fragments of the Old Georgian Version of Jeremiah," *HTR* 25 (1932) 254 ff.; P.J. Heawood, "'Armôn and 'Aram,'" *JTS* 13 (1911-12) 66-73; Seeligmann, *Isaiah*, 52; G.B. Caird, "Towards a Lexicon of the Septuagint, I," *JTS* 19 (1968) 460-461.

The translation equivalents which come closest to the meaning of the Hebrew are βασιλείον ('palace') in Prov 18:19 and ἄμφοδον (literally: 'a block of houses surrounded by streets') in Jer 17:27; 49:27(30:16).

At the same time, we meet the following general equivalents:

ναός ('temple')

Jer 30(37):18 וארמון על משפטו ישב
καὶ ὁ ναὸς κατὰ τὸ κρίμα αὐτοῦ καθεδεῖται

οἶκος ('house')

Isa 32:14 ארמון נטש
οἶκοι ἐγκαταλελειμμένοι

The following renderings probably reflect contextual guesses:

ἐναντίον ('opposite')

2 Kgs 15:25 (Q) ויכהו בשמרו⁴ בארמון בית המלך
καὶ ἐπάταξεν αὐτὸν ἐν Σαμαρεία ἐναντίον
οἴκου τοῦ βασιλέως

πόλις ('city')

Isa 34:13 ועלחה ארמנתיה (סירים)
ἀναφύσει εἰς τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν

ἄντρον ('cave'; *hapax* in the LXX)

1 Kgs 16:18 ויבא אל ארמון בית המלך
καὶ εἰσπορεύεται εἰς ἄντρον τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ
βασιλέως

Also the following two equivalents referring to specific architectural structures reflect such contextual guesses:

βάρις ('tower') Ps 48(47):4, 14; Lam 2:5, 7; 2 Chr 36:19.

πυργόβαρις ('fortified tower?')

Ps 122(121):7 יהי שלום בחילך) שלוח בארמנותיך
καὶ εὐθηνία ἐν ταῖς πυργοβάρεσίν σου

The representation of ארמון as 'land'⁴ may reflect contextual exegesis (cf. especially the parallel pair ארמון//ארץ in Mic 5:4), but the frequent occurrence of this rendering may also indicate the existence of a lexical-exegetical tradition:

γῆ ('country?')

Jer 9:20(21) כי עלה מות בחלונינו) בא בארמנותינו
εἰσῆλθεν εἰς τὴν γῆν ὑμῶν

χώρα ('land,' 'country')

Amos 3:9 השמיעו על ארמנות באשדוד ועל ארמנות בארץ מצרים

⁴ It is not impossible that the graphic similarity of ארמון and ארמה somehow influenced the present rendering.

	ἀπαγγείλατε χώραις ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς χώρας τῆς Αἰγύπτου
Amos 3:10	חמס וּשְׂדֵי בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵיהֶם ἀδικίαν καὶ τάλαιπωρίαν ἐν ταῖς χώραις αὐτῶν
Amos 3:11	וּנְבוֹ אַרְמְנוֹתַי καὶ διαρπαγήσονται αἱ χῶραί σου
Mic 5:4 (5)	(כִּי יָבוֹא בְּאַרְצָנוּ) וְכִי יֵדְרֵךְ בְּאַרְמְנוֹתֵינוּ καὶ ὅταν ἐπιβῆ ἐπὶ τὴν χώραν ὑμῶν

This exegetical tradition differs from the equally frequently occurring translation θεμέλια ('foundations') in similar contexts in the Minor Prophets (and elsewhere): Isa 25:2; Jer 6:5; Hos 8:14; Amos 1:4, 7, 10, 12, 14; 2:2, 5.

The mere variety of the renderings, especially within one translation unit, shows the translator's uncertainty with regard to the meaning of the word. Very often the different equivalents are selected on the basis of their respective contexts:

שָׁפִי (usually taken as 'hill') in Jeremiah:

3:21	קוֹל עַל שְׁפִיִּים נִשְׁמָע φωνὴ ἐκ χειλέων ἠκούσθη A voice was heard from <i>lips</i> . (שְׁפִיִּים explained from שֵׁפֶף 'lip'); similarly:
7:29	וּשְׂאֵי עַל שְׁפִיִּים קִינָה καὶ ἀνάλαβε ἐπὶ χειλέων θρήνον
3:2	שְׂאֵי עֵינֶיךָ עַל שְׁפִיִּים ἄρον εἰς εὐθείαν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς σου Lift your eyes to the <i>plain</i> (based on Aramaic, as in Num 23:3).
12:12	עַל כָּל שְׁפִיִּים בְּמִדְבָּר בָּאוּ שְׂדָדִים ἐπὶ πᾶσαν διεκβολὴν ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ ἤλθοσαν τάλαιπωροῦντες Upon every <i>pass</i> (?) in the desert destroyers came.
14:6	וּפְרָאִים עָמְדוּ עַל שְׁפִיִּים ὄνοι ἄγριοι ἔστησαν ἐπὶ <i>νάπας</i> Wild asses stood on <i>vales</i> .
4:11	רוּחַ צַח שְׁפִיִּים πνεῦμα πλανήσεως ... a wind of <i>scattering</i> .

שָׁפִי is translated as follows in Isaiah (note the parallelism):

41:18	שְׁפִיִּים ... בַּקְעוֹת
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49:9 ὄρειων ... πεδίων
 שפיים ... דרכים
 ὁδοῖς ... τρίβοις

The precious stone **שה** is identified in different ways:

πράσινος	Gen 2:12
σάρδιον	Exod 25:7; 35:9
σμαράγδος	Exod 28:9; 35:27; 39:6(36:13)
βηρύλλιον	Exod 28:20
σοομ	1 Chr 29:2

זועה, or its *Qere* form זעה ('horror'), poses no special problems for the modern lexicographer, yet seems to have been difficult for the translators:

ἀνάγκη ('punishment,' 'pain?')

Jer 15:4 ונתתים לזועה לכל ממלכות הארץ
 καὶ παραδώσω αὐτοὺς εἰς ἀνάγκας πάσαις ταῖς
 βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς

διασκορπισμός ('scattering')

Jer 24:9 ונתתים לזועה לרעה לכל ממלכות הארץ
 καὶ δώσω αὐτοὺς εἰς διασκορπισμὸν εἰς πάσας
 τὰς βασιλείας τῆς γῆς

διασπορά ('scattering')

Deut 28:25 והיית לזועה לכל ממלכות הארץ
 καὶ ἔση ἐν διασπορᾷ ἐν πάσαις ταῖς βασιλείαις
 τῆς γῆς

Jer 34(41):17 ונתתי אתכם לזועה לכל ממלכות הארץ
 καὶ δώσω ὑμᾶς εἰς διασπορὰν πάσαις ταῖς
 βασιλείαις τῆς γῆς

ἔκστασις ('astonishment')

2 Chr 29:8 ויהתם לזועה לשמה ולשרקה
 καὶ ἔδωκεν αὐτοὺς εἰς ἔκστασιν καὶ εἰς
 ἀφανισμὸν καὶ εἰς συρισμὸν

ἐλπίς πονηρά ('bad expectation')

Isa 28:19 והיה רק זועה הבי' שמועה
 ... ἔσται ἐλπίς πονηρά· μάθετε ἀκούειν

Also the following conjectural renderings of שיחה/שיחה ('pit') are based on their respective contexts:

Ps 119(118):85 כרו לי זדים שיחות
 Godless men dug pits for me.

	διηγῆσαντό μοι παράνομοι ἀδολεσχίας Transgressors told me <i>idle talk</i> .
Jer 18:20	כרו שוחה לנפשי They dug a pit for my life. συνελάλησαν ῥήματα κατὰ τῆς ψυχῆς μου They spoke <i>words</i> against my soul.
Jer 18:22	(Q: שוחה) כרו שיחה They dug a pit. ἐνεχείρησαν λόγον They formed a <i>plan</i> .

In these verses, the meaning of שוחה/שיחה was not recognized and the word was taken as שיחה ('conversation'). This rendering obviously changed the meaning of the context in which the verb did not fit any more. כרה had little to do with 'conversation,' and accordingly the translators adapted the translation of the verb to their respective objects:⁵ διηγῆσαντο ('they told'), συνελάλησαν ('they spoke'), ἐνεχείρησαν ('they undertook'). Probably the relative frequency of the occurrence of the words influenced the translators, since שיחה together with שיח occurs much more frequently in the Bible than שיחה. In Ps 57(56):7, however, the translator recognized שוחה which was easily recognizable in the context. The conjectural nature of the renderings in Jeremiah is underlined by the fact that the same phrase was rendered differently in two adjacent verses (18:20, 22).

b. Isolated instances

The almost identical verses Isa 18:2 and 18:7, which contain several difficult words and forms, have been rendered in different ways, reflecting different attempts of solving lexical problems.

MT v. 2 v. 2		v. 7	MT v. 7 (when different)
אל	πρὸς	ἐκ	
נוי	ἔθνος	λαοῦ	עם
במשך	μετέωρον	τεθλιμμένου	
ומורט	καὶ ξένον	καὶ τετιλμένου	
אל			
עם	λαὸν	καὶ ἀπὸ λαοῦ	ומעם

⁵ כרה must have been known to the translators as can be established at least in the case of Ps 7:16; 57(56):7; 94(93):13.

נורא	καὶ χαλεπὸν	μεγάλου
מִהוּא	τίς αὐτοῦ	ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν
והלאה	ἐπέκεινα	καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον
גוי	ἔθνος	ἔθνος
קן קן	ἀνέλπιστον	ἐλπίζον
ומבוסה	καὶ καταπε- πατημένον	καὶ καταπεπατημένον
אשר בזאו	νῦν	ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν μέρει
נהרים	οἱ ποταμοὶ	ποταμοῦ
ארצו	τῆς γῆς τῆς χώρας	αὐτοῦ

In v. 2, ממושך is rendered contextually by μετέωρον ('haughty'), while in v. 7 etymologically by τεθλιμμένου ('squeezed'); likewise, in v. 2, מורט is rendered contextually by ξένος ('strange'), but in v. 7 etymologically by τετιλμένου ('peeled'). מִהוּא is taken as an interrogative pronoun in v. 2 (probably read as מִהוּא or מנהו as in Aramaic), but as ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν in v. 7. Likewise, in v. 2, והלאה is taken in a local sense as ἐπέκεινα ('beyond'), but in v. 7 chronologically as καὶ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα χρόνον ('and to the eternity'). קן קן is 'hopeless' in v. 2 (ἀνέλπιστον), but 'hopeful' in v. 7 (ἐλπίζον). אשר בזאו is νῦν in v. 2, but ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν μέρει ('which is in the part?') in v. 7 (this rendering is probably based on a separation of בזאו in two words, -ב and זאו, or the like, even though the nature of the second element is not clear).

The differences between the two translations probably reflect the translators' hesitations rather than an attempt to distinguish artificially between two or three different peoples, for such a differentiation is not borne out by the evidence.⁶

3. Contextual manipulation

In some cases the avoidance of a difficult word is subtle, and therefore more difficult to recognize. We submit that the translators sometimes knowingly manipulated the Hebrew consonants in order to create words which would fit the context better than the words of their *Vorlage*, either because the *Vorlage* was not understandable to them or because the translator made certain adaptations in the wake of other changes or

⁶ V. 2 probably refers to two peoples described as ἔθνος μετέωρον καὶ ξένον λαὸν καὶ χαλεπὸν and another one described as ἔθνος ἀνέλπιστον καὶ καταπεπατημένον, both depicted in negative terms. Likewise, v. 7 probably refers to three peoples, of which the first one is described negatively (τεθλιμμένου καὶ τετιλμένου), the second one positively (μεγάλου), and the third one in mixed terms (ἐλπίζον καὶ καταπεπατημένον).

mistranslations. Such renderings do not reflect real variants, but rather ‘pseudo-variants,’ that is, Hebrew readings which existed only in the translator’s mind and not on parchment (see *TCU*, 162–171). The alleged manipulations are based on the translators’ paleographical understanding, for it must have been known to them that certain Hebrew letters were graphically so similar that they were often interchanged in Hebrew sources. Therefore a translator who could make no sense of a word when written, let us say, with a *daleth*, would have been strongly tempted to render it as if it were written with a *resh*. The assumption of such paleographical manoeuvring is objectively conditioned by the occurrence of lexical or other difficulties. Examples have been discussed in *TCU*, 162–171. One such example is repeated here, and a few are added.

Jer 31(38):8	MT	<p>וּקְבַצְתִּים מִיִּרְכְּתֵי אֶרֶץ בָּם עִוְר וּפְסָח הָרָה וְיִלְדֶת יַחְדוּ קָהַל גְּדוֹל יִשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה</p> <p>And I shall gather them from the farthest parts of the earth, among them the blind and the lame, the pregnant woman, and the one in labor, together, a great multitude shall return hither.</p>
	LXX	<p>καὶ συναΐξω αὐτοὺς ἀπ’ ἐσχάτου τῆς γῆς ἐν ἐορτῇ φασεκ’ καὶ τεκνοποίησῃ ὄχλον πολὺν καὶ ἀποστρέψουσιν ὧδε</p> <p>And I shall gather them from the farthest part of the earth at the feast of Pesach, and you will give birth to a great multitude, and they shall return hither (implying: בְּמוֹעֵד פֶּסַח).</p>

The Greek translator had a text in mind that differed completely from MT, ascribing the return of the Jews from the exile to the time of Passover (cf. T to Cant 1:1 referring to Isa 30:29). The great difference in meaning between MT and the LXX is based on a relatively small difference in consonants and vowels. Once the words ‘among them the blind and the lame’ (MT) had been read as ‘at the feast of Pesach,’ the context was completely changed and the translator was impelled, as it were, to conceive of several details in the verse in a way different from MT. In particular, the words ‘the pregnant woman and the one in labor, together’ (וְיִלְדֶת יַחְדוּ הָרָה) did not suit the new context. This caused the translator to introduce a second verb, parallel to the first one, by vocalizing וְיִלְדֶת instead of וְיִלְדֶת. Furthermore, he represented neither הָרָה nor יַחְדוּ. The upshot of this maneuvering was a rendering καὶ τεκνοποίησῃ ὄχλον πολὺν (and you will give

birth to a great multitude). The translator's *Vorlage* of the whole phrase was, as it were, הנה וקבצתים מירכתי ארץ במועד פסח ונלדת קהל גדול וישבו. The existence of that reading and its vocalization must be strongly doubted.

In some cases the translators felt at liberty to manipulate the consonantal text, disregarding prefixes and suffixes:

2 Chr 35:13	MT	בשלו בסירות ובדודים ובצלחות They boiled in pots, in cauldrons and in <i>pans</i> .
	LXX	ἤψησαν ἐν τοῖς χαλκείοις καὶ ἐν τοῖς λέβησιν· καὶ εὐσδώθη They boiled in the copper vessels and in the pots, <i>and it succeeded</i> .

צִלְחָה (pan) of MT is a *hapax legomenon*, while the related צִלְחָה occurs three times in the Bible and צִלְחָה once. The word was probably unknown to the translator, who derived it from the verb צָלַח ('to succeed'), disregarding both the internal division of the verse and the prefix and suffix of the word (cf. Allen, *Chronicles*, I, p. 61). The translation, which does not suit the context, was based on a cluster of consonants in which the translator recognized the meaning 'to succeed' without entering into details regarding the precise form of the word.

In the following examples, the translator read his *Vorlage* wrongly in such a way that he introduced, as it were, linguistically incorrect forms. We submit that these forms, too, were found only in the mind of the translator and not in his written text.

Jer 2:20	MT	אַתְּ צִפְּה זֹנָה <i>You bend like a harlot.</i>
	LXX	ἐκεῖ διαχυσθήσομαι ἐν τῇ πορνείᾳ μου <i>There I shall be spread abroad in my fornication.</i>
	=	אַחֲצֵפְּהָ *זֹנָה

διαχυσθήσομαι must probably be retroverted as אַחֲצֵפְּהָ* (presumably ἐκεῖ was added contextually). But one notes that the retroverted *אחצפה* creates a morphologically unlikely form (אצפעה) whose meaning is unclear. In spite of the unlikely form, only this reconstruction seems to account for the unusual translation.

See further Jer 6:25 analyzed in detail in *TCU*, 76–77.

In the following example, the translator read the consonants wrongly:

Gen 47:31	וישתחו ישראל על ראש הקמה
	And Israel bowed upon the head of the <i>bed</i> .

καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου
αὐτοῦ

And Israel bowed upon the top of his *staff*.

From the context it is clear that in MT a bed (*mittah*) is meant rather than a staff (*matteh*).⁷ In fact, when the word occurs next in the story, the translator identified it as 'bed' (48:2 κλίβη). In 47:31, however, he fails to identify the word because the text had not mentioned explicitly that Jacob was ill or in bed. Furthermore, *matteh* occurred twice in chapter 38, so that the translator's error is understandable. Neither the translator nor a subsequent reviser corrected the error.

Prov 8:1 הלא חכמה תקרא ותבונה תתקולה

Does not wisdom call, does not understanding raise her
voice?

Σὺ τῆν σοφίαν κηρύξεις ἵνα φρόνησίς σοι ὑπακούσῃ

You will announce wisdom in order that understanding
will obey you.

The translator wrongly took *תקרא* as a second person masculine verb rather than a third person feminine governed by *חכמה*. This understanding introduced an unwarranted *σύ* into the translation which changed the whole context.

4. *Reliance on parallelism*

Reliance on parallelism is a form of contextual translation, treated here separately. As a rule, reliance on parallelism is a stable means of determining the meaning of words, but the decision whether or not to turn to parallelism remains subjective and the recognition of different types of parallelism requires different renderings. Some of the equivalents mentioned above reflect such a reliance: e.g. Mic 5:4 (ארץ / ארמו), Isa 41:18 (שפיים / בקעות), Isa 49:9 (דרכים / שפיים). When the translator presumably relied on a parallel word, producing an acceptable rendering, we cannot be certain that this was the case, as the choice of equivalents may also have derived from his knowledge of the Hebrew language unrelated to the context. Only when invoking the parallel word created unusual equivalents (or different equivalents in several contexts), can such reliance be identified with confidence.

Reliance on parallelism may take two different forms:

a. *Choice of parallel Greek word*

⁷ For a detailed analysis, see J. Barr, "Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators," (*VTSup* 16; Leiden 1967) 1–11, esp. 3.

The choice of equivalents on the basis of the parallel word has been recognized especially in the translation of Isaiah (see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 9 ff).

Isa 5:11	בבקר // בנשר τὸ πρωὶ ... τὸ ὄψέ
Isa 21:4	לבבי // נשר חשקי ἡ καρδία μου ... ἡ ψυχὴ μου
Isa 59:10	בצהרים // כנשר ἐν μεσημβρία ... ἐν μεσονυκτίῳ

Although the rarely occurring נשר was known to some translators, the translator of Isaiah did not know its meaning. He used three completely different renderings in accordance with their respective parallels. Possibly 21:4 is irrelevant if the translation was based on a different Hebrew reading נפש (metathesis).

In the following renderings, נעצוץ is resolved according to the parallel word, in 7:19 according to סלעים and in 55:13 according to סרפד.

Isa 7:19	ובנקיני הסלעים // ובכל הנעצוצים καὶ ἐν ταῖς τρώγλαις τῶν πετρῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ σπήλαια
Isa 55:13	תחת הנעצוץ יעלה ברוש תחת הסרפד יעלה הדס καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς στοιβῆς ἀναβήσεται κυπάρισσος, ἀντὶ δὲ τῆς κονύζης ἀναβήσεται μυρσίνη

b. Repetition of the parallel word

More secure than the aforementioned technique was the repetition of the parallel word when translation of a given word was difficult, for example when the word was a *hapax legomenon* or rare (see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 20).

Jer 8:16	(מד"נשמע) נחרת (סוסיו) מקול ... φωνή ... φωνῆς
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נחרת does not occur elsewhere, but the related נחר occurs also once in the Bible.

Jer 10:20	(אהלי שדר) וכל מיתרי (נתקן...אי"נטה עוד אהלי) ומקים יריעותי καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ δέρρεις μου ... τόπος τῶν δέρρεων μου
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מיתר occurs elsewhere 8 times.

Isa 2:16	(ועל כל) אניות (תרשיש ועל כל) שכיות (החמדה) πλοῖον ... πλοῖω
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שכיות occurs only here.

5. *Employment of general words*

Ignorance of a word is often disguised by the use of general words which the translator considered to be somehow fitting in the context (e.g. 'to do,' 'give,' 'arrange,' 'prepare'). It is not easy to prove that a given rendering reflects such a contextual guess, but that assumption is likely when the Hebrew word is objectively difficult. For example:

Ps 84(83):7 נם ברכות יעטם מורה
 The early rain will also *cover* (it) with blessings.
 καὶ γὰρ ἐὺλογίας δώσει ὁ νομοθετῶν
 For the lawgiver will also *give* blessings.

Elsewhere the translator of the Psalms knows the meaning of the verb עטם (in Ps 71(70):13; 109(108):19, 29, for example, where the context makes it clear that the covering of a dress is meant, he uses περιβάλλομαι or the like). In this verse, however, 'he got himself thoroughly lost,'⁸ for he 'missed' a few words in the immediate context, and in the section quoted above he wrongly took מורה as 'lawgiver.' Accordingly an etymologically correct rendering of the verb may have been considered inappropriate by the translator. In any event, he contented himself with a general equivalent (δώσει - 'he will give').

Of special interest in this regard is the use of παρασκευάζω ('to prepare') as a general equivalent in Jeremiah.⁹ In the first two of the following examples, the translator must have known the Hebrew verbs, but he probably could not locate appropriate renderings; in the next two examples, the Hebrew verbs probably were unknown to him.

Jer 6:4 קדשו עליה מלחמה
 Sanctify war upon her.
 παρασκευάσαθε ἐπ' αὐτήν εἰς πόλεμον

Jer 46(26):9 והתהללו הרקב
 Rage, O chariots.
 παρασκευάσατε (καὶ κατασκευάσατε LXX^A) τὰ ἄρματα

Jer 12:5 ואיך תתחרה את הסוסים¹⁰
 How will you *complete* with horses?
 πῶς παρασκευάσῃ ἐφ' ἵπποις

Jer 51(28):11 הברו החצים¹¹

⁸ Thus Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 249.

⁹ This verb occurs five times in Jeremiah and six times elsewhere in the LXX.

¹⁰ Elsewhere the verb occurs only in Jer 22:15—also its translation there (παροξύνη) should probably be regarded as a translation guess.

¹¹ A reconstructed *Vorlage* הכנו is not impossible, but methodologically difficult. Ont only is הכנו graphically remote from הברו, but also the resemblance to the other three cases makes the likelihood of a contextual guess greater.

Sharpen the arrows.

παρασκευάζετε τὰ τοξεύματα

Beyond Jeremiah παρασκευάζω is also used as a general equivalent: 1 Sam 24:4; Prov 15:18; 24:27(42); 29:5.

- 2 Chr 14:4 את הבמות ואהן החמנים
καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα
- 2 Chr 34:4 מזבחות הבעלים והחמנים
καὶ τὰ ὑψηλά
- 2 Chr 34:7 המזבחות ... האשרים והפסלים) ... וכל החמנים
καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑψηλά

The meaning of חמנים (probably 'sun pillars' used in idolatrous worship) was probably conjectured from the respective contexts. Elsewhere the word occurs five times.

The translator of Psalms used παράσσω ('to cause disorder') for a whole range of Hebrew verbs, the meaning of some of which may have been unknown to him: סחר, נדר, להט, חמר, חלל, רעש, רגז, שלל, שחח, צמת, פנעם, עשש (see Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 252).

6. *Etymological renderings*

a. *Root-linked renderings*

Many translators rendered all occurrences of a given Hebrew word, element (e.g. preposition), root or construction as much as possible by the same Greek equivalent (stereotyping). It is probably true to say that from the outset a tendency towards stereotyping was the rule rather than the exception. The system of stereotyping was an integral part of the translation technique and it originated from the approach that the words of the Bible should be rendered consistently in order to remain as faithful as possible to the source language. This type of translation created a consistent representation of whole Hebrew word-groups (roots) with Greek words also belonging to one word-group. While this root-linked system had its origin in a certain conception of translation technique, it was also used in connection with difficult words. If such a difficult word has a recognizable Hebrew root, it was sometimes rendered by a Greek word belonging to a Greek stem that elsewhere rendered other Hebrew words belonging to the same word group (root). The Greek word does not necessarily carry the same meaning as the Hebrew word, but other words close to that Greek word are used elsewhere as renderings of Hebrew words close to the Hebrew word under review. In our view the

following examples show that translators sometimes resorted to root-linked renderings when the exact meaning of the Hebrew word was not known to them.

בַּשֹּׂאֵרָה, 'kneading trough,' occurs three times in the Bible. In Deut 28:5, 17 it was translated by ἐγκατάλειμμα, and in Exod 12:34 by φύραμα. Ἐγκατάλειμμα ('remnant') conveys no meaning which comes close to 'kneading through'¹² and it was merely chosen because the root of the Hebrew noun, שֹּׂאֵר, was translated elsewhere by (ἐγ)καταλείπω.

יְקִיּוֹם ('all that exists,' 'substance') was translated in Gen 7:4 by ἐξανάστασις (AM...: ἀνάστημα) and in Gen 7:23 by ἀνάστημα. These two words have to be taken as 'rising,' 'ressurrection' and not as 'living being'¹³ and both are based on the frequent equation יְקִיּוֹם - (ἐξ) ἀνίστημι.

In most instances, however, it is very hard to know whether an etymological rendering reflects a concern for the consistent representation of Hebrew word groups with equivalent Greek word groups or whether it disguises the translator's ignorance of the exact meaning of the word. For example, both נִעַרָה and ἀποτίναγμα occur only in Judg 16:9. This rendering is obviously based on the translation of נִעַר in v. 20 with ἀποτινάσσω. The same verb renders נִעַר in Lam 2:7.

b. Etymological guesses

Reliance on etymology is a known procedure for translators, and such reliance is called conjectural when the translation is based on a certain manipulation of the consonants, sometimes involving disregard of prefixes or suffixes. In all cases the Hebrew words involved are understandably difficult. Several examples have been analyzed in detail in *TCU*, 172–180.

Translators were often ignorant of the meaning of the words in their *Vorlage* and this ignorance led to several conjectural renderings.¹⁴ In a

¹² Pace LSJ, *s.v.* which quotes no other source for this meaning than the LXX of Deuteronomy.

¹³ Pace H.S. Gehman, "Adventures in Septuagint Lexicography," *Textus* 5 (1966) 129.

¹⁴ Cf. Allen, *Chronicles*, 59: 'It is not difficult to perceive that now and then the translator came across words whose meaning he did not know and could not discover. He seems to have had three distinct methods of dealing with the situation ... The first and most common expedient is guessword.' Gerleman, *Job*, 19: 'Cruces interpretum are often evaded by the Greek translator by dividing the text in his own way ... he often commits mistakes in regard to the significance of individual words and phrases'; Seeligmann, *Isaiah*, 56 '... we shall only give a modest selection of those passages where an interpretation based on misunderstanding let the translator to make free explanatory additions.' Cf. also A. Bludau, *Die alexandrinische Übersetzung des Buches Daniel und ihr Verhältnis zum MT (BSac 2, 2–3; Freiburg 1897) 87–96* ('Falsch übersetzte Stellen').

world without lexica, this situation should not cause much surprise. Only very rarely the translators were sophisticated enough to leave words untranslated (group 1 above).

The amount of conjectural translation in the LXX is probably relatively extensive, but the real number can never be determined.