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The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of its Translation of Plant Metaphors

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CHAPTER 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.¹ More specifically, plant terms are commonly used in metaphors for human relationships.² This can also be seen in Biblical and Greek literature, as this chapter will show.³

First we will discuss how “seed,” a common lexicalized metaphor, has been translated. Second, we will discuss another common lexicalized metaphor: “fruit.” While similar, these two lexicalized metaphors are treated quite differently by the LXX-Isa translator. Third we will look at metaphors using words for “root,” and discuss whether LXX-Isa understands them the same way the Hebrew does. Fourth we will discuss metaphors using “flowers,” then fifth, “leaves.” Sixth we will look at metaphors using words for “branch.” Finally, we will draw some general observations about the LXX-Isa 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.⁴ Indeed, in lexicons the meaning “offspring” is given both for זרע and σπέρμα.⁵ We will begin our discussion with two extended meanings given by BDB: First, that it can stand for “offspring;” second, for “family” or “pedigree;” third, for an individual; and fourth, we will look at original uses of “seed” metaphors introduced by the

¹ Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 19.

² Kövecses, *Metaphor*, 25.

³ Basson “People Are Plants,” 573-83. For humans described metaphorically as plants, see Korpel, *A Rift in the Clouds*, 590-91. Though the greater section is about plant imagery used of God and Ugaritic deities (587-94).

⁴ To stay focused on plant imagery, this analysis will skip occurrences of verbal forms, except where 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.

⁵ The word σπόρος occurs twice in LXX-Isa (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) which will cease.

translator. At the end of the section, conclusions will be drawn about the metaphors mentioned.

Before looking at the metaphorical uses, how the LXX understands seed in non-metaphorical places is worth mentioning. The noun זֶרַע 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 couple of times: 19:7; 23:3; 30:23; 55:10; and 5:10. In 5:10 the noun becomes the substantive participle ὁ σπείρων for the sake of style.⁷ In Isaiah 55:10 the phrase וְנָתַן זֶרַע לְזֶרַע is translated literally as καὶ δῶ 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 וְנָתַן מָטָר זֶרַע אֲשֶׁר-תִּזְרַע אֶת-הָאֲדָמָה 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 Sophocles, *The Philoctetes*, 364, Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles, is addressed as the “seed of Achilles,” ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως. In Aeschylus, *Promethius Bound*, 705, Io, the daughter of Inachus, is addressed as “Inachus' seed,” Ἰνάχειον σπέρμα.⁸ In both of these examples, someone is called the seed of their ancestor, 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 this metaphor we examine in this section is often used differently in that the context is talking to someone about their seed, rather than talking about someone as the seed of their ancestor.

Four good examples of the LXX translating this metaphor literally are Isa 53:10, 54:3, 66:22, and 61:11.⁹ E. 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-Isa.

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

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

⁸ Cf. Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, 600, though the situation 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 line 765-70 it was his brother-in-law/uncle who drove him from the city.

⁹ In 61:11 the noun זָרַע (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 (II.D.2.). Cf. Lev 11:37.

¹⁰ E. König, *Stylistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die Biblische Literatur* (Leipzig: Weicher, 1900), 17-19.

Isa 44:3

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| For I will pour water on the thirsty land, and streams on the dry ground; I will pour my spirit upon your <i>seed</i> , and my blessing on your offspring. ¹¹ | כִּי אֶצְקֶה מַיִם עַל- צִמָּא וְנִזְלִים עַל- יְבֹשָׁה אֶצְקֶה רוּחִי עַל- זְרַעְךָ וּבִרְכָתִי עַל- צֶאֱצָאֶיךָ: | 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 <i>seed</i> and my blessings on your children. ¹² |
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The imagery of this verse creates some interesting blended spaces. God giving water to the thirsty is parallel to giving his spirit and blessing to their seed,¹³ as can be seen by the repetition of יִצַק. While “seed” and “produce” are lexicalized metaphors, the fact that they are objects of the verb יִצַק in parallel to discussions of 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 אֶצְקֶה with δώσω and ἐπιθήσω is appropriate for the individual contexts but weakens the connection of the two images. Perhaps Greek stylistic sensibilities preferred to use synonyms to repeating the same word. The translator seems to have read וְנִזְלִים as if it were from the Aramaic אֶזַל and so rendered it τοῖς πορευομένοις.¹⁴

The Greek also tries to make the image clear by rendering צֶאֱצָאֶיךָ with τέκνα σου.¹⁵ Usually this root is rendered with the slightly more generic ἔκγονος, as in 48:19 and 61:9 where זֶרַע and צֶאֱצָאִים again appear in parallel.¹⁶ In 48:19 זֶרַע is translated literally. The passage references Gen 22:17 as how things would have been, if Israel had been obedient.

In 44:3, 48:19, and 61:9 the Targum renders זֶרַע as “sons,” and צֶאֱצָאִים as “your sons’ sons.”¹⁷

Isa 65:23

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| They shall not labor in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be <i>seed</i> | לֹא יִיָּעֲזוּ לְרִיק וְלֹא יִלְדוּ לְבָהֳלָה כִּי יִזְרַע בְּרוּכֵי יְהוָה הֵמָּה | οἱ δὲ ἐκλεκτοί μου οὐ κοπιήσουσιν εἰς κενὸν οὐδὲ τεκνοποιήσουσιν εἰς κατάραν, ὅτι | And my chosen ones shall not labor in vain, nor bear children for a curse, |
|--|--|--|--|

¹¹ All MT translations come from NRSV; italics denote changes I have made to the translation.

¹² All LXX translations come from NETS; italics denote changes I have made to the translation.

¹³ Cf. 40:24 where “seed” is blasted by the wind.

¹⁴ Martin Karrar, and Wolfgang Kraus, eds., *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 2653 (we abbreviate this work as LXX.D.E.K.).

¹⁵ This equivalence is seen elsewhere only in Job 5:25 and 21:8.

¹⁶ Two things to note of these passages: 1) In 48:19 בְּמַעֲתוֹ is rendered ὡς ὁ χοῦς τῆς γῆς. 2) In 61:9 there is no rendering of the phrase הָעַמִּים בְּתוֹךְ, as often done by the translator, the indirect object of the parallel clause is understood distributively. See van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 78-79.

¹⁷ “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.” All Targum quotations are from Bruce D. Chilton, *The Isaiah Targum* (The Aramaic Bible vol 11; Edinburgh: Clark, 1987). The italics are his.

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| blessed by the LORD-- and their <i>offspring</i> as well. | וְצִאָצְאֵיהֶם אֲתָם: | σπέρμα ὑψολογημένον ὑπὸ θεοῦ ἐστι. | because they are <i>seed</i> blessed by God. |
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The Greek οἱ δὲ ἐκλεκτοὶ μου comes from בְּחִירִי in verse 22.¹⁸ Here again זרע and צאצאים occur in parallel. One could think of “seed” being connected to refer to agricultural work, and “offspring” being connected to children, though they both seem to refer to children. The Greek omits the phrase וְצִאָצְאֵיהֶם אֲתָם, probably for style, since σπέρμα clearly refers to the children that are born and implies their offspring.¹⁹

Here the Targum renderers using the Aramaic cognate זרע, but צאצאים is again בני בניהון.²⁰ It would have been redundant to render זרע with בנין in a clause that is already clearly describing children.

Isa 59:21

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| And as for me, this is my covenant with them, says the LORD: 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 <i>seed</i> , or out of the mouths of your <i>seed's seed</i> , says the LORD, from now on and forever. | וְאֲנִי וְאֵת בְּרִיתִי אוֹתָם אֶמַר יְהוָה רוּחִי אֲשֶׁר עָלֶיךָ וּדְבָרִי אֲשֶׁר-שָׂמֹתִי בְּפִיךָ לֹא-יִמָּוֶשׁוּ מִפִּיךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַעְךָ וּמִפִּי זֶרַע זֶרַעְךָ אֶמַר יְהוָה מִעַתָּה וְעַד-עוֹלָם: | καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, εἶπε κύριος· τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἐμόν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐπὶ σοί, καὶ τὰ ῥήματα, ἃ ἔδωκα εἰς τὸ στόμα σου, οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη 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 <i>seed</i> , for the Lord has said it, from now on and for ever. |
|---|--|---|---|

It would appear 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 μου. The emphatic Hebrew reference to both their seed and their seed's seed is rather well rendered with the strong future negation οὐ μὴ ἐκλίπη and a reduction just to “seed,” since this term already includes the seed's seed.²¹ Here the meaning is clearly to future generations. The Targum renders each occurrence of “seed” with “son.”²²

¹⁸ For the rendering εἰς κατάραν, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 133. LXX.D.E.K, 2689 says it is an intensification of the Hebrew.

¹⁹ Symmachus and Theodotion, however, have the phrase καὶ τὰ ἐκγονα αὐτῶν μετ' αὐτῶν ἔσονται, and it is marked with an asterisk in the Syrohexapla. See Ziegler's critical apparatus.

²⁰ “They shall not *be weary* in vain, or *bring up* children for *death*; for they shall be the seed *which* the LORD *blessed*, and their *sons' sons* with them.”

²¹ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 365 suggests the clause is omitted because it was “cumbersome” and “virtually implied.” van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 69, calls it the reduction of a nearly identical adjacent phrase.

1QIsa^a agrees with MT, except it omits יְהוָה אֶמַר.

²² “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.”

In Isa 57:3-4 “seed” is used in parallel with “son.”

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| But as for you, come here, you children of a sorceress, you <i>seed</i> of an adulterer and a whore. | וְאַתֶּם קְרִבּוֹהֶנָּה בְּנֵי עֲנָנָה זֶרַע מְנַאֲף וְתִזְנֶה: | ὁμοῖς δὲ προσάγετε ὧδε, υἱοὶ ἄνομοι, σπέρμα μοιχῶν καὶ πόρνῃς· | But as for you, draw near here, you lawless sons, you <i>seed</i> of adulterers and of 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 <i>seed</i> of deceit-- | עַל-מִי תִתְעַנְּגוּ עַל-מִי תִרְחִיבוּ פֶה תִּפְתָּח לְשׁוֹן הִלּוֹא-אַתֶּם יְלִדֵי-פֶשַׁע זֶרַע שֶׁקֶר: | ἐν τίνι ἐνετρυφήσατε; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἡγοίξατε τὸ στόμα ὑμῶν; καὶ ἐπὶ τίνα ἐχαλάσατε τὴν γλῶσσαν ὑμῶν; οὐχ ὑμεῖς ἐστε τέκνα ἀπωλείας, σπέρμα ἄνομον; | 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 <i>seed</i> ? |

Often the word בֶּן is followed by an attribute or characteristic to poetically refer to people by this attribute.²³ In 57:4 it would appear that this is how the synonyms of בֶּן (לֵד) and זֶרַע are being used. The translator seems to have seen no reason to explain or remove this Hebrew idiom (or understood it literally). The renderings of the adjectives are of note, in that the Greek has made them more commonly condemned crimes. In particular, עֲנָנָה was either read as a form of עֵן,²⁴ or interpreted to refer to general turning from Torah. The rendering μοιχῶν καὶ πόρνῃς may come from reading the ת before instead of after the conjunction ו.²⁵ 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 adulterers and harlots.*”²⁶ 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.²⁷

²³ See BDB, s.v., paragraph 8. LXX sometimes renders this idiom literally, as in 1 Sam 14:52; 2 Sam 2:7; 2 Sam 13:28; 17:10; Psa 79(80):11; 102(101):21; etc. but not in Isa 5:1 or 14:12.

²⁴ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 355.

²⁵ LXX.D.E.K., 2678.

²⁶ “But you, draw near hither, people of the generation whose deeds are evil, whose plant was from a holy plant, and they are adulterers 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,”

²⁷ Paul Swarup, *The Self-Understanding of the Dead Sea Scrolls Community: An Eternal Planting, a House of Holiness* (Library of Second Temple Studies 59; London: T&T Clark, 2006).

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.²⁸ This meaning is related to the above meaning; it implies the seed from which one grew or whose seed one is. The classical examples above already generally pointed back to the ancestors of the person addressed. Here are some more clear examples given by LSJ:²⁹

Aeschylus, *Suppliants*, 289-290:

διδαχθεῖς <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.³⁰

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, *Libation-Bearers*, 503:

καὶ μὴ ἔξαλείψῃς 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.³¹

Sophocles, *Antigone* 981:

ἃ δὲ σπέρμα μὲν ἀρχαιογόνων <ῥ’> ἄντασσι Ἐρεχθιδᾶν,
She by birth was a princess of the ancient house of the sons of the Erechtheids.³²

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, *Oedipus at Colonus*, 214-15:

τίνοσι σπέρματος, <ῶ> ξένη, φώνει, πατρόθεν;
Tell us from what seed you come, stranger, on your father's side!³³

Pindar, *Olympian*, 7.93:

μὴ κρύπτε κοινὸν σπέρμα ἀπὸ Καλλιάνακτος
Do not bury in obscurity the shared seed of Callianax.³⁴

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

²⁸ BDB, s.v.; LSJ, s.v.

²⁹ Another example given is from Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, 1077.

³⁰ Aeschylus, *Suppliants* [Sommerstein, LCL 145].

³¹ Aeschylus, *Libation-Bearers* [Sommerstein, LCL 146].

³² Sophocles, *Antigone* [Lloyd-Jones, LCL 21].

³³ Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus* [Lloyd-Jones, LCL 21].

³⁴ Pindar, *Olympian* [Race, LCL 56].

for a broader group identity, such as tribe or city. As we will see, LXX-Isa 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 זֶרַע אֲבֹרָהֶם, rendered σπέρμα Αβρααμ, in 41:8, and זֶרַע יַעֲקֹב rendered τῷ σπέρματι Ιακωβ in 45:19. A variation is found in 65:9 where זֶרַע מִיַּעֲקֹב הוֹצֵאתִי 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 to represent their offspring.

Isa 45:25

| | | | |
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| In the LORD all the <i>seed</i> of Israel shall be justified and glory. | בִּיהוָה יִצְדָּקוּ וְיִתְהַלְלוּ כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל: | ἀπὸ κυρίου δικαιωθήσονται καὶ ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἐνδοξασθήσονται πᾶν τὸ σπέρμα τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ. | By the Lord shall they be justified, and all the <i>seed</i> 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.³⁵ Of note for our discussion is that the LXX feels the need to explain כָּל־זֶרַע יִשְׂרָאֵל by adding “sons:” πᾶν τὸ σπέρμα τῶν υἱῶν Ισραηλ. This addition could simply be a plus, or could be a second rendering of זֶרַע.³⁶ 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 reference simply to the descendants of the current son’s of Israel. Perhaps υἱῶν was added because of the common phrase υἱῶν Ισραηλ, which occurs two hundred seventy-five times in the Hebrew Bible.³⁷ 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 Mac 18:1: Ὡ τῶν Αβραμιαίων σπερμάτων ἀπόγονοι; it may reflect an attempt to modify and make interesting commonly heard phrases. The Targum of 45:25 is literal, except it is in the Memra of the Lord that they are justified.³⁸

Isa 43:5

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| Do not fear, for I am with you; I will bring your <i>seed</i> from the east, and from the west I will gather you; | אַל־תִּירָא כִּי אֲתִידֶּה אֲנִי מִמְּזֶרֶחַ אָבִי זֶרְעֶךָ וּמִמַּעֲרֵב אֶקְבֹּצְךָ: | 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 <i>seed</i> 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 אֶקְבֹּצְךָ, which has connotations of harvesting. The Greek is quite literal (קָבַץ and συνάγω are common word equivalents); συνάγω also can connote

³⁵ Van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 168.

³⁶ Van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 34.

³⁷ This is according to a BibleWorks 7 search.

³⁸ “In the Memra of the LORD all the seed of Israel shall be justified and glorified.”

harvesting. Within LXX Greek it takes various words for crops and straw as an object (Exod 5:2; 23:10; Lev 25:3, 20; Hab 1:15; Mic 7:1; Isa 17:5), as Muraoka shows.³⁹ 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: is the “you” referring 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 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.”⁴⁰

In 1:4 the “seed” refers to the current nation and is used negatively.⁴¹

Isa 1:4

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Ah, sinful nation, people laden with iniquity, <i>evil doing</i> <i>seed</i> , children who deal corruptly, | הֲוִין גְּזִי חַטָּא עַם כְּבֹד עוֹן זָרַע מְרֵעִים בְּנִים מְשַׁחֲתִים | οὐαὶ ἔθνος ἀμαρτωλόν, λαὸς πλήρης ἀμαρτιῶν, σπέρμα πονηρόν, υἱοὶ ἄνομοι· | Ah, sinful nation, people full of sins, <i>evil seed</i> , lawless sons, |
| who have forsaken the LORD, who have despised the Holy One of Israel, who are utterly estranged! | עֲזָבוּ אֶת־יְהוָה נֶאֱצָו אֶת־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל נָזְרוּ אַחֲזָר: | ἐγκατελίπατε τὸν κύριον καὶ παρωργίσατε τὸν ἅγιον τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. | You have forsaken the Lord and provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel! |

The expression זָרַע מְרֵעִים is found in 14:20, with the same Greek rendering.⁴² 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 them being the seed of Abraham (Gen 9:9; Isa 41:8) and seed of Jacob (45:19; 65:9), and the seed of Israel (as we saw in 45:25, above).⁴³ According to Muraoka’s lexicon, “seed” in 1:4 and 14:20 has a weakened sense of ‘descendants’ and is almost equivalent to λαός or ἔθνος.⁴⁴

The Targum adds positive epithets to contrast with those occurring here.⁴⁵ The seed becomes the positive “beloved seed” but have done evil.

³⁹ Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), s.v. Also the participle is used for “harvesters” in Isa 62:9.

⁴⁰ “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*.”

⁴¹ See also 17:10-11 below.

⁴² Isaiah 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.”

⁴³ Cf. also the holy seed in Ezra 9:2 and Isa 6:13.

⁴⁴ Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

⁴⁵ “Woe, because they were called a holy people, and sinned; a chosen congregation have multiplied sins; they were named as a beloved seed and they acted wickedly, and it was said of them, “Cherished sons”, and they corrupted 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.”

2.1.3. Seed as an Individual

It is also possible for “seed” to refer to an individual:⁴⁶

Pindar, *Olympian Odes*, 9.61:

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;

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

Isa 14:20

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| You will not be joined with them in burial, because you have destroyed your land, you have killed your people. May the <i>seed</i> of evildoers nevermore be named! | לֹא־תִתְּחַד אִתָּם בְּקִבּוּרָה כִּי־אַרְצָךְ שָׁחַת עַמֶּךָ הָרַגְתָּ לֹא־יִקְרָא לְעוֹלָם זֶרַע מְרָעִים: | οὕτως οὐδὲ σὺ ἔσῃ καθαρός, διότι τὴν γῆν μου ἀπώλεσας καὶ τὸν λαόν μου ἀπέκτεινας· οὐ μὴ μείνης 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 passages 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.⁴⁷ Another perspective sees this passage as actualizing exegesis, referring to Antiochus IV.⁴⁸ According to this reading, the evil seed is not just the king but can refer to his whole family. That the grandchildren are to be punished for their grandfather’s sin in the next verse may not necessarily be due to a specific historical crime, but a way of framing the evil of the king in question and the completeness of his punishment by an oblique reference to Num 14:18, where the third and fourth generation 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.⁴⁹ Also in 14:29 “root” is rendered as “seed” with the apparent meaning of a family.

The Targum renders the metaphor literally: לֹא יִתְקִיִּים לְעוֹלָם זֶרַע מִבְּאֶשֶׁן.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ Cf. Galatians 3:16.

⁴⁷ Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 222.

⁴⁸ Seeligmann, “Problems and Perspectives,” 79-80 [230-32]. See Also van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 39-43.

⁴⁹ We discuss 14:22 below.

⁵⁰ “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!*”

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, and places where there is no clear Hebrew equivalent.

The word σπέρμα is used in a two cases (33:2 and 48:14) where the Hebrew has זרע (arm, shoulder). This is not surprising since the text the translator worked from was unpointed and may have had many defective spellings.⁵¹ 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

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for you. Be our arm every morning, our salvation in the time of trouble. | יְהוָה חַנּוּן לַדָּךְ קִינֵנוּ הִיָּה זֶרַעַם לְבִקְרִים אַף־יְשׁוּעָתָנוּ בְּעֵת צָרָה: | κύριε, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, ἐπὶ σοὶ γὰρ πεποιθᾶμεν· 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; 1QIsa^a also has a defective spelling here. The LXX has interpreted the pronoun to be the disobedient.⁵² 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.⁵³ Ottley suggests that if בקרים was read as a participle, it could have the opposite meaning from the Greek and that antithetical renderings are sometimes made in the LXX.⁵⁴ LXX.D.E.K. seems to suggest it is a free rendering, as the adjective ἀπώλεια also shows up in Isa 1:23, 25.⁵⁵ Perhaps בקרת (punishment), which only occurs in Lev 19:20, was thought, and rendered as εἰς ἀπώλειαν.⁵⁶ It is difficult to tell where the rest of the clause comes from in the Greek. Reading אף as אך may have suggested 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.⁵⁷

⁵¹ In most cases context makes it obvious which word is meant. The LXX translates appropriately זרע 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.

⁵² LXX.D.E.K. 2592 suggests these are the same as the ἀπειθούντες in verse 1.

⁵³ The equivalents in Job 20:5 and Ezek 26:16 are based on these words, and the two Hebrew roots are parallel in Job 7:18. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 219 [67/68].

⁵⁴ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 268-69. He also suggests that perhaps a form of מרה was read.

⁵⁵ LXX.D.E.K., 2592.

⁵⁶ Though LXX-Lev does not understand this word this way.

⁵⁷ “O LORD, be gracious to us; we wait for your *Memra*. Be our stronghold on every day, our saviour in the time of trouble.”

The context of 48:14 almost seems to suggest the translation “seed.”⁵⁸

Isa 48:14

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 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. | הַקְבִּצוּ כָלְכֶם וּשְׁמָעוּ מִי בֵּהֶם הִגִּיד אֶת־ אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה אֶהְבֹּה יַעֲשֶׂה חֶפְצוֹ בְּבָבֶל וְזָרְעוֹ בְּשָׂדִים: | καὶ συναχθήσονται πάντες καὶ ἀκούσονται. τίς αὐτοῖς ἀνήγγειλε ταῦτα; ἀγαπῶν σε ἐποίησα τὸ θέλημά σου ἐπὶ Βαβυλῶνα τοῦ ἄραι 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 3rd person pronouns into 2nd person. It is interesting that the translator, having read וְזָרְעוֹ as זָרַע, did not make “seed of Chaldea” parallel to Babylon, but adds a verb to complete the phrase.⁵⁹ 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 (זָרַע), though it expands to make clear it refers to strength.⁶⁰

In Isa 17:10 the verb זָרַע 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

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| 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, | כִּי שָׁכַחְתָּ אֱלֹהֶי יִשְׁעֶךָ וּצֹר מַעֲזֶךָ לֹא זָכַרְתָּ עַל־כֵּן תַּטְעִי נְטָעִי נְעֻמִּים וּזְמַרְתָּ זֶר תִּזְרְעֶנּוּ: | διότι κατέλιπες τὸν θεὸν τὸν σωτῆρά σου καὶ κυρίου τοῦ βοηθοῦ σου οὐκ ἐμνήσθης. διὰ τοῦτο φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον καὶ σπέρμα ἄπιστον· | 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. |
| though you make them grow on the day that you plant them, and make them blossom in the | בַּיּוֹם נִטְעֶךָ תִּשְׁגִּישְׁגִּי וּבְבֹקֶר זֶרְעֶךָ תִּפְרֹחִי גַד קָצִיר | τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ, ἣ ἂν φυτεύσης, πλανηθήσῃ· τὸ δὲ πρωί, ἐὰν σπείρης, | But on the day that you plant them, you will be led astray, and if you sow in the morning, it will |

⁵⁸ Similarly, the comparison in Isa 17:5 speaks of harvesting and so renders זָרַע with σπέρμα. Ralfs follows L^{xx}, S*, A', etc. where the root was doubly translated: καὶ σπέρμα σταχύων ἐν τῷ βραχίονι αὐτοῦ ἀμῆση.

⁵⁹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 75.

⁶⁰ “Assemble, all of you, and hear! Who among them has declared these things? The LORD, *because he has compassion on Israel*, shall perform his pleasure on Babylon, and *the strength of his mighty arm he shall reveal against the Chaldeans*,”

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| morning that you sow; yet the harvest will flee away in a day of grief and incurable pain. | בַּיּוֹם נִחְלָה וְכָאֵב :אָנוּשׁ | ἀνθήσει εἰς ἀμητὸν ἢ ἂν ἡμέρα κληρώση, καὶ ὡς πατὴρ ἀνθρώπου κληρώση τοῖς υἱοῖς σου. | blossom 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 is alluding to the Adonis/Naaman cult to show the futility of this idolatry.⁶¹ 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 23:15.⁶² The rendering of וְצוּר with καὶ κυρίου is considered an anti-idolatry polemic by Seeligmann.⁶³ It is noteworthy that the translator does recognize וְצוּר מַעֲזֵיךָ as a name for God and so renders it as such.⁶⁴ The parallel clauses וְצוּר מַעֲזֵיךָ וְזֶמְרֵךָ has become two objects φυτεύσεις φύτευμα ἄπιστον καὶ σπέρμα ἄπιστον.⁶⁵ The term זמר for branch or twig only occurs 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.⁶⁶ The word וְצוּר is understood as having a negative connotation, and so is interpreted as meaning ἄπιστον.⁶⁷ Troxel says נַעֲמָנִים was read as נַאֲמָנִים,⁶⁸ though that both this and וְצוּר are rendered with the same word, suggests that the translator was rendering freely for the sake of his new text.

In 17:11 several of the words have been read differently. Ottley suggests πλανηθήσῃ is the result of reading תִּשְׁגֶּי as a form of שָׁגָה or שָׁגָה, meaning “to err.”⁶⁹ 4QIsa^a has what appears to be hitpilpel form: תִּשְׁתַּגְּשִׁי and 1QIsa^a תִּשְׁגֶּי, both of these forms could be scribal errors. Ottley also suggests that κληρώση is from reading נִחְלָה as נָחַל; that καὶ ὡς πατήρ comes from וְכָאֵב; and ἀνθρώπου from אָנוּשׁ.⁷⁰

⁶¹ See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 1-39: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (The Anchor Bible 19; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 305-6. George Buchanan Gray and Arthur S. Peake, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Isaiah* (The International Critical Commentary; Edinburgh: Clark, 1912), 301-3. Brevard S. Childs, *Isaiah* (The Old Testament library; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 137.

⁶² LXX.D.E.K., 2548. LXX.D.E.K. also points out that this unfaithful plant contrasts with the plant God plants in 60:21 and 61:3.

⁶³ Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 265 [100]. The reason for κύριος instead of θεός is because the later 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; cf. 38, 58. Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2548.

⁶⁴ Olofsson, *God is My Rock*, 58. Here the rendering of מַעֲזֵיךָ with τοῦ βοηθοῦ σου is explained. Cf. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 245, who comments on the translator's resistance to using צוּר as an epithet for God.

⁶⁵ LXX.D.E.K., 2548.

⁶⁶ See LXX.D.E.K., 2549.

⁶⁷ Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94-95.

⁶⁸ Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94-95, 125.

⁶⁹ Cf. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94, 112.

⁷⁰ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 192. For the last two, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 65, 95. Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2549.

The meaning of the Greek seems to have 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,” Exod 15:17.⁷¹ The same idea is behind the Targum of 1:4 where it adds an adjective to describe בזרעא רחימא.⁷² In 17:10-11 it maintains the idea, though, of Israel cultivating idolatry and producing bad works.

LXX-Isa 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) in the respective sections below.

In two places, the LXX uses “seed” for a term for “remnant.”

In Isa 1:9 “seed” is used instead of שריד.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| If the LORD of hosts had not left us a few survivors, we would have been like Sodom, and become like Gomorrah. | לולי יהוה צבאות הותיר לנו שריד במעט בסדום ה'ינו לעמרה דמינו: | 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 <i>seed</i> , we would have become like Sodom and been made similar to Gomorra. |
|--|---|---|---|

The word שריד occurs only here in Isaiah,⁷³ though its synonym שאר occurs often. 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 or left, escaping, or fleeing. The only other place it is rendered with σπέρμα is in Deut 3:3. There the phrase ונבהו עד-בלתי ונשריד is rendered καὶ ἐπατάξαμεν αὐτὸν ἕως τοῦ μὴ καταλιπεῖν αὐτοῦ σπέρμα. LXX-Isa could be following LXX-Deut’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.⁷⁴

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

Isa 15:9

| | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|--|
| For the waters of Dibon are full of blood; yet I will | כי מי דימון מלאו דם | τὸ δὲ ὕδωρ τὸ Ρεμμων πλησθήσεται αἵματος· | And the water of Remmon will be filled with blood, for |
|---|---------------------|--|--|

⁷¹ “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.”

⁷² This is turning a negative image into a positive one. In contrast, the Targum of 14:20 is very literal: זרע מבאשין.

⁷³ Aquila translates: λείμμα.

⁷⁴ “Had the abounding goodness of the LORD 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.”

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| bring upon Dibon even more-- a lion for those of Moab who escape, for the remnant of the land. | כִּי־אָשִׁית עַל־דִּימוֹן נוֹסְפוֹת לְפִלִּיטַת מוֹאָב אֲרִי־הָ וְלִשְׂאֲרִית אֲדָמָה: | ἐπάξω γὰρ ἐπὶ Ρεμμων ἸΑραβας καὶ ἀρῶ τὸ σπέρμα Μωαβ καὶ Αριηλ καὶ τὸ κατάλοιπον Αδαμα. | I will bring Arabs upon Remmon, and I will remove the <i>seed</i> of Moab and Ariel and the remnant of Adama. |
|--|---|--|--|

There are several significant differences in this verse. The place name has changed due to reading the ט as a ר, and Αραβας are mentioned, probably under the influence of 15:7.⁷⁵ In that passage, וּפְקֻדָּתָם עַל נַחַל הָעֲרָבִים יִשָּׂאום is rendered ἐπάξω γὰρ ἐπὶ τὴν φάραγγα ἸΑραβας, καὶ λήμψονται αὐτήν. Troxel suggests that the translator read in נוספות a form of אסר which he rendered with ἀρῶ.⁷⁶ The name Αριηλ probably comes from reading the subsequent ל.⁷⁷ But, what is important for the present study is that לְפִלִּיטַת מוֹאָב appears to be rendered with τὸ σπέρμα Μωαβ.⁷⁸ Perhaps reading אֲדָמָה 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 F. Wutz. He believes the LXX was based on a Greek transcription of the Hebrew, and so here the transcription σαρειδ was corrupted into σαρε.⁷⁹ 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. In TWNT another explanation is given: 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.⁸⁰ 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 not used with its regular extended meaning “offspring” but means something more like “race” or “tribe,” like we saw in Aeschylus, *Suppliants*, 289-290 and Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, 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 association of these ideas to the translator.⁸¹ 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 פְּלִיטַת is

⁷⁵ Cf. 10:9 and 11:11. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 135-36. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 248-49 [88/89-89/90] thinks this addition is due to actualizing exegesis.

⁷⁶ Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 110. Also LXX.D.E.K., 2545.

⁷⁷ For LXX-Isa’s understanding of Ariel as associated with Moab, see: Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 234 [78/79]; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 68; Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 135-36. LXX.D.E.K., 2545 mentions Jerome’s commentary which identifies the city Areopolis.

⁷⁸ Symmachus translates τῷ διασώσματι.

⁷⁹ Franz Wutz, *Die transkriptionen von der Septuaginta bis zu Hieronymus* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1933), 76.

⁸⁰ TWNT, VII 541. Also it is odd that this theology would be present but the phrase “holy seed” would still be absent from 6:13.

⁸¹ This is the case in Deut 3:3 also.

rendered with ῥίζα.⁸² In LXX-Isa 14:30 “root” is rendered “seed” in a parallel clause to שֶׁאֵר in the Hebrew and κατάλειμμα 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.⁸³

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.”

| | | | |
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| I will rise up against them, says the LORD of hosts, and will cut off from Babylon name and remnant, offspring and posterity, says the LORD. | וְקָמְתִי עֲלֵיהֶם נָאִם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְהִכְרַתִּי לְבָבֶל שֵׁם וְשֶׁאֵר וְנִין וְנֶכֶד נָאִם יְהוָה: | Καὶ ἐπαναστήσομαι αὐτοῖς, λέγει κύριος σαβαωθ, καὶ ἀπολῶ αὐτῶν ὄνομα καὶ κατάλειμμα καὶ σπέρμα· τὰδε λέγει κύριος. | And I will rise up against them, says the LORD Sabaoth, and will destroy their name and remnant and <i>seed</i> . This is what the Lord says: |
|--|---|--|---|

The Greek has collapsed the synonyms וְנִין וְנֶכֶד to σπέρμα.⁸⁴ 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 the offspring of the seed is removed. In Gen 21:23 נִין is also rendered with σπέρμα but נֶכֶד is rendered with ὄνομα.⁸⁵ There is a conceptual relationship between having descendants, a remnant, and 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’ αὐτον ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτου,⁸⁶ which shows even more clearly the relationship of having a remnant and a seed. The later recensions of Isaiah, as is no surprise, revert to a literal translation: Aquila has γονήν and Symmachus has ἀπόγονον. In the Old Greek it is no longer the name and remnant of Babylon, but the sons mentioned in 14:21. Babylon has become the region Babylonia in 14:23.⁸⁷

The Targum renders וְנִין וְנֶכֶד as ובר ובר בר.⁸⁸

In two places, LXX-Isa replaces an original metaphor with the metaphor “seed.”

⁸² See below how “root” may be an image for offspring.

⁸³ “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.”

⁸⁴ That this refers to the sons of Antiochus IV, see van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre*, 99-100.

⁸⁵ Cf. Job 18:19, the third place where both terms occur together. In the LXX, נִין is not rendered, and נֶכֶד is rendered with ἐπίγνωτος.

⁸⁶ Sir 47:23 only occurs in the Hebrew Ben Sirach Manuscript B, which lacks a Hebrew equivalent, according to the text in Pancratius C. Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 68; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 85.

⁸⁷ See van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre*, 99-100.

⁸⁸ “‘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.’”

Isa 31:9

| | | | |
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| His rock shall pass away in terror, and his officers desert the standard in panic," says the LORD, whose fire is in Zion, and whose furnace is in Jerusalem. | וְסִלְעוֹ מִמִּגְדוֹר יִעָבֹר וְחֲתוֹ מִנֶּסֶס שָׁרָיו נִאָּם יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר-אֹר לֹ בְצִיּוֹן וְתִנּוֹר לוֹ בִּירוּשָׁלַם: | πέτρα γὰρ περιλημφθήσονται ὡς χάρακι καὶ ἡττηθήσονται, ὁ δὲ φεύγων ἀλώσεται. 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." |
|--|---|---|--|

The entire verse was interpreted differently by the translator,⁸⁹ but the correspondences between elements in the two versions are easy to see. Here an unusual metaphor is replaced with an easy to understand metaphor.⁹⁰ The word אֲשֶׁר has been translated twice, once as Μακάριος (reading אֲשֶׁרִי) and once as ὃς.⁹¹ 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" to stand by metonymy for the family that surrounds it. Most often, οἰκείος is used for אֲשֶׁר in the LXX, though three times it is used for בֵּית. Perhaps the analogy of a flame to a furnace being equivalent to offspring from a family led to the translation of אֹר 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 14:7.⁹² A similar image is that of a lamp representing offspring or a remnant. This image is only associated with David. In 1 Kgs 11:36 God says He will leave one tribe to Solomon's son, so that: הָיִיתָ נֵיר לְדָוִיד עַבְדִּי כָּל-הַיָּמִים לִפְנֵי בִירוּשָׁלַם.⁹³ "Lamp" represents David's offspring or a remnant of his royal line; a similar image is used of David in Psa 132:17.⁹⁴ The idea of having a remnant being a kinsman or offspring is easy to understand, especially now that we have seen several examples.

⁸⁹ Otley, *Isaiah*, II 263 says the translator interpreted, not misread. Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 149 [17/18], 284 [113/114] says the translator paraphrased and expresses a longing of Zion prevalent among the Alexandrian Jewry. For an analysis of the first half of the verse, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 102; LXX.D.E.K. 2588.

⁹⁰ In Num 23:10 the odd metaphor "dust of Jacob" is translated as the more familiar "seed of Jacob."

⁹¹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 69.

⁹² Arie van der Kooij, "The Septuagint of Isaiah and the Issue of Coherence. A Twofold Analysis of LXX Isaiah 31:9B-32:8," in *The Old Greek of Isaiah: Issues and Perspectives* (eds. Arie van der Kooij and Michaël N. van der Meer; Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 55; Louvain: Peeters, 2010), 36. Cf. van der Kooij, "The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language," 184-85.

⁹³ The LXX interprets: ὅπως ἢ 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 נֵיר has to do with the eyes: Prov 21:4.

⁹⁴ In 2 Sam 21:17, David's troops urge him not to go out to battle anymore, lest he extinguish the lamp of Israel.

The Targum interprets the rock as his princes (שלטונוהי) but is literal about the furnace (ותנור בער ליה דאישא בירושלם), adding clauses for whom the miracle is done and whom the furnace is for.⁹⁵

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.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| 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 <i>flesh</i> ? | הֲלוֹא פָּרֶס לָרָעִב לַחֲמֵךְ וְעֲנִיִּים מְרוּדִים תָּבִיא בֵּית כִּי־תִרְאֶה עָרֹם וְכִסִּיתוֹ ⁹⁶ וּמִבְשָׂרְךָ לֹא תִתְעַלֵּם: | διάρυπτε πεινῶντι τὸν ἄρτον σου καὶ πτωχοὺς ἀστέγους εἷσαγε εἰς τὸν οἶκόν σου· ἐὰν ἴδῃς γυμνόν, περίβαλε, καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων τοῦ σπέρματός σου οὐχ ὑπερόψη. | 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 in close proximity the words οἰκεῖος and σπέρμα; here they constitute a sort of explanatory double translation of מִבְשָׂרְךָ. 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.⁹⁷ Ziegler points out a similar translation in Lev 18:6 where בְּשָׂרוֹ אֶל-כָּל-שָׂאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ becomes πρὸς πάντα οἰκεῖα σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ; he suggests the phonetic relationship between בשר, שאר, and זרע may have contributed to the rendering.⁹⁸ 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.⁹⁹ For example, in Lev 25:49 the phrase מִבְשָׂרְךָ מִבְשָׂרְךָ בְּשָׂרוֹ אֶל-כָּל-שָׂאֵר בְּשָׂרוֹ is translated ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν οἰκείων τῶν σαρκῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς φυλῆς αὐτοῦ λυτρώσεται αὐτόν. In LXX-Isa 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.¹⁰⁰ 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 ψυχὴ 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

⁹⁵ “His rulers shall pass away before terror, and his princes break up before the standard,” says the LORD, 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.”

⁹⁶ 1QIsa^a here has the plus בגד.

⁹⁷ Seeligmann believes since the two terms are parallel in 31:9 they may represent two variant readings of 58:7. Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 173 [34/35]. For LXX-Isa’s tendency to explicate, see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 85-110.

⁹⁸ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 130.

⁹⁹ Neither LSJ nor TWNT have examples of a classical usage of σάρξ to represent a kinsman or relation.

¹⁰⁰ In 44:16 it appears as though בשר was rendered with ἄρτος, and its parallel צֶלִי was rendered with κρέας.

softening or qualifying it with “household/kinsman” would have been sufficient. The Targum does just this, rendering it: **ומקריב בסרך לא תכבוש עינך**.¹⁰¹ 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*.¹⁰² The only other place **בשר** was interpreted in LXX-Isa is 17:4, where the phrase **וּמִשְׁמֶן בְּשָׂרוֹ יִרְצֶה** is rendered *καὶ τὰ πύονα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ σειςθήσεται*. LXX.D.E.K. says that the LXX of 58:7 restricts the meaning of the MT to refer just to progeny.¹⁰³

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

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 “seed” is preferable to the translator rather than saying “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 move to a dead metaphor, rather than render some of the passages we have discussed literally. 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 later, 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 15:9.¹⁰⁴ 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.

¹⁰¹ “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?”

¹⁰² See Ziegler’s apparatus.

¹⁰³ LXX.D.E.K. 2680.

¹⁰⁴ In theory, “seed of Moab” could mean the offspring of an individual (Gen 19:37) like “seed of Israel.”

The Targum's approach is quite different. Although lexicons list “offspring” as a definition of Aramaic זרע, the Targum of Isaiah will often interpret 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. Though in several places it is rendered with זרע: 57:4; 65:9; and 66:22. This different 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 to the Hebrew.

2.2. Fruit

In the LXX, the word פרי is rendered with καρπός (or words derived from that stem) the vast majority of the time (82x out of 101 occurrences, according to Bibleworks). 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 way of translating, they occur almost entirely in Deut 7, 28, 30, and in the book of Isaiah.¹⁰⁵ As we will see, these exceptions in Isaiah are alarming, 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, we will look at its use as metonymy for produce; second, we will examine it as a metaphor for offspring; third, we will examine it as a metaphor for the results of actions; finally, we 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 can be found in Isa 37:30.¹⁰⁶ 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

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| And this shall be the sign for you: This year eat what grows of itself, and in the second year what springs from that; | וְהָיָה לְךָ הָאוֹת אֲכֹל הַשָּׁנָה סְפִיחַ וּבַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִית שְׂחָס | τοῦτο δέ σοι τὸ σημεῖον· φάγε τοῦτον τὸν ἐνιαυτὸν ἃ ἔσπαρκας, τῷ δὲ ἐνιαυτῷ τῷ δευτέρῳ τὸ κατάλειμμα, | “And this shall be the sign for you: This year eat what you have sown, and in the second year what is left; |
|--|---|--|---|

¹⁰⁵ The other three exceptions occur in Lev 25:19, Deut 28:11 (which we will discuss below), and Ezek 19:12 where ἐκλεκτός occurs, possibly reading בד; see Takamitsu Muraoka, *A Greek~Hebrew/Aramaic Two-Way Index to the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2010), 37.

¹⁰⁶ LXX-Isa only uses the word καρπός twice, once here and once in 27:6 as we will see.

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| then in the third year sow, reap, plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. | וּבִשְׁנָה הַשְּׁלִישִׁית זָרְעוּ וְקָצְרוּ וְנִטְעוּ כִרְמֵים וְאָכְלוּ פְּרִים: | τῷ δὲ τρίτῳ σπείραντες ἀμήσατε καὶ φυτεύσατε ἀμπελῶνας καὶ φάγεσθε τὸν καρπὸν αὐτῶν. | then in the third year sow, reap, and plant vineyards, and eat their fruit. |
| The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, | וְיִסְפָּה פְּלִיטַת בֵּית יְהוּדָה הַנִּשְׁאָרָה שָׂרֵשׁ לַמָּטָה | καὶ ἔσονται οἱ καταλειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ιουδαίᾳ φυήσουσι ρίζαν κάτω | And those that are left in Judea shall take root downward |
| and bear fruit upward; | וְעָשָׂה פְּרִי לַמַּעְלָה: | καὶ ποιήσουσι σπέρμα ἄνω. | and bear seed upward, |

In 37:30 פְּרִי refers not just to the fruit of the vineyards but also to what is sown; it is lacking in 4QIsa^b. 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 סָפִיחַ is rendered with *αὐτομάτος* in its occurrences elsewhere (Lev 25:5, 11; 2 Kng 19:29). Perhaps the translator has the Sabbath and Jubilee years from Lev 25 in mind, and so says they can eat what they have sown (*ἔσπαρκας*) in the first year and 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 שְׂחִים with *κατάλειμμα* may show the translator had the harvest of the previous year in mind; the parallel passage in 2 Kings 19:29 has סָחִישׁ (rendered with *ἀνατέλλω*), rather than שְׂחִים, and 1QIsa^a has שְׂעִים.

In the next verse, there has been some condensation: the reference to פְּלִיטַת בֵּית יְהוּדָה הַנִּשְׁאָרָה is reduced simply to οἱ καταλειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ιουδαίᾳ.¹⁰⁷ LXX.D.E.K. suggests φυήσουσιν comes from reading הַנִּשְׁאָרָה as a form of שְׂגָא,¹⁰⁸ but this unique rendering does not need to be posited, the translator probably provided the verb to make the passage clear. In this verse פְּרִי 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 literal reference to actual produce in 37:30 and the metaphorical reference to fruit in 37:31. In contrast, 2 Kings 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 “fruit” (cf. Amos 9:14) than to eat “produce.” The LXX-Isa translator elsewhere often preserves and even improves renderings of various figures of word repetition.¹⁰⁹ While it appears that “seed” is a synonymous metaphor for “fruit” meaning “descendent,” it could also be an interpretation of שָׂרֵשׁ. In Isa 14:29-30 שָׂרֵשׁ is twice

¹⁰⁷ For other examples of synonymous elements reduced, see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 67-68.

¹⁰⁸ LXX.D.E.K. 2604. Cf. 1QIsa^a which has the synonym וְהִנֵּמְצָא instead.

¹⁰⁹ See van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 142-75.

rendered with σπέρμα.¹¹⁰ By using what is usually a lexicalized metaphor, σπέρμα, the translator makes much more clear that offspring is meant.

The Targum in 37:30 is specific about what is meant specifying that this current year they will eat freegrowth (כתין), and in the second year the freegrowth of the freegrowth (כתתין).¹¹¹ Fruit is translated literally in 37:30 with אב, but in 37:31 it appears to read פרה since it renders it גופיה,¹¹² though 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).

In two other places, where the root פרי occurs, it refers specifically to the fruit of vines, and LXX-Isa uses γένημα. In these contexts, though, פרי is not used metaphorically, but as a metonymy of the genus. The Greek preserves the metonymy by using another general word for produce, rather than the specific produce of vines such as σταφυλή (as in Isa 5:2, 4) or ῥώξ (Isa 65:8).

Isa 32:12¹¹³ על־שָׂדִים סְפָדִים עַל־שְׂדֵי־חֶמֶד עַל־גִּפְן פְּרִיָּה:

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

Isa 65:21¹¹⁴ וּבְנוּ בָתִּים וַיֵּשְׁבוּ וְנָטְעוּ כְרָמִים וְאָכְלוּ פְּרִיָּם:

καὶ οἰκοδομήσουσιν οἰκίας καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐνοικήσουσι, καὶ καταφυτεύουσιν ἀμπελῶνας καὶ αὐτοὶ φάγονται τὰ γενήματα αὐτῶν.

It seems odd for LXX-Isa 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, in *Iliad* III.245-246:

Κήρυκες δ' ἀνὰ ἄστῃ θεῶν φέρον ὄρκια πιστὰ,

ἄρνε δὺν καὶ οἶνον εὖφρονα, 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.¹¹⁵

Also grapes are referred to with καρπός in *Iliad* XVIII.565-568:

¹¹⁰ The analysis of “root” imagery will be dealt with elsewhere.

¹¹¹ “And this will be the sign for you: *in this* year eat free growths, 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.”

¹¹² 1QIsa^a has פרי.

¹¹³ In this example it is actually the participle פרה, 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).”

¹¹⁴ Targum: “They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit (אברהון).”

¹¹⁵ Homer, *Iliad* [Murray and Wyatt, LCL 170].

μία δ' οἷα ἀταρπιτὸς ἦεν ἐπ' αὐτήν,
τῇ νίσοντο φορῆες, ὅτε τρυγώωεν ἀλώην.
παρθενικαὶ δὲ καὶ ἡῖθεοι ἀταλὰ φρονέοντες
πλεκτοῖς ἐν ταλάροισι φέρον μελιηδέα καρπὸν.

...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.¹¹⁶

Thucydides in his *The Peloponnesian War* likewise 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-Isa, 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 papyri we find the word γένημα used in connection with wine regarding on how many years of vintage taxes are owed:

...ὕπ(ερ) ὧν ὀφείλ(ετε) δημοσί(ο)υ
οἶνον [-ου] κολοφώ(νια) δύο γενή(ματος)
ιβ (ἔτους) δι' ἡμῶν τῶν ἐπιτ(ηρητῶν).¹¹⁷

...concerning the wine which you owe the district: two kolfonia, the products for 12 years through our tax assessor.

κατάγοντι εἰς Ἀλεξάνδρειαν τὸν ἐκ Φιλ(αδελφείας) οἶνον, τὸν ἐκ τῶν γεν(ημάτων)
τοῦ δ (ἔτους).

bring to Alexandria from Philidelphia wine, from the produce of 4 years.¹¹⁸

LXX-Isa, 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.¹¹⁹ 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.¹²⁰

Isa 4:2

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| On that day the branch of the LORD shall be beautiful and glorious, | בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה צֶמַח יְהוָה לְצִבְיָה וְלִכְבוֹד | Τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπιλάμψει ὁ θεὸς ἐν βουλῇ μετὰ δόξης | But on that day God will gloriously shine on the earth with counsel, |
|---|---|---|--|

¹¹⁶ Homer, *Iliad* [Murray and Wyatt, LCL 171].

¹¹⁷ o.bodl.2.1693, ln 4-6.

¹¹⁸ P.col.4.89. 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.

¹¹⁹ 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 *Iliad* III.245-246; Euripedes, *Ion* 303; and Herodotus, *History*, 4.198.2.

¹²⁰ See Hans Wildberger, *Jesaja 1-12* (Biblicher Kommentar Altes Testament 10; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1972), s.v.

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| and the fruit of the land shall be the pride and glory of the survivors of Israel. | וּפְרִי הָאָרֶץ לְגֵאוֹן וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת לְפִלִּיטַת יִשְׂרָאֵל: | ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς τοῦ ὕψῳσαι καὶ δοξάσαι τὸ καταλειφθὲν τοῦ Ἰσραηλ, | to uplift and glorify what remains of Israel. |
|--|--|--|---|

The rest of LXX-Isa 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 particularly difficult in its language or meaning, but the translator is intent on having his translation say 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 צהה in Lam 4:7). The Isa translator knows the meaning of צמח, translating it in Isa 61:11 with αὐξάνω (to grow, cause to grow), in 55:10 with ἐκβλάσταςω (to shoot, sprout), and in 42:9, 43:19, 44:4, 45:8, and 58:8 with ἀνατέλλω (to spring forth, rise).¹²¹ Here, however, the translator seems to have taken it as the Aramaic verb צמח and so translated it ἐπιλάμψει, meaning “he will shine.”¹²² As Ziegler and Ottley rightly pointed out, the translator probably read the Aramaic צבי (desire) and so translated it with βουλή;¹²³ these renderings are unique.¹²⁴ Ottley suggests that ἐπί comes from reading וּפְרִי as פני,¹²⁵ but this would be a unique equivalence. The preposition probably comes from the prefix of the verb, repeated for the sake of style; the translator simply does not render וּפְרִי. The nouns וּלְתִפְאֶרֶת וּלְגֵאוֹן are read as infinitives, probably due to the prefix ל. But for this reading we would need something like לְגֵאוֹת וּלְפִאֶרֶת. The change from “escaped” לְפִלִּיטַת to the “remnant” τὸ καταλειφθὲν is not uncommon, but is a clear choice of the translator, and is consistent with his theological concerns.¹²⁶

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.”¹²⁷ The LXX, though, does not understand “branch” but reads a verb. Seeligmann suggests the translator was paraphrasing a text that gave him some difficulty.¹²⁸ But it seems the translator understood the passage in a certain way, and modified this verse to more clearly express his understanding.

¹²¹ σ', θ', α' have at Isa 4:2 ἔσται ἀνατολή.

¹²² Ottley believes it was read as יצח like in Lam 4:7. Ottley, *Isaiah* II, 121. LXX.D.E.K. 2515.

¹²³ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 107. He gives the example of a similar rendering for a verbal form of the Aramaic in Dan 5:19.

¹²⁴ צבי translated: ἐλπίς Isa 24:16; 28:4, 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; מַחֲשָׁבָה in Isa 55:7; 55:8 2x; דעת in Isa 44:25; יעץ in Isa 9:5; כלי in 32:7, and כלי in 32:7; תבליט in 10:25; עֲצָמָה in 41:21; מִסְכָּה in 25:7; נְדִיבָה in 32:8; צֹאֵה in 28:8.

¹²⁵ Ottley, *Isaiah* II, 121. Ziegler suggests פני הארץ (על), *Untersuchungen*, 108.

¹²⁶ See Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 286-89 [115-17].

¹²⁷ “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.”

¹²⁸ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 287 [115/116].

In one place, 29:1, *γένημα* occurs as a plus referring to produce gathered.¹²⁹ Troxel suggests it is from reading ספו as פרי,¹³⁰ 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.¹³¹ 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.

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| Their bows will slaughter the young men; they will have no mercy on the fruit of the womb; their eyes will not pity children. | וְקִשְׁתֹּת נְעָרִים תִּרְטֹשְׁנָה וּפְרִי-בֶטֶן לֹא יִרְחֲמוּ עַל-בָּנִים לֹא-תַחֲוֶס עֵינָם: | τοξέύματα 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 language of 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, it 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-Isa 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 Psa 132(131):11. In Lam 2:20 the phrase אִם-תֹּאכְלֶנָה נָשִׁים פְּרִים is rendered with this typical translation εἰ φάγονται γυναῖκες καρπὸν κοιλίας αὐτῶν. A variation is used for פרי-הבטן in Psa 127(126):3 where the LXX has καρποῦ τῆς γαστρούς. Likewise in Psa 21(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:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| The LORD will make you abound in | וְהוֹתִירְךָ יְהוָה לְטוֹבָה | καὶ πληθυνεῖ σε κύριος ὁ θεός σου εἰς | And the Lord your God will make you |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|

¹²⁹ For other features of this verse see LXX.D.E.K., 2579.

¹³⁰ Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 109-10.

¹³¹ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 246.

| | | | |
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| prosperity, in the fruit of your womb, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your ground | בְּפִרְיִי בְטֶנְךָ וּבַפֶּרִי בְּהֶמְתֶּךָ וּבַפֶּרִי אֲדָמָתְךָ | ἀγαθὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῆς κοιλίας σου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς γενήμασιν τῆς γῆς σου καὶ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῶν κτηνῶν σου | 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 ancestors to give you. | עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְהוָה לְאַבְתִּיךָ לָתֵת לָךְ: | ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, ἥς ᾤμοσεν κύριος τοῖς πατράσιν σου δοῦναι σοι. | in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers to give you. |

The LXX renders פֶּרִי 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.¹³² 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-Isa, 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 וְיָהִי כְחֹל זֶרַע וְצִאצְאֵי מֵעֵד כְּמַעֲתִיו becomes καὶ ἐγένετο ἂν ὥσει ἡ ἄμμος τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας σου ὡς ὁ χοῦς τῆς γῆς. This is the usual word equivalent for צִאצְאֵים in LXX-Isa,¹³³ the rendering τῆς κοιλίας is probably to tighten the connection to Deuteronomy. In 44:3 צִאצְאֵים again occurs parallel to זֶרַע, but this time 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-Isa has the phrase τὰ ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας is Isa 49:15, where the Hebrew says בֶּן-בְּטִנָּה. Again, the translator probably wanted to use the familiar phrase. The closest parallel to the unique Hebrew phrase is in Prov 31:2, where בֶּרֶךְ-בְּטִנִּי 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.

The Targum renders the phrase וּפְרִי-בְטֶן with וּלְדָ מַעִין.¹³⁴

Rather than shedding light on the rendering of Isa 13:18, the matter is more obscure. There seems to be no reason the translator could not have rendered the phrase with something like ἔκγονα τῆς κοιλίας. As we have seen, elsewhere the translator does not mind referring to the womb when talking about offspring. And 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 תְּנוּבָה.

¹³² Though the order of these three “fruits” is not consistently changed, like in this passage. Also, in Deut 7:13 τὸν καρπὸν τῆς γῆς σου is specified as referring to grain, wine, and oil in both versions.

¹³³ Isa 48:19; 61:9; 65:23. A rendering of צִאצְאֵים in Isa 22:24 is lacking and in 34:1 it is paraphrased to make the text more clear.

¹³⁴ “And their bows will cut young men asunder, and they will have no mercy on the offspring of the womb, and their eyes will not pity children.”

Isa 27:6

| | | | |
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| In days to come Jacob shall take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, | הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָאֵל יִצְיָן וּפְרָח יִשְׂרָאֵל | οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ἰακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ἰσραὴλ, | Those who are coming are the children of Iakob; Israel shall bud and blossom, |
| and fill the whole world with fruit. | וּמְלֵאוּ פְּנֵי-תֵבֶל תְּנוּבָה: | καὶ ἐμπλησθήσεται ἡ οἰκουμένη τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ. | and the world will be filled with his fruit. |

Chapter 27 has many interesting renderings. We will discuss the rendering of **יִשְׂרָאֵל** below in the section on roots (2.3.2.). The rendering of **יִצְיָן** with *βλαστάνω* is unique, but appropriate; its most common equivalent is *ἐξανθέω*, which was used in this verse for **וּפְרָח**, as it is its most common equivalent.¹³⁵ The rendering of **תְּנוּבָה** with *καρπός* is unique; its meaning would be better expressed with *γένημα*, which is used in all the other places where **תְּנוּבָה** occurs: Deut 32:19; Jdg 9:11; Lam 4:9; and 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 **פָּרַח** as becoming numerous (**וַיִּסְגֹּן**), and **תְּנוּבָה** as meaning grandchildren (**בְּנֵי בְנֵי**).¹³⁶

According to LSJ, *καρπός* can be used figuratively to represent children in classical literature.¹³⁷ The example they give is Euripedes, *Ion* 919-922:

μισεῖ σ' ἄ Δᾶλος καὶ δάφνας
ἔρνεα φοίνικα παρ' ἀβροκόμαν,
ἔνθα λοχεύματα σέμν' ἐλοχεύσατο
Λατῶ Δίοισί σε καρποῖς.

This example, though, is difficult, since the meaning of the phrase is not universally accepted. Some believe the text is corrupt and should read *Λατῶ Δίοισί σε κάποις*.¹³⁸

The LXX of Isaiah is unique in that it avoids literally rendering **פָּרַח** with *καρπός* when representing children, except where the context makes it entirely clear children are referred to (Isa 27:6). While the phrase **פְּרִי-בֶטֶן** is not rendered following the precedent in LXX-Deut, similar phrases are harmonized to match the rendering of the phrase. When **פָּרַח** is used to refer to the offspring of animals LXX-Isa also follows the LXX-Deut precedent.

¹³⁵ For LXX-Isa's use and non-use of synonyms, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 17-21.

¹³⁶ “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.”

¹³⁷ LSJ, s.v.

¹³⁸ Euripedes, *Ion* (trans. K.H. Lee; The Plays of Euripides 11; Warminster: Aris & Phillips Ltd, 1997), 110-111, 264.

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 (וּבְפִרֵי בְהֵמָתָךְ rendered καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐκγόνοις τῶν κτηνῶν σου) occurs in the Hebrew and Greek, respectively, in all the listed places in Deuteronomy.¹³⁹ **Isa 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:

| | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken, | אֶל-תִּשְׂמְחִי פְלִשְׁתָּ כִּי נִשְׁבַּר שֵׁבֶט מִבְּךָ | Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, πάντες οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι, συνετρίβη γὰρ ὁ ζυγὸς τοῦ παίοντος ὑμᾶς· | May you not rejoice, all you allophytes, for the yoke of him who 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. | כִּי-מִשְׁרֹשׁ נָחָשׁ יֵצֵא צִפּוֹעַ וּפְרִיזוֹ שָׂרָף מְעוֹפֵף: | ἐκ γὰρ σπέρματος ὄφεων ἐξελεύσεται ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων, καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι. | 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 פְּלִשְׁתָּ has been generalized to refer to οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι.¹⁴⁰ 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 like 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.¹⁴¹

The idea of “fruit” representing the offspring of animals may not have been completely foreign to the Greek world. According to Kittel, καρπός in Classical Greek can be figurative for the young of animals.¹⁴² The example he gives is, Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* 1.1.2:

¹³⁹ The LXX lacks a translation for the phrase in Deut 28:4.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Isa 2:6. LXX.D.E.K. 2543. This passage will be discussed further in the section on roots. For the “flying snake” and Herodotus 2.75 and 3.107-109, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 191.

¹⁴¹ The first occurrence of ἔκγονα in 14:29b could be an explication, or along with ἐξελεύσεται a double rendering of יֵצֵא since this is a term used to render יֵצְאוּ elsewhere in LXX-Isa: 48:19; 61:9; 65:23.

¹⁴² TWNT, III 617.

καὶ τοῖς καρποῖς τοίνυν τοῖς γιγνομένοις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐῷσι τοὺς νομέας χρῆσθαι οὕτως ὅπως ἂν αὐτοὶ βούλωνται. ἔτι τοίνυν οὐδεμίαν πώποτε ἀγέλην ῥησθήμεθα 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.¹⁴³

Here “fruit” could mean their offspring in particular, but seems also to mean any profit they provide, such as young, milk, meat, wool, skin, etc. So Miller’s English translation “profit” is appropriate. Perhaps LXX-Deut is too restrictive in rendering פרי with ἔκγονος, though in the Isaiah context young or offspring is certainly meant.

The Targum also interprets this passage, 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 דישׁי), the viper (צפע) is the messiah (משיח), and its fruit are his works (עובדות).¹⁴⁴

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

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| Tell the innocent how fortunate they are, for they shall eat the fruit of their labors. | אָמַרו צַדִּיק בִּי־טוֹב בִּי־פְרִי מַעֲלָלֵיהֶם יֵאָכְלוּ: | 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 אָמַרו appears to have been rendered twice, the second time as the root אסר, becoming Δήσωμεν.¹⁴⁵ Ottley suggests δύσχρηστος comes from טוב in implying the sense that “their goodness is no good to us,” and so is an ironic or antithetical rendering.¹⁴⁶ The LXX reading would not be possible from a text like 1QIsa^a which has לצדיק.

In the second half of the verse. The metaphor is preserved in the Greek using agricultural terminology, that the results (produce, crops) of one’s actions will be enjoyed (eaten). But the translator instead of using “fruit” as a metonymy for all types of agricultural products uses a general term (γένημα) with that meaning.

¹⁴³ Xenophon, *Cyropaedia* [Miller, LCL].

¹⁴⁴ “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.”

¹⁴⁵ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 117. See Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 166 [29-30], 211[61-62] nt. 38.

¹⁴⁶ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 117 and LXX.D.E.K., 2513 see it as understanding the Hebrew as irony, while others see it as an antithetical rendering: Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 204 [56/57]. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 138-39. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 97 lists 3:10 with a few other examples of antithetical renderings.

The phrase **פרי מעללים** occurs five other times in the MT. In Jer 21:14 and 32(39):19 it is not rendered. In Micah 7:13 **מִפְּרֵי מַעַלְלֵיהֶם** is rendered ἐκ καρπῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αὐτῶν and in Jer 17:10 **כִּפְּרֵי מַעַלְלָיו** is rendered καὶ κατὰ τοὺς καρποὺς τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων αὐτοῦ. In Psa 104(103):13 the similar phrase **מִפְּרֵי מַעֲשָׂיו** is rendered ἀπὸ καρποῦ τῶν ἔργων σου. Isa 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 **עַד-יָבוֹא וְיָרָה צֶדֶק לָכֶם** the LXX has continued the agricultural metaphor of the verse and rendered ἕως τοῦ ἐλθεῖν γενήματα δικαιοσύνης ὑμῖν.

The Targum leaves the metaphor fruit, translating with the cognate **פִּירִי**, but interprets “eat” as them being recompensed (**יִשְׁתַּלְמוּן**).¹⁴⁷

Fruit is used as a metaphor for the results of a more abstract action in two places in Isaiah.

Isa 27:10(9)

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: | לָכֵן בְּזֹאת יִכָּפֵר עֲוֹן- יַעֲקֹב וְזֶה כָּל-פְּרִי הַסֶּר חַטָּאתוֹ | διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία Ιακωβ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, | Because of this lawlessness of Iakob will be removed. And this is his blessing, when I remove 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. | בְּשׁוּמָו כָּל-אַבְנֵי מִזְבֵּחַ כְּאַבְנֵי-גֹר מִנְפָצוֹת לֹא-יִקְמוּ אֲשֵׁרִים וְחִמָּנִים: | ὅταν θῶσι πάντας τοὺς λίθους τῶν βωμῶν κατακεκομμένους ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν. ¹⁴⁸ καὶ οὐ μὴ μείνῃ τὰ δένδρα αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ εἴδωλα αὐτῶν ἐκκεκομμένα ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν. | 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 **כָּל-פְּרִי הַסֶּר חַטָּאתוֹ** 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.’”¹⁴⁹ There is no clear lexical warrant for this rendering.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁷ “Tell the righteous, “*You are blessed*,” for the fruits of their deeds will *be repaid*.”

¹⁴⁸ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 235 points out the phrase ἐν λεπτῇ κονίῃ in Homer, *Iliad*, XXIII. 505.

¹⁴⁹ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 235.

¹⁵⁰ For more on this verse, see LXX.D.E.K., 2573. For the two similes in 27:10(9)b see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101-2.

The Targum interprets פרי as works (עובדי) of the removal, but the clause is otherwise rendered literally.¹⁵¹

The second place פרי is used as the result of an abstract action is Isa 10:12.

Isa 10:12

| | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the <i>fruit of the greatness of heart</i> of the king of Assyria and his haughty pride. | וְהָיָה כִּי-יִבְצֹעַ אֲדָנִי אֶת-כָּל-מַעֲשָׂהוּ בְּהָר צִיּוֹן וּבִירוּשָׁלַם אֶפְקֹד עַל-פְּרִי-גִדְלֵי לִבָּב מֶלֶךְ-אַשּׁוּר וְעַל- תַּפְאֶרֶת רֹם עֵינָיו: | καὶ ἔσται ὅταν συντελέσῃ κύριος πάντα ποιῶν ἐν τῷ ὄρει Σιών 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. |
|---|---|--|---|

It probably cannot be called removing a metaphor that יִבְצֹעַ is rendered συντελέσῃ, 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 41:22.¹⁵² 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 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).¹⁵³

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible פרי is used for actions such as the fruit of righteousness (Psa 58(57):12; Prov 11:30; Amos 6:12; cf. LXX-Hos 10:12), fruit of paths (Prov 1:31), and fruit of hands (Prov 31:16; 31).¹⁵⁴ In all these cases פרי is rendered with καρπός.

Classical literature likewise uses “fruit” metaphorically as the results of actions. For example, take Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes*, 599-600:

ἐν παντὶ πράγῃ δ’ ἔσθ’ ὀμιλίας κακῆς
κάκιον οὐδέν, καρπὸς οὐ κομιστέος.

In every activity there is nothing worse than evil company; it is a crop best not reaped.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ “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*.”

¹⁵² Also in Exod 7:23; Josh 14:7; and Job 7:17.

¹⁵³ “And it will come to pass when the *LORD* has finished *doing* all that *he promised* 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.”

¹⁵⁴ See BDB s.v. for a more complete listing of this metaphorical use of פרי.

¹⁵⁵ Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* [Sommerstein, LCL 145].

Fruit can also be used as the action itself as the cause or source of the results, as can be seen in Plato, *Phaedrus* 260c-d:

ποῖόν τινα οἶει μετὰ ταῦτα τὴν ῥητορικὴν
καρπὸν ὧν ἔσπειρε θερίζειν;
what harvest do you suppose his oratory will reap thereafter
from the seed (καρπὸν) he has sown?¹⁵⁶

LXX-Isa, then, departs from the typical translation technique used in the rest of the LXX in rendering fruit metaphors representing the results of actions. LXX-Isa avoids using καρπός in these contexts despite it 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-Isa consistently avoid using “fruit” as a vehicle?¹⁵⁷

Part of the answer seems to lie in the precedent set by LXX Deuteronomy. 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, though, 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 renders with γένημα for the fruit of vines, even though Homer himself can refer to grapes with καρπός. On the other hand, in Isa 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־בֶּטֶן 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 14:29, where “fruit” is used to refer to the offspring of snakes, LXX-Isa

¹⁵⁶ Plato, *Phaedrus* [Fowler, LCL].

¹⁵⁷ Concern about confusion with the homonym καρπός meaning “wrist, hand” is not likely, as this word is only used 3x in the LXX and the contexts of the Isa passages we have discussed would make it clear that “hand” was not meant.

renders with ἔκγονος. In 3:10 where the “fruit of works” are 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-Isa may also in part be because it was a more common term for agricultural produce at the time in Egypt,¹⁵⁸ so while καρπός was appropriate, γένημα was in more common use.¹⁵⁹

Two original uses of “fruit” metaphors are interpreted, more based on the translator’s ideas about the passage than based on the context of the passage itself. These occur in 27:10(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 LXX of other books, and in 27:6 fruit is rendered as “sons’ sons,” as opposed to just “sons” where the Hebrew has “seed” as we have seen above. In 14:29 the fruit of the serpent becomes his “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 27:10(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, as above.

2.3. Root

The word שֹׁרֵשׁ (root) is used figuratively in the Hebrew Bible to refer either to people denoting their permanence and firmness in tree related imagery (Amos 2:9; Hos 9:16; 14:6; Mal 3:19),¹⁶⁰ or to familial stock (Dan 11:7), or 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).¹⁶¹ In

¹⁵⁸ James Hope Moulton and George Milligan, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament: Illustrated from the Papyri and other Non-Literary Sources* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 123-24. They note that most occurrences of γένημα come from Egyptian sources.

¹⁵⁹ If the preference of 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 was certain it was actual pudding that was meant.

¹⁶⁰ In some of these examples children or family could be meant.

¹⁶¹ BDB, s.v. Cf. HALOT, s.v.

classical Greek literature many of these metaphorical uses can also be found; we will discuss some relevant examples below.

Outside of Isaiah, the LXX always translates שֹׁרֶץ with ῥίζα when used metaphorically with the exception of Judges 5:14 (where it is rendered with the verb ἐκριζόω) and Job 8:17 (where the entire verse is rendered quite differently). In Isaiah, it 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 using “root” as a vehicle in Isaiah seems to intend something like family or familial stock as the tenor.¹⁶² 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

| | | | |
|---|---|--|--|
| A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. | וַיֵּצֵא חֹטֶר מִגִּזְעֵ יֵשׁוּ׃ וַיִּצְרֹ מִשְׁרָשָׁיו יִפְרֹה׃ | Καὶ ἐξελεύσεται ῥάβδος ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης Ιεσσαί, 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 חֹטֶר (which only occurs here in Isaiah); this equivalence may be under the influence of 10:5, 15, 24 where a “rod” (though here it is שֹׁבֵט) is mentioned. While in Ezek 37:16-20 עֵץ 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 מִטָּה is repeatedly rendered with ῥάβδος. The only other occurrence of חֹטֶר is in Prov 14:3, where it is rendered with βακτηρία, meaning “staff,” or “cane.” It appears that the LXX-Isa 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 he was simply using precise botanical terminology, as was the translator of Ezek 19. Theophrastus in his botanical works uses ῥάβδος to refer to date palm branches. For example:

μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα περιτέμνουσιν, ὁπότεν ἀδρός ἤδη γένηται καὶ πάχος ἔχῃ. 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.¹⁶³

It appears as though the rendering of חֹטֶר with ῥάβδος could be an appropriate use of botanical terminology.¹⁶⁴ According to Ziegler’s apparatus, Eusebius mentions that Aquila

¹⁶² For a classical Greek use of this metaphor, see Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris*, 609-10.

¹⁶³ Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants* [Hort, LCL 70], 2.6.4. See also 2.1.4, see also Theophrastus, *De Causis Plantarum* 1.2.1.

here has ῥαβδίων, which means “little branch,” perhaps since he felt the need to clarify the LXX word.

The rendering of מַגִּזַּע with ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης may be due to the parallel מְשָׁרְשִׁי or perhaps to the similarity in assonance. The only other place this root occurs in Isaiah, 40:24, it is rendered the same way.¹⁶⁵ 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” to potentially be an individual, as is made clear later. The Greek ἄνθος may sprout from יִפְרֶה, which is a root that could mean blossom (ἄνθος is equivalent to פָּרַח in Isa 5:24 and 18:5).¹⁶⁶ 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 the *Odyssey* IX.449: πολὺν πρῶτος νέμει τέρεν’ ἄνθεα ποίης, so it is a high register rendering of נֹצֵר.¹⁶⁷ 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: שְׂרָשִׁיָּהּ כִּנּוּ וְעַמֵּד מִנְצָר is rendered καὶ στήσεται ἐκ τοῦ ἄνθους τῆς ῥίζης αὐτοῦ τῆς ἐτοιμασίας αὐτοῦ.¹⁶⁸ The word ἀναβαίνω is only here in Isa 11:1 an equivalent to פָּרַח, though their meaning is similar. The association with Num 17:8(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 definition of ἄνθος to create an allusion to Num 17:8(23), then it was a brilliant conceit, the sort that the Alexandrian Grammatikoi loved.¹⁶⁹

While the translator appears to have taken some liberties, or at least misidentified some roots, the translation of שְׂרָשִׁי is literal (though it is rendered in the singular and the pronominal suffix is dropped), and a word in a parallel clause not meaning “root” but “stump” has also been rendered with ῥίζα. The translator seems to believe this metaphor could be easily understood and needed 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 is the person himself who will have kingly functions, establishing justice, etc. It is not until 11:10 where it is made clear that the “root of Jesse” is a person (a ruler).

¹⁶⁴ Moulton does not list a meaning like shoot or branch for ῥάβδος in his lexicon of 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).

¹⁶⁵ The third place גִּזַּע appears, Job 14:8, it is rendered στέλεχος (stump, crown of the root).

¹⁶⁶ For more on the rendering of this word, see the passage in the section on “flowers” below (2.4.1.). LXX.D.E.K. suggests this root was read, 2535.

¹⁶⁷ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 166.

¹⁶⁸ See LXX.D.E.K., 2534, which points this out and the connection to Aaron’s staff in Num 17:23. The LXX of Dan 11:7 has φυτὸν ἐκ τῆς ῥίζης αὐτοῦ.

¹⁶⁹ See Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 31.

The Targum interprets the rod as a king (מלכא), the stump as sons, the shoot as a Messiah (משיחא) and the root as grand children (מבני בנוהי).¹⁷⁰

Isa 11:10

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 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. | וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא שֶׁרֶשׁ יִשְׂי אֲשֶׁר עֵמֶד לְגֵס עַמִּים אֵלָיו גּוֹיִם יִדְרָשׁוּ וְהִיְתָה מְנַחְתּוֹ כְּבוֹד: פ | Καὶ ἔσται ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἡ ῥίζα τοῦ Ιεσσαὶ καὶ ὁ ἀνιστάμενος ἄρχειν ἐθνῶν, ἐπ’ αὐτῷ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσι, 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. |
|---|---|---|--|

The Greek, like 11:1, renders literally the metaphor “root of Jesse,” however much of the context is carefully shaped. It interprets “to be a sign/ensign” (לְגֵס) as “to rule” (ἄρχειν); this could be an interpretation of the metaphor “ensign” or may be the interpretation of what it means for the root to be one “standing to test (נִסָּה) the peoples,” or perhaps as a verbal form corresponding to the Aramaic word for the post נִסְיָא was thought.¹⁷¹ In Isa 11:12; 13:2; 18:3; and 33:23, נִס is rendered with σημεῖον.¹⁷² 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.¹⁷³ 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 שֶׁרֶשׁ of this verse is probably why the Greek made it singular in 11:1.¹⁷⁴ It seems clear from the passage as a whole in Greek, that the root of Jesse refers to the royal Davidic line. That in 11:1 the Greek 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, שֶׁרֶשׁ has been rendered as grandson (בנוהי מבני) and (בר בריה דישי).¹⁷⁵

The use of “root” as a metaphor for an individual, found in LXX-Isa 11:1, 10, can also be found in 1 Macc 1:10, where from the kings of Greece an evil root comes: καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐξ αὐτῶν ῥίζα ἀμαρτωλὸς Ἀντίοχος Ἐπιφανής. A root can also be an individual in Classical

¹⁷⁰ “And a king shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah shall be exalted from the sons of his sons.”

¹⁷¹ For the last possibility, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. He also suggests the homonym נִסִּיךְ which is rendered with ἄρχων in Josh 13:21. See also LXX.D.E.K., 2535.

¹⁷² See van der Kooij, “Metaphorical Language,” 182-83.

¹⁷³ See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. He says it is another example of an image being interpreted personally.

¹⁷⁴ For the relationship between שֶׁרֶשׁ in 11:1 and שֶׁרֶשׁ in 11:10, see: H. L. 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* (eds. D. Winton Thomas and W.D. McHardy; Oxford: Clarendon, 1963): 72-76; Joachim Becker, “Wurzel und Wurzelsproß: Ein Beitrag zur hebräischen Lexikographie,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 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. TWNT, VI 986-87, s.v. ῥίζα.

¹⁷⁵ “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.”

Greek literature, Aeschylus makes a metaphor that if a certain individual is still alive his house can again be rebuilt:

Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 965-966:

ρίζης γὰρ οὔσης φυλλὰς ἵκετ' εἰς δόμους,
σκιὰν ὑπερτεínaσα Σειρίου κυνός.

For while the root remains, foliage comes to a house, spreading shade over it against the dog-star Sirius;¹⁷⁶

The vehicle “root” is also used to refer to family origins, as well, as we will see below.

In **Isa 14:29-30** שֶׁרֶשׁ is twice rendered with σπέρμα, but it appears with different ideas about what “seed” represents.

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| Do not rejoice, all you Philistines, that the rod that struck you is broken, | אַל-תִּשְׂמְחִי פְּלִשְׁתַּי כִּלְדָּךְ כִּי נִשְׁבַּר שֶׁבֶט מִמֶּךָ | Μὴ εὐφρανθείητε, πάντες οἱ ἀλλόφυλοι, συνετρίβη γὰρ ὁ ζυγὸς τοῦ παίοντος ὑμᾶς· | May you not rejoice, all you allophytes, for the yoke of him who 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. | כִּי-מִשְׁרֵשׁ נָחֵשׁ יֵצֵא צֶפֶעַ וּפְרִיֹו שֶׁרֶץ מְעוֹפֵף: | ἐκ γὰρ σπέρματος ὄφεων ἐξελεύσεται ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων, καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι. | For from the seed of snakes will come forth the offspring of snakes, and their offspring will come forth as flying snakes. |
| The firstborn of the poor will graze, and the needy lie down in safety; | וְרָעוּ בְּכוֹרֵי דָלִים וְאַבְיוֹנִים לִבְטַח יִרְבְּצוּ | καὶ βοσκηθήσονται πτωχοὶ δι' αὐτοῦ, πτωχοὶ δὲ ἄνδρες ἐπ' εἰρήνης ἀναπαύσονται· | And the poor will graze through him, and poor men will rest in peace, |
| but I will make your root die of famine, and your remnant I will kill. | וְהָמַתִּי בָרָעַב שֶׁרֶשְׁךָ וְשְׂאִרִיתְךָ יָהֳרֵג: | ἀνελεῖ δὲ λιμῷ τὸ σπέρμα σου καὶ τὸ κατάλειμμά σου ἀνελεῖ. | but he will wipe out your <i>seed</i> 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, שֶׁבֶט has become ὁ ζυγός, an unusual equivalent seen only here and twice in Isa 14:5.¹⁷⁷ 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 this figurative usage. It is also used several other times in Isaiah with this meaning: 9:3; 10:27; 14:25; and 47:6. The word שֶׁבֶט can be

¹⁷⁶ Aeschylus, *Agamemnon* [Sommerstein, LCL 146].

¹⁷⁷ Here too, שֶׁבֶט (along with מִשָּׁה) 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/put the yoke on Philistia.

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)¹⁷⁸ or a symbol of conquest.¹⁷⁹ The LXX translator seems to have favored in Isa 14 a more common image of oppression and so chose “yoke,” which also harmonized to 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 much more clear and common vehicle than “root,” both in Greek and Hebrew.¹⁸⁰ But it seems clarity would have been achieved in 14:29 simply with the phrase ἔκγονα ἀσπίδων.¹⁸¹ We have already seen the LXX-Isa’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 generations: the seed, the asps, and the flying snakes. The change from “root” to “seed” may in addition be made because a dead metaphor is less bold and avoids turning the thick imagery of this passage into a riddle. The Targum also understands three generations, since it interprets כִּי־מִשְׁרָשׁ נָחַשׁ יֵצֵא צִפְּעֵ with אַרְי מְבִנִּי בְנוֹהֵי דִישִׁי יְפֹק מִשִּׁיחַ.¹⁸²

In verse 30, “seed” again is used rather than “root.” In the Hebrew the root being destroyed probably shows the totality of the destruction, that the “plant” will have no chance to grow back. The Greek 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 that the translator understood “seed” to represent in some way the idea of a remnant. A similar metaphor can be found in Sophocles *Antigone*, 600, though there he uses “root” to talk about the last family member of Oedipus’ house.

The Targum of 14:29 was mentioned in the section on fruit, above. In 14:29 “root” is interpreted as “your son” (בְּנֶךְ), 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 firm; this occurs along with other plant imagery. Alec Basson describes this use of root metaphors as denoting “the foundation of a person in a specific location.”¹⁸³

¹⁷⁸ BDB also lists some examples where it refers to individual chastisement, though none occur in Isaiah.

¹⁷⁹ Num 24:17; Psa 2:9; 125:3; Prov 22:8. The word מָשָׁה can similarly be used figuratively of oppression, but always in close association with שָׁבַט and only in Isaiah 10:5, 24; 14:5; 30:32; See BDB s.v.

¹⁸⁰ Also at work could be that “seed” is associated with remnant, as we have seen. In 1 Esd 8:78, 87, 88, and 89, “remnant” is rendered “root.”

¹⁸¹ This Greek phrase also occurs in 11:8 and 59:5; See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 182.

¹⁸² “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*. 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.”

¹⁸³ Basson, “‘People are Plants,’” 578.

Isa 27:6

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| In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel shall blossom and put forth shoots, | הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲקֹב יִצְיָן וּפְרַח יִשְׂרָאֵל | οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ιακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ἰσραὴλ, | Those who are coming are the children of Iacob; Israel shall bud and blossom, |
| and fill the whole world with fruit. | וּמְלֵאוּ פְּנֵי-תֵבֶל תְּנוּבָה: | καὶ ἐμπλησθήσεται ἡ οἰκουμένη τοῦ καρποῦ αὐτοῦ. | And the world will be filled with his fruit. |

We have discussed this passage already in the section on fruit (2.2.2.). The phrase הנהגה is more common than what we have here,¹⁸⁴ though as van der Kooij has pointed out, all the ancient versions understand the phrase in 27:6 to be about people.¹⁸⁵ In 41:22 the substantive participle הַבָּאִים is translated literally with τὰ ἐπερχόμενα. In Isa 27:6 it is also translated literally but is not taken in a temporal but a substantive 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 apposition) by rendering יִשְׂרָאֵל with a noun.¹⁸⁶ In the Hebrew, the verse is a metaphor describing a whole process, starting with establishment, continuing in development, and climaxing in multiplication. A plant metaphor is perfect for this idea. The LXX preserves this image, except for the first step. The phrase יִשְׂרָאֵל יַעֲקֹב is identified with “those coming,” and interpreted by the translator to be children (τέκνα). 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-Isa translator thought “root of Jesse” in 11:1, 10 could refer to a descendent from Jesse, though there it is an individual. The Targum speaks more broadly, describing the return from exile. The specific phrase becomes יתִּלְדּוּן דְּבֵית יַעֲקֹב.¹⁸⁷

It seems odd to imagine root denoting offspring instead of denoting source, but Jacob Stromberg shows that this sort of image is possible in surrounding cultures.¹⁸⁸ He shows

¹⁸⁴ 1 Sam 2:31; 2 Kgs 20:17; Isa 38:6 (rendered ἰδοὺ ἡμέραι ἔρχονται); Jer 7:32; 9:24; 16:14; 19:6; 23:5,7; 30:3; 31:27,31; 48:12; 49:2; 51:47; 51:52; Amos 8:11; 9:13.

¹⁸⁵ van der Kooij, “Text-Critical Notes,” 15.

¹⁸⁶ Cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234. For Isa 27:6, LXX.D.E.K., 2573 suggests the translator read the plural יִשְׂרָאֵל. The Hiphil form of the verb occurs in Ps 80(79):10(9), where it is rendered κατεφύτευσας τὰς ῥίζας. Also a Hiphil participle occurs in Job 5:3, rendered ῥίζαν βάλλοντας. The only other verbal form of יִשְׂרָאֵל occurring in Isaiah is in 40:24, to be discussed below.

¹⁸⁷ “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.”

¹⁸⁸ Stromberg, “Root of Jesse,” 662-65.

examples from Ugaritic literature that use *šrš* in synonymous parallelism with *bn*.¹⁸⁹ He also gives some examples from Aramaic literature (though the word for root used is עקר) as well as from Phoenician literature.¹⁹⁰

Following Joachim Becker, Stromberg discusses some possible uses of “root” to mean “offspring” or “root shoot” in the Hebrew Bible.¹⁹¹ 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 Ben 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).¹⁹²

BDAG offers an example of a Greek author using ῥίζα metaphorically to refer to “that which grows from a root, shoot, scion”.¹⁹³ The example from Pseudo-Apollodorus 2.1.4 is quite strong:

Ἀγήνωρ μὲν οὖν εἰς Φοινίκην ἀπαλλαγείς ἐβασίλευσε, κακεῖ τῆς μεγάλης ῥίζης ἐγένετο γενεάρχης.

Agenor departed to Phoenicia and reigned there, and there he became the ancestor of the great stock;¹⁹⁴

In this passage Agenor is implied to be a sort of seed from which his descendents grew, they are roots holding his family firmly in Phoenicia. The metaphor “root” functions not only to refer to offspring, but also to show their establishment.

Another tropic 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, 9.¹⁹⁵ It occurs twice in a merism in Isaiah.

Isa 37:31

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| The surviving remnant of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, | וְיִסְּפָה פְּלִיטַת בֵּית־יְהוּדָה הַנִּשְׁאָרָה שָׁרֵשׁ לְמַטָּה | καὶ ἔσονται οἱ καταλειμμένοι ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ φυήσουσι ῥίζαν κάτω | And those that are left in Judea shall take root downward |
|---|--|--|---|

¹⁸⁹ Stromberg, “Root of Jesse,” 663. He lists KTU 1.17 I 20; KTU 1.17 I 25; KTU 1.17 II 14-15.

¹⁹⁰ Stromberg, “Root of Jesse,” 663-64.

¹⁹¹ Stromberg, “Root of Jesse,” 663.

¹⁹² Stromberg, “Root of Jesse,” 662.

¹⁹³ BDAG, s.v. It also offers Diodorus Siculus 26.15 as an example, but it is not as satisfying.

¹⁹⁴ Apollodorus, *The Library* [Frazer, LCL 121-122]. The translation of ῥίζα with “stock” is interesting, since “stock” is the same metaphor as נֶגֶז used in Isa 11:1, where LXX rendered ῥίζα.

¹⁹⁵ 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;” this, however glosses over the different nuances of the image root-branch versus root-fruit. Ginsberg, “Roots Below and Fruit Above,” 72-76. For a different critique of Ginsberg, see Becker, “Wurzel und Wurzelsproß,” 22-44.

| | | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| and bear fruit upward. | וַעֲשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמַעַל: | καὶ ποιήσουσι σπέρμα ἄνω. | and bear seed upward, |
|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|

Of note in this verse is that while שָׂרַשׁ 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 שָׂרַשׁ.¹⁹⁶ 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.” 1QIsa^a has two slight differences, though they shed no light on the LXX: instead of וַיִּסְפֶּה it has וַאֲסַפֶּה, and instead of הַנִּשְׁאָרָה it has וְהַנִּמְצָא.¹⁹⁷ The Targum makes a simile with the image of the remnants being like a tree sending down roots.¹⁹⁸

Isa 5:24

| | | | |
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| Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, | לִכְן כִּפְּאֵל קֶשׁ לְשׁוֹן אֵשׁ וַחֲשֵׁשׁ לְהִבָּה יִרְפָּה | διὰ τοῦτο ὃν τρόπον καυθήσεται καλάμη ὑπὸ ἄνθρακος πυρὸς καὶ συγκαυθήσεται ὑπὸ φλογὸς ἀνειμένης, | Therefore, as stubble will be burned by a coal of fire and burned up by an <i>unrestrained</i> flame, |
| so their root will become rotten, and their blossom go up like dust; | שָׂרָשָׁם כִּמְקֵי יֵהִי וּפְרִיָּהֶם כִּמְאֲבָק יַעֲלֶה | ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν ὡς χνοῦς ἔσται, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται. | so their root will be like fine dust 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. | כִּי מָאַסּוּ אֶת תּוֹרַת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת וְאֵת אִמְרַת קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶאֱצָו: | οὐ γὰρ ἠθέλησαν τὸν νόμον κυρίου σαβαωθ, ἀλλὰ τὸ λόγιον τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰσραηλ παρώξυναν. | 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 etc., 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 more usually we see either the merism root and fruit (2 Kings 19:30; Amos 2:9) or

¹⁹⁶ See Psa 80:10(9) and Job 5:3 above. Usually verbal forms are rendered with ῥιζόω.

¹⁹⁷ Also instead of לְמַעַל it has just מַעַלָּה.

¹⁹⁸ “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;”

root and branch (Job 18:6; 29:19; Mal 3:19). The meaning here is the opposite of establishment, but that the entire plant will come to an end. The word *ἄνθος* is only used for פִּרְחָ here and in Isa 18:5, the more common equivalent being βλαστός, though it does not occur in LXX-Isa.

The comparison כִּמְךָ is rendered with *χνοῦς*, possibly due to the parallel *κονιορτός* (cf. 17:13, 29:5 where the same Greek terms are parallel, though the former renders מֶץ). The word *χνοῦς* is usually used for מֶץ.¹⁹⁹ It would seem the exact meaning of the word was not known; in Isa 3:24 it is rendered with *κονιορτός*. The related verb מִקֵּץ 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 (מַסְגִּי תוֹקֶפְהוֹן כְּשִׁבּוֹ יְהִי), and their blossom means the mammon of their oppression.²⁰⁰

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.

Diodorus of Sicily, 26.15:²⁰¹

“Ὅτι μετὰ τὴν Ἱερωνύμου τελευτὴν οἱ Συρακούσιοι ἐλθόντες εἰς ἐκκλησίαν ἐψηφίσαντο τοὺς συγγενεῖς τοῦ τυράννου κολάσαι καὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ὁμοίως τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ἀνελεῖν, καὶ μὴδὲ ρίζαν 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.

The reference to Hieronymus’ 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

¹⁹⁹ That this is what the translator read, see Hugh Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1-27 Vol 1: Isaiah 1-5* (The International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments; London: T&T Clark International, 2006), 389. We will discuss chaff in the section on grain (3.3).

²⁰⁰ “Therefore *they shall be* devoured 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.”

²⁰¹ This passage is sometimes numbered 26.16a. Diodorus of Sicily [Walton, LCL].

offspring, but to his whole family which produced him. Presumably the entire family is a tyrannical plant that needs to be completely removed, even its roots, so no tyrant again grows from it.

In one place, “root” is used in a simile.

Isa 53:2

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 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, | וַיַּעַל כַּיּוֹנָק לְפָנָיו וּכְשֶׁרֶשׁ מֵאַרְץ צִיָּה לֹא-תֵאָר לוֹ וְלֹא הָדָר | ἀνέτειλε μὲν ²⁰² ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ, οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα. | He grew up before him like a child, like a root in a thirsty land; he had no form or glory, |
| nothing in his appearance that we should desire him | וְנִרְאָהוּ וְלֹא-מְרָאָה וְנִחְמְדָהוּ: | καὶ εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος. | 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,”²⁰³ reinforcing his lack of form and majesty. The change from the root being “from” the dry land to “in” it could be from seeing ב instead of מ, but is more likely conceptual, since roots grow in the ground, generally, not from it. The Greek alters the image by reading כַּיּוֹנָק as the participle from יֹנֵק (to suck), which means babe, or child.²⁰⁴ 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.²⁰⁵ This parallel is even closer if we take the reading of the manuscripts (ἀνηγγείλαμεν instead of the conjectured ἀνέτειλε μὲν), so that it would say: “We announced before him: “[he is] like a child, like a root etc.”²⁰⁶ Again we here 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 Psa 1, and rather than “him” having no special appearance, in the Targum it is the opposite.²⁰⁷

The one remaining use of “root” in Isaiah occurs in a sort of extended metaphor.

Isa 40:24

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has | אֶף בִּלְ-נִטְעוֹ אֶף בִּלְ-זְרֵעוֹ אֶף בִּלְ-שִׂרְשׁוֹ | οὐ γὰρ μὴ σπείρωσιν οὐδὲ μὴ φυτεύσωσιν, οὐδὲ μὴ ῥιζώθῃ εἰς τὴν | For they will not sow, nor will they plant. neither will their root |
|--|--|--|---|

²⁰² This reading (followed in the Göttingen edition) is a conjecture. The manuscripts and Ralphs have: ἀνηγγείλαμεν.

²⁰³ Joseph Alexander, *Commentary on Isaiah* (2nd Ed.; Grand Rapids: Kregel Classics, 1992), vol 2, 291.

²⁰⁴ See HALOT, s.v. We will discuss this further in the section on sprouts (2.6.1.).

²⁰⁵ For the free rendering καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 128.

²⁰⁶ See notes in LXX.D. and LXX.D.E.K., 2666.

²⁰⁷ “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.”

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| their <i>stock</i> taken root in the earth, | בְּאֶרֶץ גְּזַעַם | γῆν ἢ ῥίζα αὐτῶν· | take root in the earth; |
| when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like <i>chaff</i> . | וְגַם-נִשְׁף בָּהֶם וַיִּבְשּׁוּ וְסַעֲרָה בִּקְשׁ תִּשָּׂאֵם: | ἐπνευσεν ἐπ’ αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν, καὶ καταιγὶς ὥς φρύγανα ἀναλήμψεται αὐτούς. | 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 subject instead of the object of the verbs. Like in Isa 11:1, גֵּזַע has been rendered with ῥίζα, perhaps to reduce the number of terms for stylism. The reversal of the main verbs σπείρωσιν and φυτεύσωσιν may be to make a more logical progression, from seed sown (falling through the air), to a plant planted, to it making roots under the earth.²⁰⁸ The verbal form שִׁרַשׁ is rendered with a verbal form, but the parallel clause becomes the subject and indirect object of the phrase. In the Targum it is interpreted: יִתְרַבּוּן בְּאֶרֶעָא בְּנִיהוֹן.²⁰⁹

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 can see 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 someone comes from the translator renders also 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 stylistics of the passage are adjusted in translation, but the metaphor is not changed.

The Targum, most of the time (11:1, 10; 14:29, 30; 27:6; 40:24) understands “root” to refer to sons or grandsons. In 37:31 the merism becomes similes to describe a tree metaphor

²⁰⁸ Troxel mentions this verse where he says he finds it impossible to attribute every transposition of letters or words to the work of the translator. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 75.

²⁰⁹ “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.”

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.

2.4. Flowers

2.4.1. Hebrew Words for “Flower”

In Isaiah, the word פִּיץ 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).²¹⁰

Isa 28:1,4

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 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! | הוֹי עֲטֹרַת גִּאוֹת שִׁכְרֵי אֶפְרַיִם וְצִיץ נִבֵּל צִבְי תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עַל-רֹאשׁ גִּיא שְׂמָנִים הִלּוּמֵי יָיִן: | 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. | 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 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. | וְהָיְתָה צִיצֵת נִבֵּל צִבְי תִּפְאַרְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עַל-רֹאשׁ גִּיא שְׂמָנִים כְּבִכּוּרָה בְּטָרֵם קֵץ אֲשֶׁר יֵרָאֶה הָרָאֶה אוֹתָהּ בְּעוֹדָהּ בְּכַפּוֹ יִבְלַעְנָהּ: | καὶ ἔσται τὸ ἄνθος τὸ ἐκπεσὸν τῆς ἐλπίδος τῆς δόξης ἐπ’ ἄκρου τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ ὑψηλοῦ ὡς πρόδρομος σύκου, ὃ ἰδὼν αὐτὸ πρὶν ἢ εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ λαβεῖν θελήσει αὐτὸ καταπιεῖν. | 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.²¹¹ The Greek is close to the Hebrew, 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 equating them, along with the hired workers of

²¹⁰ LSJ, s.v. def. II.

²¹¹ Demetrius, *On Style*, 267-71, 272, 272-74.

Ephraim. This closer connection makes the “crown” being trampled in verse three resonate more clearly with the idea of a frail flower being crushed. It is worth mentioning that Aristotle said asyndeton is useful for creating amplification.²¹²

The LXX has made some very 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 תַּפְאֲרָתוֹ עֲבִי נִבֵּל וְצִיץ as a single construct chain,²¹³ but this is difficult grammatically with the adjective where it is. Another reading is as a predicate clause: “a flower doomed to fade is its splendid beauty.”²¹⁴ 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 four, where nearly the same phrase again occurs, the LXX gives a different rendering. In verse one, עֲבִי is either not rendered, or as Troxel suggests, was collapsed with תַּפְאֲרָתוֹ and became ἐκ τῆς δόξης.²¹⁵ The second occurrence, however, like in Isa 24:16 and 28:5 is rendered with ἐλπίζ.²¹⁶ Also changed from verse one, ἄκρος is used instead of κορυφή, and ὑψηλός instead of παχύς.²¹⁷ 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, referring to something like the צִיץ in Exod 28:36 which the High Priest is to wear on his turban.²¹⁸ 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 in the Greek by the happy coincidence that ἄνθος in classical literature can work as a sort of superlative thing (much like flower in English usage).²¹⁹ Also, according to LSJ, it can refer to the “pride” or “honor” of someone, as in Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* 7-8:

τὸ σὸν γὰρ ἄνθος, παντέχνου πυρὸς σέλας,
θνητοῖσι κλέψας ὥπασεν.

²¹² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 3.12.2-4.

²¹³ Eg. ESV and NRSV.

²¹⁴ Blenkinsop, *Isaiah 1-39*, 385-86.

²¹⁵ He points out a similar case in Isa 13:19. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 270.

²¹⁶ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 237.

²¹⁷ Ottley thinks the use of ὑψηλός “looks like positive carelessness.” Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 237. For LXX-Isa’s use and non-use of synonyms, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 17-21.

²¹⁸ Cf. the Targum for Isa 28:1-4, where צִיץ is rendered with מצנפה (turban). See van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 168.

²¹⁹ LSJ, s.v., II.2.

for it was your glory, the gleam of fire that makes all skills attainable, that he stole and gave to mortals.²²⁰

The translator of Exodus knew this superlative meaning of *άνθος*, since in Exod 30:23 he rendered the phrase *וְאֶתְהָ קַח-לֶךָ בְּשָׁמִים רֹאשׁ מֶרְדְּרֹר חֶמֶשׁ מֵאוֹת* with *Καὶ σὺ λαβὲ ἡδύσματα, τὸ ἄνθος σμύρνης ἐκλεκτῆς πεντακοσίου σίκλους*.

So, as we have seen, the translation of the imagery in 28:1, 4 has been tightened and focused to more clearly express the issue of pride and glory of some group of people falling away.

The Targum interprets the verse as referring to the leadership.²²¹ The crown of the drunkards is interpreted as the crown of the proud and foolish prince of Israel (*כתרא לגיוֹתנא*), and the fading flower is interpreted as the diadem of the wicked of the house of the sanctuary of His praise (*לרשיעא דבית מקדשא*). 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 *άνθος*.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 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. | קול אמר קרא ואמר מה אקרא כל- הבשר חציר וכל- חסדו כציון השדה: | φωνὴ λέγοντος Βόησον· καὶ εἶπα Τί βοήσω; Πᾶσα σὰρξ χόρτος, καὶ πᾶσα δόξα ἀνθρώπου ὡς ἄνθος χόρτου· | 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 withers, the flower fades, | יבש חציר נבל ציון | ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσε, | The grass has withered, and the flower has fallen, |
| when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass. | כי רוח יהוה נשבה בו אבן חציר העם: | | |
| The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever. | יבש חציר נבל ציון ודבר-אלהינו יקום לעולם: | τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. | but the word of our God remains forever." |

In verse six the LXX makes a few modifications. It turns *ואמר* into the first person, as does 1QIsa^a and some modern translations,²²² since it better fits the context of the prophet

²²⁰ Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound* [Sommerstein, LCL 145].

²²¹ "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."

²²² Eg. ESV and NRSV.

due to homoioteleuton or parablepsis.²³³ This seems to be the case for 1QIsa^a, where the phrase is inserted interlinearly and in the margin. Ulrich thinks it is a later gloss and was not present in the LXX or the Qumran *Vorlage*.²³⁴

The verbs of verse seven are translated in the usual way: aorist for qatal. In this case it makes for good Greek, since they work as gnomic aorists which describe a general truth.²³⁵ The passage in the Greek makes a nice urbane saying, as Aristotle would describe it, in that it communicates an idea in a compact and easily understood way,²³⁶ 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 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."²³⁷ Perhaps the possibility is worth considering, that the translator has dropped verse seven because it is too crowded and frigid,²³⁸ upsetting the succinctness of the urbane statement. Even if it is not accepted that verse seven was omitted for the sake of rhetoric, the passage as a whole has had its imagery focused and tightened to better express the idea of the frailty of mankind. In Hesiod, *Works and Days*, In 7 we find the image of a withering plant used for humanity losing strength: *ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα ἀρφει*, "and easily he [Zeus] straightens the crooked and withers the manly."²³⁹

The Targum interprets flower (צִיץ) as chaff (מוצא) and the comparison is to strength (תקפהון) instead of חסד.²⁴⁰ In verses 7-8 it is not the people (העם), but the wicked among the people (רשעיא בעמא) who are the tenor of the metaphor. As mentioned above, the wicked and his 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; etc.²⁴¹

Another word for flower (or perhaps "bud" or "what sprouts" are better definitions) in Isaiah is פָּרַח, rendered with ἄνθος.²⁴² Here too, it can imply frailty. We have already

²³³ See for example Karl Elliger, *Deuteriojesaja: 1. Teilband Jesaja 40,1-45,7* (Biblischer Kommentar Altes Testament 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.

²³⁴ Eugene Ulrich, "The developmental Composition of the Book of Isaiah: Light from 1QIsaa on Additions in the MT," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 8 (2001), 299-301.

²³⁵ Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Colleges* (New York: American Book Company, 1920), §1931.

²³⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.10, particularly paragraph 2.

²³⁷ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* [Freese, LCL 193], III.10.6.

²³⁸ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3. Aristotle blames frigid style on the misuse of compound words, strange words, epithets that are too long or crowded, and inappropriate metaphors.

²³⁹ Hesiod, *Works and Days* [Most, Loeb 57].

²⁴⁰ "A voice of one who says, "Prophecy!" 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 stands for ever."

²⁴¹ We will discuss chaff metaphors below (3.3.2.1. and 3.).

²⁴² We deal with 5:24 in section 3.3.2.1.1., and in 18:5 it is not a metaphor.

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.²⁴³ In 18:5 two terms for flower are each rendered with ἄνθος, namely פרח and נצה.²⁴⁴ In 35:1 the LXX uses a specific flower name for a specific flower given in Hebrew, so חַבְצֵלֶת is rendered with κρίνον.²⁴⁵ In this passage the wilderness is personified and is said to rejoice and blossom like a lily.²⁴⁶ Verbal forms of פרח are usually rendered with a form of ἀνθέω, as in 17:11;²⁴⁷ 27:6; and 35:1.²⁴⁸

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,²⁴⁹ as we discussed above.²⁵⁰ 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.”²⁵¹ W. Bedell Stanford argues that ἄνθος does not primarily mean “flower” but something that rises to the surface.²⁵² 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.

In Isa 61:11, the LXX uses ἄνθος for another word that means “what sprouts,” or “growth:” צֶמַח.

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| 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. | כִּי כְאֶרֶץ תּוֹצִיא צֶמְחָהּ וּכְגַנָּה יִרְוַעֶיהָ תִּצְמִיחַ בְּן אָדָם יְהוָה יִצְמִיחַ צְדָקָה וְתִהְיֶה נִגְדָּה כָּל־ הַגּוֹיִם: | καὶ ὡς γῆν αὐξουσας 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 צֶמַח. In the context of this passage, it

²⁴³ See the analysis of this verse in the section on “Roots,” above (2.3.2.).

²⁴⁴ We will analysis this passage below in the section on “Sprouts” (2.6.1.).

²⁴⁵ Cf. Song 2:1 where חַבְצֵלֶת is rendered with ἄνθος.

²⁴⁶ In the LXX, it is an imperative: “rejoice and blossom like a lily!”

²⁴⁷ In this passage another term for branch is used: זֶמְרָה. It occurs only here in Isaiah, and is rendered with σπέρμα. See the section on “Seeds” (2.1.4.) for an analysis of this passage.

²⁴⁸ The only other place it occurs, in Isaiah 66:14, it is rendered with ἀνατέλλω.

²⁴⁹ Cf. Dan 11:7 θ’ which uses ἄνθος to render מִנְצֵר; LXX uses φυτόν.

²⁵⁰ For a more detailed analysis of this passage see the section on “Roots” (2.3.1.).

²⁵¹ LSJ, s.v. We have already seen that ἄνθος can be used for a twig or shoot.

²⁵² Stanford, *Greek Metaphor*, 111-14. This meaning cannot be found in Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*.

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.

The critical editions of Ralfs and Ziegler have a difference in this verse: Ralfs has the nominative $\alpha\eta\pi\sigma$ while Ziegler has the accusative $\alpha\eta\pi\sigma\nu$. Ralfs is closer to the Hebrew, but Ziegler has a better manuscript tradition and in his edition the two similes take the same structure. The LXX omits the verb of the second simile;²⁵³ the distributive rendering of a verb in synonymous parallelism is a kind of condensation often found in LXX-Isa.²⁵⁴ The MT's יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ is reduced to $\alpha\upsilon\rho\iota\sigma$ in the LXX; 1QIsa^a on the other hand has יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵימָה .

The Targum elaborates on the garden, making it irrigated and sown so that it grows (וכגנת שקיא דזירועהא מרביא) and also the righteousness and praise of Jerusalem is revealed (יגלי זכותה ותשבחתה דירושלם).²⁵⁵

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-Isa this meaning is preserved. Where the term $\alpha\upsilon\theta\sigma$ 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 $\alpha\upsilon\theta\sigma$ was used with the generic meaning LSJ and Stanford advocate. LXX-Isa is unique within the LXX for rendering terms that mean “bud” or “sprout” (נצר, פרח, and צמח) with $\alpha\upsilon\theta\sigma$. Some other LXX books use $\alpha\upsilon\theta\sigma$ as a rendering for words that do not mean “flower” in Hebrew, but not for words meaning “sprout.” The use of $\alpha\upsilon\theta\sigma$ 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.

²⁵³ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 371.

²⁵⁴ van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 81.

²⁵⁵ “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.”

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 men in their helplessness in *Illiad* XXI 463-6:

....εἰ δὴ σοί γε βροτῶν ἔνεκα πτολεμίζω
 δειλῶν, οἳ φύλλοισιν ἐοικότες ἄλλοτε μὲν 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.²⁵⁶

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 Psa 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

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| For you will be like a terebinth [which is] withered [in regard to] its leaves, | כִּי תִהְיֶה כְּאַֿלֶּה נִבְלָה עֲלֶיהָ | ἔσονται γὰρ ὡς τερέβινθος ἀποβεβληκυῖα τὰ φύλλα | For they shall be like a terebinth that has shed its leaves |
| and like a garden without water. | וְכִגְנָה אֲשֶׁר־מִים אֵין לָהּ: | καὶ ὡς παράδεισος ὕδωρ μὴ ἔχων· | and like an orchard that has no water. |

The noun עֲלֶיהָ is commonly rendered with φύλλον. The withered leaves are used in a simile to describe what the rebels and sinners that 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 Greek word ἀποβάλλω is only used as an equivalent for נִבְלָה,²⁵⁷ but as we will see, LXX-Isa uses other terms in similar similes. BDB defines נִבְלָה as “sink or drop down, languish, wither and fall, fade.” Rendering this with ἀποβάλλω seems to limit the meaning to “drop down,” since the

²⁵⁶ Homer, *Iliad* [Murray and Wyatt, LCL 171].

²⁵⁷ According to Hatch and Redpath it has no Hebrew equivalent for its other occurrences, which are only in the other versions and the additions to Daniel. Muraoka, *Two-way Index*, 14 adds the equivalent אבד pi. for Deut 26:5.

Greek term means “to shed.”²⁵⁸ The choice of this term seems to direct the attention to the tree, rather than to the withered leaf. This also is the focus of the Hebrew since נִבְלָת is feminine and so must match the terebinth and not the masculine עֵלֶה.²⁵⁹ There is good reason for the tree to be described as a terebinth, since in theory almost any tree could have been mentioned in a simile about losing leaves: Theophrastus lists the Terebinth as an evergreen tree (ἀείφυλλα).²⁶⁰ Indeed, Lytton John Musselman says that the terebinth, due to its extensive root systems, also remains green even in years of drought.²⁶¹ The Terebinth is mentioned, then, to make a rather extreme simile, that they will be like a very resilient tree that has nonetheless succumbed to a drought. So, in this simile, in both languages, leaves are mentioned simply to describe the extreme 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.).

The translation of גֵּן 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.²⁶²

The Targum also focuses on the terebinth casting off its leaves (כבוטמא דבמתר) (טרפוהי).²⁶³

Isa 34:4

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| 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. | וְנִמְקוּ כָּל-צִבְאָה הַשָּׁמַיִם וְנִגְלוּ כַסְפֶּר הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכָל-צִבְאָם יָבוֹל כִּנְבֵּל עֵלֶה מִגֶּפֶן וְכִנְבֵּלֶת מִתְאֲנָה: | καὶ ἐλιγθήσεται 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 Mirjam van der Vorm-Croughs notes, the omission of the heavens rotting in the Greek is probably deliberate, since LXX-Isa will often remove one synonymous element in the translation.²⁶⁴ 1QIsa^a has an additional clause at the beginning of this verse: וְהַעֲמִיק יִתְבַּקֵּעַ, it lacks וְנִמְקוּ, but instead has the verb יפולו

²⁵⁸ Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 71. Theophrastus uses this term to talk about shedding fig leaves in *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.9.7.

²⁵⁹ In GKC 116.i two ways of understanding נִבְלָת 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, Bruce K. Waltke and Michael Patrick O'Connor, *An introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 37.3c. But in light of Isa 34:4, where this term appears again, I believe it should be understood as absolute.

²⁶⁰ Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.9.3. He calls it τέρμινθος, which is a variant spelling, according to LSJ s.v.

²⁶¹ Lytton John Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh: Plants of the Bible and the Quran* (Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2007), 267.

²⁶² See van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 113, 232.

²⁶³ “For you will be like a terebinth when its leaves fall, and like a channeled garden without water.”

²⁶⁴ van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 61-62, 65.

after “heavens.” The withering leaf is again of a specific plant: a grape vine. In the parallel clause, the exact substantive is omitted. It could imply leaves falling from the fig tree, but then it is odd that נִבֶּלֶת is feminine, while עֵלֶה 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 we have a word repeated in each gender: מִשְׁעָן וּמִשְׁעָנָה. 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 more likely grammatically for the feminine תִּפְאֵנָה.²⁶⁵ HALOT lists this passage as the only occurrence of a word נִבֶּלֶת, which means “a withered fig.”²⁶⁶ According to Theophrastus, the fig tree is apt to shed its figs before they ripen;²⁶⁷ 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.²⁶⁸ If a fig is not pollinated, it turns brown and falls away.²⁶⁹

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).²⁷⁰

The LXX leaves out the first clause, though as we would expect, the three recensions all include it. The rendering of סֵפֶר with βιβλίον does not necessarily change the image, since the verb ἐλίσσω still means to roll up, and βιβλίον can mean something like a scroll.²⁷¹ The LXX understands the “hosts” of heaven to be the stars.²⁷²

The translation of the various forms of נָבַל 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-Isa, to remove paronomasia.²⁷³ The participle in the second simile, however, is rendered as a present indicative verb. The translation equivalent πίπτω for נָבַל is appropriate, but this is the only verse where it is used in the whole LXX.²⁷⁴ But this definition is consistent with how LXX-Isa 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.²⁷⁵ Given the context, falling is clearly what the similes aim to describe.

²⁶⁵ While it appears masculine in the plural, it is a feminine noun. According to BDB s.v. it only occurs in the plural when meaning the fruit as opposed to the tree.

²⁶⁶ HALOT, s.v. cf. Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1326, who has this reading, but thinks it is unproven.

²⁶⁷ Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 2.8.1-4; 3.3.8.

²⁶⁸ 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: Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 2.8.1-4.

²⁶⁹ Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 128. Musselman lists Isa 34:4 as an example of this phenomenon.

²⁷⁰ Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 129.

²⁷¹ At least according to Middle Liddell, s.v.

²⁷² LXX.D.E.K., 2596.

²⁷³ van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 74.

²⁷⁴ Cf. Isa 28:1, 4 where it is rendered with ἐκπίπτω.

²⁷⁵ Cf. 24:4 where it is interpreted in an emotional sense in the context of the earth being personified.

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.²⁷⁶ 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,²⁷⁷ 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 cleaned up 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 said 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.²⁷⁸ The withering leaf metaphor is maintained, and the fig simile is rendered with cognates: וּכְנַבְלָא מִתִּינָא; according to Jastrow, נַבְלָא refers to an inferior variety of fig.²⁷⁹

Isa 64:5(6)

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a <i>menstrual</i> cloth. | וְנִהְיָ כְּטָמֵא כָּלֵנוּ וְכִבְגָּד עֲדִים כָּל- צִדְקָתֵינוּ | καὶ ἐγενήθημεν ὡς ἀκάθαρτοι πάντες ἡμεῖς, ὡς ῥάκος ἀποκαθημένης πᾶσα ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἡμῶν. | And we have all become like unclean people; all our righteousness is like the rag of a woman who sits apart. |
| We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. | וְנִבְלָ כְּעֹלֶה כָּלֵנוּ וְעֲוֹנוֹנוּ כְּרוּחַ יִשָּׁאֵנוּ: | καὶ ἐξερρήμεν ὡς φύλλα διὰ τὰς ἀνομίας ἡμῶν, οὕτως ἄνεμος οἴσει ἡμᾶς. | 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 carries 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

²⁷⁶ van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 163. Perhaps it should be listed as a case of explication.

²⁷⁷ Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.9.7.

²⁷⁸ “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.”

²⁷⁹ Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 Volumes; London: W.C. Luzac & Co., 1903), s.v.

women in the LXX.²⁸⁰ Seeligmann lists this translation as an example of “standardized expressions relating to traditional homiletics and religious practice.”²⁸¹ Both 1QIsa^a and 4QIsa^b 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,²⁸² while in the Greek their sins are the cause of their falling away. This is achieved by changing the conjunction ו into διὰ. MT’s וְנָבַל is problematic; DCH suggests it is 1st person plural Qal wayyiqtol from נָבַל, though HALOT suggests it be amended to וְנָבַל.²⁸³ The LXX appears to read the latter. The word choice is interesting, since it fits well with the context of the wind blowing the leaf away when it falls. Only here is ἐκρέω used as an equivalent for נָבַל; the only other place this word occurs (Deut 28:40) it is a rendering of נָשַׁל.²⁸⁴ The word πίπτω, like was used in 34:4, could have sufficed here too, but ἐκρέω is much more apt for the image.

In both languages there is a metaphor of them withering/falling, which is then described in terms of the leaf. The Greek appears to drop the second occurrence of כָּלֵנוּ from its rendering and makes their sins the cause of their falling. The choice of ἀνομία for עוֹן is not surprising, given LXX-Isa’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.²⁸⁵

2.5.2. Summary

As we have seen, in LXX-Isa the leaf imagery is for the most part preserved rather literally and עָלָה is rendered with φύλλον regularly. What makes these metaphors interesting is the care and nuance the translator has when rendering the accompanying word נָבַל. 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.

²⁸⁰ For the various terms it renders, see Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 14.

²⁸¹ Seeligmann, *The Septuagint of Isaiah*, 187 [44/45].

²⁸² Usually עוֹן forms in the plural as עוֹנוֹת, but it appears in a few other places it has been pointed as though it formed the masculine plural regularly, as in Jer 14:7 which has אֶם-עוֹנֵינוּ עֲנֵנוּ בָּנוּ. Our verse, then, must be a defective spelling of an alternate plural form.

²⁸³ See also LXX.D.E.K., 2687.

²⁸⁴ See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 132, who thinks the Deut passage influenced the LXX-Isa passage.

²⁸⁵ “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 taken away.”

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 נֶצֶר; it occurs only in Isa 11:1; 60:21; Dan 11:7 (which, as we have seen, the OG renders with φυτόν and Theodotion with ἄνθος); and Sir 40:15 (where it is rendered ἔκγονος).²⁸⁶ As discussed in the section on roots and the section on flowers, in Isa 11:1 נֶצֶר is appropriately rendered with ἄνθος, since this Greek term can mean “something that rises to the surface.”²⁸⁷ In 14:19 we find the word נֶצֶר, but it most likely means “putrefying matter.”²⁸⁸

Isa 60:21

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. They are the shoot that I planted, the work of my hands, so that I might be glorified. | עַמִּי כֻלָּם צְדִיקִים לְעוֹלָם יִרְשׁוּ אֶרֶץ נֶצֶר מִטְעוֹ ²⁸⁹ מַעֲשֵׂה יָדַי לְהַתְפָּאָר: | καὶ ὁ λαός σου πᾶς δίκαιος, καὶ δι' αἰῶνος κληρονομήσουσι τὴν γῆν, φυλάσσω τὸ φύτευμα, ἔργα χειρῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς δόξαν. | Your people shall all be righteous, and they shall inherit the land forever, guarding <i>the</i> plant, the works of <i>his</i> hands, for glory. |
|---|--|--|---|

The noun נֶצֶר in apposition to other terms describing it has been rendered as if it were a participle form of נֶצַר, that is, as the singular participle φυλάσσω. Grammatically, the participle must modify λαός, even though this noun here has a plural verb.²⁹⁰ 1QIsa^b omits נֶצַר, though it is present in 1QIsa^a and appears to have been present in 4QIsa^m.²⁹¹ The rendering of מִטְעוֹ 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,²⁹² it probably actually refers to God (as 1QIsa^a also understands it). The LXX probably makes the first person pronominal ending third person

²⁸⁶ The Hebrew נֶנֶךְ, meaning offspring, occurring in Isa 14:22 and 57:19 is said to derive from “little shoots” by HALOT, s.v. But there is no evidence given to support this. The current study agrees with DCH that it means simply descendent.

²⁸⁷ LSJ, s.v.

²⁸⁸ DCH, s.v. E. Nestle, “Miscellen,” *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1904): 127-30.

²⁸⁹ ק. מטעי.

²⁹⁰ Cf. Isa 26:2-3 where people are again described as guarding, using singular participles.

²⁹¹ 1QIsa^a has a plus instead of the pronoun: נֶצַר מִטְעֵי יְהוָה מַעֲשֵׂי יָדָיו.

²⁹² NETS reads: “guarding their plant, the works of their hands, for glory.”

because previously, in 60:20, God is spoken of in the third person. The only other occurrence of **מָטֶע** in LXX-Isa is in 61:3, where a very similar phrase occurs: **וְקָרָא לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצִּדִּיק** **מָטֶע יְהוָה לְהַתְּפָאֵר** rendered *καὶ αὐθιγόνονται 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 versions, is that God planted Israel in their land, as in Exod 15:17.²⁹³ The difference is that the LXX introduces some group of righteous people who inherit the land and who guard this plant.²⁹⁴

The Targum interprets the phrase **נֹצֵר מָטֶעִי** with **נֹצֵבָא דְחַדוּתֵי**, connecting the plant to that of Isa 5:7 where the same phrase occurs.²⁹⁵

As we have seen, the word **נֹצֵר** is never given a literal translation. The closest we have seen (not counting the recensions of LXX-Isa) is *ἄνθος* in LXX-Isa 11:1 and Dan 11:7 *θ'*, or *φυτός* in LXX-Dan 11:7. Also Ben Sirach's grandson, in 40:15, opted to interpret the metaphor **נֹצֵר** as offspring: **נוצר מחמס לא ינקה כי שורש חנף על שן סלע** was rendered: *ἐκγονα ἀσεβῶν οὐ πληθυνεῖ κλάδους καὶ ῥίζαι ἀκάθαρτοι ἐπ' ἀκροτόμου πέτρας*.²⁹⁶

Another term for a young shoot or twig (as we saw in its verbal form in Sir 40:15) is **יוֹנֵק** or **יוֹנֵקֶת**. The latter form occurs only once in the Hebrew Bible in Isa 53:2 (the former form does not occur in Isaiah).

Isa 53:2

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| 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. | וַיַּעַל כְּיוֹנֵק לְפָנָיו וְכַשְׂרֵשׁ מֵאַרְץ צִיָּה לֹא-תֵאָר לוֹ וְלֹא הָדָר וְנִרְאָהוּ וְלֹא-מְרֹאָה וְנִחְמְדָהוּ: | <i>ἀνέτειλε μὲν²⁹⁷ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ, οὐκ ἔστιν εἶδος αὐτῷ οὐδὲ δόξα· καὶ εἶδομεν αὐτόν, καὶ οὐκ εἶχεν εἶδος οὐδὲ κάλλος·</i> | 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. |
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We have discussed this passage already in the section on roots (2.3.2.). The LXX understands **יוֹנֵק** as a substantive participle from **יָנַק**, as occurs in 11:8.²⁹⁸ Perhaps the translator recognized the play on words with **יוֹנֵקֶת** (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.” His grandson also opted to make clear one term referred to offspring, then maintained the rest of the plant imagery. It is possible, though, that the LXX-Isa

²⁹³ Cf. Psa 44:3; 80:9. The Targum also reads Isa 61:11 this way, though it renders **יְדִי** with **גְבוּרָתִי**.

²⁹⁴ LXX.D.E.K., 2683.

²⁹⁵ Targum 60:21: “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.”

²⁹⁶ Hebrew text from MS B in Beentjes, *The Book of Sira in Hebrew*, 70.

²⁹⁷ All manuscripts read *ἀνηγγείλαμεν*.

²⁹⁸ LXX.D.E.K., 2666.

translator rendered יֶיֶנֶק with παιδίον at a lexical level, and did not bother to consider the interpretation of a metaphor. 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 this word, it renders with לבלב, “bloom” or “sprout.” The rest of the passage, though, has quite a bit of interpretation as discussed above.²⁹⁹

Three more terms for sprouts, or more accurately, tendrils or shoots, are נְטִישׁוֹת, זְלִזְלִים, and שְׁלָחוֹת (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 נְטִישׁוֹת is interpreted as the buttresses of a city, but in Jer 48:32(31:32) it is translated with κλῆμα. The word זְלִזְלִים only occurs in Isa 18:5.

Isa 18:5

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| 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. | כִּי־לִפְנֵי קָצִיר כְּתֹם־ פָּרַח וּבִסֵּר גִּמְלֵי יֵהִיָּה נֹצֵה וְכָרַת הַזְּלִזְלִים בְּמִזְמֵרוֹת וְאֶת־ הַנְּטִישׁוֹת הַסֵּיר הֵתַז׃ | πρὸ τοῦ θερισμοῦ, ὅταν συντελεσθῇ ἄνθος καὶ ὄμφαξ ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος ὀμφακίζουσα, καὶ ἀφελεῖ τὰ βοτρυδία τὰ μικρὰ τοῖς δρεπάνοις καὶ τὰς κληματίδας ἀφελεῖ καὶ κατακόψει | Before the harvest, when the blossom has been completed and the unripe grape blossoms, <i>producing unripe grapes</i> ³⁰⁰ — then he will take away the little clusters with pruning hooks and take away the small branches and cut them off... |
|---|---|---|---|

In the Hebrew, the vinedresser is doing something quite remarkable. Pruning should be done after the harvest and before the new summer growth.³⁰¹ Pruning just before the harvest, when grapes are forming, would serve no purpose other than to ruin the vintage. 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 all the specific vine related terminology and so uses the appropriate terms in Greek. The rendering of פָּרַח with ἄνθος is not surprising; the Greek repeats the same word later probably for the sake of alliteration. The Hebrew בִּסֵּר could refer more generally to unripe fruit, but the Greek is specific about unripe grapes. The Hebrew גִּמְלֵי

²⁹⁹ “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.”

³⁰⁰ Both NETS and LXX.D. take ὀμφακίζουσα substantively.

³⁰¹ Cato, *De Agricultura*, 32-33 describes pruning in the fall. Columella, *De re Rustica* IV.x, says in cold climates prune in the spring before the shoots bud, but in warm sunny climates, prune in the fall, the natural season when fruit and leaves drop.

יְהִיָּה appears to be rendered with ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος,³⁰² changing the word order; and נֶצֶחַ is rendered ὀμφακίζουσα.³⁰³ 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 ὀμφαξ ἀνθήσῃ ἄνθος ὀμφακίζουσα. The word זִלְזָלִים may mean something more like a tendril, but the Greek makes it clearly the little clusters of unripe grapes: τὰ βοτρυδία τὰ μικρά. As a whole, the Greek makes the image specific and vivid.

The Targum appears to interpret כְּתָם as referring to a tree (אֵילָנָא). The phrase וּבִסְרָ וְיְהִיָּה נֶצֶחַ is more clear: וּבִסְרָ מִיְנִיהָ סִמְדָּר (and the unripe fruit [spreads] from its blossom).³⁰⁴ The second part of the verse, though, abandons the metaphor, making the imagery just a description of the season and clearly states that rulers will die by the sword and the mighty will be removed.

2.6.2. Branches

While מֶטֶה can have the definition “branch of a vine,” it only occurs in Ezek 19:11 (LXX uses ῥάβδος). The LXX-Isa translator never reads this root with this meaning.³⁰⁵ Although it is still often translated ῥάβδος, in LXX-Isa it clearly refers to scepters and not branches. Another Hebrew term for branch is אֶמְרִי. BDB defined it as “top” or “summit,” occurring in Isa 17:6, 9; and Gen 49:21. More recent lexicons, however, define it as “branch” or “twig.”³⁰⁶ In Gen 49:21, the context shows that it is discussing a deer, referring to the branching of its antlers.³⁰⁷

Isa 17:6

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| 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. | וְנִשְׂאֲרֻּ בּוֹ עֹלָלֹת כְּנֶקֶף זֵית שְׁנַיִם שְׁלֹשָׁה גִרְגָּרִים בְּרֹאשׁ אֶמְרִי אַרְבָּעָה חֲמִשָּׁה בְּסַעֲפֶיהָ פְּרִיָּהּ נֶאֱמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | καὶ καταλειφθῇ ἐν αὐτῇ καλάμη ἢ ὥς ῥῶγες ἐλαίας δύο ἢ τρεῖς ἐπ’ ἄκρου μετεώρου ἢ τέσσαρες ἢ πέντε ἐπὶ τῶν κλάδων αὐτοῦ καταλειφθῇ. | 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. |
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In the Hebrew, verse five introduces the general concept of a harvest, and verse six specifies that conditions will be like the gleanings that are left over. The rather vivid and

³⁰² LXX.D.E.K., 2551.

³⁰³ LXX.D.E.K., 2551 believes this word connects the halves of the verse.

³⁰⁴ “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.”

³⁰⁵ Isa 9:3; 10:5, 15, 24, 26; 14:5; 28:27; 30:32.

³⁰⁶ HALOT only gives the Isaiah passages, while DCH gives all three.

³⁰⁷ The ESV and NRSV follow the LXX version: “that bears beautiful/comely fawns.”

pictorial image is then used of a few olives left 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.³⁰⁸ 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 this can hinder the next year's fruit production of the tree.³⁰⁹ 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 easily fall.

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 discussing the harvesting is distracting. The plural ῥῶγες is not based on נִקְה but rather on גִּרְגְּרִים.³¹⁰ The word order is changed to make it clear that the olives are what is important, not the tree. The rendering of בְּרֵאשׁ with ἐπ' ἄκρου is usual enough. The rendering of אֶמֶר with μετέωρου 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 אֶמֶר 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 פְּרִיָה as meaning something like "its fruit" as a part of a predicate clause, and so could be clarified by saying "will remain." So the rendering of פֶּרֶה with καταλείπω is an explication; that the branch was fruitful is not as relevant in the context as saying 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.

³⁰⁸ Pliny, *The Natural History*, 15.3.

³⁰⁹ Pliny, *The Natural History*, 15.3. 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.

³¹⁰ 1QIsa^a reads גִּרְגְּרִים.

The Targum appears to have known the meaning of אָמִיר and so rendered it with צִנֵּף.³¹¹ 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

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| On that day their strong cities will be like a <i>deserted woodland and the branch</i> which they deserted <i>before</i> the children of Israel, and there will be desolation. | בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִהְיוּ עָרֵי מְעוֹז בְּעִזּוּבַת הַחֹרֶשׁ וְהָאָמִיר אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְהָיְתָה שְׂמָמָה: | τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη ἔσονται αἱ πόλεις σου ἐγκαταλελειμμέναι, ὡς τρόπον ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Ευαῖοι ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ, καὶ ἔσονται ἔρημοι, | On that day your cities will be abandoned, just as the Amorrites and the Heuities abandoned them before the sons of Israel, and they will be desolate. |
|--|--|--|--|

The Hebrew of this verse is difficult, and often partially amended to agree with the LXX version, so that instead of יִהְיוּ עָרֵי מְעוֹז בְּעִזּוּבַת הַחֹרֶשׁ וְהָאָמִיר it would have יִהְיוּ עָרֵי מְעוֹז בְּעִזּוּבַת הַחֹרֶשׁ וְהָאָמִיר.³¹² If it is true that the Hebrew was corrupted, it would have to have taken place before 1QIsa^a, since it agrees with MT. The three recessions also do not agree with LXX, according to Ziegler's apparatus, though none of them translate אָמִיר: 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 of the LXX,³¹³ οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Ευαῖοι, but the lists of Canaanite people commonly appear in various orders and with various nations.³¹⁴

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 (אָמִיר) 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 אָמִיר is here used to mean mountain top, while in verse 6 it meant tree top.³¹⁵

The LXX, either through an effort to understand a difficult text, or from reading a variant text,³¹⁶ no longer has any plant imagery, but instead an allusion to the Israelite

³¹¹ "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 LORD God of Israel."

³¹² For example see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 634, 637-38. He does not explore the possibility that אָמִיר could mean branch.

³¹³ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 192.

³¹⁴ Cf. 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.

³¹⁵ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 192.

³¹⁶ LXX.D.E.K., 2548 offers the possibility of a different *Vorlage* or the translator's exegesis.

conquest of Canaan. Also, the cities are no longer “strong” in the Greek.³¹⁷ Another minus in this verse is an equivalent for **אֲשֶׁר עָזְבוּ**.³¹⁸

The Targum understands **הַחֲרָשׁ וְהָאֶמִיר** as meaning “desolation and waste” (**דַּחְרוּב** (ואתחמר).³¹⁹

Another word for branch used in Isaiah, **פֶּאֶרָה**, can be found in **Isa 10:33**.

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| Look, the Sovereign, the LORD of hosts, will lop the boughs with terrifying power; | הִנֵּה הָאֲדוֹן יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת מְסַעֵף פֶּאֶרָה בְּמַעֲרָצָה | ἰδοὺ γὰρ ὁ δεσπότης κύριος σαβαωθ συνταράσσει τοὺς ἐνδόξους μετὰ ἰσχύος, | For behold, the Sovereign, the Lord Sabaoth, will mightily confound the glorious ones, |
| the tallest trees will be cut down, and the lofty will be brought low. | וְרַמֵּי הַקֹּמָה גְּדוּעִים וְהַגְּבִהִים יִשְׁפְּלוּ: | καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῇ ὕβρει συντριβήσονται, καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ ταπεινωθήσονται, | 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 **פֶּאֶרָה** 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.³²⁰ The Greek may not have understood either term in the phrase **מְסַעֵף פֶּאֶרָה**. The word **פֶּאֶרָה** 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 Psa 18:14(17:15). Also, it could have been a logical move: for a group of people to “branch” could imply a parting of ways, a division (**סְעֻפָּה**), 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

³¹⁷ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 192 attributes this to the similar letters in the following word, as does LXX.D.E.K., 2548.

³¹⁸ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 54 suggests the Hebrew is a gloss.

³¹⁹ “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.”

³²⁰ Cf. van der Kooij, “Metaphorical Language,” 182.

the wicked sons of the watchers who fell: **ובניהם אשר כרום ארזים גבהם וכהרים**.³²¹ Also, the LXX interprets **הַקֹּמָה** by saying *τῇ ὕβρει*. In 37:24, **קֹמַת** 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 **גְּדֹעִים** can mean “to break,” since it is rendered with *συγκαλάω* five times,³²² and in Isaiah, twice with *συντρίβω*.³²³

The translator has interpreted the plant imagery, as Ottley has pointed out, by making high branches stand for the high in arrogance.³²⁴ This is indeed what the Hebrew image is about as well and 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 **פֶּאֶרָה** and was not sure what **מִסְעָף** meant as a participle, but it seems likely he was deliberately interpreting the metaphor personally.³²⁵

The Targum has a very different understanding of this verse. It inserts wine treading imagery, similar to Isa 63:2-4.³²⁶ The second part of the verse is much more literal, however.

In Isa 4:2, another term for branch, **צֶמַח**, is rendered with a word that can mean “to shine:” *ἐπιλάμπω*.³²⁷ As we 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 as though it were the Aramaic word. The Targum, though, here renders it with **משיחא**.³²⁸

In **Isa 27:10-11** two terms for “branch” in the Hebrew appear (**סֵעָף** and **קֶצִיר**), though there is no terminology for “branch” in the Greek.

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| For the fortified city is solitary, a habitation deserted and forsaken, like the wilderness; the calves graze there, there they lie down, and strip its branches. | כִּי עֵיר בְּצוּרָה בָּדֵד נֹה מְשֻׁלַּח וְנִעְזָב כַּמְדָּבָר שֵׁם יִרְעָה עֵגֶל וְשֵׁם יִרְבֵּץ וְכֻלָּה סֶעְפִּיָּה: | τὸ κατοικοῦμενον ποίμνιον ἀνειμένον ἔσται ὡς ποίμνιον καταλελειμμένον· καὶ ἔσται πολὺν χρόνον εἰς βόσκημα, καὶ κεῖ ἀναπαύσονται. | The <i>sheep</i> inhabiting ³²⁹ (it) will be left deserted, like a forsaken <i>flock</i> ; and it will be turned into a feeding place for a long time, and there they will rest. |
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³²¹ Damascus Document, II.19.

³²² Isa 45:2; Psa 75:11; 107:16; Jer 50:23; Lam 2:3.

³²³ The other occurrence is Isa 14:12.

³²⁴ Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 166.

³²⁵ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint of Isaiah*, 270-71 mentions this phrase as an example of where the translator’s social-ethical feelings are evident in his translation. LXX.D.E.K., 2534 and van der Kooij, “Metaphorical Language,” 182 also believe the translator was interpreting the metaphor.

³²⁶ “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.”

³²⁷ For a discussion of Isa 4:2 see the fruit section above.

³²⁸ Cf. 61:11, where the Targum renders **צֶמַח** with **צמח**.

³²⁹ 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.

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| 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. | בִּיבֶשׁ קְצִירָהּ תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה נָשִׁים בְּאֵוֹת מְאִירוֹת אוֹתָהּ כִּי לֹא עִם- בִּינּוֹת הוּא עַל-כֵּן לֹא-יִרְחַמְנוּ עֲשֵׂהָ וַיֵּצְרוּ לֹא יִחַנְנוּ: | καὶ μετὰ χρόνον οὐκ ἔσται ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν χλωρόν 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 αὐτούς οὐ μὴ ἐλέησῃ. | 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. |
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This passage occurs in a large section marked by its 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 get destroyed by grazing cattle, and once dead and dry get burned. The Greek, however, probably based on the cattle grazing (שָׁם יִרְעָה) (עֵגֶל) focuses on the idea of a flock of sheep being abandoned so they feed and rest for a long time, until there is nothing left there to eat, since it dried up.

The Hebrew at the beginning of the verse is translated as the end of the previous verse. Regarding the plant terminology, it would appear the phrase **וְכָלָה סְעֵפִיָּה בִּיבֶשׁ קְצִירָהּ** **תִּשְׁבְּרָנָה** has been understood to express all the greenery drying up, and so has been paraphrased with *καὶ μετὰ χρόνον οὐκ ἔσται ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν χλωρόν διὰ τὸ ξηρανθῆναι*.³³⁰ LXX.D.E.K. suggests **כלה** was read in the sense of “*vergehen*,” and so comes to this rendering.³³¹ The term *χλωρός* or “greenery” could be based on understanding the idea of branches (סְעֵפִיָּה),³³² 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 **קְצִיר**, though that passage is also complicated regarding its rendering. Perhaps the LXX-Isa translator based *χλωρός* on the occurrence of **קְצִיר**. The term **קְצִיר** meaning branch is translated with *κλῆμα* in Psa 80:11(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 it dried up.

³³⁰ LXX.D.E.K., 2573.

³³¹ LXX.D.E.K., 2573.

³³² Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 236.

The Targum interprets the branches as armies being cut off, confounded, and broken.³³³

2.6.3. Branch as Greek Translation

In a one place, LXX-Isa has a word for “branch” where the Hebrew does not.

Isa 55:12

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| 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. | כִּי־בְשִׂמְחָה תֵּצֵאוּ וּבְשָׁלוֹם תּוּבְלוּ הַהָרִים וְהַגְּבָעוֹת יִפְצְחוּ לִפְנֵיכֶם רִנָּה וְכָל־עֵצֵי הַשָּׂדֶה יִמְחֲאוּ־כָף: | 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 ἐπικροτήσῃ τοῖς κλάδοις, | for you shall go out with joy and <i>pass through</i> ³³⁴ 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 Psa 98:8 the same anthropomorphisms are applied to streams and mountains, but is rendered more literally: יִרְנְנוּ הָרִים יַחַד הָרִים יִמְחֲאוּ־כָף; there the LXX has ποταμοὶ κροτήσουσιν χειρὶ ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό, τὰ ὄρη ἀγαλλιάσονται.³³⁵ In Isa 55:12, rather than the hills making a joyful noise (since they can not properly make any noise), they are said to rise up and greet them.³³⁶ 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 put an analogous piece of plant anatomy to what humans would have for hands: κλάδος.³³⁷ This may not, though, be an issue of interpreting a metaphor, but could be under the influence of Lev 23:40, where date-palm branches are called

³³³ “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 discerning people; therefore he who made them will not have compassion on them, and he who formed them will not pity them.”

³³⁴ NETS disagrees with the Göttingen LXX, and instead follows Rahlfs’ text: διδαχθήσεσθε. That διδαχθήσεσθε is the better reading, see LXX.D.E.K., 2672. 1QIsa^a reads תלכו.

³³⁵ See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 353.

³³⁶ Cf. the traditional Irish blessing which begins: “May the road rise to meet you, May the wind be always at your back...”

³³⁷ LXX.D.E.K., 2672.

כַּפֹּת הַמִּנְעוּל. There, though, the LXX renders it with κάλλυνθρα φοινίκων (frond of date-palms). Also, the word כַּפָּה 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.³³⁸ Still, LXX-Isa may not be interpreting 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 χεῖρί, while α' has ταρσῶ.³³⁹ The Targum follows the LXX, making the trees rustle their branches.³⁴⁰ 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 נֹצֵר, 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 נֹצֵר 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 אֹמִיר 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 occurs again, 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 (יֹנֵק) 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 פֶּאֶרָה could have been understood as a pun for glorious ones through the tree metaphor running through the passage, or 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 “sprout,” as also the branch

³³⁸ We will discuss these passages in the section on reeds (3.1.3.).

³³⁹ LSJ has the definition “mass of matted roots” based on its occurrence in Theophrastus, *De Causis Plantarum*, 3.7.2. This meaning is probably not what α' had in mind.

³⁴⁰ “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*.”

in 17:6, though there it adds that it is a rebellious branch. In 17:9, though, 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, though, 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 or group. It is interesting to note, since seeds, fruit, roots, a flower, sprouts, and branches are used for individuals or groups in both MT and the LXX of Isaiah, but 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-Isa 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 potentially create confusion if rendered literally.

LXX-Isa 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 more potently communicate in the passage 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(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 hopefully made clear the independence of the LXX-Isa translator. He does not seem obliged to follow the example of other LXX translators, and certainly does not restrict metaphors to one meaning, but rather carefully renders each verse in its context. He occasionally seems to give thought to the meaning and best way to express a given metaphor, but it is always in the context of the passage at hand and is in the service of the passage’s perceived meaning.