



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Austin, B.M.

Citation

Austin, B. M. (2014, May 28). *The Old Greek of Isaiah: An Analysis of its Translation of Plant Metaphors*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/25844>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/25844>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/25844> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Austin, B.M.

Title: The old Greek of Isaiah : analysis of its translation of plant metaphors

Issue Date: 2014-05-28

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS

This study examined how the plant metaphors of LXX Isaiah were rendered. We have taken a topical approach, focusing on the vehicles used in similes and metaphors. Already each chapter has conclusions of the various features of the translation; what remains to be discussed are the broader issues and implications of this research. In this final chapter we will first review and discuss the various metaphor translation strategies adopted by LXX-Isa to deal with plant metaphors. Second, we will review the findings of Ziegler in light of the present analysis. Third, we will attempt to place LXX-Isa within its Jewish context by noting some of its similarities and differences compared to Targum Jonathan's way of interpreting metaphors. And fourth, we will return to the issue brought up in the introductory chapter regarding to what extent LXX-Isa reflects Greek ideas about metaphors.

4.1. Metaphor Translation Strategies

In the introduction (1.1.3.), we looked at some metaphor translation strategies proposed by several LXX scholars. We saw that LXX translators used various translation strategies to render metaphors into Greek. In this section we will look at the strategies the LXX-Isa translator used to render plant metaphors. We have expanded the categories discussed above in order to describe more precisely how the translator renders. In addition, we have attempted to describe reasons a given strategy was adopted. As we will see, often there are multiple factors affecting why a given translation strategy was adopted.

4.1.1. Metaphors Translated with the Same Metaphor

We should begin by noting that often the translator has simply translated metaphors using the same vehicle but in the new language. But even in places where a metaphor is translated with the same metaphor there is room for some interpretation. We will first list passages where the metaphors are rendered literally with the same metaphor. Second we will list the passages that, while preserving the same metaphor, are adjusted in some way. Third we will list passages where the same metaphor is used but has been adjusted for stylistic reasons in translation.

4.1.1.1. Literally Translated Metaphors

In several places the dead metaphor “seed” representing offspring is rendered literally; often a parallel term for offspring makes clear that this is meant by seed, and so facilitates this literal rendering, as in 57:3-4 and 61:9. The idea of the “seed of Abraham” is a conventional metaphor that alludes to Gen 12:7, 13:15-16 etc., and so it is rendered literally in 41:8 as are its variations “seed of Jacob” in 45:19 and “seed that will be brought from Jacob” in 65:9. Similar is the idea that Israel’s seed will be gathered from across the world in 43:5. In 1:4 the current people are called an evil seed (cf. 14:20 where the translator makes this an epithet for a particular person and his family), and it is rendered literally. As we have shown, classical Greek literature had analogous metaphors to these, so they are not entirely culturally specific conceptualizations and so could be easily rendered.

Some more unique metaphors are also rendered literally, but original metaphors are in theory easier to translate, according to translation theorists.¹ In 36:6 a rod of crushed reed is literally translated as an image for unreliable Egypt, together with its explanation. A similar image in 42:3 is likewise preserved, though here the bruised reed will not be broken. In two places forests and trees are personified, being told to rejoice in 44:23 and exulting over a fallen “lumberjack” in 14:8.

A strictly literal translation technique should have resulted in this section being by far the longest, since most metaphors should have been rendered with the same metaphor. But the LXX-Isa translator, as Ziegler has pointed out,² did not feel bound to stay close to the *Vorlage*, but would render metaphors freely.

4.1.1.2. Literally Translated Metaphors in Adjusted Passages

Sometimes, while the metaphor we are interested in has been preserved, other metaphorical aspects of the verse have been adjusted. In 44:3 the metaphor of offspring being a “seed” is maintained (perhaps due to explicit terminology mentioning offspring in the parallel phrase), but the metaphor of the spirit being poured out like water is rendered as just being given or placed. In 45:25 a metaphor using “seed” to represent offspring is preserved, but is perhaps rendered twice or interpreted, in that in the Greek it is the “seed of the children of Israel” instead of just “the seed of Israel.” In 11:1 the root of Jesse is rendered literally, but the Greek has a blossom grow from it rather than a branch. Similarly, in 37:31 the remnant is said to take root downward in both texts, but in the Greek instead of bearing fruit above it produces seed. In 24:7 the personification of the vine mourning is preserved but the parallel wine languishing is rendered as mourning, probably for lexical reasons.

In two passages, the LXX preserves a metaphor literally but adjusts the language to point to how it should be interpreted. The high trees in 2:12-13 are brought down, but the Greek makes it clearer that people are meant by adding some adjectives that apply to people

¹ See van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

² Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80.

and not trees. Also in 2:13, the specific kind of tree is interpreted as a different species. In 5:1-7, as we have seen, the metaphor is literally preserved, but the translator adjusts some elements, most notably adding references to the hedge and fence in 5:2; this creates more coherence with 5:5.

These examples show how imagery can be rendered literally, though the passage in which it occurs may have been shaped by the translator to one end or another. Also, it is a good illustration of the limits of my method; the translation of individual metaphors is truly best understood in the context of the text where it occurs.

4.1.1.3. Stylistic Adjustments

In a few places a metaphor is rendered with the same metaphor but has been improved stylistically. In 40:24 the vocabulary is reduced: גִּזְע is rendered with ῥίζα.³ A more obvious example is in 59:21 where זֶרַע וּמִפִּי זֶרַע וּמִפִּי זֶרַע וּמִפִּי is reduced just to ἐκ τοῦ στόματός σου καὶ ἐκ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ σπέρματός σου, since seed can already include all subsequent offspring. Similarly, in 65:23 the LXX preserves the seed metaphor but omits the last clause of the verse “and their offspring as well” since it is unnecessary and prolix.

In Isa 40:6-8 the translator shows his skill in rendering a metaphor (and an accompanying simile) with the same metaphor (and simile) while at the same time improving it stylistically, as we have shown in 2.4.1. In 40:6 the metonymy “flesh” standing for humanity, which is unusual in Greek, is interpreted subtly by rendering a third person pronoun referring back to it with “man.” Also the “flower of the field” is rendered as “flower of grass” to create more coherence in the passage. The passage as a whole features a metaphor, antithesis, and actuality which are features Aristotle recommends for good style, so perhaps 40:7 was not dropped by accident by parablepsis or homoioteleuton but was deliberately omitted because it was too crowded and frigid stylistically. In 56:3 the eunuch’s metaphor describing him as a dry tree is preserved literally, but the style is improved by featuring assonance. A similar example where Greek word choice improves the metaphor is 55:13 where specific kinds of weeds are mentioned in the Greek that contrast logically with the pleasant plants, such as the spontaneously sprouting thorn and cypress and the fetid flea-bane plant replaced by the fragrant myrtle.

These passages show that the translator, even while staying close to his text by translating metaphors with the same metaphors, at times seeks to explain and make clear his translation to his audience using a pleasing style.

³ This could be considered a lexical issue, if the translator thought the word meant “root,” or a metonymic shift from a stump to a root.

4.1.1.4. Conclusions

Given the number of examples this study has examined, that only the above eleven metaphors are rendered literally with the same metaphor seems like a rather small sample. Generally, even where the translator uses the same metaphor as the Hebrew, he tends to make adjustments to shape the passage or focus the meaning of the metaphor. So, even when the translator did render a metaphor with the same metaphor he will often leave his mark in the translation.

4.1.2. Metaphors Translated with Different Metaphors

Translating a metaphor with a different metaphor is a well-known translation technique. But this technique can be taken up for different reasons. Of the examples we have examined, there seems to be five reasons which we will review in turn. First, a metaphor may be translated with a different metaphor for lexical reasons, understanding different words in the text. Second, the translator may have interpreted the metaphor by a metonymic shift. Third, the translator may wish to use more conventional metaphors known to his readers (or to create conventional metaphors in his text). Fourth, LXX-Isa at times tries to find more vivid and dramatic metaphors than a purely literal rendering would have made. And finally, in at least one place, the translator rendered a metaphor literally yet has altered what the metaphor represents. These categories to some extent can overlap, as we will point out.

4.1.2.1. Metaphors Changed for Lexical or Textual Reasons

In 33:2 and 48:14 it is almost not fair to say the metaphor is translated with a different metaphor, since it is apparent that the translator read **יֵרֹעַ** (spelled defectively in MT in both places) as **יָרַע** and so rendered with *σπέρμα*. In 11:1 and 40:24 LXX-Isa seems to understand **גִּזַּע** as referring not to a stump but perhaps a taproot, and so renders it in both places with *ρίζα*. But the change from stump to root may have been done to make a metaphor that is more specific or clear or even an attempt at conventionalization toward other metaphors in Isaiah dealing with roots (such as 11:10; 14:29-30; 27:6; etc.), or perhaps even should be considered a rendering with a metonymic shift.

A few more places should be mentioned here, since there is a lexical warrant to some degree for the translator to have used a different metaphor, though we prefer to classify these passages differently. In 27:4, as we will discuss below, the translator reads **שָׁמַר** as an infinitive of **שָׁמַר**. In 3:14, the Greek metaphor is more vivid, since they understood **בָּעַר** II. (to graze, in the Piel) as **בָּעַר** I. (to burn) and rendered with *ἐμπυρίζω*. In 7:19, the word *ξύλον* could be from seeing **נֶעְצִין** and supposing **עֵץ** was meant.

4.1.2.2. Metaphors Changed by a Metonymic Shift

In some cases the translator uses a slightly different metaphor by choosing words metonymically associated. For example, in 11:1 and 40:24, as we have seen, there was a shift from “stump” to “root.” The most obvious examples of this technique was LXX-Isa’s unique interest in using γένημα rather than the more common equivalent καρπός for rendering פְּרִי when agricultural products are meant. We saw this in 32:12 and 65:21 where “produce” is in fact meant in the Hebrew, but also in 3:10 where a more extended meaning of “the result” is meant; this is interesting in that classical Greek literature does have similar metaphors to those in Hebrew, using the word καρπός. Also peculiar is that in 27:9 the word תְּנוּבָה which ought to be translated γένημα (like in the other places it occurs in the LXX) is instead rendered with καρπός. Perhaps 11:1 could be classified here (or indeed as a shift with lexical warrant) in that נֶצֶר is rendered with ἄνθος.

4.1.2.3. Metaphors Changed to Conventionalize

Here we mean to suggest that at times the translator has rendered a metaphor with a different metaphor in order to create or expand references to a conventional metaphor. That is, the translator replaced some metaphors in his translation with metaphors found commonly elsewhere, either in LXX-Isa or biblical literature more generally. This conventionalization, by repeating metaphors with similar or standard meanings, allows for his text to be more readily understood.

This tendency is seen most clearly with the use and introduction of metaphors using “seed” as a vehicle, perhaps because it is nearly a lexicalized metaphor. As we have shown, Isaiah uses “seed” in metaphors to represent offspring, families, or individuals (see 2.1.). LXX-Isa introduces “seed” metaphors for each of these already established meanings. In 37:31 where “bearing fruit” is mentioned to represent producing offspring, LXX-Isa instead says that they will produce “seed.” Similarly, in 14:30 the offspring (parallel to remnant) of the Philistines is referred to as their “root,” but the LXX substitutes the metaphor “seed.” In 14:29, “seed” is used in the Greek as the source of a particular person, while in the Hebrew he comes forth from a “root.” In 14:20, while strictly speaking the LXX uses the same metaphor as the Hebrew, in translation the “seed” no longer represents a kind of people (evil seed) but refers to an individual evil seed and his family.

In two places the translator turns somewhat obscure metaphors into “seed” metaphors. In 31:9 the unique “fire” and “furnace” metaphors are rendered instead as the more conventional “seed” metaphor (meaning remnant or family member) and its interpretation: “kinsmen.” In 57:7 the reference to “your flesh” meaning one’s family would sound strange in Greek, so the translator there too picks the more conventional metaphor “seed.”

In 27:10-11 the Greek abandons the unique metaphor of branches being stripped by calves, drying out, being broken, and being collected by women for a fire. Instead, since the

idea of the metaphor is to show an abandoned fortified city, the Greek uses language more commonly occurring in Isaiah, that of lush green places drying up (such as in 15:5-6; 19:6-7; and 42:15).

4.1.2.4. Metaphors Exchanged for More Vivid or Dramatic Metaphors

At times the LXX-Isa translator likes to substitute a different metaphor that is more vivid or dramatic than the Hebrew affords. The motivation for these substitutions is not always necessarily to make a more vivid metaphor.

In 3:14, possibly in part due to a lexical issue, as mentioned above, rather than leaders grazing God's vineyard, they burn it. In 27:4, likewise, there is some sort of lexical issue at work (as well as many other alterations in the translation), yet rather than having thorns and briars the LXX substituted the metaphor of guarding a field of stubble.

In a few places the translator does seem to be deliberately using a more vivid metaphor. In 7:19, as shown above, there may be some lexical warrant; the translator seems to have interpreted a word for a kind of thorn bush as a tree to better fit the context of hiding places. In 11:1 the translator uses *ἄνθος* to render *נֶחֱמֵץ*, which more vividly shows the new life springing up from the root. Similarly, in the simile in 61:11, the earth does not just bring forth shoots, but in the Greek the translator has it grow flowers. In 28:1 and 4 the translator makes the fading flower more vivid by shifting from a description of the process of fading to a description of it having withered and fallen.

4.1.2.5. Metaphors That Have Had Their Tenors Altered

In at least two places the translator has rendered a metaphor with the same vehicle but has managed to change the tenor it represents in his translation. As mentioned above, in 11:10 the "root of Jesse" in the Hebrew could refer either to the royal line or to an individual, but in the Greek it is specifically an individual. A more definite example comes from 14:20; in Hebrew the "evil seed" refers to evil people in general or as a group of evil people, but in the Greek it refers to an individual and his family.

4.1.2.6. Conclusions

While indeed the above subcategories to an extent overlap, we can conclude, based on our sample, that the translator does not typically replace one metaphor with another because it is objectionable in some way, but does seem at times to understand his text differently at the lexical level than we would. At times he is careful not to render a metaphor literally that will sound too strange in Greek (e.g. 57:7), though also he will at times avoid metaphors that have classical Greek precedents and so should have been possible (as we have seen in his avoidance of *καρπός*). It would be interesting to see if further research showed other ways the translator has conventionalized metaphors in Isaiah. The true genius of the LXX-Isa translator

is his ability to interpret the Hebrew text while translating it largely literally, as can be seen in his altering the tenor of two metaphors while translating their vehicles literally.

4.1.3. Metaphors Translated with Non-metaphors

Metaphors can be rendered with non-metaphors in a variety of ways and for different reasons. First, we will look at some examples where idioms and dead-metaphors are rendered so as to give a non-metaphoric meaning, usually by giving the metonymic value of the Hebrew word. Second, we will look at puns and homonyms that are rendered either in line with the Hebrew or the homonym. Third, we will look at places where the LXX has rendered using the perceived meaning of the Hebrew metaphor. These three sections give order to how metaphors are rendered into non-metaphors, but in nearly each specific example different factors are at work in determining how the translator renders.

4.1.3.1. Hebrew Idioms, Dead Metaphors and Metonymies Rendered

In 4:2 **וּפְרִי הָאָרֶץ** is rendered simply with ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. Ottley suggests that the LXX reads **פְּנִי**,⁴ but this would be a unique equivalence. The translator transforms this entire verse to express his own ideas. The word **פְּרִי** was probably dropped because of the translator's ideas about the verse or style, and not because of the state of his *Vorlage*.

In 10:12 another idiom using the word **פְּרִי** is removed. The Hebrew **אֶפְקֹד עַל-פְּרִי מִלְּךָ-לִבְבִּי לְגִדְלִי לִבְבִּי מִלְּךָ-אֲשׁוּר** is reduced to ἐπάξει ἐπὶ τὸν νοῦν τὸν μέγαν, τὸν ἄρχοντα τῶν Ἀσσυρίων. If the fruit of the great heart is its results, pride, then the LXX saw no reason to render it in this clause since later in the verse this is made clear. While the phrase **פְּרִי-גִדְלִי לִבְבִּי** is unique, it operates according to the idiomatic use of **פְּרִי**.

The case of 13:18, however, is a matter of interpreting an idiom. The Hebrew **וּפְרִי יְרֵחָמוּ בָטֶן לֹא יִרְחָמוּ** is rendered καὶ τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν οὐ μὴ ἐλεήσωσιν, though here it has a synonymously parallel phrase. This is a good translation of **פְּרִי-בָטֶן**, but in Gen 30:2; Mic 6:7; and Psa 132(131):11 we find καρπὸν κοιλίας, and in Psa 127(126):3 καρποῦ τῆς γαστροῦ.

A similar idiom is also interpreted in 14:29b, this time it is the fruit of snakes. The Hebrew **וּפְרִי שָׂרָף מְעוֹפֵף** is rendered καὶ τὰ ἔκγονα αὐτῶν ἐξελεύσονται ὄφεις πετόμενοι. The verb **יָצָא** and the noun **פְּרִי** are rendered twice by the Greek to balance the parallelism. Again the rendering of **פְּרִי** with τὰ ἔκγονα is appropriate, and is used elsewhere for renderings of fruit as an offspring of animals (Deut 28:4, 11, 51; 30:9).

In Isa 27:6 a metaphor of Jacob taking root and blossoming is rendered as a variation of the idioms in 13:18 and 14:29. The Hebrew **הַבָּאִים יִשְׂרָשׁ יַעֲקֹב יִצְיָן וּפְרָח יִשְׂרָאֵל** is rendered οἱ ἐρχόμενοι, τέκνα Ιακωβ, βλαστήσει καὶ ἐξανθήσει Ισραηλ. The translator reads **יִשְׂרָשׁ** as the noun **שָׂרָשׁ** and renders it τέκνα.

⁴ Ottley, *Isaiah II*, 121. Ziegler suggests **פְּנִי הָאָרֶץ** (על); *Untersuchungen*, 108.

In two places, the LXX-Isa translator appears to give a literal rendering of what he perceives to be a metonymy. In 55:12 the translator renders **וְכָל-עֵצִי הַשָּׂדֶה יִמְחֶאוּ-כָּף** with *καὶ πάντα τὰ ξύλα τοῦ ἀγροῦ ἐπικροτήσῃ τοῖς κλάδοις*. While the translator may have understood **כָּף** to be the same as **כֶּפֶף**, meaning “branch” (though he never renders this word literally, see 9:13; 19:15) the translator may have simply thought it odd for trees to clap hands so adjusted it to branches, a shift that could be understood as metonymic from one species to another species. An example quite different is 18:2, where a metonymy of the genus is perceived and the species is given. The Hebrew **הַשְׁלַח בְּיָם צִירִים וּבְכָל־יַגְמָא עַל-פְּנֵי-מַיִם** is rendered *ὁ ἀποστέλλων ἐν θαλάσῃ ὄμηρα καὶ ἐπιστολὰς βυβλῖνας ἐπάνω τοῦ ὕδατος*. The translator seems to take **כָּלִי** as meaning something like “an article, an object” and so gives it the more specific meaning “letter,” *ἐπιστολή*, due to the context of sending messengers and hostages; nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible is **כָּלִי** used to refer to a boat. As Ziegler has pointed out, LXX-Isa often renders **כָּלִי** freely to fit what is meant in the specific context, rather than rigidly rendering with *σκεῦος*.⁵

While we can point out that LXX-Isa sometimes interprets idioms and dead metaphors or perceived metonymic statements, this observation is of limited value, since in most cases the immediate context seems to be the deciding factor for the rendering, not the idiomatic or metonymic nature of the statements themselves.

4.1.3.2. Puns and Homonyms

Puns represent a dilemma for translators: how can they offer both meanings of the word in the new language? Similarly, when presented with a word that has a homonym in an un-vocalized text, the translator must choose between meanings.

In 10:33, a metaphor of the LORD trimming high branches is given for the arrogant being brought low. The LXX, though, renders **מִסְעֵף פְּאָרָה** with *συνταράσσει τοὺς ἐνδόξους*. The translator seems to have understood **מִסְעֵף** in the sense of “divide,” and **פְּאָרָה** not as “branch,” but “glorious people.” Once this reference to branches being trimmed is gone, the remaining metaphor with a dual meaning of the high (branches/trees) must refer only to high people. The translator makes this clear, rendering **וְרָמֵי הַקּוֹמָה גְּדוּעִים וְהַגְּבֵהִים יִשְׁפְּלוּ** with *καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ τῇ ὕβρει συντριβήσονται, καὶ οἱ ὑψηλοὶ ταπεινωθήσονται*.

It would be easy to compile a long list of words taken with a different meaning from what modern scholars believe the Hebrew intended, but here are a few examples where the rendering of a word with its homonym has affected a metaphor.

In 60:21 the phrase **נֶצֶר מִטְעֹו** is rendered *φυλάσσω τὸ φύτευμα*. Rather than calling the people a shoot God planted (as in Exod 15:17), in the Greek the righteous people are in the land guarding the plant, the work of God’s hands. In the Greek of 61:3, however, the

⁵ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83-84.

people are called righteous generations, the plant of the Lord for glory, so perhaps in 60:21 the translator sees some group of leaders as those guarding the plant.

The LXX reads the noun צֶמַח as the Aramaic verb צִמַּח in 4:2. The result is that the “branch of the LORD,” a metaphor of a messianic figure, is removed in the Greek. Instead of בְּיָוֶם הַהוּא יִהְיֶה צֶמַח יְהוָה לְצִבְיָ וּלְכְבוֹד we read Τῇ δὲ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ ἐπιλάμψει ὁ θεὸς ἐν βουλῇ μετὰ δόξης. The metaphor was technically removed, but it was not the result of the translator actively considering what to do about the metaphor.

Only 10:33 could be considered a possible pun. In these other examples the translator reads the text differently than the MT does, and removes a metaphor mostly due to how the verse as a whole is understood.

4.1.3.3. Interpreting the Meaning of the Metaphor

In a few cases we can say with confidence that the translator has removed the metaphor and opted instead to state what he believes the metaphor meant.

The translator in 27:9(10) renders the “fruit” idiom as though it were a metaphor and gives what he believes it represents, so וְזֶה כָּל-פְּרִי הַסֵּר חֲטָאתוֹ is rendered καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἡ εὐλογία αὐτοῦ, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι αὐτοῦ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν.

In 33:11 a metaphor of giving birth to straw is rendered with what the translator thinks it means. The Hebrew קָשׁ רִוְחָכֶם תִּלְדוּ is interpreted as ματαία ἔσται ἡ ἰσχὺς τοῦ πνεύματος ὑμῶν. Elsewhere conceiving and giving birth to wind is rendered literally (28:18), and in 59:4 that the people conceive trouble and give birth to guilt is rendered literally. The interpretation of 33:11 is probably under the influence of 30:15 and Lev 26:20 where their strength is vain, as Ziegler pointed out.⁶

In two passages, 9:13 and 19:15, the same word pair is used in a merism but is interpreted in two different ways by the LXX. Isa 9:13 reads וַיִּכְרֹת יְהוָה מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב and was rendered καὶ ἀφείλε κύριος ἀπὸ Ἰσραὴλ κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, μέγαν καὶ μικρὸν ἐν μιᾷ ἡμέρᾳ. The Greek seems to understand וְזָנָב not as synonymously parallel to רֹאשׁ but as an explanation of it. In the next verse it is explained that the leaders and prophets are meant by this metaphor, so the Greek has made it clear that all will be removed, great and small. But in 19:15 where the Hebrew reads וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה לְמִצְרַיִם מַעֲשֶׂה אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂה רֹאשׁ וְזָנָב כִּפְּה וְאַגְמוֹן the Greek interprets καὶ οὐκ ἔσται τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις ἔργον, ὃ ποιήσει κεφαλὴν καὶ οὐράν, ἀρχὴν καὶ τέλος. The Greek has made these word pairs the object of the verb (rather than describe the doer), so they no longer represent the leader’s inability to lead but describe the disorderly state of Egypt. In each verse the translator has rendered the meaning of the metaphor in order to clarify what he thinks it means in its immediate context.

⁶ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 147.

In 21:10 two metaphors are interpreted by the translator. The Hebrew מִדְּשָׁתִי וּבִן־גֶּרֶנִי is interpreted as οἱ καταλελειμμένοι καὶ οἱ ὀδυνώμενοι. The idea that being threshed is to suffer some sort of violence is clear enough (cf. Micah 4:13 and Hab 3:12 where it is a metaphor for military defeat). Also the process of winnowing after threshing may have given rise to the idea of a remnant, though in 17:5-6 what is left in the field represents the remnant.

In three places, tree metaphors are interpreted as referring to people. In 10:19, after two verses talking about trees of the forest, the phrase וְשֹׁאֵר עֵץ יַעֲרֹ is rendered with καὶ οἱ καταλειφθέντες ἀπ’ αὐτῶν, making clear that these trees represented people. In 10:34 the translator interprets “the thickets of the forest” and “the majestic trees” both as “the lofty” (2x), and to make clear that these lofty ones are people, he specifies that they fall by the sword (μάχαιρα) rather than just by iron (בְּרִזָּל). In 61:3 rather than calling those mourning in Zion “oaks of righteousness” the LXX calls them “generations of righteousness.”

In 27:2-4 the vineyard metaphors have been nearly all removed and replaced with discussion of a besieged city. We have discussed this at length in 3.5.1.

4.1.3.4. Conclusions

While we have used the word “metaphor” rather broadly, these examples show that there are a variety of reasons why a metaphor can be rendered with a non-metaphor. Giving a non-metaphorical rendering of an idiom or dead metaphor is interpretation on a different level than giving the meaning of a metaphor. But also, some metaphors are removed because the translator reads the passage differently or understands a different definition of a word; this is not the same as interpreting the meaning of a metaphor. In each case the translator is carefully trying to render the verse at hand, looking at the immediate and more remote contexts to interpret. Further study is needed to see which idioms or sorts of idioms and dead metaphors are “acceptable” to be retained in the translation by various LXX translators. For example, as we have seen, idioms involving “fruit” are always removed by LXX-Isa, though not by other LXX translators, while some other metaphors are conventionalized to “seed” in LXX-Isa.

4.1.4. Translation of Non-Metaphors with Metaphors

On three occasions the translator has introduced a plant metaphor where there was no metaphor in the Hebrew.

Two of these occasions involve words for a remnant being rendered with “seed.” In 1:9 the word שְׂרִיד is rendered with σπέρμα, perhaps following the precedent in Deut 3:3. In 15:9 פְּלִיטָה is rendered with σπέρμα; usually in Isaiah it is rendered with a form of καταλείπω (4:2 and 37:31 where the parallel “fruit” is rendered “seed”), unless it is parallel to שֹׁאֵר, in which case it is rendered with a participle from σῶζω (10:20 and 37:32). As we discussed in

2.1.4. concerning these passages, LXX-Isa seems to take seed and remnant as related ideas. In any case, “seed” is very nearly a dead metaphor in the LXX.

The third place a metaphor is introduced is in 24:7, though it is probably because the translator believes אָבַל means “to mourn” since this is also how he translates it in 24:4 (where it is again parallel to אָמַל). The addition of this metaphor, then, is most likely due to the translator’s understanding of the vocabulary and not due to concern for style or expression.

4.1.5. Merging of Multiple Metaphors

In at least three places the translator has merged metaphors together. In 35:7 the Hebrew has four transformations: sand becomes a pool, thirsty ground becomes springs; the haunt of jackals becomes a swamp, and grass becomes reeds. The Greek, however, only has the first two transformations (altered somewhat in translation) then describes what the marshy springs will be like: the joy of birds and a residence for reeds and marshland. Perhaps the translator wanted to reduce the number of parallel images and so opted instead to describe the pleasant scene resulting from the transformations.

In 37:27, the Hebrew has what may be three implied similes: that the inhabitants become plants of the field, tender grass, and grass on the housetops, blighted before it is grown. The Greek, however, condenses these down into two similes (perhaps under the influence of דָּחִי), so they are like dry grass on housetops and like wild grass.

In 40:6, a passage with several interesting renderings, a metaphor and a simile (all flesh is grass; their constancy like the flower of the field) are merged so that all flesh is grass and the glory of man like the flower of grass. By mentioning grass in the simile instead of the field, the two images are tied more closely together. This is still implied in the Hebrew (especially in 40:7 where the grass and flower fade) but is explicit in the Greek.

4.1.6. Metaphors Omitted

In two cases LXX-Isa omits a plant metaphor, giving no equivalent for it. In 40:7 the metaphor that all flesh is grass is repeated in the Hebrew, but the LXX omits this verse. It could be due to parablepsis or homoioteleuton, but could also have been done for stylistic reasons. In 42:15 LXX-Isa omits a clause describing herbage (עֵשֶׂב) drying out, probably for stylistic reasons, that is, to reduce nearly identical elements.⁷

⁷ See van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 69-70.

4.1.7. Translation of Metaphors with Similes

As we said in our introduction, Demetrius suggests using similes instead of metaphors if they are “too bold.”⁸ As we will show below (4.3.3.), metaphors rendered as similes in LXX-Isa do not seem to have been done so because they were too bold (with the possible exception of 50:3).⁹ But nevertheless, the translator sometimes renders metaphors with similes, as Ziegler has discussed.¹⁰ In some cases the simile is implied in the Hebrew, in other cases the translator has at least some lexical warrant for using a simile, but in some cases the translator has introduced similes due to some exegetical considerations.

4.1.7.1. Similes Implied in the Hebrew

The terse style of Hebrew poetry often omits particles and conjunctions, so at times a simile is probably implied though there is no comparative marker. In 37:27 the Hebrew has no comparative marker, but the LXX adds one, perhaps under the influence of *היה*, since often *ל היה* constructions are interpreted as similes in LXX-Isa.¹¹ Even modern English translations (NRSV, ESV) render these metaphors in 37:27 as similes. The same issue seems to be at work in 33:12, where we find overly terse poetic statements that seem to imply a comparison and also feature the presence of *היה*, and so the Greek has made it into a simile. In 51:12 the phrase *וּמִבְּנֵי אָדָם חָצִיר יִנָּתֵן* is translated with a simile in modern translations (NRSV, ESV) as well as in LXX: *καὶ ἀπὸ υἱοῦ ἀνθρώπου, οἷ ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἐξηράνθησαν*. The translator has made this clause clear by making it a simile and explaining what exactly he thinks *יִנָּתֵן* means.

In 9:17(18) the Greek adds a simile, probably believing that it is implied by the parallel clause having a simile *καὶ καυθήσεται ὡς πῦρ ἢ ἀνομία καὶ ὡς ἄγρωστος ξηρὰ βρωθήσεται ὑπὸ πυρός*; only it is not a parallel clause (unless it is climactic parallelism) but a continuation of the simile in Hebrew: *כִּי־בַעֲרָה כָאֵשׁ רִשְׁעָה שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית תֹּאכֶל*.

4.1.7.2. Lexical Warrants for Translating with a Simile

We have already seen that in 37:27 the translator may have thought he saw a lexical warrant for using a simile. In 1:31 it is clearer, in that *ל היה* is rendered with a simile. Again, some modern translations (NRSV, ESV) tend to see similes in this verse as well. Similarly, in 41:15 a comparative marker is added where the Hebrew has *ל*. Perhaps it makes better sense in Greek to say they will be made like threshing sledges than to say they will be made into threshing sledges. The issue of *ל היה* constructions being rendered with *ὡς* could just be a matter of Greek syntax and not a matter of concern for rhetorical style.

Another example is in 44:4, where *וְצִמְחוּ בִבְיֵין חָצִיר* is rendered as though *ב* were *כ*: *καὶ ἀνατελοῦσιν ὡσεὶ χόρτος ἀνὰ μέσον ὕδατος*. This could be the result of the *Vorlage*

⁸ Demetrius, *On Style*, 80, 85.

⁹ And arguably 55:8.

¹⁰ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92f.

¹¹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

matching 1QIsa^a, which reads כבין. But as Ziegler has pointed out, sometimes where MT has כבין LXX-Isa has read it as a comparative marker.¹²

4.1.7.3. Similes Introduced Due to Exegetical Considerations

In two places the translator introduces a simile in order to more clearly express what the translator thought the passage meant. In 5:6 the translator introduces a simile that thorns will come up as in a dry land. This is done in part due to the translator's unique ideas about the meaning of שָׁמִיר וְשֵׁית, but also to distinguish the thorns overcoming the abandoned vineyard from those being produced by it in 5:2 and 4. In 10:17 another metaphor with the words שָׁמִיר וְשֵׁית is rendered with a simile. The Hebrew metaphor emphasizes that God will burn the thorns and briars of the king, but the Greek introduces a simile to show how violently or quickly they will be consumed, like they were dry grass.

4.1.7.4. Conclusions

Generally, LXX-Isa appears to render metaphors as similes only where he believes a simile is actually meant, either by being implied or because he thought he saw (or did see in his differing *Vorlage*) a comparative marker. The case of the construction **היה ל** deserves further investigation; perhaps the translator does in fact render this appropriately by using a comparative marker. In the only two places where the translator's exegesis is the deciding factor, it is probably because of the word pair **שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית** which he has his own unique approach to everywhere it occurs.

4.1.8. Translation of a Simile with the Same Simile

Again, a generally literal translation technique of the translator should have resulted in the majority of similes being translated literally. Also, if similes are “safer” than metaphors, as Demetrius says,¹³ there should be less need to find alternative ways of expressing them in a new language. But as we will see, even where similes are rendered with the same simile, the LXX-Isa translator will often make slight adjustments to the simile or its passage and at times will expand the simile.

4.1.8.1. Literal Renderings of a Simile with the Same Simile

Not much needs to be said about the simile literally rendered. The three similes in 1:8 (like a booth in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a besieged city) are all rendered literally. In 48:19, the well known simile alluding to God's promise to Abraham in Gen 22:17 that "your seed will be like sand" and its parallel "like dust" are rendered literally. In 66:14 a

¹² Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92.

¹³ Demetrius, *On Style*, 80, 85.

strange simile of bones flourishing like grass is rendered literally; דָּשָׁא is rendered with βοτάνη probably for its positive connotations. One of the similes in 5:24, וּפְרָחָם כְּאֶבֶק יַעֲלֶה, is rendered literally as καὶ τὸ ἄνθος αὐτῶν ὡς κονιορτὸς ἀναβήσεται. In both the Hebrew and the Greek of 65:25 the lion eats straw like the ox (but the similar simile in 11:7 is not rendered as a simile).

4.1.8.2. Slightly Adjusted Similes

Sometimes the translator makes various sorts of small adjustments while using the same simile in Greek.

In three places, rather than “withering” the translator has opted for “fallen.” In 1:30 the translator carefully renders the simile to draw attention to the terebinth that sheds its leaves, as opposed to the withering leaves. In 34:4 the translator adjusts the leaves and fruit simile so that they fall rather than just wither. In 64:5(6), also, the attention is drawn to leaves that have fallen rather than are withering. In each of these passages the translator has carefully rendered נָבַל to more vividly express the simile.

In 53:2 a simile is adjusted, probably to make it more sensible (and not just due to confusion about the text); rather than a root growing *out of* dry ground (מֵאֶרֶץ) the LXX has it growing *in* a dry land (ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ).

In 5:24 the first simile is rendered literally (except that “tongue of fire” is rendered “coal of fire”) and the second simile (the comparative marker is implied in the Hebrew but perhaps not in the Greek) is adjusted to be more closely parallel (“sinks down in the flame” is rendered “burned up by an unrestrained flame”).

A second simile in 17:5 is slightly adjusted due to lexical reasons; וַיִּרְעַן was thought to be יִרְעַן and so rendered with σπέρμα.

The simile in 17:6 is slightly adjusted as well; the translator has removed that the tree is beaten and only says that the few olives remain in the tree and makes the simile more succinct.

The simile in 7:2, that the heart of the king and the people shake like a tree in the forest, is slightly adjusted in the Greek; the verb נָנַח is rendered in two different ways (with ἐξίστημι for the people and σαλεύω for the trees) for the sake of clarity.

4.1.9. Translation of a Simile with a Different Simile

The translation of similes should be easier, since they often make explicit the point of comparison. But in several cases the LXX-Isa translator has seen fit to translate one simile with another. First, we will list similes that differ probably due to a textual or lexical issue. Second, we will list a place where a simile is altered by a metonymic shift. Third, we will list

similes altered for the sake of clarification. Fourth, we will look at similes with the word *φρύγανα*. Then we will make some conclusions.

4.1.9.1. Textual or Lexical Issues

In 5:24 the translator rendered *מֶקֶד* as though it were *מָצָא*, that is, with *χνοῦς*, and so has changed the simile.

In 17:5 the translator has altered the simile slightly by taking the subject *קִצִּיר* as an object of what was gathered (*ἀμνητος*); also the means of gathering (*וְזָרְעוּ*) was read as its homonym (rendering it with *σπέρμα*) further describing what was gathered.

In Isa 53:2 there is something of a pun, where *וַיַּעַל כִּיּוֹנָק לְפָנָיו* could be understood as referring to a baby growing up until the next clause, *וְכִשְׁרָשׁ מֵאֶרֶץ צִיָּה*, makes it clear that a plant is meant. The translator, though, renders *ἀνέτειλε μὲν¹⁴ ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ ὡς παιδίον, ὡς ῥίζα ἐν γῇ διψώσῃ*.

4.1.9.2. Metonymic Shift

In 61:11 rather than the earth bringing forth sprouts (*צֶמַח*), the LXX makes the simile about flowers (*ἄνθος*), which makes a more vivid image; also flowers are more closely related to the parallel “seed.” This rendering is similar to the shift in 11:1 from *נֶזֶר* to *ἄνθος*.

4.1.9.3. Clarification

In a few places the LXX-Isa translator substitutes another simile that is clearer in some way.

For the simile of the oak being cut down in 6:13, the translator has instead used the simile of an acorn falling from its husk. We have noted the difficulties of this verse above (3.6.2.2.); the acorn falling simile is parallel to the terebinth simile which seems to be implied to be about a terebinth shedding its leaves.

In 9:17(18) thorns are rendered as dry grass that will be burned. We will discuss this below where multiple similes are combined.

In 17:5b, rather than the simile of gleaning grain in the valley of Rephaim (which requires readers to know about this particular valley), the LXX says it is like gathering grain in a firm ravine, where one cannot sow.

The unique simile “like chaff on the mountains” in 17:13 is rendered to be clearer: “like the dust of chaff when they winnow.”

A second simile in 17:13 is also changed, rather than tumble-weed (*גִּלְגָּל*) being blown in a storm, the LXX makes it a gust driving dust kicked up by a wheel. There could be some lexical warrant for this (*גִּלְגָּל*), but in 29:5 the LXX again introduces the idea of dust being

¹⁴ All manuscripts read *ἀνηγγείλαμεν*.

blown by the wind without any equivalent. In both places the translator's new simile illustrates and makes more vivid a parallel simile of chaff blowing away.

The unique simile of treading straw into dung is clarified to conform with more common images; perhaps we can consider it conventionalization, in 25:10. To an extent the translator may have understood **מִתְבַּן** to mean grain, and then by metonymy associated it with the threshing floor (*ἄλων*), but there is no clear reason **מִדְמִנָּה** should have been rendered with *ἄμαξα* besides that the translator was transforming the simile into describing threshing.

In 58:5 the image of bowing one's head like a reed is rendered instead with bending the neck like a ring. This appears to be the translator picking a better image, though could be because he did not understand the word **אֶגְמוֹן** the way we do.

In 65:22 the translator rather flagrantly interprets by turning the simile "like a tree" into "like the tree of life." This does in a sense clarify, in that the longevity of the tree is meant in Hebrew; the Greek extends the longevity.

4.1.9.4. Similes with *φρύγανον*

In several places LXX-Isa prefers to use similes with *φρύγανον*, rather than with a word for stubble, since it better expresses the simile. In 40:24 the translator changes the simile from that of straw blowing in the wind to twigs, probably thinking the frail desert plants that easily come loose from their roots when dried out. This change better connects the simile to the image of the princes' stock not taking root in the earth. The same simile is used in 41:2, though here because comparing bows to dry twigs is a more vivid simile than comparing them to straw. We find the same rendering for a third time in 47:14, where tinder is clearly meant. Instead of saying the astrologers are like straw and they will be burned, the LXX says simply that they will be burned like twigs. The translator may have thought *φρύγανον* was a valid meaning of **שִׁבְרָה**, but he stands alone among the LXX translators in using this equivalent. In 5:24, though, he uses the more standard equivalent *κάλαμη*.

4.1.9.5. Conclusions

While there are three cases that look like there may be a textual or lexical issue, most of the above examples show that the translator would sometimes use a different simile or adjust it to what he thought would be a more clear or appropriate simile. Most of these cases feature a unique simile, which may be why he felt the need to use a different vehicle. If indeed clarity is what is at issue, it is interesting that the translator opts for a different simile so often, rather than use a non-simile to express what he thought the idea was.

4.1.10. Translation of Similes with Non-Similes

On three occasions the translator has rendered a simile with a non-simile. In 41:2 this could be because כעפר was read as בעפר, since the Greek has εἰς γῆν. The change is that rather than the victor making the kings like dust with his sword, now the kings' swords are given to the earth. In 11:7 a simile is removed due to harmonization. Here the three pairs of animals are all said to eat “together” in the Greek, though the Hebrew only has “together” once. The Greek harmonizes what is said about the three pairs, removing a simile in the process. So, in the first case the simile may have been removed because the translator did not see a comparative marker, and in the second place it was removed for the sake of style.

In 17:9 the Hebrew may have been corrupted, though the DSS evidence and the three other versions all agree with MT against LXX. The MT reads יְהִיו עָרֵי מְעֻזָּה כְּעֻזַּבַּת הַחֶרֶשׁ וְהָאֲמִיר אֲשֶׁר עֲזָבוּ מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, while LXX has ἔσονται αἱ πόλεις σου ἐγκαταλελειμμέναι, ὃν τρόπον ἐγκατέλιπον οἱ Ἀμορραῖοι καὶ οἱ Εὐαῖοι ἀπὸ προσώπου τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ. While this passage is technically a simile rendered with a non-simile, it is clearly not a simple issue of the translator removing imagery, he has read the text quite differently, or even read a different text.

4.1.11. Translation of Non-Similes with Similes

In one place, the translator introduces a simile where the Hebrew does not have (or imply) one. We discussed the details of how in 27:10(9) the phrase כִּי עֵר בְּצֹרָה בָּדָד is rendered ὥσπερ δρυμὸς μακράν (see 3.6.4.1.); here it is necessary only to note that כִּי was taken as a comparative marker.

4.1.12. Merging Multiple Similes

In 24:13 two similes are combined, turning the second simile into an explanation with a metaphor; rather than “like when an olive is beaten, like at the gleanings when the grape harvest is ended” the Greek has “just as when someone gleans an olive tree, so shall people glean them, even when the harvest has ceased.”

4.1.13. Metaphor or Simile with an Explanation

In a few cases a metaphor or simile has an explanation along with it. In 36:6, in what way Pharaoh is a broken reed is explained in both languages by saying it breaks when you lean on it and injures the hand holding it. Similarly, the allegory in 5:1-7 is explained in verse 7 in both languages, though the Greek subtly shapes and interprets other elements. In both

languages, the image in 40:6-8 is explained: humanity is like grass in that it quickly withers and fades.

In two places we examined, the translator adds an explanation for the image. Isa 27:2-4 has many differences in the Greek from the Hebrew, most of the vineyard metaphor has been rendered with language about a besieged city. As if this were not enough, the translator adds a sort of theological summary in 27:4, about how God has done all that he has ordained.

Another extended metaphor can be found in 28:23-28. Here various agricultural activities are described in terms of how they typically are and are not done, where various crops are planted and how they are processed after harvest. In the Greek the translator updates some of the terms and equipment to better match the practices of his day in Egypt. More interesting, though, is that the translator interprets giving his perceived meaning of the metaphor in 28:28, so that threshing means God's anger and trampling is His bitterness, neither of which will last forever. By interpreting the metaphor in this verse he provides an explanation for the imagery in the entire passage.

4.1.14. Conclusions

It should come as no surprise that the translator used so many different strategies to render metaphors, given the well known independent character of LXX-Isa's translation approach, and since, as Labahn has shown, even within one chapter, Lam 3:1-21, a LXX translator used six different strategies to render metaphors.¹⁵ It is tempting to draw statistics about how often a metaphor is rendered with the same metaphor versus a non-metaphor or different metaphor, and so forth, but since we have only surveyed plant metaphors, these statistics may not accurately represent those of all the metaphors in the book. Nevertheless, we can make some observations about how the translator used different metaphor translation strategies.

It is important to note that quite often the translator is content to render a metaphor or simile with the same metaphor or simile. Often it is because the metaphor is a dead metaphor (as in the case of "seeds"). But also conventional metaphors, which should be more difficult to translate, are maintained in the translation, perhaps since they can be found commonly in biblical literature (such as metaphors about trees, roots, and grass). Some original metaphors are also rendered, as is the case with the bruised reed in 36:6, which has an explanation in the text. The extended metaphor in Isa 5:1-7 is also rendered with the same metaphor, though with some modifications, and has an explanation. The similes rendered with the same similes are often modified slightly in some way, as we have seen.

¹⁵ Labahn, "Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise," 181. She counts five strategies, but I count two of her subdivisions separately.

Rendering a metaphor with a different metaphor is a good strategy when trying to create vivid and poetic passages that are sensible to the audience and reflect their own experience. Skilled translators can find and use equivalent metaphorical expressions in the target language. Usually, though, when LXX-Isa renders a metaphor with a different metaphor this does not seem to be his main concern. Often he uses a different metaphor due to lexical or textual issues; he has taken a word to have been a different word or to have had a different definition than we would expect. It is difficult to tell in the cases where the translator has altered the metaphor by making a metonymic shift in the meaning of a word or vehicle of the metaphor, whether the translator was endeavoring to interpret, or if it is simply testimony to a different lexical knowledge of the meaning of the words in question. Translations using metonymy are worthy of more research. It is more clear that the translator is deliberately choosing a different metaphor in cases where he chooses to use dead metaphors (such as “seed,” particularly for words the meaning of which he clearly knows) or conventionalizes to more common metaphors (such as using the common image of lush places drying out in 27:10-11 or using a threshing simile in 25:10). Sometimes the translator renders a metaphor in such a way as to show the resultant state rather than the process, such as when he talks of flowers instead of shoots, and will describe leaves, flowers, and fruit as having fallen rather than withering; this approach creates more vividness. Also of interest, and worthy of further study, are the metaphors that have their vehicles hijacked to carry new tenors in the translation, such as 11:10 and 14:20; these show the translator’s skill in interpreting the meaning of a text while rendering many features literally.

The translator renders similes with different similes for many of the same reasons: because of lexical or textual issues, using metonymic shifts, or seeking to clarify the imagery. Often when he feels the need to use a more clear simile it is because the simile in question is unique (such as treading straw into dung in 25:10), and so the translator may conventionalize, picking a simile found elsewhere in biblical literature or even in Isaiah itself. One strange exception is the translator’s use of *φρύγανον* to render similes; while he makes a good simile in each case, it is unclear why he felt the need to clarify the similes with this word.

The translator renders a metaphor with a non-metaphor for several reasons. As we have shown, he will often remove Hebrew idioms and dead metaphors (particularly using the word פִּרְי). Sometimes he removes a metaphor by way of metonymic shift (55:12 could be an example of this, if the translator knew כִּפְּףָה meant branch;¹⁶ a better example is 18:2 with the vessel of papyrus). Homonyms and puns in the Hebrew at times require the translator to choose a rendering that in effect removes the metaphor but is more clear. When the translator uses a non-metaphor in an effort to interpret a metaphor it is usually due to the features of the individual passage at hand. It is in these examples that the LXX-Isa translator shows himself to be most unique among the LXX translators.

¹⁶ Though he gives no evidence elsewhere of knowing this meaning.

Of the passages we have examined where similes are rendered with non-similes, twice it is due to textual or lexical issues and in the third passage the simile is removed to harmonize to the surrounding clauses.

In only three places the translator introduces a plant metaphor where the Hebrew has no metaphor. In two cases it is because he prefers to say “seed” rather than remnant; it is noteworthy that while he introduces a metaphor, it is a dead or lexicalized metaphor and is consistent with uses of the same metaphor in other places in the Hebrew Isaiah text. The third place it is probably not an exegetical effort but only because he defined a word differently than we do. Where similes are introduced where they are lacking in the Hebrew it is always due to lexical reasons; the translator only introduced similes where he thought they were present in his *Vorlage*. Similarly, the translator does not seem to render metaphors with similes where they are too bold or objectionable in some way, but usually because the Hebrew implies a simile or he thought his text had a simile present.¹⁷ The exception to this is where the word pair *שִׁמְרִי וְשִׁי* occurs, words for which the translator has his own special approach.

In some cases the translator takes other approaches to metaphors for the sake of style. In particular, he at times merges metaphors or similes together or will even omit them, as we have seen, though, it is not always clear whether an omission is deliberate or not.

At times the translator feels the need to explain a metaphor or simile. He often explains or renders them in ways similar to other metaphors or similes present already in the Hebrew text.

So, looking generally at these various translation strategies, subdividing them for possible reasons they were adopted, it is clear that some of the same or similar issues are dealt with differently. For instance, lexical or textual issues provide motivation for the translator adopting various different translation strategies, such as rendering with a different metaphor, a non-metaphor, or a simile with a different simile. In a sense, these are false positives of that strategy being used, since the translator has simply read a different text or read it differently or understood a different definition than we would, and was not deliberately trying to modify the expression of the metaphor for his target language.

It is curious also that while dead metaphors should in theory be the hardest to translate between languages,¹⁸ they do not seem to bother our translator. This could be because many of the dead metaphors we looked at have similar usages in classical Greek literature, and can be found elsewhere in biblical literature. The one exception is metaphors involving “fruit,” which should have been no harder than the others, since again, they are found commonly in biblical literature (and were rendered literally in the other books of the LXX) and can also be found in classical Greek literature.

¹⁷ We will address the issue of metaphors rendered as similes below in 4.4.3.

¹⁸ van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

Conventional metaphors, likewise, should be difficult to translate, particularly if they are language or culture specific.¹⁹ But again, the translator often has no problem with these metaphors, though he will occasionally modify them in various ways for his translation. Where the translator does make changes to metaphors it is often when they are original, which in theory should be the easiest to translate.²⁰ As we have seen, though, these original metaphors are often conventionalized in that the translator substitutes for them dead metaphors or metaphors found elsewhere in Isaiah.

The translator shows his independence and license in his translation by making some metaphors more vivid, but can be seen most clearly where he adds interpretations of metaphors or renders them with non-metaphors to give what he believes the metaphor means. Likewise he feels he has the authority to omit and otherwise adjust metaphors, not only for the sake of clarity and to express their proper meaning in Greek, but even simply for the sake of good style and to render some of the rhetorical force even at the expense of some of the individual words and phrases.

But at the same time the translator is rather moderate. He usually does not change metaphors into similes or vice versa unless he thinks the text intends them. Even where he shows alarming and unique interpretations, he is consistent in how he executes them, so that while he resists metaphors with “fruit,” he is systematic and consistent in how he renders them. Likewise he appears to have a clear conception of the meaning of the word pair שְׁמִיר וְיִשִּׁית, and so is consistent in how he deals with them in the different contexts they appear. His use of φρύγανον also, while unique, is always used for the same Hebrew word and is always used well to express the metaphor in which it occurs. Further evidence of his moderation is that when he does render a metaphor with a different metaphor he usually conventionalizes, opting for a metaphor that has already been used in the Hebrew of Isaiah.

Labahn has argued for Lam 3:1-21 that it is unclear whether metaphors are altered as a result of the translator receiving the metaphors of the MT or of the translator producing metaphors in Greek,²¹ which in some cases is undoubtedly true in the examples we examined above. But I think we can go further and suggest that the pluses and minuses of similes are wholly the result of how the LXX-Isa translator received the imagery of the MT, while some of the places where he renders with a non-metaphor or adds an explanation are the results of him producing (or rather interpreting) metaphors. A more obvious example of the later are the similes where the translator uses φρύγανον as the vehicle of a metaphor and rendering of קֶשׁ, since he clearly knows the proper meaning of this Hebrew word.

¹⁹ van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

²⁰ van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint*, 86.

²¹ Labahn, “Bitterkeit und Asche als Speise,” 153.

4.2. Evaluation of Ziegler's Work on the Metaphors in LXX-Isa

Our study has made frequent reference to that of Ziegler and has hopefully expanded on his work to paint a more full picture of how the LXX-Isa translator dealt with metaphors. We have already summarized Ziegler's chapter on metaphors and comparisons in the introduction (1.1.2.), it remains for us here to evaluate his findings against our own. While we have looked primarily at metaphors in passages that have plant terminology, Ziegler based his observations on his work with the entire book; but nevertheless, from our own more limited perspective we can confirm that Ziegler's observations are largely sound. Indeed, the translator does feel free to interpret, particularly figurative expressions, while at the same time produces a translation that in some relationship represents the *Vorlage*.²² Ziegler's chapter on the importance of the papyri for understanding LXX-Isa is also of great value for the study of metaphors, since they are informative of the realia of the translator which he sometimes draws from to furnish vehicles for the metaphors in his translation. Rather than rehearsing the numerous points of agreement with Ziegler,²³ this section will describe a few points that warrant further investigation.

One point that needs further investigation is whether the translator felt the need to ameliorate images that were “zu real und derb.”²⁴ The only example Ziegler gives of this is Isa 3:15, where מְלָכָם תִּדְכָּאוּ עַמִּי וּפְנֵי עֲנִיִּים תִּטְחֲנוּ is rendered τί ὑμεῖς ἀδικεῖτε τὸν λαόν μου καὶ τὸ πρόσωπον τῶν πτωχῶν κατασχύνετε;. There is no doubt the translator is interpreting these metaphors, and it is easy to see how, but is it because the image is too harsh? Elsewhere in Isaiah דכא is also interpreted,²⁵ except 57:15, where the second occurrence is rendered with συντρίβω. But synonyms used metaphorically are not interpreted, such as רטש, which is rendered with συντρίβω in 13:16 where infants are the object (also 13:18, though LXX reverses the action). While perhaps less harsh, in 1:28 rebels and sinners are crushed (שָׁבַר rendered with συντρίβω), and people are also crushed (with these same words) in 8:15 and 28:13. It does not seem to be an issue of the image being too harsh since similar images are maintained. We have also seen other examples of the translator rendering metaphors based on homonyms (see 4.1.3.2.) or Aramaic definitions of words (as we saw in 8:6-8) which may be at work here. Ziegler also points out that טחן is interpreted literally in 47:2, so the translator knows it means “to grind.” But in 3:15 the translator seems to have interpreted it in light of דכא, and so renders it as to humble: κατασχύνω. When we look at the larger context in which these metaphors occur, it becomes clear that it is not the individual metaphor that is too harsh, since in 3:7, 12, and 17 metaphors are also interpreted, and the idea of “humbling” is found in

²² Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 80-81, 83-84.

²³ Or the details on which we agree or disagree in the analysis of specific texts.

²⁴ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81.

²⁵ The meaning “humble” (as in the Aramaic) may be thought in 19:10 where it is rendered with ὀδύνη and 53:5 where it is rendered with μαλαρίζομαι. 1 Macc 1:40 similarly interprets דכא, rendering it with ἀτιμάζω. For καθαρίζω in Isa 53:10, cf. 28:27 where this renders שִׁד, and dill is the object.

3:8, 17, and 26. The metaphor seems to be interpreted, then, in light of the translator's ideas about the meaning of the passage, not because of its choice of vehicle. Ziegler may well be right that some metaphors are interpreted because they are too vivid and coarse, but the example he gives is not entirely convincing.

Another point Ziegler makes, and which can be found in the present study, which requires further research is whether some images are interpreted due to the translator's lack of Hebrew knowledge. On the one hand, indeed some rare words are not literally rendered. Examples Ziegler gives include 3:17, where **שָׁפַח ... קִדְקֹד** is rendered with *ταπεινώσει...ἀρχούσας*; and 1:22, where **לְסִיגִים** is rendered *ἀδόκιμον*.²⁶ But there are similar interpretations of words the meaning of which the translator clearly knew, such as we have seen with **דכא** and **טחן** in 3:15.²⁷ There may be two different phenomena at work (some metaphors interpreted because the vocabulary was obscure, others with known vocabulary interpreted for some other reason), or the translator may have been deliberately interpreting the passages and knew perfectly well the meaning of the words. As we have shown in the case of **שָׁמִיר וְשִׁית**, to which indeed the translator has a unique approach, he is at least consistent in his understanding of the terms and does not reach wildly for a solution in each occurrence. Likewise, the translator knows the meaning of **קָשׁ**, yet on several occasions renders it with the unexpected equivalent *φρύγανον*. In cases where the translator renders based on grammatical theories of analogy or using Aramaic definitions, is there a way to tell the difference between the translator not knowing a word and the translator expounding a possible, perhaps perceived to be hidden, meaning of the passage?

Ziegler is quite right regarding LXX-Isa's tendency to render metaphors personally,²⁸ as we have seen, for example, with metaphors involving trees (2:12-13; 10:19; 61:3) and branches (10:33-34). David Baer has expanded on this point at length; he shows that this is not only done for metaphorical speech but is a way the translator reads Isaiah for his own time; Baer gives nearly two hundred examples of personalization in LXX-Isa.²⁹

Ziegler also makes many useful observations about comparisons.³⁰ One point that is helpful is his discussion of word equivalents for comparative particles. Here further research is needed, not only of the Greek rendering, but of the syntax of the Hebrew itself to show just to what extent **ל** and *ὡς* overlap in meaning, and whether **לִּהְיֶה** ever marks similes in the Hebrew. Ziegler says the construction **לִּהְיֶה** means “*zu etwas werden*,”³¹ so based on our distinction between metaphor and simile it is not comparative, yet LXX-Isa often renders it as

²⁶ He also looks at 1:25.

²⁷ We may add also 10:19 and 61:3.

²⁸ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81-82.

²⁹ Baer, *When We All Get Home*, 59. See ch. 3: “‘Personalization’ in LXX Isaiah.”

³⁰ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92-103. See the summary in our introduction (1.1.2.).

³¹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Also Ronald J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax: An Outline* (2nd Edition; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), §278.

a simile.³² Ziegler gives as examples: 1:31; 8:14; 29:5, 17; 40:23; and 41:2. In theory, $\omega\varsigma$ could be intended to mark identity in these constructions and not a comparison.³³ As Muraoka has shown, $\omega\varsigma$ originally in Greek had a comparative sense but over time developed some other usages as well,³⁴ though is most commonly used for comparisons in Biblical literature.³⁵ It is best, then, to consider the Greek of these examples to be similes, and indeed they make the best sense as similes. Muraoka also points out that some uses of $\omega\varsigma$ are close in meaning to some uses of $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$.³⁶ This is interesting since in 41:2 and 1:25 LXX-Isa renders כִּי הִיא לִי with $\epsilon\iota\varsigma$, though it is interpreting the simile in both places. Further research is needed to see whether כִּי הִיא לִי should be considered to be marking a simile in some cases or whether it is closer to a metaphor and LXX-Isa simply prefers to use a simile in these places.

In conclusion, Ziegler has laid a solid foundation for the study of metaphors and similes in LXX-Isa. Ziegler offered some categories for the rendering of metaphors and more for how similes were rendered. The present study has expanded on his work by categorizing in detail the various translation strategies for rendering metaphors adopted by the translator. We turn now to further contextualizing LXX-Isa in its Jewish and Hellenistic contexts.

4.3. LXX-Isa and Jewish Approaches to Rendering Metaphors

In this section, we will attempt to position LXX-Isa within its Jewish context and show that some of its treatment of metaphors fits within the trajectory of Jewish interpretive traditions. To do this, we will focus first on the similarities and then on the unexpected differences between Targum Jonathan's and LXX-Isa's approach to rendering metaphors.³⁷ In the introduction (1.3.2.1.) we have already discussed how Targum Jonathan of the Prophets dealt with metaphors and similes. As we have seen, though have not analyzed in depth, these observations hold for the examples included in this study.

³² By contrast see 1:22 where LXX-Isa interprets the image, and so does not render it with a simile.

³³ For the use of $\omega\varsigma$ to mark identity or similarity, see Muraoka, "The Use of $\omega\varsigma$ in the Greek Bible," 56-57.

³⁴ Muraoka, "The Use of $\omega\varsigma$ in the Greek Bible," 53.

³⁵ Muraoka, "The Use of $\omega\varsigma$ in the Greek Bible," 71-72.

³⁶ Muraoka, "The Use of $\omega\varsigma$ in the Greek Bible," 58, nt. 3. Ottley, *Isaiah*, II, 302 says these Greek words are easily confused in the manuscripts, as are כִּי and בִּי .

³⁷ For a recent study comparing LXX-Zech and Targum Jonathan more generally, see Cécile Dogniez, "Some Similarities between Septuagint and the Targum of Zechariah," *Translating a Translation: The LXX and its Modern Translations in the Context of Early Judaism* (eds. H. Ausloos and B. Lemmelijn; BETL 213; Leuven: Peeters, 2010): 89-102; she also notes bibliography. One similarity she points out of note to us is that both translations changed the metaphor in Zech 12:6 from "pot of fire" to "firebrand."

4.3.1. Similarities

We have seen several examples in our introduction (1.1.2.) of similarities between how the Targum and LXX-Isa render metaphors. One similarity in the approach of these two translations is the tendency to translate the meaning or interpretation of a metaphor. We have seen also that sometimes they agree in their interpretation. Sometimes, the Targum is even more literal than the LXX. We have found similar examples in the passages we have examined, particularly above where we discussed metaphors or similes rendered with non-metaphors or non-similes. Here we will first list places where both translations attempt to clarify the same passage in some way; second we will list places where both have the same interpretation of a metaphor or simile; third, we will list some passages where the LXX uses the otherwise characteristically Targumic method of rendering part of the imagery while offering an extended interpretation.

4.3.1.1. Clarifying the Same Passage

In some cases, both LXX-Isa and the Targum agree that a metaphor should be clarified in some way, though they do not always take the same solution. For 1:29, “terebinths” is rendered with “idols” by the LXX, but the Targum says “oaks of the idols.” In 10:33-34 both LXX and the Targum interpret the “lofty” and other terms as representing some group of people. In 37:30-31, the second part of the Hebrew’s “take root below...bear fruit above” is changed in the LXX to “bear seed upward” while the Targum opts for “raises its top upward,” perhaps since it also made clear that a tree is meant. In 27:10(9) the LXX thinks “the full fruit” means a “blessing” while the Targum puts “effectuation.” In 10:12 the “fruit of the greatness of heart” is interpreted by the LXX as referring to “pride,” but the Targum interprets it as “deeds.” In 28:25-28 both translations try to clarify the metaphor, the Targum clarifies in the first verse, while the LXX adds an explanation in the last. In 51:20 the antelope simile is turned into a half-cooked chard by the LXX translator, but the Targum renders personally: “those cast in nets.” In 58:7, where the metaphor “flesh” would have sounded strange in Greek, the LXX opted instead for “seed,” while the Targum rendered it literally while adding, as does the LXX, that it is a relative. The epithet “oaks of righteousness” used of the people in 61:3 is interpreted by the LXX as “generations of righteousness,” but the Targum is more specific, saying: “true princes.”

4.3.1.2. Offering a Similar Explanation

In some places LXX-Isa and the Targum offer a similar explanation for a metaphor, as van der Kooij has pointed out.³⁸ For example, in 1:31 both add very nearly the same explanation, that the wicked are meant, though in different ways. In 7:2, where the hearts of the people shaking is compared to trees in the wind, both LXX and the Targum use different

³⁸ van der Kooij, “The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language,” 181-82, 184.

verbs for the hearts and the trees. In 13:18 both remove “fruit” opting instead for a word for offspring, though the Targum still has it in construct with “womb.” In 24:7 both translations believe אָבֵל means “mourn,” though the LXX personifies the wine as mourning, and the Targum makes it the drinkers of wine who mourn. In 55:12, despite other additions, the Targum and the LXX both have the trees clap their branches. And the comparison of the lives of the people to a tree in 65:22 is interpreted by both the LXX and the Targum as the “tree of life.”

4.3.1.3. LXX-Isa’s Targumic Translations

At times LXX-Isa’s approach to rendering metaphors employs methods used extensively later in the tradition by the Targum, as van der Kooij has pointed out.³⁹ For example, Churgin describes one of the Targum’s methods of rendering metaphors as giving the object represented, often staying close to the original, maintaining “a circumscription of phraseology.”⁴⁰ This can include a simile using the vehicle of the Hebrew, either before or after an explanation.⁴¹

If we look at the Targum of Isa 27:2-4 we see that the metaphor has become just a simile in the first verse, followed by an explanation of the imagery (that it is a description of the covenant with its blessings and curses) in the rest of the passage.⁴² The LXX is similar, only it does not use a simile in 27:2 but has the metaphor of the Hebrew, followed in the rest of the passage by only what the imagery is thought to represent (a fortified city).

Similarly, in 28:24-28 the LXX stays close to the Hebrew text rendering closely all the various agricultural activities (with some cultural updating of terms). In the final verse, LXX-Isa offers a theological explanation to make clear the point of mentioning the various agricultural activities (that God will not be angry forever, presumably just like the various activities are only done for a time and to a certain degree and in a certain manner). The Targum renders differently, making clear in the first verse what the passage means by explaining with similes.

Further analysis of the translation of metaphors in LXX-Isa is needed to determine why some images are interpreted this way, while others are rendered literally in Greek. Possible reasons are that the translator had a special interest in expressing clearly the idea he thought these texts described. Also, it could be a matter of more rare images being clarified, as we have seen is sometimes the case among plant metaphors. In any case, LXX-Isa is clearly using techniques for rendering metaphors that were to be used more extensively later in Jewish tradition, as van der Kooij has shown.⁴³

³⁹ van der Kooij, “The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language,” 179-85.

⁴⁰ Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 86.

⁴¹ Churgin, *Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, 86-88.

⁴² This approach is also seen in the Targum of Isa 5:1-6. Another nice example is found in 21:10, where an interpretation is given before offering the vehicle recast in a simile.

⁴³ van der Kooij, “The Interpretation of Metaphorical Language,” 179-85.

4.3.1.4. Conclusions

This comparison has shown that the LXX does indeed adopt some methods of metaphor interpretation as well as specific interpretations that are used more extensively later in Jewish tradition by the Targum. This conclusion is not limited to Isaiah (or the study of metaphors), but LXX-Isa interprets to a much greater extent than other books; L. H. Brockington already has shown various ways the LXX and Targum have similar theological interests (such as adding soteriological interpretations in Isaiah;⁴⁴ and have other interpretations with verbal similarity to various degrees and where they exhibit similar expository traditions).⁴⁵ Further study of these features should shed light on how metaphors were thought to function in Early Judaism and fill in the trajectory of this tradition.⁴⁶ It is interesting in the case of the more expanded interpretations that LXX-Isa feels authorized to replace the imagery with its meaning; though the Targum does this often, the Targum assumes the Hebrew text is being read with it, while the LXX probably does not make this assumption.⁴⁷ This is the same explanation given by Dogniez in his study of similarities in general between the LXX and Targum of Zechariah.⁴⁸

4.3.2. Differences

While there are many well known and expected differences, due to the differences in time, place, language, and purpose of the two translations, there are some differences that are worthy of note, as they serve to temper and balance our perspectives on the translators. First, we will show some places where the Targum is actually more literal than the LXX in some way. Second, we will compare how the two translations conventionalize imagery, resort to stock interpretations, or make classical allusions. Finally, we will make some concluding comments about their differences.

⁴⁴ L. H. Brockington, "Septuagint and Targum," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 25 (1954), 80-83.

⁴⁵ Brockington, "Septuagint and Targum," 84-6. Passages of note he lists for Isaiah are: 11:4; 8:7; 17:4; 18:1; 36:2; 38:18; and 52:4.

⁴⁶ Brockington believes the similarities are due to a shared oral tradition and that the interpretations are made to meet the expository needs of the synagogues in the respective milieus, "Septuagint and Targum," 82, 86. The idea of shared oral tradition and expository methods are undoubtedly at work, but there is no need to tie them specifically to the synagogue (since we do not know enough about what was done and read in synagogues in the 2nd century BC), but can be attributed to a shared scribal and exegetical tradition.

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the "Interlinear Model" of the LXX, see our introduction (1.3.2.1.).

⁴⁸ Dogniez, "Some Similarities between Septuagint and the Targum of Zechariah," 90-91.

4.3.2.1. Places the Targum is More Literal than LXX-Isa

Sometimes the Targum is actually more literal than the LXX, rendering a metaphor or simile with the same metaphor or simile. For example, in 1:9 and 15:9 where the LXX renders “remnant” with “seed,” the Targum agrees with MT (despite its other expansions). Similarly in 14:20 the Targum is closer to the MT than LXX, which makes the “evil seed” an individual. In 14:22 a word for offspring becomes “seed” in the LXX, but “grandson” in the Targum. In 11:7 the Targum keeps the simile, while the LXX removes it. The “vessels of papyrus” in 18:2 become “fishing boats” in the Targum, while LXX makes them letters. In 25:10, the straw trodden in dung is rendered nearly literally in the Targum (it is trodden in a mire), while the LXX replaces it with a threshing metaphor. In 31:9, God’s “fire” and “furnace” is interpreted as “seed” and “kinsmen” by the LXX, but the Targum renders the vehicle of the image literally, though explains it as a threat for the wicked. In 35:7 the Targum is closer to MT than the LXX is, though neither are exactly the same nor extensive in their interpretation. In 40:24; 41:2; and 47:14 the Targum renders literally, despite other additions, with “chaff,” while the LXX prefers “twigs.” Whereas the LXX cuts back the number of trees mentioned in 41:19 and 44:14, the Targum lists them all. The bent reed describing how they bow their heads in 58:5 is rendered literally by the Targum, but LXX-Isa changes the metaphor to a ring. The Targum’s ability to render the vehicles of these metaphors and similes literally is probably because the translator felt more free to expand and explain the imagery. LXX-Isa, on the other hand, generally does not like to expand the text much and so usually restrains himself to the choice between rendering the vehicle of the metaphor, or using what he thinks will be a more clear vehicle, or giving what he thinks is its tenor.

4.3.2.2. Conventionalization

Another difference is how the two translations conventionalize imagery. We have seen that LXX-Isa will sometimes conventionalize unique metaphors, instead using more commonly found metaphors. The conventionalization in the Targum is quite different. We have seen that often the Targum introduces explicit references to the metaphor that Israel is God’s special plant, an idea that probably underlies much plant imagery in the Bible. For example, in 57:2-4 the metaphor “seed,” rendered literally in LXX, is replaced in the Targum by a description of Israel as an evil people who come from a holy plant. In 17:10-11 the “alien slips” which were meant as literal plants used for pagan worship are replaced in the Targum by a description of Israel as God’s select plant. In 60:21 the MT indeed has this meaning, and the Targum adds that it is a “pleasant plant.”⁴⁹ In 61:3, though, the Hebrew “planting of the LORD” becomes “people of the Lord.”

⁴⁹ See also 5:2, where the Targum expands that “*I established them as the plant of a choice vine*,” perhaps just to tighten the connection to the explanation in 5:7.

A difference in their exegetical approach that has a bearing on the renderings of metaphors is that LXX-Isa tends to render metaphors according to the context in which they occur, while the Targum is prone to offer stock interpretations for images, as if they were established symbols. So in the Targum, “root” is sometimes rendered with “sons of sons,” as in 11:1, 10; 14:29 (but not 14:30 and 40:24 where it is just “sons” or 5:24 and 53:2 where other interpretations are made). Sometimes words for “trees” are interpreted for rulers as in 2:13 where the trees become “kings” and “tyrants;” the trees (and bricks) of 9:9(10) also become rulers; and again in 14:8; also, in 61:3 where “oaks of righteousness” becomes “true princes.” Similarly, the recurring phrase in 9:13 and 19:15 (palm branch and reed) is interpreted as representing rulers by the Targum in both places. Alternatively trees are sometimes rendered as referring to armies or warriors, as in 10:19 and 10:34. A well known example from the Targumim in general is the tendency to make water metaphors refer to Torah.

The Targum will sometimes insert what could be called “classical allusions,” interpreting a metaphor or redesigning it to refer to some biblical character or event to illustrate what is meant. Sometimes Abraham is mentioned, as in 5:1 and 41:2. In 65:8, the tricky metaphor about not destroying the grape cluster is replaced with the analogy of righteous Noah being spared from the flood.

4.3.2.3. Conclusions

These differences are in part due to LXX-Isa’s attempt to stay close to the *Vorlage*, while the Targum is more free to expand. When LXX-Isa does offer an explanation of a metaphor it is often in place of some text and not an expansion of it (such as in 28:22-28). The Targum has the luxury of being able to give both the vehicle of the metaphor and offer its explanation. The different sort of conventionalization in the two translations is probably due to LXX-Isa being more concerned with rhetoric in expressing the meaning of his passage (and so conventionalizes to well known metaphors), while the Targum is trying to systematize the theology of the text (and so conventionalizes to certain stock meanings of metaphors).

4.4. Evidence of Greek Views of Metaphors in LXX-Isa

To some extent, the use of metaphors in the Hebrew of Isaiah already conforms to Hellenistic requirements of good style. As Lowth long ago pointed out:

If the Hebrew poets be examined by the rules and precepts of this great philosopher and critic [Aristotle], it will readily be allowed, that they have assiduously attended to the sublimity of their compositions by the abundance and splendour of their figures; though it may be doubted whether they might not have been more temperate in the use of them. For in those poems at least, in which something of uncommon grandeur and sublimity is aimed at, there predominates a

perpetual, I had almost said continued use of the Metaphor, sometimes daringly introduced, sometimes rushing in with imminent hazard of propriety.⁵⁰

We have shown in our introduction (1.3.1.5.) that there is evidence that the translator was concerned about proper Greek style, but to assess his use of metaphors against Hellenistic rhetorical manuals is tricky. For one thing, the manuals teach that metaphors should be used differently in different genres. So, does our translator understand Isaiah as a book of divine oracles that speak in poetry full of riddles and enigmas?⁵¹ Or is it the prose oratory of the prophet, which employs lofty, heroic, and subdued styles to persuade his audience to repentance? Or would the translator have recognized different genres in different passages? This issue is beyond the scope of our current study, but could explain differences in translation technique and rendering of metaphors in different passages. A second difficulty was highlighted already in antiquity by Philodemus, as we have seen (1.3.1.1.). He points out that the rhetoricians do not give any practical working instructions, and do not describe why the metaphors they condemn are faulty or how to create good metaphors.⁵² He adds that rhetorical training does not account for good or bad speech, and that what the rhetoricians condemn is not typical of the uneducated but of those lacking common sense.⁵³ If this really is the case, then what instructions, exactly, do we expect to see the translator following? And whether he was educated in rhetoric or not may be less important than his natural ability and feel for good style.

Despite this, to see if any evidence can be culled from our study we will here first look for evidence of the so-called Aristotelian substitution view of metaphor. Second, we will list metaphors that are adjusted in some way to show how they are in line with what the rhetorical handbooks suggest. Third we will discuss whether metaphors are rendered as similes because they are too bold, as Demetrius' handbook says bold metaphors should be treated.

4.4.1. Substitution View of Metaphor

In the introduction we mentioned that many modern theorists of metaphor believe Aristotle advocates what they call the “substitution view” of metaphor.⁵⁴ According to this view, a metaphor simply substitutes one word for another and so can be paraphrased in literal language. More recently, scholars have questioned whether Aristotle held to this view.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Aristotle's definition states that a metaphor is “the application of a word that belongs to another thing: either from genus to species, species to genus, species to species, or

⁵⁰ Lowth, *Lectures on the Sacred Poetry of the Hebrews*, 121.

⁵¹ Note the literal (and unique) choice of *αἰνιγματιστής* to render *לְשׁוֹן חֵזק* in Num 21:27, where perhaps some word for a poet (such as *ποιητής*) is better suited.

⁵² Philodemus, *The Rhetoric of Philodemus*, 298. This corresponds to Sudhaus, 1.171.2 col. XII-1.175, col. XVI.

⁵³ Philodemus, *The Rhetoric of Philodemus*, 199-200. This corresponds to Sudhaus, 1.186 col. V-1.192 col. XI.

⁵⁴ Black, *Models and Metaphors*, 33-34.

⁵⁵ See Soskice, *Metaphors and Religious Language*, 8-10.

by analogy.”⁵⁶ As such, the removal or interpretation of a metaphor could, in theory, be done by applying the proper word to a thing by the same relationships described. Caution is due, though, for two reasons. First, even in the Hebrew, many metaphors seem to function merely by the substitution of one word for another, such as the eunuch in 56:3 saying he is a “dry tree,” instead of an “infertile man.”⁵⁷ Second, if the translator simply substitutes one word for another (as opposed to paraphrasing the statement, or otherwise explaining it), it may not necessarily be because he has adopted the substitution theory of metaphors from Aristotle, but could be because he is generally aiming to follow a literal translation technique and wants to maintain a quantitative representation of the words in the Hebrew text.⁵⁸

With these caveats in mind, it is possible to list some examples of places where the translator interprets (or simply clarifies) a metaphor by substituting a word with another word more proper to the thing described. This is most clear in 61:3 where “oaks of righteousness” is rendered instead with “generations of righteousness.” Some other examples include: “palm branch and reed” is rendered “great and small” in 9:14(13) and “beginning or end” in 19:15; in 21:10 “threshed one” is rendered “remnant” and “son of a threshing floor” is rendered “those suffering;” in 27:6 “children” is substituted for “root;” in 27:9(10) the “full fruit” is rendered with “blessing;” and in 31:9 “seed” is substituted for “light” and “kinsmen” for “furnace.”

Another part of Aristotle’s definition, that this substitution can be from genus to species, or species to genus, species to species, or by analogy, also describes how some metaphors are rendered by LXX-Isa, as we have seen. For instance, some renderings are from genus to species, such as: 10:34 “sword” is substituted for “iron.” The phenomena Ziegler pointed out, whereby the translator substitutes פָּלִי with what he believes it represents is an interpretation from genus to species.⁵⁹ Others are from species to genus, such as: 3:10; 27:6; 32:12; and 65:21 where the species פֶּרִי is rendered as the genus γένημα; the simile in 17:5 has the species “valley or Rephaim” replaced by the genus “hard valley.” Most common are substitutions of species for species, often just changing the vehicle of the metaphor: in 11:1 the LXX substitutes a “blossom” for the Hebrew’s “branch;” in 14:29-30 “seed” is twice substituted for “root;” in 37:31 a “seed” is substituted for the Hebrew’s “fruit;” and “root” is substituted for “stump” in 11:1 and 40:24; likewise for the simile in 61:11 where “flower” is substituted for “sprout” (though the terms may be synonymous); and in 40:24, 41:2, and 47:14 where φρύγανον is substituted for קֶשֶׁת. Analogous substitutions are seen where LXX-Isa

⁵⁶ Aristotle, *Poetics*, XXI.7-9, [Halliwell, LCL].

⁵⁷ It is particularly common with dead metaphors, such as uses of “seed,” “fruit,” and “root.” To an ancient Hellenistic Jew it would have seemed plausible that Aristotle learned something about rhetoric from Moses and the prophets, even if indirectly, so they would not have been surprised to see metaphors in Isaiah functioning in line with Aristotle’s descriptions.

⁵⁸ See Tov, *The Text-Critical use of the Septuagint*, 23-24.

⁵⁹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 83-84.

introduces a metaphor in 15:9,⁶⁰ so that “remnant” is replaced by “seed;” and 14:22 where “seed” is substituted for “descendent and offspring.”

4.4.2. Adjustments to Metaphors in Line with Rhetorical Handbooks

We have seen that many metaphors and similes are adjusted in some way or interpreted; in this section we will look at some of these adjustments that appear to be in line with what Aristotle describes. While many of their comments seem vague or subjective in their sensibilities, there are some examples from LXX-Isa that appear to conform to what these teachers of rhetoric advocate and condemn. It is unconvincing to argue that metaphors are rendered literally (with the same metaphor) due to concern for good style, so we will focus primarily on metaphors and similes that are changed by the translator in some way.

One of the things Aristotle suggests is that metaphors should be derived from beautiful things, selecting words that either sound beautiful or are beautiful in sense, and the same is true for ugly things.⁶¹ LXX-Isa seems to take this into account in translating the eunuch’s speech in 56:3, saying with assonance: ἐγὼ εἶμι ξύλον ξηρόν. Perhaps the ugly sense of the metaphor in 25:10 contributed to replacing “like treading straw in dung” with the more conventional threshing language.

One of the causes of frigid style is epithets that are too long or unseasonable, or too crowded.⁶² Aristotle complains about Alcidamas’ crowded style, giving examples of what he should have said:

For instance, he does not say “sweat” but “damp sweat”; not “to the Isthmian games” but “to the solemn assembly of the Isthmian games”; not “running,” but “with a race-like impulse of the soul”; not “museum,” but “having taken up the museum of nature”; and “the scowling anxiety of the soul”; “creator,” not “of favour,” “but all-popular favour”; and “dispenser of the pleasure of the hearers”; “he hid,” not “with branches,” but “with the branches of the forest”; “he covered,” not “his body,” but “the nakedness of his body.”⁶³

In a few places LXX-Isa removes epithets and statements that are too long or crowded. In 4:2 LXX-Isa says just “upon the earth” instead of the Hebrew’s “and the fruit of the land.” A more clear example is in 10:12 where LXX-Isa has “great mind” instead of “the fruit of the greatness of heart,” an epithet both too long and unseasonable. In 13:18 the translator puts just “your children” instead of “the fruit of the womb.” Perhaps the epithets were too crowded in 14:29 with all the snake imagery, so that “root” becomes “seed” and “fruit” is rendered with “offspring.”⁶⁴ The frigid epithet in 27:9(10), “and this is the full fruit of the removal of their

⁶⁰ For Aristotle the analogies are more direct, such as Ares’ shield is analogous to Dionysius’ cup. *Poetics*, XXI.16-32.

⁶¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.2.13.

⁶² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3.3.

⁶³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3.3, [Freese, LCL].

⁶⁴ Also “rod” becomes “yoke.” The verse is made more clear, which is the chief merit of good style, according to Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.2.1.

sin,” is rendered: “and this is their blessing when I remove their sin.”⁶⁵ In 59:21, LXX-Isa stops after the word not departing “from your mouth nor from the mouth of your seed,” omitting the superfluous “nor from the mouth of the seed of your seed.” Aristotle would approve of omitting the last statement, “for when words are piled upon one who already knows, it destroys perspicuity by a cloud of verbiage.”⁶⁶ In 65:23 the blessed seed are rendered literally, then the LXX omits the superfluous last clause “and their descendants as well,” since seed already includes their descendents.⁶⁷

To achieve loftiness of style, Aristotle suggests using descriptions instead of the name of things; but for conciseness to do the reverse.⁶⁸ This could be at work in why some metaphors are interpreted, besides to make them more clear. For instance, in 33:11 the two strange metaphors “You conceive dry grass and bring forth straw,” are reduced and interpreted just as “the strength of your spirit will be vain.”⁶⁹ This metaphor may also have been interpreted for being too far-fetched. Similarly in 21:10 “O my threshed and my son of a threshing-floor,” is rendered with the names (which the translator thought were described metaphorically) “Hear, you who have been left and you who are in pain.” Again, it is unclear if the metaphor was too far-fetched or just too long and needed to be more concise and clear.

Aristotle likes metaphors that set things before the eyes (τῷ πρὸ ὀμμάτων ποιεῖν).⁷⁰ By this he means metaphors that express actuality as opposed to abstract ideas; so saying a man is “four-square” is a metaphor, but to say “his life is in full bloom” expresses actuality in a metaphor.⁷¹ Perhaps related to this concern for actuality is LXX-Isa’s adjustment of metaphors that make for a more vivid image. In particular, the translator seems to prefer to describe things in their final state, rather than in intermediate processes. We can see this in 11:1 where the sprouting shoot is translated with the fully developed flower that will come up from the root. Similarly, rather than describing withering, the translator prefers to describe that leaves have fallen in several passages (perhaps due to his understanding of the word נָפַל). In 28:1 and 4 the flower is described as “fallen” rather than “fading.” In 1:30 the tree’s leaves are not withering, but in the Greek the tree sheds (ἀποβάλλω) them. Again in 34:4 the stars fade like leaves on the vine and the fig in the Hebrew, but the Greek says they will fall. Falling is more animated than withering, which is observed slowly over time; Aristotle suggests motion is important for achieving actuality.⁷² The same thing is seen in 64:5, where

⁶⁵ The issue may not be that it is too long, but that the metaphor is too far-fetched. Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3.4. One example he disapproves of is: “you have sown shame and reaped misfortune.”

⁶⁶ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3.3, [Freese, LCL].

⁶⁷ Note also the compound word τεκνοποιέω; compound words are to be used in moderation according to Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.3.3.

⁶⁸ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.6.1.

⁶⁹ LXX-Isa also adds some clauses to this verse to ballast his omission and to interpret the passage.

⁷⁰ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.11.1.

⁷¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.11.2, [Freese, LCL].

⁷² Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.11.3-4. Aristotle shows a preference for using animate vehicles for metaphors of inanimate things; since our study is of plant metaphors, we have not seen many examples of this.

we do not fade like a leaf, but in the Greek we fall like a leaf, which better sets up the image of the wind carrying the leaves away. In one place, 3:14, the translator, perhaps due to reading a word as its homonym, makes a much more vivid metaphor: rather than “graze my vineyard” the LXX has “burn my vineyard.”

We have already argued (2.4.1.) that Isa 40:6-8 may have been modified in the Greek to make an urbane saying, since in the Greek it has antithesis, metaphor, and actuality, the three features Aristotle says should be aimed for to make an urbane saying.⁷³

It can not be shown that the translator was deliberately following Aristotle; as Philodemus suggests, good style could be just as much about having good sense and not a good rhetorical education. But as we have shown in our introduction, the discussion and analysis of tropes was an important part of learning to read and conduct literary criticism under the tutelage of a grammarian, and this training with tropes would largely be in Aristotelian terms. So, it should not be surprising that LXX-Isa at times modifies his translation to conform to what the rhetorical teachers of his day thought about how metaphors should be used. Likewise we should not be surprised that his Greek education does not come out more in his translation, since he was in no way obliged to follow Greek rhetorical rules. His translation method is largely literal, though he may at times take liberties and use some of the techniques he learned from his Greek education.

4.4.3. Bold Metaphors Ameliorated by using Similes

Demetrius in his manual on style says that metaphors that are too bold can be made safe by turning them into similes.⁷⁴ We can easily see if this advice is followed by searching LXX-Isaiah for pluses that are comparative markers.⁷⁵

Ziegler suggests that sometimes the translator removed imagery that was too strong or harsh;⁷⁶ the only example he gives is 3:15, where the image is interpreted but not made into a simile.

As van der Vorm-Croughs has shown, most of the time when the translator adds ὡς it is to harmonize a clause to the previous or subsequent clause which has a simile.⁷⁷ In Hebrew poetics, similes and metaphors can be hard to distinguish since the comparative particle can be implicit. LXX-Isa makes implicit similes explicit in 55:8 and 66:3.⁷⁸ In 52:7 a rhetorical

⁷³ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, III.10.6.

⁷⁴ Demetrius, *On Style*, 80, 85.

⁷⁵ ὥσπερ is used with no equivalent in 10:17, but LXX-Isa often uses similes with the word pair שְׁמִיר וְשִׁית. The word ὥσπερ is only used without an equivalent twice in Isaiah: in 55:8 the Hebrew implies a comparison between God’s thoughts and our thoughts; in 27:9 the LXX reads the text differently and does not add the simile to ameliorate a bold metaphor. The only places ὃν τρόπον is added is 62:5, where a simile is implied in the Hebrew.

⁷⁶ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 81. See IV.B., above for an analysis of this claim.

⁷⁷ van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 132-33. She shows Isa 4:5; 5:29; 10:17; 16:1; 16:11; 17:11; 23:3; 27:10(9); 30:22; 44:4; and 50:9.

⁷⁸ It could be argued that 55:8 is not a simile in the Hebrew, but the LXX wanted to make the statement safe.

statement (introduced with **כְּ**) is rendered as a simile, probably in an attempt to better capture the force of the statement in Greek and for the sake of clarity.⁷⁹ The translator turns 37:27 into a simile, probably because of the occurrence of **הִיָּה**; Ziegler has shown that **הִיָּה לְ** is commonly rendered with **ὡς**.⁸⁰ Also, we can not consider the comparative marker a plus where it is an equivalent of **ב** or **לְ**, since the translator seems to understand these as able to denote comparisons, as Ziegler has shown.⁸¹ In one place, though, the translator may have added a comparative marker to avoid a statement that is otherwise absurd. **Isa 50:3** says:

I dress the heavens in darkness, and sack cloth I make its clothing.	אֶלְבִּישׁ שָׁמַיִם קְדָרוֹת וְשָׁק אֲשִׁים בְּסוּתָם:	καὶ ἐνδύσω τὸν οὐρανὸν σκότος καὶ θήσω ὡς σάκκον τὸ περιβόλαιον αὐτοῦ.	And I dress heaven with darkness and I put as sackcloth its cloak.
--	--	---	--

Typically, as we have seen, when there is a metaphor followed by a simile, or vice versa, LXX-Isa makes them both similes. But here the translator lets the first metaphor remain but makes the second a simile. If the translator simply thought the simile was implicit, we should have found both parts of the verse rendered as similes.⁸² The second part of the verse is a much bolder metaphor, to say the heavens are covered in sackcloth, but as a simile it is more acceptable.

LXX-Isa, then, does not seem to take Demetrius' advice for dealing with bold metaphors by making them similes very often. He seems to much prefer making difficult metaphors clear by interpreting them.

4.4.4. Conclusions

In this section we have aimed to show what appears to be evidence that the translator took some of his rhetorical training concerning metaphors to heart and used it to improve the style of his translation. As we have admitted, there could be other explanations for many of the examples given. But we have seen in our introduction that other scholars have already shown further evidence that the translator was concerned at times with making his translation conform to Greek standards of good style. Further research is needed to see if there is more evidence among the other renderings of metaphors not examined in this study. Also, it would be noteworthy if other studies could show examples where the translator has made his text not better stylistically but worse. One possible example may be 45:25 where “seed of Israel” is rendered with the unnecessarily long “seed of the sons of Israel.”⁸³

⁷⁹ The rendering of rhetorical questions in LXX-Isa is worthy of further study. Compare 5:4b; 27:4; 28:25; 29:17; 51:12; 58:5; etc.

⁸⁰ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Here too it could be argued that the simile is implicit in the Hebrew.

⁸¹ Ziegler, *Untersuchungen*, 92. Or they may have been read as **ב**.

⁸² Cf. The Targum, which finds it necessary to add a comparative marker to both clauses: **אֲכַסִּי שְׁמַיָּא כִּיד בְּקַבְלָא** and **וּבְסַקָּא אֲשׁוּי כְּסוּתָהוֹן**, “I will *cover* the heavens *as* with *darkness*, and make *as* sackcloth their covering.”

⁸³ This rendering is in line with other examples of LXX-Isa making double translations, see van der Vorm-Croughs, *The Old Greek of Isaiah*, 34-36, but often elsewhere “seed” metaphors are used without explanation in LXX-Isa.

4.5. Conclusion

This study has hopefully shown how LXX-Isa dealt with metaphors, filling in more details to the picture started by Ziegler and van der Kooij. We have not taken a comprehensive look at all the metaphors in Isaiah, but only a cross-section: the plant metaphors. Still, we have seen a variety of translation and interpretive methods from different sections of the book while being able to see the relationship of related metaphors within the book. But why individual metaphors are treated the way they are and how they are intended to function is probably best understood in light of the passage in which they occur; future research is needed in order to take a more contextual approach to metaphor, seeing how they are translated and interpreted along with the discourse and passage in which they occur.

We have seen that LXX-Isa is independent of other LXX translators, not only with his freedom to interpret metaphors but also in what metaphors he is willing to use or wishes to avoid (such as fruit metaphors). He interprets metaphors both in their small details and large, both making slight adjustments to shape their meaning and blatantly stating instead of the metaphor what he believes it represents. He at times updates the vehicles of metaphors to reflect the practices of his own day and conditions in Egypt, as Ziegler has shown. LXX-Isa's freedom to render metaphors is not an isolated phenomenon but seems to be one dimension of his approach to the book and his method of interpretation in general.

We have shown that LXX-Isa at times appears to be taking Hellenistic sensibilities about the proper use of metaphors into account. At the same time he often interprets using methods and interpretations which clearly belong to Jewish scribal traditions and which are further developed in the following centuries. To some degree, then, he resembles the scholars Aristeas par. 120-122 describes: a scholar familiar with both Jewish and Greek literary traditions. Further research is warranted to better position LXX-Isa among Jewish as well as Greek traditions in terms of his methods of exegesis and sensibilities of style.