

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### BILITERAL EXEGESIS OF HEBREW ROOTS IN THE SEPTUAGINT?

#### 1. *Background*

The first step in any translational activity is the attempt to identify the form and meaning of each word in the source language, without which the translating procedure is not feasible. In the absence of auxiliary tools such as lexicons and concordances, ancient biblical translators thus had to rely on their own knowledge of the Hebrew/Aramaic languages, the context of the words in the source language, and exegetical traditions.

Reliance on the context is an important source of information for any translator. In the hands of the ancients, however, such reliance often amounts to what we would consider conjectural renderings (guessing), even though the boundary between adaptation to the context and guessing is very vague. It can often be made plausible that translators produced conjectural renderings on the basis of the context when a Hebrew word is rendered in completely different ways in accordance with the different contexts in which it appears.<sup>1</sup> Another type of conjectural rendering involves a translation that disregards some of the letters of the Hebrew word.<sup>2</sup> Some aspects of the translators' lexical and grammatical knowledge, especially in the realm of verbal forms, are discussed in this paper.

As we focus in this study on some of the deficiencies of the translators, we should probably first remark that the Greek translators were often surprisingly well informed with regard to rarely occurring words or forms in Scripture. In the analysis of the translators' lexical sources, some unusual sources are also encountered. Thus, some striking resemblances between translation equivalents in the LXX and words in

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<sup>1</sup> For examples of conjectural renderings, see Tov, "Septuagint Translators." For a different view of the nature of guessing, referring mainly to the issue of vocalization, see J. Barr, "'Guessing' in the Septuagint," in Fraenkel, *Studien zur Septuaginta*, 19–34.

<sup>2</sup> Examples of such conjectural renderings are provided in *TCU*, 172–80.

Akkadian<sup>3</sup> and Arabic<sup>4</sup> (often misleadingly called “Arabisms”) may imply that the translators drew on lexical information for Hebrew that was known in their time but subsequently lost. The translators’ reliance on the Aramaic language resulted from a different situation. Aramaic was a living language when the translation was made, and the translators were probably equally familiar with that language as with Hebrew. The translators possibly based themselves more on Aramaic than Hebrew, but because of the close resemblance between these two languages one cannot distinguish between the translators’ different sources. However, when the LXX agrees with an Aramaic root that has a meaning different from its Hebrew counterpart, such inappropriate reliance on Aramaic can be established easily.<sup>5</sup> Other mishaps occurred when the translator chose a wrong translation on the basis of postbiblical rather than biblical Hebrew.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the Greek Pentateuch often served as a source of lexical information for later translators.<sup>7</sup>

The main source of lexical information for the translators thus was their living knowledge of the Hebrew and Aramaic languages, which allowed them to determine the semantic content of words in their *Vorlagen*. However, before that information could be utilized, the translators had to analyze the morphological nature of the word being translated in order to determine, for example, whether it was a noun or a verb. If it was a verb, we wonder whether the translator took further steps in his analysis. In accordance with the grammatical concepts that developed from medieval times onwards, the translators may have had

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<sup>3</sup> For some examples, see G. R. Driver, “L’Interprétation du texte masorétique à la lumière de la lexicographie hébraïque,” *ALBO* II, 18 (Louvain/Bruges–Paris, 1950) = *ETL* 26 (1950) 337–53.

<sup>4</sup> For examples and a discussion, see Frankel, *Vorstudien*, 201–2; G. R. Driver, “Studies in the Vocabulary of the Old Testament. VII,” *JTS* 35 (1934) 380–93; part VIII, *ibid.*, 36 (1935) 293–301; D. Winton Thomas, “The Language of the Old Testament,” in *Record and Revelation* (ed. H. W. Robinson; Oxford: Clarendon, 1938) 374–402; Barr, *Comparative Philology*, 238–45.

<sup>5</sup> For examples and an analysis, see J. Joosten, “On Aramaising Renderings in the Septuagint,” *Hamlet on a Hill. Semitic and Greek Studies Presented to Professor T. Muraoka on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (ed. M. F. J. Baasten and W. Th. van Peursen; OLA 118; Leuven: Peeters, 2003) 587–600. For an earlier analysis, see *TCU*, 249–50.

<sup>6</sup> For many examples and an analysis, see the valuable studies by J. 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 & Ben Sira* (ed. T. Muraoka and J. F. Elwolde; Leiden, E. J. Brill, 2000) 115–30; “On the LXX Translators’ Knowledge of Hebrew,” in Taylor, *X Congress*, 165–79; “Biblical Hebrew as Mirrored in the Septuagint: The Question of Influence from Spoken Hebrew,” *Textus* 21 (2002) 1–19; “Linguistic Innovations in the Hebrew of the Hellenistic Period: Qumran and the Septuagint,” *Meghillot* 2 (2004) 151–5 (Heb.). See further: Frankel, *Vorstudien*, 201; J. Blau, “Zum Hebräisch der Übersetzer des AT,” *VT* 6 (1956) 98–100.

<sup>7</sup> See Tov, “Pentateuch.”

to determine the root of the verb, as well as its conjugation (*binyan*), aspect, and tense. How else would a translator be able to distinguish between such homographic consonantal forms as the *pi'el wayedabber* ("he spoke") and the *hiph'il wayadber* in Ps 18:48 and 47:4 ("he subdued"; correctly rendered by the LXX with forms of ὑποτάσσω)? However, it seems that the translators did not have to go through these analytical stages in the case of verbs. It need not be assumed that the translators were aware of such abstractions as "roots" or conjugations when identifying meaningful elements in verbs. They possibly had only a vague understanding of such abstractions as conjugations, which included the distinction between the *qal*, *hiph'il*, and *hitpa'el* forms of the same root. It sufficed for the translators to distinguish between a form reflecting "something like the *qal*" and a form incorporating "something like the *hiph'il*." In all likelihood, together with that base knowledge of meaningful patterns in the Hebrew/Aramaic verbs, the translators probably recognized clusters of meaningful elements or word patterns that allowed them to identify the essence of the Hebrew verb. After all, it sufficed to distinguish between *wydb* 1 (= *wayedabber*) carrying meaning 1 and *wydb* 2 (*wayadber*) carrying meaning 2.

The translation was thus based on the understanding of the semantic content of clusters of consonants (letters) in Hebrew/Aramaic, and the actual reading or pronunciation ("vocalization" in later times) and parsing are not a necessary part of the translation process.<sup>8</sup>

The search for these determinative clusters of consonants in the source language is part and parcel of the procedure of etymological exegesis.<sup>9</sup> Thus, *בשורה* ("kneading trough") in Deut 28:5, 17 was taken as a noun related to the verb *שאר* ("to remain"). The next step for the translator was to locate an equivalent Greek noun, in this case one derived from its Greek counterpart (ἐγ)καταλείπω, viz. ἐγκατάλειμμα. This etymological translation was based on the formal relation between the noun *בשורה* and the root *שאר*, regardless of the fact that

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<sup>8</sup> Obviously, the understanding by the translators of the meaningful elements of a word sometimes differs from that of MT and/or modern understanding. Anachronistically, these different understandings are sometimes described as differences in vocalization. For analyses, see J. Barr, "Vocalization and the Analysis of Hebrew among the Ancient Translators," *VTSup* 16 (1967) 1–11; idem, "Reading a Script without Vowels," in *Writing without Letters* (ed. W. Haas; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1976) 71–100; Tov, *TCLU*, 159–74. See further Barr, "'Guessing' in the Septuagint."

<sup>9</sup> Various aspects of this assumed etymological procedure and its implications for the nature of the translation and its language have been discussed by U. Rapallo, *Calchi ebraici nelle antiche versioni del "Levitico"* (Studi Semitici 39; Rome: Istituto di studi del vicino oriente, Università di Roma, 1971); Barr, *Literalism*.

ἐγκατάλειμμα is not used in Greek as “kneading trough,”<sup>10</sup> but only as “that which was left.”

Etymological exegesis lies at the base of all ancient translations, be it in its simple form, as in the example given above, or in more complex forms. This chapter focuses on one aspect of this procedure, namely exegesis involving a biliteral understanding of Hebrew words, especially verbs.

## 2. Biliteral Exegesis?

Although most semantic identifications of verbs by the LXX translators are “correct,” and most of them refer to triliteral Hebrew verbs, it does not necessarily follow that the translators followed a system of triliteral roots. The evidence merely shows that the translators were able to draw on various sources, enabling them to obtain the necessary semantic information. Triliteral verbs usually formed the basis for these identifications; for most of them (e.g. עב"ד, שב"ר), all three letters were necessary for the identification, while in some cases two letters sufficed.

In the weak verbs (patterns פ"י, פ"י, פ"נ, פ"א, ע"ע, ע"וי, ל"א, ל"י), often only two radicals were needed for semantic identification. Thus for the rendering of עשה, the translator merely needed to identify the radicals עש as relating to עש"ה, since the roots \*עשא, \*עוש, \*עשש, \*יעש, etc. do not exist and other options are therefore irrelevant. This is not a problematic case, nor are the translations of forms of סב"ב, since \*יס"ב, \*אס"ב, \*סו"ב, \*נס"ב, \*סב"ה are not evidenced. These forms could be identified on the basis of the letters סב without taking a third radical into consideration. However, other instances are more complex since the opposition between verbs ל"א and ל"י, such as in the case of קנא (“to envy”) and קנה (“to acquire”), necessitates either the examination of the third radical or reliance on the context. For an inappropriate choice in the קנ group, see below.

This description implies that the translators could make a shortcut by relying on merely two of the root letters. At the same time, it is not easy to substantiate this assumption for the LXX since the semantic information of most Hebrew verbs is correctly identified, and one needs to make a strong case proving that the translation of certain verbal forms

<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, when LSJ ascribes to this word a meaning “kneading trough” on the basis of its occurrence in the LXX of Deuteronomy, it creates a meaning that did not exist at the time of the LXX translation. On this and other misconceptions with regard to the LXX in this otherwise excellent lexicon, see G. B. Caird, “Towards a Lexicon of the Septuagint,” *JTS* 19 (1968) 453–75; 20 (1969) 21–41. Some of these imprecisions have been corrected in E. A. Barber, *A Greek-English Lexicon, A Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1968); P. G. W. Glare, *Revised Supplement* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

was based on only two letters. Nevertheless, there are such instances, since mistaken renderings suggest that in some cases *two* letters sufficed for the semantic identification of verbal forms. We take our clue from assumed shortcuts by the translators in the identification process. For some verbs, a cluster of two letters sufficed for identification, but if that abbreviated cluster was the key for two *different* verbs, mishaps could occur, as, for example, in the case of ר"א pointing to both the ל"י verb ר"ה ("to see") and the פ"י verb יר"א ("to fear"):

a. Forms of ר"ה and יר"א were frequently interchanged in Hebrew sources because of their similarity. These forms also must have puzzled translators on occasion. Thus, a homograph such as יראו required the translator to decide whether it is derived from the root *r'h* ("to see") or *yr'* ("to fear"), represented in the Tiberian vocalization as יִרְאוּ ("they will see" [*passim* in the Bible]), יִרְאוּ ("they feared" [*passim*]), or יִרְאוּ ("fear!" [e.g. Ps 34:10]). The same decision had to be made regarding יירא which may be derived from either *r'h* (יִירָא ["and he saw"]) or *yr'* (יִירָא = וַיִּירָא ["and he feared"]). Likewise, מורא ("terror"), an intrinsically unproblematic word related to *yr'* ("to fear"), was often<sup>11</sup> linked by the LXX to the root *r'h* ("to see"):

Deut 4:34	ובמוראים καὶ ἐν ὁράμασιν (= V <i>visiones</i> , T <sup>0J</sup> חזוניהן)
Deut 26:8	ובמורא καὶ ἐν ὁράμασιν (cf. T <sup>0J</sup> חזוניהן)
Jer 32 (39):21	ובמורא καὶ ἐν ὁράμασιν

Guided by the respective contexts,<sup>12</sup> the translators associated מ(ו)רא with the cluster ר"א, which they linked with *r'h* ("to see") rather than *yr'* ("to fear").

At the same time, it is hard to define a boundary between the etymological procedure described above, which does not involve the possibility of a variant reading, and the assumption of a variant reading as may be suggested by the reading ובמוראים of SP in Deut 4:34 and ובמראה in the same text in Deut 26:8.<sup>13</sup>

The confusion between the two roots is also visible in the occasional translation of נורא as ἐπιφάνης:

<sup>11</sup> Contrast the derivation of מורא from *yr'* ("to fear") by the same translator in Deut 11:25 יתן כחם ומוראכם ופחדכם—εὐμῶς ὁ φόβος καὶ εὐμῶς ὁ φόβος ἐπιθήσει and the appropriate equivalents—יראה—φόβος, φόβος occurring elsewhere in the LXX.

<sup>12</sup> E.g. Deut 4:34 ובמוראים גדלים.

<sup>13</sup> Likewise, in the Passover Haggadah, מראה גדל (Deut 26:8) is explained as the "revelation of God's presence," probably on the basis of מראה.

Hab 1:7

אֵיִם יִנְרָא הָאֵוָה

(Ἔθνος τὸ πικρὸν . . . τὸ πορευόμενον ἐπὶ τὰ πλάτη τῆς γῆς τοῦ κατακληρονομησαί σκηνώματα οὐκ αὐτοῦ) φοβερός καὶ ἐπιφανής ἐστιν

Within Habakkuk's harsh description of the enemy in 1:5-10 (11?), the Chaldeans are described in the LXX of v 7 as φοβερός καὶ ἐπιφανής. In this context it is understandable that the Chaldean people should be called φοβερός ("frightening," "terrible"), but what does the next word, ἐπιφανής, mean in this context? Are the people "conspicuous," "evident," or "famous"? Or should we rather take ἐπιφανής as the opposite of its main meaning, that is, "infamous"? However, the solution to this question lies in a different area. Against the sense of the passage, the translator derived נִרְא from הָאֵוָה, and somehow adapted the rendering to the context.

Joel 2:11

כִּי גְדוֹל יוֹם יְהוָה וְנִרְא מֵאֵד

διότι μεγάλη ἡ ἡμέρα τοῦ κυρίου, μεγάλη καὶ ἐπιφανής σφόδρα

In this verse (cf. also 3:4), "the day of the Lord" is seemingly described as "glorious," but the real meaning of ἐπιφανής is "conspicuous," as the Hebrew was derived from הָאֵוָה ("to see").<sup>14</sup>

b. The frequent translation of מוֹעֵד (אהל) ("[tent] of meeting") on the basis of עֵד ("witness") as (ἡ σκηνή) τοῦ μαρτυρίου is based on its last two consonants,<sup>15</sup> although other verses were possibly echoed in the translators' ears.<sup>16</sup>

In the great majority of the instances described below, the biliteral exegesis pertains to weak verbs, such as the patterns מִ"פ, מִ"ב, etc. In some instances, however, such exegesis pertains to strong verbs, such as מִ"ד ("to rebel") and מִ"מ ("deceit"), explained from מִ"ר ("bitter"), מִ"ל ("to humiliate") explained from מִ"א ("to prevent") through מִ"ל ("dung") explained from מִ"ה ("to resemble") through מִ"מ, etc. In several examples below, a quiescent 'aleph is involved.

The translators' biliteral renderings should be seen in the light of an internal analysis of the LXX, but Hebrew variations in MT and the

<sup>14</sup> The same rendering occurs in Judg 13:6A (as opposed to B φοβερόν), Mal 1:14, 3:22, Zeph 3:1, and 1 Chr 17:21. For an analysis of this rendering, see my study "Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings."

<sup>15</sup> Also when occurring alone, מוֹעֵד has been rendered as μαρτύριον (1 Sam 9:24, 13:11 etc.).

<sup>16</sup> Both יע"ד and ע"ד are used in connection with the "tent of meeting" (see Exod 30:36). See further עדוה (אהל) in Exod 30:36; Num 9:15, 17:22, 18:2.

Qumran scrolls, developments in rabbinic Hebrew, and medieval Jewish grammatical theories should be taken into consideration as well. These aspects will be analyzed in § 3.

In the following *non-exhaustive* collection of samples, the heading mentions in bold characters the two-letter basis for the exegesis, followed (from right to left) by (i) the root of the biblical word according to modern understanding and (ii) the root, letters, or word reflected by the LXX. Thus in the first example, **נִיאַשׁ** is a *niph'al* form of **יֵאֵשׁ**, but the translators derived the word from **אֵי־שׁ / אֵי־שׁ**. The two understandings have the letters **אש** in common.

### אש

יא"ש / איש, אנש

Jer 2:25                      **נִיאַשׁ** (וְחֹמְרִי) נִיאַשׁ  
 (But she said:) "Desperate"  
 ἀνδρῖοῦμαι  
 I will strengthen myself

In MT, the adulteress says: "Desperate. ('No, I love the strangers, and I must go after them')," while in the LXX she says: "I will strengthen myself (for she loved strangers, and went after them)." The translation of **נִיאַשׁ**, which is based on **אֵי־שׁ / אֵי־שׁ** rather than **יֵאֵשׁ**, yields a completely different, though not necessarily impossible, meaning from that in MT.<sup>17</sup> In Jer 18:12 also, the Greek translation creates a new context opposed to that of MT:

Jer 18:12                      **וַיֹּאמְרוּ** (וַיֹּאמְרוּ) נִיאַשׁ  
 But they will say: "It is no use."  
 καὶ εἶπαν ἀνδρῖοῦμεθα  
 But they said: "We will strengthen ourselves."

### בר

ברבר / בר"ר

1 Kgs 5:3                      **וּבְרִבְרִים** אֲבוּסִים  
 and fatted geese  
 (4:23)                      . . . καὶ ὀρνίθων ἐκλεκτῶν σιτευτά  
 and choice birds, fatted

**בְּרִבְרִי** (goose?), a *hapax legomenon* in the Bible, is derived here from **בְּרִבְרִי** (cf. **בְּרִבְרִי** – ἐκλέγω, ἐκλεκτός elsewhere in the LXX). Cf. also the next example of an equivalent occurring earlier in the same verse.

<sup>17</sup> The translators of 1 Sam 27:1, Isa 57:10, Job 6:26 identified **נִיאַשׁ** correctly.

## בריא/בר" (ר)

1 Kgs 5:3	ועשרה בקר בראים and ten fattened oxen
(4:23)	καὶ δέκα μόσχοι ἐκλεκτοί and ten choice calves

## בש

## בא"ש / יב"ש

Isa 50:2	תבאש (דנתם מאין מים) (their fish) stink (because of lack of water)
	καὶ ξηραυθήσονται (= 1QIsa <sup>a</sup> תיבש) and (they) will dry out

In the LXX, in which the *'aleph* was conceived of as a mute letter, only the letters **בש** were taken into consideration. However, it is not impossible that the LXX reflects a different reading also found in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.<sup>18</sup>

## גר

## גנ"ר / אנ"ר

Jer 18:21	והגרם (על ידי חרב) and mow them down (by the sword)
	καὶ ἄθροισον αὐτούς and assemble them

In rendering **והגרם**, only the middle two letters **גר** were taken as determinative for the identification, with the understanding that a quiescent *'aleph* was lost (i.e., **והאנרם**). The same phenomenon must have taken place in the next example in which the translator understood his *Vorlage* to read **גרים** or **גנרים** reflecting his understanding **גרים(א)(ב)**.

## מגור (גו"ר) / אנ"ר

Jer 20:10	(שמעתי דבת רבים) מגור (מסביב) (I heard the whispers of the crowd—) terror (all around)
	στραθοροζομέων of those who assemble

<sup>18</sup> See Kutscher, *Language*, 241.



**דמ**

דמן/דמ"ה

Jer 8:2	לדמן (על פני האדמה יהיו) (they shall become) dung (upon the face of the earth) εἰς παράδειγμα an example
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This rendering, based on the root דמ"ה, recurs in Jer 9:22 (21); 16:4. For the same equivalent, see Dan 2:5. Cf. Ps 17:12 דמינו, rendered by Aquila as ὁμοίωσις αὐτῶν (reconstructed from Syh דומיא דילהון).

**חל**

חל"ה/חל"ל

Mic 1:12	חלה (לשוב יושבת מרוח) (the inhabitant[s] of Maroth) hoped for (good) τίς ἤρξατο who started?
	חי"ל/חל"ל
Ps 10:5 (9:26)	יחילו (דרכיו בכל עה) (his ways) prosper (at all times) βεβηλοῦνται are defiled

The various confusions of renderings of the חל group in the LXX have been analyzed extensively by Weissert.<sup>19</sup> In the examples listed here, the translators created completely new contexts differing from those of MT. See further below, n. 28.

**חס**

מחסה (חס"ה)/חוי"ס

Jer 17:17	מחסי אתה (ביום רעה) you are my refuge (in a day of calamity) φειδόμενός μου ... sparing me
Joel 4:16	(וייהוה) מחסה (לעמו) (and the Lord) will be a shelter (to his people) φείσεται he will be merciful

<sup>19</sup> D. Weissert, "Alexandrian Analogical Word-Analysis and Septuagint Translation Techniques—A Case Study of חיל-חיל-חיל," *Textus* 8 (1974) 31–44.

Although the roots חו"ס and חס"ה are semantically close to one another, they represent different ideas. φείδομαι usually reflects forms of חו"ס.

## יך

הורה/אור

In two verses in 2 Kings, forms of הורה ("to instruct") have been rendered as if related to אור ("light"): 2 Kgs 12:3 הורהו and 17:27, 28 ויירם, מורה (in all three cases: φωρίζω based on אור – φῶς *passim* in the LXX).<sup>20</sup> Likewise, in Hab 2:18, 19 מורה and יורה were rendered as παντασία as if from אור. The etymological interpretation behind these renderings should be compared with the textual variation between יורו (משפטיך) in MT Deut 33:10 and 4QTest (4Q175) 17 ויאירו<sup>21</sup> and likewise ויורהו (MT) and ויראהו (SP, LXX, S, T, V) in Exod 15:25. These examples show that the boundary between etymological exegesis and the assumption or presence of a variant is very subtle.

## כל<sup>22</sup>

כל"ם/כל"ה

1 Sam 20:34	הקלבו (אביו) (his father) had humiliated him συνετέλεσεν ἐπ' αὐτόν he had completed upon him
	כל"ם/כל"א
1 Sam 25:7	הקלנום we humiliated them ἀπεκάλυσαμεν αὐτούς we prevented them
1 Sam 25:15	לא הקלנו we were not humiliated οὐκ ἀπεκάλυσαν ἡμᾶς they did not prevent us

The Greek translation created contexts completely different from those in MT.

<sup>20</sup> The three renderings occur in sections ascribed to *kaige*-Th, and similar renderings occur *passim* in Aquila's translation that was based on *kaige*-Th. See M. Smith, "Another Criterion for the *καί γε* Recension," *Bib* 48 (1967) 443–5.

<sup>21</sup> First publication: J. M. Allegro, *DJD* V, 57–60. Cf. 4QpIsa<sup>d</sup> (4Q164) 5 במשפט מאירים.

<sup>22</sup> On the confusion of *kol* and *kalah* in the LXX, see F. H. Polak, "The Interpretation of כל"ה/כל"ה in the LXX: Ambiguity and Intuitive Comprehension," *Textus* 17 (1994) 57–77.

	כ"ל, כו"ל/כל"ל
Jer 6:11	נלאיתי הכיל I cannot hold it in καὶ ἐπέσχον καὶ οὐ συνετέλεσα αὐτούς and I held (it) and I did not complete them
Ezek 23:32	מרבבה להכיל it holds (so much) τοῦ συνετέλεσαι to complete
	כל"ה/אכ"ל
Hab 3:17	נָקַרְתָּ מִמְכֻלָּה (צֹאן) (the flock was cut off from) the sheepfold (ἐξέλιπον) ἀπὸ βρώσεως (πρόβατα) from the food
2 Chr 30:22	וַיֹּאכְלוּ (אֵת הַמִּוֶּעֵד) they ate the (food of the festival) καὶ συνετέλεσαν and they completed

In all these cases, the Greek translation created contexts completely different from those in MT.

The translator of Habakkuk derived מכלה from אכ"ל. For a similar rendering, see Isa 3:6 והמכשלה הזאת – τὸ βρῶμα ἐμόν (my food). The wording of this verse in Greek has much in common with the next one, and may have been influenced by it; at the same time, the translator of Isaiah may have had the root אכ"ל in mind (cf. 1 Kgs 5:25 מכלה “food”).

## מַר

מַר"ה/מַר"ר (ר)

Deut 31:27	ממרים היתם עם יהוה you have been rebellious against the Lord παραπικραίνοντες ἦτε πρὸς τὸν θεόν you have been embittering (in your conduct) toward God
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Words of the מַר"ה group have *often* been rendered as παραπικραίνω (“to embitter”), a verb that is related to the adjective πικρός “bitter” (usually reflecting מַר). This frequent LXX equivalence was apparently

influenced by its first occurrence in the Greek Pentateuch, in the present verse.<sup>23</sup>

מר"ד/מר"ר (ר)

Ezek 2:3      אל בני ישראל (אל גוים) המורדים אשר מרדו בי  
 . . . to nations of rebels who have rebelled  
 against me  
 πρὸς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ Ἰσραηλ τοὺς  
 παραπικραίνοντάς με  
 to the house of Israel, them that embitter me

This example transcends the boundaries of the group of weak verbs.

מרמה/מר"ר (ר)

Ps 10:7      אלה פיהו מלא ומרמות ותך  
 his mouth is filled with cursing, deceit, and  
 oppression  
 (9:28)      οὗ ἄρας τὸ στόμα αὐτοῦ γέμει καὶ πικρίας καὶ  
 δόλου  
 whose mouth is full of cursing, and bitterness,  
 and fraud

נח

נח"ם/נח"ה/נח"ה

These three roots have different base meanings (נח"ם = “to comfort, relent,” נח"ה = “to lead,” and נח"ה = “to rest”), yet in the translations they are often interchanged because of their similarity, sometimes producing homographic forms (נח"ם actually produced forms from all three roots in the various witnesses, as in 1 Sam 22:4; 1 Kgs 10:26; 2 Kgs 18:11; Prov 11:3). The close relationship between the roots is evident already in the MT of Genesis, where the name of Noah is explained from נח"ם (Gen 5:29). The present study focuses on forms that are derived from one of the three roots, but are rendered by another one.

Isa 1:24      הוי אנהם מצרי  
 Ah, I will get satisfaction from my foes (NJPST)  
 οὐ παύσεται γὰρ μου ὁ θυμὸς ἐν τοῖς  
 ὑπεναντίοις  
 For my wrath shall not cease against my  
 adversaries

<sup>23</sup> See Tov, “Pentateuch.” See further the thorough discussion of this word by Walters, *Text*, 150–53 as well as earlier studies: M. Flashar, “Exegetische Studien zum Septuagintapsalter,” *ZAW* 32 (1912) 185–9; R. Helbing, *Die Kasussyntax der Verba bei den Septuaginta* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1928) 101–3.

παύομαι (to cease) and its composita frequently reflect נ"ח in the LXX. נח"ם is also rendered as παύομαι in Jer 26 (33):3, 13, 19; 31 (38):15; 42 (49):10.

Isa 63:14 רוח יהוה תניחנו  
the spirit of the Lord gave them rest  
πνεῦμα παρὰ κυρίου. καὶ ὠδήγησεν αὐτούς  
the spirit from the Lord, and guided them (תְּנִיחֵנוּ)

## נמ

נא"ם/נו"ם

Jer 23:31 (הנני על הנביאים . . . ) הלקחים לשונם וינאמו נאם  
(Behold, I am against the prophets . . . ), who use  
their tongue and deliver a speech  
LXX<sup>88</sup> L' La-w τοὺς ἐκλαμβάνοντας (LXX<sup>rel</sup> ἐκβάλλοντας)  
προφητείας γλώσσης καὶ νυστάζοντας  
νυσταγμὸν αὐτῶν  
. . . who put forth prophecies of (their) tongue  
and slumber their sleep

The translator derived נאם וינאמו from נ"ם ("to slumber"), as if the text read וינומו נום, for which cf. the frequent spelling of נאם in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> as נואם/נאום/נואם (cf. Kutscher, *Language*, 498–500).

## ספ

יס"ף/אס"ף

Jer 7:21 (עלותיכם) ספו (על זבחיכם)  
add (your burnt offerings to your other  
sacrifices)  
συναγάγετε  
assemble  
Isa 29:1 (שנה על שנה) ספו  
add (year to year)  
συναγάγετε (γενήματα ἐνιαυτὸν ἐπ' ἐνιαυτόν)  
assemble (produce year by year)

To these renderings, cf. the interchange MT ויאספה/1QIsa<sup>a</sup> ויספה in Isa 37:31 (see Kutscher, *Language*, 220).

	ספ"ה / אס"ף
Isa 13:15	וכל הנספה (יפול בחרב) (whoever) is caught (will fall by the sword) καὶ οἵτινες συνηγμένοι εἰσὶν (similarly S דגנתהוסיב) and all the assembled
	אס"ף / סו"ף
Exod 23:16	וחנו האסיף (בצאת השנה) באספך (את מעשיך מן השדה) (you shall observe) the Festival of Ingathering (at the end of the year), when you gather in (from the field the fruit of your labor) καὶ ἐορτῆν συντελείας (ἐπ' ἐξόδου τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ) ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ (τῶν ἔργων σου τῶν ἐκ τοῦ ἀγροῦ σου) . . . and the Feast of Finishing (at the end of the year) in the gathering in (of your fruits out of your field).
Lev 23:39	באספכם (את תבואת הארץ) when you have gathered (the yield of the land) ὅταν συντελέσητε τὰ γενήματα τῆς γῆς when you have completed (the fruits of the land)

The context in Exodus (בצאת השנה, "at the end of the year") probably influenced the present rendering involving the representation of האסיף on the basis of סו"ף. Interestingly enough, the translator rendered the root אס"ף twice differently in this verse.

The following two examples illustrate the complexity of the renderings of the ספ group involving the representation of אס"ף as אס"ף in MT:

	אס"ף / אס"ף
Exod 5:7	לא תאספון להת you shall not continue to give οὐκέτι προστεθήσεται διδόναι you shall no longer give
The translator rightly derived תאספון from אס"ף (see BDB, p. 415).	
	אס"ף / אס"ף
2 Sam 6:1	ויסף עוד דוד את כל בחור (David) again gathered (all the chosen men) καὶ συτήγαγεν ἔτι (Δαυιδ πάντα νεανίαν) (David) again gathered (every young man)

The translator rightly derived **הָיָה** from **הָיָה**. Cf. Ps 104:29 MT **הָיָה** and 1QpHab V 14 **וַיִּסְבְּרוּ** reflecting Hab 1:15 **וַיִּסְבְּרוּ** (he gathered them).

The following examples show the interaction between **הָיָה** and **הָיָה** within MT. Formally speaking, the second words in both examples are derived from **הָיָה**, but the biblical authors artistically combined the two roots (see further § 3 below). The translator of Jeremiah derived the two forms from **הָיָה**, while in Zephaniah the two forms were derived from **הָיָה** (probably by the same translator).

Jer 8:13	<b>אֶסְבֹּא אֶסְבֹּא</b> I will make an end of them <i>καὶ συναΐξουσιν (τὰ γενήματα αὐτῶν)</i> and they will collect (their produce)
Zeph 1:2	<b>אֶסְבֹּא אֶסְבֹּא (כל)</b> I will sweep (everything) away <i>ἐκλείψει ἐκλιπέτω (πάντα)</i> he must abandon (everything) completely

### פצ

#### פּוֹץ/נִפֹּץ

Jer 23:1	<b>וּמַפְצִים אֶת צֹאן מְרֵעִיתִי . . .</b> . . . and who scatter the sheep of my pasture <i>καὶ ἀπολλύοντες τὰ πρόβατα τῆς νομῆς μου</i> . . . and who destroy the sheep of my pasture
Ezek 34:21	<b>אֲשֶׁר הִפִּיצוּהֶם (אוֹתָנָה)</b> until you scattered (them) <i>καὶ ἐξέθλιβετε</i> and you cruelly treated

Both Greek translations, based on **נִפֹּץ**, present a context differing from that of MT. A reverse picture is reflected in the following renderings of **נִפֹּץ**, which are based on **פּוֹץ**.

Jer 51:20	<b>מִפֶּן אַתָּה לִי . . . וְנִפְצֵתִי</b> you are my war club . . . and I will smash
(28:20)	<b>דִּיֹּסְכֹרְפִיִּים שׁוּ מוֹי . . . וְדִיֹּסְכֹרְפִיִּים</b> you are scattering for me . . . and I will scatter

For similar renderings, see Jer 13:14, 51(28):21, 22, 23, as well as Dan 12:7 Th.

## צ

נצ"ר / צ"ר

Jer 4:16 נצרים (באים)  
 watchers (come)  
 συστροφαί cf. S כנשא דעממא  
 bands/crowds

For the translation equivalent, cf. צ"ר – συστροφή in Hos 4:19, 13:12;  
 Prov 30:4.<sup>24</sup>

נצ"ר / יצ"ר

Prov 24:12 ונצר נפשך  
 He who keeps watch over your soul  
 ὁ πλάσας πνοήν  
 he that formed breath

## ק

קנ"א / קנ"ה

Isa 11:11 (יוסיף אדני שנית ידו) לקנות (את שאר עמו)  
 (the Lord will extend his hand yet a second  
 time) to redeem (the remnant of his people)  
 τοῦ ζηλωσαι  
 to be zealous for

The translator derived לקנות (“to acquire”) from קנ"א (“to be zealous”) (cf. v 13 יקנא – ζηλώσει). For the close connection between forms of the two roots, see the artistic use in Ezek 8:3 סמל הקנאה המקנה. See further § 3 below.

## ר

מורא, נורא / רא"ה

See above, § 2.

## רע

רע"ע / רע"ה

Ps 2:9 תרעם (בשבט ברזל)  
 You shall break them (with a rod of iron)  
 ποιμανεῖς αὐτούς = S תרעא אנון  
 You shall shepherd them

<sup>24</sup> See the analysis by C. Rabin, “Nošrim,” *Textus* 5 (1966) 44–52.



תּרעם of MT fits the parallel stich (ככלי יוצר תנפצם), “you will dash them in pieces as a potter’s wheel”), and hence the understanding of the Greek translator, possibly influenced by Mic 7:14 רעה עמך בשבטך,<sup>25</sup> is inappropriate.

### רש

יר"ש / רו / אש

Jer 49:2 (and Israel shall dispossess) those who dispossessed him  
(30:2) ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ  
its government

### שב

שב"ב / יש"ב

Jer 3:6, 8, 12 מש(ו)בה ישראל  
that faithless one, Israel  
ἡ κατοικία τοῦ Ἰσραηλ  
the house of Israel  
similarly: Hos 11:7; 14:5

The Greek rendering, based on יש"ב (cf. the translation of מושב with κατοικία in Ezek 34:13), is unusual, since there is no apparent reason in the context for this understanding. Elsewhere in Jeremiah, משובה is rendered from שב"ב (Jer 2:19; 3:11, 22) or שו"ב (see the next item). The combination of a noun from the root יש"ב and ישראל occurs in Exod 12:40.

שב"ב / שו"ב

Jer 8:5 שובבה . . . משבה (נצחה)  
is rebellious . . . (with perpetual) rebellion  
ἀπέστρεψεν . . . ἀποστροφήν  
turned away . . . turning away

The same rendering recurs in Jer 5:6.

שו"ב / יש"ב

Ezek 29:14 והשבתי אהם  
I will bring them back  
καὶ κατοικίσω αὐτούς  
I will cause them to dwell

<sup>25</sup> Suggestion by N. Mizrahi.

For the closeness of **שׁו"ב** and **יִשׁוּב**, see Jer 42:10 **שוב השבו** (see also § 3 below).

### שמ

אש"ם / שמ"ם

Hos 10:2            יאשמו  
                          they must bear their guilt  
                          ἀφανισθήσονται  
                          they will be destroyed

This translation recurs in Hos 14:1 and Joel 1:18. See also Isa 24:6 T; Ezek 6:6 (cf. Sym, S, T); Ps 34:22 (cf. S).

### שנ

שאנ"ן / יש"ן

Jer 46:27            ושקט ושאנן (ואין מחריד)  
                          And he will have calm and quiet (and no one  
                          shall trouble him)  
                          (26:27)            καὶ ἡσυχάσει καὶ ὑπνώσει  
                          And he will have calm and will sleep

The Greek translation of **ושאנן** is probably based on an assumed connection between **ושאנן** (**ישאנן**?) and **יש"ן** ("to sleep") involving a quiescent *'aleph*.

### שר

שר"ר / יש"ר

Jer 9:13            וילכו אחרי שררות לבם  
                          who stubbornly follow their own will  
                          ἀλλ' ἐπορεύθησαν ὀπίσω τῶν ἀρεστῶν τῆς  
                          καρδίας αὐτῶν τῆς κακῆς  
                          but they went after the pleasing things of their  
                          evil heart

The Greek translation is based on the equivalence **ישר** – ἀρεστ-, occurring often in the LXX (Exod 15:26; Deut 6:18; 12:8, 25, 28 etc.). The same rendering recurs in Jer 16:12; 18:12.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup> For the same etymological derivation, see Sym in Jer 11:8 ἀρεσκεία; Th in Jer 11:8; 13:10 ἐνθύτης.

Jer 15:11 K                      אִם לֹא שָׂרִיתֶךָ (Q שְׂרִיתֶךָ)  
 I have surely set you free (K)  
 καταεσθυσεν αὐτῶν  
 while they succeed

The verb καταεσθύσω often renders words from the root יִשׁ"ר (Ps 5:8; Prov 1:3; 9:15, etc.).

### 3. Some Conclusions

The data adduced in this study illustrate several aspects of the translators' etymological exegesis, especially their turning to clusters of two letters that provide the minimal information needed for semantic identification. This technique was employed in the case of several weak verbs as well as a few strong verbs, but it is hard to know how widespread this procedure was since it comes to light only from the recognition of occasional errors in identification. The cases illustrated here show that for some verbs a cluster of two letters could suffice for semantic identification, but if that cluster was the key for two *different* verbs, mishaps could occur as in the case of רִא pointing to both רִא"ה and יִר"א.

Renderings of this type do not necessitate the assumption that the translators adhered to a biliteral root theory.<sup>27</sup> Nor is there sufficient evidence for assuming that the translators' Hebrew "word-analysis" was influenced by a comparison with the Greek verbal system, as analyzed by Alexandrian grammarians.<sup>28</sup>

These renderings probably reflect unsystematic *ad hoc* exegesis in the identification process. The translators experienced many difficulties in analyzing Hebrew forms, so that by necessity they sometimes turned to improvisations. Similar improvisations are visible in the renderings described in n. 1 as well as some partial translations (sometimes some of

<sup>27</sup> Besides, the translators created identical meanings for different roots, while at the root of biliteral exegesis lies the assumption of different, though slightly similar, Hebrew roots sharing two of the three consonants, such as פִּר"ה, פִּר"צ, פִּר"ס, פִּר"ש, פִּר"ד, פִּל"ה, פִּל"נ, פִּל"ר.

<sup>28</sup> Thus Weissert (see n. 19). This attractive theory would be even more attractive if it could be proven that the translators compared Hebrew linguistic phenomena with equivalent Greek features in other aspects also. The theory assumes sophistication from the side of the translators, whereas perhaps ignorance and lack of experience guided their actions (see the examples in this paper and see Tov, "Septuagint Translators"). Further, Weissert's assumed rules of analogy used in the various translation units in the LXX are problematic as they presuppose either unity of translation or constant interaction between the translators.

the letters of the word in the *Vorlage* were disregarded in the translation because the translator did not know how to render them).<sup>29</sup>

The assumption that the translators based themselves on the close relationship between certain roots may be supported by the way this closeness was regarded in Scripture itself. Some biblical authors “played on” these related roots.<sup>30</sup> Thus two prophets (Jer 8:13; Zeph 1:2) skillfully combined *שׁוּב* and *שׁוּב* (see above) as well as *שׁוּב* and *שׁוּב* (Jer 42:10 *שׁוּב* (תשבּו), etc.

The close proximity between the weak verbs sometimes created a mixture of verbal forms that was part and parcel of Biblical Hebrew (BH). Thus *פ״י* forms were sometimes mixed with *ע״י* (for example, *מל״ל/נמ״ל* next to *מ״ל*, *נפ״ץ/פ״ץ* next to *ע״י* (Gen 17:11), *מ״ש/שׁוּב* next to *ע״י* (for example, *מ״ש/שׁוּב*), and verbs *ל״א* with *ל״י*.<sup>31</sup> As a result, the school-type distinction between the verb patterns often can no longer be upheld. Thus *הוֹבִישָׁה* in 2 Sam 19:6 (and elsewhere) reflects *ב״שׁ*, not *יב״שׁ*, rightly translated as “you have humiliated” in the translations, including the LXX.<sup>32</sup> All these phenomena are recorded in the lexicons and grammars.<sup>33</sup>

These developments were accelerated in MH, resulting in greater contamination. There are new *ע״י* forms next to *פ״י* (for example, *יב״ק/ק״ץ*), there are new instances of *ע״ע* forms next to *ע״י* (for example, *זל״ל/ז״ל*), and there is additional assimilation between *ל״א* and *ל״י* forms. All these phenomena are well illustrated in the grammars.<sup>34</sup>

Since mixture and confusion between various word patterns frequently took place in BH and MH, it is not surprising that similar manuscript variations were created in all periods. Some of these manuscript variations were mentioned above, occasionally coinciding with the LXX. Thus, for Isa 50:2 (*דְּנַתָּם מֵאֵין מֵיָם*), the reading of the LXX *καὶ ξηραυθήσουσται* may be based on 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> *היבשׁ*. The interchanges

<sup>29</sup> See n. 2.

<sup>30</sup> The phrase is used by Sperber, *Historical Grammar*, 596, who provided many examples, not all of them relevant.

<sup>31</sup> See Gesenius–Kautzsch, *Grammar*, § 75 qq–rr and Ezek 8:3 *הַקְּנָאָה הַמְּקַנָּה* quoted above (where the second word, formally reflecting *קנ״ה*, carries the meaning of *קנ״א*). In fact, according to Sperber, *Historical Grammar*, 595, these two patterns form one rather than two groups.

<sup>32</sup> Likewise, in 2 Sam 6:1 *וַיִּסַּף*, what looks like a *פ״י* form actually represents *יב״פ* through the omission of the quiescent *'aleph*, and reversely in Exod 5:7 where what appears to be a *פ״י* form *לֹא הִאֲסַפְּוּן* actually represents *הוֹסַפְּוּן*.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, Gesenius–Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> See M. H. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927) §§ 185, 189; G. Haneman, *A Morphology of Mishnaic Hebrew According to the Tradition of the Parma Manuscript (De-Rossi 138)* (Texts and Studies in the Hebrew Language and Related Subjects 3; Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980), esp. 422–31.

between MT וַיִּסְפְּהוּ/1QIsa<sup>a</sup> וַיִּסְפְּהוּ in Isa 37:31 and between MT Hab 1:15 וַיִּסְפְּהוּ (he gathered them)/1QpHab V 14 וַיִּסְפְּהוּ parallel the פ"א/פ"י interchanges between the LXX and MT recorded above (פ"א group). In addition, the detailed description by Kutscher, *Language of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>* provides ample illustration of the interchanges of weak verbal forms between MT and the scroll unrelated to the LXX (e.g., נח"ל/יח"ל [p. 265], סר"ר/סר"ה [p. 269], יס"ר/סו"ר [p. 268], סר"ר/סר"ה [p. 269]).

The translators may have been aware of these phenomena and developments. However, we should be very careful not to ascribe refined grammatical understanding to the translators, since lack of linguistic understanding is widespread. Furthermore, there is a very basic difference between the translators' exegesis and the developments taking place in the Hebrew language. The developments within the language took place in a natural way, without distorting the message of the texts or the meanings of words. Thus when a ל"א form was represented in Ezek 8:3 as a ל"י form (סמל הקנאה המקנה), it nevertheless carried the meaning of קנ"א; the reader probably understood the author. However, when the LXX of Isa 11:11 rendered לקניוה according to the ל"א pattern, he created a completely different meaning and context.<sup>35</sup> It would therefore be hard to describe this development as natural, and would probably be closer to the truth to consider this and most of the renderings recorded here as reflecting lack of linguistic refinement.<sup>36</sup> We therefore noted sometimes that the translator created a completely new context.

In sum, the LXX translators, as other biblical translators in antiquity,<sup>37</sup> often turned to a *cluster* of two letters providing sufficient information for the translation process, especially in weak verbal forms. This approach was borne out of the translators' difficulties in identifying words, rather than any biliteral theory.<sup>38</sup> Such a theory was developed

<sup>35</sup> Therefore, in his summarizing remarks on the interchanges between roots in MT and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, Kutscher (*Language*, 296–315) probably reads too much into the external similarities between this scroll and the versions: "... the Versions make use of the same methods as the Scr." (306) ... In all these instances, the exegesis of one or another of the medieval Jewish commentators—who of course read = MT—is in accord with the 'emendation' of the versions and the Scr.'s reading. (306) ... Actually, the Versions are of great value to us for a different reason: they help us to understand what the Scr.'s scribe had in mind when he changed the text" (308).

<sup>36</sup> At the same time, some of the renderings may have been influenced by phonetic developments, as in the cases of נר, ספ, and נב (suggestion by N. Mizrahi).

<sup>37</sup> For some examples from the Targumim, see Prijs, *Tradition*, 83, n. 3. For the Peshitta, see Ch. Heller, *Untersuchungen über die Peshitta zur gesamten hebräischen Bibel I* (Berlin: Poppelauer, 1911) 45–7.

<sup>38</sup> Another view was espoused by G. R. Driver, "Confused Hebrew Roots," in *Occident and Orient ... Gaster Anniversary Volume* (ed. B. Schindler; London: Taylor's Foreign Press,

much later by some medieval Jewish grammarians,<sup>39</sup> and revived in the scholarly literature from the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>40</sup>

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1936) 73–83. According to Driver, it was not the translator who sometimes mistakenly derived a verbal form from a closely related root, but the roots themselves were closely related. Thus Driver believes that אב"ל, “was dried up, mourned,” נב"ל, “dropped, faded, languished,” and perhaps also בל"ה, “was worn out, wasted away,” were “cognate roots developed from *bl* as a common base,” (ibid., p. 75), as, e.g. in Jer 12:4 עד מתי תאבל הארץ ועשב where כל השדה ייבש where אב"ל should be taken as “was dried up” as in תהרוב. According to Driver, this claim is supported by the versions, in which, in another instance, forms of אש"ם are rendered as if from שב"ם (see the examples above), both deriving from a common root אש"ם = שב"ם. Regardless of the merits of Driver’s speculation, support from the versions is very questionable.

<sup>39</sup> Menahem Ibn Saruq (10<sup>th</sup> century) and Judah ben David Hayyuj (c. 945–1000). In the prologue to his lexicon, the *Mahberet*, Menahem Ibn Saruq developed the theory that all trilateral roots were ultimately biliteral, even uniliteral. See the editions of H. Filipowskius, *Antiquissimum linguae hebraicae et chaldaicae lexicon ad sacras scripturas explicandas A Menahem Ben Saruck hispaniensis . . .* (London/Edinburgh: Typis H. Filipowskius, 1854) and A. Saenz Badillos, *Mahberet / Menahem Ben Saruq; edición crítica* (Granada: Universidad de Granada, 1986); see also Y. Blau, “Menahem ben Jacob Ibn Saruq,” *EncJud* (Jerusalem: Keter, 1971) 11:1305–6.

<sup>40</sup> For an analysis and bibliography, see S. Moscati, “Il biconsonantismo nelle lingue semitiche,” *Bib* 28 (1947) 113–35; G. J. Botterweck, *Der Trilateralismus im Semitischen erläutert an den Wurzeln GL KL KL (BBB 3)*; Bonn: Peter Hanstein Verlag, 1952) 11–30; *An Introduction to the Comparative Grammar of the Semitic Languages, Phonology and Morphology* (ed. S. Moscati; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1969) 72–5. See further Gesenius–Kautzsch, *Hebrew Grammar*, § 30 f–o.