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

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## CHAPTER 3

### KINDS OF PLANTS

Metaphors can be culturally specific, as many theorists have shown, so metaphors that deal with specific kinds of plants may or may not be intelligible to different cultures living in different environments. This chapter will examine metaphors mentioning specific kinds of plants to see how the translator rendered them. While much plant life is common both to Egypt and Judea, there are some significant differences in flora, environment, and landscape. Ziegler has already pointed out many features of LXX-Isa that reflect an Egyptian provenance.<sup>1</sup> While expanding on this observation, we will also see that in other places the underlying Judean situation will shine through in the translation, and in a few places the translator seems to add features that better describe Judea than Egypt.

In this chapter we will examine various categories of plants in turn. First we will look at reeds and canes; second grass will be examined; third types of grain and related terminology; fourth thorns and thistles will be examined; fifth vineyards and vines; sixth trees; and seventh we will look at one simile where the Greek has a kind of chard; finally some conclusions will be offered.

#### 3.1. Reeds

Reeds are mentioned a few times in Isaiah though in several different ways. The Hebrew terms used are קִנְיָה, גִּמְא, אֶגְמוֹן, סוּף, and עֵרוֹת. In this section we will discuss the first three terms in order (the last two occur once each and will be mentioned below), then summarize how reed metaphors are rendered.

##### 3.1.1. קִנְיָה

In 19:6 we find the phrase וְסוּף קִנְיָה and it is translated with *καλάμου και παπύρου*, though this passage is a literal description of Egypt's punishment.<sup>2</sup> In the Greek, these two plants could be considered as specific valuable plants that will fail as a crop (or foraged good),

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<sup>1</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, "Kapital 8. Der alexandrinisch-ägyptische Hintergrund der Je-LXX," 175-212.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the meaning extends beyond a physical drought to political, social, and cultural drought. In the LXX, *παπύρος* only occurs three times. In Job 8:11 it renders גִּמְא, but in Job 40:16(21) it occurs with two synonyms which together stand for קִנְיָה וּבִצְהָה.

or they could simply be two terms for plants that grow in the marshes and are vulnerable to drought. Of note is that the LXX feels the need to add that they are in the marshes, ἔλος, whereas the context could have suggested that they are growing on the river, streams, canals, and pools.<sup>3</sup> The next verse, 19:7, has another word that could mean reed, עֲרוֹת, which the LXX renders with ἄχτι (reed-grass).<sup>4</sup> In the passage as a whole, one can not help but think of Job 8:11-13 where fools who forget God are compared to reeds which cannot survive without water, since the devastation of Egypt is related to the foolishness of its councilors in Isa 19:10. But it is not clear that LXX-Isa has this in mind since, as we will discuss below, the translator misses his chance to connect reeds and fools together in 19:15. The Targum translates 19:6 literally.<sup>5</sup>

**Isa 35:7**

<p>the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water; the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp, the grass shall become reeds and rushes.</p>	<p>וְהָיָה הַשָּׂדֶה לְאֵי וְצִמְאֵון לְמַבְוֵי מַיִם בְּנוֹה תַנִּים רְבֻצָה חֲצִיר לְקִנְיָה וְגַמָּא:</p>	<p>καὶ ἡ ἄνυδρος ἔσται εἰς ἔλη, καὶ εἰς τὴν διψῶσαν γῆν πηγὴ ὕδατος ἔσται· ἐκεῖ εὐφροσύνη ὀρνέων, ἔπαυλις καλάμου καὶ ἔλη.</p>	<p>the dry place shall turn into marshlands, and in the thirsty land there shall be springs of water; the joy of birds shall be there—a residence of reed and marshlands.</p>
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This verse comes in the context of a restoration which is depicted with the image of the wilderness sprouting with life. As van der Kooij has shown, the LXX links 35:1-2 with Isaiah 32:2 and 25:5 and so uses the idea of the thirsty land and thirsty people to be references to Zion.<sup>6</sup> While 35:7 is not necessarily a metaphor, it vividly illustrates the translator’s conceptions of marshes and reeds.

The first half of the verse is translated literally, except for the springs becoming singular in the Greek, and the addition of ἔσται for the sake of clarity. The second part of the verse is more difficult. Scholars have disputed how to understand this part of the verse, but the LXX reading is completely different. There is no clear textual warrant for rendering בְּנוֹה תַנִּים רְבֻצָה with ἐκεῖ εὐφροσύνη ὀρνέων.<sup>7</sup> Ottley suggests בנוה may have been read as a form of רִנָּן.<sup>8</sup> Ziegler believes the idea of “joy” may come from the influence of 32:14.<sup>9</sup> LXX.D.E.K.

<sup>3</sup> The plus in this passage is based on the word מצור, but it is unclear how.

<sup>4</sup> HALOT, s.v. But DCH, s.v. seems to have reservations about this meaning of עֲרוֹת.

<sup>5</sup> “and the canals will be devastated, and their deep rivers will dry up and be desolate, reed and rush will not come up. 7 The greater part of the river will dry up, and will become as its stones, and every place where they sow by the river will dry up, be desolate and not sprout.”

<sup>6</sup> Arie van der Kooij, “Rejoice, O Thirsty Desert! (Isaiah 35): On Zion in the Septuagint of Isaiah,” in ‘Enlarge the Site of Your Tent:’ The City as Unifying Theme in Isaiah (eds. Archibald L. H. M. van Wieringen and Annemarieke van der Woude; Leiden: Brill, 2011): 11-20.

<sup>7</sup> In 13:22 תַנִּים is rendered with ἔχινος; while in 34:13 and 43:20 it is rendered with σειρήν. The last term is what is found in α’ and σ’ of 35:7. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 35:7 agrees with MT, except lacks the ה on רבצה.

<sup>8</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 280.

<sup>9</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 149.

suggests “joy” came from seeing תנה and “birds” from הצפר, or he associated “residence” with birds, as in Deut 22:6.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps the translator was surprised by the lack of a contrast in this part of the verse and so decided to insert a more positive image describing what the desert would become. The insertion of “joy” εὐφροσύνη, probably comes from the greater context, since it is repeated three times in 35:10.<sup>11</sup> In 34:11, birds are part of the picture of abandoned places, but here they are singing for joy in a peaceful marsh scene. This image seems more at home in Egypt than in Judea where the scene would be more likely a river bank than a marsh.<sup>12</sup> One thinks of Egyptian art works, such as the fowling scene depicted in the tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē, where the birds are flying up from a papyrus marsh.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, in a simile used in a text about the dedication of Edfu, the bread is said to be as numerous as the sand on the beach, the oxen like a cloud of locusts, and as many birds as in a swamp.<sup>14</sup> In 35:6, however, in both Hebrew and Greek, the image is much more like a flashflood in the desert. The springs and marsh in 35:7 show that it was a flash flood that permanently transformed the desert.

In the last phrase, הַצִּיר appears to have been read with the meaning “an abode” or “residence.” This makes good sense, since this is its meaning in 34:13 where we also find the phrase תְּנִים תְּנִים. The most common equivalent for קִנָּה is κάλαμος; this is a good equivalent in that they are both rather general words for reeds or canes. According to Musselman, קִנָּה refers to *arundo donax* as well as generally to other kinds of reeds most of the time in the Old Testament (when one of its extended meanings is not meant), but in five places refers to *acorus calamus*, or calamus (Exod 30:23; Song 4:14; Isa 43:24; Jer 6:20; Ezek 27:19).<sup>15</sup> In Exod 30:23, the LXX has καλάμου εὐώδους, the same term for *acorus calamus* as Theophrastus (*Enquiry* 4.8.3; 9.7.1 and 3) uses: κάλαμος ὁ εὐώδης.<sup>16</sup> In Isa 35:7, then, we should assume a generic meaning for καλάμου, since the LXX often is more specific (usually due to the Hebrew being more specific) when it means calamus (even if the LXX does not interpret it as meaning calamus).

<sup>10</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2599.

<sup>11</sup> However, in 35:6 instead of the mute shouting for joy (וְתִרְצֵן לְשׁוֹן אֵלִים) they speak clearly (καὶ τρανῆ ἔσται γλῶσσα μογιλάων).

<sup>12</sup> A wet area full of reeds is possible in the Jordan valley, near Dan, and in a few other river valleys (such as Zin Canyon or En Gedi) but is not typical. Remember, though, the Hebrew does say אֲנָם.

<sup>13</sup> Norman de Garis Davies, *The Tomb of Rekh-Mi-Rē at Thebes* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art Egyptian Expedition vol. 11; New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1943), plate 42.

<sup>14</sup> “zu essen gab es mehr als das Sand auf einem Strand ist,... es wurden mehr Ochsen aller Rassen geschlachtet als eine Wolke von Heuschrecken, so viele Vögel wie in einem Sumpf.” S. Saumeron and H. Stierlin, *Die letzten Tempel Agyptens: Edfu und Philae* (Zürich: Atlantis, 1978), 40.

<sup>15</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 73.

<sup>16</sup> The word εὐώδης is only used in this verse, twice rendering בִּשְׁם (Cf. Targum Isa 43:24, where קנה is rendered בִּשְׁם קני בסם. The two most common renderings of בִּשְׁם in the LXX are ἄρωμα (15x) and ἡδυσμα (7x)). The other occurrence in this verse modifies cinnamon. For the other verses where Musselman believes calamus is meant, Song 4:14 the usual translation equivalent is used without any description or elaboration. We will discuss the Isaiah passage below, but there we find θυμίαμα. LXX Jer 6:20 interprets the phrase תְּנִים תְּנִים as referring to cinnamon: καὶ κιννάμωμον. There is no equivalent in Ezek 27:19.

The rendering of אֶמְגַל with ἔλος is peculiar. The word only occurs four times in the Hebrew Bible, and is treated differently each time. In Exod 2:3 it is not rendered. In Job 8:11 it is rendered with πάπυρος, which is the ideal translation. We will deal with Isa 18:2 below, but it is enough here to note that it is rendered βύβλινος. In 35:7, we could have a textual issue, in that the text (or just the translator) read אגם instead of אגמ,<sup>17</sup> which is elsewhere rendered five times with ἔλος,<sup>18</sup> including the first part of the current verse. Having a word for marsh appears to be an idea important for our translator in passages where deserts become wet and green and vice versa (19:6; 33:9; 35:7; 41:18; 42:15); the association of reeds and marshes seems to be appropriate and well known to Egyptians.<sup>19</sup>

The Targum is literal, for the most part, but clarifies the meaning of the second part of the verse by the addition of תמן: תמן יסגי קני וגומא: תמן, “the place where jackals dwell, there reeds and rushes will increase.”<sup>20</sup> In 35:6, however, the disabled people being healed are interpreted as captives returning, and in 35:9 the lion is interpreted as a wicked king.

In the narrative in Isa 36:6 Sennacherib’s messenger uses a metaphor of a bruised reed.

<p>“See, you are relying on Egypt, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.”</p>	<p>הִנֵּה בְטַחְתָּ עַל- מִשְׁעַנְתֵּי הַקֶּנֶה הַרְצוּן הַזֶּה עַל- מִצְרַיִם אֲשֶׁר יִסְמְךָ אִישׁ עָלָיו וּבֵא בְכַפּוֹ וְנִקְבְּהָ בְּנִפְרָעָה מִלְדֵּי-מִצְרַיִם לְכֹל- הַבְּטָחִים עָלָיו:</p>	<p>ἰδοὺ πεποιθῶς εἶ ἐπὶ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν καλαμίνην τὴν τεθλασμένην ταύτην, ἐπ’ Αἴγυπτον· ὃς ἂν ἐπ’ αὐτὴν ἐπιστηρισθῆι, εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ· οὕτως ἐστὶ Φαραω βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου καὶ πάντες οἱ πεποιθότες ἐπ’ αὐτῷ.</p>	<p>“See, you are trusting in Egypt, this <i>rod of crushed reed</i>; whoever leans on it, it will go into his hand. Such is Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and all who trust in him.”</p>
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In the Hebrew, the image is of using a crushed or damaged reed as a staff, which breaks as soon as you try to put any weight on it, so that it hurts you rather than helps you. The interpretation of this metaphor is given twice in the verse, first in apposition to the reed equating it, then again at the end of the verse in an explanation. The structure, giving the metaphor then the explanation introduced with בְּ, almost makes it a comparison. In the Greek, the tenses are played with a bit and the passage is made into nice Greek (as seen by the use of a periphrastic construction, the use of definite articles in the description of the staff, and the rendering of אִישׁ with ὃς ἂν). The rendering of the phrase הִנֵּה הַרְצוּן הַקֶּנֶה הַמִּשְׁעַנְתֵּי is

<sup>17</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 280; and LXX.D.E.K., 2599.

<sup>18</sup> Exod 7:19; 8:1; Isa 35:7; 41:18; 42:15. It also renders סוּף in Exod 2:3 and 5.

<sup>19</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 189-90.

<sup>20</sup> “and the parched ground [sic] shall become pools of water, and the thirsty area springs of water; the place where jackals dwell, there reeds and rushes will increase.”

literal, showing that the staff is made of reed: ἐπὶ τὴν ῥάβδον τὴν καλαμίνην τὴν τεθλασμένην ταύτην. Either the LXX’s *Vorlage* lacked הַקֶּבֶץ or the translator thought the idea was already expressed by εἰσελεύσεται εἰς τὴν χεῖρα αὐτοῦ, and so omitted what he thought was a redundant synonym.<sup>21</sup> It is present in the parallel text in Kings, both in the Hebrew and Greek, and also is included in Theodotion of our passage.<sup>22</sup>

In all, the rendering of this verse is quite literal. The metaphor is already explained in the Hebrew, so there is no extra work for the translator in rendering it. The reed is probably chosen for the metaphor both because it is typical of Egypt, and also because a reed can be weakened by being crushed and breaks in such a way that it would hurt someone, like in this image. Of note is how much is not rendered, in contrast, in the next verse, 36:7, though that is beyond the scope of this research.

The Targum clarifies the first mention of Egypt by rendering it פֶּרַעַה מְלֹכָא דְּמִצְרַיִם.<sup>23</sup> This makes the two interpretations of what the reed-staff represents identical. Otherwise the rendering is quite literal.

In **Isa 42:3** there is another reference to a bruised reed.

<p>a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice.</p>	<p>קִנְיָה רְצוּץ לֹא יִשְׁבֹּר וּפְשֵׁתָה כְּהָה לֹא יִכְבֶּנֶה לְאַמֶּת יוֹצֵיא מִשְׁפָּט:</p>	<p>κάλαμον τεθλασμένον οὐ συντρίψει καὶ λίνον καπνιζόμενον οὐ σβέσει, ἀλλὰ εἰς ἀλήθειαν ἐξοίσει κρίσιν.</p>	<p>a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking wick he will not quench, but he will bring forth judgment for truth.</p>
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The bruised reed here has nothing to do with the use in 36:6. The LXX renders literally, the biggest difference being the addition of the contrastive ἀλλά. The translator does not give what he thinks the metaphors mean, but in the Hebrew there are similar images in 36:6 of a bruised reed, and in 43:17 where warriors and armies are said to die like an extinguished wick כְּבִיבֵי פְשֵׁתָה כְּבִיבֵי, ὡς λίνον ἐσβεσμένον. However, these passages do not seem related in the Hebrew or the Greek; it is merely the reuse of the same vehicle for different tenors. The meaning here has to do with the servant’s mercy and gentleness toward the weak.

The Targum interprets the two metaphors by making them similes: the meek are like a bruised reed and the poor are like a smoldering wick (perhaps to disambiguate from the metaphors in 36:6 and 43:17).<sup>24</sup> The Targum renders the second part of the verse literally without any addition.

<sup>21</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 62-63.

<sup>22</sup> See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 284.

<sup>23</sup> “Behold, you are relying on *Pharaoh king of Egypt*, that broken reed of a staff, which will pierce the hand of *the man who leans on it*. Such is *Pharaoh king of Egypt* to all who rely on him.”

<sup>24</sup> “*The poor who are like a bruised reed* he will not break, and *the needy who are like a dimly burning wick* he will not quench; he will bring forth *judgment* for *his truth*.”

In the two places where an extended meaning of קנה is used, LXX translates appropriately. In Isa 43:24 the plant is mentioned in the context of sacrifices, so means specifically the plant *acorus calamus* or calamus, which has a root used in incense.<sup>25</sup> The LXX renders with θυμίαμα (incense), and the Targum clarifies by saying קני בסם. In 46:6 קנה is used to refer to the beam of a set of scales. The LXX renders it with ζυγός, which is the appropriate Greek term,<sup>26</sup> and the Targum takes a similar strategy rendering with מוזניא.

### 3.1.2. גמא

Another term for a reed is גמא which, as we have seen, means papyrus. We have discussed its only other occurrence in 35:7.

#### Isa 18:2

<p>sending ambassadors by <i>sea</i> in vessels of papyrus on the waters! Go, you swift messengers, to a nation tall and smooth, to a people feared near and far, a nation mighty and conquering, whose land the rivers divide.</p>	<p>הַשְּׁלַח בְּיָמֵי צִירִים וּבְכֵלֵי-גַמָּא עַל-פְּנֵי- מַיִם לָבוֹא מִלְּאֲכָבִים קָלִים אֶל-גּוֹי מְמַשְׁדָּה וּמוֹרָט אֶל-עַם נוֹרָא מִן-הוּא וְהִלְאָה גּוֹי קוֹקוֹ וּמְבוֹטָה אֲשֶׁר- בְּזָאוּ נְהָרִים אֲרָצוֹ:</p>	<p>ὁ ἀποστέλλων ἐν θαλάσῃ ὄμηρα καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βυβλίνας ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος· πορεύσονται γὰρ ἄγγελοι κοῦφοι πρὸς ἔθνος μετέωρον καὶ ξένον λαὸν καὶ χαλεπόν, τίς αὐτοῦ ἐπέκεινα; ἔθνος ἀνέλπιστον καὶ καταπεπατημένον. νῦν οἱ ποταμοὶ τῆς γῆς</p>	<p>he who sends hostages by sea and papyrus letters on the water! For swift messengers will go to a high nation, and a foreign and fierce people: who is beyond it? It is a nation without hope and trampled down. Now the rivers of the land</p>
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Our interest in this passage is only in the first parallel clauses. In the Hebrew, the second cola expands on how the messengers will travel on the sea, namely, on papyrus boats on the water. The LXX takes the phrase כְּלֵי-גַמָּא not as a description of a kind of boat, but as a circumlocution for an epistle.<sup>27</sup> The LXX seems to have a more specific idea for this passage in mind than the Hebrew expresses. This is seen by the rendering of צִירִים. This term for some sort of messenger is translated with ἄγγελος (three times) in the LXX, and in LXX-Isa is twice translated with πρέσβυς. Only here is it rendered with ὄμηρος.<sup>28</sup> This rendering shows a much more specific relationship: if they sent only a messenger or envoy it shows they wanted to talk, but sending hostages shows they already have a certain agreement or obligation and are subordinate. This rendering may be in part under the influence of the translator's understanding of the next clause.

<sup>25</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 73.

<sup>26</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>27</sup> Ziegler simply calls it a free rendering in his description of the rendering of כְּלֵי. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

<sup>28</sup> Van der Kooij points out that this word equivalence is also found in Aquila Prov 13:17 and Symmachus Isa 57:9. van der Kooij, "The City of Alexandria and the Ancient Versions," 147 nt.10. See also LXX.D.E.K., 2550.



In Hebrew the word **כֶּלִי** is remarkably versatile, and often is given specificity by the noun it is in construct with. Only in this passage is it used to refer to ships.<sup>29</sup> While papyrus boats could undoubtedly be seen on the rivers and canals of Egypt, as indeed they can still be seen today,<sup>30</sup> the only other Biblical reference to a papyrus water craft is the **אֲנִיֹּת אֲבָה** in Job 9:26 and the ark in Exod 2:3, but in neither place does the Greek render as a papyrus boat. The translator of LXX-Isa 18 could have taken **כֶּלִי** in its most general sense, “an article, object,”<sup>31</sup> and given the material “papyrus” and the context of sending hostages and messengers, rather naturally assumed the phrase referred to letters. The translator, then, translates by way of metonymy of the genus, exchanging the general “object” to the specific “letter.”<sup>32</sup> Only here in the LXX do we find the adjective *βυβλίνας*, though elsewhere we find *πάπυρος* (Isa 19:6; Job 8:11; 40:21) which refers to the plant, not the material. The idea of ships, however, is still present in the LXX of the passage in 18:1.

Elsewhere LXX-Isa often renders **כֶּלִי** with the standard *σκεῦος* (Isa 10:28 where it refers to baggage; 39:2 where it refers to Hezekiah’s valuables; 52:11 where it refers to temple vessels; 54:16 where it refers to something made by a smith; in 54:17 the term is used, but the LXX may change the meaning from a weapon to a generic item; 65:4 where it refers to cooking and eating vessels).<sup>33</sup> At times, though, LXX-Isa specifies to what it thinks **כֶּלִי** refers. In 13:5 where weapons are meant, it is rendered with *ὄπλομάχος*.<sup>34</sup> In 61:10 where the ornaments and jewelry of a bride are meant, it is rendered with *κόσμος*. In two places, the translator goes beyond specifying a general word with a specific rendering and actually interprets. In 66:20, the phrase **בְּכֵלֵי טְהוֹר** becomes *μετὰ ψαλμῶν*, a rendering due to contextual reasons.<sup>35</sup> We have already discussed Isa 22:24 (1.3.3.4.), but in brief, the entire metaphor of the verse is interpreted, and the various vessels have been interpreted by merism for all the people: *ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου*.

It should be noted that in 18:1 the Greek adds a reference to a boat, *πλοῖον*, which could be under the influence of 18:2, or may be an equivalent for **צֶלְצֵל**, as in Job 40:31.<sup>36</sup> There are undoubtedly other contextual reasons for the LXX translator’s decision to translate these phrases the way that he does (see also, for instance, the translation of 18:2b and the same clause in 18:7), but we will leave that to other studies.

<sup>29</sup> The closest it gets is “cargo” in Jonah 1:5.

<sup>30</sup> F. Nigel Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Plants: Flowers and Trees, Fruits and Vegetables, Ecology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 69-70.

<sup>31</sup> See BDB s.v., def. 1.

<sup>32</sup> Aristotle might look down on using the metaphor “vessel of papyrus” to mean a letter; while it is a sort of genus for species, the metaphor is not proportional, in that it can not be reversed; a vessel can not be called a letter very easily. See Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.4.4.

<sup>33</sup> Ziegler describes the translation of **כֶּלִי** in LXX-Isa as an example of the translator’s freedom to interpret figurative expressions. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83-84.

<sup>34</sup> The only other place this term is used is in the previous verse, 13:4.

<sup>35</sup> Bringing a sacrifice in clean vessels is no longer possible in the Greek, since the sacrifice has become a simile for bringing prisoners.

<sup>36</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2550.

The Targum understands the clauses in question in 18:2 to refer to messengers and fishing boats, respectively.<sup>37</sup> Also the people are “robbed and plundered” by the gentiles. But in 18:1 the land is India, not Cush.

### 3.1.3. אַגְמוֹן

Another term for reed is אַגְמוֹן, related to the term for marsh, אַגְמָה.

#### Isa 58:5

<p>Is such the fast that I choose, a day to humble oneself? Is it to bow down the head like a bulrush, and to lie in sackcloth and ashes? Will you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?</p>	<p>הַכִּזָּה יְהִי־צוֹם אֲבַחְרֶהוּ יוֹם עֲנוּת אָדָם נִפְשׁוֹ הַלְכָף כְּאֶגְמוֹן רֹאשׁוֹ וְשָׂק וְאֶפְרָל יִצְיַע הַלְזָה תִּקְרָא-צוֹם וְיוֹם רְצוֹן לַיהוָה:</p>	<p>οὐ ταύτην τὴν νηστείαν ἐξελεξάμην καὶ ἡμέραν ταπεινοῦν ἄνθρωπον τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ· οὐδ’ ἂν κάμψῃς ὡς κρίκον τὸν τράχηλόν σου καὶ σάκκον καὶ σποδὸν ὑποστρώσῃ, οὐδ’ οὕτως καλέσετε νηστείαν δεκτὴν.</p>	<p>This is not the fast I have chosen, even a day for a person to humble himself; not even if you bend your neck like a ring and spread under you sackcloth and ashes—not even so shall you call it an acceptable fast.</p>
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Our interest in this verse is in the simile. In the Hebrew we have the bowing of the head compared to a reed bending; it is easy to imagine a papyrus reed with its globe of flowers at the top bowing down in the wind. The Greek, however, has changed head to neck and reed to ring.<sup>38</sup> Ziegler points out that κάπτω is elsewhere associated with necks, but never with heads.<sup>39</sup>

The word אַגְמוֹן occurs only five times in the Hebrew Bible, three times in Isaiah it is not literally rendered (we will discuss the other two occurrences below) nor in the two occurrences in Job (in Job 40:26 it appears to be rendered with κρίκον, though Muraoka finds the equivalence implausible,<sup>40</sup> and in Job 41:12 it is rendered with ἄνθραξ, probably due to the context). It could be argued that the translators of all these passages simply do not know what the word means, which is odd, since the LXX knows the meaning of אַגְמָה. In both Job passages it appears that the translator has used the context to make a guess (different in each place). BDB and Ottley suggest it could refer to a rope made from reed fiber, which would explain the rendering in Job 40:26 and Isa 58:5.<sup>41</sup> Another explanation can be found in looking at the words more commonly rendered with κρίκος: וַי (3x) and קֶרֶס (4x), both terms meaning “hook.” The translator may have thought a bent hook or ring was a better image for a

<sup>37</sup> “which sends messengers by the sea and in fishing boats upon the waters! Go, swift messengers, to the people robbed and plundered, to the people which was strong before and continually, the people robbed and plundered whose land the Gentiles plundered.”

<sup>38</sup> 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> agrees with LXX’s second person pronoun: רֹאשׁוֹ.

<sup>39</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99-100. He points out the close parallel in Ecc 30:12.

<sup>40</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v. Rashi, however, says אַגְמוֹן refers to a bent needle or fishhook.

<sup>41</sup> BDB. s.v. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 359.

bowed neck than a bending reed. In either case, while the LXX changes the vehicle of the simile, it is still apt, as Ziegler has said.<sup>42</sup>

The Targum is literal, even using the word אגמון, though it feels the need to explain the simile, adding that the rush is bowed down.<sup>43</sup>

**Isa 9:13**

<p>So the LORD cut off from Israel head and tail, palm branch and reed in one day--</p>	<p>וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל          רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כַּפֵּה          וְאַגְמוֹן יוֹם אֶחָד:</p>	<p>καὶ ἀφείλε κύριος ἀπὸ          Ἰσραηλ κεφαλὴν καὶ          οὐράν, μέγαν καὶ          μικρόν ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ,</p>	<p>So the Lord took away from Israel head and tail, great and small in one day--</p>
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In the Hebrew of the next verse (9:14) the head (LXX: ἀρχή) is said to be the elders and those following them and the tail are the prophets. In the passage as a whole, however, there is no interpretation for what the branch and reed represent. If the two word pairs are understood as synonymously parallel, or two images of the same thing, we can suppose that the palm-branch represents the rulers (just as the Hasmonean kings used the palm branch as their symbol). The reed also, in theory, could represent prophets perhaps by the association of reed flutes (as mentioned with prophets and other instruments in 1 Sam 10:5), though this is a strained speculation. Apart from 9:14, there is no mention of prophets in the passage. The LXX seems to have understood אַגְמוֹן וְכַפֵּה not as synonymous to the first image but as further describing it, and so renders it as great and small,<sup>44</sup> so that all the leaders and prophets will be removed. The branches and reeds, then, were seen as a merism for all the leaders. The only place outside Isaiah where the term כַּפֵּה is used is Job 15:32, where it is rendered ῥάδαμνος; as mentioned in the section on branches above (2.6.3.), the LXX-Isa translator may have thought he saw the word כַּפֵּה in Isa 55:12.

Ziegler believes the translator paraphrases.<sup>45</sup> He does not describe why, but says that μέγαν καὶ μικρόν is a proper rendering.<sup>46</sup> Ziegler also points out that the phrase “great and small” occurs many times in the Hebrew Bible, but not in Isaiah.<sup>47</sup> He says LXX-Isa likes to use the phrase when the text is obscure, such as in 22:5, 24; 33:4, 19, though in all these other places the word order is the reverse.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the Hebrew phrase that ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου renders in 22:5 is obscure; LXX.D.E.K. suggests the translator may have read two words, קרקע (ground) and קדקד (top of the head), and rendered the perceived meaning of the

<sup>42</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 100. Here he also discusses how the other versions deal with this passage.

<sup>43</sup> “Is this *it*, the fast that I take pleasure in, a day for a man to afflict himself? Is it to bow down his head like a rush that is bowed down, and to lodge upon sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, and a day that is a pleasure before the LORD?”

<sup>44</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

<sup>45</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84. Ottley calls the translation a “simplified version;” Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 157.

<sup>46</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

<sup>47</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

<sup>48</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

metaphor.<sup>49</sup> Here again it functions in Greek as a merism for all the people suffering what is described. In 22:24 the Hebrew is not obscure, the translator says ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἕως μεγάλου as an interpretation of the metaphor “from cups to flagons,” prompted by the Hebrew כּל כּלי הַקֶּטַן. In 33:4 the Greek phrase could be understood as an interpretation of the Hebrew אֶסֶף הַחֲסִילִים if the phrase were understood to show that even the spoil of a small bug will be plundered. In this case saying simply “from small to great” shows the same thing, that the spoil of all people will be plundered. The last place it occurs in Isaiah, 33:19, it is a plus based on reading the verse a little differently. Moving where the sentence ends, and taking הַמְגַדְלִים as a pual participle and עַם in the next sentence in connection with it, the translator adds μικρὸν καὶ μέγαν to modify the λαόν who are growing up. As we have seen, on several occasions the LXX-Isa translator likes to add “small and great” but it is because of how he reads the Hebrew and appears to be what he thinks the Hebrew intends, and not, as Thackeray believes, because the translator was in doubt of the meaning of the Hebrew.<sup>50</sup>

The Targum interprets these words in 9:13 as kings and governors and such: רִישׁ וְהַגְמוֹן שְׁלֹטוֹן וְאַטְרוֹן.<sup>51</sup>

**Isa 19:15**

Neither head nor tail, palm branch or reed, will be able to do anything for Egypt.	וְלֹא־יְהִי לְמִצְרַיִם מַעֲשֵׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כַּפֶּה וְאַגְמוֹן:	καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἔργον, ὃ ποιήσει κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος.	And there will not be a work for the Egyptians that will make head <i>and</i> tail, beginning <i>and</i> end.
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Here again we have the two word pairs: head and tail, and palm branch and reed. In the context, 19:12-14, the wise men and princes of Egypt are depicted as powerless and confused, like staggering drunks. In light of this, it makes sense to suppose in 19:15 it is the leaders that are meant by the metaphors, like in 9:13. If this is the case, then the two word pairs should be the subject of יַעֲשֶׂה (as in RSV), the verse meaning the various leaders are powerless to do anything to help Egypt.

The Greek, however, makes these word pairs the object of the verb. They no longer represent the leaders being able to do nothing, but describe the state of Egypt itself. In the context of incompetent and confused leaders, these word pairs seem to represent disorder. “Head and tail” may here be much like the English idiom “I can’t make head or tail of it,” meaning one can not understand or make sense of it (put it into order); the pair ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος more clearly has this meaning.<sup>52</sup> To elaborate on Ziegler’s suggestion, the rendering is

<sup>49</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2559.

<sup>50</sup> H. St. J. Thackeray, “The Greek Translators of the Prophetic Books,” *The Journal of Theological Studies* IV (1903): 583 nt. 3.

<sup>51</sup> “So the LORD *destroyed* from Israel head and *commandant, ruler and tyrant* in one day—15 the elder and honoured man is the head, and the *scribe* who teaches deceit is *faint*.”

<sup>52</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

dependent on the previous pair; it probably is meant to reiterate or explain “head and tail,” in that ἀρχή is a synonym of κεφαλή (both render שׂרָר in 9:13 and 9:14, though there the leadership is meant), and τέλος is chosen as a counterpart to ἀρχή.<sup>53</sup>

The Targum interprets these terms exactly as in 9:13.<sup>54</sup>

#### 3.1.4. Summary

In Isaiah, reeds and canes are mentioned only a few times but are used in a variety of ways. In two places they are mentioned as plants that live where there is water: in 19:6-7 they die as Egypt dries up but in 35:7 they are used to describe the desert becoming a marsh. That reeds are closely associated with marshes, so that a transfer between a place and what grows in it is possible, is not unique to this passage; in Exod 2:3, 5 the LXX has marsh (ἔλος) where the Hebrew has reed (רִיבּוֹ). In two places reeds are mentioned in the Hebrew for their frailty once bruised; the LXX renders these places literally (36:6 and 42:3). In 18:2 a word for “reed” is rendered literally but the phrase is changed from a boat to a letter of papyrus, due to the context. In 58:5 a reed is used in the simile of bowing for its ability to bend, but the Greek uses a simile of a bent ring or hook. In 9:13 and 19:15 the same image is rendered in two different ways. In each of these two places it is rendered to explain the meaning of the previous image; the image itself does not really have a life or meaning of its own to the translator (though in 9:13 the idea of a reed being frail may be at work in the Greek). All in all, reeds are used in Isaiah in a variety of ways, and the Old Greek translator tries to catch and accentuate their meaning in the context in which they occur, though this is not always how modern people would understand the Hebrew.

The Targum generally either interprets or renders literally, though occasionally will add words to specify the meaning. It expands 19:6-7 emphasizing that the rivers and canals are drying up; the reference to reeds and canes is preserved literally. Isa 35:7 is rendered literally, with only a few clarifying words. The bruised reed in 36:6 is rendered literally, though Pharaoh is called king; but in 42:3 the Targum turns the bruised reed metaphor into a comparison describing the poor. In 18:2 the vessel of papyrus is rendered as a kind of fishing boat, explaining the odd epithet. The comparison of a bowed head to a reed in 58:5 is rendered literally, though the Targum clarifies the point of comparison: that the reed is bent. The Targum, like LXX-Isa, interprets the word pair “branch and reed” in 9:14 and 19:15 though is much more specific, rendering as rulers and tyrants.

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<sup>53</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 84.

<sup>54</sup> “And the Egyptians will not have a *king who will reign*, head or *commandant*, ruler or *tyrant*.”

### 3.2. Grass

In Isaiah we find a variety of terminology for grass and greenery: **חֲצִיר**, **עֵשֶׂב**, **דָּשָׁא**, **יֵרֶק**, and **חֲשֵׁחַ**. The various words for grass are used either to express the idea of something that quickly flourishes (44:4 and 66:14) or as something that quickly withers (15:6; 37:27; 42:15; 51:12);<sup>55</sup> often both ideas are implicitly at work (such as 40:6-8; 51:12; or 35:7 where dry grass is used in contrast to a pool of reeds). As a corollary to the idea of withering, grass is mentioned as something flammable and quickly consumed by fire (5:24; 33:11).

In the LXX, the rich array of vocabulary is reduced to just three terms: *βοτάνη*, *χόρτος*, and *ἄγρωστος*. Of the ten passages where grass terminology occurs in Isaiah, five are either not rendered or are not metaphors: The term **חֲשֵׁחַ** means dry grass or foliage;<sup>56</sup> as Ziegler has pointed out, both occurrences of this word in Isaiah (5:24 and 33:11) are parallel to the word **חֲשָׁה** but are rendered as verbs.<sup>57</sup> Since this term is not rendered literally we will discuss these passages in the section on chaff (3.3.2.1.1.).<sup>58</sup> The term **חֲצִיר** appears in 35:7; as we discussed in the section on reeds (3.1.1.), it is rendered, based on its other definition, with *ἔπαυλις* (residence).<sup>59</sup> Similarly, the Targum renders with **שְׂרִי** (to dwell). This could be because also in 34:13 **חֲצִיר** appears even more clearly with this meaning. LXX renders it the same way in 34:13 but the Targum has **מְדוּרָא** (dwelling place). The term **עֵשֶׂב** occurs in 42:15, but that clause is not rendered in the LXX, probably because the translator attempted to reduce “(nearly) identical elements that are not joined in coordination.”<sup>60</sup> In 15:6, several words for grass are found and they are again reduced to two nouns (one becomes an adjective), though this verse is not a metaphor but describes how the greenery of Moab will fail. The LXX adds grass terms in three passages; we will discuss 9:17, 10:17, and 32:13 below in the section on thorns (3.4.1.).

This section will discuss the remaining five passages looking first at those concerned with grass that withers and is dry, then will look at grass that flourishes.

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<sup>55</sup> Basson has two categories of plant metaphors more generally that represent a person flourishing (Isa 11:1; 27:6; etc.) or passing away (Isa 1:30; 3:14; 5:5-6; 14:30; etc.). Basson, ““People are Plants,”” 578-79. Sticher, “Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras,” 251-52 discusses metaphors where grass is transient, usually a vehicle representing the wicked.

<sup>56</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>57</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 9-10. However, his attempt to link the Greek rendering to the Aramaic meaning of **חֲשָׁה** “to feel, to suffer,” is not convincing.

<sup>58</sup> Note that 5:24 was already partially discussed in the section on roots (2.3.2.).

<sup>59</sup> This equivalent is also used in Isa 34:13, 42:11, and 62:9.

<sup>60</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 69-70. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has the missing clause. It is noteworthy that LXX-Isa has removed the clause with geography atypical of Egypt.

### 3.2.1. Withering Grass

Four terms for grass, חֲצִיר, דָּשָׂא, יֵרֶק, and עֵשֶׂב, are found together in Isa 37:27.

<p>while their inhabitants, <i>short of hand</i>, are dismayed and confounded; they have become like plants of the field and like tender grass, like grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown.</p>	<p>וַיִּשְׁבִּיֵהוּן קְצָרֵי יָדַי  חֲתוּ וּבָשׁוּ הָיוּ עֵשֶׂב  שָׂדֵה יֵרֶק דָּשָׂא  חֲצִיר גִּזְזוֹת וּשְׂדֵמָה  לִפְנֵי קָמָה:</p>	<p>ἀνῆκα τὰς χεῖρας, καὶ  ἐξηράνθησαν καὶ  ἐγένοντο ὡς χόρτος  ξηρὸς ἐπὶ δωμάτων  καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις.</p>	<p>I weakened their hands, and they have <i>dried up</i>, and they have become like dry grass upon housetops and like wild grass.</p>
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This verse can be understood in various ways, and there have been several suggestions for how to understand וּשְׂדֵמָה.<sup>61</sup> The parallel to this verse in 2 Kgs 19:26 reads וּשְׂדֵפָה which makes better sense and appears to be the basis of the Targum of Isa 37:27.<sup>62</sup> The LXX of 2 Kgs 19:26 translates all the grass terms. LXX.D.E.K suggests that the *Vorlage* of LXX-Isa read שְׂדֵפָה which may have contributed to the rendering χόρτος ξηρός.<sup>63</sup> The possibility of this reading being in the *Vorlage* is strengthened by 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which has הַנְשַׁדֵּף לִפְנֵי קָדִים. While it is possible this word was read and contributed to the LXX's understanding, ξηρός could also have been freely added for clarity or under the influence of Psa 129:6 where יִהְיוּ שְׂדֵפָה לִפְנֵי יְבֵשׁ is rendered with γενηθήτωσαν ὡς χόρτος δωμάτων, ὅς πρὸ τοῦ ἐκσπασθῆναι ἐξηράνθη. In 9:17(18) as we will see, the translator also adds ξηρός (though here it modifies ἄγρωστις which is a rendering for “thorns”) to make it clear that flammability is what is at issue. Likewise in 51:12 the translator clarifies with the verb ξηραίνω modifying grass. In 37:27, the translator understands the grasses mentioned to be illustrative of how the inhabitants will lose strength and vitality. As though the verb ξηραίνω were not enough, the translator also adds the adjective ξηρός to tighten up and focus the comparison, and perhaps to partially ballast the synonyms he has condensed. The Hebrew basis for ἄγρωστις could be דָּשָׂא (as in Gen 1:11 and Deut 32:2) though it is an equivalent elsewhere for עֵשֶׂב (as in Micah 5:6); this Greek term is not used in 2 Kgs 19:26. As Ziegler points out, ἄγρωστις is a kind of weed that grows in fields and is mentioned in the Papyri.<sup>64</sup>

The Greek has partially interpreted the phrase קְצָרֵי יָדַי to be more clear. The Greek has not rendered חֲתוּ.<sup>65</sup> Instead of being ashamed, the LXX understands וּבָשׁוּ as coming from יָבֵשׁ,<sup>66</sup> probably due to the grasses in the verse, and so was rendered with ξηραίνω. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>

<sup>61</sup> See Wilderberger, *Jesaja*, 1415, 1418-419.

<sup>62</sup> The Targum reads: דִּישְׁלוּק עַד לֹא מִטָּא לְמַהוּי שׁוּבְלִין.

<sup>63</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2603.

<sup>64</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181. Michael Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten* (Münchener Beiträge zur Papyrusforschung und antiken Rechtsgeschichte Heft 7; München: Beck, 1925), 114-15.

<sup>65</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 63. She classifies it as an instance of the reduction of synonymous words in coordination.

<sup>66</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2603. Cf. 40:7 which has יְבֵשׁ חֲצִיר rendered ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος.

reads: וישב ו; the *yod* may help explain LXX-Isa’s reading. The Greek has also condensed all the synonymous terms for grasses in the enumeration down to one term and put it in a simile, so הִיוּ עֵשֶׂב שָׂדֵה וִירֶק דְּשָׂא חֲצִיר גְּנוֹת becomes ὡς χόρτος ξηρὸς ἐπὶ δωμάτων;<sup>67</sup> there are no exact equivalents for χόρτος or ἄγρωστις. Most of the Hebrew terms for grass or vegetation suggest fresh green growth, but the LXX makes it dry grass, probably to emphasize the point of the comparison (implied in the Hebrew, but the Greek has a comparative particle): they have become weak. In 2 Kgs 19:26 the Greek renders the same phrase, aiming more for accuracy, as χόρτος ἀγροῦ ἢ χλωρὰ βοτάνη χλόη δωμάτων.

As mentioned above, the Targum agrees with the emendation to שדפה.<sup>68</sup> Apart from clarifying the first part of the verse that their strength (חיל) is cut off, the Targum renders literally.

**Isa 51:12**

<p>I, I am he who comforts you; <i>who are you that you fear</i> a mere mortal who must die, a <i>son of man who is given up</i> like grass?</p>	<p>אֲנֹכִי אֲנֹכִי הוּא מִנְחַמְכֶם מִי־אֵת וְתִירְאֵי מֵאֲנוּשׁ יָמוֹת וּמִבְּן־אָדָם חֲצִיר יִנָּתֵן:</p>	<p>ἐγὼ εἶμι ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ παρακαλῶν σε· γνώθι τίνα εὐλαβηθεῖσα ἐφοβήθης ἀπὸ ἀνθρώπου θνητοῦ καὶ ἀπὸ υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οἷ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν.</p>	<p>I am, I am he who comforts you. Acknowledge of whom you were cautious; you were afraid because of a mortal man and a son of man, who have dried up like grass.</p>
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The Greek has made some modifications to this verse.<sup>69</sup> Of note for our purposes is that the last clause has been clarified. This use of the Hebrew verb נתן is unique to this passage.<sup>70</sup> The Greek interprets it to better reinforce the perceived meaning of the passage; it makes it explicitly a comparison by inserting the comparative marker, and interprets the verb to explain the point of the comparison: οἷ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν. The translator appears to have prioritized translating with a finite verb over refraining from adding elements which turn the clause into a simile. This understanding makes sense in this passage, in that it illustrates how humanity is weak and feeble. It is probably under the influence of 40:6-8, where the verb ξηραίνω also occurs in relation to χόρτος, describing the frailty of humans.<sup>71</sup> Part of the idea in 40:6-8, which may underlie the Greek of 51:12 as well, is that grass turns green, springs up, and flowers quickly, and so seems to have great vigor, but is in fact frail and transitory. Ziegler also points to Isa 40:7 as an influence on 51:12, as well as 42:15.<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> See van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 63-64.

<sup>68</sup> “while their inhabitants, *their force* shorn, are *shattered* and confounded, and have become *like* plants of the fields and *like* tender grass, and *like* grass on the housetops which is *singed* before it comes to be ears.”

<sup>69</sup> The plus εὐλαβηθεῖσα is probably under the influence of 57:11, as Ottley has suggested, Ottley, *Isaiah*, II, 340. cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 223-24 [71]; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 76.

<sup>70</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has the same verb, though in the qatal.

<sup>71</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2664.

<sup>72</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 162.



The Targum also interprets the verb, but in a different way, and adds a comparative marker: ומבר אנשא דכעסבא חשיב.<sup>73</sup> The Targum rendering is more literal than the LXX.

**Isa 40:6-8**

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.	קֹל אִמַּר קְרֹא וְאָמַר מָה אֶקְרָא כָּל- הַבָּשָׂר חֲצִיר וְכָל- חֶסְדּוֹ כְּצִיץ הַשָּׂדֶה:	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,	יִבֶּשׂ חֲצִיר נִבְלָצִין	ἐξηράνθη ὁ χόρτος, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος ἐξέπεσε,	The grass has <i>dried out</i> , and the flower has fallen,
when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people are grass.	כִּי רוּחַ יְהוָה נִשְׁבָּה בּוֹ אֶכֶן חֲצִיר הָעָם:		
The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God will stand forever.	יִבֶּשׂ חֲצִיר נִבְלָצִין וְדַבְרֵי-אֱלֹהֵינוּ יִקּוּם לְעוֹלָם:	τὸ δὲ ῥῆμα τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.	but the word of our God remains forever."

We have discussed this passage at greater length in the section on flowers (2.4.1.). Here we will focus on its rendering of "grass." In Isa 40:6-8 חֲצִיר appears four times, and is twice rendered with *χόρτος*; the third occurrence of *χόρτος* is a rendering for *הַשָּׂדֶה*. The other two occurrences of *חֲצִיר* are in clauses that are minuses, as was discussed in the section on flowers. The rendering of *שָׂדֶה* with *χόρτος* is unique to this passage; elsewhere in LXX-Isa it is rendered with *ἀγρός*.<sup>74</sup> Ziegler suggests this rendering is under the influence of the repetition of *χόρτος* in this passage,<sup>75</sup> but it could have been a deliberate choice. This rendering tightens the relationship between the image and the reality, so that man and his glory are more closely related to grass and its flower; also it tightens the relationship between 40:6 and 40:7, since the field is not mentioned again in the Hebrew. This changes the parallelism into a more climatic construction, rather than two parallel ideas. In Psalm 103(102):15 where man's mortality is again compared to grass and to the flower of the field, the LXX renders literally, using *ἄνθος ἀγροῦ*.

<sup>73</sup> "I, I am he that comforts you; of whom are you afraid, of man who dies, of the son of man who is reckoned as the grass?"

<sup>74</sup> 5:5 2x; 7:3; 32:12; 36:2; 43:20; 55:12.

<sup>75</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 150.

The Targum of 40:6-8 interprets that all the wicked are like grass, and their strength like the chaff of the field.<sup>76</sup> Also, in 40:8 grass is replaced with the wicked dying, and the flower with their thoughts perishing.

### 3.2.2. Flourishing Grass

In two passages, grass is used positively to illustrate things that flourish.

#### Isa 44:4

<p>And they will spring up in between grass like willows by flowing waters.</p>	<p>וְצִמְחוּ בְּבֵין הָצִיר כְּעֵרְבִים עַל-יְבִלִי- מַיִם:</p>	<p>καὶ ἀνατελοῦσιν ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὑδατος καὶ ὡς ἰτέα ἐπὶ παραρρέον ὕδωρ.</p>	<p>And they shall spring up like grass in the midst of water and like a willow by flowing water.</p>
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The Hebrew text of this passage is often emended in various ways;<sup>77</sup> the main issue is the unusual preposition בְּבֵין. LXX and 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> both have instead כְּבֵין (בֵין becomes ἀνὰ μέσον in LXX).<sup>78</sup> A second textual question is whether הָצִיר refers to “grass” or “reed.”<sup>79</sup> HALOT lists 44:4 along with Isa 35:7 and Job 8:12 as occurrences where הָצִיר means “reed.” But in each of these places, it makes more sense to define it as meaning “grass.”<sup>80</sup> In any case, here the LXX renders it as meaning grass, making it a simile like the parallel clause.

A third issue is the LXX’s plus: ὑδατος. The LXX *Vorlage* could have been the same as the MT or 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>; Ziegler suggests that ὑδατος was added for the sake of having a pleasing comparison.<sup>81</sup> Also, ὑδατος provides a nice parallel to ὕδωρ. While this addition could have been already in the *Vorlage*, it makes sense for it to be a deliberate addition, as Ziegler says, since nearly everywhere else in LXX-Isa χόρτος occurs in contexts of dryness (10:17; 15:6; 37:27; 40:6-7; 51:12).<sup>82</sup> The addition here would be to specify that fresh green grass is meant, contrasting dry land where water is poured in 44:3. In the MT, as it stands, the first clause is metaphorical, likening them to something that springs up in the grass. This metaphor is then made more specific in the parallel clause, where it is described in a simile. The Greek, by the

<sup>76</sup> “A voice of one who says, “Prophesy!” And he answered and said, “What shall I prophesy?” All the wicked are as the grass, and all their strength like the chaff of the field. The grass withers, its flower fades, for the spirit from the LORD blows upon it; surely the wicked among the people are reckoned as the grass. The wicked dies, his conceptions perish; but the word of our God stands for ever.”

<sup>77</sup> For discussion, see Elliger, *Deuterojesaia*, 363-64.

<sup>78</sup> The Syriac attests מְבֵין.

<sup>79</sup> See Elliger, *Deuterojesaia*, 364.

<sup>80</sup> Indeed, in Job 8:12 it would be a rather trivial observation that papyrus without water withers before any other reed. Also in 35:7 it would make no sense to say that the reed becomes a cane and rush. In both places grass makes better sense.

<sup>81</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 73. Cf. van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 188. For the plus of the comparative particle see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 132.

<sup>82</sup> The other exception is 32:13.

modifications we have discussed and the addition of the conjunction *καί*, has made two synonymously parallel similes. The image in both texts is that of God pouring out water and his people sprouting up spontaneously, like grass after a rain shower, and that they will be like willows that grow where water is abundant (just as willows, in fact, commonly do grow).<sup>83</sup> In the Greek, more prominence is given to the idea of water.

The Targum makes clear the subject of this verse by saying the righteous (צדיקיא) will grow.<sup>84</sup> It also clarifies in what way they are like grass by writing רכיכין ומפנקין כלבלבי (tender and soft like a sprout of grass).

**Isa 66:14**

<p>You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your <i>bones</i> shall flourish like the grass; and it shall be known that the hand of the LORD is with his servants, and his indignation is against his enemies.</p>	<p>וְרֵאִיתֶם וְשִׂשׁוּ לְבַבְכֶם וְעֲצְמוֹתֵיכֶם כַּדְּשָׁא תִּפְרָחְנָה וְנִוְדְעָה יְדֵי־הוֹהֵא אֶת־עַבְדָּיו וְזַעַם אֶת־אֲבִיו:</p>	<p>καὶ ὄψεσθε, καὶ χαρήσεται ὑμῶν ἡ καρδία, καὶ τὰ ὀστέα ὑμῶν ὡς βοτάνη ἀνατελεῖ· καὶ γνωσθήσεται ἡ χεὶρ κυρίου τοῖς σεβομένοις αὐτόν, καὶ ἀπειλήσει τοῖς ἀπειθοῦσιν.</p>	<p>And you shall see, and your heart shall rejoice, and your bones shall grow like grass, and the hand of the LORD shall be known to those who worship him, and he shall threaten those who disobey him.</p>
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In this passage, in both languages, there is the peculiar simile that their bones will sprout up like grass. The idea is of dry dormant grass turning green and sprouting into luxuriant green pasture grass, seemingly overnight, when it is watered. Bones are mentioned to represent the whole body’s renewal whereas the heart refers more to mental or spiritual health.<sup>85</sup> This is a positive image, whereas so far we have mostly seen humans compared to grass to emphasize their transience, particularly in 40:6-8 where we saw another metonymy for physical bodies (σάρξ) compared to grass. The meaning of this simile is probably best understood in light of Isa 58:11, where the bones are made strong (fat in Greek, cf. Prov 15:30) in the context of God providing needs in dry places.<sup>86</sup>

While the Hebrew term אֲשַׁדֵּי seems to denote mostly fresh grass,<sup>87</sup> the Greek rendering βοτάνη implies herbage good for pasturing.<sup>88</sup> Both words, though, can be vague terms for vegetation or herbage;<sup>89</sup> they are equivalents meaning this in Gen 1:11, where also

<sup>83</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 308. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 72, also says willows love water and take root quickly.

<sup>84</sup> “The righteous shall be exalted, tender and indulged as tufts of grass, like a tree that sends its roots by streams of waters.”

<sup>85</sup> R. N. Whybray, *Isaiah 40-66* (London: Oliphants, 1975), 286. Also BDB, s.v. עצם.

<sup>86</sup> Some manuscripts (א<sup>ca</sup>, A, Q, 26, 86, etc.; see Ziegler’s apparatus) have an additional explanatory simile in 58:11, and so read: καὶ τὰ ὀστέα σου ὡς βοτάνη ἀνατελεῖ καὶ πιανθήσεται. For the rendering of עבד with σέβω, see LXX.D.E.K., 2690.

<sup>87</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>88</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>89</sup> Muraoka describes the Greek term as “growth on land, ‘plant, herbage.’” Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

we can find *χόρτος*.<sup>90</sup> The word *βοτάνη* is probably used here in Isa 66:14 because it has more positive connotations than *χόρτος*.

The Targum has *היג* (body) for *עצ* (bone), probably by way of metonymy, but renders the rest of the simile literally.<sup>91</sup>

### 3.2.3. Summary

As we have seen, Isaiah uses grass primarily to show something that quickly flourishes and just as quickly withers;<sup>92</sup> grass is quickly consumed by fire, and is used to show desolation (eg. 15:6). Where the LXX does not render grass terms (5:24; 33:11; 15:6; 35:7; 42:15) it is not due to the metaphor but to other considerations. Where the terms are rendered, LXX-Isa uses fewer terms for grass but will often make explicit whether well watered grass or dry grass is meant. In two passages where LXX-Isa introduces terms for grass (9:17(18); 10:17, both discussed in the section on thorns, 3.4.1.) it is mentioned for its flammability; in the third passage, 32:13 (also discussed in the section on thorns, 3.4.2.), grass is mentioned in contrast to cultivated plants to describe a field becoming fallow.

Likewise where grass is mentioned as something that quickly withers, LXX-Isa maintains the metaphor, often making explicit that dryness is at issue. In 37:27, possibly due to textual issues, LXX-Isa adds a verb and an adjective to show that dry grass is meant; also what may be an implied simile in Hebrew is made explicitly a simile in the Greek. In 51:12 a unique usage of a Hebrew word is rendered as meaning dried out; again an implied simile is made explicit. In 40:6-8 grass is rendered several times in an image of human frailty; the LXX adds a reference to grass with the effect of tying together more closely two metaphors in the passage and improving the style of the passage.

Where grass is mentioned as something quickly sprouting and returning to life the LXX makes this clear. In 44:4 the translator adds that the grass is near water to emphasize its greenness and for the sake of the parallel clause. The Hebrew has a metaphor that is expanded by a simile in the parallel clause, but the LXX makes it two synonymously parallel similes (the first simile may have been due to the *Vorlage*). In 66:14 the unique comparison of bones sprouting like greenery is maintained as a simile in the Greek. The choice of *βοτάνη* may be due to it having more positive connotations of lush healthy vegetation.

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<sup>90</sup> Perhaps there *βοτάνη* is used for consonance with *βλαστησάτω* to compensate for the cognate accusative lost from the Hebrew; the two following cognate accusatives are found also in Greek.

<sup>91</sup> “You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice; your *bodies* shall flourish like grasses; and the *might* of the LORD shall be *revealed to do good* to his servants, *the righteous*, and he will *bring a curse* to his enemies.”

<sup>92</sup> Eidvall, studying metaphors in the Psalms, found that plants, particularly grass (Psa 90:5; 103:15; 37:2), are used for the brevity of human life (though in Psa 72:16 grass has a positive sense); G. Eidvall, “Metaphorical Landscapes in the Psalms,” in *Metaphors in the Psalms* (ed. P. van Hecke and A. Labhan; BETL 231; Leuven: Peeters, 2010): 13-22.

LXX-Isa’s conception of grass is largely based on the Hebrew usage. It is noteworthy that the situation in Egypt was quite different from that of Judea in terms of grass lands. While in Judea grass of various qualities was abundant in places, in Egypt pasture land was scarce and typically the result of cultivation.<sup>93</sup> Grass was not a sign of wilderness but a crop important for fodder which was taxed.<sup>94</sup> Indeed, in the papyri *χόρτος* is used as a general term for fodder.<sup>95</sup> While the qualities of grass flourishing, withering, and flammability would have been known, LXX-Isa’s negative view of grass is not typical of the Egyptian landscape.

The Targum renders most of these places literally (15:6; 42:15; 37:27; 5:24). Like LXX-Isa, in 35:7 the Targum understands *רציר* as meaning “residence.” In a few places the imagery is maintained, but is applied to a different subject: in 40:6-8 only the wicked and their strength are like grass; and in 44:4 the righteous are like grass, and the Targum specifies in what way, namely, their softness and tenderness. In 66:14, instead of “bones” sprouting the Targum has “body,” but is otherwise the same. In 51:12 the vague verb “to give” is interpreted as meaning “considered.” Of the passages that mention grass, 33:11 is rendered the most freely by the Targum; it interprets the phrase mentioning grass, but still maintains a reference to chaff (see III.C.2.a.).

### 3.3. Grains

Grains like wheat and barley are a kind of grass, botanically speaking. Due to their importance to civilized life, considerable terminology is related to them. In this section we will examine how metaphors are used in Isaiah that come from both the different types of grain and the various parts of grain.<sup>96</sup>

#### 3.3.1. Types of Grain

##### 3.3.1.1. Texts

We can find several terms for various grain crops in **Isa 28:25**.<sup>97</sup>

When they have leveled its surface, do they not scatter <i>black cumin</i> , sow cumin,	הֲלוֹא אִם-שָׂוּהָ פְּנִיָּהּ וְהִפִּיץ קֶצֶחַ וְכַמְזֹן	οὐχ ὅταν ὁμαλίση αὐτῆς τὸ πρόσωπον, τότε σπείρει μικρὸν μελάνθιον καὶ κύμινον	When he has leveled its surface, does he not then sow <i>black cumin</i> and cumin and
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<sup>93</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 211-12.

<sup>94</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 212-18.

<sup>95</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 212-13.

<sup>96</sup> We have not discussed the parts of grain (chaff, ear, straw, stubble) in the previous chapter since the way these metaphors are used are more closely related to grass and thorns which are discussed in this chapter.

<sup>97</sup> *בָּר* (grain, corn) does not occur in Isaiah.

and plant wheat in rows and barley in its proper place, and <i>emmer-wheat</i> as the border?	יִזְרַק וְשָׂם חֲטָה שׂוֹרָה וְשַׁעֲרָה גְּסָמֹן וּבְסֻמָּת גְּבֻלָּתוֹ:	καὶ πάλιν σπείρει πυρὸν καὶ κριθήν καὶ ζέαυ ἐν τοῖς ὁρίοις σου;	again sow wheat and barley and <i>einkorn</i> in your borders?
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In the Hebrew, two herbs are mentioned, קֶצֶח (black cumin)<sup>98</sup> and כַּמֶּן (cumin); they occur again in 28:27 and are rendered the same way as here. The LXX translates these spices accurately; Ziegler points out that they are two spices often mentioned in the papyri.<sup>99</sup> Additionally he says that the LXX addition *μικρόν* is accurate in that only a small amount of black cumin was sown.<sup>100</sup> Theophrastus does not mention the name *μελάνθιον* but does talk about a black variety of cumin.<sup>101</sup> Also, he does not tell us where to plant cumin (*κύμινον*) in a field, but does mention that some say that for an abundant crop one should curse and abuse it while sowing.<sup>102</sup>

The meaning of two Hebrew terms are uncertain. Three possibilities for שׂוֹרָה are 1) a kind of grain; 2) a row in which the wheat is planted; 3) a dittography of וְשַׁעֲרָה.<sup>103</sup> The word גְּסָמֹן likewise has multiple explanations: 1) a niphil participle of סָמַן, meaning to place;<sup>104</sup> 2) it is simply unexplained;<sup>105</sup> 3) a dittography of וּבְסֻמָּת; 4) a scribal sign; 5) Marchalianus and Syh have *κέγχρον* (millet).<sup>106</sup> Whatever they may mean, the LXX has not rendered them, according to Ziegler, “*weil sie nichts mit ihnen anfangen konnte.*”<sup>107</sup>

While the Hebrew seems to emphasize in the previous verse preparing the fields and in v.25 how to arrange the crops in the field, this verse does not seem to take timing into account. At least according to Theophrastus, barley is sown before wheat (*ζειά*, which is not the same species as *ζέα* but is the same genus, is sown earlier than wheat and barley).<sup>108</sup> Likewise in Exod 9:31-32 the barley and flax are ruined by the hail, but the חֲטָה and בְּסֻמָּת are not because they ripen later. Ziegler thinks the translation of בְּסֻמָּת with *ζέαυ* was a last resort, but that the translator has chosen a grain variety common to Egypt; he says it is often found in the papyri and that Pliny the Elder mentions it as an Egyptian crop.<sup>109</sup> While *ζέα* is probably *einkorn* (*triticum monococcum*),<sup>110</sup> בְּסֻמָּת is *emmer-wheat* (*triticum sativum*)

<sup>98</sup> KJV renders with “fitches,” a kind of vetch used for fodder; NRSV renders “dill,” perhaps following Luther’s translation. I follow HALOT and LXX, rendering it with “black cumin.”

<sup>99</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 183.

<sup>100</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 183-84.

<sup>101</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 7.3.2.

<sup>102</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 7.3.3.

<sup>103</sup> These views can be seen in HALOT, s.v.; Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1084.

<sup>104</sup> DCH, s.v.

<sup>105</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>106</sup> The last three explanations can be found in Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 1084. The word is left un-rendered in his translation.

<sup>107</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184.

<sup>108</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 8.1.3, 8.1.2.

<sup>109</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184.

<sup>110</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

according to HALOT,<sup>111</sup> but Musselman thinks it cannot be definitely identified.<sup>112</sup> In any case, one variety of grain has been rendered with a variety, probably from the same genus, used at the time of the translation.<sup>113</sup>

The reason for describing the various tasks and arrangement of agricultural activities is not to give precise instructions as for an almanac, but to show that all these different things are done in a proper way and for a purpose,<sup>114</sup> just like the various things being suffered, and so if they face destruction (28:22) for a time it is part of a greater plan.

The Greek, however, understands the section differently. While much of the passage (28:25-29) is rendered literally, though updated slightly to reflect contemporary Egyptian agricultural practices,<sup>115</sup> in 28:28 the Greek has an explanation of the imagery. As Ziegler points out, the translator has interpreted exegetically.<sup>116</sup>

**Isa 28:28**

<p>Grain is crushed for bread, but one does not thresh it forever; one drives the cart wheel and horses over it, but does not pulverize it.</p>	<p>לַחֵם יוֹדֵק כִּי לֹא לְנֹצַח אֲדוֹשׁ יְדוּשְׁנוּ וְהַמִּם גְּלָגַל עֲגֻלָּתוֹ וּפְרָשָׁיו לֹא יִדְקְנוּ:</p>	<p>μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται. οὐ γὰρ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ὀργισθήσομαι, οὐδὲ φωνὴ τῆς πικρίας μου καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.</p>	<p>will be eaten with bread. For I will not be angry with you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you.</p>
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The translator has transformed the meaning of the entire section with this rendering.<sup>117</sup> Now the entire section is an allegory for Israel. They are plowed and sown, threshed, but not so long as to completely destroy them. The rendering seems mostly based on **כִּי לֹא לְנֹצַח**, together with his interpretation of 28:22, where the prophet hears of works cut short. Ziegler points out a similar rendering in 21:10, where LXX-Isa renders “threshed” and “winnowed” with whom he thinks the terms represent.<sup>118</sup> Ziegler suggests the rendering of 28:28 is under the influence of 57:16, where God again says he will not punish his people forever (**לֹא לְנֹצַח**).<sup>119</sup> Perhaps another hint is found in 28:25 where the Greek changes the third to the

<sup>111</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>112</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 293-94. He is confident that it is not spelt or einkorn. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 86, says that it is a hard wheat related to emmer, but is not more specific. He does, though, say it was known to the Egyptians as *swt*.

<sup>113</sup> It is pointless to worry too much about the exact species since they probably changed with cultivation and since the ancients did not have a very good understanding about how they changed. According to Theophrastus, ζεῖα will turn into πυρός in as little as three years if proper measures are not taken, and likewise wild wheat and barley change with cultivation in the same time period. Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 2.4.1.

<sup>114</sup> Black cumin indeed needs to be threshed, yet is easily damaged, so is beaten lightly with a rod, as Isaiah says in verse 27. See Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 133.

<sup>115</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 182-85.

<sup>116</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

<sup>117</sup> For a detailed analysis of this LXX-Isa 28:23-29, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 276-86.

<sup>118</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

<sup>119</sup> He also points to Jer 3:12; Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 119-20; cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 223 [70/71].

second person (ἐν τοῖς ὀρίοις σου) which could be an allusion to Psa 147:14(3).<sup>120</sup> We will discuss 28:27-28 further below in relation to the threshing of grain (3.3.2.3.1.).

The Targum has interpreted the passage allegorically. Most of the allegorical treatment occurs in 28:24-25 (where it is about the prophets teaching and the blessing that Israel would enjoy if they would turn to the law), and the rest of the agricultural imagery is preserved or made into similes (as in 28:25).<sup>121</sup> In 28:28 the threshing idea is made clear and winnowing is added by mentioning the chaff being blown away.<sup>122</sup>

**Isa 17:5** is the other passage where grain is mentioned, though here generically.

<p>And it shall be as when reapers gather standing grain and their arms harvest the ears, and as when one gleanes the ears of grain in the Valley of Rephaim.</p>	<p>וְהָיָה כְּאֶסְף־קִצִּיר  קָמָה וְזָרְעוּ שְׂבָלִים  יִקְצֹר וְהָיָה כְּמִלְקֵט  שְׂבָלִים בְּעֵמֶק  רְפָאִים:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔσται ὃν τρόπον  ἐάν τις συναγάγη  ἀμητὸν ἐστηκότα καὶ  σπέρμα σταχύων  ἀμήση, καὶ ἔσται ὃν  τρόπον ἐάν τις  συναγάγη στάχυν ἐν  φάραγγι στερεᾷ</p>	<p>And it shall be as if someone were to gather the standing crop and reap the seed of the ears of grain, and it shall be as if someone were to gather an ear of grain in a firm ravine</p>
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This verse continues to describe what it means in the previous verse that Jacob’s glory will be brought low and his fat made lean. The harvesting similes are familiar enough, but in what way things will be like a harvest is not made clear in this verse (unless the reference to the valley of Rephaim had a specific meaning to the audience). It is only in 17:6 that it is made clear that the image describes almost everyone being gathered up and removed from the land, so only gleanings are left, one or two here and there. This is made entirely clear in 17:9.

There are three main explanations for how to understand קִצִּיר. It can either refer to the time “gathering at harvest;” or to a person (“a harvester”) either as a form of קָצַר or as a noun forming like פְּלִיל and נְבִיא, or as an explanatory gloss for בְּאֶסְף.<sup>123</sup> The LXX understands it as what is gathered, the crops of the harvest: ἀμητος. Rather than reading קָמָה as the object, it is read as an adjective from קוֹם, modifying ἀμητος. Also of note is that the translator has added subjects for both clauses (τις), and has rendered מְלִקֵט with συναγάγη. These two changes make the clauses more closely related (though it may serve just for variation, in that the verbs συνάγω and ἀμάω now alternate). Between the two clauses the translator has rendered וְזָרְעוּ with its homonym, giving us σπέρμα;<sup>124</sup> this clause, σπέρμα σταχύων ἀμήση, explains to what exactly ἀμητὸν ἐστηκότα refers.<sup>125</sup>

<sup>120</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 224.

<sup>121</sup> “If the house of Israel set their face to perform the law, would he not repent and gather them from among the Gentiles among whom they are scattered, behold as dill and cumin which is strewn? And he will bring them near by families to their tribes, behold, as seeds of wheat in rows and barley in proper places and spelt on the borders.”

<sup>122</sup> “They indeed thresh grain, but they do not thresh it forever; and he stirs with the wheels of his cart and separates the grain and lets the dust fly.”

<sup>123</sup> For the scholars who hold to each view see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 636.

<sup>124</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 191.

<sup>125</sup> Cf. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which reads: וזרעו שבלים וקציר.



A second peculiarity is the mentioning of the valley of Rephaim, which according to Josh 15:8 and 18:16 is located outside Jerusalem. Some hold that the text is corrupt, either missing some part, or אפרים has become רפאים.<sup>126</sup> Wildberger suggests the valley was mentioned to give a vividness to the image, naming a nearby place where his audience would have seen harvesting activities.<sup>127</sup> The LXX-Isa rendering of this phrase is unique. Elsewhere LXX-Isa only uses στερεός as a plus to modify stone (2:21; 5:28; 50:7; 51:1). Also, the other places the Hebrew עֵמֶק רְפָאִים occurs, it is rendered literally in LXX (though not always in the same way). Ottley suggests the translator may have understood the Hebrew to mean the valley of healers, so rendered “strong, sound,” or that he read רקיע. Ziegler suggests the translator here had Deut 21:4 in mind, where נחל איתן (ever flowing stream) is rendered with φάραγγα τραχεῖαν (rough valley), which is explained in the verse as a place that is not plowed or sown.<sup>128</sup> The Greek may have actually understood רְפָאִים to mean “mighty men” (cf. Targum) as he did in 14:9,<sup>129</sup> but did not find “valley of mighty men” appropriate here, so instead said φάραγγι στερεῶ “strong valley.” In any case, the meaning of the Greek phrase in Isa 17:5 is that it has hard soil that is unsuitable for cultivation.<sup>130</sup>

The LXX has preserved the two similes, and also has the second more specific than the first, though perhaps with a different meaning than in the Hebrew. In the Hebrew the first two describe harvesting while the third describes gleaning. In the Greek, though, the three similes are nearly synonymous.

As mentioned above, the translator does not seem to have understood the term קָמָה properly. The only other place it occurs in Isaiah, 37:27b, is a minus in LXX-Isa. The term for an ear of grain שֶׁבֶלֶם, however, has been appropriately translated with στάχυς. Where this term appears to occur in 27:12 it is correctly rendered based on its homonym.

The Targum renders literally: ויהי כמכנש חצר קמא “and it will be like gathering a harvest of standing crop,” and at the end: במישר גיבריא “in the plain of mighty men.”<sup>131</sup>

### 3.3.1.2. Summary

Only two passages in Isaiah talk specifically about grains. The use of grains in 28:25 is not properly metaphoric, but better categorized by the vague term *mashal*; they are mentioned to make an analogy to which the LXX adds an explicit interpretation in 28:28. In 17:5, however, the LXX preserves three similes, though changes their meaning, seemingly due to the difficulty of some of the vocabulary. It is interesting that the translator does not offer what exactly it means to harvest in the hard valley.

<sup>126</sup> For a few proposals see Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 637.

<sup>127</sup> Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 648.

<sup>128</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 114. LXX.D.E.K., 2548 concurs.

<sup>129</sup> The LXX translator also knows the meaning “physician” for this word, as can be seen in Isa 26:14, 19.

<sup>130</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 635.

<sup>131</sup> “And it will be as a harvester gathers standing grain, and with his arm harvests ears, and as on gleaning ears in the *plain of mighty men*.” Cf. Targum Gen 6:4 where גיברא renders גפילים.

The Targum interprets 28:28, as well as the rest of the passage, as an allegory, giving specific things for the various agricultural terms to represent. In 17:5 the Targum renders literally; its understanding of **בְּעֵמֶק רְפָאִים** is literal (taking the meaning of the place name) and explains nothing.

### 3.3.2 Parts of Grain

Apart from types of grain, grain plants have various parts such as the ear (**שֶׁבֶלֶת**), the stalk (**שֵׁק**),<sup>132</sup> and the chaff that must be separated from the actual grain in the ear (**מֵץ**).<sup>133</sup> Another term for one of the byproducts of threshing is **תֵּבֵן** (crushed stalks, straw, chaff).<sup>134</sup> In English, the word “chaff” can refer both to the part that is separated in threshing and to the cut straw that can be used for cattle feed, and so it is often found as a definition of the last three Hebrew terms.<sup>135</sup> The Greek word *ἄχυρον* means “chaff, bran, husks,”<sup>136</sup> as well as “straw.”<sup>137</sup> This was not a waste product but a valuable commodity in arid regions such as Ancient Egypt; it was used as a fuel source (often mixed with manure), as a building material (when mixed with clay or mud), as well as fodder (sometimes mixed with other grains, particularly barley).<sup>138</sup> Chaff was taxed in the Roman period,<sup>139</sup> but can be seen in papyri receipts already in the Ptolemaic period.<sup>140</sup> The word used by the LXX as a rendering of **מֵץ**, namely, *χνοῦς* in classical Greek means dust, fine down, or incrustation,<sup>141</sup> though in the LXX it means chaff.<sup>142</sup> The only use of this word in the Papyri<sup>143</sup> is on some sort of receipt, but there is not enough context to firmly see to what it refers.<sup>144</sup> The LXX seems to want to distinguish chaff

<sup>132</sup> According to DCH, s.v., **שֵׁק** refers both to the stubble left in the field and the straw left after threshing.

<sup>133</sup> See HALOT, s.v.

<sup>134</sup> HALOT, s.v.

<sup>135</sup> As in BDB, and HALOT. DCH, however, distinguishes **שֵׁק**, **תֵּבֵן**, and **מֵץ** more clearly.

<sup>136</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>137</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v., has the definition “straw” and for Dan 2:35 “chaff and grain.”

<sup>138</sup> Archeological, ethnographical, and literary evidence is brought together in Marijke van der Veen, “The Economic Value of Chaff and Straw in Arid and Temperate Zones,” *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 8.3 (1999): 112-13. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 91.

<sup>139</sup> See van der Veen, “The Economic Value of Chaff,” 216 for primary and secondary references.

<sup>140</sup> P.Tebt. 3.2842 from ~140BC; and P.Princ.2.18 from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Accessed 4/27/2012, <http://www.papyri.info/>.

<sup>141</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>142</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. It would seem outside of the LXX, according to LSJ, this term is not typically used for chaff, but for dust, powder, and things that are fine and small. In Aristophanes Fragments, *Babylonians* 78, as pointed out by *LSJ Supplement*, we can find the phrase *ἔχεις ἄχυρα καὶ χνοῦν*, describing stuffing for a bed, Aristophanes, *Fragments* [Henderson, LCL 502], though even here “chaff” may not be meant. J. Lust, E. Eynikel, K. Hauspie, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Revised ed.; Stuttgart: deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), s.v. only gives Hos 13:3 with the definition “chaff” and defines all others as “dust.” LSJ’s examples from 2 Kgs 22:43 and 2 Chr 1:9 are problematic, since in both places it is a textual variant, and Ralfs’ edition prefers the reading *χνοῦς*.

<sup>143</sup> Based on a word search of *χνοῦς* as well as *χνόος* on <http://www.papyri.info/> 4/27/2012.

<sup>144</sup> HGV BGU 3.921.

as the husks from chaff as the straw, and so uses *χνοῦς*;<sup>145</sup> though perhaps the minute dust-like parts that are released in threshing, winnowing, and sieving which can not be collected for later use but blow away are what is meant by this term. Of the occurrences of *גָּזַל*, threshing or winnowing is only mentioned in Hos 13:3; Isa 41:15; and possibly in Isa 17:3 (though explicitly in the LXX).<sup>146</sup>

In two places LXX takes special effort to describe what is meant by “chaff.” In Dan 2:35 the statue breaks and becomes like dust on a summer threshing floor (*בְּעוֹרָה מִן־אֲדָרִי־קִיט*)<sup>147</sup> that is blown away by the wind. The Greek text ο’ feels the need to be more specific than just “chaff” and so has: *ὡσεὶ λεπτότερον ἀχύρου ἐν ἄλωνι*. The Theodotion text is less specific, writing: *ὡσεὶ κονιορτός ἀπὸ ἄλωνος θερινῆς*. The other place is in Isa 17:13, where *גָּזַל* is rendered *χνοῦν ἀχύρου*. In these two places it seems the translators felt *ἀχύρον* on its own did not adequately represent what was meant, but had to be qualified as some smaller part. Perhaps a similar concern is why *χνοῦς* is typically used for *גָּזַל* instead of *ἀχύρον*; this however, does not explain why a double rendering is not used in the other places *גָּזַל* occurs.

While some of these terms have some degree of overlap, we will first discuss how LXX-Isa understands *שֶׁקַע*, second we will look at *תְּבַנֵּן*, and finally *גָּזַל* (including threshing metaphors, since they imply chaff). Each section has its own summary.

### 3.3.2.1. שֶׁקַע

In LXX-Isa, *שֶׁקַע* is rendered once with *κάλαμη* (stubble, straw) in 5:24,<sup>148</sup> which is the common equivalent used elsewhere in the LXX, occurring eight other times. It is rendered in Isaiah most often, three times, with *φρύγανον* (dry stick),<sup>149</sup> and in 33:11 its metaphorical meaning is made explicit. In this section we will first look at the passages where *שֶׁקַע* occurs with *שֶׁשֶׁקַע*, then where it is rendered with *φρύγανον*, third where the more regular equivalent *κάλαμη* occurs without a Hebrew equivalent, and finally a section summary.

#### 3.3.2.1.1. שֶׁקַע Occuring with שֶׁשֶׁקַע

##### Isa 5:24a

Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble,	<i>לִבֵּן כְּאֵבֶל קֵשׁ לְשׁוֹן אֵשׁ וְחִשַׁשׁ</i>	<i>διὰ τοῦτο ὁν τρόπον καυθήσεται καλάμη ὑπὸ ἀνθρακος πυρός</i>	Therefore, as stubble will be burned by a coal of fire and
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<sup>145</sup> The choice of this term is appropriate for referring to something small and fluffy, such as grain husks, though the etymology, as “something scratched off or planed” also makes sense for grain husks. This etymology, though the meaning “chaff” is not mentioned, is from Robert Beeks, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek Vol 2* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 1639-640. Of course this etymology was probably not thought of in ancient times.

<sup>146</sup> The other passages *גָּזַל* occurs are: Psa 1:4; 34:5; Wis 5:14; and Isa 29:5. Also *χνοῦς* renders *מָקַח* in Isa 5:24, where also there is no sense of winnowing. In Job 21:18 it is rendered with *κονιορτός*, parallel to *ἄχυρον*. In Zeph 2:2 it is rendered with *ἄνθος*, another image of something transient (see Isa 40:6-7).

<sup>147</sup> In M. Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic of the Byzantine Period* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1992), s.v. both *עוֹר* and *מוֹץ* are defined simply as “chaff.”

<sup>148</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>149</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. Only one place outside of Isaiah uses this as an equivalent: Jer 13:24.

and as dry grass sinks down in the flame,	לְהִבָּה יִרְפָּה	καὶ συγκαυθήσεται ὑπὸ φλογὸς ἀνειμένης,	burned up by an <i>unrestrained</i> flame,
so their root will become rotten, and their blossom go up like dust;	שָׂרְשָׁם בְּמֶקַח יִהְיֶה וּפְרִיָּהֶם כְּאַבְבֶּקָה יַעֲלֶה	ἡ ῥίζα αὐτῶν ὡς χνούς ἔσται, καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται·	so their root will be like fine dust and their blossom go up like dust;

We have discussed the second part of this verse in the section on roots (2.3.2.). The imagery in the first half of this verse is a rather complex combination of metaphor and simile. Both the basis for the comparison and what is being compared are described in metaphorical terms. Despite this complexity, the passage is remarkably straight forward and easy to understand.

To say that a flame eats stubble could be described as a dead metaphor, or idiomatic, as could saying “tongue of flame.” But when both elements are combined it is clearly a vivid living metaphor. The parallel clause is rather pictorial: one can just see how burning grass curls and bends as it turns to bright embers and falls.

The Greek translation modifies this construction, but not because of its complexity. The LXX instead of having “tongue of flame” as the subject, makes “stubble” the subject of a passive verb.<sup>150</sup> The expression “tongue of flame” is not common in Biblical Hebrew but can be found in some later literature.<sup>151</sup> In Targum II Esther 6:13 the phrase **לשנא דנורא** occurs, referring to the flame that came out of the furnace into which the three youths were thrown. Also, in Enoch 14:9-10 the phrase *γλώσσης πυρός* appears twice. It is also found in the Dead Sea Scrolls as **[ולשנ] י נור**.<sup>152</sup> In a Dead Sea Scroll fragment of the Targum of Job 41:11 (11Q10) we read **בלשני אשה** where the MT has **כידודי אש**.

The Greek rendered **לשון אש** with *ἄθρακος πυρός*, which is a word combination that renders **גְּחֻלֵּת** in Prov 6:28; 25:22; and Isa 47:14.<sup>153</sup> This was perhaps under the influence of the phrase **גְּחֻלֵּי־אֵשׁ** (Lev 16:12; 2 Sam 22:13; Psa 18:13; Ezek 1:13; 10:2). The only other place where fire is described in relation to “tongue” is Isa 30:27, where the Hebrew has **תְּלַחֵת אֵשׁ אֲכָלָת** and it is rendered *καὶ ἡ ὄργη τοῦ θυμοῦ ὡς πῦρ ἔδεται*. The three recensions render 5:24 literally with *γλῶσσα πυρός*. In Isa 5:24 the transformation of the metaphor is probably due to harmonization to the more familiar phrase **גְּחֻלֵּי־אֵשׁ**, though in our passage it becomes singular. Also damaging to the “consuming fire” metaphor is that it is rendered as a “burning fire.”<sup>154</sup>

<sup>150</sup> For LXX-Isa’s occasional practice of making active constructions passive, see Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 202-3 [55-56].

<sup>151</sup> The idiom is known in English, no doubt, due to KJV of Acts 2:3.

<sup>152</sup> See J. T. Milik, ed., *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumrân Cave 4* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 194. Cf. 4Q206 1xxi3 (4QEn<sup>a</sup> ar) for the phrase **בלשני נור**. Also, the Book of Giants 4Q530 2n+6-12,9 has **לשני די נור**.

<sup>153</sup> The rendering in Isa 47:14 is more complicated, as we will discuss below.

<sup>154</sup> This rendering is not uncommon, see LXX.D.E.K., 2518.

Rather than the second image of the simile, the Greek understands a continuation of the image. The Greek simile is stubble burning from a hot coal spreading wildly, let loose, burning things. This interpretation is arrived at by rendering **יִרְפָּה** with the adjectival participle *ἀνειμένης*.<sup>155</sup> The verb *ἀνίημι* is one of the most common equivalents of the root **רפה** in the LXX as a whole.<sup>156</sup> Perhaps **חשש** was rendered with *συγκαίω*, because it was thought to be synonymous with **אכל**, which is rendered with *συγκαίω* in Gen 31:40. The only other occurrence of **חשש** is in Isa 33:11. In that passage also, fire is said to devour (**אכל**), but there is no clear translation of **חשש**. The repetition of verbs for burning create more unity in 5:24. Williamson points out that 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> reads: **ואש לוהבת**, but this is most likely secondary and does not help with understanding the Greek.<sup>157</sup> 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> agrees with MT, having **חשש**.

Note also, as mentioned in the section on roots (2.3.2.), *χνοῦς* is offered as a rendering of **מק**, which the translator either did not understand or read as **מץ**.<sup>158</sup> If the meaning “chaff” is meant, the translator introduces an image.

The changes in the metaphors of this verse seem primarily due to the understanding of the vocabulary, and are not an attempt to interpret or update the imagery.

The Targum renders literally, making the terms chaff (**קשא**) and hay (**עמיר**).<sup>159</sup>

The other place **חשש** occurs it is again rendered as some kind of verb in the LXX and again occurs with **קש**.<sup>160</sup>

### Isa 33:11

<p>You conceive <i>dry grass</i> and bring forth <i>straw</i>, your breath is a fire that will consume you.</p>	<p>תִּהְיוּ חֹשֵׁשׁ תִּלְדוּ קֶשׁ רֹחַבְכֶם אֵשׁ תֹּאכְלֶכֶם:</p>	<p><i>νῦν ὄψεσθε, νῦν αἰσθηθήσεσθε· ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν, πῦρ ὑμᾶς κατέδεταί.</i></p>	<p>Now you will see; now you will perceive; the strength of your spirit will be vain; fire will consume you.</p>
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The metaphor of conceiving and giving birth is used several other times in Isaiah. In 26:18 the people conceive and give birth to wind; the LXX renders this literally, though the wind is made positive in the Greek instead of representing vanity or emptiness. In 59:4 they conceive trouble and give birth to guilt and in 59:13 they only conceive and ponder lies,<sup>161</sup> there is no giving birth. The LXX maintains both of these metaphors in its translation. Perhaps the more concrete metaphor of straw, as opposed to something abstract, was considered to be too far-fetched or difficult to understand to be used in this context.

<sup>155</sup> *α'* has *παρίησι*, “to yield,” “fall.”

<sup>156</sup> It occurs 10x as an equivalent, as does *ἐκλύω*.

<sup>157</sup> Williamson, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Isaiah 1-27*, 384. Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2518.

<sup>158</sup> Also possible is that it should in fact read *χνοῦς*.

<sup>159</sup> “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 *rotteness*, and *the mammon of their oppression* as *the dust which flies*.”

<sup>160</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 9-10.

<sup>161</sup> The equivalent *κύω*, *ατέω* for **יָרָה** is marked as doubtful in Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v. For 59:4’s relationship to 33:11, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

Alternatively, the translator may have decided to interpret the metaphor to further emphasize the destruction coming upon the godless in Zion.<sup>162</sup>

It is unlikely that the Greek is based on a misreading of the Hebrew. IQIsa<sup>b</sup> has a feminine form חששה, but this does not help us understand what the Greek does. The closest thing to a possible lexical warrant for ὄψεσθε would be seeing חזה instead of תהרו; Ottley suggests perhaps they read תראו or תחזו.<sup>163</sup> Also, it is unlikely that αἰσθηθήσεσθε was from reading תלדו as a form of ידע.<sup>164</sup> There is even less of a lexical warrant for the use of νῦν twice. Rather than simply omit the clause, due to a strange metaphor, the translator has taken inspiration from the previous verse using νῦν in short clauses with just a verb. The translator saw that the verbs were second person, so he made the clause in the second person as a response to God in the previous verse. The translator seems to have interpreted the metaphor, rendering קש רוחכם תלדו as ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. Perhaps קש suggested to the translator the idea of emptiness and is the basis for ματαία; according to Muraoka, this passage is one of the three free renderings in LXX-Isaiah that use μάταιος.<sup>165</sup> Ziegler suggests the passage has been influenced by Isa 30:15, where תהיה is twice rendered with ματαία, and that both passages are under the influence of Lev 26:20.<sup>166</sup>

The difficulty of the metaphor in this verse is clear in that the three recensions seem to have problems with it as well. Aquila has συλλήψεσθε αἰθάλην “you will be pregnant with ash,” Symmachus has κήσεσθε φλόγα “you will conceive flame,” and Theodotion has: γαστρι λήψεσθε σποδῆ τέξεσθε καλάμην “you will grasp ash in your belly, beget stubble.”<sup>167</sup> Theodotion is the closest to the Hebrew, but still has the idea of ash instead of dry grass, perhaps because of the mention of flames in the verse.

The Targum rendering of this verse is very free, but we can still find in it a reference to chaff in a simile, though it is blown by the wind: מימרי בעלעולא לקשא ישיצי יתכון “My word, like a storm wind to chaff, will destroy you.”<sup>168</sup>

### 3.3.2.1.2. קש Rendered with φρύγανον

In the other three places קש occurs, it is rendered with φρύγανον.

#### Isa 40:24

Scarcely are they planted, scarcely sown, scarcely has their <i>stock</i> taken root	אֲיִן בְּלִ-נִטְעוּ אֶף בְּלִ- זָרְעוּ אֶף בְּלִ-שָׂרֵשׁ בְּאֶרֶץ גְּזֻעִים	οὐ γὰρ μὴ σπείρωσιν οὐδὲ μὴ φυτεύσωσιν, οὐδὲ μὴ ῥιζωθῆ εἰς τὴν γῆν ἢ ῥίζα αὐτῶν·	For they will not sow, nor will they plant, neither will their root take root in
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<sup>162</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2593.

<sup>163</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah* II, 271. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 118.

<sup>164</sup> Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 118, nt. 172. He points out this equivalence in 49:26.

<sup>165</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v.

<sup>166</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

<sup>167</sup> See the apparatus of Gottingen LXX Isaiah.

<sup>168</sup> “You conceive for yourselves wicked conceptions, you Gentiles, you make yourselves evil deeds; because of your evil deeds my Memra, as the whirlwind the chaff, will destroy you.”

in the earth,			the earth;
when he blows upon them, and they wither, and the tempest carries them off like <i>straw</i> .	וְגַם-נִשְׁף בָּהֶם וַיִּבְשׁוּ :וְסִעָרָה כְּקֶשׂ תִּשָּׂאם:	ἔπνευσεν ἐπ’ αὐτούς καὶ ἐξηράνθησαν, καὶ καταιγὶς ὡς φρύγανα ἀναλήμψεται αὐτούς.	he blew upon them, and they withered, and a tempest will carry them off like <i>twigs</i> .

We have discussed this passage in the section on roots (2.3.2.). Here our focus is on the simile “the tempest carries them away like straw” or in the Greek “like twigs.” If the idea is being slight and easily carried by the wind, straw (*κάλαμη*) seems like it would make more sense than “twigs,” though *κάλαμη* could potentially be confused for the stubble still left in the earth. The choice of *φρύγανα* as a translation, together with the reversal of the voice of the verbs in 40:24a, has changed the image. In the Hebrew the princes are scarcely planted (that they are next said to be scarcely sown is a chronological step backwards, probably as a hyperbole) and barely take root before they are withered. This language is an image of grain (or perhaps any other seed that is sown, or the flower and grass in 40:6-8) being sown, germinating, and being dried out by the wind before it matures. The Greek improves the logic of the word order<sup>169</sup> and makes the princes the subject of the verbs, though not sowing or planting, then describes them as not taking root but drying out and being carried away like twigs. Their stock taking root in the earth could be an image of planting tree cuttings. In Theophrastus’ *De Causis Plantarum* we can find the same verbal form describing that transplanted trees should not have their hole filled in right away so that they can strike roots properly: *Καὶ τοὺς γύρους οὐκ εὐθὺς συμπληροῦσιν ὅπως ρίζωθῆι τὰ κάτω πρότερον.*<sup>170</sup> In this case, the tiny branches (the princes of 40:23 who become rulers of nothing) do not take root (their rule is not established) before they are dried out and blown away in the tempest as twigs. This is in contrast to the common image of kings as trees (as in Isa 2:12-13 or Dan 4:20-22).

The Targum understands the sowing and taking root as children multiplying in the earth, but the last part has God’s word scattering them like chaff **יבדר לקשא יבדר** **קעלעולא יתהון**.<sup>171</sup>

### Isa 41:2

Who has roused a victor from the east, summoned him to his service? He delivers up nations to him, and tramples kings under foot; he makes them like dust with	מִי הָעֵרַל מִמְּזֹרַח צֶדֶק יְקַרְאֵהוּ לְרִגְלוֹ יִתֵּן לְפָנָיו גּוֹיִם וּמַלְכִים יִרְדֵּי יִתֵּן כְּעָפָר חֲרָבֹו כְּקֶשׂ נִדְף קִשְׁתֹּו:	τίς ἐξήγειρεν ἀπὸ ἀνατολῶν δικαιοσύνην, ἐκάλεσεν αὐτήν κατὰ πόδας αὐτοῦ, καὶ πορεύσεται; δώσει ἐναντίον ἐθνῶν καὶ	Who has roused righteousness from the east, called it to its feet and it will go? He will place it before nations and astonish kings, and he will <i>give to the earth</i>
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<sup>169</sup> Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 75 thinks the transposition of words is not the result of the translator’s exegesis.

<sup>170</sup> Theophrastus’ *De Causis Plantarum* [Einarson and Link, LCL 471], III.4.2. This is after describing how the tree should be planted in certain seasons, and the hole treated in such a way to make it easy for the tree to take root.

<sup>171</sup> “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.”

his sword, like driven stubble with his bow.		βασιλεῖς ἐκστήσει καὶ δώσει εἰς γῆν τὰς μαχαίρας αὐτῶν καὶ ὡς φρύγανα ἐξωσμένα τὰ τόξα αὐτῶν.	their swords and their bows like twigs that are driven out.
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For our purposes, it is only the last clauses that are of note.<sup>172</sup> In the Hebrew the two final similes are describing how the one roused from the east subdues kings and nations, his sword makes them like dust and his bow drives them off like stubble, presumably, is driven by the wind. The Greek has removed the first simile and the second simile is different in the Greek, though it is rendered literally in its own way.<sup>173</sup>

The first simile is removed, possibly, because while כ was taken as ב (perhaps since his text did indeed read this),<sup>174</sup> he has rendered עֶפֶר with γῆν by way of metonymy. This is not an unusual rendering of עֶפֶר, it occurs forty-six times, including five other times in LXX-Isa (2:9; 34:9; 40:12; 47:1; 65:25).<sup>175</sup> The difference between giving them to the earth instead of to the dust could be very slight. The important change is that it is no longer “his” sword, but the swords of his enemies. The second simile is rendered literally, except the verb is made passive and the singular indirect object “his bow” becomes the plural subject “their bows.” The simile in the Greek is not of driven stubble, but of bows being like feeble twigs. The simile has changed, but there is a better point of comparison: bows and twigs. In the Hebrew the sword and bow are the means of subduing kings and nations, while in the Greek they stand metonymically for the kings and nations, who are killed and expelled. The Greek ἐξωθέω is a unique rendering for נָדָה. The translator probably knows what it means (cf. 19:7 where there is a closer equivalent) and has here partially interpreted the simile.

The Targum understands the difficult Hebrew use of צָדַק to refer to Abraham.<sup>176</sup> Also it makes clear that he cast his slain like the dust with his sword (רמא כעפרא קטילין קדם) (חרביה) and pursued them like stubble with his bow כקשא רדפנון קדם קשתיה.

#### Isa 47:14

See, they are like stubble, the fire consumes them; they cannot deliver themselves from the	הִנֵּה הֵיוּ כְקֵשׁ אֵשׁ שֶׁרָפְתָם לְאֵי־יָצִילוּ אֶת־נַפְשָׁם מִיַּד לְהַבָּה	ἰδοὺ πάντες ὡς φρύγανα ἐπὶ πυρὶ κατακαήσονται καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐξέλωνται τήν	See, they all will be burned like twigs on a fire, and they will not deliver their soul from the flame; since
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<sup>172</sup> For the pluses in this and the following verses, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 71-72. See also Arie van der Kooij, “‘Coming’ Things and ‘Last’ Things: Isaianic Terminology as Understood in the Wisdom of Ben Sira and in the Septuagint of Isaiah,” in *Festschrift for Henk Leene: The New Things: Eschatology in Old Testament Prophecy* (eds. F. Postma, K. Spronk, and E. Talstra; Amsterdamse Cahiers Voor Exegese van de Bijbel en zijn Tradities, Supplement Series 3; Maastricht: Uitgeverij Shaker Publishing, 2002): 135-40.

<sup>173</sup> IQIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT in this verse.

<sup>174</sup> Ottley mentions that כ and ב are easy to confuse in Hebrew, as also εἰς and ὡς are easy to confuse in Greek transmission of texts. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 302.

<sup>175</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 24.

<sup>176</sup> “Who brought Abraham openly from the east, a select one of righteousness in truth? He brought him to his place, handed over peoples before him and shattered kings; he cast the slain like dust before his sword, he pursued them like chaff before his bow.”



<p>hand of the flame. No coal for warming oneself is this, no fire to sit before!</p>	<p>אֵין־גַּחֲלֵת לְחֹמֶם אֹר לְשֵׁבֶת נִגְדָּו:</p>	<p>ψυχὴν αὐτῶν ἐκ φλογός· ὅτι ἔχεις ἀνθρακας πυρός, κάθισαι ἐπ’ αὐτούς.</p>	<p>you have coals of fire, sit on them--</p>
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In this passage, the prophet prophesies against the daughter of Babylon in the second person. In 47:12-13 she is told sarcastically to consult with her sorcerers and astrologers, who are described as doomed in 47:14. They are said to be like stubble, burned by fire, and they cannot save themselves from the hand of the flame. This image is built on by the next, that the daughter of Babylon will have no coal to comfort her, since the astrologers are destroyed quickly like stubble in a fire, instead of providing a slow hot fire the way burning charcoal would.

The Greek has made several modifications. These modifications appear to center around the first two clauses becoming one clause with one verb: κατακαίω. The word הַיָּד has been dropped and πάντες added. The preposition ἐπί is added to clarify and as a part of making the sentence better Greek. Here the rendering of שֵׁקֶט with φρύγανον is appropriate, since tinder is what is clearly meant. Also of note is that the translator has changed מִיָּד לְהִבָּה to the more straightforward, and stylistically superior ἐκ φλογός. The LXX-Isa translator has discretely removed it, since there is no need to personify the fire.<sup>177</sup> Similarly, in 64:7, מִיָּד וְנִגְנִי is rendered simply as διὰ τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν. Usually the LXX-Isa translator has no problems with using hand metaphors and metonymies, at least the more conventional ones.<sup>178</sup> As mentioned earlier, here the phrase אֵין־גַּחֲלֵת לְחֹמֶם אֹר is collapsed to ὅτι ἔχεις ἀνθρακας πυρός. The end of the verse is understood differently in the Greek and continues into 47:15a.

The Greek, by combining the first two clauses, has changed the simile. In the Hebrew they are like straw and a fire will burn them, but in the Greek they burn like twigs. In the Hebrew the similes have more interchange between tenor and vehicle, in that they are like tinder, and the fire that burns them is like a person in that it has hands. The Greek has moved further into the metaphorical language by making things more direct.

The Targum takes a different tactic, explaining each of the first two clauses so that they are weak like straw, and the nations are strong like fire that will consume them.<sup>179</sup> The third clause maintains “hand” but flame is rendered as their slayers: מִיָּד קְטוּלִין.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. 5:24, where the “tongue” of a flame is removed.

<sup>178</sup> In general, the anthropomorphic or idiomatic use of יָד is usually not removed in LXX-Isa, but the more rare idioms involving hands are removed. Similarly, Orlinsky argues that all three times the right hand of God occurs and thirty-six out of thirty eight occurrences of the hand of God are rendered literally in LXX-Isa. Orlinsky, “The Treatment of Anthropomorphisms and Anthropopathisms in the Septuagint of Isaiah,” 195. The two exceptions, he says, are “rendered freely in accordance with the context.” Likewise, Raija Sollamo detects no anti-anthropomorphic tendency in the LXX as a whole’s rendering of מִיָּד. See Raija Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint* (Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Dissertationes Humanarum Litterarum 19; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1979), 191-204.

<sup>179</sup> “Behold, they are faint as the chaff, the peoples who are strong as the fire destroy them; they cannot deliver themselves from the power of killers. They have no remnant or survivor, not even a place to be rescued in!”

Why LXX-Isa thinks φρύγανον is an appropriate rendering for ψק could be understood if we think in terms of use instead of resemblance. Even in arid environments where heating is less important, fuel is still needed for cooking, and in Hellenistic settlements, for the bath house. Beside what wood was available, for fuel people would use manure, straw (chaff), and various small woody desert plants (such as *zilla spinosa*, *cornulaca monacantha*, and *leptadenia pyrotechnica*, all of which have been found burnt in Roman era Egyptian fireplaces).<sup>180</sup> By φρύγανον, then, the translator may have had in mind not dead wood gathered from beneath trees, but the smaller twig-like plants that can be found throughout the Middle East and Egypt. One plant in particular, *zilla spinosa*, exemplifies the qualities which appear in the LXX-Isa passages. It grows nearly everywhere, as can be seen in its frequent listing in ecological surveys,<sup>181</sup> and particularly flourishes in grassland communities.<sup>182</sup> An issue for these small desert plants is their taking root: if their roots do not grow deep enough (to reach moist ground) before the wet season ends, they die,<sup>183</sup> like in LXX-Isa 40:24. That φρύγανον is carried by the wind also makes more sense if we consider it to refer to such small desert plants, some of which act like a kind of tumble weed (such as *gundella tournefortii* and *salsola kali*),<sup>184</sup> and most certainly could easily be blown about if they become detached from the roots.<sup>185</sup>

The LXX-Isa translator has only followed convention in 5:24, rendering with καλάμη, perhaps because elsewhere in the verse he understood other terms related to kinds of grains: dry grass is mentioned (ψψη) and the translator has also chaff (χνοῦς).<sup>186</sup> As mentioned above, there are some hints that may show there was good reason for the strange equivalent favored by LXX-Isa. In 40:24 the translator has perhaps used φρύγανον to contrast the princes mentioned to the common image of kings as trees. In 41:12 the Greek has changed the metaphor: instead of being driven by the bow (implied to be as driven by a wind), the Greek has their bows expelled like flimsy twigs; once the translator takes bows as the object, it makes much more sense (due to their resemblance) to compare them to twigs than to straw. In 47:14 saying φρύγανον burned in the fire may be preferable to straw because its root already implies it is destined for fire. Also, a twig is a small staff or rod and so could be understood as a sort of mocking diminution of these important advisors. While φρύγανον is not an obvious

<sup>180</sup> van der Veen, "The Economic Value of Chaff," 218-19.

<sup>181</sup> M. A. Zahran and A. J. Willis, *The Vegetation of Egypt* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1992), 112-13; 156-57, 220. It is mentioned repeatedly throughout the book.

<sup>182</sup> Zahran and Willis, *The Vegetation of Egypt*, 156-57, 200-1.

<sup>183</sup> See I. Springuel, M. Sheded, and W. Abed, "Plant Growth in Relation to a Rain Incident in Wadi Agag, South Egypt," *Vegetatio* 90 (1990), 159. They note that *zilla spinosa* is one of the best plants at striking deep roots, and so has a comparatively low rate of juvenile mortality.

<sup>184</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 281-83. Though as he describes, *salsola kali* is used for food, not fuel. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 57.

<sup>185</sup> *Zilla spinosa*, when mature, "is pulled out of its bed and goes bouncing through the desert," according to [http://www.flowersinIsrael.com/Zillaspinosa\\_page.htm](http://www.flowersinIsrael.com/Zillaspinosa_page.htm) (accessed 3/5/2012).

<sup>186</sup> Though the translator may mean "dust" and not "chaff" here.

rendering for שֶׁקֶט, the translator has been able to consistently use it in a way appropriate to the context he creates in his translations.

This equivalent only occurs outside Isaiah in Jer 13:24: *καὶ διέσπειρα αὐτοὺς ὡς φρύγανα φερόμενα ὑπὸ ἀνέμου εἰς ἔρημον*. Here it is an odd comparison, to say they will be scattered in the wind like sticks; while sticks certainly blow in the wind, leaves, straw, chaff, and grass all come more readily to mind and are more dramatically carried by lighter breezes. The word φρύγανον only occurs in two other places in the LXX: in Job 30:7 it is used for לִדְוִקָה, a kind of weed or artichoke;<sup>187</sup> in Hos 10:7 it is used for קֶצֶק, a splinter.<sup>188</sup>

### 3.3.2.1.3. καλάμη where the Hebrew Lacks a Word for Straw

While καλάμη seems like a better rendering of שֶׁקֶט, and is used more often elsewhere in the LXX, in LXX-Isa it is only used for שֶׁקֶט once (5:24), as we have seen. The other three places it occurs in LXX-Isa it modifies the meaning of an image. In Isa 1:31 it is used to further describe נְעֵרֶת (tow), in 17:6 for עֲלֵלֶת (gleanings), and in 27:4 as a rendering for שִׁית (thistle). We discuss 17:6 in the section on trees (3.6.3.3.), and 27:4 in the section on thorns (3.4.1.). We will discuss 1:31 here because the LXX has the plus καλάμη and there are not other flax related passages in Isaiah with which to discuss it.

Flax was an important crop in both Palestine and Egypt. Types of linen are mentioned in Isa 3:23 and 19:9, and how the Greek renders them is interesting,<sup>189</sup> but the plant flax or its parts only occur in a metaphor in 1:31.

#### Isa 1:31

The strong shall become like <i>tow</i> and their work like a spark;	וְהָיָה הַחֹסֶן לְנְעֵרֶת וּפְעֵלוֹ לְנִיצוֹץ	καὶ ἔσται ἡ ἰσχυρὸς αὐτῶν ὡς καλάμη στιππύου καὶ αἱ ἐργασίαι αὐτῶν ὡς σπινθηῆρες πυρός,	And their strength shall be like a <i>straw</i> of <i>tow</i> , and their works like sparks of fire,
<i>the two of them</i> shall burn together, with no one to quench them.	וּבְעָרוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו וְאִין מְכַבֵּה:	καὶ κατακαυθήσονται οἱ ἄνομοι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἅμα, καὶ οὐκ ἔσται ὁ σβέσων.	and the lawless and the sinners shall be burned together, and there shall be no one to quench them.

Isaiah 1:31 tells how the wicked described in the previous verses, who will be refined out of Jerusalem (1:25), will self destruct. The word נְעֵרֶת refers to tow,<sup>190</sup> it only occurs here and in Judges 16:9. Tow is a by-product of flax production; when the woody parts of the plant are combed (hackled) out of the flax fibers, some fibers break and are also removed; these

<sup>187</sup> Here again, perhaps *salsola kali* was thought.

<sup>188</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 335 finds this equivalent implausible.

<sup>189</sup> For the rendering of the articles of clothing in chapter 3 see: Michaël van der Meer, “Trendy Translations in the Septuagint of Isaiah: A Study of the Vocabulary of the Greek Isaiah 3:18-23 in the Light of Contemporary Sources,” in *Die Septuaginta-Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (eds. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008): 581-96.

<sup>190</sup> HALOT, s.v.; DCH, s.v.; BDB, s.v.

short fibers are the tow and can still be used to make coarser cordage, rough fabric, and often wicks.<sup>191</sup> The Hebrew image, then, builds in each clause. First, the strong are said to become tow, that is, something feeble; second, their works become a spark (something short lived, a flash in the pan). In the second part of the verse the image develops further by combining the two previous ideas: their works will set them on fire and the two of them will burn up; to make matters worse, in the final clause we learn that there is no one to extinguish them.

The Greek of 1:31a has made a few adjustments. The metaphors were made into similes, by interpreting ל as though it were כ, as often happens.<sup>192</sup> “The strong” and “their works” have become in Greek “their strength” and “their works;” “they” must be οἱ ἄνομοι and οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ mentioned in 1:28.<sup>193</sup> The change from “the strong” to “their strength” could be based on a *Vorlage* reading with pronominal suffixes like that of 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which reads: החסנכם (and also ופעלכם), though the person is still different. The idea that tow is weak can be seen in classical literature, in that *στυππέϊνος* is used metaphorically for feebleness in *Comica Adespota* 855.<sup>194</sup> The LXX also renders the vehicles of the two similes each with two words, so נְעֵרָת becomes καλάμη στιππύου, and נִצוֹץ becomes σπινθήρες πυρός.<sup>195</sup> The need to specify that it is a single straw of tow may be to distinguish it from a stronger cord of tow, or from tow as a collective material.<sup>196</sup> Ziegler suggests καλάμη was added because it is thrown into fires in metaphors describing the punishment of the wicked (Isa 5:24; Mal 4:1(3:19)).<sup>197</sup> Theodotion and Symmachus use only one word for tow in Isa 1:31: ἀποτίναγμα, while Aquila seems to understand נְעֵרָת to be from נָעַר (to shake), and so renders with τίναγμα. In Judges 16:9, where again the simile of tow is used, this time snapping in a fire, a cord of tow is expressed by the construct פִּתְלֵה־הַנְּעֵרָת (thread of tow) which is rendered as στρέμμα στιππύου in Vaticanus (B) and κλώσμα τοῦ ἀποτινάγματος in Alexandrinus (A). As Ziegler points out,<sup>198</sup> in Sirach 21:9 a similar idea to LXX-Isa 1:31 is expressed: στιππύον συνηγμένον συναγωγῇ ἀνόμων, καὶ ἡ συντέλεια αὐτῶν φλόξ πυρός (The assembly of the lawless is bundled tow, and their end is a flame of fire).

In Isa 1:31b the LXX adds an interpretation for the metaphor by making clear to whom שְׁנֵיהֶם refers: οἱ ἄνομοι καὶ οἱ ἁμαρτωλοὶ from 1:28, who again appear being destroyed together, this time by fire instead of crushing. In the Greek, the pronoun could not have

<sup>191</sup> R. J. Forbes, *Studies in Ancient Technology* vol. IV (Leiden: Brill, 1964), 30.

<sup>192</sup> Ziegler notes that ל + היה is often turned into a simile in LXX-Isa, *Untersuchungen*, 92. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 233, believes the metaphor is made into a simile to underline the metaphoric value of “strength.”

<sup>193</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 111.

<sup>194</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>195</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2509 suggests these words point to LXX-Isa 5:24.

<sup>196</sup> For στιππύον (which also can have the spelling *στυππύον*, according to LSJ, s.v.) as a collective singular, see p.cair.zen.3.59489. Cf. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 233, who says that καλάμη is added to show that the weakness of tow is meant, as opposed to rope.

<sup>197</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92-93. But it only elsewhere (beside 1:31 and 5:24) appears in Isaiah in 17:6 and 27:4, where it refers to the stubble left in a field after harvest.

<sup>198</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

referred to “their strength and works” since the LXX understands these as attributes of someone else (the lawless and the sinners). LXX.D.E.K points out that  $\delta$   $\sigma\beta\acute{\epsilon}\sigma\omega\nu$  corresponds to LXX-Amos 5:6 and LXX-Jer 4:4.<sup>199</sup>

The Targum is similar to LXX in several ways: the strong again becomes strength: תוקפהון דרשיעיא, tow is rendered with two words in a simile: כנעורת כתנא; spark is also rendered with two words in a simile: כניצון נורא; and while “the two of them” is not the lawless and sinners but refers to tow and spark, twice we have a reference to רשיעיא.<sup>200</sup>

As we mentioned, Ziegler suggests  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta$  is used in 1:31 because it often occurs in descriptions of the wicked being punished in metaphors using fire,<sup>201</sup> but we suggested it is added to distinguish that an individual fiber of tow is meant and not tow as a collective singular. While indeed in 1:31 and 5:24 we find  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta$  destined for fire, in the other two places it occurs in LXX-Isa (17:6 and 27:4) the idea is related to what is left in fields after harvest.

#### 3.3.2.1.4. Summary

It is clear that the LXX-Isa translator knew the meaning of  $\psi\kappa$  since he translated it with  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta$  in 5:24. In this passage he may have translated with  $\kappa\alpha\lambda\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta$  because of the idea of the “unrestrained flame;” a flame in a field of stubble or where straw is stored would be difficult to restrain compared to how he usually translates  $\psi\kappa$ :  $\phi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$  (dry sticks) which needs to be gathered and typically belong in a controlled cooking or heating fire. In 33:11 the translator renders what he thought the straw metaphor meant: vanity or weakness; this is close to how Targum Isaiah understands straw metaphors in 5:24 and 47:14. In the remaining three occurrences of  $\psi\kappa$ , it is rendered as  $\phi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$ . In 40:24 the image is of something being carried away; by rendering with  $\phi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$ , the translator continues the idea of the princes being planted and creates a subtle contrast to the common image of kings as trees. In 41:2 the image is again of something blowing away in the wind; in rendering with  $\phi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$  the Greek makes a more apt image of the enemies’ bows uselessly being scattered. In 47:14 the image is again about fire;  $\phi\rho\acute{\upsilon}\gamma\alpha\nu\omicron\nu$  implies that they are destined to be burned which further advances the translator’s rendering of the verse. The translator, then, chooses which vehicle, straw or twigs, will better express what he understands to be the meaning of the passage at hand.

The Targum renders the similes literally in 5:24, maintaining the reference to stubble. The rendering of 33:11 is free, so that stubble is interpreted as evil deeds, yet the idea of straw ( $\psi\kappa$ ) is added turning the reference to breath into the common image of wind blowing chaff away. In 40:24 the first half of the verse is interpreted, but the simile of wind scattering straw

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<sup>199</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2509.

<sup>200</sup> “And the strength of the wicked shall become as a tow of flax, and the deed of their hands as a spark of fire; as when they are brought near to each other and both of them burn together, so will the wicked come to an end, they and their wicked deeds, and there will be no pity for them.”

<sup>201</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92-93.

is maintained. The Targum interprets the righteous one in 41:2 to be Abraham, and has him pursue his enemies with his bow like stubble, probably before a wind. For 47:14 the Targum understands that one group are weak like straw as opposed to a strong group that destroys them like fire.

### 3.3.2.2. תָּבַן

Another term that refers to “straw” or “stubble,” in this case meaning the cut straw used as cattle feed, is תָּבַן. This term is typically rendered with ἄχυρον, which in classical Greek referred to the husk or bran of the grain,<sup>202</sup> but in the LXX refers more to the straw from which the grain is removed at threshing.<sup>203</sup> In this section we will first look at the texts where תָּבַן occurs, then make a short summary.

#### 3.3.2.2.1. Texts

The word תָּבַן only occurs in Isaiah in 11:7 and 65:25.

#### Isa 11:7

The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.	<p>וּפְרָה וְדֹב תִרְעִינָה          יַחְדָּו יִרְבְּצוּ יְלֵדֵיהֶן          וְאַרְיֵה כִבְקֵר יֹאכַל-          תָּבָן:</p>	<p>καὶ βοῦς καὶ ἄρκος          ἅμα βοσκηθήσονται,          καὶ ἅμα τὰ παιδία          αὐτῶν ἔσονται, καὶ          λέων καὶ βοῦς ἅμα          φάγονται ἄχυρα.</p>	And the ox and the bear shall graze together, and their young shall be together, and together shall the lion and the ox eat <i>straw</i> .
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In the Hebrew, this image depicts future tranquility such that even animals will be tame and live together in peace. The predators will be content eating grass and hay together with their former prey. The Greek maintains this image, though it removes the comparison of the lion eating *like* an ox, but instead eats *with* the ox (note also the LXX does not bother with a synonym for βοῦς), harmonizing to the first clause. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, 4QIsa<sup>b</sup>, and 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> all have כִּבְקֵר (though 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> lacks the ר).

The Greek has made a few minor stylistic adjustments. In the first clause, it moves “together” (ἅμα) to before the verb, and adds it to the subsequent two clauses. The rendering of תָּבַן with ἄχυρον is a good choice, since both refer to cut stalks of grain used for cattle fodder, and can also mean chaff.<sup>204</sup>

The Targum renders this verse literally.<sup>205</sup>

In Isa 65:25 very nearly the same image is used again.

The wolf and the lamb shall graze together, the lion	<p>וְאֵב וְטֹלָה יִרְעוּ          כְּאַחַד וְאַרְיֵה כִבְקֵר</p>	<p>τότε λύκοι καὶ ἄρνες          βοσκηθήσονται ἅμα,          καὶ λέων ὡς βοῦς</p>	Then wolves and lambs shall graze together, and a lion
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<sup>202</sup> LSJ, s.v.

<sup>203</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. As a second definition he has the chaff and grain separated from the straw and grain.

<sup>204</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. LSJ s.v..

<sup>205</sup> “The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.”

<p>shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent-- its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.</p>	<p>יֹאכַל-תִּבְּן וְנָחַשׁ עֲפָר לֶחֶמוֹ לֹא-יָרְעוּ וְלֹא- יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָר קִדְשֵׁי אֶמְרַי יְהוָה:</p>	<p>φάγεται ἄχυρα, ὄφεις δὲ γῆν ὡς ἄρτον· οὐκ ἀδικήσουσιν οὐδὲ μὴ λυμανοῦνται ἐπὶ τῷ ὄρει τῷ ἁγίῳ μου, λέγει κύριος.</p>	<p>shall eat <i>straw</i> like an ox, but a snake [shall eat] earth <i>like</i> bread! They shall not do wrong or destroy on my holy mountain, says the Lord.</p>
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This image is shorter than that of 11:6-9, and focuses more on the dangerous animals no longer doing harm. The Greek renders more literally than in 11:7, note especially the very same phrase יֹאכַל-תִּבְּן וְנָחַשׁ עֲפָר is now rendered literally, preserving the simile και λέων ὡς βοῦς φάγεται ἄχυρα.<sup>206</sup> But in the next sentence, the snake instead of eating dust for its bread it has a new simile in the Greek: it eats earth like bread.<sup>207</sup> This simile is jarring after the previous one, the lion is compared to something else that eats, while the snake has its future food compared to its regular food (bread in the sense of subsistence).<sup>208</sup> Again, תִּבְּן is rendered with ἄχυρον.

The Targum also renders this verse literally.<sup>209</sup>

While the term ἄχυρον is used as an equivalent for תִּבְּן in 11:7 and 65:25, it also appears in 30:24 and 17:13 (which we will discuss below in our discussion of chaff: מִץ). In 30:24 we find a description of how the land will be blessed in the future, and how the cattle will have large pastures and will eat high quality fodder: וְהָאֵלֶפִים וְהָעִירִים עֲבָדֵי הָאֲדָמָה וְהַבְּמֹזָרָה בְּלִיל חֲמִין יֹאכְלוּ אֶשְׁרֵי-זֶרֶה בְּרַחַת וּבַמְזֹרָה “And the cattle and donkeys, the workers of the earth, will eat seasoned mixed-fodder, which was winnowed with a winnowing-shovel and winnowing-fork.” The meaning of בְּלִיל חֲמִין is some sort of special fodder, seasoned somehow and mixed with different kinds of grain and straw;<sup>210</sup> that it is special fodder is made clear in that it has been winnowed, which is not usually necessary for cattle feed. LXX does not render this literally but gives the general sense, that the fodder is ἄχυρα ἀναπεποιημένα ἐν κριθῇ λελιχυμένα. The idea of winnowing (or at least it is threshed and crushed) is present, as is that it is a mixture, hay prepared with barley, so it is still a special kind of fodder, or at least more than the most basic fodder of plain hay.

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 182 [41].

<sup>207</sup> Perhaps it is better thought of as a deictic use of ὡς. See T. Muraoka, “The Use of ὡς in the Greek Bible,” *Novum Testamentum* 7.1 (1964), 55.

<sup>208</sup> This would be less jarring if the previous simile were: the lion will eat hay like it eats the ox. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

<sup>209</sup> “the wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like an ox; and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain, says the LORD.”

<sup>210</sup> Probably something like the slightly fermented mixture “silage” is meant, as NRSV renders it. For the identification of חֲמִין with chick peas, see Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 130.

### 3.3.2.2. Summary

To summarize, LXX-Isa understands **תְּבַנֵּי** to refer to a grain farming byproduct that can be collected and fed to animals, and so renders with *ἄχυρον*, which is a term used to render other words related to cattle feed. The Targum renders with the Aramaic cognate.

### 3.3.2.3. מֶן

The last part of grain plants that needs to be considered is the chaff or husk that is separated from the ear of grain by crushing or threshing and then is winnowed away. In this section we will first look at the texts where it occurs, then make a short summary.

#### 3.3.2.3.1. Texts

The Hebrew term for chaff is **מֶן**, and occurs in Isa 17:13, 29:5 and 41:15, and in each case is rendered with *χνοῦς* (chaff).<sup>211</sup> As discussed above, *χνοῦς* was probably used as an equivalent of **מֶן** in the LXX to describe the smaller, lighter parts of chaff (*ἄχυρον*).

#### Isa 17:13

<p>The nations roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke them, and they will flee far away, chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and <i>tumbleweed</i> before the storm.</p>	<p>לְאַמִּים כְּשֹׁאֵן מַיִם רְבִים יִשְׁאֹן וְגַעַר בּוֹ וְנָס מִמְּרָחֵק וְרָדָף כְּמֶזְךְ הָרִים לְפָנֵי-רוּחַ וְכַגְלֵגֶל לְפָנֵי סוּפָה:</p>	<p>ὡς ὕδωρ πολὺ ἔθνη πολλά, ὡς ὕδατος πολλοῦ βία καταφερομένου· καὶ ἀποσκορακιεῖ αὐτὸν καὶ πόρρω αὐτὸν διώξεται ὡς χνοῦν ἄχυρου λικμώντων ἀπέναντι ἀνέμου καὶ ὡς κονιορτὸν τροχοῦ καταιγὶς φέρουσα.</p>	<p>Many nations are like much water, as when much water violently rushes down. And he will damn him and pursue him far away, like the dust of chaff when they winnow before the wind and like a sudden gust [drives] dust of a wheel.</p>
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For the LXX’s reading of the water similes, see LXX.D.E.K. For our purposes, it is important to note **כְּמֶזְךְ הָרִים** has been rendered with *ὡς χνοῦν ἄχυρου λικμώντων*. LXX.D.E.K. notes that the idea of winnowing comes from Isa 30:22, 24 and 41:16, and that **מֶן** is here rendered twice: *χνοῦν ἄχυρου*.<sup>212</sup> This double rendering is probably to specify *χνοῦς* as chaff, since it could otherwise be misunderstood, being parallel to *κονιορτός*.<sup>213</sup> Ziegler believes *ἄχυρου* is added because of *λικμώντων*.<sup>214</sup> It is interesting to note that this parallel also has two words where the Hebrew has only one: *κονιορτὸν τροχοῦ*.<sup>215</sup> Another explanation is that the

<sup>211</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. The word *χνοῦς* also occurs in Isa 5:24, for **מֶן**. The only other place **מֶן** occurs is Isa 3:24, where it is rendered with *κονιορτός*. Each rendering is appropriate for the context in which they occur, though they may not be very close equivalents for **מֶן**.

<sup>212</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2549. See also van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 34.

<sup>213</sup> Ziegler believes the translator inserted *κονιορτὸν* due to the parallel *χνοῦν ἄχυρου*. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93. However, cf. 29:5, where *τροχοῦ* is added to explain *κονιορτὸν* “dust.”

<sup>214</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 193, believes *ἄχυρου* is explanatory, pointing to its addition also in 30:24 (as does Ziegler), though that context is different, as we have seen.

<sup>215</sup> See van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 34.



idea of winnowing could have come from the translator supposing זרִים should be זָרִים;<sup>216</sup> though Ziegler suggests the translator may have thought mountains are mentioned as a place where they winnowed in Palestine.<sup>217</sup> According to Musselman, גִּלְגֵּל refers to a sort of tumble-weed that dries out and blows in the wind around the same time of year as wheat is harvested,<sup>218</sup> and so would have been seen blowing about when the chaff was also being blown away;<sup>219</sup> the LXX never renders in this way. Indeed here, the LXX understands the image to be of a passing wheel kicking up a cloud of dust, as in 5:28 where chariot wheels are compared to a blast of wind.<sup>220</sup>

The Targum makes clear that the waters are kings, translates זרִים literally, and perhaps understands גִּלְגֵּל, or at least transliterates with גִּלְגֵּל.<sup>221</sup>

**Isa 29:5**

<p>But the multitude of your foes shall be like small dust, and the multitude of tyrants like flying chaff. And in an instant, suddenly,</p>	<p>וְהָיָה כְּאַבְקַת דָּק הַמֶּזֶן זָרִיד וְכִמְזַץ עֵבֶר הַמֶּזֶן עֲרִיצִים וְהָיָה לְפֶתַע פְּתָאִים:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔσται ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀπὸ τροχοῦ ὁ πλοῦτος τῶν ἀσεβῶν καὶ ὡς χνοῦς φερόμενος, καὶ ἔσται ὡς στιγμὴ παραχρῆμα 6 παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ·</p>	<p>But the wealth of the impious shall be like dust from a wheel and like flying chaff. And it shall be like an instant, suddenly, 6 from the Lord Sabaoth,</p>
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Depending on how we understand הַמֶּזֶן, the enemies' army or royal entourage, or the general confusion they create, it is just like a cloud of dust and chaff passing in the wind, just a temporary little cloud of chaos disappearing quickly and permanently.<sup>222</sup>

The Greek has made several modifications to the verse. Of note first, is that the Greek has added the idea of a wheel (ἀπὸ τροχοῦ),<sup>223</sup> which is elsewhere seen in relation to chaff (more specifically, to dust (κονιορτός) as in 17:13,<sup>224</sup> but also generally as we will see, in the Greek of 41:15). The LXX here understands הַמֶּזֶן to refer to the strangers' abundance of riches, as in 29:7, 8; and 32:14;<sup>225</sup> this fits into the translator's understanding of the passage, since it is also a plus found in 29:2. Also of note is that rather than the idea of strangers or tyrants, the LXX has ἀσεβής, the impious. This equivalence (for זרִים) can also be found in Isa 25:2, 5, and is explainable if we understand it as it is used to describe things strange to the law,

<sup>216</sup> Ziegler does not think this explanation is necessary. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 193, thinks the genitive suggests the translator is making a guess, or that he read חרש or זרה.

<sup>217</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

<sup>218</sup> This is how LXX.D.E.K. 2550 understands the Hebrew.

<sup>219</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 281-83.

<sup>220</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

<sup>221</sup> "Kingdoms roar like the roaring of many waters, but he will rebuke him, and he will flee far away and be chased like chaff on the mountains before the wind and the whirling dust before the storm." Chilton seems to think גִּלְגֵּל can mean "whirling dust," but I can only find the definition "wheel" in lexicons.

<sup>222</sup> In how many cartoons is a crowd or chaos illustrated as a cloud of dust and commotion?

<sup>223</sup> IQIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT in that there is no wheel.

<sup>224</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2579.

<sup>225</sup> This equivalence can also be found in Isa 16:14; Psa 36:16, and as Muraoka points out, 36:3. Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 97.

like the strange incense of Exod 30:9 or the strange fire of Lev 10:1, Num 3:4; and 26:61.<sup>226</sup> Another explanation is that of Muraoka, who suggests the translator understood דַּי (insolent, presumptuous),<sup>227</sup> which agrees with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which has דַּי. The Greek omits the synonymous phrase הַמֶּזֶן עָרִיצִים, using the first rendering distributively.<sup>228</sup> Nearly the same phrase, πλοῦτος ἀσεβῶν, is found also in the Greek of 24:8.<sup>229</sup>

The equivalent φερόμενος for עֲבָר is elsewhere only found in Jer 13:24;<sup>230</sup> this passage, remember, is also the only place outside of Isaiah that uses φρύγανα for קֶשׂ.

The last change is that the Greek adds a simile, as Ziegler pointed out he often does this when he sees the phrase הִיָּה לְ. <sup>231</sup> These changes are largely stylistic, they do not change the imagery drastically in content, though their rhetorical effect is different.

The only thing to note about the Targum is that “your multitude of enemies” ( הַמֶּזֶן עָרִיצִים) are interpreted as the tumult of those scattering you הַמֶּזֶן מְבַדְּרֶיךָ, understanding perhaps זרע.<sup>232</sup>

**Isa 41:15**

<p>Now, I will make of you a threshing sledge, sharp, new, and having teeth; you shall thresh the mountains and crush them, and you shall make the hills like chaff.</p>	<p>הִנֵּה שֶׁמְתִידָ לְמוֹרֵג  חֲרוּץ חֲדָשׁ בְּעַל  פִּיפִיּוֹת תְּדוּשׁ הָרִים  וְתִדְק וּגְבַעוֹת כְּמֶזֶן  תִּשָּׂים:</p>	<p>ἰδοὺ ἐποίησά σε ὡς τροχούς ἀμάξης ἀλωῶντας καινοὺς πριστηροειδεῖς, καὶ ἀλόησεις ὄρη καὶ λεπτυνεῖς βουνοὺς καὶ ὡς χνοῦν θήσεις.</p>	<p>Look, I made you as the threshing wheels of a cart, new and saw-shaped, and you shall thresh mountains and grind hills to powder and make them like <i>chaff</i>.</p>
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In this passage God comforts Israel saying he will make them a threshing sledge that will reduce mountains and hills to chaff. The metaphor here explains 41:11-12 where Israel’s enemies will become like nothing, here the enemies are mountains and hills but are reduced to chaff which blows away and is gone in 41:16.<sup>233</sup>

The term מֹרֵג refers to a threshing sledge.<sup>234</sup> Here its high quality is described as being sharp (חֲרוּץ)<sup>235</sup> and new (חֲדָשׁ), that is, all the stones or metal teeth on the bottom are still sharp and none have fallen out. The meaning of בְּעַל פִּיפִיּוֹת is obscure; HALOT defines פִּיפִיּוֹת as “sharp edges” and DCH as just “edge,” since it is used to describe double edged swords. In 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> it is two words: פִּי פִּיּוֹת; perhaps thinking a sort of superlative expression

<sup>226</sup> See definition 2d in BDB.

<sup>227</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 189.

<sup>228</sup> van der Vorm-Crougths, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 77-78.

<sup>229</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2565, 2579.

<sup>230</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2579. For the translator’s preference for this verb, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 142-43.

<sup>231</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

<sup>232</sup> “But the multitude of your *dispersed* shall be like small dust, and a *tumult* of *strong ones* like chaff which passes, and there will be a *tumult* suddenly.”

<sup>233</sup> The Greek renders literally the reference to winnowing in 41:16, while the Targum adds a simile explicitly mentioning chaff.

<sup>234</sup> HALOT, s.v. DCH, s.v.

<sup>235</sup> As a noun, this would also mean a threshing sledge. HALOT, s.v.

like שִׁיר הַשִּׁירִים.<sup>236</sup> The strong expression of plurality, פִּיפִּיּוֹת, undoubtedly denotes an extra amount of stones or metal teeth, since they are already described as sharp and new. Whatever it means exactly, it clearly contributes to the picture of the sledge being a deluxe industrial model with all the accessories; it is a much more elaborate description than Amos 1:3 uses: הַרְצוֹת הַבְּרִזָּל.

The Greek translates the metaphor as a simile, rendering לְ with ὡς, and changes the terminology to better fit the Egyptian agricultural context. As Ziegler pointed out: though there is no regular LXX rendering for מוֹרֵג, here the translator has not rendered it, but has changed the threshing sledge into threshing rollers, τροχούς ἀμάξης, under the influence of 28:27.<sup>237</sup> In that passage, we find the Greek τροχὸς ἀμάξης literally translating אֹפֶן עֲגֵלָה. Ziegler shows that this, along with the term πιστηροειδεῖς (for בְּעֵל פִּיפִּיּוֹת) reflects the Egyptian milieu,<sup>238</sup> and gives the example of Cyril of Alexandria who comments on this verse by mentioning that some Egyptians just use animals to thresh grain with their hooves, while others use wagons with saw-like wheels.<sup>239</sup> Troxel suggests שֶׁדֶשׁ was read as הַדֶּשׁ and so rendered ἀλωῶντας, then was read as שֶׁדֶשׁ and rendered καινούς;<sup>240</sup> but it seems the technical terms do not have exact equivalents but are updated to fit the tools of the translator's day.<sup>241</sup> Another change the Greek makes is to move the conjunction on “hills” to before the simile, which improves the parallelism.

The Greek does not change the vehicle of the metaphor, but makes it a simile, then adjusts the terminology of the vehicle to better fit the experience of his audience. As in 29:5, the Greek has added the idea of a wheel in a passage mentioning chaff.<sup>242</sup>

The Targum renders literally, except it interprets mountains and hills as nations.<sup>243</sup>

The image of chaff is used in the Hebrew to illustrate something that is minute and light and is passing away and disappearing in the wind. The Greek uses it in the same way, though often adjusts the surrounding terminology, often to include a wheel; in 17:13 and 29:5 the wheel is mentioned as kicking up dust for the wind, while in 41:15 it is a threshing tool.

Chaff is implicitly present also wherever threshing (שֶׁדֶשׁ; 21:10; 25:10; 28:27-8; 41:15) and winnowing (זָרָה; 30:24; 41:16, which we have already discussed) is mentioned.<sup>244</sup>

<sup>236</sup> Otherwise 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT regarding the threshing implement, as does 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> up to חרוץ.

<sup>237</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186-87.

<sup>238</sup> Seeligmann lists the word πιστηροειδεῖς as an example of the translator's big vocabulary. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version*, 184 [42/43].

<sup>239</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186-87.

<sup>240</sup> Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 120. He calls this a translation doublet, as opposed to a double translation.

<sup>241</sup> Without ἀλωῶντας it could be unclear why this wagon wheel is mentioned.

<sup>242</sup> It is noteworthy that the translator uses χροῦς and not χροῦς or κονιορτός, suggesting he has chaff and not simply dust in mind.

<sup>243</sup> “Behold, I make you a *strong* threshing sledge, new, *full of points*; you shall *kill the Gentiles* and *destroy* [them], and you shall make *the kingdoms* like *the chaff*. 16 You shall winnow them, and a wind shall carry them away, and *his Memra*, as *the whirlwind the chaff*, shall scatter them. And you shall rejoice in *the Memra* of the LORD; in the Holy One of Israel you shall glory.”

**Isa 21:10**

<p>O my threshed and my son of a threshing-floor, what I have heard from the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.</p>	<p>מְדֻשָּׁתִי וּבֶן-גֶּרְנִי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתִּי מֵאֵת יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַגִּדְתִּי לָכֶם:</p>	<p>ἀκούσατε, οἱ καταλειμμένοι καὶ οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι, ἀκούσατε ἃ ἤκουσα παρὰ κυρίου σαβαωθ· ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ ἀνήγγειλεν ἡμῖν.</p>	<p>Hear, you who have been left and you who are in pain; hear the things I have heard from the Lord Sabaoth; the God of Israel has announced them to us.</p>
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Here, at the end of an oracle about Babylon’s fall to Media and Persia, the audience, Israel/Judah, are addressed metaphorically. The term מְדֻשָּׁתִי refers to what was threshed and בֶּן-גֶּרְנִי to what is characteristic of a threshing floor: threshed grain. The metaphor suggests the people addressed have suffered violence like threshed grain. As LXX.D.E.K. points out, in Micah 4:13 and Hab 3:12 nations are described as being threshed as a metaphor for them being defeated.<sup>245</sup>

The Greek interprets these terms as also in 28:28 where a similar interpretation is made.<sup>246</sup> The threshed grain metaphor comes out of nowhere in the passage, so it makes sense that the translator would feel the need to interpret it for the sake of clarity.<sup>247</sup> He renders the threshed grain מְדֻשָּׁתִי as representing the remnants: οἱ καταλειμμένοι.<sup>248</sup> This is interesting, since in 17:5-6 the remnant is what was left in the field, so the grain is presumably what was carried off. But of course it is possible to use the same vehicle in different ways for different metaphors. Those remaining in 21:10 are thought of as having suffered some violence or distress,<sup>249</sup> which the translator makes clear by rendering the parallel בֶּן-גֶּרְנִי with οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has גְּדָרִי (my fenced one), though the MT reading makes better sense as the basis for the Greek. While threshed grain implies chaff, neither the Hebrew nor the Greek even make an implication regarding whether the chaff is present or has already been winnowed away.<sup>250</sup>

In addition to interpreting the metaphor and giving what it is thought to represent, the translator has further clarified the passage by adding two imperatives (ἀκούσατε) for which the vocatives act as subject. Ziegler suggests this plus follows the relative clause and is similar to Isa 1:10; 7:13 and such passages.<sup>251</sup> The main verb in the Hebrew has changed from first person to third person; the prophet no longer announces to the threshed, but it is God who declares to the prophet and the remnant.

<sup>244</sup> Isa 27:12 may contain threshing and gleaning imagery, though synonyms are used: חֲבַט and לָקַט. In any case, LXX understands it to refer to “fencing” (συμφράσσω) instead of “beating.”

<sup>245</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2557.

<sup>246</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185.

<sup>247</sup> Seeligmann goes too far in saying the translation “is practically independent of the Hebrew text.” Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 277.

<sup>248</sup> This term appears in 13:12,14; 27:10; 37:4, 31, as LXX.D.E.K., 2557 points out.

<sup>249</sup> LXX.D.E.K. describes it as cruelty suffered by the defeated. LXX.D.E.K., 2557.

<sup>250</sup> NRSV renders בֶּן-גֶּרְנִי as “winnowed one.”

<sup>251</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 65.

The Targum also interprets the metaphor, though by giving what it thinks מְדַשְׁתִּי represents, then by expanding the parallel name into a simile.<sup>252</sup> So, the first part represents kings skilled in war who will plunder, and the second part says they plunder like someone skilled to thresh: מלכין דאומנין לאגחא קרבא ייתון עלה למיבזה הא כאיכרא דאומן למדש ית אידרא.

**Isa 25:10**

For the hand of the LORD will rest on this mountain. The Moabites shall be trodden down in their place as straw is trodden down in a dung-pit.	כִּי־תִנְנֶנָּה יְד־יְהוָה בְּהַר הַזֶּה וְנָדוּשׁ מוֹאָב תַּחֲתֵיו כְּהַדֹּשׁ מִתְבֵּן בְּמִי <sup>253</sup> מִדְּמָנָה׃	ὅτι ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει ὁ θεὸς ἐπὶ τὸ ὄρος τοῦτο, καὶ καταπατηθήσεται ἡ Μωαβίτις, ὃν τρόπον πατοῦσιν ἄλωνα ἐν ἀμάξαις.	Because God will give us rest on this mountain, and Moabitis shall be trodden down as they tread a threshing floor with wagons.
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The Hebrew uses a more general meaning for the term דָּוַשׁ, simply to tread. In this case it is straw being trod into dung, either for fuel or fertilizer.<sup>254</sup> The metaphor is different from the threshing metaphor, in that it is less about suffering cruel violence and more about humiliation, though the reality may have been much the same.

The Greek removes the anthropomorphism יְד־יְהוָה saying instead simply ὁ θεός. This may not be due to the issue of it being an anthropomorphism, but a matter of syntax, since the translator appears to have read תִּנְנֶנָּה as a hiphil (exchanging a י for the ו),<sup>255</sup> and so rendered it with ἀνάπαυσιν δώσει.<sup>256</sup> The Greek changes the image into the more common one of grain being threshed, though he should have been familiar with mixing straw and manure for fuel as was common.<sup>257</sup> The Qere-Ketiv of MT is read in both ways by various ancient versions: LXX follows the Qere (בְּמוֹ, rendering with the preposition ἐν), as does the Peshita and Vulgate; while 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, Symmachus, and the Targum follow the Ketiv.<sup>258</sup> As Ziegler points out, πατέω is a unique rendering for דָּוַשׁ, though it can be found in relation to a threshing floor (ἄλων) in 1 Sam 23:1.<sup>259</sup> As we have seen, תְּבֵן is elsewhere in Isaiah always rendered with ἄχυρον, but here מִתְבֵּן is understood to stand for the grain of the threshing floor; the

<sup>252</sup> “Kings who are skilled in waging war will come against her to plunder her even as the farmer who is skilled in threshing the grain. The prophet said, What I have heard before the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, I announce to you.”

<sup>253</sup> ק במו.

<sup>254</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185-86. For an analysis of the Hebrew in light of Mari texts, see: Bob Becking, “‘As Straw is Trodden Down in the Water of a Dung-Pit;’ Remarks on a Simile in Isaiah 25:10,” in *Isaiah in Context: Studies in Honour of Arie van der Kooij on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (eds. Michaël N. van der Meer et al.; Leiden: Brill, 2010): 3-14. He argues in favor of the ketiv reading, understanding that straw was used to cover the dung to soak up water and cover the smell. Cf. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which has כְּחָדוּשׁ.

<sup>255</sup> See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 227.

<sup>256</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2568. Here it suggests 32:17 as a similar case.

<sup>257</sup> see van der Veen, “The Economic Value of Chaff,” 218-19. Cf. Ezekiel 4:11-15.

<sup>258</sup> See Arie van der Kooij, “Isaiah 24-27: Text-Critical Notes,” in *Studies in Isaiah 24-27: The Isaiah Workshop-De Jesaja Werkplaats* (eds. Hendrik Jan Bosman, Harm van Grol, et alii; Oudtestamentische Studiën 43; Leiden: Brill, 2000), 14.

<sup>259</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185-86.

LXX uses a metonymy putting the threshing floor (ἀλών) for what is trod upon it.<sup>260</sup> The rendering of מְדַמְנָה with ἀμαξία is not really a rendering,<sup>261</sup> but like in other passages related to threshing, the translator includes the idea of wheels or carts (21:10; 41:15).<sup>262</sup>

The Targum changes “hand” to “power.”<sup>263</sup> Of more interest to us is that the Targum also changes the vehicle of the metaphor; instead of treading straw in dung, the straw is trodden into clay דְּמִידֵּשׁ תְּבִנָּא בְּטִינָא, probably under the influence of Exod 5:7 and Nahum 3:14.

In Isa 28:23-29 there is a passage illustrating various agricultural activities that are done in a certain way, and others that are not done in a certain way. We have discussed 28:25, 28 above (3.3.1.1.), but now we will look again at 28:27-28 where threshing is discussed and the passage is interpreted in the Greek.

**Isa 28:27-28**

<p><i>Black cumin</i> is not threshed with a threshing sledge, nor is a cart wheel rolled over cumin; but <i>black cumin</i> is beaten out with a stick, and cumin with a rod.</p>	<p>כִּי לֹא בַּחֲרוּץ יִדָּשׁ          קִצָּח וְאוֹפֵן עֲגָלָה          עַל-כַּמֶּן יוֹסֵב כִּי          בַמַּטֵּה יַחֲבֹט קִצָּח          וְכַמֶּן בְּשִׁבֵּט:</p>	<p>οὐ γὰρ μετὰ σκληρότητος καθαίρεται τὸ μελάνθιον, οὐδὲ τροχὸς ἀμάξης περιάξει ἐπὶ τὸ κύμινον, ἀλλὰ ῥάβδῳ ἐκτινάσσεται τὸ μελάνθιον, τὸ δὲ κύμινον</p>	<p>For <i>black cumin</i> is not <i>cleaned</i> with harshness, nor will a cart wheel roll over the cumin, but <i>black cumin</i> is shaken with a rod, and cumin</p>
<p>[It] is crushed for bread, but one does not thresh it forever; one drives the cart wheel and horses over it, but does not pulverize it.</p>	<p>יֶחֱם יוֹדֵק כִּי לֹא          לְנִצָּח אֲדוֹשׁ יְדוֹשֵׁנוּ          וְהֵמָּה גִלְגַּל עֲגָלָתוֹ          וּפְרָשָׁיו לֹא יִדְקְנוּ:</p>	<p>μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται. οὐ γὰρ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ὀργισθήσομαι, οὐδὲ φωνὴ τῆς πικρίας μου καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.</p>	<p>will be eaten with bread. For I will not be angry with you forever, nor will the voice of my bitterness trample you.</p>

In 28:23-25 the proper order of planting a field is described, and in 28:27-28 the proper way of preparing various produce is described, first by saying how herbs are not treated, then by saying how they are treated. In 28:27 two different threshing implements are mentioned, a sledge (חֲרוּץ) and rollers (אוֹפֵן עֲגָלָה), perhaps simply cart wheels); since they are not used on black cumin and cumin, they presumably are used for something else: the wheat, emmer, and barley of 28:25. The herbs are simply struck with a rod to shake the seeds

<sup>260</sup> Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 186, where he points out the papyri using the same metonymy.

<sup>261</sup> See Wilson De A. Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6 as Interpretation & Translation: A Methodological Discussion* (PhD Diss., Leiden University, 2012), 118-19, where the suggestion that the translator read במרכבה for במי מדמנה is rejected.

<sup>262</sup> Ziegler says it is conditional on the image of the threshing floor. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 97.

<sup>263</sup> “For the *might* of the LORD will be *revealed* on this mountain, and the Moabites will be trodden down in *their* place, as the straw is trodden down in the *mire*.”

loose. In 28:28 the Hebrew concedes that the cumins are crushed, even by cart wheels, but it is not ground finely. The meaning of the passage has to do with Judah suffering, but only for a time and according to the planned ordering of God's will (28:29). In 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> a few differences should be noted. First of all, in 28:29, לחם is missing (4QIsa<sup>k</sup> has לחם<sup>l</sup>) and the first word is דק<sup>l</sup>. Also, גלגל has been added by a corrector. These changes do not seem to form the basis for the differences in the Greek.

The Greek in these verses creates a more clear explanation of the whole passage. It is difficult to tell if σκληρότης is an interpretation of בְּחִרְוִין as the adjective (with sharpness) or as a noun (with a threshing sledge).<sup>264</sup> As we saw in 21:10, the translator associates threshing with harsh treatment causing agony, so he could have interpreted “with a threshing sledge” to refer to harsh treatment. The rendering of וְדִישׁ with καθαίρω is interesting. The translator knows the meaning of דִּישׁ, as we saw in 41:15; Ziegler discusses this rendering and concludes that the translator was influenced by his culture and rendered with καθαίρω, which refers more to winnowing or cleaning the seeds rather than threshing, because he knew it was appropriate to how cumin was treated.<sup>265</sup> This translation, then, fits the common practice, which in fact reinforces the point the passage is trying to make, that black cumin is not treated harshly like grains are, it is simply cleaned by winnowing or sieving.<sup>266</sup> In comparison, the next clause is rendered very literally, except for the word order being adjusted by moving the location of the verb περιάγω, and reading it as a Qal instead of Hophal.<sup>267</sup> Likewise the next clause כִּי בַמְטָה יִחַבֵּט קֶצֶחַ is rendered literally, but the last is understood differently. Presumably וְכִמֶּזְבֵּץ לְחֶם יוֹדֵק is rendered with τὸ δὲ κύμινον μετὰ ἄρτου βρωθήσεται.<sup>268</sup> Ottley and Ziegler suggest the translator understood לְחֶם יוֹדֵק as being analogous to the idiom מְטָה-לְחֶם (eg. Lev 26:26) and shortened the phrase just to μετὰ ἄρτου.<sup>269</sup> LXX.D.E.K. suggests the word שֶׁבֶט was simply passed over.<sup>270</sup> This rendering is probably for clarity, since cumin is not crushed with a rod for making bread, but is crushed so it can be eaten with bread, as the Greek makes clear, dropping the references to the preparation of the cumin.

The passage as a whole is interpreted by the Greek in the last lines. It does not render the horses or wagons. The Greek interprets threshing (אָדוּשׁ יְדוּשָׁנוּ) as God's anger (ἐγὼ ὑμῖν ὀργισθήσομαι).<sup>271</sup> The translator again sees threshing as an image of harsh violent treatment, in this case as a manifestation of God's anger. The last phrase וְהָמָּם גְּלִגְל עֲגָלָתוֹ וּפָרָשָׁיו לֹא־

<sup>264</sup> It appears with little textual warrant in 4:6 and 8:12, as LXX.D.E.K., 2578 points out.

<sup>265</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184-85.

<sup>266</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 184-85.

<sup>267</sup> This parsing agrees with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>. LXX.D.E.K., 2578.

<sup>268</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2578 suggests יוֹדֵק was read as נִקָּד like in Jos 9:5, 12 where βιβρώσκω is used as an equivalent. However, it is probably an equivalent there to express the idea of the bread being worm-eaten.

<sup>269</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 245. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 8.

<sup>270</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2578.

<sup>271</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 185. That it is brief anger accords with 7:4; 10:25; 54:7, as pointed out in LXX.D.E.K., 2578. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 120 also points to Isa 57:16 and Jer 3:12. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has הִדָּשׁ instead of אָדוּשׁ.

לִדְקֹנָנוּ appears to be rendered freely. Perhaps וְהַמֶּן was read as וְהַמֶּן, and is thus the source of the word φωνή; a similar idea to the Greek is expressed in Isa 30:30.<sup>272</sup> The idea of animosity (πικρία) comes from 28:21.<sup>273</sup> The one phrase rendered nearly literally is לֹא־יִדְקֹנָנוּ which becomes οὐδὲ... καταπατήσει ὑμᾶς.

The Greek, then, interprets the passage as having to do with how Judah is treated. They suffer hardship for a time, but are not to be destroyed, just as black cumin and cumin are beaten but not crushed.<sup>274</sup> This interpretation is partly the result of reading 28:26 as describing a chastisement followed by rejoicing.

The Targum interprets the passage as a whole already in 28:24-25, so that the rest can be rendered nearly literally. In 28:28 לֶחֶם is interpreted as grain עֲבוּרָא. The horses, which were omitted in the Greek, are rendered as a verb, and in the context of threshing, the Targum talks about separating the grain from the chaff: וּמְפָרִישׁ יֵת עֲבוּרָא וּמְפָרֵחַ יֵת דּוּקָא.<sup>275</sup>

### 3.3.2.3.2. Summary

LXX-Isa always understands the term chaff (זֶבֶן), rendering it literally with χνοῦς. While in 5:24 and in 29:5 the translator may have intended χνοῦς to carry a meaning more like “dust,” in the other places it clearly refers to chaff. In 17:13 the translator is more clear, rendering: χνοῦν ἀχύρου, and in 41:15 the context is of threshing. Chaff is mentioned in Isaiah to illustrate something that is chased away by the wind and disperses and disappears. In Aristophanes, *Acharinians*, 508 we see chaff in a metaphor in reference to the mixed nature of the members of a city: τοὺς γὰρ μετοίκους ἄχυρα τῶν ἀστῶν λέγω.<sup>276</sup> We do not see chaff as a party in Isaiah, unlike Matt 3:12 and Luke 3:17 where it is a group that needs to be separated.

The LXX does not interpret or replace these chaff metaphors, but in each case adjusts and directs the metaphor. In 17:13, perhaps for lexical reasons, the translator has added winnowing, which makes more vivid the idea of the chaff being tossed in the air and blown away by wind. In 29:5 the similes are adjusted in the Greek. Instead of fine dust passing away, the Greek has introduced the idea of a wheel (which is found with chaff in 17:13 and the Greek of 41:15). Also, the similes are interpreted as standing for something different in the Greek; in the Hebrew it is the army of your strangers (זֶרְיָהּ הַמֶּן) but in the Greek it is the riches of the impious (ὁ πλοῦτος τῶν ἀσεβῶν), probably due to the translator’s understanding of the passage as a whole. In 41:15, the LXX updates the image to better fit his Egyptian

<sup>272</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2578.

<sup>273</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2578.

<sup>274</sup> Perhaps we could push this to claim that the other nations are like the wheat and barley which will be completely crushed and ground to flour, like Moab in 25:10.

<sup>275</sup> “For *they* do not thresh dill with threshing sledges of iron, nor do *they* turn wheels of a cart upon cumin; for *they* beat dill with the stick, and cumin with the rod. 28 *They indeed thresh grain, but they* do not thresh it forever; and he *stirs* with the wheels of his cart and *separates the grain and lets the dust fly.*”

<sup>276</sup> Aristophanes, *Acharnians* [Henderson, LCL 178].



context by describing the kind of threshing sledge commonly used. Also, here the metaphor is turned into a simile.

Threshing metaphors meet more varied treatment in the LXX. In 21:10, the metaphor is interpreted as a remnant that is suffering, perhaps to make more clear who is addressed. In 25:10, the Greek turns a more unique metaphor into a more conventional metaphor: treading straw into a dung-heap becomes treading out grain. Also, the translator again adds contemporary technology, adding the idea of a threshing cart. In 28:28-29, the threshing metaphor is again updated to the translator's contemporary practice (for how cumin is prepared) and the passage is clarified (that cumin is crushed to be eaten with bread). The Greek interprets the passage as a whole here (that they will suffer only for a time), and like in 21:10 interprets threshing, though this time as a manifestation of God's anger. While threshing implies chaff, the threshing metaphors in Isaiah and the Greek rendering do not.

In the Targum, it is noteworthy that it also interprets 29:5 as referring to a different group than the Hebrew, though it understands it in a different way than the Greek. In 41:15, the mountains and hills are interpreted as nations, but the rest of the metaphor is retained. In the next verse, rather than a tempest scattering the chaff, it is made clear that God's word (מימר) scatters them. In 21:10, the Targum interprets the first metaphor, then uses the parallel phrase as a simile to relate the tenor to the vehicle. Like in the Greek of 25:10, the Targum also has used a different metaphor from the Hebrew (and the Greek); instead of treading straw into dung, it is straw trodden into clay. The Targum of 28:28-29 is rendered literally, though mostly due to the passage already being interpreted in 28:24-25. We should mention again here that in the Targum of 40:6 a chaff metaphor is introduced, so that the strength of the wicked is like chaff of the field instead of the flower of the field. This is probably because it is blown away in the next verse, and so harmonizes with the common chaff in the wind imagery.

### 3.4. Thorns

Various sorts of thorns and thistles are mentioned several times in Isaiah. Sometimes they are metaphorical, but other times they stand in images that work by way of metonymy. Generally speaking, thorns and thistles are mentioned either in connection with inhabited places becoming devoid of people with the result that thorns grow up, or they are mentioned as something flammable.

In this section we will first look at a word pair unique to Isaiah, then we will look at the more common thorn terminology, and finally there will be a summary.

### 3.4.1. A Unique Isaianic word pair: שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית

Several times we see the word pair שְׁמִיר and שִׁית.<sup>277</sup> These terms only occur in Isaiah, and always occur together, except for in 32:13 where we find קוץ שְׁמִיר. Wildberger believes שְׁמִיר refers to the christ-thorn plant, and שִׁית is a generic word for thorny scrub brush.<sup>278</sup> He says they are chosen for the sake of alliteration.<sup>279</sup> The LXX's translation of this phrase is complex.<sup>280</sup> About half of the time, LXX-Isa renders it in a sense having to do with thorns in uncultivated land, and about half the time it renders it as having to do with grass.

#### Isa 5:6

I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;	וְאַשְׁיִתְהוּ בְתֵהּ לֹא יִזְמַר וְלֹא יַעְדֵר וְעֵלָה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית	καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου καὶ οὐ μὴ τμηθῆ ἢ οὐδὲ μὴ σκαφῆ, καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα·	And I will <i>leave my vineyard unused</i> and it shall not be pruned or dug and a thorn shall come up into it as into a <i>fallow field</i> ,
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.	וְעַל הָעֲבִים אֲצַוָּה מִהַמְטִיר עָלָיו מָטָר:	καὶ ταῖς νεφέλαις ἐντελοῦμαι τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι εἰς αὐτὸν ὕετόν.	and I will command the clouds, that they send no rain to it.

In 5:7 we get the explanation for this allegory, that the vineyard is the house of Israel and the vine is the man of Judah.<sup>281</sup> This probably does not mean we have to find an exact interpretation for the thorns and weeds; they probably simply illustrate symptoms of an abandoned place, like the abandoned cities in 5:9. A vineyard being neglected in Prov 24:30-31 (in this case by a sluggard) is also described in synonymous terms (in the Greek the land becomes fallow and grassy). The image in 5:6 is of neglect, that the vines are not pruned and so grow out of control and become unfruitful, and that thorns and weeds are allowed to grow up without being weeded. God even commands the clouds to neglect to rain on the vineyard.

The Greek has a slightly different picture. The phrase וְאַשְׁיִתְהוּ בְתֵהּ is rendered καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου which Ziegler says is common terminology in the Papyri for leaving fields so that they become fallow,<sup>282</sup> which naturally would be disastrous for a vineyard, which requires considerable labor to maintain. The LXX for some reason wants to make explicit that the vineyard is being abandoned, and so gives what is meant by the pronoun: τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου. The term χέρσος likewise refers to developed land that is deteriorating.<sup>283</sup> Schnebel shows that the primary meaning of χέρσος is dry land, but that in Hellenistic Egypt it came to describe arable land that has become less productive due to lack of irrigation (natural or artificial), or because it was overgrown with canes or with thorns and scrub or tamarisks, or

<sup>277</sup> Isa 5:6; 7:23, 24, 25; 9:17; 10:17; and 27:4.

<sup>278</sup> Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 171.

<sup>279</sup> Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 171.

<sup>280</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 33, 181.

<sup>281</sup> We will discuss this passage again in the section on Vines and Vineyards (III.E.1.).

<sup>282</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179-80.

<sup>283</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181.

covered in sand or salt.<sup>284</sup> John S. Kloppenborg Verbin points out that in Ptolemaic Egypt, the failure of vineyards was common enough for the word *χερσάμπελος* to be coined.<sup>285</sup> This is a more precise description of the matter, leaving a vineyard to become a fallow plot of land. Fallow can sound positive in English, but here we should understand it as describing a plot of land that requires considerable extra work to be put back to use;<sup>286</sup> in the Egyptian context perhaps the land is even returning to desert. The Greek is literal but more technical in describing the consequences of God's action, that the vines will not be pruned or weeded.

The rendering of the phrase *וְעָלָה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית* with *καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα* is difficult to unravel. The Greek has added the words *εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς* and omitted a conjunction. The Hebrew has two subjects, but the Greek has only one and a comparison describing the location for the action. Judging from the rendering of the phrase in 7:23, 24, and 25, it is likely that *שְׁמִיר* is rendered with *χέρσος* and *שִׁית* with *ἄκανθα*.<sup>287</sup> The typical meaning of *χέρσος* is “dry land,” but Ziegler points out that in the Papyri it is often used to refer to fallow or undeveloped land.<sup>288</sup> In the Egyptian context, an abundance of thorns growing in a field would render it a *χέρσος*;<sup>289</sup> though in Judea various thorn plants would also need to be weeded in fields. The addition of the simile may be because in the Greek (5:2, 4), the vine was already producing thorns when it was being properly tended. So here it is necessary to clarify that the vineyard will be left to become fallow and thorns will sprout up. This makes clear that the choice vine that produces thorns will not be left to flourish on its own, bringing an abundant crop of thorns; this difference is also clarified by the use of the plural *ἄκανθας* in 5:2, 4, whereas everywhere else in LXX-Isa it is used in the singular.<sup>290</sup> In 7:23, vineyards are again destroyed, but there they become undeveloped land and thorns, without a simile in Hebrew or in the Greek. The rendering of *שִׁית* with *ἄκανθα* occurs three other times: in Isa 7:23, 24, and 25.<sup>291</sup>

The Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.<sup>292</sup> The phrase *וְעָלָה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית* becomes *מטלטלין ושבביקין ויהון*, “And they will be deported and abandoned.” It is debatable whether this interpretation is of the text as a metaphor or as a prophecy.

<sup>284</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 14-20. Also it can be used with descriptions of land reclaimed from the wilderness, 13-14.

<sup>285</sup> John S. Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices and the Citation of Isa 5:1-7 in Mark 12:1-9,” *NT 44.2* (2002), 152.

<sup>286</sup> Such as cutting and burning the wild scrub or repairing irrigation systems; loans were sometimes needed to finance this work; see Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 21-23.

<sup>287</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v.

<sup>288</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181.

<sup>289</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 20-21.

<sup>290</sup> As Ken Penner pointed out in personal correspondence, S\* (and B) have *ἄκανθαι* which is corrected in stages to *ἄκανθα*.

<sup>291</sup> See Hatch and Redpath, 43b. Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 364.

<sup>292</sup> “And I will make them [to be] *banished*; they will not be *helped* and they will not be *supported*, and they will be *cast out* and *forsaken*; and I will command the *prophets* that they *prophecy* no *prophecy* concerning them.”

The second place the phrase occurs is Isa 7:23-25, where vines (and by metonymy, vineyards) are mentioned three times as becoming a place for שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית. Strictly speaking this passage is not metaphorical, but it does stand as a sort of hyperbole or metonymy for how even the best farm land will become a fallow waste since no one will be around to take care of it. All three times the words are rendered with χέρσος and ἄκανθα respectively. While the first two verses are rendered almost completely literally, in 7:25 the Greek renders the clauses differently, making the mountains an exception to the lands that will become dry and overrun with thorns. This is also how the Targum understands the verse. This change seems to lie more on the level of their understanding of the prophecy than their understanding of the metaphor.<sup>293</sup>

In all three verses, the Targum renders שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית with הובאי ובור, thorn and fallow land.<sup>294</sup> This is the same as the LXX, but with the opposite words associated with thorn and fallow land or simply with the word order changed.

In other places, LXX-Isa understands שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית to refer (in part) to dry grass, usually in the context of fire.

**Isa 9:17(18)**

<p>For wickedness burned like a fire, consuming briars and thorns; it kindled the thickets of the forest, and they swirled upward in a column of smoke.</p>	<p>כִּי־בַעֲרָה כָּאֵשׁ רְשָׁעָה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית תֹּאכֵל וְתִצַּת בְּסִבְבֵּי הַיַּעַר וְיִתְאַבְּכוּ גֵּאוֹת עֲשָׂן:</p>	<p>καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἡ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται ὑπὸ πυρός· καὶ καυθήσεται ἐν τοῖς δάσεσι τοῦ δρυμοῦ, καὶ συγκαταφάγεται τὰ κύκλω τῶν βουνῶν πάντα.</p>	<p>And the transgression will burn like a fire, and like dry grass will it be consumed by fire, and it will burn in the thickets of the forest and devour everything around the hills.</p>
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We will discuss this passage further in the section on trees (3.6.4.). For the current purposes, it is worth noting that the Greek adds a comparative particle: ὡς. While it could be argued that the simile is implied in the Hebrew and the comparative particle is omitted because it is poetry, it seems more likely to read the clause as the fuel wickedness will burn. Wickedness is burning first the thorns and thistles, then spreading over the hills and forests burning up everything. This is made clear in the next verse which says that the land and people of the land are allowed to burn because of God’s wrath. That the thorns and trees are compared to people is also made clear in 9:18 by the phrase וַיְהִי הָעָם כַּמֶּאֱכֹלֶת אֵשׁ.

The Greek understands all of this differently. The translator reads שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית as a comparison of in what way lawlessness burns. In the next verse, where the connection between the fire’s fuel and people is made, the translator has rendered with a passive

<sup>293</sup> To be precise, their reading is based on taking יְרֵאת as the subject of the clause.

<sup>294</sup> Chilton renders בור with “briers,” but Sokoloff does not have this definition in either lexicon. Jastrow seems to arrive at his definition “weed, briars” based on the Targum’s use as an equivalent here in Isa 7:23 and from “something waste, wild-growing.”

participle (κατακαυμένος), and so instead of being like fuel (וַיְהִי הָעָם כְּמֵאֵלֶּת אֵשׁ), the people are like they have been burned (καὶ ἔσται ὁ λαὸς ὡς ὑπὸ πυρὸς κατακαυμένος).

It is within the context of this transformation of the passage that the rendering of שְׂמִיר וְיִשְׁתִּית can be understood. The translator may have thought a literal rendering would express thorns in a fallow waste (based on how these words were translated in the other passages where it occurs) and then chose a rendering that more clearly expresses the essential quality described, flammability, and so renders with ἄγρωστις ξηρά. LXX.D.E.K. similarly believes that these terms were used because they better fit the verb אָכַל or βιβρώσκω.<sup>295</sup> As we will see below, thorns are said to be burned in 32:13 in both Hebrew and Greek, though there the emphasis is not on the flammability of thorns; they are burned as a method of disposal. In two other places (10:17 and 32:13) שְׂמִיר is rendered as grass (χόρτος), and so may be the basis here for ἄγρωστις; Muraoka is probably right in that he does not venture independent word equivalents for the two words in the phrase.<sup>296</sup>

The Greek metaphor of a fire spreading from dry grass to thickets and burning everything around the hills sounds just like how fires would spread. Hepper discusses how forests develop and the effects of burning; he says it is unlikely that oak forests would be easy to set on fire, while coniferous trees burn much more easily; he says that grass and grain fires would spread very quickly and could easily light dry thickets that accompany hill-woodlands, which could then generate the heat to spread to the hardwood trees.<sup>297</sup>

The Targum interprets the passage.<sup>298</sup> Thorns and thistles are interpreted as representing the sinners and the guilty, חַטָּאִיא וְחַיִּיבֵיא.

### Isa 10:17

And the light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briars in one day.	וְהָיָה אִזְרַיִשׁרָאֵל לְאֵשׁ וְקִדּוּשׁוֹ לְלֶהֱבֵה וּבְעֵרָה וְאָכְלָה שִׁתּוֹ וְשְׂמִירוֹ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד:	καὶ ἔσται τὸ φῶς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ εἰς πῦρ καὶ ἀγιάσει αὐτὸν ἐν πυρὶ καιομένῳ καὶ φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην. τῆ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη	And the light of Israel will become a fire and it will sanctify him with a burning fire and devour the wood like grass. In that day
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Throughout the context of this passage the translator has made several modifications. This verse is a continuation or expansion of 10:16, in that it continues to describe how God will intervene to humble the king of Assyria and to destroy his stout warriors with a wasting sickness. In 10:17, the language has become much more poetic in that there is no direct

<sup>295</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2530.

<sup>296</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v.

<sup>297</sup> Hepper, *Bible Plant*, 39-40.

<sup>298</sup> “For the retribution of their sins burns like the fire, it destroys transgressors and sinners; and it will rule over the remnant of the people and destroy the multitude of the armies.”

reference; God is called the “light of Israel” and “the Holy One,” and the king is only a pronoun and his army or perhaps his pretensions are called thorns and thistles.<sup>299</sup>

The Greek renders the first part of the verse literally, except it reads וקדושו as a verb and so renders ἀγιάσει αὐτόν,<sup>300</sup> and also removes the conjunction on וּבְעֵרָה and makes it a participle describing the previous verb. Also, the last two words of the verse are understood as the beginning of the next sentence.

The phrase we are interested in, וְאֵכְלָהּ שִׁיתוֹ וְשָׁמִירוֹ, has again been rendered with an additional simile, like in 5:6, 9:17(18), and 33:12, though with a completely different meaning. The pronouns have disappeared entirely. It seems likely that שָׁמִירוֹ was rendered with χόρτος (which is clearly the case in 32:13), and שִׁיתוֹ was rendered with ὕλη. It could be argued that in 27:4 שִׁיתוֹ is rendered with καλάμη, but as we will discuss below, this is not likely.<sup>301</sup> We have seen that elsewhere שִׁיתוֹ is rendered with ἄκανθα (Isa 5:6; 7:23, 24, and 25), and that in 7:19 a word the translator knew meant thorn is rendered as a thorn tree, so it seems possible that the translator thought he could render שִׁיתוֹ with ὕλη. The term ὕλη can refer both to fire wood (as NETS appears to understand it, though they just have “the wood” which could have either meaning) or to a collection of trees, a sort of copse (or *Gehölz*, as LXX.D understands it).<sup>302</sup> In the other two places ὕλη occurs,<sup>303</sup> Job 19:29 has it as a rendering of שִׁיתוֹ (as Muraoka suggests), and in Job 38:40 it is a rendering of סִבָּה.<sup>304</sup> In any case, it is not used to mean wood or firewood elsewhere in the LXX, but is used as an equivalent to copse in Job 38:40. In addition to dropping the prepositions, the LXX has reversed the order of שִׁיתוֹ וְשָׁמִירוֹ, returning them in the translation to their more regular order. The context of woods burning in Isa 10:18-19 probably contributed to this verse’s rendering.

So, the rendering φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην should probably be understood as an image of a forest or copse of trees, which should be difficult to ignite,<sup>305</sup> being burned quickly as if they were a clump of inflammable dry grass. This image is similar to that of 9:17(18) where the same Hebrew phrase has been rendered as dry grass and is said to burn up the thickets of the forest, though in that verse synonyms are used for grass and for thicket. This connection is made stronger in the Greek of 9:17(18) where it adds the idea of hills, which are mentioned in 10:18. The point of this connection would highlight the idea that the destruction the Assyrians bring to Israel and Judea will also come upon them, since in both cases it comes as the result of God’s wrath.

<sup>299</sup> Cf. Ob. 18, where Jacob becomes a fire and the house of Joseph a flame to consume the house of Esau, which will become stubble.

<sup>300</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2532.

<sup>301</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v. deletes this equivalent.

<sup>302</sup> See Preisigke, *Wörterbuch*, s.v.

<sup>303</sup> Hatch and Redpath list גִּלְגָּל as an equivalent in Psa 68(69):2, but both Ralfs and the Göttingen LXX prefer the reading ἰλύν.

<sup>304</sup> It also occurs in Wis 11:17; 15:13; Sir 28:10; II Mac 2:24; and IV Mac 1:29.

<sup>305</sup> Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 39-40.

The Targum interprets the elements of this passage, so that God is the light of Israel, His word is the flame, and the thorns and thistles are the rulers and tyrants: שלטונוהי וטורנוהי.<sup>306</sup>

**Isa 27:4**

<p>I have no wrath. Who endows me with thorns and briars? I will march to battle against it. I will burn it up.</p>	<p>חַמָּה אֵין לִי מִי־  יִתְנֶנִּי שְׁמִיר שִׁית  בְּמִלְחָמָה אֶפְשָׁעָה  בָּה אֶצִּיתְנָה יְחַד:</p>	<p>οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς· τίς με θήσει φυλάσσειν καλάμην ἐν ἀγρῶ; διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν. τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε. κατακέκαυμαι,</p>	<p>There is not <i>one</i> that has not taken hold of it; who will set me to watch stubble in a field? Because of this enmity I have set it aside. Therefore because of this the Lord God has done all things, whatever he has ordained. I have been burned up.</p>
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In the Hebrew the peace of Israel and God’s zeal to defend it is expressed through another vineyard metaphor. God wishes (as expressed by the cohortative verbs) there were thorns and thistles so He could zealously make war on them and destroy them from His vineyard. The Greek has rather drastically changed the entire chapter.<sup>307</sup> We discuss other features of this verse below in the section on vineyards (3.5.1.).

The phrase מִי־יִתְנֶנִּי שְׁמִיר שִׁית is translated so as to still contain a metaphor, but the image is entirely different. In the Greek a rhetorical question asks about guarding a field of stubble. Indeed, fields are guarded to protect the harvest from beasts and robbers (like the image in 1:8), but once the field has been stripped, it was not customary to guard the stubble. The city presumably is the field that has been plundered and emptied and so needs no more protection since there is nothing left to protect. Often in Isaiah we see the idea of harvesting and gleaning as an image of plundering (such as 24:13); this is made stronger in the LXX in some places (such as 3:12). Unlike much of the verse, this phrase is easy to understand in light of the Hebrew. As Ziegler points out, the translator gives a double reading of שְׁמִיר, first as an infinitive of שָׁמַר and so rendered it with the common equivalent φυλάσσω.<sup>308</sup> The second reading καλάμη is based on reading עָמַר;<sup>309</sup> though this could also have been a reading based on the understanding of שְׁמִיר as referring to grass (as in 10:17; 32:13; and 9:17). A second possibility is that it comes from שִׁית which the translator knew was a kind of thorn plant, but in this context thought καλάμη worked better for the image. The addition of ἐν ἀγρῶ is interesting,<sup>310</sup> since as we have seen, usually the idea of a fallow field (χέρσος) is

<sup>306</sup> “And it will come to pass that *the master of the light of Israel and his Holy One, his Memra will be strong as the fire, and his words as the flame; and he will kill and destroy his rulers and his tyrants in one day.*”

<sup>307</sup> For an analysis of 27:2-5 see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87-91.

<sup>308</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

<sup>309</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

<sup>310</sup> Ottley suggests it is an addition or a duplicate misreading of בְּמִלְחָמָה. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234.

found in connection to שָׁמִיר. Ziegler believes ἐν ἀγρῶ is based on reading שִׁית as שְׁדִי like in 33:12 where the same rendering is given for שִׁיד.<sup>311</sup> LXX.D.E.K. agrees that שָׁמִיר was read as an infinitive and suggests שִׁית is rendered freely as an image of captured Jerusalem.<sup>312</sup> A third possibility is that the translation is based on the idea that שָׁמִיר can mean a fallow field (χέρσος), but for the sake of the rhetoric of the image it is stronger to talk about guarding a harvested field (since the enemies have plundered it) rather than a fallow field of thorns (which would be absurd, since it is devoid of crops by definition). This passage could have a triple rendering of שָׁמִיר, but there are of course less exotic explanations for the Greek, as we have seen.

The Targum expands this verse also, but makes it about how God would destroy Israel's enemies if they would follow his law, like fire destroys thorns and fallow land: ואשיציון כמא דמשיציא אשתא הובאי ובור כחדא.<sup>313</sup>

### 3.4.2. Other Terms for Thorn: קוץ, נַעְצוץ, חוֹךְ, קמוֹשׁ, סִירָה

In Isa 34:13 three types of thorny plant are mentioned

Thorns shall grow over its strongholds, nettles and thistles in its fortresses. It shall be the haunt of jackals, an abode for ostriches.	וְעִלְתָּה אֲרָמְנֹתֶיהָ סִירִים קְמוֹשׁ וְחוֹךְ בְּמִבְצָרֶיהָ וְהִיתָה נְוָה תְּנִים חֲצִיר לְבָנוֹת יַעֲנָה:	καὶ ἀναφύσει εἰς τὰς πόλεις αὐτῶν ἀκάνθινα ξύλα καὶ εἰς τὰ ὄχυράματα αὐτῆς, καὶ ἔσται ἔπαυλις σειρήνων καὶ αὐλή στρουθῶν.	Thorn trees shall grow up in their cities and in her fortresses. It shall be a habitation of sirens and a courtyard of ostriches.
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In this passage, God's judgment on Edom is described, which entails how all the people will be gone and it will no longer be a kingdom. While it is not metaphoric speech, it is noteworthy for the translation equivalents and the translator's conception of thorns. In this verse and the following, the abandoned fortresses (rendered as "cities") and strongholds will be overgrown with weeds and become homes to wild animals and the demons that live in remote wilderness places. The Hebrew uses three terms for thorns or thistles in parallelism חוֹךְ, קְמוֹשׁ, סִירִים. The Greek, however, only has one kind of thorn described with two words ἀκάνθινα ξύλα.<sup>314</sup> This is probably a case of condensation of synonymous terms.<sup>315</sup> In α', σ' and θ', on the other hand, we find renderings for each of the words: ἄκανθαι καὶ κνίδες καὶ

<sup>311</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

<sup>312</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>313</sup> "Behold, there are many prodigies before me! If the house of Israel set their face to do the law, would I not send my anger and my wrath among the Gentiles who are stirred up against them and destroy them as the fire destroys briars and thorn together?"

<sup>314</sup> Preisigke, *Wörterbuch* I, 41 cites a similar phrase, found among the wood mentioned in a tax document from the second century AD, where we find: ξύλ[α] κανθ[ο]ν. P.LOND vol. 3, papyri 1177 ln. 191.

<sup>315</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 77-78.



ἄκανες.<sup>316</sup> In Ecc 7:6, קִרְה is rendered with ἀκάνθα (but with σκόλοψ in Hos 2:8). The word קִרְה is rendered with ἀκάνθα three times (Prov 26:9; Sol 2:2; Hos 9:6), and twice with ἄκαν in 2 Kgs 14:9. The word קְמוֹשׁ, however, is a more complicated issue. According to Hatch and Redpath, it might be the basis for the word ὄλεθρος (ruin, destruction) in Hos 9:6;<sup>317</sup> Muraoka's Index is more confident that it is.<sup>318</sup> The only other place it occurs is Prov 24:31, though neither index offers an equivalent there. The issue of translation equivalents for the first half of this verse is tricky, but it is interesting to note there are two words for weeds or thistles in the Hebrew: קְמוֹשׁ and קְרָלִים, and while they may not be directly the basis of these Greek words, we do find χερσωθήσεται καὶ χορτομανήσει.

Returning to the question at hand, the phrase ἀκάνθινα ξύλα is general and vague for a thorny tree,<sup>319</sup> but as we will see in the section on trees, it is a good description for the acacia tree or perhaps the *ziziphus spina-christi*. Theophrastus speaks of several specific thorny trees that could have just as easily been mentioned by LXX-Isa.<sup>320</sup> That the translator decided to make the thorn a tree and not some smaller plant gives the impression of permanence or at least the long passage of time, that trees will be growing there, and not simply some small seasonal weed.

The Targum renders the first and last plant with its Aramaic cognate, and קְמוֹשׁ with קְרְסוּלִין. No explanation is given.<sup>321</sup>

In **Isa 7:19** another kind of thorn is also turned into a tree, though for completely different reasons.

<p>And they will all come and settle in the steep ravines, and in the clefts of the rocks, and on all the thornbushes, and on all the pastures.</p>	<p>וּבָאוּ וַיִּנְחֻוּ בְּכָל־ בְּנִיחֵי הַבְּתֹת וּבְנִקְיֵי הַסְּלָעִים וּבְכָל־הַנְּעֻצּוֹצִים וּבְכָל־הַנְּהַלְלִים:</p>	<p>καὶ ἐλεύσονται πάντες καὶ ἀναπαύσονται ἐν ταῖς φάραγξι τῆς χώρας καὶ ἐν ταῖς τρώγλαις τῶν πετρῶν καὶ εἰς τὰ σπήλαια καὶ εἰς πᾶσαν ῥαγάδα καὶ ἐν παντὶ ξύλῳ.</p>	<p>And they will all come and rest in the ravines of the country and in the clefts of the rocks and into the caves and into every crevice and on every tree.</p>
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The last two clauses have been switched in the translation, perhaps to make a more logical sequence coming after other geological features. The word ῥαγάς is only used here in the LXX. In classical Greek it refers to a fissure, as found in dry soil, or can be used of a crack in the skin.<sup>322</sup> It is an odd equivalent for נְהַלְלִים, perhaps we can make sense of it with the suggestion that the translator thought that the affixed ל could make what he read as נחל

<sup>316</sup> See the apparatus of Ziegler's LXX text.

<sup>317</sup> Hatch and Redpath, 986a. They mark it with a question mark.

<sup>318</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, s.v.

<sup>319</sup> Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 8-9.

<sup>320</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.1: ἄκανθα Αἰγύπτια; 4.2.8: ἄκανθα ἢ λεύκη; 4.7.1: ἄκανθα ἢ διψάς.

<sup>321</sup> "Thorns shall grow over its palaces, and nettles and thistles in the stronghold of its fortresses. It shall be a haunt of jackals, a place for ostriches."

<sup>322</sup> LSJ, s.v.

diminutive.<sup>323</sup> The plus *καὶ εἰς τὰ σπήλαια* is probably meant to explain why the places are listed;<sup>324</sup> the flies and bees will go everywhere, even the places where people would hide from them. The translator seems to know that *נַעְצוּץ* refers to a kind of thorn bush, since he translates it with *στοιβή* in 55:13.<sup>325</sup> But here, rather than give an exact equivalent he interprets the plant as a metonymy for every tree. Also the letters *עץ* may have suggested rendering with *ξύλον*. That the translator once renders *נַעְצוּץ* as “thorn” and once as “tree” suggests he identified the plant as something like *ziziphus spina-christi*,<sup>326</sup> a large thorn-bush that can approach the size of a small tree, and so he rendered it in such a way as to express the features of the plant most salient to the passage in which it occurs. In this passage, the translator thought the places mentioned were hiding places, and so trees are chosen since they make better hiding places than small thorn plants.

In 7:19, the Greek makes some adjustments to the metaphor, though probably for style more than for what the specific images represent. In both languages the metaphor of this verse shows the ubiquity of the presence of the flies and bees, not specific places or institutions where they will be (though the places mentioned are where people fleeing them would hide).

The Targum interprets this passage. In 7:18 the flies are used as a simile to describe the numbers of an army *לעם קטרי משרית גיבריא דסגיאין כדיבביא*, and the bee is used in a simile to show the armies strength *ולעזיזי משריתא דאינון תקיפין כדבראיתא*. In 7:19 the Targum interprets some of the places as relating to cities so *וְנָחוּ בְּלִמְ בְּנִחְלֵי הַבְּתוֹת* is interpreted as *וישרון כלהון ברחובי קריא*,<sup>327</sup> and *וּבְכָל הַנְּהַלְלִים* is interpreted as *ובכל בתי תושבחתא*, in every house of glory.<sup>328</sup> As mentioned above, the Targum interprets some of the places mentioned, but in the case of *נַעְצוּץ* uses the cognate (or loan word) *נעעוץ*.<sup>329</sup>

An otherwise common (Gen 3:18; Exod 22:5; Jdg 8:7, 16; 2 Sam 23:6; Psa 118:12 etc.) word for thorn, *קוץ*, only occurs twice in Isaiah.

<sup>323</sup> The idea of ל endings being diminutive can be seen in older grammars, such as T. J. Conant, trans., *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (17<sup>th</sup> ed.; New York: D. Appleton, 1855), §30.3, though this misconception may not have arisen yet in antiquity.

<sup>324</sup> Ziegler thinks the meaning of *נַעְצוּץ* was unclear to the translator and was the basis of *εἰς τὰ σπήλαια* as a parallel to *ἐν ταῖς τρώγλαις τῶν πετρῶν*. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 10.

<sup>325</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2522, says the translator understood the words *עץ* and *גחל*, and so rendered them with *ξύλον* and *ράγας*, respectively.

<sup>326</sup> It must be noted that Theophrastus calls this plant *παλίουρος* (*Enquiry*, 4.3.1-3); *στοιβή* is *Poterium/Sarcopoterium spinosum* (*Enquiry*, 1.10.4; 6.1.3; 6.5.1-2). LSJ and Muraoka identify *στοιβή* as thorny burnet; this is a low growing plant that could hardly be called a tree.

<sup>327</sup> Perhaps thinking *בְּנִחְלֵי הַבְּתוֹת* referred to the valleys of houses, or the spaces between them.

<sup>328</sup> Perhaps thinking *וּבְכָל הַנְּהַלְלִים* had to do with praise *הלל*.

<sup>329</sup> “And they will come and all of them  *dwell* in the *squares* of the *city*, and in the clefts of the rocks, and in all the *deserts of thornbushes*, and in all the *famed buildings*.”

### Isa 32:13

<p>for the soil of my people growing up in thorns and briars; yes, for all the joyous houses in the jubilant city.</p>	<p>עַל אֲדָמַת עַמִּי קוֹץ שְׁמִיר תִּעֲלֶה בִּי עַל- כָּל-בֵּיתֵי מְשׁוֹשׁ קָרְיָה עֲלִיזָה:</p>	<p>ἡ γῆ τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἀκανθα καὶ χόρτος ἀναβήσεται, καὶ ἐκ πάσης οἰκίας εὐφροσύνη ἀρθήσεται· πόλις πλουσία,</p>	<p>As for the land of my people, thorns and grass will come up, and joy will be removed from every house. A wealthy city,</p>
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This verse and the passage it is from is not metaphorical but an elaboration expressing how the city and land will be abandoned. We discuss it because the translation gives insights into the Greek and Targum translators' conceptual understanding of thorn terms. In the Hebrew this verse continues to elaborate on why the women in 32:11-12 should be full of sorrow. The farm land is said to be overcome with thorns. Either the joyous houses and exultant town is also overcome with thorns, or it is a new idea, and the women should be full of sorrow because of them, but the exact reason why is not stated until the next verse. The Greek has made many adjustments to this passage, such as the women in 32:9 are said to be rich (perhaps to connect them with the ornamented daughters of Zion in 3:16-26). In 32:13 the Greek has removed the first preposition, making some sort of nominative exclamation,<sup>330</sup> or to introduce the subject of the thought.<sup>331</sup> The word קוֹץ is rendered with its most common equivalent in the LXX: ἀκανθα,<sup>332</sup> but שְׁמִיר is rendered with χόρτος; we have discussed this equivalent above. The Greek changes the style of the verse, but does not seem to interpret it as anything other than a literal description, though expressed in a rhetorical way, of the destruction that will come upon certain people.

The Targum is also very literal, even being unhelpful with the phrase בִּי עַל-כָּל-בֵּיתֵי מְשׁוֹשׁ, rendering it אַרְי עַל כָּל בֵּיתֵי דִי. The Targum understands קוֹץ שְׁמִיר the same way it often (7:23, 24, 25; 27:4) renders שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית with הוֹבֵאֵי וּבֹר.<sup>333</sup>

### Isa 33:12

<p>And the peoples will be as if burned to lime, like thorns cut down, that are burned in the fire.</p>	<p>וְהָיוּ עַמִּים מְשֻׂרְפֹת שִׂיד קוֹצִים כְּסוּחִים בְּאֵשׁ יִצְתּוּ:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔσονται ἔθνη κατακαυμένα ὡς ἀκανθα ἐν ἀγρῷ ἐρριμμένη καὶ κατακαυμένη.</p>	<p>And the nations will be burned like a thorn cast out and burned in a field.</p>
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In the Hebrew we have two phrases that are overly terse. In the first phrase a construct is used where a preposition would be much more clear. It appears to be a sort of genitive of

<sup>330</sup> William W. Goodwin, *Greek Grammar* (Revised and Enlarged; Boston: Ginn & Co, 1900), §1045.

<sup>331</sup> Smyth, *Greek Grammar for Colleges*, §941.

<sup>332</sup> It is an equivalent 12x. See Hatch and Redpath, s.v.

<sup>333</sup> “for the land of my people which will bring up briars and thorn; yea, for all the joyous houses in the strong city.”

effect,<sup>334</sup> so that the people will be burned until even their bones have become lime.<sup>335</sup> The second clause is probably a simile, though there is no comparative marker due to the terse style of poetry. The phrase could, though, be understood as a metaphor, that the thorns קוצים are equated to the people עמים, who are burned in fire.

The Greek has taken the two separate ideas and combined them into one idea. The translator recognized that there was a simile, and so made it explicit by adding a comparative marker. The idea that this takes place in a field is probably, as Ziegler suggests, from the word שׂד which was read as שׂדי or שׂדה.<sup>336</sup> The Hebrew קוצים is the basis of ἄκανθα (like in 32:13), so the Greek has changed the word order. The only other place כּסח occurs in the Qal is Psa 80:17, where it is rendered with ἀνασκάπτω (to dig up). The Greek rendering in Isa 32:12 adds to the picture of thorns that they are discarded from a field and burned. This simile is of particular note because, as we have seen, LXX-Isa does not usually associate thorns with kindling for a fire in places where we would expect, but renders with “grass.”

The Targum is literal, even omitting any comparative marker. The one change of note is that instead of lime (שׂד) the Targum has fire: נור.<sup>337</sup>

### 3.4.3. Summary

This analysis has shown certain patterns. In the Hebrew, thorns are mentioned to illustrate land that has been neglected because there is no one to tend it properly (5:6; 7:19, 23-25; 32:13; 34:13). In addition, it is used to describe a threat to a vineyard which represents the house of Israel (5:6; in the Greek of 27:4 it represents Jerusalem, as we will argue below (3.5.1.)). Thorns are also mentioned for their flammability (9:17; 10:17; 33:12).

The Greek transforms many of these images, sometimes because of the immediate context but also because of some underlying assumptions the translator has. One such underlying assumption is that שׂמיר can refer both to a place or habitat (χέρσος, 4x) and to what grows in it (χόρτος, 2x).<sup>338</sup> This could be a sort of metonymic exchange;<sup>339</sup> A similar conceptualization can be seen in Prov 24:31 where two kinds of weeds are rendered with the infinitives χερσωθήσεται καὶ χορτομανήσει. Similarly, in Isa 33:12 the LXX adds a reference to a field (though perhaps for lexical reasons), ἐν ἀγρῶ, as a place where thorns will be. The translator chooses between these concepts for his translation of שׂמיר, usually, based on the

<sup>334</sup> Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 9.5.2.c, though they do not list this passage anywhere in their discussion of the construct state.

<sup>335</sup> Lime is made primarily from calcium (it is either calcium oxide or calcium hydroxide), and so the bones are the only part of the body that could produce lime. Cf. Amos 2:1 for bones being burned to lime.

<sup>336</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 98. Cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 272. The usual equivalent of שׂד is κοιλία (Deut 27:2, 4 and Amos 2:1).

<sup>337</sup> “And *the* peoples will be burned *with* fire; thorns cut down are burned in the fire.”

<sup>338</sup> Also, 27:4 has both the concept of grass and a field in the Greek.

<sup>339</sup> Perhaps it is an attempt at a Midrashic word play but in Greek, since the differences between the words are just the vowels and τ has become σ.

context. When the word is mentioned to describe abandoned places the meaning “fallow field” is used twice (5:6; 7:23-25), once the thorn is made into a thorn tree to emphasize more permanence (34:13), and once is made into grass to denote a weed (32:13). When the context has to do with burning or flammability the meaning “grass” is used (9:17; 10:17; however in 33:12, thorns are removed from a field and burned). In 27:4 we find both a field and stubble, though here the phrase is interpreted much more than usual. It should be noted that while the translator’s use of *χέρσος* in connection to thorns reflects well the Egyptian situation, according to the papyri, it would seem *χόρτος* is not a weed but a cultivated crop.<sup>340</sup> The association of a fallow waste and grass fits more the situation in Judea, though it is also possible for a *χέρσος* to be used as a pasture in Egypt.<sup>341</sup>

The Greek also associates thorns with trees. There are several species of thorn trees in Judea and Egypt, most notably the acacia, though this is not the tree explicitly named in LXX-Isa where the Hebrew has only a thorn. In 7:19 a word the translator knew meant “thorn” is rendered with *ξύλον*. In 34:13 three words for thorns are condensed into the phrase “thorn tree.” In 10:17 the idea of a copse is added, somehow under the influence of the phrase *וְשִׁתּוֹ וְשִׁמְרֵהוּ*.

The immediate context can be seen as affecting the transformation of thorn metaphors in several places. As was just mentioned, in 34:13 the translator turns a thorn into a thorn tree to exaggerate the image. In 5:6, the translator gives more details by using technical vocabulary to describe the vineyard being left to become a fallow plot of land. In 9:17(18), the translator uses different terms than he usually does to emphasize the flammability of dry grass in the context of a spreading conflagration.

Also of note is that for three out of the eight occurrences of *וְשִׁמְרֵהוּ* the translator has added a comparative marker (5:6; 10:17; and 9:17, though in the last case it may be implied in the Hebrew).<sup>342</sup> It is interesting that the Targum adds a comparative marker for 27:4, comparing fire destroying thorns and thistles to how God would destroy enemy nations.

This nuanced contextual and conceptual rendering of thorns in the LXX is markedly different from how the Targum approaches the issue. It is striking how both LXX and the Targum understand 7:23-25 as referring to thorns and fallow land (as also in 27:4 and 32:13),<sup>343</sup> but elsewhere the Targum is either literal or has interpreted the metaphor. In Isa 5:6 *וְשִׁתּוֹ וְשִׁמְרֵהוּ* is interpreted as deported and abandoned. In 9:17 it is interpreted as referring to sinners and the guilty, and in 10:17 it is thought to refer to rulers and governors. In the other places, though, there is still a reference to thorns and briars (7:19; 33:12; 34:13).

<sup>340</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 212-13.

<sup>341</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 16-17.

<sup>342</sup> Also a comparative marker is added 33:12, though here it also may be implied in the Hebrew.

<sup>343</sup> As mentioned in a footnote above, Chilton translates *בוֹר* as “brier,” but this definition is not found in either of Sokoloff’s lexicons. Jastrow’s dictionary says: “*something waste, wild-growing, whence weed, brier,*” but cites only Isa 7:23 and the places where it is an equivalent for the phrase *וְשִׁתּוֹ וְשִׁמְרֵהוּ*. It seems safer to suppose that like LXX, the Targum understands this phrase to imply fallow or waste land.

The Targum interprets the phrase **שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית** in various ways. In 5:6 the thorns and thistles coming up are interpreted as the people being cast out and forsaken. In 9:17, the phrase is interpreted as representing transgressors and sinners that are destroyed by the retribution of their sins which burns like fire. In 10:17 the same word pair is interpreted as rulers and tyrants being killed and destroyed. In 27:4 **שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית** are rendered literally, but in an added simile of how God’s wrath would burn among the gentiles if Israel would obey the law. For the Targum, the context of **שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית** is always destruction, but the words themselves can represent different groups of people. This is probably related to 33:12 where thorns being burned is used for a simile of peoples being burned (the Targum is literal, except it renders “lime” with “fire”).

The Targum renders other words meaning “thorn” literally (34:13; 7:19; 32:13; 33:12). In 7:19 the thorn becomes “deserts of thornbushes.” As mentioned above, in 7:23-25 the Targum and LXX both render one of the words for thorns with a word for fallow land.

That LXX-Isa adds similes (5:6; 9:17; 10:17) in the exact verses that the Targum feels the need to interpret the meaning of the image is surely significant. These three passages are more poetic and have more imagery than the other places thorns appear. The LXX approach to the imagery in these passages is to reinforce and make more vivid the vehicle of the image, while the Targum interprets the image giving what it feels is the tenor. Perhaps an explanation for this approach is that the LXX translator knows he needs to make a literary text and is concerned about keeping as close as possible to the Hebrew, while the Targum translator assumes his text will be read with the Hebrew, and so should offer insights not obvious in the Hebrew text.

### 3.5. Vineyards and Vines

The language of viticulture is a rich source for imagery in the Bible, particularly in Isaiah. We will focus only on vineyards and vines, leaving images of wine and wine making to other studies.

#### 3.5.1. Vineyard (כַּרְם)

The word **כַּרְם** occurs fifteen times in Isaiah, and is always translated with *ἀμπελών*, except for in 5:10, which we will discuss below. In many of the passages it occurs (36:16-7; 37:30; 61:5; 65:21), however, vineyards are spoken of literally, often as a sign of the condition of the nation that is being punished or restored.

#### Isa 1:8

And daughter Zion is left like a booth in a	<b>וְנוֹתְרָה בַּת־צִיּוֹן</b>	<i>ἐγκαταλειφθήσεται ἡ θυγάτηρ Σιων ὡς</i>	Daughter Zion will be forsaken like a
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vineyard, like a shelter in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.	בְּסֹכָה בְּכַרְם כַּמְלוּנָה בְּמִקְשָׁה כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה:	σκηπή ἐν ἀμπελῶνι καὶ ὡς ὀπωροφυλάκιον ἐν σικυηράτῳ, ὡς πόλις πολιορκουμένη·	booth in a vineyard and like a garden-watcher's hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city.
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This verse, along with its similes, is translated literally. The Greek addition of *καὶ* agrees with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> against MT and MurIsa. The only thing to note, which will be seen again later, is that here a vineyard is used in a simile that describes daughter Zion. To be precise, daughter Zion will be like a tent in a vineyard, which is qualified by saying like a besieged city. As LXX.D.E.K points out,<sup>344</sup> the image is probably that the huts are temporary, as in Isa 24:20 where they are as unstable as a drunk and TestJos 19:12 where it will be gone by the end of summer. The verb *ἐγκαταλείπω* seems to suggest (as the Targum makes clear) that the tent and hut are left alone (disregarded)<sup>345</sup> in a field that has been harvested. The Greek word *ὀπωροφυλάκιον* is elsewhere used in the LXX in passages relating to Jerusalem (Psa 78:1; Mic 3:12) and Samaria (Mic 1:6) being destroyed, but in these places renders *עִי* (heap of stones, rubble).<sup>346</sup> The besieged city appears again with the image of a vineyard in LXX-Isa 27:3, as we will discuss below.

The Targum is more interesting, specifying that the simile is of a vineyard and a cucumber field after the harvest: ואשתארת כנשתא דציון כמטלתא בכרמא בתר דקטפוהי בכרסל מבתותא במקטיא בתר דאבעיוהי *יִתָּר*.<sup>347</sup> That it is after the harvest shows not only remoteness, but also abandonment, and perhaps even desolation in that the plants have been harvested and picked over.

### Isa 3:14

The LORD enters into judgment with the elders and princes of his people: It is you who have grazed <sup>348</sup> the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your houses.	יְהוָה בְּמִשְׁפַּט יָבוֹא עִם־זְקֵנֵי עַמּוֹ וְשָׂרָיו וְאַתֶּם בְּעֵרְתֶם הַכֶּרֶם גִּזְלַת הָעֲנִי בְּבֵתֵיכֶם:	αὐτὸς κύριος εἰς κρίσιν ἔξει μετὰ τῶν πρεσβυτέρων τοῦ λαοῦ καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἀρχόντων αὐτοῦ Ἰμεῖς δὲ τί ἐνεπυρίσατε τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου καὶ ἡ ἀρπαγὴ τοῦ πτωχοῦ ἐν τοῖς οἴκοις ὑμῶν;	The Lord himself will enter into judgment with the elders of the people and with their rulers. But you, why have you burned my vineyard, and why is the spoil of the poor in your houses?
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<sup>344</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2507, it also mentions EpJer 69, where a scarecrow guards nothing.

<sup>345</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>346</sup> For the relationship of these passages, see Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah and Cognate Studies*, 227. Cf. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 105. Cf. Michaël van der Meer, “The Question of Literary Dependence of the Greek Isaiah upon the Greek Psalter Revisited,” in *Die Septuaginta – Texte, Theologien, Einflüsse: 2. Internationale Fachtagung veranstaltet von Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)*, Wuppertal 23.-27.7.2008 (eds. Wolfgang Kraus and Martin Karrer; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010): 162-200.

<sup>347</sup> “And the congregation of Zion is left like a booth in a vineyard after they have picked it clean, like a tent for staying overnight in a cucumber field after they have stripped it, like a city which is besieged.”

<sup>348</sup> NRSV translates: “devoured.” For the scholarly discussion on the root and meanings of *בער*, see Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 226.

In this passage “the vineyard” is probably not a collective singular, since it has a definite article. It could be a metaphor for God’s people, like in Isa 5:1-7, but here there is nothing to make clear that it is meant as a metaphor.<sup>349</sup> It could be understood as a general statement, to graze the vineyard meaning they help themselves to what they want from someone else’s property, or that they leave no gleanings in their own vineyard. The verb בער could mean more than “graze,” it could mean to destroy the vineyard by allowing cattle to trample it, as in Exod 22:4 and Isa 5:5.<sup>350</sup>

In the Septuagint, the translator has brought emphasis to the fact that the LORD himself will enter judgment, by adding αὐτός; also it removes the possessive pronoun after “people.” Troxel believes that the Lord is not simply entering into litigation, but is coming in a theophanic way to judge the rulers.<sup>351</sup> The interrogative τί anticipates the question in the Hebrew of the next verse,<sup>352</sup> and makes the accusation more vivid. The Greek appears to understand the vineyard as a metaphor. This is clear in that it is now God’s vineyard τὸν ἀμπελῶνά μου instead of הַכֶּרֶם, anticipating the song of the vineyard in chapter 5.<sup>353</sup> Further, the leaders do not graze the vineyard (if this limited definition is intended) but burn it;<sup>354</sup> this is not simply stealing for one’s own gain but a cruel and malicious act to deprive someone of what is theirs. The idea of burning comes from understanding בערתם as its homonym. LXX-Isa does know בער can mean something to do with pillage, since in 5:5 it is rendered with διαρπαγή (plunder, the act of plunder) and in 6:13 it is rendered with προνομή (plunder), though as nouns in both places. Ziegler points out that ἐμπυρίζω is found often in the Papyri as a method of clearing land and killing weeds,<sup>355</sup> though no sensible person would clear a vineyard of weeds in this way. The Greek metaphor, then, is that the leaders rather than tending God’s vineyard are actively destroying it. As Troxel says, the Greek of this verse first gives a metaphor, that the leaders burn God’s vineyard, then gives a concrete description of the situation: they plunder the people.<sup>356</sup> Burning the vineyard, then, could mean that they are clearing the plot to put it to their own purposes (and profit), or that they are plundering the people thoroughly leaving nothing, as if a fire had burned it up. LXX-Isa is probably

<sup>349</sup> Ottley seems to imply this is a metaphor in the Hebrew, since he calls it another hint at the coming parable in 5:1-7. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 119. Williamson takes the vineyard as a metaphor, in light of chapter 5. Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 271.

<sup>350</sup> Williamson, *Isaiah 1-5*, 226.

<sup>351</sup> Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 378-79.

<sup>352</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2513.

<sup>353</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2513.

<sup>354</sup> Baer suggests these leaders are foreign leaders oppressing God’s people. David A. Baer, “‘It’s All about Us!’: Nationalistic Exegesis in the Greek Isaiah (Chapters 1-12),” in *“As Those Who Are Taught”: The Interpretation of Isaiah from the LXX to the SBL* (eds. Claire Mathews McGinnis and Patricia K. Tull; SBL Symposium Series 27; Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 33-36.

<sup>355</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 180-81. He mentions vineyards, but his sources, Dahlman and Schnebel, do not.

<sup>356</sup> Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 381. It is difficult, though, to take ἀρπαγή as the act of plundering, Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 379, one would expect to plunder the poor in their houses, not in the leaders’ houses.



interpreting in light of Psa 80(79):17 where again God’s vineyard is facing threats, including being burned (שָׂרַף, rendered with ἐμπυρίζω) and cut down.<sup>357</sup>

The Targum interprets the vineyard metaphor, writing: וְאַתּוֹן אֲנִסְתּוֹן יִת עַמִּי.<sup>358</sup> The word אֲנִסְתּוֹן could be understood to mean they attack the people, or that they force them to sell their possessions due to poverty or even that they seize the people by force.<sup>359</sup> In any case, they are actively harming the people they should be ruling.

Isa 5:1-7 is an allegory in the form of a song with an explanation of its meaning in the final verse. Each verse will be examined and the allegory as a whole will be commented on in 5:7.

**Isa 5:1**

Let me sing for my beloved my love-song concerning his vineyard:	אֲשִׁירָה נָא לְיַדַּי שִׁירַת דּוֹדַי לְכַרְמִי	Ἄισω δὴ τῶ ἡγαπημένῳ ᾄσμα τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ τῶ ἀμπελῶνί μου.	I will now sing for the beloved a song of the loved one concerning my vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard on a mountain spur, a son of fertility.	כָּרֵם הָיָה לְיַדַּי בְּקֶרֶן בְּוֶשְׁמֹן:	ἀμπελῶν ἐγενήθη τῶ ἡγαπημένῳ ἐν κέρατι ἐν τόπῳ πίονι.	The beloved <i>acquired</i> a vineyard in a <i>horn</i> , on a fertile place.

The translator distinguishes דֹדַי from דוֹד by using two different parts of speech: ἡγαπημένος and ἀγαπητός. Elsewhere, ἡγαπημένος is used for דֹדַי only in Jer 11:15,<sup>360</sup> while ἀγαπητός is used for it five times in the Psalms. Nowhere else is ἀγαπητός used for דוֹד.<sup>361</sup> The definite article suggests the translator has a person in mind, instead of simply an adjective describing what kind of song it is.<sup>362</sup> The ἡγαπημένος could be understood as a collective singular, representing the group to whom the song is addressed, but in light of 5:7, it probably is intended to address the leadership in particular.<sup>363</sup>

The translator, as he does with much of the song, tries to put this verse into first person. This is complicated in this verse because לְיַדַּי is translated literally without the pronominal suffix as τῶ ἡγαπημένῳ. In the Greek, the person sings the song to the beloved τῶ ἡγαπημένῳ, and it is the singer’s vineyard in 1a (ἀμπελῶνί μου), and in the following verses. But in 1b it is the beloved who acquires a vineyard ἀμπελῶν ἐγενήθη τῶ ἡγαπημένῳ. This

<sup>357</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 180.

<sup>358</sup> “The LORD will bring into judgment the elders and commanders of his people: “You have robbed my people, the spoil of the poor is in your houses.””

<sup>359</sup> Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat-Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 145-46.

<sup>360</sup> In Isa 44:2 ἡγαπημένος appears in relation to Israel, parallel to Jacob.

<sup>361</sup> LXX-Isa mentions an ἀγαπητός again in 26:17 (as a plus) in what appears to be a messianic interpretation. Seeligmann believes it is a Christian gloss, *The Septuagint of Isaiah*, 26.

<sup>362</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2515 points out that it is an objective genitive, and that it means an individual, perhaps a particular leader.

<sup>363</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2515.

could be a careless mistake in trying to turn the voice into the first person ( $\alpha'$  and  $\theta'$  avoid this problem in that they have  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\nu\iota$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  in 1a, and  $\sigma'$  has  $\acute{\alpha}\mu\pi\epsilon\lambda\acute{\omega}\nu\alpha$   $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , allowing the song to begin in 5:2). This question in the LXX can be resolved in several ways. The singer could be referring to himself as  $\eta\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , though this is least likely. It could be that 1b has a different voice than 1a, though the translator has otherwise tried to remove the Hebrew's alternation between first and third person. One could suppose that the song begins in 5:2, and the prophet speaking in verse 1a calls it "my vineyard" not because he owns it but because he's associated with it; it is his vineyard in that it represents his people; then he refers to God as beloved in 1b, switching to God's voice in the song in 5:2. The best solution is that the beloved in 1a and 1b are the same as the beloved new planting of 5:7; the beloved acquired a vineyard in that it became associated with it: in the metaphor the vine was planted in the vineyard in a good plot of soil. In any case, there remains the question of the identity of the  $\acute{\alpha}\gamma\alpha\pi\eta\tau\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ . It could be God, though again it would be odd to refer to Himself this way. It similarly probably does not refer to the prophet (unless God sings the prophet's song) nor to the vineyard as a whole (since the song is about the vineyard). The ineluctable conclusion is that it is very unclear who it is meant to be.<sup>364</sup>

The translation using  $\gamma\acute{\iota}\nu\omicron\mu\alpha\iota$  is interesting. The translator could have rendered  $\text{לְהִיָּהוּ}$  with  $\acute{\omega}\varsigma$  as in 1:31; 8:14; 29:5, 17; and 40:23.<sup>365</sup> But if this technique was followed, the comparison would have been backwards: "a vineyard is like my beloved;" also, this would spoil the climax of the allegory when its meaning is finally revealed in 5:7.

The translation of the dead metaphor  $\text{רֶן}$  with  $\acute{\kappa}\acute{\epsilon}\rho\alpha\varsigma$  is apt, since in Greek it can also be a geographical term, though usually having to do with rivers or bays, but can be part of a mountain;<sup>366</sup> also, it can be simply a horn shaped object.<sup>367</sup> The use of  $\text{רֶן}$  in construct with another noun, denotes a nature, character, or quality.<sup>368</sup> E. W. Bullinger calls the phrase  $\text{רֶן־בֶּן־שֶׁן}$  antimereia, since it is the exchange of one noun for another.<sup>369</sup> The LXX, then, explains the figure by saying "fat place," partially preserving the imagery, while explaining the most difficult part (namely, why this hill is being called a son). By adding  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omega$  "place" not only does the LXX clarify what is meant by "horn" but also allows it to be characterized by the metaphor  $\pi\acute{\iota}\omega\nu$ .<sup>370</sup> A similar description is found in the Greek of 30:23 describing a

<sup>364</sup> If it should be interpreted in light of 26:17 it may refer to some messianic figure.

<sup>365</sup> Ziegler discusses this frequent translation equivalent, Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

<sup>366</sup> LSJ, s.v. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 123, calls it "a very usual metaphor for a hill or peak."

<sup>367</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 395. If ram's horns are thought of, then it makes sense that this refers to a terraced hill side.

<sup>368</sup> P. Joüon, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; trans. and rev. T. Muraoka; Subsidia Biblica 27; Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2009), §129j; Waltke and O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 9.5.3b.

<sup>369</sup> E. W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible Explained and Illustrated* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1968), 503-4.

<sup>370</sup> For the translator's use of  $\tau\acute{o}\pi\omicron\varsigma$  with unusual Hebrew equivalents, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 115-16.

pasture as τόπον πίονα, but there is no clear Hebrew basis there. As LXX.D.E.K. points out, the land of Judaea is meant.<sup>371</sup>

The Targum tries to make clear both what this allegory represents and who is speaking it.<sup>372</sup> The song is sung by the prophet: אמר נביא אשבחיה. Also, rather than waiting for the punch line in 5:7, the Targum states from the beginning that Israel is comparable to a vineyard: לישראל דמתיל בכרמא. It also makes clear who “my beloved” is: Abraham, perhaps under the influence of Isa 41:8 where the phrase זרעיה דאברהם רחמי again occurs. The description of the vineyard is also clarified; בטור רם means a high hill קרן, and בן-שמן refers to a fertile land בארע שמינא.

### Isa 5:2

<p>He dug it and cleared it of stones, and planted it with choice vines; he built a watchtower in the midst of it, and hewed out a wine vat in it;</p>	<p>וַיַּעֲזָקְהוּ וַיִּסְקְלֵהוּ וַיִּטְעֵהוּ שָׂרֵק וַיִּבֶן מִגְדָּל בְּתוֹכֹוּ וַיִּגְמֵי קֶבֶב חֲצֵב בּוֹ</p>	<p>καὶ φραγμὸν περιέθηκα καὶ ἐχαράκωσα καὶ ἐφύτευσα ἄμπελον σωρηχ καὶ ὠκοδόμησα πύργον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ προλήνιον ὠρυξά ἐν αὐτῷ·</p>	<p>And I put a hedge around it and fenced it in and planted a Sorech vine, and I built a tower in the midst of it and dug out a wine vat in it,</p>
<p>he expected it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes.</p>	<p>וַיִּקְוֶה לְעִשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשִׁים:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι σταφυλήν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀκάνθας.</p>	<p>And I waited for it to produce a cluster of grapes, but it produced thorns.</p>

As with the previous verse, the LXX has rendered the verbs into 1<sup>st</sup> person, probably under the influence of the 1<sup>st</sup> person in 5:3.

The Hapax Legomena עזק, "dug around" is used to refer to tilling the soil in preparation for planting.<sup>373</sup> BDB relates the word to the same Arabic root, which means to cleave or furrow the earth with an implement.<sup>374</sup> It is rendered in Greek by καὶ φραγμὸν περιέθηκα “and placed a hedge around (it).” The word φραγμός is elsewhere used in relation to Jerusalem's wall (1 Kgs 10:22; 11:27; Ezra 9:9; Psa 80:12), so it may have been chosen with an interpretation of the allegory in mind. It is also associated with vineyards (Num 22:24; Psa 79(80):13); Ziegler notes that it is a less common word for a vineyard wall, but that it is found in the papyri.<sup>375</sup> It is possible, though, that the translator simply thought this is what was meant. Rashi thinks this Hebrew comes from the Aramaic עִיִּיקָא, and so refers to surrounding

<sup>371</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2516.

<sup>372</sup> “The prophet said, I will sing now for Israel-which is like a vineyard, the seed of Abraham, my friend-my friend’s song for his vineyard: My people, my beloved Israel, I gave them a heritage on a high hill in fertile land.”

<sup>373</sup> Carey Ellen Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine: Viticulture in Ancient Israel* (Harvard Semitic Monographs 60; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2000), 97.

<sup>374</sup> BDB, 740.

<sup>375</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. Cf. Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 423-24.

with a fence like a sort of ring.<sup>376</sup> This sort of reasoning would mean the translator translated עֶזֶק with περιτίθημι and added φραγμός to clarify what was meant (and to create more coherence with 5:5).<sup>377</sup> It cannot be ruled out, though, that Rashi was influenced by the LXX at least indirectly. Ibn Ezra also claims the Hebrew refers to a fence or hedge, but based on the Arabic.<sup>378</sup> Both HALOT and DCH have the possibility of עֶזֶק here meaning to build or surround with a wall, both under the influence of LXX, but HALOT notes the Arabic ‘zq.<sup>379</sup> In any case, the LXX mentioning φραγμός here and fencing creates more coherence in the passage, since a hedge (מְשׁוּפָּה, φραγμός) and a wall (גֵּדֵר, τοῖχος) are removed from the vineyard in 5:5.

The phrase וַיִּסְקְלֵהוּ “and cleared it [of stones],” becomes ἐχαράκωσα “I fenced” (the only other usage of this word is for צוֹר in Jer 32(39):2). The piel of סָקַל also occurs in Isa 62:10, where סָקְלוּ מְאֵבֶן is rendered καὶ τοὺς λίθους τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ὁδοῦ διαρρίψατε. This suggests the translator knew what the term was referring to, but for some reason did not want to use that image here. Again, it could be to harmonize with 5:5 where a hedge and a wall are described as being removed from the vineyard. Ziegler notes the possibility that the translator read the root סָלַל, since χάραξ renders סָלְלָה in Isa 37:33; Ezek 4:2; and 26:8.<sup>380</sup> He says the Greek often means “surround with stakes” or “fence around” in the papyri.<sup>381</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin believes, based on papyrological evidence, that this refers to setting stakes for the vines to grow upon,<sup>382</sup> but Ziegler has already dismissed this understanding since they are placed before the vine is planted (which would not make sense) and since it is parallel to the building of a wall.<sup>383</sup>

The word שֵׁרֶק is rendered twice, first it is translated vine and then transliterated: ἄμπελον σωρηχ.<sup>384</sup> Troxel lists this translation as a feature of the translator, that he transliterates technical terms and proper nouns.<sup>385</sup> Σωρηχ is an unusual transliteration in that ק usually is transliterated with κ, but χ and γ are also possible, though rare.<sup>386</sup> A few other passages use the same transliteration of שֵׁרֶק: in Jdg B 16:4 בְּנַחַל שֵׁרֶק becomes ἐν Αλσωρηχ,

<sup>376</sup> Avraham I. Rozenberg, ed., *Isaiah: A New English Translation* (vol. 1. מקראות גדולות; New York: The Judaica Press, 1982), 41. cf. Sokoloff, *Jewish Babylonian Aramaic*, 400, where עֶזֶק is defined as “to ring.”

<sup>377</sup> For Pseudo-Aristeas’ use of wall metaphors for God giving Israel the law, see par. 139 and 142. In LXX-Prov 28:4 those who love the law fortify themselves with a wall. See Cook and van der Kooij, *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom*, 126-27.

<sup>378</sup> See in Rozenberg, *Isaiah*, vol 1, 41.

<sup>379</sup> HALOT, s.v. DCH, s.v.

<sup>380</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179.

<sup>381</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179.

<sup>382</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 147-48.

<sup>383</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. LXX.D. likewise translates: “umzäunte.”

<sup>384</sup> That it is a double translation, see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 35. For translations followed by transliterations of name-phrases, see van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah,” in *Law, Prophets, and Wisdom*, 73-74.

<sup>385</sup> Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 170.

<sup>386</sup> Joseph Ziegler, “Transcriptionen in der Ier.-LXX,” in *Mitteilungen Des Septuaginta-Unternehmens der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen VI* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958), 60. See for example קְטוּרָה rendered Χεττουρα in Gen 25:1.

and Jdg A 16:4 has *χειμάρρου Σωρηχ* “valley of Sorach.” The other passages containing this word offer a rendering: in Jer 2:21 *שֶׁרֶק* becomes *ἄμπελον καρποφόρον* (again a double rendering; *α'* has just *Σωρηχ*); in Gn 49:11 *וְלִשְׁרָקָה* becomes *καὶ τῆ ἔλικι* (tendrils); and in Isa 16:8 *שְׁרוּקִיָּה* is translated *ἀμπέλους αὐτῆς*. The LXX translators know this term has something to do with grapes and vineyards, but are inconsistent in being more specific than that. Tov lists Isa 5:2 under “Transliterations of Unknown Words, Transmitted as Collective Readings.”<sup>387</sup> It is possible that the definition “vine” was derived from the context in the occurrences in Isa 5:2; Isa 16:8; and Jer 2:21 (especially since it appears parallel to *גִּפְנֵי* in the last two instances). It is unclear why the transliteration was left in 5:2 and not in any of the other places (apart from where it is a place name). According to Tov, revisers generally reverted guesses of unknown words back to transliterations, suggesting *σωρηχ* was added later.<sup>388</sup> In some manuscripts of 5:2 *σωρηχ* is spelled with a *κ*.<sup>389</sup> It is curious that this transliteration would be improved later in transmission. Seeligmann suggests the transliteration was older, and the explanation *ἄμπελον* was added later,<sup>390</sup> but Ziegler in his critical edition believes both were original. Aquila and Theodotion have the same reading, but Symmachus has *ἐκλέκτην*.<sup>391</sup> This definition can be found for *σωρηχ* in Hesychius’ lexicon,<sup>392</sup> possibly added by some monk. The Targum agrees with Symmachus, translating the phrase as *גפן בחירה*, or “choice vine.”<sup>393</sup> LXX.D.E.K. suggests the Greek of 5:2 does not transliterate *שֶׁרֶק* but *סרח* as an allusion to Ezek 17:6, where *גפן סרח* (*ἄμπελον ἀσθενοῦσαν*) is an image for a king.<sup>394</sup> The connection to Ezek 17:6 is interesting in that *α'* has *σωρηχ*,<sup>395</sup> and for Jer 2:21 *α'* has *σωρηχ*.<sup>396</sup>

To the translators’ credit, the precise meaning of the word *שֶׁרֶק* is still disputed. BDB still lists “choice” as one of its definitions.<sup>397</sup> One definition is that it became a name for a variety of vine due to its red color like the sunrise, which is what the Arabic root means.<sup>398</sup> The best explanation is that it is a specific variety of grape vine which, either because of its fruitfulness,<sup>399</sup> color, or even its seedless grapes,<sup>400</sup> was recognized as being the best. HALOT defines it as “a valued, perhaps bright-red species of grape” and DCH says it is a choice vine,

<sup>387</sup> Emanuel Tov, “Transliterations of Hebrew Words in the Greek Versions of the Old Testament,” *Textus* 8 (1973), 92. Aquila and Theodotion have this reading as well.

<sup>388</sup> Tov, “Transliterations of Hebrew Words,” 83-84.

<sup>389</sup> *σωρηκ* Q-106-710 O-88-736 309-cl’ Or.X 597. 598 Eus.Cyr. ο↓.

<sup>390</sup> Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 171 [33], 180 [39/40], 207 [59].

<sup>391</sup> Ziegler’s apparatus is unclear if it is part of a double rendering or not.

<sup>392</sup> Hesychius, word entry 3092. NETS in the footnote of 5:2 says the Hebrew means “choice.”

<sup>393</sup> Rashi explains they are the best of all branches for planting. See in Rozenberg, *Isaiah*, vol 1, 41.

<sup>394</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2516. Also it asks whether the vine producing thorns may be an allusion to Jdg 9:14, where the parable of the trees choosing the thorn for their king occurs.

<sup>395</sup> *θ'* has *ἀχρ<ε>ῖα* and *σ'* has *ἠπλωμένη*.

<sup>396</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2516.

<sup>397</sup> BDB, 977.

<sup>398</sup> BDB, 977.

<sup>399</sup> As in LXX of Jer 2:21.

<sup>400</sup> So says Redak; see in Rozenberg, *Isaiah*, vol 1, 41.

perhaps red.<sup>401</sup> That it is a special variety of vine is evident from the contexts where it occurs. As Walsh says: “The infrequency of קִרְשׁ in the Bible, the fact that Yahweh is the vintner in two out of three contexts, and that Judah as the favored son benefits in the third—probably determined its translation as ‘choice’.”<sup>402</sup> The Greek phrase ἄμπελον σωρηχ could denote a particular vine variety; the Ptolemies imported many varieties of vines which are denoted in the Papyri by similar constructions, such as: ἀμπέλου καπνείου, ἀμπέλος φοινίσση; ἀμπέλος κάπνιος; and ἀμπέλος βούμαστος.<sup>403</sup>

The term קִרְשׁ is typically understood to refer to a wine vat where the must (grape juice) runs after being trod in the תַּג; though BDB also says that it can refer to the wine-press where the grapes are trodden.<sup>404</sup> Ziegler notes that the LXX seems to understand the same double meaning, in that it sometimes translates קִרְשׁ with ληνός (winepress in general) and sometimes with ὑπολήγιον (wine vat).<sup>405</sup> Walsh believes קִרְשׁ is a general term for the entire wine-press complex, while תַּג refers more specifically to the press itself.<sup>406</sup> In Isa 5:2, however, we have the only LXX instance of the word προλήγιον (vat in front of the wine press),<sup>407</sup> which otherwise does not occur in Greek until this passage is interpreted in Christian commentaries on this passage.<sup>408</sup> In Isa 16:10 קִרְשׁ is translated with ὑπολήγιον, a vat placed under a wine press;<sup>409</sup> this is probably an alternate wine-press and vat configuration from a προλήγιον. Ziegler suggests that Isa 5:2 refers to a *Vorkelter* or a pre-press which would produce the finest quality wine.<sup>410</sup>

The sour grapes, שִׂשְׁבִּים, are rendered as thorns, ἀκάνθας. A similar word הַשִּׂבִּים which only occurs in Job 31:40, is rendered by the LXX as βάτος, bramble/thorns. Aramaic שִׂבִּים means bad, in the hipil to decay, smell badly; also the early stage of ripening.<sup>411</sup> The verbal root שִׂבִּים used in Isa 50:2 as שִׂבִּים־תִּבִּי is translated with ξηραίνω (perhaps thinking of the root שִׂבִּים), which is logical in the context. While the root שִׂבִּים is rare in the Hebrew Bible, the translator could have known its meaning from Aramaic and decided ἄκανθα was more appropriate in the context.

The decision to translate שִׂשְׁבִּים in Isa 5:2 (and also 5:4) with ἀκάνθας (thorns) is probably, in part, conceptual. In Isa 7:23-25 and 32:11-13 vineyards are contrasted with thorns and brambles in the Hebrew and the Greek.<sup>412</sup> The translator may have been influenced by the contrasts in these passages, and so felt the opposite of vines and grapes are brambles

<sup>401</sup> HALOT, s.v. DCH, s.v.

<sup>402</sup> Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 106.

<sup>403</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 252-53.

<sup>404</sup> BDB, 428.

<sup>405</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179.

<sup>406</sup> Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 162-65.

<sup>407</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>408</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 149.

<sup>409</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>410</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179. For comments on first press wine, see Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 194-95.

<sup>411</sup> Jastrow, *Dictionary*, v.s. p. 136.

<sup>412</sup> Cf. Jer 12:10-13, where someone sows wheat but reaps thorns.

and their thorns. Interestingly, Ibn Ezra also comments that it was thorns that the vine produced.<sup>413</sup> In Isa 33:12 and 34:13 the land is overcome by thorns as part of God’s judgment for wicked acts, whereas in LXX-Isa 5, thorns metaphorically represent the acts of the wicked. Kloppenborg Verbin believes that since the vineyard is producing thorns there is implied some negligent human party that should have been tending the vineyard.<sup>414</sup> But as we will see in our discussion of 5:6, this is unlikely, since it is the vine that produces thorns, not the land the vineyard is on.<sup>415</sup>

The overall picture of the vineyard, then, is slightly different in the LXX. This is in part due to exegetical concerns, as we have seen, as well as updating to contemporary Egyptian practices. Kloppenborg Verbin argues that the Hebrew describes a new vineyard being cultivated on a hill, while the LXX describes a plot of land being converted into a vineyard, as was often done.<sup>416</sup> He draws support, in part, from the use of νεόφυτος in 5:7, which was a technical term for newly planted vines.<sup>417</sup> However, he does not explain what it means that the beloved “acquired a vineyard,” which might suggest it already was a vineyard. There was a term for fields being converted to vineyards: χέρσος ἀμπελίτις.<sup>418</sup>

The Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.<sup>419</sup> So, the first three verbs are rendered as וקדשתננון ויקרתננון וקיימתננון (I sanctified them, and I glorified them, and I established them). Since these verbs are interpreted, the reference to שִׁרְק is turned into a simile: כמיצב גפן בחירא (like a planting of a choice vine). Likewise, the vineyard’s features are interpreted, so that the watchtower is God’s sanctuary (בנייהון ובנית מקדשי), and the wine-vat is the altar for them to atone for their sins (לכפרא על חטאיהון ואף מדבחי יהבית). The grapes are good works (עובדין טבין), and ויעש באשים is cleverly rendered with ואינון אבאישו עובדיהון (but they caused their works to be bad).

**Isa 5:3**

And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem and people of Judah,	ועתה יושב ירושלם ואיש יהודה	καὶ νῦν, ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ἰουδα καὶ οἱ ἐνοικοῦντες ἐν Ἱερουσαλημ,	And now, man of Ioudas and those who dwell in Ierousalem,
judge between me and my vineyard.	שפטו־נא ביני וביין ברמי:	κρίνατε ἐν ἐμοὶ καὶ ἀνὰ μέσον τοῦ ἀμπελώνος μου.	judge between me and my vineyard.

<sup>413</sup> See in Rozenberg, *Isaiah*, vol 1, 41. He did not get this from the Targum, which says “made evil their deeds” using the root באש.

<sup>414</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 151.

<sup>415</sup> IQIsa<sup>a</sup> has ויעשה, but even if the ה were a pronominal suffix, it would have no antecedent, since both שִׁרְק and כרם are masculine; though in Isa 27:2 כרם is feminine according to BDB.

<sup>416</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 146-47.

<sup>417</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 152.

<sup>418</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 246-47.

<sup>419</sup> “And I sanctified them and I glorified them and I established them as the plant of a choice vine; and I built my sanctuary in their midst, and I even gave my altar to atone for their sins; I thought that they would do good deeds, but they made their deeds evil.”

The order of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah are switched in the LXX.<sup>420</sup> For agreement with the LXX order see 2 Kings 23:2; 2 Chr 20:15, 18, 20; 2 Chr 21:13; 32:22; 33:9; 34:30; 35:18; Ezra 4:6; Jer 4:4; 11:2; 11:9, 12; 17:20, 25; 18:11; 25:2; 32(39):32; 35(42):13, 17; Dan 9:7; and Zeph 1:4. Isa 22:21 also has the order seen in the Hebrew of 5:3 and the LXX preserves the order in translation (house of Judah becomes inhabitants, like for Jerusalem). Jer 36(43):31 has this order as well, but men of Judah becomes land of Judah. When the two terms “House of Israel and Men of Judah” appear in 5:7 the LXX does not change the order. The plural ἐνοικοῦντες agrees with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> which has יושבי ירושלם.

Only here, in 5:7, and Jer 35(42):13 is the phrase אִישׁ יְהוּדָה rendered with ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα. Typically ἄνηρ is used, either in the singular or plural. In Jer 35(42):13 it is also rendered literally as a singular and is parallel to “inhabitants” in the plural translated with a plural: וְאֶמְרָתָּ לְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה וְלְיוֹשְׁבֵי יְרוּשָׁלַם as καὶ εἶπὸν ἀνθρώπῳ Ιουδα καὶ τοῖς κατοικοῦσιν Ιερουσαλημ. LXX-Isa’s translation is more eloquent, with the definite article (ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα), and using the same preposition in the prefix (ἐνοικοῦντες ἐν Ιερουσαλημ). Based on these passages, and Ob 1:9,<sup>421</sup> it seems ἄνθρωπος can be a collective singular, though it is odd that in Isa and Jer it stands parallel to a plural, especially in Isa, where the parallel collective singular is translated in the plural (assuming the *Vorlage* was like MT, and not 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>). Since יושב is understood as a collective singular (unless of course the *Vorlage* agreed with 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>), while אִישׁ is not, it seems possible that ἄνθρωπος is intended to be a singular (and not collective). LXX.D.E.K. takes it as a singular with the leadership in mind, and compares it to 8:8, 32:2, and 19:20, where a singular ἄνθρωπος is added in the Greek.<sup>422</sup> When the translator intends a plural, he at times adds ἄνθρωποι, as in 25:3-5.<sup>423</sup>

The Targum changes voice in this verse, with נביא אימר להון (Prophet, say to them...)<sup>424</sup> Also it interprets the situation by adding הא בית ישראל מרדו מן אוריתא ולא צבן למתב (Behold, the house of Israel have rebelled against the law, and they are not willing to repent). Also of note is ואיש יהודה is rendered ואנש יהודה.

#### Isa 5:4

What more was there to do for my vineyard that I have not done in it? When I expected it to yield grapes, why did it yield wild grapes?	מֵה־לְעֲשׂוֹת עוֹד לְכַרְמִי וְלֹא עָשִׂיתִי בּוֹ מִדּוֹעַ קִנְיֹתִי לְעֲשׂוֹת עֲנָבִים וַיַּעַשׂ בְּאֲשָׁשִׁים:	τί ποιήσω ἔτι τῷ ἀμπελῶνί μου καὶ οὐκ ἐποίησα αὐτῷ; διότι ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι σταφυλὴν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀκάνθας.	What more might I do for my vineyard, and I have not done for it? Because I waited for it to produce a cluster of grapes, but it
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<sup>420</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 124 points out that B has the same order as the Hebrew.

<sup>421</sup> See Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 52. Ottley, *Isaiah* vol II, 124.

<sup>422</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2516. 19:20 is of particular note. However, in 40:6 ἄνθρωπος is added and is undoubtedly meant to be collective singular, or at least general for all men.

<sup>423</sup> For an analysis of this passage see Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6*, 182-92.

<sup>424</sup> “Prophet, say to them, Behold the house of Israel have rebelled against the law, and they are not willing to repent. And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem and men of Judah, judge now my case against my people.”



			produced thorns.
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The LXX translates well, using a subjunctive to capture the modal ל + infinitive construct.<sup>425</sup> The translation of מְדוּעַ with διότι is unusual, (usually מְדוּעַ is translated by ὅτι τί or δια τί) but this rendering is not unheard of (see Jdg 5:28 and Jer 30:6). In the Hebrew, according to Jouon-Muraoka 161.k, the interrogative is the first “of two coordinate members, when, logically, the first member is subordinate and the interrogative relates only to the second member.”<sup>426</sup> The translator may have had difficulty with this construction, and so converted the rhetorical question into a causal statement with a contrast. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has בכרמי instead of לְכַרְמֵי, and וישה instead of ויעש, but LXX seems to agree with MT in both places.

Theophrastus discusses all the things that can go wrong if a vine is not tended properly or is exposed to bad weather: the leaves can fall off, the plant can die, the shoots may grow too much, or the branches become too woody, the fruit might not grow at all, or it may fall off before ripe.<sup>427</sup> Also, in his discussion of spontaneous changes that can happen in plants, he mentions that a vine that produces white grapes may suddenly produce black ones, or vice versa.<sup>428</sup> The translator has departed from reality and exaggerates what happens in the vineyard; the vines are not failing, they are actively producing a bad crop.

The Targum turns the question about what more could have been done for the vineyard into a question of what promised good was not given to Israel: מא טבא אמרית להון למעבד עוד לעמי ולא עבדית להון.<sup>429</sup>

**Isa 5:5**

And now I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured; I will break down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.	<p>וְעַתָּה אֹדְיֶעְהָנָא  אֶתְכֶם אֶת אֲשֶׁר-אֲנִי  עֲשֶׂה לְכַרְמֵי הַסֵּר  מְשׁוֹכְתוֹ וְהָיָה לְבָעֵר  פְּרִץ גְּדָרוֹ וְהָיָה  לְמַרְמָס:</p>	<p>νῦν δὲ ἀναγγελῶ ὑμῖν  τί ποιήσω τῷ  ἀμπελῶνί μου· ἀφελῶ  τὸν φραγμὸν αὐτοῦ  καὶ ἔσται εἰς  διαρπαγὴν, καὶ  καθελῶ τὸν τοῖχον  αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσται εἰς  καταπάτημα,</p>	But now I will declare to you what I will do to my vineyard. I will remove its hedge, and it shall be plundered, and I will tear down its wall, and it shall be trampled down.
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The hedge and wall mentioned here in the Hebrew were not included in the Hebrew description of the labor God performed in planting the vineyard in 5:2. The Greek, however, already had there the φραγμός and the act of fortifying (χαρακώω). The first person ἀφελῶ is probably not due to a reading like 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which has אסיר, but is simply due to the translator turning the whole passage into the first person.

<sup>425</sup> Waltke and O’Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, 36.2.3f.

<sup>426</sup> Jouon/Muraoka, §161.k.

<sup>427</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.14.6-7.

<sup>428</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 2.3.1.

<sup>429</sup> “What more good did I promise to do for my people that I have not done for them? When I thought they would do good deeds, why did they make their deeds evil?”

The rendering of לְבַעַר with εἰς διαρπαγὴν only occurs here.<sup>430</sup> Troxel suggests this equivalent is based on 3:14, with the idea of economic plunder underlying the decision.<sup>431</sup> The notion of plundering may have been chosen as a possible result of having the fence and wall removed, and has tightened the connection between the vineyard imagery and the reality it represents.<sup>432</sup> The choice of τοῖχος seems appropriate for a wall around a vineyard, though in the Papyri, vineyard walls are usually called τεῖχος, πλαστή, or πλάτη.<sup>433</sup>

Like the LXX, the Targum relates the hedge and the wall to 5:2, in that here God says He will remove his Shekhinah and they will become plunder (לְמִיבֹז) and He will break down the house of their sanctuaries (אֶת־רַע בֵּית מִקְדָּשֵׁיהוֹן); in 5:2, though, it was the temple and altar.<sup>434</sup>

### Isa 5:6

I will make it a waste; it shall not be pruned or hoed, and it shall be overgrown with briars and thorns;	וְאַשְׁיִתְהוּ בְתָהּ לֹא יִזְמַר וְלֹא יַעְדֹר וְעֵלְהָ שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית	καὶ ἀνήσω τὸν ἀμπελώνά μου καὶ οὐ μὴ τμηθῆῖ οὐδὲ μὴ σκαφῆ, καὶ ἀναβήσεται εἰς αὐτὸν ὡς εἰς χέρσον ἄκανθα·	And I will abandon my vineyard, and it shall not be pruned or dug, and a thorn shall come up into it as into a wasteland;
I will also command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it.	וְעַל הָעַבִּים אֶצְוֶה מִהַמְטִיר עָלָיו מָטָר:	καὶ ταῖς νεφέλαις ἐντελοῦμαι τοῦ μὴ βρέξαι εἰς αὐτὸν ὑετόν.	And I will also command the clouds, that they send no rain to it.

In the section on thorns (3.4.1) we discussed how the LXX translator has shaped this verse with language typical of the papyri to vividly describe a vineyard being left to turn into a fallow waste.<sup>435</sup> Note again the singular ἄκανθα, in contrast to the plural form in 5:2 and 5:4.

As mentioned in the section on thorns, the Targum interprets all the elements in this verse.<sup>436</sup>

### Isa 5:7

For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the people of Judah are his pleasant planting;	כִּי כָרַם יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה נֹטַע שְׁעִשְׁוּעָיו	ὁ γὰρ ἀμπελῶν κυρίου σαβαωθ οἶκος τοῦ Ἰσραηλ ἐστὶ καὶ ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ἰουδα νεόφυτον ἡγαπημένον·	For the vineyard of the Lord Sabaoth is the house of Israel, and the man of Ioudas is a beloved young plant;
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<sup>430</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has simply בער.

<sup>431</sup> Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 389.

<sup>432</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2516.

<sup>433</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 243-44. See 25:12 for an odd use of τοῖχος. cf. Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6*, 121.

<sup>434</sup> “And now I will tell you what I am about to do to my people. I will take up my Shekhinah from them, and they shall be for plundering; I will break down the place of their sanctuaries, and they will be for trampling.”

<sup>435</sup> See also Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 181-82.

<sup>436</sup> “And I will make them [to be] banished; they will not be helped and they will not be supported, and they will be cast out and forsaken; and I will command the prophets that they prophesy no prophecy concerning them.”

he expected justice, but saw bloodshed; righteousness, but heard a cry!	וַיִּקְוֶה לְמִשְׁפָּט וְהִנֵּה מִשְׁפָּח לְצַדִּיקָה וְהִנֵּה צַעֲקָה׃	ἔμεινα τοῦ ποιῆσαι κρίσιν, ἐποίησε δὲ ἀνομίαν καὶ οὐ δικαιοσύνην ἀλλὰ κραυγὴν.	I waited for him to produce justice, but he produced lawlessness—nor did he produce righteousness but a cry!
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Again in this verse, the LXX has tried to put the verbs into first person. This means, either the voice changes in 5:7a, or that the Lord refers to Himself in the third person. Like in 5:3, we again have the issue of ἄνθρωπος τοῦ Ιουδα; if we understand it as a collective singular, then the beloved new plant (νεόφυτον ἡγαπημένον) also must be a collective singular. The Hebrew עֲשֵׂה צִדִּיקָה וְהִנֵּה צַעֲקָה refers to the צַדִּיק of verse 5:2. The LXX translates with νεόφυτον ἡγαπημένον, an adequate but unique translation; usually (5x in the Psalms) עֲשֵׂה צִדִּיקָה is rendered with μελέτη.<sup>437</sup> In α' we find φυτὸν ἀπολαύσεως αὐτοῦ and in σ' φυτὸν τέρψεως, both are closer translations. Here the LXX translator is undoubtedly creating coherence with 5:1 (though there the adjective is substantive); if the translator wanted to distinguish the vine from the beloved (ἡγαπημένος) of 5:1, he could have used a different word here. That the translator uses νεόφυτος (used elsewhere for עֲשֵׂה only in Job 14:9)<sup>438</sup> instead of simply φυτός, makes sense, since the vine in question was planted in the vineyard in 5:2. The word νεόφυτος was the technical term for newly planted vineyards,<sup>439</sup> though LXX-Isa wants it to refer to the ἄμπελος σωρηχ. In 5:7b the LXX adds verbs, the same as were used in 5:2: ποιῆσαι...ἐποίησεν, creating yet more coherence with that verse. In the following phrase he does not add verbs, but does add a negation, and renders the conjunction with a contrastive ἀλλά to make the contrast more obvious.<sup>440</sup> Here there is still ambiguity whether it is the house of Israel or the man of Judah who is doing lawlessness, though the man of Judah is the immediate antecedent of the verb; this is noteworthy in light of the two having their order switched in 5:3. In 5:3, the man of Judah follows immediately after the thorns produced in 5:2.

The Targum of verse seven replaces vineyard with “people,” and elaborates on what God expected and what he found.<sup>441</sup>

Isa 5:1-7 is widely recognized as an allegory, as opposed to a parable. A parable is an extended simile, that is, a comparison by resemblance, while an allegory is an extended metaphor, that is, as comparison by representation.<sup>442</sup> The interpretation of this allegory is

<sup>437</sup> Other exceptions are Prov 8:30-31 where εὐφραίνω and ἐνευφραίνομαι are used, and Jer 31:20 uses ἐντρυφάω. In Psa 118(119):166 הַשֵּׁשׁ is rendered with ἀγαπᾶν, and in 93(94):19 it renders the form עֲשֵׂה צִדִּיקָה.

<sup>438</sup> Cf. Psa 143:12 where it is used for עֲשֵׂה צִדִּיקָה.

<sup>439</sup> Schnebel, *Die Landwirtschaft im hellenistischen Ägypten*, 245.

<sup>440</sup> For the translators use of negative particles, see Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 94-99.

<sup>441</sup> “For the *people* of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant; *I thought that they would perform judgment*, but behold, *oppressors*; *that they would act innocently*, but behold, *they multiply sins*.”

<sup>442</sup> See Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, 748-49.

provided already in the Hebrew in 5:7, making it unnecessary for the LXX translator to explain what the imagery refers to. He can translate literally allowing 5:7 to interpret the imagery. In both the Hebrew and the Greek, God planted the vineyard, the vineyard is Israel, the beloved planting are/is the men/man of Judah, grapes are justice and righteousness, and bad grapes/thorns are lawlessness and cries of distress. Some elements are not explained, such as the wall, the hedge (or clearing stones), rain, etc., but these details function within the allegory and do not need real counterparts, or their counterparts are implied by their function in relation to the parts that are explained. In any case, they show God doing all the proper work necessary to cultivate a perfect vineyard.<sup>443</sup> Perhaps these details were understood to represent specific things, which would be elaborated when the passage was commented on by the Greek translator or his community. The Targum goes into detail, explaining how each element of the allegory relates to Israel's history, with particular interest in the temple.

The LXX for this passage as a whole does not interpret to the extent that the Targum does. It does, as Ziegler points out and we have seen, update the vineyard terminology to contemporary practices. Also, to some extent it recasts the image as a Hellenistic-Egyptian vineyard as distinct from an Israelite vineyard.<sup>444</sup> The biggest differences between vineyards in these regions would be that in Israel vineyards would be placed on terraces on hillsides, like we see in 5:1 in both languages.<sup>445</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin argues that the Greek has the conversion of a plot of land, while the Hebrew has the creation of a new plot,<sup>446</sup> but this seems difficult, since in 5:1 a vineyard is acquired, and not simply a plot of land for a vineyard.

As mentioned above, the change in voice in the Septuagint to the first person has left a difficulty in 5:1: if it is “my vineyard” why does it say “the beloved acquired a vineyard?” Who is speaking when, and about whom? In 5:7 we learn that the vineyard belongs to the Lord of Hosts, so the first person references to “my vineyard” throughout the passage are presumably made by God. But does the prophet refer to God in 7a, or does God refer to Himself in the third person? Likewise, in 1b, is the beloved who acquires a vineyard God, who refers to Himself in the third person, or is it someone else? The tempting solution to the last problem is to call the pronoun μου of 5:1 a mistake resulting from the attempt to put the whole passage into the first person; then, we could claim the song only begins in 5:2, where the voice turns to the first person, as in α', σ', and θ'. But assuming the translator was deliberate and careful in his translation, we must suppose either the prophet calls the vineyard his own in 5:1a in that he is somehow associated with it,<sup>447</sup> and in 5:1b the prophet talks about God, his beloved, acquiring the vineyard, or we must suppose God is referring to Himself as

<sup>443</sup> See Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 137.

<sup>444</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin expands on Ziegler in the description of this updating. Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 134-59.

<sup>445</sup> See Walsh, *The Fruit of the Vine*, 93-99.

<sup>446</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, “Egyptian Viticultural Practices,” 146.

<sup>447</sup> A citizen can refer to “my land” in a different way than a king might refer to “my land.”

beloved in 1b, or some other beloved is said to acquire the vineyard. If we do assume the translator was deliberate and consistent, then the beloved of 5:1a-b is probably meant to be the same beloved new planting in 5:7, that is, the man of Judah. If this is the case, the beloved acquired a vineyard in 5:1 by being the sorach vine planted in it (5:2). In the same way we might say a dog from an animal shelter got a good home, not by purchasing the deed to the house, but by being brought to it and settled there. This seems like an odd thing to say at this point in the passage, but the literal translation technique required this phrase to be rendered; indeed it is rendered quite literally, except for the pronoun and for the last words. The question of the identity of the ἀγαπητός in 5:1, however, remains.

A second difficulty in the translation is the ambiguity created in 5:4 by rendering **כִּשְׂבָאִים** with ἀκάνθας; in the Greek, it is possible that the vineyard as a whole is growing thorny plants, or that the vines of the vineyard are growing thorns instead of grapes. As mentioned above, Kloppenborg Verbin believes there is an implicit criticism of some other party who was negligent in tending the vineyard and did not remove the thorn plants that were growing.<sup>448</sup> But this explanation does not seem likely, as we have said. The owner of the vineyard asks in 5:4 what more could he have done for the vineyard? If he could have weeded out the thorns, the question, and the whole allegory, loses its meaning. Additionally, that the vineyard is no longer pruned or dug in 5:6 shows that it was pruned and the weeds dug out of it before the harvest. Also, in 5:6 when the vineyard is abandoned, thorn (a collective singular, unlike the plural of 5:2 and 5:4) springs up like in a fallow field, as opposed to as in a tended vineyard. But whether the vine or the vineyard produces thorns is beside the point; the point is God did everything He could for His vineyard, but still it produced the opposite of what it was supposed to produce. When we look at what grapes and thorns represent in 5:7, it becomes clear that a criticism of the leadership is indeed implied, in that there is no justice but lawlessness. This shows that the ruling authorities are not acting righteously but are causing their people to cry in distress (like in 3:14, where the leadership sets fire to the vineyard, in the Greek).

The allegory is focused in the LXX by the addition of walls and fences in 5:2. In the Hebrew the allegory speaks more broadly of God's deeds on behalf of the vineyard, preparing the land, planting, and cultivating the vineyard. The Greek puts the focus more on the defense of the vineyard (though the other elements are not completely absent), by mentioning twice the wall and fence, and by changing "grazing" into "plundering," which exaggerates the destruction of the vineyard once the walls are gone. By focusing on defense, the allegory hints at the idea of a city, though still speaks generally about a people or nation. Ziegler suggests Isa 5:1-7 plays a role in Isa 27:2-5 rendering the vineyard as a city, as we will discuss below.<sup>449</sup>

<sup>448</sup> Kloppenborg Verbin, "Egyptian Viticultural Practices," 150-51.

<sup>449</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 90.

The LXX of the song of the vineyard, then, follows closely the Hebrew original, bringing the image to the experience of his readers by the use of appropriate terminology. At the same time, by slight adjustments, here and there, the translator has focused the allegory to a particular interpretation. That the vineyard produces thorns instead of grapes, and not just bad grapes, makes the vineyard, and those it represents, even more culpable; they are not only disappointing (producing poor quality grapes) but are wicked (producing thorns). The Greek appears to lay extra focus on the leadership, by the way it deals with the “man of Judah.”

There is a peshet fragment (4Q162/4QpIsa<sup>b</sup>) of this passage, but not much can be said from it beyond that verse 5 is interpreted as God abandoning his people.

The Targum, on the other hand, interprets each element of the allegory, and makes what little imagery survives into similes. In 5:7, where in the Hebrew and Greek the interpretation of the allegory is given, the Targum in part interprets even this: ארי עמיה דיוי צבאות בית ישראל (for the people of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel).

In 5:10 vineyards are mentioned as producing very little wine to illustrate the desolation promised in 5:9. The phrase צמדיי כרם is rendered ζεύγη βοῶν. Ottley says the Greek phrase corresponds in meaning to the unit of measure צמד;<sup>450</sup> the only other place it occurs, 1 Sam 14:14, it is rendered very differently. There is no need to suppose כרם was thought to be some plural for a word for cattle (such as פרים);<sup>451</sup> since the context of plowing a vineyard makes little sense;<sup>452</sup> the translator may have supposed a yoke of oxen was a better rendering and better cohered with the parallel clause.<sup>453</sup>

The Targum renders the Hebrew well, only adding an explanation for why the ten measures of vineyard land yields only one measure of wine: the sin of not giving tithes.

In 27:2-5 a vineyard again is used in a metaphor. In the Hebrew it is implied to represent God’s people, but in the Greek it is explicitly interpreted as a besieged city.

**Isa 27:2**

On that day: “A pleasant vineyard, sing about it!	בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרֶם: חֲמַד <sup>454</sup> עֲנוּלָהּ:	τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκεῖνη ἀμπελῶν καλός· ἐπιθύμημα ἐξάρχειν κατ’ αὐτῆς.	On that day: a beautiful vineyard—a desire to begin singing <i>against</i> it.
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The LXX testifies to a textual variant in MT, namely, the reading חמד as opposed to חמר.<sup>455</sup> The LXX read חמד and gave it a double rendering καλός and ἐπιθύμημα.<sup>456</sup> Ziegler

<sup>450</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 125.

<sup>451</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 125. LXX.D.E.K. 2517.

<sup>452</sup> A field where a vineyard was to be planted would need the soil loosened, perhaps by plowing, but describing a land being turned into an under performing vineyard would require considerable more description than a literal rendering style would allow.

<sup>453</sup> Ziegler thinks the translator considered it arable land generally, and did not need to be restricted to vineyards. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 108. For the units of measure, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 193.

<sup>454</sup> Following BHS; the reading of the Aleppo Codex and Leningradensis is חמר, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has חומר; this reading is reflected also in the Vulgate and the Peshitta. See van der Kooij, “Isaiah 24-27: Text-Critical Notes,” 15.

thinks it is questionable that ἀμπελών καλός is original, since the passage as a whole is frequently understood to be about a city, and so the original reading was πόλις πολιορκουμένη (as occurs in 27:3), which the feminine pronoun αὐτῆς would then match.<sup>457</sup> But it is entirely possible that the translator simply maintained the vineyard metaphor in verse 2 (as well as rendering literally the gender of the pronoun) and once the song began in verse 3 makes clear his interpretation of the metaphor. The feminine pronoun in the Hebrew here and the feminine forms in the next verse undoubtedly contributed to the idea that a city was meant and not a vineyard, which is elsewhere always masculine in Hebrew.

The Targum makes clear that the passage is talking about the congregation of Israel, and turns the metaphor into a simile.<sup>458</sup> Like the LXX, it gives two renderings of חֲקִי but to a different end: ככרם נסב בארע טבא.

### Isa 27:3

I, the LORD, am its keeper; every moment I water it. I guard it night and day so that no one can harm it;	אֲנִי יְהוָה נֹצְרָה לְרִגְעִים אֲשַׁקֶּנָּה פֶּן יִפְקֹד עָלֶיהָ לַיְלָה וַיּוֹם אֲצַרְנָה:	ἐγὼ πόλις ἰσχυρά, πόλις πολιορκουμένη, μάτην ποτιῶ αὐτήν· ἀλώσεται γὰρ νυκτός, ἡμέρας δὲ πεσεῖται τὸ τεῖχος.	I am a strong city, a besieged city; in vain will I water it, for it will be taken by night, and by day the wall will fall.
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In this verse, the Hebrew is more concerned about showing God’s care for the vineyard, than about describing the vineyard itself. That God waters the vineyard is the opposite of 5:6 where He commanded the clouds not to rain. Giving it drink could mean irrigation practices, like in Deut 11:10 where Egyptian fields are watered by foot וְהִשְׁקִיָּהּ בְּרִגְלֶיהָ. Guarding the vineyard was important for the LXX’s understanding of 5:1-7 (where a vineyard representing the house of Israel is destroyed).

The Greek, for some reason, has omitted יְהוָה,<sup>459</sup> Seeligmann suggested it was abbreviated in the *Vorlage* as י and eliminated by haplography.<sup>460</sup> The phrase πόλις πολιορκουμένη only elsewhere occurs in 1:8 where it translates כְּעִיר נְצוּרָה. Ottley suggests that πόλις πολιορκουμένη comes from נצרה and πόλις ἰσχυρά is a duplicate.<sup>461</sup> Ziegler holds the opposite view, that the song in 26:1 contributed to the idea that the song in 27:2 was about a strong city,<sup>462</sup> though in 26:1 it is πόλις ὀχυρά.<sup>463</sup> Ziegler believes πόλις ὀχυρά was original

<sup>455</sup> See D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament: 2 Isaïe, Jemie, Lamentations* (OBO, 50.2; Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires, 1986), 188-92.

<sup>456</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>457</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 88.

<sup>458</sup> “In that time, “The congregation of Israel which is like a choice vineyard in a good land, sing of it!””

<sup>459</sup> Unless עיר יהוה was thought (Isa 60:14; Psa 48:8; 101:8), and not wanting to use the term in a negative context opted for πόλις ἰσχυρά, as Prof. van der Kooij tentatively proposed in discussion.

<sup>460</sup> Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 169 [31/32].

<sup>461</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234.

<sup>462</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87.

<sup>463</sup> It would appear Ziegler preferred this reading for 27:3 while he wrote *Untersuchungen*, but changed his mind when he prepared the Göttingen LXX text. The reading ἰσχυρά is attested in S, A, and Q\*.

and πόλις πολιορκουμένη was secondary.<sup>464</sup> Van der Vorm-Croughs, following Seeligmann,<sup>465</sup> believes this is a case of two coordinate renderings that reflect distinct readings or interpretations of the Hebrew, as her section title says.<sup>466</sup> She explains that both adjectives come from נצרה; first, πολιορκουμένη comes from reading a Niphal participle of צור (to enclose); and second, ισχυρά comes from reading בצרה, as in 25:2; 36:1; and 37:26 (though in these places the Greek has ὀχυρά).<sup>467</sup> Seeligmann believes πόλις is an exegetic addition, which the translator “came to regard as the binding factor” between his two readings of נצרה.<sup>468</sup>

It seems likely that we have here a double translation; why the translator here uses πόλις ισχυρά instead of πόλις ὀχυρά could be to distinguish this city from that of 25:2 and 26:1. The term ὀχυρά is better for a fortified city, though ισχυρά is used again in 33:11 to describe the strong position the righteous will inhabit. The idea that a city was meant at all, and not a vineyard, is probably in part due to 1:8, where a vineyard is mentioned and נצורה describes a city.<sup>469</sup> Also, all the feminine forms in the Hebrew of 27:2-3, as mentioned above, would match עיר, but nowhere else is כָּרִים feminine. The surrounding context of strong cities undoubtedly also contributed to the translator understanding 27:2-3 to be about a strong city.

Like in Isa 5:1-7, it is confusing concerning who is speaking. In 5:2 the beloved is said to acquire a vineyard, but then the passage speaks about “my vineyard.” So too in 27:3, the speaker is the besieged city, but the passage continues to describe what “I” do for “her” (the city). According to LXX.D., 3-4a is all part of one direct speech. It then still remains odd that the city refers to itself as “her,” αὐτήν.

The phrase μάτην ποτιῶ αὐτήν for לְרִיק לְרִיקִים אֲשַׁקֵּנָה could be the result of reading לְרִיקִים or לְרִיקִים.<sup>470</sup> Muraoka calls μάτην here a free rendering.<sup>471</sup> LXX.D.E.K. thinks the idea is that a continuous effort is a futile effort,<sup>472</sup> if it was efficacious it would stop. To give drink to a city makes sense in the context of a siege, and if the translator believed the city was doomed to fall then indeed providing water to it would be in vain.<sup>473</sup> It seems unlikely that γάρ is meant to render פֶּן, but the two words are otherwise unaccounted for.<sup>474</sup> Troxel calls ἀλίσκω a

<sup>464</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

<sup>465</sup> Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 169. Though he believes it is read as בצרה and נצרה.

<sup>466</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 32.

<sup>467</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 32.

<sup>468</sup> Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 169. He believes the *Vorlage* had the Tetragrammaton abbreviated with ׀, which had fallen out due to haplography.

<sup>469</sup> As also in Isa 27:10, but the LXX does not translate in the same way there, and does not even mention a city.

<sup>470</sup> For the former, see Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234. Ziegler agrees with the possibility and suggests also the latter, Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89.

<sup>471</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 77.

<sup>472</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>473</sup> Cf. Sir 24:31 where giving drink (ποτιῶ) to the garden has good results. Water here representing instruction. LXX.D.E.K. suggests this is the meaning of the metaphor “to give drink” in LXX Isa 27:3, also. LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>474</sup> Even more unlikely is that it was thought to be the proclitic particle ׀.



slot word used by the translator in contexts having to do with battle.<sup>475</sup> But there seems to be some lexical warrant: ἀλώσεται could be a free interpretation of יִפְקֹד, since פִּקֹּד can have negative connotations suggesting a coming punishment, as in Isa 10:12 and Jer 6:15.<sup>476</sup> As Ottley says, πεσεῖται is probably a result of seeing in אֶצְרָנָה the letters צר and τεῖχος comes from reading חֲמָה as חוֹמָה in the next verse.<sup>477</sup> Van der Vorm-Crouchs agrees that חֲמָה is rendered twice, once as τεῖχος and once as ἐπελάβετο (associating the root חמס).<sup>478</sup> Ziegler points out that the phrase πεσεῖται τὸ τεῖχος occurs also in 24:23.<sup>479</sup>

The Targum expands and interprets the verse.<sup>480</sup> There is no mention of a vineyard, but God keeps his covenant. Giving drink refers to the cup of their punishment (כס פורענותהון). Day and night refers to the constant protection of God’s Memra.

**Isa 27:4**

<p>I have no wrath. <i>Who will give me thorns and briars? I will march to battle against it. I will burn it up.</i></p>	<p>חֲמָה אֵין לִי מִיִּתְנִי שְׁמִיר שִׁית בְּמַלְחָמָה אֶפְשָׁעָה בָּהּ אֶצִּיתָנָה יְהִד:</p>	<p>οὐκ ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς· τίς με θήσει φυλάσσειν καλάμην ἐν ἀγρῶ; διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν. τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε. κατακέαυμαι,</p>	<p>There is not <i>one</i> that has not taken hold of it; who will set me to watch stubble in a field? Because of this enmity I have set it aside. Therefore because of this the Lord God has done all things, whatever he has ordained. I have been burned up.</p>
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The Hebrew expresses the peace of Israel and God’s zeal to defend it. God wishes (as expressed by the cohortative verbs) there were thorns and thistles so He could zealously make war on them and destroy them from His vineyard.

The Greek has rather drastically changed this verse along with much of the chapter.<sup>481</sup> Relating Greek clauses to the underlying Hebrew is difficult; there appears to be some double translations in this verse. The identity of the relative pronoun ἢ is translated as referring to “city” by NETS and to “Macht” in LXX.D.; more literally it refers to the enmity (or the inimical one) mentioned later: πολεμία. This idea, while difficult to extrapolate from the Hebrew, continues from the Greek’s understanding of 27:3 where the strong city is taken and the wall falls; every enemy will take hold of the city. Likewise ἐπελάβετο αὐτῆς may come

<sup>475</sup> Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 79.

<sup>476</sup> Ziegler suggests the root לָכַד may have been thought, Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89. LXX.D.E.K. is probably right that it is a paraphrase with the sense of an announcement of judgment. LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>477</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234. Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>478</sup> van der Vorm-Crouchs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 47-48.

<sup>479</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 89. Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2572. For LXX-Isa’s use of τεῖχος and τοῖχος see van der Kooij, *The Oracle of Tyre*, 67-68; Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 173-74.

<sup>480</sup> “I, the LORD, keep for them the covenant of their fathers, and I will not destroy them, except that in the moment that they incite to anger before me, I make them drink the cup of their retribution. But though their sins already demand that retribution be taken from them, night and day my Memra protects them.”

<sup>481</sup> For an analysis of 27:2-5, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87-91.

from the general perceived context of an inimical party attempting to seize a city; LXX.D.E.K links it to Joel 2:9 where again the word occurs in the context of an attacked city.<sup>482</sup> Van der Vorm-Croughs suggests ἐπελάβετο is based on linking חמה to חמס by way of root association.<sup>483</sup>

We have already discussed the rendering of the phrase מִי־יִתְּנֵנִי שְׂמִיר שִׁית in the section on thorns (3.4.1.).

The phrase διὰ τὴν πολεμίαν ταύτην ἠθέτηκα αὐτήν presumably comes from the Hebrew. The word πολεμίαν comes from בְּמִלְחָמָה. The word פשע elsewhere only occurs in 1 Sam 20:3,<sup>484</sup> where it is rendered ἐμπέπλησται. In Isa 27:4, as Ottley and LXX.D.E.K. show, the translator understood פשע as in Isa 1:2.<sup>485</sup> The last word, בָּה, is rendered with αὐτήν.

The next phrase, τοίνυν διὰ τοῦτο ἐποίησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς πάντα, ὅσα συνέταξε, has been compared to the similar phrase in Lam 2:17.<sup>486</sup> Ziegler held that it was a marginal gloss already before the LXX; he shows how the theme of God decreeing things before they happen is addressed elsewhere, as in 37:26.<sup>487</sup> Seeligmann, on the other hand, thought it was a Christian gloss.<sup>488</sup> LXX.D.E.K. acknowledges the influence of Lam 2:17, and suggests the following equivalents: פשע = ποιέω, מה = πάντα ὅσα, צוה = συντάσσω.<sup>489</sup> This plus acts as a kind of theological summary, explaining why God's holy city faces such disasters. The phrase דַּחֲצִיתָנָה יְיָ runs into the next verse in the Greek, as a complaint of the people wanting to make peace with God.

The Targum expands this verse also, but makes it about how God would destroy Israel's enemies if they would follow his law, like fire destroys thorns and fallow land: ואשיצניון כמה דמשיציא אשתא הובאי ובור כחדא.<sup>490</sup>

The vineyard metaphor of Isa 27:2-4 has been substantially reworked by the LXX; indeed, after 27:2 there is no hint of a vineyard at all in the Greek but only of a besieged city. The reference to giving drink in 27:3 which in the Hebrew refers to a vineyard in the Greek refers to the besieged city. It could literally refer to giving water in the famine of the siege, or

<sup>482</sup> LXX.D.E.K. 2572.

<sup>483</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 47-48. This is an example of words rendered at the end of one clause and the beginning of the next clause.

<sup>484</sup> One manuscript has it in Prov 29:6, but LXX has ἀμαρτάνοντι.

<sup>485</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 234. LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>486</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 91; Seeligmann, *The Septuagint of Isaiah*, [26/27] 162.

<sup>487</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 90-91. Ziegler convincingly shows the several connections between LXX-Isa 37 and 27. Van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 239 also offers these passages as an example of elements being adopted from elsewhere in Isaiah.

<sup>488</sup> Seeligmann, *The Septuagint of Isaiah*, [26/27] 162.

<sup>489</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2572. For the last equivalent, see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 50, where she suggests a double rendering of אציתנה, as συντάσσω from צוה and κατακαίω from יצת.

<sup>490</sup> "Behold, there are many prodigies before me! If the house of Israel set their face to do the law, would I not send my anger and my wrath among the gentiles who are stirred up against them and destroy them as the fire destroys briars and thorn together?"

could be a metaphor for instruction.<sup>491</sup> How the vineyard became a besieged city is in part due to lexical issues, in part due to the immediate context, and in part due to the interpretation of the vineyard in Isa 5.

The lexical warrant, such as it is, involves the interpretation of two words in 27:3-4. While opinions differ as to exactly what happened, many agree that נצרה gave way to the idea of a strong or besieged city, as we have seen; נצורה is used to describe a city in Isa 1:8. The second lexical warrant is חמה in 27:4, which was interpreted as a city wall: τεῖχος. In addition to these, the repeated feminine forms in the passage probably suggested to the translator that a city (עיר/πόλις) was meant.

The context likewise probably contributed to the understanding that a city was meant; cities are mentioned numerous times in Isa 24-26. In particular, as we stated above, the song in 26:1 about a strong city (though there a different word for “strong” is used) may have contributed to the song in 27:2 being understood as referring to a city.<sup>492</sup> Also, in the following passage, 27:10, a fortified city (עיר בצורה) is described as deserted (though LXX renders this phrase differently there). Hendrik Leene has argued that in the Hebrew, 27:8 invites a comparison between the vineyard of 27:2-6 with the city of 27:10-11.<sup>493</sup> Also, as Ziegler pointed out, the phrase πεσείται τὸ τεῖχος occurs both in 27:3 and 24:23. More specifically, exegesis of LXX-Isa 26 shows that it is most likely referring to Jerusalem,<sup>494</sup> so it makes sense that this context would contribute to seeing 27:2-5 as referring to Jerusalem also, despite the fact that it is described as πόλις ἰσχυρά in 27:3 and not as πόλις ὀχυρά as in 26:1.

The connection between Isa 5 and Isa 27 does not at first appear to go far beyond them both being songs about a vineyard. While the Greek of Isa 5 still maintains the interpretation that the vineyard represents the house of Israel and the vine the man of Judah, the language of the passage has been changed, making it easier to relate to a city. In LXX-Isa 5:2 the additional description of the vineyard as fenced or fortified brings it closer to the besieged city of 27:3. As we saw in the Targum, later tradition understood parts of the vineyard of Isa 5 to represent the temple in Jerusalem. Baumgarten argues that 4Q500 uses botanical imagery from Isa 5 to describe the temple as early as the first century BCE.<sup>495</sup> While identified already as a benediction by Baillet,<sup>496</sup> Baumgarten shows that it is probably a benediction addressed to God, since it talks of “the gate of the holy height” (לשער מרום הקודש) and the “streams

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<sup>491</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2572.

<sup>492</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 87.

<sup>493</sup> Hendrik Leene, “Isaiah 27:7-9 as a bridge between vineyard and city,” in *Studies in Isaiah 24-27* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2000): 199-225. He shows some connections in the Hebrew between 27 and 24 on page 216-17, though the LXX does not appear to make these connections.

<sup>494</sup> van der Kooij, “The Cities of Isa 24-27,” 195-97. Cunha, *LXX Isaiah 24:1-26:6*, 206-7.

<sup>495</sup> Joseph M. Baumgarten, “4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord’s Vineyard,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40 (1989), 1-2.

<sup>496</sup> Maurice Baillet, *Qumrân Grotte 4* (DJD VII; Oxford, 1982), 78-79.

of your glory” (ופלגי כבודכה).<sup>497</sup> In even such a short fragment the connection to Isa 5 is clear: both speak of a wine vat יקב (Kloppenborg Verbin points out that there is no point to the fragment saying it is made of stones unless it has in mind the altar, like the Targum),<sup>498</sup> and both use the somewhat rare adjective שעשוע.<sup>499</sup> Additionally, Baumgarten believes the holy height corresponds to the tower in 5:2 and that word מכה<sup>o</sup>[ can be reconstructed as מכה[וכר].<sup>500</sup> Perhaps this interpretation, that the song of the vineyard in Isa 5 refers to the Temple, was already known to the LXX-Isa translator; it seems to fit with his understanding of the vineyard as Jerusalem in Isa 27:2. In any case, 4Q500 and the Targum demonstrate that the tradition thought it possible to identify a vineyard with Jerusalem (or more specifically, its temple), as LXX-Isa does in 27:2-5. Already in the Hebrew it is hinted at that Jerusalem itself is at times represented by a vineyard. In 1:8 the daughter of Zion is compared to a hut in a vineyard (and to a besieged city), and in 3:14 it could be understood that the leaders grazing the vineyard are helping themselves to the goods in Jerusalem, though nothing explicit makes this connection in the Hebrew or the Greek. While 1:8 is only that the people are like a vineyard or like a besieged city, and in 3:14 and 5:1-6 the people not the city are represented by a vineyard,<sup>501</sup> LXX-Isa 27 takes a step further thinking a vineyard represents the city Jerusalem.

### 3.5.2. Vines

Grapes or grapevines (גפן) are often nearly synonymous with vineyards. We have already discussed 7:23-5 in the section on thorns (3.4.1.). For the occurrence in 34:4, see the section on leaves (2.5.1.). The occurrences in 32:10-12 and 36:16-17 speak literally about actual grapes and vines. Isaiah 16:8 also talks about a vine in hyperbolic terms, which the LXX makes less extreme, but the Targum interprets allegorically.<sup>502</sup> In 16:9 there is weeping for vines, though this is probably because they are actually destroyed (and are not a metaphor).

#### Isa 24:7

The wine <i>mourns</i> , the vine languishes, all the merry-hearted sigh.	אָבַל תִּירוֹשׁ אֲמַלְלָהּ גִּפְנוֹ נִאֲנָחוּ כָּל־שִׂמְחֵי־ לֵב:	πενθήσει οἶνος, πενθήσει ἄμπελος, στενάξουσιν πάντες οἱ εὐφραινόμενοι τὴν	The wine will mourn; the vine will mourn; all who rejoice in their soul will groan.
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<sup>497</sup> Baumgarten, “4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord’s Vineyard,” 1.

<sup>498</sup> John S. Kloppenborg [Verbin], *The Tenants in the Vineyard* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 195; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 90. Both Kloppenborg Verbin and Baumgarten also compare the fragments’ interpretation to that of both the Targum and Tosephta Sukkah 3.15.

<sup>499</sup> Baumgarten, “4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord’s Vineyard,” 1-2.

<sup>500</sup> Baumgarten, “4Q500 and the Ancient Conception of the Lord’s Vineyard,” 2.

<sup>501</sup> Cf. Ezek 15:6 where again the people of Jerusalem are represented by a grape vine in the context of coming destruction.

<sup>502</sup> “For the *armies* of Heshbon are plundered, the *companies* of Sibmah are killed; the *kings* of the *Gentiles* kill their rulers, they reached to Jazer, strayed to the desert, their outcasts cut [their way] through, cross over the sea.”

		ψυχῆν.	
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While in Isa 16:8-9 there was weeping for vines, in 24:7 they are personified as themselves weeping. In the Hebrew, the synonymous parallelism suggests it could be understood to mean simply that wine and vine dry out. According to HALOT, אָבַל can mean “to dry out,” and has a homonym that means “to mourn,” but אָמַל only means to dry out.<sup>503</sup> The Greek translates both terms with *πενθέω*,<sup>504</sup> and so anthropomorphizes the wine and vine, giving them emotions. In 16:8 the translator has also rendered אָמַל with *πενθέω*. Earlier in the passage, the earth also is said to mourn (אָבַל) in 24:4, which may have contributed to the Greek reading of 24:7.<sup>505</sup> In 4QIsa<sup>c</sup> there is a plus, and so reads גַּן יִצָּה, which is a closer parallel to תִּירוֹשׁ.

Also of note is that שְׂמַחֵי־לֵב has been rendered with *εὐφραϊνόμενοι τὴν ψυχῆν*. This translation occurs 13x (and 12x for לֵב) in the LXX and *διάονια* 19x, so often this lexicalized metaphor is translated so as to remove the idiom.

The Targum inserts a subject and makes things causal, so that those who drink wine mourn because the vines are dying;<sup>506</sup> this is based on the context, particularly 24:9 and 11.

A word associated with grape vines is אָשַׁכַּל, which occurs in Isaiah only in 65:8.

Thus says the LORD: As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, "Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,"	כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה בְּאֶשֶׁר יִמְצָא הַתִּירוֹשׁ בְּאֶשְׁכּוֹל וְאָמַר אֵל- תִּשְׁחִיתֵהוּ כִּי בִרְכָה בּוֹ	Οὕτως λέγει κύριος ἽΟν τρόπον εὐρεθήσεται ὁ ῥῶξ ἐν τῷ βότρυι καὶ ἐροῦσι Μὴ λυμήνη αὐτὸν ὅτι εὐλογία ἐστὶν ἐν αὐτῷ,	Thus says the Lord: As the grape will be found in the cluster, and they will say, “Do not destroy it, because a blessing <sup>507</sup> is in it,”
so I will do for my servants' sake, and not destroy them all.	כִּן אֶעֱשֶׂה לְמַעַן עֲבָדַי לְבַלְתִּי הַשְׁחִית הַכֹּל:	οὕτως ποιήσω ἕνεκεν τοῦ δουλεύοντός μοι, τούτου ἕνεκεν οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσω πάντας.	so I will do for the sake of the one who <i>serves</i> me. For the sake of this one I will not destroy them all.

The Hebrew comparison expresses that the destruction declared in 65:1-7 will not be complete but some remnant will survive. Some commentators understand the Hebrew as the Greek does, that some good grapes are found on a bad bunch, but others that it is a good bunch of grapes among bad bunches.<sup>508</sup> It remains strange, though, that “wine” or “must” is mentioned and that there is nothing to clarify what kind of activity is being done that the bunch would otherwise be destroyed.

<sup>503</sup> HALOT s.v.; DCH only has the definition “to mourn” for אָבַל.

<sup>504</sup> See LXX.D.E.K., 2565.

<sup>505</sup> See Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 66, 72, 147-48.

<sup>506</sup> “All who drink wine mourn, for the vines wither, all the merry-hearted sigh.”

<sup>507</sup> NETS follows Rahlfs with “the blessing of the Lord,” though it does not mention that it departs from Ziegler at this point.

<sup>508</sup> See Blenkinsop, *Isaiah 56-66*, 275-76.

The word שִׁירָתָא is usually translated with οἶνος in LXX (and in LXX-Isa). The rendering here with ῥῶξ is considered to be free by Muraoka,<sup>509</sup> and indeed, it constitutes an interpretation of the difficult simile. Ziegler suggests the translator had the leftover grapes in mind, which one was supposed to leave for the poor (Lev 19:10: οὐδὲ τοὺς ῥῶγας τοῦ ἀμπελῶνός σου συλλέξεις), similar to the use of ῥῶξ in Isa 17:6 (though there it refers to olives); the mention of a blessing, then, is to that promised for keeping such commandments (Deut 24:19).<sup>510</sup>

The Targum abandons the language of the comparison, making it about Noah (chosen, perhaps in part, because he was a vintner) being saved in his wicked generation, rather than having to do with grapes.<sup>511</sup>

### 3.5.3. Summary

In summary, vineyard metaphors in LXX-Isa could be on their way toward conventionalization, in that they seem to be regularly thought to represent Jerusalem. This is hinted at in the Hebrew already in 1:8 and 3:14, but is hinted at more strongly in the Greek of 5:1-7 and made explicit in 27:2-6. The comparison in 65:8 also makes good sense (both in the Hebrew and Greek) if understood in relation to Isa 5:1-7, so that not all the grapes are bad (though they are thorns in the Greek), but a few will be saved.

In 5:10, the removal of the vineyard is probably due to trying to make a more sensible text. The reduction of the hyperbolic size of the vine of Sibmah has to do with the translator trying to describe how Moab will be ravaged in 16:8-9. In 24:7 the vines are personified as weeping, though this is probably not connected to ideas of Israel as God's vineyard.

The Targum in 1:8 focuses the metaphor, making it clear that the hut and booth are abandoned after the harvest is over. The grazing of the vineyard in 3:14 is interpreted simply as robbing God's people, as the context makes clear. In 5:1-7 the Targum expands interpreting the language to give an overview of Israelite history and the temple; it explains the exile and the temple's destruction as the result of the people's failure to obey the law. In 27:2-4 the individual elements of the vineyard are again interpreted; the passage becomes about Israel and the covenant and what God would do for His people if they would only follow the law.

Concerning the vine of Sibmah in 16:8-9, the Targum interprets the vine's parts, so that the vine is the armies, the tendrils rulers, and the shoots fugitives. In 24:7, rather than the

<sup>509</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 105.

<sup>510</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 132.

<sup>511</sup> "Thus says the LORD: "As Noah who was found innocent in the generation of the flood, and I promised not to destroy him in order to establish the world from him, so I will do for my servants', the righteous', sake, in order not to destroy all."

vine mourning, those who drink wine mourn. In 65:8 the strange “must in the grape cluster” image is replaced by a vintner: Noah, who becomes the basis for the comparison.

### 3.6. Trees

In Hebrew, עץ is a word for a tree or the material wood. The LXX renders it with ξύλον the majority of the time. When the context is appropriate, it uses more specific terms, such as in Gen 18:4 where it has δένδρον.<sup>512</sup> Since our interest is in plant imagery, we will skip most of the passages that use עץ as the material wood or speak of trees literally.<sup>513</sup>

This section will first discuss general references to trees; second, it will look at references to oaks or terebinths; third, several other specific kinds of trees will be treated together; and fourth, references to thickets and woods will be examined; and finally a summary of tree related metaphors will be offered.

#### 3.6.1. References to trees in general: עץ

Often Isaiah uses tree metaphors that do not need to be any particular kind of tree. As we will see, the LXX-Isa translator sometimes feels the need to adjust these passages in various ways. We will first look at the texts in question, then make a summary.

##### 3.6.1.1. Texts

The first place עץ occurs is in a short narrative section giving historical context to a prophecy.

##### Isa 7:2

<p>When the house of David heard that Aram had allied itself with Ephraim, the heart of Ahaz and the heart of his people shook as the trees of the forest shake before the wind.</p>	<p>וַיִּגְדַּל לְבַיִת דָּוִד לְאֹמֶר נָחָה אֲרָם עִלָּי- אֶפְרַיִם וַיִּנְעוּ לִבָּבוֹ וּלְבַב עַמּוֹ כְּנוֹעַ עֵצִי- יַעַר מִפְּנֵי רֵוַח:</p>	<p>καὶ ἀνηγγέλη εἰς τὸν οἶκον Δαυιδ λέγοντες Συνεφώνησεν Ἀραμ πρὸς τὸν Ἐφραιμ· καὶ ἐξέστη ἡ ψυχὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ, ὃν τρόπον ὅταν ἐν δρυμῶ ξύλον ὑπὸ πνεύματος σαλευθῆ.</p>	<p>And it was reported to the house of David saying, “Aram has made an agreement with Ephraim.” And his soul and the soul of his people were agitated as when a tree in the forest is</p>
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<sup>512</sup> Cf. Ezek 37:16-20.

<sup>513</sup> Isa 10:15; 30:33; 37:19; 40:20; 44:13; 44:19; 45:20; 60:17. Often trees are mentioned literally in relation to cultic sites in Isaiah. Sticher, “Die Gottlosen gedeihen wie Gras,” 253-54 argues that God is not described in tree metaphors out of concern for Canaanite tree-cults; she also shows that trees as something permanent usually are used to represent the righteous in the OT; though they can be cut down, they may sprout from the stump and so can be an image of judgment and salvation. She shows trees also can be used negatively as representing the proud and arrogant, and in Psa 37 the wicked are like a tall tree that nevertheless vanishes without a trace.

			shaken by the wind.
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This simile is interesting, first of all, since it is used in a narrative section to describe events, and not in a more poetic prophetic section.<sup>514</sup> In the Hebrew the comparison turns on using the same verb נָנַע to describe the tenor (their hearts) and the vehicle (trees of the forest). That hearts shake is itself a metaphor for fear, though it also describes the physical sensation of shock and fear. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has only the hearts of the people shake, probably due to haplography: וינע לבב עמו.

The LXX clarifies exactly what is meant by hearts shaking. The word ἐξίστημι is only used here as an equivalent for נָנַע. The translator wanted to explain what it meant for their heart to shake by saying they were amazed or stunned, as Muraoka defines the phrase.<sup>515</sup> The regular translation, even in LXX-Isa, for לִבָּב is καρδία, which further shows that the translator was attempting to explain the meaning of the phrase and was not concerned with preserving its imagery. Once the reality represented is clear, the translator is able to translate the simile describing it.

But the simile too has been modified in translation. The comparative particle is rendered with a long but precise phrase ὃν τρόπον ὅταν so that the simile can be an entire phrase.<sup>516</sup> The verb σαλεύω (elsewhere used seven times for נָנַע) is moved to the end of the sentence. Also, the construct relationship עֲצֵי יַעֲרֵר has been carefully rendered ἐν δρυμῷ ξύλον, as opposed to just using a genitive; the word order is changed, the plural becomes singular and a preposition is used to show the relationship.

These changes clarify what the simile means, but appear to be done for the sake of creating an inclusio. The reality and the simile describing it are linked by the term נָנַע in the Hebrew, but the Greek has sought for clarity in describing the reality and so uses different verbs.<sup>517</sup> By rearranging the simile, the link between the verbs ἐξίστημι and σαλεύω is reestablished by placing them at the beginning and end of the sentence.

The Targum modifies this simile slightly, and like the LXX uses two different verbs for the hearts (עֲזִיב to shake or move) and the tree (יִדָּע hit.: to be thrown about).<sup>518</sup>

<sup>514</sup> For the use of συμφωνέω, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 195 [50/51]. LXX.D.E.K., 2520.

<sup>515</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v. ψυχή.

<sup>516</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

<sup>517</sup> For this technique in LXX-Isa, see Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 182 [41].

<sup>518</sup> “And it was made known to the house of David: “The king of Syria has allied himself with the king of Israel,” to come up against him. And his heart with the heart of his people quaked as the shaking of trees of the forest before the wind.”



**Isa 10:17-19**

<p>The light of Israel will become a fire, and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day.</p>	<p>וְהָיָה אֹרֶן־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְאֵשׁ וּקְדוֹשׁוֹ לְלֶהֱבֵה וּבַעֲרָה וְאָכְלָה שִׁיתוֹ וּשְׁמִירוֹ בַּיּוֹם אֶחָד:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔσται τὸ φῶς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ εἰς πῦρ καὶ ἀγιάσει αὐτὸν ἐν πυρὶ καιομένῳ καὶ φάγεται ὡσεὶ χόρτον τὴν ὕλην. τῆ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ</p>	<p>The light of Israel will become a fire, and it will sanctify him with a burning fire and devour the wood like grass. On that day</p>
<p>The glory of his forest and his fruitful land the LORD will destroy, both soul and body, and it will be as when an invalid wastes away.<sup>519</sup></p>	<p>וּכְבוֹד יְעָרָו וְכַרְמֵלֹו מִנֶּפֶשׁ וְעַד־בָּשָׂר יִכְלֶה וְהָיָה כַּמָּסָס נֶסֶס:</p>	<p>ἀποσβεσθήσεται τὰ ὄρη καὶ οἱ βουνοὶ καὶ οἱ ὄρυμοί, καὶ καταφάγεται ἀπὸ ψυχῆς ἕως σαρκῶν· καὶ ἔσται ὁ φεύγων ὡς ὁ φεύγων ἀπὸ φλογὸς καιομένης·</p>	<p>the mountains and the hills and the woods will vanish, and it will consume them from the soul to the flesh, and the one who flees will be like the one who flees from a burning flame.</p>
<p>And the remnant of the trees of his forest will be so few that a child can write them down.</p>	<p>וּשְׂאֵר עֵץ יְעָרָו מִסְפָּר יִהְיוּ וְנָעַר יִכְתְּבֵם:</p>	<p>καὶ οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἔσονται ἀριθμὸς, καὶ παιδίον γράψει αὐτούς.</p>	<p>And those who are left from them will be a cipher, and a child will write them down.</p>

We have already discussed 10:17 in the section on thorns (3.4.1.). There we showed that the LXX adjusts the image to be that of a copse of trees going up in flames as quickly as a clump of dry grass.

As Muraoka suggests concerning 10:18, ἀποσβεσθήσεται probably comes from reading וּכְבוֹד as though it had the root כבה,<sup>520</sup> possibly due to the perceived need for a verb in the clause.<sup>521</sup> This change turns the imagery of the verse. In the Hebrew we have the king’s realm and person becoming a waste, while the Greek has what appears to be metaphorical language (since hills and mountains are destroyed) about the land and about his person. The Greek renders יְעָרָו literally, though without the possessive pronoun, but moves it after its rendering for וְכַרְמֵלֹו. Ottley suggests that ὄρος is a rendering of יְעָרָו understood to be הַהָרִים, but this is not likely.<sup>522</sup> The word כרמל is usually transliterated, though again in Isa 29:17 it is twice rendered with τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ.<sup>523</sup> In 37:34, however, it is not rendered.<sup>524</sup> In 16:10 it is

<sup>519</sup> Or “as when a banner-holder despairs.”

<sup>520</sup> Muraoka, *Two-Way Index*, 15. This translation is made in Prov 31:18. Cf. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 162. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 110-11.

<sup>521</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> matches MT in this passage.

<sup>522</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 162.

<sup>523</sup> The same transliteration (but without mention of a mountain) is used twice in 32:15, while in 32:16, 33:9 and 35:2 the transliteration used is κάρμηλος. Only in 33:9 and 35:2 does the Hebrew mean the place and not the noun.

rendered with ἀμπελών, though probably due to the parallel כַּרְם. The rendering of 10:18 is probably because it made no sense to the translator to call Carmel the Assyrian's, and so he rendered just the mountains and added the hills to make a nice word pair; we see the two terms in synonymous parallelism in 10:32.<sup>525</sup> In 44:23, however, יַעַר is rendered with βουνός (note the parallel ὄρος), so we could here have a double rendering of יַעַר; Ziegler thinks βουνός is original and δρυμός was added later. As Ziegler has shown, the similar passage in Ecc 43:21(23) probably also plays a role in the rendering of this verse.<sup>526</sup>

The Hebrew יִבְלָה may have been understood to come from the root אכל, since κατασθίω is its most common equivalent. It could also be that the translator took language from the preceding context to interpret specifically how they will be destroyed. The idea of wasting away having been removed, the Greek goes on to transform the comparison from an invalid atrophying to someone fleeing from fire (another element perhaps taken from the context).<sup>527</sup> The basis for this change appears to arise from understanding כְּמַסַּס נִסַּס to come from the root נִסַּס.<sup>528</sup> Note that the simile maintains some alliteration, though from different sounds than the Hebrew. The translator could have reused the phrase πυρός καιομένου from 10:16 (though in a different case), but chose a synonym that repeats the φ sound instead.

In 10:19, the LXX replaces the phrase עֵץ יַעַר with a pronoun referring back to those fleeing, interpreting the remaining trees as the remaining people.<sup>529</sup> The rest of the verse is translated very literally, rendering the yiqtol as simple future, whereas a potential sense is preferred. The trope could be an implicit comparison in Greek and Hebrew, or a metaphor, though it may be considered a sort of prophecy.

The passage as a whole in the Hebrew uses thorn, wood, and tree metaphors to talk about the king, his men, and his glory. The thorns and thistles in 10:17 probably represent his army or works; the forest and land being consumed could refer to his land, but in light of them being consumed “body and soul” suggests it represents his people. Likewise the few trees surviving the fire seem to suggest people are meant and not his actual forests. The Greek focuses this imagery by amplifying the burning flame throughout the passage; that people are meant by the tree and forest imagery is made clear by the LXX in 10:19 by making the remnant refer to those who flee the fire.

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<sup>524</sup> See Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

<sup>525</sup> For this word pair, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

<sup>526</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 111.

<sup>527</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 162. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 93.

<sup>528</sup> This phrase is still difficult to understand. DCH suggests six possible meanings for נִסַּס. It is probably best to understand it either as meaning to be sick (as from Syriac nassîs) or to shake (as from Akkadian nasâsu), Wildberger, *Jesaja*. 406.

<sup>529</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 82. LXX.D.E.K., 2523.

The Targum also understands the trees in this passage to refer to people.<sup>530</sup> In 10:17 the grass and thorns are rendered as rulers and tyrants. In 10:18 the forest is rendered as people, and in 10:19 the remnant of trees are rendered as the survivors of his army camp.

**Isa 44:23**

<p>Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel.</p>	<p>רְנֹו שְׁמַיִם כִּי־עָשָׂה          יְהוָה הַרְיֵעוּ          תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֲרֶץ פִּצְחוּ          הַרִיִם רְנֵה יַעַר וְכָל־          עֵץ בּוֹ כִּי־גָאֹל יְהוָה          יַעֲקֹב וּבִישְׂרָאֵל          יִתְפָּאֵר:</p>	<p>εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί,          ὅτι ἠλέησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν          Ἰσραηλ· σαλπίσατε,          θεμέλια τῆς γῆς,          βοήσατε, ὄρη,          εὐφροσύνην, οἱ βουνοὶ          καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τὰ          ἐν αὐτοῖς, ὅτι          ἔλυτρώσατο ὁ θεὸς          τὸν Ἰακωβ, καὶ          Ἰσραηλ δοξασθήσεται.</p>	<p>Rejoice, O heavens, because God has had mercy on Israel; trumpet, O foundations of the earth; shout for joy, O mountains, the hills and all the trees that are in them, because God has redeemed Iakob, and Israel will be glorified!</p>
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In this verse the heavens, earth, mountains, forests, and trees are personified and told to rejoice in various manners; we have already treated the similar passage 55:12 where mountains, hills, and trees rejoice (2.6.3.). The plus giving the reason to rejoice (ὅτι ἠλέησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν Ἰσραηλ) is probably to explain what exactly God did (יְהוָה כִּי־עָשָׂה), and is provided from the end of the verse.<sup>531</sup> The phrase תַּחְתִּיּוֹת אֲרֶץ is unique to this passage. Usually תַּחְתִּי is used in an attributive position and not in a construct phrase, as we see in Ezek 26:20: בְּאֲרֶץ תַּחְתִּיּוֹת.<sup>532</sup> LXX-Isa uses the familiar phrase, θεμέλια τῆς γῆς, which more properly translates מוֹסְדֵי אֲרֶץ as in Isa 24:18 and 40:21.<sup>533</sup> It also occurs in Isa 14:15 for the phrase יִרְכַּבְתִּי־בוֹר. The rendering of רוע with σαλπίζω only occurs here. It is probably due to understanding it as meaning a signal or war cry, and so the idea of sounding a trumpet.<sup>534</sup>

A significant change in the translation is found at the end of the verse. In the Hebrew, God shows himself glorified in Israel, but in the Greek Israel is glorified.<sup>535</sup> This change in meaning is achieved by leaving off the preposition ב.

What is important for our study is that the forest (יַעַר) is made into a hill (βουνός).<sup>536</sup> There could be at work here the same issue that led to the addition of βουνοί in Isa 10:18, or it

<sup>530</sup> “And it will come to pass that the master of the light of Israel and his Holy One, his Memra will be strong as the fire, and his words as the flame; and he will kill and destroy his rulers and his tyrants in one day. 18 And the glory of his many armies and his warriors, their soul with their body, he will destroy, and he will be broken and fugitive. 19 And the remnant of the people of his armies will come to an end, to become a people of small number and they will be esteemed a faint kingdom.”

<sup>531</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 317. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 156.

<sup>532</sup> Cf. Jos 15:19; Psa 88:7; Lam 3:44; Ezek 32:18, 24.

<sup>533</sup> Also in Psa 81:5; Prov 8:29; Mic 6:2; and for יסודי תבל in Sir 16:19.

<sup>534</sup> Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2654.

<sup>535</sup> Cf. LXX.D.E.K., 2654.

<sup>536</sup> 4QIsa<sup>b</sup> and 1QIsa<sup>b</sup> both correspond to MT, lacking “hills.”

could be a more logical counterpart to mountains than a forest would be (see Isa 40:4; 55:12, etc.).

The Targum is literal, though specifies that what the LORD has done is accomplish redemption for His people.<sup>537</sup>

Another passage that mentions trees in anthropomorphic language is Isa 55:12. We have dealt with this passage in the section about branches (2.6.3.). Remember that the tree was rendered literally, but it clapped its branches in Greek, rather than its hands.

**Isa 56:3**

<p>Do not let the foreigner joined to the LORD say, "The LORD will surely separate me from his people"; and do not let the eunuch say, "Behold, I am just a dry tree."</p>	<p>וְאֵל־יִאמַר בֶּן־הַנֶּכֶד הַנְּלוּהָ אֶל־יְהוָה לֵאמֹר הַבְּדֵל יַבְדִּילֵנִי יְהוָה מֵעַל עַמּוֹ וְאֵל־יִאמַר הַסְּרִיס הֲזֵ אֲנִי עֵץ יָבֵשׁ:</p>	<p>μη λεγέτω ὁ ἀλλογενὴς ὁ προσκείμενος πρὸς κύριον Ἐφοριεῖ με ἄρα κύριος ἀπὸ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ· καὶ μὴ λεγέτω ὁ εὐνοῦχος ὅτι Ἐγὼ εἰμι ξύλον ξηρόν.</p>	<p>Let not the alien who clings to the Lord say, "So then the Lord will separate me from his people," and let not the eunuch say, "I am a dry tree."</p>
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This verse has had some changes made in translation, though the content and rhetorical force has been maintained. Ziegler points out that *προσκείμενος* is an expression known from LXX-Pentateuch in passages having to do with foreigners.<sup>538</sup> The LXX omits the introduction of direct speech *לֵאמֹר*, though the second quote has the additional introduction *ὅτι*. The pleonastic construction of an infinitive absolute and a finite verb is often translated in LXX-Isa either with just a verb or with a finite verb and a cognate noun in the dative.<sup>539</sup> In this verse, the translator has opted to translate just the verb but has given the statement a similar sense of certainty as the Hebrew construction would, by adding the particle *ἄρα*.<sup>540</sup> In the second quote, *הֲזֵ* is not rendered with its stereotype *ἰδοὺ*. Perhaps it is meant to be represented by the word *εἰμί*. In any case, the quote in Greek has much the same force with the first person pronoun and the verb, of asserting the reality or certainty of his statement. The quote features terseness and assonance with the *ε* and *ξ* sounds.<sup>541</sup>

<sup>537</sup> "Sing, O heavens, for the LORD has accomplished *redemption for his people; break forth, O foundations of the earth; shout into singing, O mountains, O forest and all trees that are in it!* For the LORD has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel."

<sup>538</sup> Such as Exod 12:49 and Lev 16:29. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 129.

<sup>539</sup> See Emanuel Tov, "Renderings of Combinations of the Infinitive Absolute and Finite Verbs in the LXX—Their Nature and Distribution," *Studien zur Septuaginta-Robert Hanhart zu Ehren: Aus Anlaß seines 65. Geburtstages* (eds. Detlef Fraenkel, Udo Quast, and John W. Wevers; *Mitteilungen des Septuaginta-Unternehmens XX*; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 70.

<sup>540</sup> See Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §2787, §2790.

<sup>541</sup> For the importance of metaphors sounding beautiful, see Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.2.13.

In both the Hebrew and the Greek, it is ambiguous whether the eunuch considers himself dry wood or a dry tree;<sup>542</sup> both images are apt. If he's dry wood, then he is presumably attached to the rest of Israel (just like the foreigner in the beginning of the verse), but is dead and has no future or potential for children (contrary to the promise in 56:5) and should be pruned off (perhaps implied by יִכָּרֵת like 56:5). If the image is understood as a tree it has the connotation of other tree images (such as Judges 9:9-15; Psa 1:2-3; Dan 4:10-12, 20-22), where kings and important people are likened to them. The eunuch, though, is dry and so again, has no future or hope for offspring.

The Targum softens the image, making it a simile: הֵא אֲנִי כְּעֵץ יָבֵשׁ (reading אֲנִי: “behold I am like a dry tree”).<sup>543</sup> Perhaps the Targum read a text like 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which reads אֲנִי כְּעֵץ, but divided the words differently.

**Isa 65:22**

<p>They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.</p>	<p>לֹא יִבְנֶוּ וְאַחֵר יֵשֵׁב          לֹא יִטְעוּ וְאַחֵר          יֹאכַל כִּי־כִימֵי הָעֵץ          יִמֵּי עַמִּי וּמַעֲשֵׂה          יְדֵיהֶם יִבְלוּ בַּחַיִּי:</p>	<p>καὶ οὐ μὴ οἰκοδομήσουσι καὶ ἄλλοι ἐνοικήσουσι, καὶ οὐ μὴ φυτεύσουσι καὶ ἄλλοι φάγονται· κατὰ γὰρ τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς ἔσονται αἱ ἡμέραι τοῦ λαοῦ μου, τὰ ἔργα τῶν πόνων αὐτῶν παλαιώσουσιν.</p>	<p>and they shall not build, and others inhabit; they shall not plant, and others eat, for according to the days of the tree of life shall the days of my people be; they shall make old the works of their labors.</p>
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Of special note in this passage is that the simile is interpreted quite dramatically. In the Hebrew, the lifespan of the people is compared to that of a tree, most of which live quite a long time. The Greek, though, departs from typical literal translation and specifies that the tree of life is meant.

The rendering of the Hebrew comparative marker with κατά and an accusative is not mentioned by Ziegler in his discussion of comparisons and is found nowhere else in LXX-Isa. This is, however, a common rendering in Ben Sira.<sup>544</sup> This rendering has changed the comparison into a more literal description of their days. In addition, the translator has understood the definite עֵץ to refer not to just any tree, but to the tree of life, τοῦ ξύλου τῆς ζωῆς.<sup>545</sup> In Gen 2-3 the tree of life, עֵץ הַחַיִּים, is likewise rendered τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς. Ottley suggests it may have originally read: κατὰ γὰρ τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ ξύλου ἔσονται αἱ ἡμέραι τῆς

<sup>542</sup> The choice of ξύλον over δένδρον could be simply because it is used more commonly (245 versus 14 times) or for the sake of assonance. That it is for assonance is strengthened by 57:5 where נַגְרַךְ עַץ is rendered δένδρα δασέα. This is the only place in Isa where δένδρον is used for עץ.

<sup>543</sup> “Let not a son of *Gentiles* who has *been added to the people of the LORD* say, “The LORD will surely separate me from his people”; and let not the eunuch say, “Behold, I am *like* a dry tree.””

<sup>544</sup> Hatch and Redpath, Appendix 2, 181a.

<sup>545</sup> Seeligmann believes the phrase could come from a latter reviser, who also altered 65:3, Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 167-68 [30-31].

ζωῆς τοῦ λαοῦ μου,<sup>546</sup> but no manuscript preserves this reading. This interpretation of Isa 65:22 is seen also in the Targum, which reads ארי כיומי אילן חייא יומי עמי. This interpretation is probably based on קִנְיָן having the definite article (in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> it lacks the article), just as in Jewish tradition הַמִּזְבֵּחַ in Gen 22:9 is thought to refer to the altar Adam, Cain and Abel, and Noah sacrificed on, because it has the definite article.<sup>547</sup>

The Targum in addition to agreeing with the LXX about the tree of life, it also agrees that the last clause is about people living so long that they outlive their various works which should outlive them.<sup>548</sup>

Before moving on to specific types of trees, two passages that list several specific types of trees are worth mentioning. In 44:14 the LXX gives a general rendering for various types of trees, and in 41:19 the LXX reduces the number of different types of trees.

**Isa 44:14**

<p>He cuts down cedars or chooses a holm tree or an oak and lets it grow strong among the trees of the forest. He plants a <i>laurel</i> and the rain nourishes it.</p>	<p>לְכַרְת־לּוֹ אֲרָזִים וַיִּקַּח תְּרִזָּה וְאֵלֹן וַיִּאמְקֶ-לּוֹ בַעֲצֵי-יַעַר נָטַע אֶרֶן וַיְגַדְלֵם יְגַדְלֵם:</p>	<p>ὁ ἔκοψε ξύλον ἐκ τοῦ δρυμοῦ, ὃ ἐφύτευσε κύριος καὶ ὑετὸς ἐμήκυνεν,</p>	<p>He cut wood from the forest, which the LORD planted and the rain made grow,</p>
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This passage occurs within a description of how foolish it is that people take wood and use some of it for fuel and exert effort to turn some of it into an object of worship. This verse is not metaphorical, but it is insightful for how the translator understands tree language and how he deals with poetry.

Here the translator removes parallelism and enumeration of synonymous terms.<sup>549</sup> The terms אֲרָזִים, אֵלֹן, and אֶרֶן (cedar, oak, and laurel)<sup>550</sup> are not difficult or obscure, but are all removed in favor of a direct and clear description of what the person described is after: ξύλον.<sup>551</sup> Van der Vorm-Croughs lists this verse as an example where LXX-Isa condenses two clauses into one.<sup>552</sup> Ottley, however, calls the text mutilated, suggesting the translator skipped

<sup>546</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 383.

<sup>547</sup> See, for example, Ramban (Nachmanides), *Commentary on the Torah 1: Genesis* (trans. Charles B. Chavel; New York: Shilo, 1971), 276-77.

<sup>548</sup> “They shall not build and others inhabit; they shall not plant and others eat; for like the days of the tree of life shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall wear out the works of their hands.”

<sup>549</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

<sup>550</sup> BDB defines אֶרֶן as fir or cedar, while HALOT defines it as laurel. Musselman says that the Old Testament does not mention the laurel, Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 170, but he nowhere makes clear what this Hebrew term refers to. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 74, believes that a laurel (bay) tree is meant.

<sup>551</sup> Ziegler agrees that the omissions are the result of a deliberate free rendering. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 126. Also LXX.D.E.K., 2654.

<sup>552</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 73.

from ארזים to ארן;<sup>553</sup> but this does not explain why לו was not rendered or why יער and נטע were rendered. Also, the similar reduction of parallel words and clauses in the surrounding passage, such as in 44:12, 13, 15, 17, and 25,<sup>554</sup> must be taken into account and suggests that the condensation was the deliberate work of the translator. The term תרזה only occurs here; Musselman thinks it could be a species of pistacia, related to the terebinth.<sup>555</sup> Besides this collapsing of terms for tree for the sake of clarity and style, the translator adds an agent for the verbs in the second part of the verse: κύριος. LXX.D.E.K. suggests the translator read ארן as אדן.<sup>556</sup> It could be a matter of the translator taking the opportunity to add that the wood which man works into an idol has its source from the true God.

The Targum is rather literal.<sup>557</sup> It only adds two double translations. The difficult tree תרזה is rendered with תרן תורז (mast of toraz), which acts to specify that it is some sort of tree good for timber, but does not try to identify or interpret it further. The other double rendering is of ויאמן-לו with ומתקיף ומתקין ליה, which clarifies the idea of a tree being selected but allowed to mature before being cut down.

**Isa 41:19**

<p>I will put in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, the myrtle, and <i>tree of oil</i>; I will set in the desert the cypress, <i>the plane</i> and the pine together.</p>	<p>אָתָן בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲרֹז שֵׁטָה וְהַדָּס וְעֵץ שֶׁמֶן אֲשֵׁים בְּעֵרְבָה בְּרוֹשׁ תְּדָהָר וּתְאֲשׁוּר יַחְדָּו:</p>	<p>θήσω εἰς τὴν ἄνυδρον γῆν κέδρον καὶ πύξον καὶ μυρσίνην καὶ κυπάρισσον καὶ λεύκην,</p>	<p>I will put in the dry land a cedar and a box-tree and a myrtle and a cypress and a white poplar</p>
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In this passage the Greek has removed the synonymous parallelism and reduced the number of trees listed from seven to five. Van der Vorm-Crouchs lists this passage among those where the enumeration of closely associated words are reduced.<sup>558</sup>

The Greek does not have equivalents for עץ שמן, the tree of oil, or either תדהר or תאשור. Assessing the translation of the trees mentioned is difficult, in that it is uncertain to which species some of these terms intend to refer. We will discuss the issue of word equivalents and the species of trees here, since it will be useful for the following sections on specific types of trees.

It is well known that ארז means cedar, so the rendering with κέδρος is appropriate. The rendering of שטה with πύξος is unique to this passage, in fact, πύξος only occurs here.<sup>559</sup>

<sup>553</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 315.

<sup>554</sup> See van der Vorm-Crouchs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 63-65, 79, 81.

<sup>555</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 267. HALOT prefers some species of oak, perhaps the holm oak.

<sup>556</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2654.

<sup>557</sup> “He cuts down cedars, or chooses a holm or an oak and *establishes* it among the trees of the forest; he plants *the* laurel and rain nourishes it.”

<sup>558</sup> van der Vorm-Crouchs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 63-64. Also she lists it among passages where there is condensation by a distributive rendering of parallel clauses, 77-81.

Elsewhere *טֹפֵּט* usually occurs in the construct phrase *עֵצֵי שֹׁטִים* as in Exod 25:5, and is rendered *ξύλα ἄσηπτα* (rot resistant wood).<sup>560</sup> This tree is thought to be the acacia tree, or more specifically *acacia nilotica* or *albida*.<sup>561</sup> Theophrastus describes both species of acacia, calling them *ἄκανθα ἢ Αἰγυπτια* and *ἄκανθα ἢ λεύκη* respectively.<sup>562</sup> LXX-Isa's rendering *πύξος*, however, is a different tree, the *buxus sempervirens*.<sup>563</sup> This is probably not a wild guess, since both the *buxus sempervirens* and the *acacia nilotica* are resistant to rot and provide good material for making things.<sup>564</sup> It is worth noting that in the previous chapter, Isa 40:20, we find the phrase: *הַמִּסְכָּן תְּרוֹמָה עֵץ לֹא יִרְקַב יִבְחָר* which could have given another kind of tree as one that does not rot, but the LXX does not make this connection.<sup>565</sup> LXX-Isa provides a better translation for the acacia tree in 34:13 (though the Hebrew may not intend to imply this) where we find the phrase *ἀκάνθινα ξύλα* for the Hebrew *סִירִים קְמוֹשׁ וְחוֹךְ*.

The next tree mentioned, *הַדֵּס*, is properly translated as *μυρσίνη*.<sup>566</sup> The term *עֵץ שָׁמֶן*, is not rendered here.<sup>567</sup> The exact tree *בְּרוֹשׁ* refers to is disputed. HALOT prefers juniper, of all the various options, while Musselman believes it is a cypress.<sup>568</sup> The LXX outside of Isaiah renders it as referring to juniper, *πέυκινος*, twice (Hos 14:9; II Chron 2:8(7)) and once as cypress, *κυπάρισσος* (2 Kgs 19:33).<sup>569</sup> In LXX-Isa, though, it is always rendered as cypress (Isa 37:24; 41:19; 55:13; 60:13). LXX-Isa, then, is on the cutting edge of scholarship on this issue.

The last two trees mentioned, *תְּדָהָר* and *תְּאֲשׁוּר*, only occur here and again together in Isa 60:13. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has *תרהר* here and *תהרהר* in 60:13, which does not help. HALOT believes the former is best described vaguely as a tree from Lebanon, and the later as a cypress. The LXX renders one of these trees with *λεύκη* (poplar).<sup>570</sup> In Isa 60:13, assuming

<sup>559</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2649.

<sup>560</sup> It is interesting to note that the LXX seems to understand the wood that is meant since it translates its most important quality as a construction material: that it does not rot. A more literal rendering of the phrase would have used the word *ἄκανθα*, which would have accurately identified the tree, botanically speaking, but would have sounded as though the ark and other vessels were to be made out of thorn trees. The word choice probably had some theological undertones to it.

<sup>561</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 38.

<sup>562</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.1; 4.2.8.

<sup>563</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.5.4-5.

<sup>564</sup> For the *πύξον* see Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 5.3.7; 5.4.1-2. For the acacia, see Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 38-41.

<sup>565</sup> This could be because *בְּרוֹשׁ* does not mean a kind of tree. We will discuss this passage below.

<sup>566</sup> Compare Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 198-200; and Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.3.3; 1.9.3.

<sup>567</sup> In 1 Kgs 6:23 it is also not rendered. In Neh 8:15 it occurs after the *תִּי* and is rendered with *ξύλων κυπάρισσινων*; in 1 Kgs 6:31, 33 it is rendered with *ξύλων ἀρκευθίνων*, while in 1 Kgs 6:32 it is rendered with *ξύλων πευκίνων*. The tree *עֵץ שָׁמֶן* is often identified either as a wild olive or a kind of pine tree. See HALOT, s.v. That it is not an olive tree, see Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 109 nt. 1.

<sup>568</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 110.

<sup>569</sup> Also, it renders it six times as referring to a pine tree, and twice as a cedar.

<sup>570</sup> Theophrastus discusses the poplar. Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.10.1; 3.1.1; 3.3.1; etc.



the three trees mentioned are rendered in the same order, תְּדֵהָר is rendered as *πεύκη* (pine) and תְּאֲשׁוּר as *κέδρος* (cedar).<sup>571</sup>

In the Hebrew, it is undoubtedly significant that seven trees are mentioned. The acacia could live in the desert, but the cedar, myrtle, olive, and cypress would most likely die there.<sup>572</sup> That they do not live together, and especially in the desert, is probably why they are chosen, which 41:20 makes clear in that they are planted so men will know that the LORD has done it. Since we cannot identify with certainty the תְּדֵהָר and תְּאֲשׁוּר, we cannot say whether they could live in the desert. The trees mentioned are all beautiful and useful for various products, and so we would expect them in a king's garden, which is another reason they were probably chosen for this image.

As mentioned earlier, the Greek removes the parallelism and two trees, probably for the sake of style and not for symbolism. In the Greek, these trees are still out of place together in the desert. Whether the trees could be planted by cuttings is probably irrelevant to the metaphor in both languages, as it is supposed to be a miraculous planting in any case.

The Targum appears to be rather literal, using Aramaic cognates for most of the trees. For the last two trees it has מורנין ואשכרעין, “planes and pines.”<sup>573</sup>

Two passages should be mentioned where the LXX adds a reference to a tree. In 16:9 we read τὰ δένδρα σου, which is probably a result of a differing *Vorlage* which matched 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, which reads אַרְזִיךָ.<sup>574</sup> In 7:19, discussed in the section on thorns (3.4.2.), a type of thorny plant (נַעְצוּיִן) is rendered with ξύλον.

### 3.6.1.2. Summary

As we have seen, in the Hebrew, trees are often used in comparisons and metaphors for people. In 7:2, the shaking of the king and his people's hearts is compared to trees shaking in a forest; the Greek improves the style of this verse. In 10:17-19 wood is added and carefully crafted to make it represent people. And in 56:3, a eunuch compares himself to a dry tree; the Greek improves the style by adding assonance. In 65:22 people's lifespans are said to be like that of a tree, but the LXX makes it specifically like the tree of life.

The opposite also is true, in that trees are sometimes personified in Isaiah as well as LXX-Isa. In 44:23, trees and forest sing for joy, and in 55:12 the trees clap.

In 44:14 and 41:19, as we have seen, the LXX does not attempt to render all of the tree types accurately, probably for the sake of style. We will investigate specific types of trees further in the following sections.

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<sup>571</sup> We will discuss 60:13 below.

<sup>572</sup> See the relevant trees in Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*.

<sup>573</sup> “I will put in the wilderness cedars, acacias, myrtles, olive trees; I will *make great* in the desert cypresses, planes, and pines, together;”

<sup>574</sup> MT has אַרְזִיךָ דְמַעְתֵּי. The LXX does not seem to understand the trees or vines in this passage as metaphorical.

The Targum renders similarly to the LXX in some cases. In 7:2, for example, it also uses two different verbs in the comparison, one for the hearts and another for the trees, though not to the same effect as the LXX. Also, the Targum understands the tree of life to be implied in 65:22. The Targum goes further than the LXX in interpreting trees as people in 10:17-19, rendering them as rulers, tyrants, armies, and survivors. In 56:3, though, the metaphor of the eunuch being a dry tree is softened into a simile. But unlike the LXX the Targum lists all the specific trees in 44:14 (specifying a rare word for a kind of tree) and 41:19;<sup>575</sup> and renders literally the trees and forests and mountains rejoicing in 44:23.

### 3.6.2. Oak/Terebinth

The Hebrew term אֵיל occurs three times in Isaiah. BDB defines it as the terebinth (which is also its definition for אֵלֶּה and אֵלֹן), while HALOT says only that it is a mighty but unspecified tree. The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew lists אֵילִים as the plural absolute form of אֵלֶּה, which it defines as terebinth. The Targum believes that they are different words, in that in Isa 1:29 אֵילִים is rendered with אֵילֹן (tree) while in the next verse, 1:30, אֵלֶּה is rendered with בטמה (terebinth). DCH defines אֵלֹן as an oak or other large tree. In this section we will look at how these trees are rendered. First, we will look at occurrences of אֵיל; second, אֵלֶּה; third, אֵלֹן; and finally, make a summary.

#### 3.6.2.1. אֵיל

##### Isa 1:29

For you shall be ashamed of the <i>terebinths</i> in which you delighted;	כִּי יִבְשׂוּ מֵאֵילִים אֲשֶׁר חִמְדְּתֶם	διότι καταισχυνθήσονται ἐπὶ τοῖς εἰδώλοις αὐτῶν, ἃ αὐτοὶ ἠβούλοντο,	For they shall be ashamed because of their idols, which they themselves wanted,
and you shall blush for the gardens that you have chosen.	וְתַחְפְּרוּ מֵהַגְּנוֹת אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתֶּם:	καὶ ἐπησχύνθησαν ἐπὶ τοῖς κήποις αὐτῶν, ἃ ἐπεθύμησαν.	and embarrassed because of their gardens, which they desired.

The rendering of אֵיל with εἶδωλον can be explained in various ways. On the level of word analysis, the translator could have read a form of אֱלֹהִים (like in Num 25:2; 1 Kgs 11:2, 8, 33; Isa 37:19) or אֵלֶּה (like in Dan 3:12, 18; 5:4, 23) or אֵילִי (like in Lev 19:4; 1 Chr 16:26; Psa 97:7; Hab 2:18), since these words also can be rendered with εἶδωλον.<sup>576</sup> If the *Vorlage* was like 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> it would have read מֵאֵלִים (cf. Exod 15:11; Isa 57:5) and so been rendered this way as an interpretation of “gods.”<sup>577</sup> Another explanation, which is probably not mutually exclusive to the first, is that the LXX interprets מֵאֵילִים as referring to the idols

<sup>575</sup> Cf. Zech 11:2 where the Targum interprets cypresses as kings and cedars as princes.

<sup>576</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 110, suggests the translator read אֵילִים or אֱלֹהִים.

<sup>577</sup> See van der Kooij, *Textzeugen*, 215-16. LXX.D.E.K., 2509. 4QIsa<sup>f</sup> has only ]א.

worshiped at sacred trees by way of metonymy. The translator probably wanted to make clear that idolatry is meant here. The same translation technique is used in 57:5, though here we have a defective spelling: אֱלִים. It seems likely, though, that the translator knew the association between sacred trees and pagan worship, since in 27:9 and 17:8 he rendered אֲשֶׁרָה with δένδρον, both with contexts of pagan worship places. In the next verse, 1:30, כְּאֵלֶּה is rendered with ὡς τερέβινθος (see the section on leaves, 2.5.1.).

The Targum explains the verse by making explicit that the trees and gardens are places of idol worship, calling the terebinth מאילני טעותא, and the garden מגניאך טעותא.<sup>578</sup>

**Isa 61:3**

<p>to provide for those who mourn in Zion-- to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, to display his glory.</p>	<p>לְשׂוֹם   לְאַבְלֵי צִיּוֹן          לְתַתּוֹ לָהֶם פְּאֵר          תַּחַת אֶפֶר שֶׁמֶן          שֶׁשׂוֹן תַּחַת אֲבֵל          מְעִטָּה תְּהִלָּה תַּחַת          רִיחַ כְּהָה וְקָרָא          לָהֶם אֵילֵי הַצְּדָק          מִטֵּעַ יְהוָה          לְהַתְּפָאֵר:</p>	<p>δοθῆναι τοῖς πενθοῦσι          Σιων δόξαν ἀντι          σποδοῦ, ἄλειμμα          εὐφροσύνης ἀντι          πένθους, καταστολήν          δόξης ἀντι πνεύματος          ἀκηδίας· και          κληθήσονται γενεαὶ          δικαιοσύνης, φύτευμα          κυρίου εἰς δόξαν.</p>	<p>so that to those who mourn for Sion be given glory instead of ashes, oil of joy instead of mourning, a garment of glory instead of a spirit of weariness. They will be called generations of righteousness, a plant of the Lord for glory.</p>
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For our interests, this passage is notable in that אֵילֵי הַצְּדָק has been rendered γενεαὶ δικαιοσύνης. Perhaps the translator thought אֵילֵי was from אֵיל referring to men as in Exod 15:15 (though there the LXX renders it with ἄρχοντες, leaders).<sup>579</sup> Ottley believes γενεαί is an explanation of “oaks” as a symbol for the life of the righteous,<sup>580</sup> but here generations are meant, not a long life or a fruitful or flourishing life. Ziegler rejects Fischer’s suggestion that אֲבֵי was read, and suggests that γενεαί was chosen as a parallel to “planting,”<sup>581</sup> but from the examples he gives, 60:21 and 17:10, it is unclear why it should be fitting. LXX.D.E.K. suggests that the translator borrowed from 61:4 in an attempt to avoid calling them oaks, since he knows they are associated with idolatry (as we have seen).<sup>582</sup>

In any case, this rendering fits into the conceptual metaphor of people as plants. If roots are their ancestry and seeds or fruit are their offspring, then the tree itself can be the generations linking the two. The parallel clause has a literal translation of a plant. Alec

<sup>578</sup> “For you shall be ashamed of the oaks of the idols in which you delighted; and you shall be humiliated for your gardens of the idols in which you assemble.”  
<sup>579</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has the first yod added above the line; also 4QIsa<sup>m</sup> matches MT.  
<sup>580</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 369.  
<sup>581</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 171.  
<sup>582</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2683-684.

Basson believes planting tree metaphors in the Hebrew Bible represent a person restored.<sup>583</sup> But this metaphor seems to resonate much more with ideas of Israel’s special covenant relationship with God. They are separated from other nations (like a vine or tree cutting) and are brought to a piece of land that has been specially prepared for them, where they are carefully tended.<sup>584</sup> Basson is partially correct, that some of these metaphors are that of transplanting a tree, removing it and bringing it to a different land, or brought back to the original land.<sup>585</sup>

The Targum understands the oaks to mean the leaders (רברבי קשטא) and the plant to mean the people (עמיה דיוי).<sup>586</sup> In Exod 15:15, where the LXX understood the tree in this way, the Targum sees it as the strong, תקיפי מואב.

### 3.6.2.2. אֵלֶּה

The word אֵלֶּה only occurs twice in LXX-Isa, though in 41:28 the demonstrative pronoun אֵלֶּה is rendered with εἰδῶλον. We have discussed 1:30 in the section on leaves (2.5.1.). There the specific tree terebinth is mentioned (and literally translated as a terebinth in the Greek) because it is an evergreen, and so the simile is rather strong, saying that its leaves wither and fall away.

#### Isa 6:13

<p>“Even if a tenth part remain in it, it will be burned again, like a terebinth or an oak whose stump remains standing when it is felled.” the holy seed is its stump.</p>	<p>וְעוֹד בֵּה עֵשְׂרִיָּה  וְשִׁבָּה וְהִיתָה לְבַעַר  כְּאֵלֶּה וְכֶאֱלוֹן אֲשֶׁר  בְּשִׁלְכָתָּ מִצְבַּת בָּם  זֶרַע קֹדֶשׁ מִצְבַּתָּהּ:</p>	<p>καὶ ἔτι ἐπ’ αὐτῆς ἔστι  τὸ ἐπιδέκατον, καὶ  πάλιν ἔσται εἰς  προνομήν ὡς  τερέβινθος καὶ ὡς  βάλανος ὅταν ἐκπέσῃ  ἀπὸ τῆς θήκης αὐτῆς.</p>	<p>And again the tithe is on it, and it will be plundered again, like a terebinth and like an acorn when it falls from its husk.</p>
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This verse presents interesting interpretive and textual problems. To begin, the second part of this verse is slightly different in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>: כאלה וכאלון אשר משלכת מצבת במה זרע. Brownlee suggests משלכת be read as a Hophal participle, so the terebinth “is overthrown.”<sup>587</sup> The other difference is the reading במה where MT has בָּם. Brownlee suggests the phrase refers to cultic high places, and translates it “the sacred column of a high place.”<sup>588</sup> This reading, unfortunately, does not shed light on the LXX. The temporal

<sup>583</sup> Basson, “‘People are Plants,’” 577-78.

<sup>584</sup> Exod 15:17; 2 Sam 7:10; Isa 60:21; Jer 11:17; Jer 24:6; Psa 44:3; Psa 80:9; etc.

<sup>585</sup> Ezek 36:36; Amos 9:15.

<sup>586</sup> “to confuse those who mourn in Zion—to give them a diadem instead of ashes, oil of joy instead of mourning, a praising spirit instead of their spirit which was dejected; that they may call them true princes, the people of the LORD, that he may be glorified.”

<sup>587</sup> William H. Brownlee, “The Text of Isaiah VI 13 in the Light of DSIa,” VT 1.4 (Oct 1951): 296-97.

<sup>588</sup> Brownlee, “The Text of Isaiah VI 13,” 296-97. It seems this spelling could just be a long form of a 3mpl pronoun, as in Elisha Qimron, *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Harvard Semitic Studies 29; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1986), 58, 62-64.

conjunction *ὅταν* along with the active *ἐκπέση* suggests the LXX *Vorlage* agreed with MT against 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, at least in this difference.

The LXX's lack of the last phrase has led some to suggest it was a later addition,<sup>589</sup> sometime between the LXX and Qumran. What likely happened is that the LXX translator skipped the phrase *וְרַע קִדְשׁ בְּמִצְבֵּת* by homoiarkton, but did translate *הַמִּצְבֵּת* as *ἀπὸ τῆς θήκης αὐτῆς*.<sup>590</sup> If the LXX *Vorlage* ended with *בְּמִצְבֵּת* we would expect to see a preposition in the translation; so, *αὐτῆς* is from the pronominal ending on *הַמִּצְבֵּת*.<sup>591</sup>

The Greek is ambiguous. It can mean either “like an oak when it falls from its grave/station”<sup>592</sup> or “as an acorn when it falls from its husk.”<sup>593</sup> As Troxel has suggested, the “acorn” reading is more likely, since the other place *βάλανος* occurs, Isaiah 2:13, it is in the phrase *δένδρον βαλάνου*.<sup>594</sup> Troxel finds the meaning of the terebinth simile obscure, but thinks the acorn simile is apt for people being plundered; but he reverses the action, saying: “like an acorn deprived of its husk.”<sup>595</sup> A better explanation of both similes is that of van der Kooij, who explains the terebinth by saying it refers to the terebinth of 1:30, which there has shed all its leaves.<sup>596</sup> The parallel simile of the acorn falling from its husk means that it falls from its rightful place; van der Kooij points out that this is the regular meaning of *ἐκπίπτω*.<sup>597</sup> He interprets the similes, then, to refer to the loss of position and power of the priesthood (referenced by the “tithes”).<sup>598</sup>

According to Theophrastus, there is a tree peculiar to Egypt called *ἡ βάλανος*.<sup>599</sup> He says the tree gets its name from its fruit, which though useless in itself, has a husk that perfumers use.<sup>600</sup> This does not help much with our simile, since the balanos tree's fruit does not fall from its husk. The Greek seems to be thinking of an acorn that falls out of its husk from a tall oak tree. The context is of the remnant in the land multiplying (6:12) only to be plundered again. The image of the terebinth could be that it has been cut and mangled for the

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<sup>589</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 213. However, Seeligman, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 213 [63/64] suggests that the phrase is authentic.

<sup>590</sup> J. A. Emerton, “The Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah vi.13,” in *Interpreting the Hebrew Bible: Essays in Honor of E.I.J. Rosenthal* (eds. J.A. Emerton and Stefan C. Reif; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 89. See also Wildberger, *Jesaja*, 234. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 48.

<sup>591</sup> Emerton, “The Translation and Interpretation of Isaiah vi.13,” 89.

<sup>592</sup> See NETS, 6:13. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 193 [48/49], he says the translation “is rooted in the coagulated equation of *מצבה* with *θήκη* = gravestone, monument – which the translator, was, of course, perfectly familiar.”

<sup>593</sup> LXX.D. 6:13. Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 386-87.

<sup>594</sup> Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 386-87. Theophrastus, however, refers to the tree just as *ἡ Βάλανος*. Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.1, 6.

<sup>595</sup> Troxel, “Economic Plunder,” 386-87.

<sup>596</sup> Arie van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood,” in *Let us Go up to Zion: Essays in Honour of H.G.M. Williamson on the Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (eds. Iain Provan and Mark J. Boda; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 74.

<sup>597</sup> van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood,” 74-75.

<sup>598</sup> van der Kooij, “The Septuagint of Isaiah and Priesthood,” 75.

<sup>599</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.1. cf. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 150.

<sup>600</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.6.

resin it produces,<sup>601</sup> but the tree recovered and is plundered of its resin again. The image of the balanos is that the acorns fall and are easily collected. The idea of the “seed” in the Hebrew may be in part reflected in the LXX translation in it mentioning balanos fruit.

The Targum interprets the tenth as the righteous, and the tree simile as being dry terebinths and oaks that have lost their leaves (כבוטמא וכבולטא דבמיתר טרפוהי), but still have enough moisture to produce seed.<sup>602</sup>

### 3.6.2.3. אֵלֹן

We have already seen the two other places אֵלֹן occurs in LXX-Isa, 44:14 (where it is not rendered) and Isa 6:13 (where it is rendered with βαλάνος). Outside of LXX-Isa βαλάνος is used to render אֵלֹן three times,<sup>603</sup> while δρύς (not occurring in LXX-Isa) is used eleven times.

#### Isa 2:12-13

<p>For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up <i>that he be humbled.</i></p>	<p>כִּי יוֹם לַיהוָה צְבָאוֹת עַל כָּל־גֹּאֲזָה וְרִם וְעַל כָּל־נִשְׂאָה וְשִׁפְלוֹ:</p>	<p>ἡμέρα γὰρ κυρίου σαβαωθ ἐπὶ πάντα ὑβριστὴν καὶ ὑπερήφανον καὶ ἐπὶ πάντα ὑψηλὸν καὶ μετέωρον, καὶ ταπεινωθήσονται,</p>	<p>For the day of the Lord Sabaoth will be against everyone who is insolent and haughty and against everyone who is lofty and high, and they shall be humbled,</p>
<p>against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan;</p>	<p>וְעַל כָּל־אַרְזֵי הַלְבָנוֹן הָרְמִים וְהַנְּשָׂאִים וְעַל כָּל־אֵלֹנֵי בַשָּׁן:</p>	<p>καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶσαν κέδρον τοῦ Λιβάνου τῶν ὑψηλῶν καὶ μετεώρων καὶ ἐπὶ πᾶν δένδρον βαλάνου Βασαν</p>	<p>both against every cedar of Lebanon, of them that are lofty and high, and against every <i>balanos</i> tree of Basan,</p>

In 2:12, the Greek adds high/proud, μετέωρος (taken from the next verse),<sup>604</sup> parallel to high, ὑψηλός, in order to define it. This could have been done also because height, or being high (רום) was interpreted as being proud (ὑπερήφανος) in this verse. The association of height and pride underlies much of the tree imagery in Isaiah (as we saw in 10:33). The LXX may have omitted the second על כל in 2:12 for stylistic reasons, or because his *Vorlage* matched 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>.

In 2:13, the high and proud of the previous verses has now been imaged as tall trees. The LXX renders the metaphors literally. That the two adjectives used of these trees, ὑψηλός and μετέωρον, are in the previous verse for people (and μετέωρον is an addition in 2:12)

<sup>601</sup> See Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4:16.1-2; 9.1.2.

<sup>602</sup> “And one in ten they will be left in it and they will again be for scorching like the terebinth or the oak, which when their leaves drop off appear dried up, and even then they are green enough to retain from them the seed. So the exiles of Israel will be gathered and they will return to their land.” For the holy seed is their stump.”

<sup>603</sup> Gen 35:8 (2x); Judg 9:6 (also Judg A 9:6).

<sup>604</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 61.

suggests the translator probably considered these trees to represent people.

The translation of the trees themselves is worthy of note. The cedar of Lebanon has been rendered literally (we will discuss this tree more below). Usually (10x), אֵלֶּן is rendered as oak, δρῦς, in the LXX. The Greek phrase δένδρον βαλάνου or “tree of the acorn,” could be understood as a poetic way of talking about an oak, but this would be an unusual kind of rhetorical flare for the translator.<sup>605</sup> What seems a more likely explanation is that the translator means just what he says: ἡ βάλανος, the balanos tree which, according to Theophrastus, is native to Egypt.<sup>606</sup> Theophrastus’ description of the tree also makes good sense in the context of this verse, in that he says they are stout and fair in their stature and useful for building ships.<sup>607</sup> So they are sizable trees and probably more familiar to the experience of readers than the Cedars of Lebanon. Perhaps βαλάνος is chosen here because it can also refer to part of a gate or its bars,<sup>608</sup> as in Jer 30:9, and so could foreshadow the mention of high towers and walls in 2:15. Though it makes more sense to connect the trees with people and the hills and mountains in the following verses to the cities. The Damascus Document uses some similar imagery for the high being laid low; in CD II.19 we have the phrase: וּבְנֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר כְּרוּם אֲרָזִים גְּבֵהִים.

The Targum understands the lofty and high in 2:12 as proud people (גִּיּוֹתֵינִיא וּרְמִיָּא לִיבֵא) and the cedar and oak of Isa 2:13 to refer to the kings of the peoples (מַלְכֵי עַמְמֵיָא) and tyrants of the provinces (טוֹרְנֵי מְדִינַתָּא).<sup>609</sup>

#### 3.6.2.4. Summary

The LXX-Isa translator does not render אֵלֶּן as one specific kind of tree, but does know that it is a kind of tree. In 1:29 he renders it as idols, probably knowing that a tree associated with idolatry is meant. As we mentioned above, in Isa 27:9 and 17:8 he renders אֲשֶׁרָה with δένδρον, so he knows about sacred trees. Also, his rendering of אֵלֶּן with γενεά in 61:3 makes good sense as an interpreted metaphor if he thought the Hebrew meant a kind of tree. LXX-Isa understands אֶלְהָה to refer to the terebinth tree, translating it this way in 1:30 and 6:13. The word, אֵלֶּן however, seems to be understood as a tree native to Egypt, the balanos tree, as it is interpreted in 2:12-13, though in 6:13 he renders using acorn imagery.

<sup>605</sup> For the rendering of בְּרוּשִׁים with ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου in 14:8, see below.

<sup>606</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.1. They in fact also live elsewhere in Africa as well as the Levant, Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 55, 150.

<sup>607</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 4.2.6. Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 150, says they are stout and grow to a height of 3m. Alfred G. Bircher and Warda H. Bircher, *Encyclopedia of Fruit Trees and Edible Flowering Plants in Egypt and the Subtropics* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2000), 53, says the timber is compact, easy to work, and resists insects.

<sup>608</sup> Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>609</sup> “For the day is about to come from the LORD of hosts against all the proud and lofty of heart and against all the strong—and they will be humbled 13 and against all the kings of the Gentiles, strong and hard, and against all the tyrants of the provinces;”

The Targum interprets some references to oaks or terebinths, so that in 2:12-13 and 61:3 they are interpreted as tyrants and kings. Also, for the lofty and high of 2:12 the Targum makes clear that this refers to proud people. In 1:29, like the LXX, the Targum specifies that the trees are associated with idolatry, but rather than replacing the word for tree with “idol,” it describes the tree as a “tree of idolatry.” In 6:13 the strange terebinth simile is interpreted in light of 1:30 as a terebinth that loses its leaves, then another tree metaphor is added, which, though dry, can still produce seed.

### 3.6.3. Other Kinds of Trees

There remains several other varieties of trees used in Isaiah. In 60:13, three trees are mentioned: **וְתֵאֵשׁוּר וְתִדְהָר וְבְרוֹשׁ** rendered: *κυμαρίσσω και πεύαη και κέδρω*.<sup>610</sup> This passage is not metaphorical, but talks about the precious woods that will adorn the temple. The Greek renders **לְפָאֵר** (to beautify) as *δοξάσαι*, but this can mean nearly the same thing and does not mean the trees represent people.

Another tree that is mentioned in Isaiah is the fig tree: **תְּאֵנָה**. We have already discussed the image of the leaves falling from the fig tree (34:4) in the section on leaves (2.5.1.) and the early fig that is eaten right away in the section on flowers (2.4.1.). The other two places it is mentioned are literal: in 36:16 they are mentioned by Rabshekeh in the context that if Jerusalem surrenders, everyone will enjoy the fruit of their own fig tree and vine; in 38:21 figs are mentioned as an ingredient in the salve Hezekiah is to apply to his boils. The LXX and Targum render both of these passages literally.

In 40:20, the word **מְסֻכֵּן** occurs, which could be a specific kind of tree<sup>611</sup> or a reference to a poor person. In any case, the LXX does not render the word, probably for stylistic reasons. The Targum renders it with **אֹרֶן** (laurel), perhaps thinking it was related to the word **מְסוּכָה** (hedge), which occurs in Mic 7:4. This passage is not metaphorical.

The word **עֵרְבָה**, meaning willow, occurs twice in Isaiah. In 15:7 it is used in a place name for a valley, but the LXX renders it as a people: Arabians. We have already discussed 44:4 in the section on grass (3.2.2.); willows are mentioned in both languages in a simile to show how the people will flourish; the willow is mentioned because they are commonly found near streams.

In this section we will discuss the following trees used in metaphors and similes in turn: **אֶרֶז**, **בְּרוֹשׁ** and **הָדָס**, and **זֵית**, then we will make a summary.

<sup>610</sup> The only other place **וְתֵאֵשׁוּר** and **וְתִדְהָר** occur in Isaiah is in 41:19, which we discussed above.

<sup>611</sup> See HALOT, s.v. and the DCH, s.v.



### 3.6.3.1. אָרְזִי

The cedar tree, אָרְזִי, is usually translated literally with κέδρος or with κέδρινος in the LXX,<sup>612</sup> and also in LXX-Isa, as we just saw with 2:13. In 9:9(10) it is also rendered literally, though the passage is altered and an allusion to the tower of Babel is inserted.<sup>613</sup> The one exception to this is 16:9 where, assuming the Greek *Vorlage* was the same as 1QIsa<sup>a</sup>, אָרְזִי is rendered τὰ δένδρα σου.

#### Isa 14:8

<p>The cypresses exult over you, the cedars of Lebanon, saying, "Since you were laid low, no one comes to cut us down."</p>	<p>גַּם־בְּרוֹשִׁים שְׂמְחוּ לְךָ אָרְזִי לְבָנוֹן מֵאֵז שְׁכַבְתָּ לְאֵי־עֵלָה הַכֶּרֶת עָלֵינוּ:</p>	<p>καὶ τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου ἠύφραnthησαν ἐπὶ σοὶ καὶ ἡ κέδρος τοῦ Λιβάνου 'Αφ' οὗ σὺ κεκοίμησαι, οὐκ ἀνέβη ὁ κόπτων ἡμᾶς.</p>	<p>and the trees of Lebanon rejoiced over you, even the cedar of Lebanon, saying, "Since you fell asleep, <i>one who cuts</i> us down has not come up."</p>
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Of note for the current study in this passage is that בְּרוֹשִׁים has been rendered generically as the trees of Lebanon, ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου. The usual rendering of בְּרוֹשִׁי in LXX-Isa, as mentioned above, is κυπαρίσσος, as in 41:19, which is probably a correct identification of the tree.<sup>614</sup> The two terms for tree in parallel in the Hebrew are both tall conifers, useful for timber, that can be found in Lebanon.<sup>615</sup> Their asyndetic relationship may have seemed odd to the translator, so he rendered the first term generically as the trees of Lebanon, then gave the specific term as the singular (perhaps collective singular) cedar of Lebanon. He may have simply desired to reduce the number of trees mentioned, as in 44:14 and 41:19, and so did not give both specific names here. This passage is probably not a metaphor in the Hebrew, just an anthropomorphism or personification.<sup>616</sup> The actual trees would be glad (as if they were like people with emotions) that the king of Assyria will no longer cut them down (as he presumably boasts of doing in Isa 37:24, only there בְּרוֹשִׁי is rendered with κυπαρίσσος). In the Greek, likewise, it is an example of personification or anthropomorphism.

The Targum sees the trees as representing leaders, and this time, those with property (cf. 9:9(10)): אָרְזִי שְׁלִטוֹנִין חֲדִיאוּ עֲלֵיךָ עַתִּירֵי נַכְסֵיָא אֲמַרִין.<sup>617</sup>

<sup>612</sup> A few times it is rendered as a cypress, κυπαρίσσος: Job 40:17; Ezek 27:5; 31:3, 8.

<sup>613</sup> See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 156. Seeligmann, *The Septuagint Version of Isaiah*, 191 [47/8]. Troxel, *LXX-Isaiah*, 147-48. LXX.D.E.K., 2529.

<sup>614</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 110.

<sup>615</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 112.

<sup>616</sup> That the trees are not figurative, see Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 176.

<sup>617</sup> "Indeed, rulers rejoice over you, the rich in possessions, saying, 'From the time that you were laid low, no destroyer comes up against us.'"

### 3.6.3.2. בְּרוֹשׁ and הֶדְס

We have already mentioned all of the passages that have a cypress, בְּרוֹשׁ (14:8; 37:24; 41:19; 60:13), and those that mention the myrtle, הֶדְס (41:19), except 55:13, where both trees occur.

#### Isa 55:13

<p>Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the <i>nettle</i> shall come up the myrtle; and it shall be to the LORD for a memorial, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off.</p>	<p>תַּחַת הַנְּעֻצִים יֵעָלֶה בְּרוֹשׁ תַּחַת הַסְּרָפֵד יֵעָלֶה הֶדְס וְהָיָה לְיְהוָה לְשֵׁם לְאוֹת עוֹלָם לֹא יִכָּרֵת:</p>	<p>καὶ ἀντὶ τῆς στοιβῆς ἀναβήσεται κυπάρισσος, ἀντὶ δὲ τῆς κονύζης ἀναβήσεται μυρσίνη· καὶ ἔσται κυρίῳ εἰς ὄνομα καὶ εἰς σημεῖον αἰώνιον καὶ οὐκ ἐκλείψει.</p>	<p>And instead of the brier shall come up a cypress, and instead of the <i>flea-bane plant</i> shall come up a myrtle, and the Lord shall be<sup>618</sup> for a name and an everlasting sign and shall not fail.</p>
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This verse speaks metaphorically of the conditions that will obtain if the people seek God again; it is a reversal of the curse from Gen 3. Instead of weeds, pleasant trees will sprout up seemingly spontaneously. The word נְעֻצִים only occurs twice in the Hebrew Bible, here and Isaiah 7:19. As discussed above, in 7:19 it is rendered simply as “tree.” This could be because the translator understood the Hebrew term to refer to the *ziziphus spina-christi*,<sup>619</sup> which is a large thorny bush that sometimes grows as large as a tree.<sup>620</sup> Here, though the translator uses στοιβή.<sup>621</sup> This plant, according to Theophrastus, has thorns on the stem and fleshy leaves.<sup>622</sup> The Hebrew and Greek terms probably do not refer to the same species, but both refer to a specific sort of thorny plant. The translation of בְּרוֹשׁ with κυπάρισσος is accurate. The passage implies that the cypress is more desirable than the thorn-bush. Perhaps the point of comparison is in the fact that thorns seem to sprout up everywhere that is untended; Theophrastus says cypress trees spontaneously generate after rain.<sup>623</sup> Otherwise, the comparison could be of a small undesirable tree being replaced with a large and desirable tree.

The second weed that will be replaced by something better, סְרָפֵד, or a spiny nettle, is not the same thing as κονύζα, a kind of stinky weed: the flea-bane plant,<sup>624</sup> neither word occurs elsewhere.<sup>625</sup> The translation of הֶדְס with μυρσίνη is accurate, as we saw in 41:19. The point of comparison between the weed and myrtle in the Greek probably has to do with aroma. Theophrastus notes specially how the κονύζα has a strong smell and keeps animals away,<sup>626</sup>

<sup>618</sup> Here NETS follows Ralphps, which reads: καὶ ἔσται κύριος, the preferred reading also of LXX.D.E.K., 2672.

<sup>619</sup> It must be noted, however, that this plant is referred to as παλίουρος in Theophrastus, *Enquiry* 4.3.1-3.

<sup>620</sup> Musselman, *Figs, Dates, Laurel, and Myrrh*, 276.

<sup>621</sup> For other meanings and uses of this word, see Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 10.

<sup>622</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 1.10.4; 6.1.3. While in Isa 55:12 the mountains and hills break into song and the trees clap hands when the people turn to God and He pardons them, Theophrastus says the στοιβή rejoices when put in sandy soil, 6.5.2.

<sup>623</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 3.1.6.

<sup>624</sup> See LXX.D.E.K., 2672. Muraoka, *Lexicon*, s.v.

<sup>625</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 353.

<sup>626</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 6.2.6.

while the myrtle has a very nice smell.<sup>627</sup> This passage shows the translator was concerned about what plant or tree is being mentioned and why; for both comparisons he picks plants that have a logical, though antithetical, relationship.

The Targum understands these trees as representing people: חלף רשיעיא יתקיימון צדיקיא וחלף חייביא יתקיימון דחלי חטאה.<sup>628</sup>

### 3.6.3.3. זית

The olive tree, זית, is mentioned twice in Isaiah (17:6 and 24:13) to illustrate the idea of a remnant in the image of the tree being beaten to harvest its olives. We have already discussed 17:6 in the section on branches (2.6.2.).

#### Isa 24:13

<p>For thus it shall be on the earth and among the nations, as when an olive tree is beaten, as at the gleaning when the grape harvest is ended.</p>	<p>כִּי כֹה יִהְיֶה בְּקִרְבֵּי הָאָרֶץ בְּתוֹךְ הָעַמִּים בְּנִקְוֵי זֵית כְּעוֹלֵלֶת אִם־כֹּלֶה בְּצִיר:</p>	<p>ταῦτα πάντα ἔσται ἐν τῇ γῆ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἐθνῶν, ὃν τρόπον ἐάν τις καταλήσῃται ἐλαίαν, οὕτως καταλήσονται αὐτούς, καὶ ἐάν παύσῃται ὁ τρύγητος.</p>	<p>All these things shall be on the earth, in the midst of the nations; just as when someone gleans an olive tree, so shall people glean them, even when the <i>grape</i> harvest has ceased.</p>
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The Hebrew image of this passage refers to the same situation as in 17:6, or even to that passage itself.<sup>629</sup> The idea of the beaten olive tree and the gleaning after the harvest is that just a few will be left. The Greek removes the notion of the tree being beaten and focuses on the idea of gleaning. The Greek, as in 17:6, does not render that the tree is beaten. It could be possible that the translator here understood נקף to mean something like “to go around” and so thought it referred to wandering through the orchard looking for the remaining olives.<sup>630</sup> But this does not explain the rendering in 17:6. It seems more likely that the translator has shaped the metaphor to express more clearly what he thought it meant, and so twice talks about gleaning the few remaining olives after the harvest. It is irrelevant how the tree was harvested (e.g. beating the branches). Whereas the Hebrew image is of a few olives abandoned and alone in the orchard ready to be taken by passing people, the Greek image is of the olives being gleaned by the nations even after most have already been carried off by the harvest. Also, the Hebrew has two similes, while the Greek has a simile and an explanation.<sup>631</sup>

<sup>627</sup> Theophrastus, *Enquiry into Plants*, 6.8.5.

<sup>628</sup> “Instead of the wicked shall the righteous be established; and instead of sinners shall those who fear sin be established; and it shall be before the LORD for a name, for an everlasting sign which shall not cease.”

<sup>629</sup> For a detailed analysis of 24:13, see Cunha, *LXX Isaiah*, 79-81, 155-58.

<sup>630</sup> 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

<sup>631</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2565.

The Targum again, like in 17:6, explains the olive gleaning image as referring to the righteous being left behind among the nations, using the same phrase: **יחידאין צדיקיא בגו עלמא ביני מלכוותא**.<sup>632</sup> Like the LXX, though, the tree is not beaten, just gleaned.

#### 3.6.3.4. Summary

The LXX seems to consider why various specific trees are mentioned. While we have seen already that he tends to cut back and generalize lists of trees (44:14; 41:19; 14:8; though not in 60:13) he is still careful in identifying the specific tree that the Hebrew mentions and rendering it accurately. This accuracy is probably because the metaphorical language is often based on features characteristic of the specific tree mentioned, such as figs losing leaves (34:4); willows growing near streams (44:4); cedars being prized for timber (14:8; 37:24);<sup>633</sup> or olive trees holding a few olives despite attempts to harvest them (17:6; 24:13). This is seen even further in 55:13, where the translator specifies generic words for weeds as specific plants that are logically antithetical to the trees mentioned, highlighting the contrast.

These other kinds of trees are all interpreted as people by the Targum: in 14:8 the cypresses are the leaders and the cedars those rich in property; in 55:13 the bad plants are interpreted as wicked people and the good plants replacing them are good, righteous people; and in 24:13 the olives left in the tree are the righteous.

#### 3.6.4. Thickets and Woods

Related to trees, thickets or woods are also used metaphorically. The word **קִבְּהַ** means underbrush or thicket; it always occurs with **יַעַר** in Isaiah, which also means thicket but can mean wood or forest as well. In this section we will first look at the relevant texts, then offer a summary.

##### 3.6.4.1. Texts

We have already discussed the occurrences in Isa 7:2; 10:18-19; 44:14; and 44:23, and it is not used metaphorically in 21:13.<sup>634</sup>

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<sup>632</sup> “For thus shall *the righteous be left alone* in the midst of the *world* among the *kingdoms*, as the *stripping of the olive tree*, as gleanings *after vintage*.”

<sup>633</sup> Also in 9:9(10).

<sup>634</sup> In 56:9, a forest is mentioned as a place wild animals come from to prey on Israel (either imaged as a flock or perhaps some sort of a field) because her watchmen are incompetent.

**Isa 9:17(18)**

<p>For wickedness burned like a fire, consuming briars and thorns; it kindled the thickets of the forest, and they swirled upward in a column of smoke.</p>	<p>כִּי־בַעֲרָה כָּאֵשׁ רָשָׁעָה שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית תֹּאכֵל וְתִצֵּת בְּסִבְכֵי הַיַּעַר וְיִתְאַבְּכוּ גְּאוֹת עֲשָׂן:</p>	<p>καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἡ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται ὑπὸ πυρός· καὶ καυθήσεται ἐν τοῖς δάσεσι τοῦ δρυμοῦ, καὶ συγκαταφάγεται τὰ κύκλω τῶν βουνῶν πάντα.</p>	<p>And the transgression will burn like a fire, and like dry grass will it be consumed by fire, and it will burn in the thickets of the forest and devour everything around the hills.</p>
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We have already discussed this passage in part in the section on thorns (3.4.1.). In the Hebrew, wickedness burns various flammable things (which we learn are the people in the next verse), but the Greek, due to standard translation equivalents, makes wickedness into lawlessness, and renders בערה as passive: καυθήσεται. While the simile “like fire” is preserved, the action is reversed. The translation of שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית with ἄγρωστις ξηρὰ is probably to make more clear the idea of something very inflammable burning.<sup>635</sup>

The picturesque image of columns of smoke is rendered quite differently in the Greek. Ziegler believes the last phrase was difficult for the translator, so he rendered parallel to the previous phrase.<sup>636</sup> Also he points out the related passages in Jer 21:14; 27(50):32 and Psa 82(83):15.<sup>637</sup> The reference to hills probably comes from supposing גְּאוֹת could refer to hills,<sup>638</sup> or perhaps seeing גֵּיא and thinking the space around hills.<sup>639</sup> As we have seen already, LXX-Isa knows that typically forests and hills are related in Judea, so perhaps the mention of a forest (יַעַר) was warrant enough to add the hills (as in 10:18 and 44:23).<sup>640</sup>

The simile of the people being like fuel for a fire, has been transformed to compare them to fuel that has been burned by a fire. This is probably due to reading כמאכלת as a passive form of a participle instead of as a noun. It could be a part of all the passive verbs the Greek has in this passage.

A result of the transformations in this passage is that the people are not as strongly tied to the thorns/grass and forests that burn. In the Greek the land is more clearly destroyed and the people are burned, while in the Hebrew the people were burned as fuel like thorns and forests.

The Targum understands “wickedness” to mean the retribution for their sins פורענות חוביהון הטאיה.<sup>641</sup> The rest of the verse is more difficult to equate to the Hebrew, but seems

<sup>635</sup> We discussed the translation of שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית in the section on thorns (3.4.1.).

<sup>636</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109. He offers possible readings for the individual words.

<sup>637</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 110.

<sup>638</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 109.

<sup>639</sup> IQIsa<sup>a</sup> agrees with MT.

<sup>640</sup> As Ziegler notes, *Untersuchungen*, 109. For wooded hills, see Hepper, *Bible Plants*, 39-40.

<sup>641</sup> “For the retribution of their sins burns like the fire, it destroys transgressors and sinners; and it will rule over the remnant of the people and destroy the multitude of the armies.”

to interpret the weeds and forests as people: וחיביא תשיצי ותשלוט בשאר עמא ותשיצי סגי משריתא.

**Isa 10:34**

<p>He will hack down the thickets of the forest with <i>iron</i>, and Lebanon with its majestic trees will fall.</p>	<p>וְנִקְוּ סִבְכֵי הַיַּעַר בְּבַרְזֵל וְהַלְבָּנוֹן בְּאַדְיַר יָפוֹל:</p>	<p>καὶ πεσοῦνται οἱ ὑψηλοὶ μαχαίρα, ὁ δὲ Λίβανος σὺν τοῖς ὑψηλοῖς πεσεῖται.</p>	<p>And the lofty will fall by dagger, and Lebanon will fall with the lofty ones.</p>
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We have dealt with 10:33 in the section about branches (2.6.2.). There the LXX has interpreted the high branches and high trees as the proud rather than as the Assyrians as the Hebrew context would suggest (10:24). In 10:34 the LXX continues in this interpretation calling the thickets and forests simply the high,<sup>642</sup> and likewise associates the trees of Lebanon with people. It is interesting to note that the metonymy “iron” has been interpreted explicitly to mean a sword since people are being cut down, much like the NRSV interprets it to mean axe since it cuts trees. Also, the Greek is careful to translate the first preposition ב as a dative of means, but the second one gets a preposition in Greek to specify that the relationship is different than in the first clause.<sup>643</sup>

The Targum interprets the trees to refer to warriors: ויקטיל גיברי משריתיה דמתגברין בברזלא ועבדי קרביה על ארעא דישראל יתרמון.<sup>644</sup>

**Isa 22:8**

<p>He has taken away the covering of Judah. On that day you looked to the weapons of the House of the Forest,</p>	<p>וַיִּגְלֵ אֶת מַסְךְ יְהוּדָה וַתִּבֹּט בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא אֶל-נֶשֶׁק בַּיִת הַיַּעַר:</p>	<p>καὶ ἀνακαλύψουσι τὰς πύλας Ἰουδα καὶ ἐμβλέψονται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ εἰς τοὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς οἴκους τῆς πόλεως</p>	<p>And they will uncover the gates of Ioudas and look on that day into the choicest houses of the city,</p>
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In the Hebrew, the phrase בַּיִת הַיַּעַר appears to be the name of the building used as an armory, either because of the forest of spears or it is the house of the forest of Lebanon mentioned in 1 Kgs 7:2. The Greek, however, reads it as עיר.<sup>645</sup> This could be an interpretation of the passage, since πύλη seems to explain “covering.”<sup>646</sup> Ottley suggested נֶשֶׁק was thought to be something like נשכה, as in Neh 13:7, where it is used of a room in the

<sup>642</sup> If we allow the wisdom of Euthyphro to overtake us, like it overtook Socrates in *Cratylus*, we may suppose ὑψηλός is a fitting word since it contains forest: ὕλη.

<sup>643</sup> See Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 166.

<sup>644</sup> “And he will slay the mighty men of his armies who make themselves mighty with iron, and his warriors will be cast on the land of Israel.”

<sup>645</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 211.

<sup>646</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 211.

temple,<sup>647</sup> though this explanation seems unlikely. LXX.D.E.K. suggests the verb was read, and that kissing was somehow associated with the idea “choice.”<sup>648</sup>

The Targum understands the phrase as referring to the treasury of the temple: על זין בית גנזי מקדשא<sup>649</sup>

**Isa 29:17**

<p>Shall not Lebanon in a very little while become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be regarded as a forest?</p>	<p>הֲלוֹא-עוֹד מְעַט מְזַעַר וְשֵׁב לְבָנוֹן לְכַרְמֵל וְהַכְרָמֶל לְיַעַר יִחְשָׁב:</p>	<p>οὐκέτι μικρὸν καὶ μετατεθήσεται ὁ Λίβανος ὡς τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ καὶ τὸ ὄρος τὸ Χερμελ εἰς δρυμὸν λογισθήσεται;</p>	<p>Is it not yet a little while, and Lebanon shall be changed like Mount Chermel, and Mount Chermel shall be regarded as a forest?</p>
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As we saw in 10:18, the word כְּרָמֶל is associated with mountains, though this time specifically with mount Carmel.<sup>650</sup> In the Hebrew, the comparison seems to be about the wild forest becoming a cultivated field and vice versa. In the Greek, however, there seems to be a downgrade: Lebanon becomes Carmel, and Carmel becomes just a forest, or perhaps thicket. Similarly, 32:15 says Carmel will be considered a forest, both in Hebrew and Greek, though there this is after it has become wilderness.<sup>651</sup> In the Hebrew this cryptic verse probably should be understood in light of the reversals in the following verses, where the deaf hear and blind see and so forth. For the Greek it makes best sense when understood with 29:20, where the lawless and proud are destroyed.

The Targum agrees with LXX that it is talking about Carmel.<sup>652</sup> But instead of it becoming a forest it is inhabited as many cities: וּכְרַמְלָא לְקְרוּיִן סְגִיאיִן יִתִּיב.<sup>653</sup>

In one place, the LXX adds a word for forest where the Hebrew has something else.

**Isa 27:10(9)**

<p>Therefore by this the guilt of Jacob will be expiated, and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin: when he makes all the stones of the altars like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no sacred</p>	<p>לָכֵן בּוֹזֵאת יִכְפֹּר עֲוֹן- יַעֲקֹב וְזָה כָּל-פְּרִי הַסֵּר חֲטָאתוֹ בְּשׁוּמוֹ   כָּל-אַבְנֵי מִזְבְּחַ כְּאַבְנֵי-גֵר מִנְפָצוֹת לֹא-יִקְמוּ אֲשֵׁרִים וְחֲמָנִים:</p>	<p>διὰ τοῦτο ἀφαιρεθήσεται ἡ ἀνομία Ιακωβ, καὶ τοῦτό ἐστιν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ὅταν θῶσι πάντας τοὺς λίθους τῶν βωμῶν κατακεκομμένους ὡς</p>	<p>Because of this the lawlessness of Iakob will be removed. And this is his blessing, when I remove his sin, when they make all the stones of the altars broken pieces like fine dust, and their trees will not</p>
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<sup>647</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 211.

<sup>648</sup> LXX.D.E.K., 2559.

<sup>649</sup> “He has uncovered the hiding place of the house of Judah, and he has looked in that time upon a weapon of the treasure house of the sanctuary.”

<sup>650</sup> In Isa 37:24 it has no equivalent in the Greek.

<sup>651</sup> In 65:10 the place Sharon is rendered simply as a forest.

<sup>652</sup> Chilton translates כְּרַמְלָא as a fruitful field.

<sup>653</sup> “It is not yet a very little while until Lebanon shall return to be as a fruitful field, and the fruitful field will cause many cities to be inhabited?”

poles or incense altars will remain standing. 10 For the fortified city...	10 כִּי עֵיר בְּצוּרָה ...בְּדָד	κονίαν λεπτήν· καὶ οὐ μὴ μείνη τὰ δένδρα αὐτῶν, καὶ τὰ εἰδωλα αὐτῶν ἐκκεκομμένα ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν.	remain, and their idols will be cast down like a forest far away.
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The word *δρυμός* appears to be based on the beginning of the next verse. Opposite from what we saw in 22:8, עֵיר is read as עַר (as also in 32:19). Ottley suggests that ἐκκόπτω was a rendering of בְּצוּרָה supposing בצר “to cut off,”<sup>654</sup> or it was confused with נפצות; also he thinks μακράν is from בְּדָד.<sup>655</sup> Ziegler agrees with the last point, but thinks ἐκκόπτω may have come from seeing a form of כרת.<sup>656</sup> Ziegler rejects that the phrase could have been a plus in the *Vorlage*, showing other passages that associate the destruction of idols with ideas of cutting them down.<sup>657</sup> The meaning of the simile “like a distant forest” may have to do with the idea of going to great lengths to acquire wood, such as for Solomon’s temple; so that the great effort to travel and cut them down would be considered valuable.

The use of δένδρα to render אֲשֵׁרִים is unique to LXX-Isa (also seen in 17:8),<sup>658</sup> the most common equivalent is ἄλσος (a grove). The choice of using δένδρα is interesting, since in the next clause we read of the idols being cut down like a forest. The simile כְּאֲבִיגֵיגַר is rendered freely: ὡς κονίαν λεπτήν, a phrase known from classical literature.<sup>659</sup> Ziegler shows that elsewhere גַּר is rendered with κονία.<sup>660</sup>

The Targum renders אֲשֵׁרִים with a cognate, and emphasizes that they will not be raised up again. It preserves the city in the next verse, though not as a simile.<sup>661</sup>

### 3.6.4.2. Summary of Woods and Thickets

The LXX seems to associate hills with forests, adding them in 9:17(18); 10:18; and 44:23. Similarly, בְּרִמָּל is associated in LXX-Isa with mount Carmel and forests in 10:18; 29:17; and 32:15. Occasionally, LXX-Isa turns cities into forests (27:10(9); 32:19) or forests into cities (22:8), perhaps for lexical reasons. The metaphoric value of a forest can be people, as in 10:34; and perhaps also in 9:17(18) and 29:17.

The Targum is more likely to associate trees with kinds of people, as in 9:17 and 10:34. It does on at least one occasion turn a forest into a city, or rather, a village (29:17).

<sup>654</sup> Also LXX.D.E.K., 2573.

<sup>655</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 235.

<sup>656</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101.

<sup>657</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 102. 2 Chron 15:16; 28:24; 34:7; Micah 1:7; Exod 34:13; Deut 7:5; and 12:3.

<sup>658</sup> But in Alexandrinus of 17:8 ἄλσος is used.

<sup>659</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 235. He points out Homer, *Illiad*, XXIII.505 and Sophocles, *Antigone*, 256.

<sup>660</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 101.

<sup>661</sup> “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 alter* like chalkstones crushed to pieces, no Asherim or sun pillars will be *established*.”



Asherim are rendered with a cognate in the Targum of 27:10, and most of the passage is rendered literally. The forest of weapons in 22:8 is interpreted as the temple treasury.

### 3.6.5. Summary of Trees

As we can see, the LXX-Isa translator treats tree metaphors in a variety of ways. Usually he does not change a metaphor simply due to the difficulty of the metaphor itself in the target language, but for other exegetical concerns. The distance the translator takes the image away from being a literal rendering varies.

In some places the translator is willing to preserve the metaphor in his translation, or to use it with only slight modifications. For example, in the two places where trees are personified, 44:23 and 55:12, the translator makes some modifications but lets the image stand.

In a few places, the translator appears to make modifications for the sake of style. For example, in 41:19 the translator cares more about a terse style than in listing the seven kinds of trees mentioned (also 44:14). In 56:3 and 57:5, equivalents for trees are made that are unusual in themselves but create alliteration in the translation. In 7:19 the word order is changed to create a better topical logical flow.

Sometimes the translator is a little more active and careful in his translation, shaping it to more effectively express what he thinks it aims to express. For example, in 7:2 the translator clarifies that the people are amazed, and adjusts the metaphor to show how the tree shaking represents this. Likewise, in 1:30, the translator is very careful to show that the people will be like the tree losing its leaves, not like the leaves themselves. In 55:13, the translator is attentive to the different kinds of plants and their relationships and so renders with plants that have a logical antithetical relationship (such as the foul and sweet smelling plants). Similarly, in some cases the translator appears to render freely for the sake of clarity. In 1:29 and 57:5 trees are rendered as idols to make clear what the passage means (though as we discussed, these could be simply lexical issues). In 2:12-13, the translator appears to use a tree that would have been more familiar to his Egyptian audience than the usual tree would have been. Also, in 24:13 the translator seems to want to avoid equating the cypress with the cedar, or to suggest they are the only trees of Lebanon.

The translator sometimes goes further, modifying the passage to better express his understanding of the meaning of the metaphor. In 2:12-13, the translator is less subtle than the MT in equating the high and arrogant with the trees; the LXX adds an adjective which ties these closer together. In 10:19 he makes a similar exegetical move this time by omitting a reference to trees, letting a pronoun refer to people in the sentence instead. In 10:34 the reference to thickets is rendered by a reference to the high and the iron is made a sword, showing the translator understands these trees to refer to people. The translator goes even

farther in 61:3, where he interprets the terebinth tree as representing generations, and so gives what he perceives to be the meaning of the metaphor. In 65:22 the translator changes the simile dramatically from comparing a long lifespan to a tree, to saying people will live like the tree of life.

In 6:13, the translator offers a different simile; rather than describing how the people will be like a tree that is cut down leaving a stump, the translator talks about an acorn falling from its husk. In 9:17(18) the LXX may remove the metaphor referring to actual land being ravaged. In 27:9 a simile is added, though it is the result of reading the text differently.

While few of the tree metaphors are rendered rigidly literally, usually the translator is subtle in his renderings, clarifying and nuancing them to better express what he thinks they mean. In a few cases, for whatever reason, the translator is more bold in modifying the metaphor or removing it to express his own ideas.

The Targum renders similarly to LXX in several cases, as we have seen. In 7:2, different verbs are used for the trembling hearts and trees comparison; in 65:22 both believe the tree of life is meant; in 10:17-19, the high and types of trees are interpreted as people, though the Targum is more explicit than the LXX; in 1:29 the LXX replaces trees with “idols” while the Targum calls them “trees of idolatry” (the Asherim are rendered literally by the Targum in 27:10); and in 29:17 both turn forests into cities.

The Targum has a marked tendency to explicitly interpret tree metaphors as referring to various types of people (often rulers), as can be seen in 2:12-13; 9:9(10); 9:17; 10:17-19; 10:34; 14:8; 55:13; 61:3. Similarly, it makes clear that the olives left after gleaning in 24:13 are the righteous (also 17:6).

But the Targum does not have the same stylistic concerns as the LXX, so in 41:19; 44:14; and 44:23 the various types of trees are all listed, rendered literally; in 6:13, where the LXX renders literally adding assonance, the Targum renders the metaphor as a simile. Two strange metaphors are also dealt with differently in the two translations: the terebinth cut from its station is interpreted in light of 1:30 as losing its leaves (LXX has the acorn fall from its husk), then a simile is added of a dry tree having moisture enough to produce seed. The house of the forest in 22:8 is interpreted as the temple treasury by the Targum, while the LXX rendered generally as the choice houses of the city.

### 3.7. Chard

In one place, the LXX changes a simile to contain a reference to beets or chard.

#### Isa 51:20

Your sons fainted, they lie at the head of every street like an	בְּנֵי־עַלְפֹּן שָׁכְבוּ בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־חוֹצוֹת	οἱ υἱοὶ σου οἱ ἀπορούμενοι, οἱ καθεύδοντες ἐπ’ ἄκρου	Your sons are the ones perplexed, who lie down at the head
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antelope in a net; They are full of the wrath of the LORD, the rebuke of your God.	<p style="text-align: center;">בְּתוֹא מְכַמֵּר הַמְּלֵאִים חֲמַת־יְהוָה גְּעַרַת אֱלֹהֵיךָ:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">πάσης ἐξόδου ὡς σευτλίον ἡμίεφθον, οἱ πλήρεις θυμοῦ κυρίου, ἐκλελυμένοι διὰ κυρίου τοῦ θεοῦ.</p>	of every street like a half-cooked <i>chard</i> , who are full of the wrath of the LORD, made feeble by the LORD God.
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In the Hebrew, the idea seems to be that the sons fainted from exhaustion, and so lie out at the head of every street like an antelope (if this is the meaning of תוא) that has been chased into a net and is exhausted from the chase and the struggle in the net.

The Hebrew עלף is translated differently in each of its occurrences, so not much can be made of it being rendered with ἀπορέω. Ottley suggests ערפו was read since the same word is used as an equivalent 5:30.<sup>662</sup> Perhaps the term was understood and contributed in part to the use of ἐκλύω below, which is a unique rendering of גְּעַרָה. The choice of ἐκλύω captures both the idea of losing courage that the context of 30:17 suggests, and can mean to be weary, perhaps under the influence of עלף. The extending of the divine name in the last clause is often done in LXX-Isa.<sup>663</sup>

Of note is that the simile בְּתוֹא מְכַמֵּר was rendered with ὡς σευτλίον ἡμίεφθον. Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion all render it literally, though differ in the word used for net. 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> has a different spelling, but the same text: כתו מ'כמר. The only other occurrence of תוא is Deut 14:5, where it is spelled תא' and rendered with ὄρυξ. Ottley seems to like the suggestion that the translator read כתאמך מר understanding bitter herbs.<sup>664</sup> Ziegler surveys several of the suggestions of how this translation came about, the best answer seems to be that of Wust, namely, that תיא (a kind of leafy plant) was read.<sup>665</sup> The word ἡμίεφθος probably comes from understanding מכמר as coming from כמר, which in rabbinic Hebrew means to heat fruit.<sup>666</sup> In Isa 19:8, the LXX renders nearly the same word consonantly, מְכַמְרַת, with σαγήνη, though perhaps it was a guess from the context of fishermen and hooks. The remarkable rendering of this simile in 51:20 is probably due to reading the text differently and not a desire to substitute a new metaphor more accessible to the audience. What is most remarkable is that the translator ends up with a sensible and even vivid image: the exhausted youth lying like blanched chards.

The Targum harmonizes to Nah 3:10, interpreting that the sons will be dashed to pieces (rendering עלפו with מתרפין), thrown (רמו for שכבו) in the head of every street.<sup>667</sup> The simile is rendered: כמזרקי מצדן (like those cast in nets), keeping the construct, but only

<sup>662</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 341. Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 128.

<sup>663</sup> van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 91-92.

<sup>664</sup> Ottley, *Isaiah*, II 342.

<sup>665</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99. The Syriac agrees with LXX.

<sup>666</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 99. Joosten, "The Knowledge and Use of Hebrew in the Hellenistic Period Qumran and the Septuagint," 119-20. He argues that this could be an example of spoken words being confused for classical words.

<sup>667</sup> "Your sons will be dashed to pieces, thrown at the head of all the streets like those cast in nets; they are full of wrath from the LORD, rebuke from your God."

seems to understand מִכְּמָר. It is interesting that the first part of the verse is interpreted, but not the tricky simile.

### 3.8. Conclusions

Many individual points have already been made in the section summaries. Here we will reiterate the LXX-Isa translator's independence and thoughtfulness in how he rendered metaphors. Also, we will point out some tendencies and issues that have arisen in this chapter.

Again this chapter has shown the cognitive metaphor "people are plants" is often at work in Hebrew plant metaphors as well as in LXX-Isa. Of particular note here is how LXX-Isa at times extends these and uses them to interpret. The clearest example is in 61:3 where the term "trees" is rendered as "generations," but can also be seen where the translation adjusts the metaphor to more clearly express that people (often arrogant people) are meant, as in 2:12-13; 10:19, and 34. This interpretation is already to an extent in the Hebrew of Isaiah, and can be seen elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, particularly Jdg 9:8-15 and Dan 4:20-22. A more culture specific cognitive metaphor, that Israel (or some subset) is God's vineyard, seems to underlie LXX-Isa's understanding of many of the passages mentioning vineyards and vines; more specifically, LXX-Isa often seems to have Jerusalem in mind (1:8; 3:14; 5:1-7 which in the Hebrew explicitly says the vineyard is the house of Israel; and 27:2-6).

The LXX-Isa translator is very much aware of the relationship between plants and the environment in which they typically flourish. In the Hebrew of Isaiah already we often see deserts flourishing with greenery (35:7; 41:18-19) and lush marshlands and cities becoming barren wilderness (19:6; 33:9; 34:9-15; 42:15). Ziegler has already pointed out the Egyptian nature of the translator's understanding of marshlands.<sup>668</sup> We can see this particularly in 19:6 where the translator adds a reference to a marsh where reeds are mentioned.<sup>669</sup> Similarly, the translator's association of fallow wastes and thorns reflects an Egyptian milieu;<sup>670</sup> this is particularly apparent in how he rendered שְׂמִיר, as we have seen. The association of grass and fields is not as clearly Egyptian, since usually grass had to be cultivated in Egypt, though it is abundant in Judea. When discussing forests the translator will often add references to hills, both of which are features more typical of Judea, Samaria, and Galilee (9:17(18); 10:18; and 44:23).

The LXX-Isa translator is often careful to pay attention to the specific plants mentioned, since the metaphor itself often functions because of qualities specific to that kind of plant. In 36:6, the LXX specifies that crushed reed is meant, to emphasize its frailness using the same terminology as in 42:3. We have seen that unlike the rest of the LXX, LXX-

<sup>668</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 189-90.

<sup>669</sup> Oddly, LXX-Isa 33:9 mentions "marshes" but does not have the MT's "desert" (they are not equivalents).

<sup>670</sup> Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 179-81.

Isa uses *χνοῦς* for *קֹמ*, perhaps to better distinguish husks of grain from straw. Lists of specific trees are reduced for the sake of style (44:14; 41:19), but metaphors with specific species of trees are rendered carefully with an eye for the quality of the tree in question, so that the tree losing leaves in 1:30 is an evergreen to illustrate extreme dryness; but in 34:4 it is the fig that drops its leaves (or perhaps fruit) as they tend to actually do, to illustrate stars falling; and willows are mentioned by streams (44:4) where they are commonly found. A more dramatic example of the translator taking qualities of specific plants into account is in 55:13, where a word for weed is rendered as a specific kind of malodorous plant to contrast the fragrant myrtle.

In several cases, however, the LXX-Isa translator changes which plant is mentioned in a metaphor. In the case of *שֶׁמֶר*, as we have seen, the translator does not seem to know it should mean thorn, but in three places where fire is involved, renders with words for grass (9:17(18); 10:17; 32:13). In 33:12, however, a different word for thorn is rendered literally and is said to be burned up. In the only other place grass burns, 5:24, the translator seems to have understood *שֶׁחַח* as a verb meaning “to burn.”<sup>671</sup> Another exchange from one plant to another is the case of stubble (*שֶׁקֶה*) which is rendered literally with *καλάμη* in 5:24 (where it is burned), but in 47:14 where it is again burned, it is rendered with *φρύγανον*. In two cases, stubble is also rendered *φρύγανον* in the context of being blown by the wind (40:24 and 41:2). As we have argued in 3.3.2.1.4., the translator seems to have taken context into account and so uses *φρύγανον* to better express the meaning of the passage. So, where the translator does change which plant is mentioned in a metaphor, it is either due to having a different conception of the word’s meaning (as is the case for *שֶׁמֶר* and *שֶׁחַח*) or it is due to his attempt to maintain rich metaphors with connections to the passage in which they occur (as in the case of *שֶׁקֶה*).

This chapter has shown that while there are indeed some probable textual differences in the *Vorlage* and cases where the translator has understood words differently than modern scholars, in many cases the translator adjusts the language of metaphors to communicate clearly in Greek what he believes the image means.

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<sup>671</sup> The other occurrence of *שֶׁחַח* in 33:11 has no clear equivalent.

