



Editorial theory and the range of translations for ‘cedars of Lebanon’ in the Septuagint

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Dates:

Received: 30 Apr. 2018

Accepted: 21 June 2018

Published: 01 Nov. 2018

How to cite this article:

Miller-Naudé, C.L. & Naudé,
 J.A., 2018, ‘Editorial theory
 and the range of translations
 for “cedars of Lebanon”
 in the Septuagint’, *HTS
 Teologiese Studies/
 Theological Studies* 74(3),
 a5059. [https://doi.org/
 10.4102/hts.v74i3.5059](https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i3.5059)

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Although the Hebrew source text term רָצֵף [cedar] is translated in the majority of cases as κέδρος [cedar] or its adjective κέδρινος in the Septuagint, there are cases where the following translations and strategies are used: (1) κυπάρισσος [cypress] or the related adjective κυπαρίσσινος , (2) ξύλον [wood, tree] and (3) non-translation and deletion of the source text item. This article focuses on these range of translations. Using a complexity theoretical approach in the context of editorial theory (the new science of exploring texts in their manuscript contexts), this article seeks to provide explanations for the various translation choices (other than κέδρος and κέδρινος). It further aims to determine which cultural values of the translators have influenced those choices and how they shape the metaphorical and symbolic meaning of plants as determined by Biblical Plant Hermeneutics, which has placed the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis.

Introduction

As shown in Naudé and Miller-Naudé (2018), the Hebrew term רָצֵף [cedar] is translated in the Septuagint as κέδρος [cedar] or with the adjectival form κέδρινος in 65 cases. It was also shown that the botanical terms were interpreted and translated by the translators as a result of their own foreign frame of reference on the basis of the anachronistic and indeterminate botanical data available to them; they provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute (see also Naudé and Miller-Naudé forthcoming a and b). It was further shown that the metaphorical and symbolic meanings of plants needs to be determined by Biblical Plant Hermeneutics, which has placed the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis consonant with the Israelite classification and valorisation of plants (Musselman 2012).

However, as will be discussed in this article, in the remaining cases of the Hebrew term רָצֵף , the Septuagint translated the term either as κυπάρισσος [cypress] (or the adjectival form κυπαρίσσινος) or ξύλον [wood, tree]. In some cases, the Hebrew term is not represented at all in the Septuagint. The aim of this article is to provide explanations for these more problematic translation choices in terms of both editorial theory (the new science of exploring texts in their manuscript contexts) and lexicography within a complexity theoretical approach (Marais 2014).¹

The hypothesis is that the term רָצֵף is utilised in the Hebrew source text to refer to a specific species, namely *Cedrus libani*, and to convey a specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning, whereas the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms that were available to them and that provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute. It is further hypothesised that the cultural values of the translators have influenced these translational choices, which shape metaphorical and symbolic meaning in a particular way to strengthen their own ideology. Even when the translators thought they knew what tree was referred to (given their knowledge of Hebrew, botany or earlier translations and traditions), they still frequently read into the text what suited them.

The paper is organised as follows: in the next section editorial theory and the complexity of the translation of the Septuagint is discussed, followed by a description of the complex nature of the translation of the term רָצֵף in the Septuagint. An analysis of the translations is conducted to determine both the translation choices and those cultural values which influenced them.

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1. This article continues our use of complexity theory to analyse the complexity of the Septuagint as a translation, as first is described by Naudé (2009) as the next important project for Septuagint research.

Note: This work is based on research supported in part by the National Research Foundation (NRF) of South Africa (Cynthia L. Miller-Naudé [UID 95926] and Jacobus A. Naudé [UID 85902]). The grantholders acknowledge that opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendations expressed in any publication generated by the NRF-supported research are those of the authors and that the NRF accepts no liability whatsoever in this regard.

Editorial theory and the complexity of the translation of the Septuagint

Research on the Septuagint has been driven primarily by the needs of textual criticism (within the framework of the established paradigms of Classical and Modern Philology) either as a search for the Vorlage or Urtext or as a search for the best or most authoritative final text. For this purpose the 'translation technique' of a particular writing is investigated to determine which variants might provide data for reconstruction of the parent text or to determine which variants could be attributed to the typical practice of the translator and therefore are not useful for reconstruction.²

As a reaction to the established paradigms of Classical and Modern Philology, where the dominant focus was on a reconstructed, hypothetical text that is to be interpreted in light of the historical context in which the text was presumably produced (see Lied 2015), New Philology as a philological perspective within the larger field of Editorial Theory provides a model broadly conceived for understanding *texts*, *text production* and *transmission* and for exploring texts in their *manuscript contexts*.³ Each individual manuscript (or inscription, tablet, etc.) is viewed as a meaningful historical artefact, and variants found in these manuscripts are viewed as potentially interesting in their own right. The aim of New Philology is to study texts as: (1) integral parts of historically existing manuscripts and (2) to interpret the texts in light of the context of the manuscript and its historical usage (Lied 2015).⁴ In light of Marais (2014:37) the duality of the aims of classical text-critical methodology and New Philology must be maintained in a paradoxical, complex relationship. Our view is therefore that the choices of the translator, editor or scribe must be studied in light of the context of the specific manuscript under discussion as well as the alterity of the Israelite and/or Hebrew cultural background or Vorlage (see also Naudé and Miller-Naudé forthcoming b). This is beyond Tov's multiple-text theory, where the focus is still on the reconstruction as well as the nature and evaluation of the Hebrew text underlying the Septuagint (Tov 2015; see also Worthington 2012). This is also beyond

2.Sollamo (2016:143–153) provides a historical overview of the term 'translation technique', its usage as a method of inquiry that opens up the Septuagint as a translation in its own right and its contribution to textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. Sollamo also describes the contribution of the syntax of the Septuagint and the theology and/or ideology of the translators to 'translation technique'. See also Pietersma (2006:1–11).

3. See, for example, Nichols (1990), Driscoll (2010), Suarez and Woudhuysen (2010), Walsh (2010), Suarez and Woudhuysen (2013), Pollock (2015) and Wang (2015). In biblical studies, see especially Lied (2015) and the essays by Lied and Lundhaug (2017). Pollock (2015) redefines philology as 'making sense of texts' and argues that the New Philology (Editorial Theory) of the 21st century needs historical reflexivity, non-provinciality and methodological and conceptual pluralism (Wang 2015:ix). Three tendencies are distinguished: Firstly, antitheoretical *resentment* followed from post-modernism. Secondly, there is a tendency toward a minimalist understanding of philology as the craft of collecting, editing and commenting on texts, especially via the use of new technology. A third tendency is maximalist and aims to rethink the very nature of the discipline, transhistorically and transculturally (Pollock 2015:6). The third tendency is the intention of our investigation in this article as well as in future work.

4. According to Nichols (1990), copying is a process that changes texts – not in terms of 'corruption' but in terms of 'improvement' (change is adaptation). Editorial practices should respect this diversity in manuscripts. New Philology studies a manuscript as a snapshot of an evolving tradition of ongoing text production and creation of new identities. Texts are to be read in the context of manuscript production and circulation.

the classification of literalism by Boyd-Taylor (2016:121–131; see also Pietersma 2010:3–21) in ancient Hebrew–Greek translation based on the binary distinction of 'literal' and 'free', which is reductionist.⁵

The complex nature of the translation of the term רָצֵן in the Septuagint

The term רָצֵן occurs 73 times in the Hebrew Bible (Andersen & Forbes 1989:51; Lisowsky 1993/1958:139–140); the feminine form רָצֵנָה occurs once (Zph 2:14) as does the form רָצֵנִים (Ezk 27:24). There are five Greek terms in the Septuagint that translate רָצֵן (Muraoka 2010:154). The first translation term is κέδρος , which is translated as 'cedar'. The second translation term is κέδρινος and is used to typify the products manufactured from cedar wood.⁶ The third translation term is κypάρισσος . By referring to ancient authors, Liddell and Scott (1968:1011) translate it with 'cypress' (*Cupressus sempervirens*) or 'cypress-wood'. Montanari, Goh and Schroeder (2015:1194) have 'cypress' as the translation. According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:799), κypάρισσος is used to translate רָצֵן in the Hebrew Bible four times. The fourth translation term is κypαρίσσινος . This term is used to typify the products manufactured from cypress wood (Liddell & Scott 1968:1011; Montanari, Goh & Schroeder 2015:1194). According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:799), κypαρίσσινος translates רָצֵן one time in the Hebrew Bible. The fifth translation term is ξύλον . This term refers to wood that is cut and ready to use as timber or firewood; a piece of wood, log, beam, post; or live wood, tree (Liddell & Scott 1968:1191–1192). The term ξύλον is used two times to translate רָצֵן in the Hebrew Bible. The dictionaries of Septuagint Greek provide the same translation values of the Greek terms (see Lust, Eynikel & Hauspie 2003:336, 360, 361; Muraoka 2009:394, 419). In some cases רָצֵן was not translated into Greek and deleted. This happened in seven instances. What is further interesting is that none of these terms occurs in the New Testament. According to Muraoka (2010:67) κέδρος was also used as the translation term for רֹשֶׁת and רָצֵן . The term κέδρινος was also used to translate רֹשֶׁת (Muraoka 2010:67). According to Muraoka (2010:72) κypάρισσος was also used as the translation term for the terms רֹשֶׁת and רָצֵן , while the term κypαρίσσινος was also used as translation term for רָצֵן (Muraoka 2010:72). It is clear that there is both significant disparity and significant overlap in these terms for trees and tree products.

It seems where the translation of the term רָצֵן in the Septuagint is the term κypάρισσος it refers to a species of trees constituting the genus *Cupressus* of the cypress family, Cupressaceae. As discussed by Naudé and Miller-Naudé (2018), the term רָצֵן in the Hebrew Bible refers to the genus and species *Cedrus libani* within the family of conifers, Pinaceae. In the cases

5. For an overview of recent developments in translation studies before complexity theory and their relationship to Septuagint studies, see Naudé (2008).

6. As indicated above, the translation of κέδρος and κέδρινος is discussed by Naudé and Miller-Naudé (2018). This article will focus on the range of other translations.

where the term אָרז in the Hebrew Bible is translated as κέδρος in the Septuagint and the cases where the term אָרז in the Hebrew Bible is translated as a noun in collocation with the adjective term κέδρινος in the Septuagint, it is concluded that there are no shifts in the specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text.

In what follows the other translations of the term אָרז in the Septuagint are described and analysed.⁷ It will be determined if there are shifts in the specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text.⁸

An analysis of the term אָרז and its range of translations in the Septuagint

The translation of the term אָרז in the Hebrew Bible as κυπάρισσος in the Septuagint

In Ezekiel 27:5–6 the term אָרז is not translated as κέδρος in the Septuagint. Instead, the translators make use of κυπάρισσος with the meaning ‘cypress’.

Ezekiel 27:5-6⁹

בְּרוּשִׁים מִשְׁנִיר בְּנֹו לָךְ אֶת כָּל־הַתַּיִם
 אָרְזוּ מִלְכָּנוֹן לְקַחוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת תַרְנֹו עֲלֶיךָ:
 אֶל־וֹנִים מִבָּשָׁן עָשׂוּ מִשׁוֹטְיָד קַרְשׁוֹ
 עֲשׂוּ־שֹׁן בַּת־אֲשׁוּרִים מֵאִי כַּתִּים
 [כַּתִּים]:
 Out of cypresses from Senir they crafted all your planks. They took a cedar from Lebanon to make your mast. Out of oaks from Bashan they made your oars. Your deck they made of ivory inlaid in pinewood from the coasts of Kittim.

κέδρος ἐκ Σανιρ ὠκοδομήθη σοι, ταινία σαλίδων κυπάρισσου ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου ἐλήμφθησαν τοῦ ποιῆσαι σοι ἵστους ἐλατινούς. ἐκ τῆς Βασανιτιδος ἐποίησαν τὰς κόπας σου, τὰ ἱερά σου ἐποίησαν ἐξ ἐλέφαντος, οἴκου ἀλσώδεις ἀπὸ νήσων τῶν Χεττιν.

A cedar from Sanir was built for you, fillets of timber of cypress were taken from Lebanon to make fir-tree masts for you. They made your oars from Basanitis; they made your holy things from ivory, woodland houses from the islands of the Chettiin (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

Ezekiel 27:5–6 forms part of Ezekiel 27:1–36, which is a sarcastic lamentation over Tyre, pictured as a shipwreck of a wealthy trading vessel. The focus is on the quality of beauty

7. In the analysis that follows, the textual versions used in the examples are as follows. *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1997) is used for the text of the Hebrew Bible and Rahlf's and Hanhart (2006) for the Septuagint text. The translation of the Hebrew is that of the authors, unless otherwise noted. The translation of the Greek is from Pietersma and Wright 2007, as indicated.

8. Unlike similes and metaphors, which highlight the notion of comparativity of an item or action and the term that refers to it, a symbol in literary terms refers to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event, which in turn signifies something else (see Abrams 1999:97, 311). In general, we view meaning as encyclopedic in nature (Evans & Green 2006:206–244), which implies that word meaning cannot be understood independently of the vast system of encyclopedic knowledge to which it is linked. The organisation of meaning is based on the notion of frames (developed by Fillmore 1982), which are detailed knowledge structures or schemas emerging from social as well as physical experience and which form a rich network of meaning. Frames thus represent a complex knowledge structure that allows us to understand a group of related words.

9. Hebrew words in square brackets indicate the Qere reading.

(Ezk 27:3, 11), which is indicated by the word order in the Hebrew – the phrase בְּרוּשִׁים מִשְׁנִיר [cypresses from Senir]¹⁰ appears at the beginning of the sentence; in linguistic terms, the phrase is topicalised (see Van der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2017:492–493, 510, 512, 545). The Greek translator employed the phrase κυπάρισσος ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου for the phrase אָרְזוּ מִלְכָּנוֹן. The term κέδρος, which is usually used to translate the Hebrew term אָרְז, is instead used in Ezekiel 27:5 to translate the Hebrew בְּרוּשִׁים (which is normally translated by the Greek term κυπάρισσος). The implication of beauty that is conveyed by the topicalisation in Hebrew is now lost in the translation as a result of the translator switching the normal translation of אָרְז for that of בְּרוּשׁ. In the phrase אֶל־וֹנִים מִבָּשָׁן, the term אֶל־וֹנִים refers to a specific tree, but it is left untranslated and thus has been deleted in the translation. The term אֲשׁוּרִים, which identifies a specific term, is translated with a general term, ἀλσώδης [like a grove]. It is again clear that the Greek translator was not able to make correct identifications of the trees to which the Hebrew terms refer. These verses support our hypothesis that the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms that were available to them and provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute. A further aspect of the switching of the normal translation of אָרְז for that of בְּרוּשׁ is that the role of cedar, out of which the mast, the most important part of the boat to show its power, is manufactured, was downscaled by the Greek translator so that Tyre, an evil power, is not so explicitly associated with the positive qualities of strength and majesty implicitly conveyed by the term אָרְז.¹¹ This view is supported by Hubler (2007:946), who claims that although the Greek version of Ezekiel was translated relatively literally, interpretation occurred to reflect ideological considerations to accommodate political and religious views. The implication is that the translator's choice of terminology exhibits adaptations to accommodate strategies such as ‘semantic levelling’ as well as ‘differentiation’.

In Ezekiel 31:3 the term אָרְז is a metaphor for the ruler of Assyria and symbolises strength, dignity and grandeur.¹² The cedar as the symbolic world tree carries the image of life-giving prosperity, by which all of the animals of creation were nourished. Ezekiel 31:1–18 compares Egypt to Assyria, which had formerly been the mightiest and most feared

10. The plural is generic, denoting the species (Bloch 1995:13, footnote 1).

11. Cook (2009:35–36) notes that: ‘... the phrase ἵστους ἐλατινούς occurs only rarely in Greek literature. According to HR, it is found only in Ezek 27:5 and in Homer (*Od.* 2:424). It remains difficult to determine direct influence in this regard, since these seem to be at most allusions. I have discovered a plethora of similar examples in the LXX version of Proverbs, where D'Hamonville interprets similar allusions as direct evidence of Platonic and/or Stoic influence. From the above it should be evident that I am sceptical of such inferences ... In the book of Proverbs I have found no convincing examples of influence from Greek philosophical perspectives, be it Platonic and/or Stoic influence ... The most that can be inferred from the examples from Job, Hosee and lezekiel that I dealt with above is that in by far most of the cases one can at most speak of inter-textual allusions. None of these examples evinced direct influence from Greek philosophical/mythological thinking’.

Joosten (2013:22–45) argues that in Ezekiel 27:5 ‘the expression ἵστους ἐλατινούς “masts of fir” seems to be a literary allusion to Homer’ (*Od.* 2.424). See also Ritschl (1838).

12. A metaphor involves the use of a name or descriptive term to refer to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. Unlike a simile, a metaphor is a comparison without the use of ‘like’ or ‘as’ and refers to the application of a name or descriptive term to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable. Metaphors are sometimes viewed as condensed or elliptical forms of similes. On the distinctions, see Jenni (1994:34, 37), Abrams (1999:97, 311), and Todd and Clarke (1999:249–68).

empire of the ancient Near Eastern world but was finally defeated in 612 BCE and so was an extinct nation in Ezekiel's time.¹³ Ezekiel 31:18 applies this lesson from history to Egypt. In Ezekiel 31:3 and 31:8 the Hebrew term **אַרְז** is translated as *κυπάρισσος* in the Septuagint.¹⁴ As indicated above, the term **אַרְז** is associated with majesty, stateliness and outward power, while the term *κυπάρισσος* foregrounds the quality of beauty.

Ezekiel 31:3

הִנֵּה אֲשׁוּר אֲרֵז בְּלִבְנוֹן יִפֶּה עֲנָנָה וְהָרֶשׁ מִצֵּל וְגִבָּה קוֹמָה וּגְבִין עֲבֹתִים הִיָּתָה צִמְרָתוֹ: Consider Assyria, a cedar of Lebanon: beautiful branches, dense shade, towering height; indeed, its top went up between the clouds. (CEB)

ἰδοὺ Ἀσσοῦρ *κυπάρισσος* ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ καὶ καλὸς ταῖς παραφυσίαν καὶ ὑψηλὸς τῷ μεγέθει, εἰς μέσον νεφελῶν ἐγένετο ἡ ἀρχὴ αὐτοῦ. Behold, Assour is a cypress in Lebanon; beautiful in limbs he is and high in size; his top came to be into the midst of clouds. (Pietersma & Wright 2007)

Ezekiel 31:8

אֲרָזִים לֹא־עָמְמָהוּ בְּגַדְאֵלֵיהֶם בְּרוֹשִׁים לֹא דָמוּ אֶל־סַעֲפֹתָיו וְעֲרַמְגָּם לֹא־הָיוּ כַּפְּאֲרֹתָיו כְּלַעַץ בְּגַדְאֵלֵיהֶם לֹא־דָמָה אֵלָיו בְּגִבּוֹ: No cedar was its equal in God's garden. The cypress trees did not have anything like its branches, and the plane trees had nothing like its boughs. None of the trees in God's garden could compare to it in its beauty.

κυπάρισσοι τοιαῦται οὐκ ἐγενήθησαν ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ πίτυες οὐχ ὅμοιοι ταῖς παραφυσίαν αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐλάται οὐκ ἐγένοντο ὅμοιοι τοῖς κλάδοις αὐτοῦ. πᾶν ξύλον ἐν τῷ παραδείσῳ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ὁμοιώθη αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ κάλλει αὐτοῦ. Such cypresses do not exist in the orchard of God, and pine trees were not like his limbs, and silver firs were not like his branches; no tree in the orchard of God resembled him in his beauty (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

The choice of the term *κυπάρισσος*, which is associated with beauty as a translation in the Greek, explicates the aspect of beauty in the tree metaphor, which is prominent in the Hebrew text as well as its translation into Greek. This is strengthened in the Greek translation by the deletion of 'dense shade and towering height'; these are features of the cedar but not the cypress. However, it lost the image of the cedar as the world tree (in the Hebrew text), which carries the image of life-giving prosperity. A further aspect for the choice of the term *κυπάρισσος* in Greek instead of *κέδρος* is so that Assyria and Egypt as evil powers are not so explicitly associated with the positive qualities that **אַרְז** conveyed. In other words, the translator of the Septuagint does not

13. *Biblical Hebraica Stuttgartensia* as well as Zimmerli (1979:747–748, 755–756) want to emend **אַרְז** to **אַשׁוּר** [pine] without textual support.

14. In Ezekiel 31:3 Symmachus translated the term **אַרְז** with the term *κέδρος* (Hatch & Redpath 1998/1902:758).

want to use the qualities associated with *κέδρος* to apply to the evil nations of Assyria and Egypt and for that reason uses *κυπάρισσος*.

The term **אַרְז** in Job 40:17 is not translated as *κέδρος* in the Septuagint but rather with *κυπάρισσον* with the meaning 'cypress'.

Job 40:17

יִתְקַצַּץ זַנְבּוֹ כְּמוֹ־אַרְז יִתְקַצַּץ יָתְדָיו [פְּתִיחוֹתֵי] יְשָׁרָיו: He stiffens his tail like a cedar; the tendons in his thighs are tightly woven.

ἔστησεν οὐρὰν ὡς *κυπάρισσον*, τὰ δὲ νεῦρα αὐτοῦ συμπεπλεκται. It stood up its tail like a cypress, and its sinews have been interwoven (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

A possible explanation is that the Septuagint translator of Job used *κυπάρισσον* to translate the Hebrew simile in order to avoid attributing the positive qualities associated with **אַרְז** to the creature Behemoth described in Job 40:15–24. According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:758) the translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion have *κέδρος*, renderings which bring the Greek into greater alignment with the Hebrew.

To summarise, it seems that in the cases where the term **אַרְז** in the Hebrew Bible is translated as *κυπάρισσος* in the Septuagint the translator does not want to associate *κέδρος* and its metaphoric and symbolic qualities of power and majesty to ideologically negative entities that are described with the term **אַרְז** in the Hebrew text.

The translation of the term **אַרְז** in the Hebrew Bible as *κυπάρισσος* in the Septuagint

In Ezekiel 27:24 the hapax legomenon **אַרְזִים** in the Hebrew Bible is not translated as *κέδρος* in the Septuagint but instead as *κυπάρισσινα*, meaning 'cypress wood'. In Aquila it is translated as *κέδρος* (Hatch & Redpath 1998/1902:758).

Ezekiel 27:24

הָמָּה רַבְלִיָּהּ בְּמִקְלָיִם בְּגָלוּמֵי תְּכֵלֶת וְרִקְמָה וּבְגָנָן בְּרִמִּים בְּתֻבֵּלִים תְּשִׁיעַ וְאַרְזִים בְּמִרְכָּלָהּ: These were thy traffickers in gorgeous fabrics, in wrappings of blue and richly woven work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and cedar-lined, among thy merchandise. (JPS)

φέροντες ἐμπορίαν ὑάκινθον καὶ θησαυροὺς ἐκλεκτοὺς δεδεμένους σχοινίοις καὶ *κυπάρισσινα*. ... bearing commerce in blue and choice treasures bound with cords and cypress wood. (Pietersma & Wright 2007)

As in Ezekiel 27:5–6, 31:3 and 31:8 above, the translator of the Septuagint did not want to use the powerful qualities associated with *κέδρος* to apply to the commerce of the evil nation of Tyre and therefore used the adjective *κυπάρισσινα*.

The translation of the term אֲרָז in the Hebrew Bible as ξύλον in the Septuagint

When the Septuagint translator renders אֲרָז as ξύλον, a generalisation strategy is being employed in which a term referring to a particular botanical species is rendered by a generic term, as illustrated first by 1 Kings 5:20.

1 Kings 5:20 (English 5:6)

וְעַתָּה צַוָּה וְיִקְרְתוּ לִי אֲרָזִים מִן־הַלְבָּנוֹן וְעַבְדֵי יְהוָה עִם־עַבְדֵיךָ וְשָׂכַר עַבְדֵיךָ אֶתֶּן לָּךְ כַּכֵּל אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר כִּי־אֵתָה יִדְעֶמָה כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ אִישׁ יָדַע לִקְרַת־עֲצָיִם כַּצְדָּנִים:

So now order cedars of Lebanon to be cut for me. My servants will work with your servants. I will pay your servants whatever you say is appropriate, for you know that we have no one among us who knows how to cut down trees like the Sidonians.

καὶ νῦν ἐντειλαὶ καὶ κοψάτωσάν μοι ξύλα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου, καὶ ἰδοὺ οἱ δοῦλοί μου μετὰ τῶν δούλων σου, καὶ τὸν μισθὸν δουλείας σου δώσω σοι κατὰ πάντα, ὅσα ἐάν εἴπης, ὅτι σὺ οἶδας ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν ἡμῖν εἰδὼς ξύλα κόπτειν καθὼς οἱ Σιδώνιοι.

And now command, and let them cut timber from Lebanon for me, and behold, my slaves are with your slaves, and I will give you the wages of your services according to all that you say, for you know that we have no one who knows how to cut timber like the Sidonians (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

1 Kings 5:20 is part of Solomon's message to Hiram, king of Tyre (1 Ki 5:16–20; English 5:2–6), in which he requests cedars of Lebanon to build the temple. In Hiram's reply (1 Ki 5:22–23; English 5:8–9), in which he complies with Solomon's request, he mentions both cedars and cypresses (verse 22; English verse 8). The reciprocal arrangements of both Hiram (1 Ki 5:24; English 5:10) and Solomon (1 Ki 5:26; English 5:11) are mentioned. From Hiram's side, he provided Solomon with all the timbers of cedars and cypresses that he desired.

In 1 Kings 5:20 (Solomon's request) the substitute for אֲרָזִים מִן־הַלְבָּנוֹן is τὰ ξύλα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου, a general phrase meaning 'trees of Lebanon'. The reason for the Septuagint translator's use of generalisation as a translation strategy is not immediately clear. Noth (1968:86) suggests that אֲרָזִים מִן־הַלְבָּנוֹן in verse 20 could mean trees in general, which are then specified first in verse 22 and more specifically in verse 24. Gray (1977:152) incorrectly views the cedar as 'not particularly adapted, as a branching tree with a comparatively short trunk, for rough building, for which pine would be more suitable'. He suggests that the 'long trunked timber' of the Cilician pine may be visualised in the verse – pine 'is specifically mentioned in v. 23, so that we may retain "cedar", which was to be used rather for panelling' (1977:152). Gray's understanding of the characteristics of אֲרָז as having a short, branching trunk are based on an incorrect botanical identification of the tree, first promoted by Köhler (1937), although he mistakenly attributes this approach to Noth (1968). The interpretations of Noth and Gray must be rejected

because they are not based on Biblical Plant Hermeneutics – אֲרָז refers to a specific species (*Cedar libani*) and not trees in general and אֲרָז properly identified botanically does not have a short, branching trunk.

We suggest that the explanation for the translator's rendering of אֲרָזִים מִן־הַלְבָּנוֹן as τὰ ξύλα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου must rather be sought in translation strategies for making sense of the passage. The subsequent verses of the passage provides important context for the translator's choices. In 5:22 (Hiram's reply) the Septuagint has ξύλα κέδρινα καὶ πεύκινα [cedar and pine wood] for the Hebrew בְּעֵצֵי אֲרָזִים וּבְעֵצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים [wood of cedars and wood of cypresses]. In 5:24 (Hiram's contribution) the Septuagint has κέδρους καὶ πᾶν θέλημα αὐτοῦ [cedars and his every wish] for the Hebrew בְּעֵצֵי אֲרָזִים וּבְעֵצֵי בְרוֹשִׁים כְּכָל־רָצוֹן [wood of cedars and wood of cypresses according to his every desire]. Because the translator uses a form of κέδρος or κέδρινος for אֲרָז twice in the subsequent verses in the same pericope (verses 22, 24), it is clear that he knows the appropriate Greek equivalent of the Hebrew term (Noth 1968:86). There must, therefore, be an interpretive reason for his use of generalisation as a translation strategy in verse 20. (The remainder of the passage has additional complexities in the Septuagint concerning the translation of בְרוֹשִׁים, which will be explored in a subsequent article.) We suggest that because cypress timber is mentioned alongside cedars in Hiram's agreement to Solomon's proposal (verse 22) and in Hiram's compliance (verse 24), the Septuagint translator used generalisation as a translation strategy in verse 20 in order to avoid a contradiction between Solomon's proposal and Hiram's agreement and compliance. As Montgomery (1951:139) notes, the cedars of Lebanon, mentioned alone in verse 20, were the prime object of Solomon's request, although both species (cedar and cypress) are mentioned in verses 22 and 24. The translator uses generalisation (the use of τὰ ξύλα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου) as a translation strategy in order to harmonise verse 20 with verses 22 and 24.

A second example of generalisation as a translation strategy in rendering אֲרָז is found in Isaiah 44:3. The prophet ridicules the worship of idols, saying that the idol maker expects his prayers to be heard by a block of wood that is suitable for burning.

Isaiah 44:14

לְקַרְתֵּלְךָ אֲרָזִים וַיִּקַּח מִרְזֵה וְאֵלֶיךָ וַיִּשְׁמְרֵם לְךָ בְּעֵצֵי־יַעַר נֹטַע אֲרָז וַיִּגְדֵּל: He cuts down cedars and acquires a cypress, umbrella pine or an oak. He gets trees from the forest; he plants a spruce and the rain makes it grow.

ὁ ἔκοψεν ξύλον ἐκ τοῦ δρυμοῦ, ὃ ἐφύτευσεν κύριος καὶ ὑετὸς ἐμήκυνεν, He cut this wood from the forest, which the Lord planted and the rain made grow. (Pietersma & Wright 2007)

In this verse, the Septuagint has generalised the various trees and only uses the generic phrase ξύλον ἐκ τοῦ δρυμοῦ [wood from the forest]. By contrast, the translations of κέδρος

in Aquila and Theodotion (Hatch & Redpath 1998; 1902:758) aim to represent the term אָרְזִים and to connect it to the related term אָרָז.

Cases of non-translation in the Septuagint of the term אָרָז in the Hebrew Bible

In a number of verses, the Septuagint does not translate the term אָרָז.

In Jeremiah 22:15–16 Jehoiakim shows little regard for God's people or God's word but rather is concerned with royal building projects involving massive amounts of cedar. By contrast, the success of his forefather, Josiah, was not derived from amassing wealth and erecting massive arrangements but by practising justice and defending the poor.

Jeremiah 22:15

הַתְּמָלִיד כִּי אַתָּה מִתְתַּרְרָה בְּאַרְזֵי אֲבִיךָ
הֲלוֹא אֲבִיךָ וְשָׂתָה וְעָשָׂה מִשְׁפָּט
וַיִּצְדָּקָה אֵץ טוֹב לוֹ:
Are you a king because you
compete in cedar? As for your
father, didn't he eat and drink
and do justice and righteousness?
Then it was well with him.

μη βασιλευσεις, οτι ου
παροξυνη εν Αχαζ τω πατρι
σου; ου φαγονται και ου
πιονται: βελτιον ην σε ποιειν
κριμα και δικαιοσυνην
καλην.
Surely, you will not be king,
because you are irritated with
Achaz your father? They will
not eat, and they will not drink;
it is better for you to execute
judgment and righteousness.
(Pietersma & Wright 2007)

The Hebrew of this verse is difficult. The Masoretic accents indicate a reading in which the first sentence ends with the *'atnah* on אָרְזִים. The sentence is marked as a question with the interrogative *h-* and can be appropriately understood as a rhetorical question. The meaning of the sentence largely depends upon how to read the word מִתְתַּרְרָה. One possibility is to understand the form as a rare *Tiph'el* participle of the root חרה, meaning 'to contend with' (Gesenius, Kautzsch & Cowley 1910; §55h) or 'to compete with' (Köhler & Baumgartner 2001; s.v. חרה). This stem formation is also attested with the same meaning in Jeremiah 12:5, where the imperfective form מִתְתַּרְרָה occurs. Another possibility is to read the consonantal text as rather a form of the Hithpael participle from the same root חרה, meaning 'to be agitated, excited', a meaning attested in Psalms 37:1, 7 and Proverbs 24:19.

The second sentence in the verse is also difficult. In the Masoretic reading, the sentence begins with the noun אָבִיךָ [your father] and continues with a negative rhetorical sentence. A precise description of the syntax of the sentence, however, requires a brief explanation of three types of sentences with a nominal constituent at the beginning of the sentence, outside of its canonical place within the sentence. The first construction involves a constituent that occurs at the beginning of the sentence (Naudé 1990:124; Holmstedt 2014:116–117). In topicalisation the constituent is moved to the left of the sentence but inside of the sentence boundary. This can be demonstrated by the fact that the topicalised

constituent occurs after interrogatives and the presentative marker *hinnē*. In Psalm 77:8, the topicalised prepositional phrase (לְעוֹלָמִים) occurs after the interrogative *h-*:

Psalm 77:8

הֲלְעוֹלָמִים יִנְחָחוּ אֲדוֹנָי
Will the Lord forsake
forever? (lit. Is it *forever*
the Lord will forsake?)
Topicalisation

The second construction, left dislocation, involves a constituent that occurs to the left outside of the sentence and has a resumptive element that occurs within the sentence. In the following verse, both constructions are present. In the first line, topicalisation occurs; in the second line, left dislocation occurs.

Isaiah 42:3

קָנָה רְצוּדִל לֹא יִשְׁבֹּר
A bruised reed he will not
break,
Topicalisation

וּפִשְׁתָּה כְּהָה לֹא יִכְבֵּנָה
and a faintly burning wick
he will not quench it.
Left dislocation

Isaiah 42:3 also illustrates the fact that both topicalisation and dislocation allow a negative marker to occur after the constituent that is topicalised or dislocated. However, topicalisation and dislocation differ with respect to interrogatives. As indicated above, a topicalised constituent occurs within the scope of the interrogative. By contrast, a left dislocated constituent occurs outside of the interrogative and is resumed within the interrogative sentence, as illustrated in Genesis 34:23 and 1 Kings 14:29.

Genesis 34:23

מִקְנֵיהֶם וְקַנְיָנָם וְכָל-
Their livestock, their
property and all their beasts,
בְּהֵמָתָם הֲלוֹא לָנוּ הֵם
won't they be ours?
Left dislocation

1 Kings 14:29

וְיֵתֵר דְּבָרֵי רִחְבֵּעַם
And the remainder of the
deeds of Rehoboam and all
וְכָל-אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הֲלֹא-
that he did, are they not
הַמָּה כְּתוּבִים עַל-סֵפֶר
written in the book of the
דְּבָרֵי הַיָּמִים לְמַלְכֵי
deeds of the days of the
יְהוּדָה:
kings of Judah?
Left dislocation

The third construction is less commonly attested. It shares some features with topicalisation and other features with left dislocation. Like topicalisation, it consists of a constituent that is at the beginning of the sentence and is not resumed within the sentence. Like left dislocation, it exhibits a sentence boundary between the left dislocated constituent and the sentence proper. This construction was identified by Naudé (1990) as a variety of topicalisation and by Holmstedt (2014) as 'a heavy topic'. One way that a sentence boundary may be explicitly marked is through an interrogative. The distinction between left dislocation and heavy topicalisation involving interrogatives can be seen respectively in the two poetic lines of the following verse:

Zechariah 1:5

אֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֵינֶם הָיִים? *Your fathers, where are they?* Left dislocation

וְהַנְּבִיאִים הַלְעוֹלָם יִהְיֶה? *And the prophets, do they live forever?*¹⁵ Heavy topicalisation

Returning now to Jeremiah 22:15, the noun אָבִיךָ [your father] in the second sentence is an example of a ‘heavy topic’, a noun that has been moved to the beginning of the sentence and that is separated from its sentence by an interrogative marker. Because the noun is not resumed within the sentence proper, it is both a rare construction and one that could be difficult to interpret syntactically, especially when reading an unpointed text.¹⁶

The Septuagint translator does not employ a rhetorical question in the first sentence but rather renders the sentence as a negative statement. In this way, the translator conveys the pragmatic import of the sentence but not its syntactic form. More importantly, the Septuagint seems to understand rather the word מְתַהַרֵּר as a Hithpael participle from the root הרה with the meaning ‘to be agitated, excited’. The Septuagint translator then renders the prepositional phrase בְּאָרְזוֹ as the preposition *beth* followed by the personal name Ahaz (Αχαζ) or, following Codex Alexandrinus, Ahab (Αχααβ) rather than the common noun ‘cedar’. Finding an explanation for the Septuagintal translation is not easy. While it would be possible to posit that the Septuagint translated a different Vorlage reading באָחוֹ (or באָהָאב) instead of באָרְזוֹ, resulting in understanding the word as the proper name Ahaz or Ahab rather than the common noun אָרְזוֹ [cedar], this seems unlikely in light of the fact that in the previous verse (22:14), the translator represents בְּאָרְזוֹ with ἐν κέδρω (see Vonach 2011:2772). In addition, the revision of Symmachus again has κέδρος (Hatch & Redpath 1998/1902:758), the expected rendering of בְּאָרְזוֹ.

A second possibility is exemplified by Lundbom, who, after describing the difficulties of the Hebrew text, characterises the Septuagint reading as follows: it ‘cannot be right’ because ‘the MT’s “in cedar” suits the context perfectly and is a key word in the larger structure to which the present oracle belongs’ (Lundbom 2004:138). In other words, the Septuagint translator made a mistake. However, the fact that there are two divergent Septuagint readings, both with proper names of previous Israelite kings, suggests rather interpretive translation strategies rather than mistakes or an alternative Vorlage.

A third possibility is hinted at by Van Selms (1972:272–273, especially note 21), who suggests that the deviations of the LXX are a misinterpretation of the Hebrew text. In a similar vein, Vonach (2011:2772) suggests that the translator implemented the change because he did not understand the rhetorical question of the Hebrew text. However, neither

15.The indication of the subject on the Hebrew finite verb does not constitute resumption of the heavy topic in the second line.

16.Thompson (1980:477 note 6) exemplifies the difficulties of a modern reader in understanding how to read the syntax of heavy topicalisation when he says: ‘In the text one word appears, “Your father”; but for the sense we need to insert something else like “Think of ...” “Now what about ...”’

author specifies precisely how a misunderstanding of the Hebrew text might have produced the rendering of the Septuagint translator, especially since Josiah and not Ahaz (or Ahab) was the father of Jehoiakim.

We want to suggest that the starting point for the translator’s divergent understanding of the Hebrew text lies in the difficulty in determining where the first sentence of the verse ends and the second sentence begins. In an unpointed text without the benefit of the Masoretic accents as a guide to intonational pauses, the Septuagint translator had to rely on syntax and meaning. By interpreting the word מתהרהר as a Hithpael participle meaning ‘to be agitated’, the following prepositional phrase באָרְזוֹ beginning with the preposition *beth* should indicate the person with whom the subject was agitated. This posed a problem, because the root ארז does not form the basis of a personal name. By understanding the following word אָבִיךָ as appositional to אָרְזוֹ rather than as a heavy topicalised constituent of the following sentence, the Septuagint translator thinks that perhaps the Hebrew should be באָחוֹ, thus referring to Ahaz, a king of Judah and one of the predecessors of Jehoiakim. The rendering of the translator of Alexandrinus reflects the same interpretive strategy of the syntax of the Hebrew, but the translator decided upon a different royal name, באָהָב, a king of Israel and not of Judah, but one who like Ahaz was deemed an evil king who did not promote justice. More importantly, as Keil (1980:339) notes, Ahab had built a palace of ivory (1 Ki 22:39), thus providing an example of a king who erected a splendid palace but did not promote justice. The verse then provides an example of translators grappling with a difficult Hebrew text and using the translation strategy of generalisation for the purposes of harmonisation to create a coherent text.

Other cases of non-translation in the Septuagint of the term אָרְזוֹ in the Hebrew Bible occur in 1 Kings 6:16, 18 (the entire verse is omitted) and 22. The pericope in 1 Kings 6:15–22 is about the interior of the temple, its inner woodwork, the partition of the shrine and the decoration of the temple (Montgomery 1951:149; Gray 1977:167) and it has been well described by Gray (1977:167) as ‘disjointed’. The complexities and indeterminacies of the textual history of the Hebrew of 1–2 Kings *vis-à-vis* the Greek of 3–4 Kingdoms are summarised by Law (2015), who describes the various viewpoints concerning the extent to which the Septuagint was based on a proto-MT text, the extent to which the Hebrew text was still fluid at the time of the translation of the Septuagint and the extent to which later editors of both Hebrew and Greek texts played a role. In particular, he says (Law 2015) that:

... one’s view on who was responsible for the divergences in the Greek and Hebrew traditions will determine the extent to which the translator might have been responsible for theological interpretation. If the translator was faithful to his *Vorlage*, which was different from the MT, his influence is relatively light and the responsibility for major theological emphases should be attributed to those who modified the

earliest Hebrew text. If, however, the translator is responsible for differences, he is the one to whom ideological changes should be attributed. (p. 159)

Law (2015:158–159) concludes that an analysis of 3–4 Kingdoms requires an examination of textual criticism, ‘translator technique’ and literary criticism. We suggest rather that Septuagintal scholarship must employ editorial theory (i.e. text criticism, including the history of each text and their interrelationships) and a description of translation strategies (as employed by translation studies scholars; see Baker 2011; Van Rooyen & Naudé 2009). The study of translation strategies includes an analysis of the ideological and theological stances of the translators as conveyed by their translation choices as well as the ways in which the broader literary context has affected their concern to produce a coherent text.

In 1 Kings 6:16, the Septuagint omits mention of cedar.

1 Kings 6:16

וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה מִיַּרְכּוֹתַי [מִיַּרְכּוֹתַי] הַבַּיִת בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים מִן־הַקְּרָקַע עַד־הַקְּרָוֹת וַיִּבְנוּ לוֹ מִבַּיִת לְדָבִיר לְקֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים: He built twenty cubits of the rear of the house with boards of cedar from the floor to the walls, and he built this within as an inner sanctuary, as the Most Holy Place. (ESV)

καὶ ὠκοδόμησεν τοὺς εἴκοσι πηγχεῖς ἀπ’ ἄκρου τοῦ οἴκου, τὸ πλευρὸν τὸ ἐν ἄπὸ τοῦ ἐδάφους ἕως τῶν δοκῶν, καὶ ἐποίησεν ἐκ τοῦ δαβὴρ εἰς τὸ ἅγιον τῶν ἁγίων. And he built the twenty cubits from the top of the house, the one side from the floor to the rafters, and he made from the dabir to the holy of holies (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

The previous verse (verse 15) has already mentioned in detail the use of wood products in the temple:

וַיִּבְנוּ אֶת־קִירוֹת הַבַּיִת מִבְּתוֹת בְּצִלְעוֹת אֲרָזִים מִקְּרָקַע הַבַּיִת עַד־קִירוֹת הַסָּפֹן צִפָּה עֵץ מִבַּיִת וַיִּצַּר אֶת־קְרָקַע הַבַּיִת בְּצִלְעוֹת בְּרוֹשִׁים: He lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar. From the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood, and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress. {ESV}

[He lined the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar. From the floor of the house to the walls of the ceiling, he covered them on the inside with wood, and he covered the floor of the house with boards of cypress. {ESV}]

The Septuagint translator has produced a coherent text of verse 16 within the context of the pericope by removing the redundant information that the panelling of the room is cedar. He also removed the information concerning cedar on the floor to avoid a description that contradicts the information in verse 15 that the floor boards were cypress and not cedar. As noted in the quotation by Law (2015:159) above, it is impossible ultimately to know whether the harmonisation of verse 16 with verse 15 is the work of the Greek translator or a Hebrew editor. Either the translator deleted from a Hebrew source text to harmonise or the translator used a Hebrew text that was later edited in divergent ways. The translator wanted a coherent text and that is what he produced at the end.

In 1 Kings 6:20, the Septuagint also reflects a text that is harmonised within the context by removing redundancies.

1 Kings 6:20

וְלִפְנֵי הַדָּבִיר עֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה אָרְךָ וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה רֵחֵב וְעֲשָׂרִים אַמָּה קוֹמָתוֹ וַיִּצְפֶּהוּ וַיִּבֶן סָגוּר וַיִּצַּר מִזְבֵּחַ אֲרָז: The interior of the inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high; he overlaid it with pure gold. He also overlaid the altar with cedar. (NRSV)

εἴκοσι πηγχεῖς μῆκος καὶ εἴκοσι πηγχεῖς πλάτος καὶ εἴκοσι πηγχεῖς τὸ ὕψος αὐτοῦ, καὶ περιέσχευ αὐτὸν χρυσίῳ συγκεκλεισμένῳ. καὶ ἐποίησεν θυσιαστήριον The length twenty cubits and twenty cubits the width and twenty cubits its height, and he covered it with overlaid gold. And he made an altar (Pietersma & Wright 2007).

By comparing verse 22 in the Hebrew text, it is clear that the Hebrew text is repetitive: ‘He also overlaid the altar with cedar’ (verse 18); ‘... and the entire altar belonging to the shrine, he overlaid with gold’ (verse 22). The Septuagint does not have this repetition: ‘And he made an altar’ in verse 20 is followed by the last four words of verse 21 ‘in front of the Debir and overlaid it with gold’. Verses 20–22 focus on the gold that is overlaid (Vonach 2011:905–906) and most of the Greek translations omit mention of the cedar of the altar, including Codex Vaticanus. However, mention of ‘cedar’ [κέδρου] is included in Origen, Codex Alexandrinus, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion (Hatch & Redpath 1998; 1902:758; Rahlfs & Hanhardt 2006:640). By omitting reference to the cedar of the altar in verse 20, a coherent and less repetitive text results with a focus on gold. As Montgomery notes (1951:151–152), the decorative aspects of the description of the temple and especially its lavish use of gold are in accordance with other temple descriptions from the ancient Near East. We suggest, therefore, the Septuagint translator (or an editor of the Hebrew text) has removed the redundancy of mention of cedar in this verse to produce a coherent text.

Mention of cedar is also removed from the following verse, which is part of the description of the building of Solomon’s palace.

1 Kings 7:3 (7:40 LXX)

וְהָיָה בָּאֲרָז מִמַּעַל עַל־הַצִּלְעוֹת אֲשֶׁר עַל־הָעַמּוּדִים אַרְבָּעִים וְחַמְשָׁה חֲמִשָּׁה עֶשְׂרֵת הָקוּר: It was roofed with cedar on the forty-five rafters, fifteen in each row, which were on the pillars. (NRSV)

καὶ ἐφάπτωσεν τὸν οἶκον ἄνωθεν ἐπὶ τῶν πλευρῶν τῶν στύλων, καὶ ἀριθμὸς τῶν στύλων τεσσαράκοντα καὶ πέντε, δέκα καὶ πέντε ὁ στίχος: And he paneled the house, from above, on the sides of the logs, and the number of logs was forty-five; the course was fifteen. (Pietersma & Wright 2007)

This verse (7:3/7:40 LXX) is part of the pericope of 7:38–50 (LXX). In verse 39, the use of cedar wood is mentioned: ‘... it was built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar beams on the pillars’. Near the end of the pericope, cedar wood is mentioned again in verse 49. In verse 40, the Septuagint omits the redundant mention of cedar.¹⁷

A few verses later in 7:7 (7:44 LXX), the Septuagint again omits reference to cedar.

1 Kings 7:7 (7:44 LXX)

ואילם הכסא אשר ישפט-שם אדם
המשפט עשה וספיו בארו מהקרקע עד-
הקרקע: And he made the porch of the
throne where he was to judge,
even the porch of judgment:
and it was covered with cedar
from floor to floor (ASV).

καὶ τὸ αἶλαμ τῶν θρόνων, οὗ
κρινεῖ ἐκεῖ, αἶλαμ τοῦ κριτηρίου. And the Ailam of the Thrones,
there where he pronounced
judgment, Ailam of the Court.
(Pietersma & Wright 2007)

The Septuagint has produced a less redundant and more coherent, streamlined text by omitting reference to cedar.

Verse not translated in the Septuagint

One verse (1 Ki 6:18) in which אָרז occurs in the Hebrew is not translated in the Septuagint.

1 Kings 6:18

ואָרז אֶל־הַבַּיִת פְּנִימָה מִקְלַעַת
פְּקֻעִים וּפְטוּרֵי צָצִיִּים הַכֹּל אָרז אֵין
אָבן נִרְאָה: The cedar inside the temple was
carved in the form of gourds
and open flowers. All was cedar.
No stone was seen.

According to Rahlfs and Hanhart (2006:640) Origen added a Greek translation of this verse. According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:758), Alexandrinus has verse 18, as do Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion.

For the broader context of the pericope in which this verse occurs, see the preceding discussions concerning verses 16 and 20 above. As Montgomery (1951:149–150) and Gray (1977:168) have shown, this verse (6:18) is largely redundant in repeating information from verses 15 and 16. Lundbom (2004) suggests that:

... this verse and the phrase “he prepared a shrine” from verse 19 ... interrupt the description of the shrine by relating to the decoration of the main hall, suggesting secondariness. (p. 242)

The term κέδρος occurs in the Septuagint but not as translation of the term אָרז in the Hebrew Bible

In four verses, the term κέδρος occurs in the Septuagint but not as a translation of the term אָרז in the Hebrew Bible. The first instance occurs in Psalm 37:35 (36:35 LXX).

17. In 1 Kings 7:6 (7:43 LXX), Origen adds ἐν κέδρου (Rahlfs & Hanhart 2006:640) as do Alexandrinus and Aquila (Hatch & Redpath 1998/1902:758). The Hebrew does not include mention of cedar in this verse.

Psalm 37:35 (36:35 LXX)

רָאִיתִי רָשָׁע עָרִיז וְיָמְתַעַרְהוּ כְּאֶזְרַח רִעְוֹן: I have seen a wicked,
powerful person spreading
himself like a leafy indigenous
tree.

εἶδον ἀσεβῆ ὑπερψούμενον
καὶ ἐπαιρόμενον ὡς τὰς κέδρους
τοῦ Λιβάνου. I saw an impious one being
highly lifted up and being
raised up like the cedars of
Lebanon (Pietersma & Wright
2007).

In this verse, the Hebrew has a generic description of a tree, which is characterised as ‘native’ or ‘indigenous’ and ‘leafy and/or luxurious.’ The Septuagint has a specific tree, the cedars of Lebanon. Weiser (1962:313) explains the discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek by positing that the Septuagint has the original reading; he thus follows *Biblia Hebraica* in proposing to emend the participle מתערה to מתעלה [become high]. The Septuaginta Deutsch explains the Greek as a free translation of a corrupted Hebrew text (Bons et al. 2011:1603); in other words, there is no translation strategy involved that could explain the translation.

We suggest rather that the Greek translator employed a translation strategy of explicitation by replacing a generic term with a specific one. The translator of Psalms uses cedars of Lebanon symbolically to refer to a powerful, evil person; the use of a specific tree creates a more powerful simile. What is very interesting is that the translator of Psalms has a different ideological viewpoint concerning the symbolic use of cedar from that of the translator of Ezekiel. Whereas the translator of Ezekiel did not want to use cedar metaphorically to refer to powerful evil persons, as exemplified in Psalm 37:65 (36:35 LXX) the translator of Psalms does not have a problem in referring to impious wicked persons as cedars of Lebanon.

In the second verse, the translator of Ezekiel uses κέδρος to translate בְּרוּשִׁים מִשְׁנִיר [cypresses from Senir].

Ezekiel 27:5

בְּרוּשִׁים מִשְׁנִיר בְּנִי לָךְ אֵת כָּל־
לְחֵתֶיךָ: אָרז מִלְּבָנוֹן לָקַחוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת
תֵּרֶן עֲלֶיךָ: (Out of) cypresses from Senir
they made for you a whole deck;
they took a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast over you.

κέδρος ἐκ Σανίρ ὑποδομήθη
σοι, ταινία σανίδων
κυπαρίσσου ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου
ἐλήμφθησαν τοῦ ποιησαί σοι
ἵστους ἐλατίνους. A cedar from Sanir was built for
you, fillets of timber of cypress
were taken from Lebanon to
make fir-tree masts for you.
(Pietersma & Wright 2007)

This verse is explained above, where it is argued that the two terms for the trees used for the planks of the ship and its mast were switched so that cedar, the tallest and most powerful tree, is not used in symbolic reference to a wicked kingdom.

In the third verse, the Hebrew term תַּאֲשׂוּר [pine] is translated with κέδρος [cedar].

Isaiah 60:13

קְבוֹד הַלְּבָנוֹן אֵלֶיךָ יָבוֹא בְרוֹשׁ תְּדַהֵר
וּתְאֲשׂוּר יִתְהַוֶּה לְפָאֵר מְקוֹם מִקְדָּשִׁי
וּמְקוֹם רַגְלֵי אֲבֹתַי: Lebanon's glory will come
upon you, cypress, elder tree,
and pine, to glorify the site
of my sanctuary, and I will
honour my royal footstool.

καὶ ἡ δόξα τοῦ Λιβάνου πρὸς σὲ
ἦξει ἐν κυπαρίσσῳ καὶ πεύκῃ
καὶ κέδρῳ ἅμα, δοξάσαι τὸν
τόπον τὸν ἁγιὸν μου. And the glory of Lebanon
shall come to you, with cypress
and pine and cedar together,
to glorify my holy place.
(Pietersma & Wright 2007)

In this verse, there are three names of trees בְּרוֹשׁ וּתְאֲשׂוּר [cypress, elder tree and pine]. These three trees in the same order occur in the second part of Isaiah 41:19, where the Septuagint translates only two terms κυπαρίσσον καὶ λεύκην [cypress and white poplar]. As argued in more detail in Naudé and Miller-Naudé (2018), the Greek translators had difficulties finding translation equivalents for multiple trees in a list. As a result, some of the translation equivalents reflect Greek terms that provided, in the translators' view, a suitable familiar or local substitute. In some cases, the Hebrew term is simply not translated. In Isaiah 60:13, the use of κέδρος for the third tree term is probably triggered by the connection to Lebanon with which the cedar was associated.

In the fourth verse, the Hebrew term בְּרוֹשׁ is translated with the adjective κέδρινος.

2 Chronicles 3:5

וְאֵת הַבָּיִת הַגָּדוֹל חִפְּהוּ עֵץ בְּרוֹשִׁים
וְיִתְחַפְּהוּ זָהָב טוֹב וַיַּעַל עָלָיו תַּמְרִים
וַיִּשְׂרְשְׁרוּ: He paneled the walls of the
main room with cypresses,
covered them with fine gold,
and decorated them with
palm trees and chains.

καὶ τὸν οἶκον τὸν μέγαν
ἐξύλωσεν ξύλοις κεδρίνοις καὶ
κατεχρύσωσεν χρυσίῳ καθαρῷ
καὶ ἔγλυψεν ἐπ' αὐτοῦ φοίνικας
καὶ χαλαστά. And he lined the great house
outside with cedar wood and
gilded it with pure gold and
engraved palms on it and
chains. (Pietersma & Wright
2007)

In this verse, the Septuagint substitutes 'cedar' for 'cypress' because the temple is associated with cedar wood. The Septuagint translator is harmonising what is known elsewhere about the panelling of the temple through using the translation strategy of substitution. In other words, the Septuagint translator sees cypress as a base timber and cedar as a luxurious wood for panelling; he therefore corrects the Hebrew text. Rudolph (1955:203) explains the MT rendering by arguing that the wood is not so important because the Chronicler is focussing on 1 Kings 6:13, 22, which emphasises gold. See the preceding discussion on 1 Kings 6:16, 18, 22 in

1 Kings 6:16, 6:20 and Isaiah 60:13 as discussed above in which the Septuagint removes the redundant references to cedar in order to focus on gold.

What is very interesting about the translator's strategy in this verse is its connection to the translation strategy in Ezekiel 27:5 as discussed above. In that verse, the translator employed a strategy of substitution in employing the phrase κυπαρίσσου ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου for the phrase מְלִכְנוֹן אֶרֶץ for ideological reasons, namely, to avoid symbolically representing Tyre with the grandeur of the cedar. In 2 Chronicles 3:5, the glorious reputation of the temple is elevated through the substitution of cedar for cypress. The translation strategy (substitution), the ideology, and the symbolic valorisation of cedar and cypress are the same – it is only the objects to which they are applied that differ in the two verses.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have examined those cases in which the Hebrew source text term אֶרֶץ [cedar] is not translated with its usual Septuagintal equivalent κέδρος [cedar] or its adjective κέδρινος but rather with one of the following: (1) κυπαρίσσοις [cypress] or the related adjective κυπαρίσσινος, (2) ξύλον [wood, tree] or (3) non-translation/deletion of the source text item. We have demonstrated that employing editorial theory and determining the translation strategy of the Septuagintal translators within the broader frameworks of complexity theory and Biblical Plant Hermeneutics provides an insightful methodology for explaining the Septuagintal readings.

Most Septuagintal research is text critically oriented in looking for the Vorlage of the Septuagint translators, but the focus on the search for the source text is reductionist in light of the complex nature and interrelationships of the Hebrew text and the Septuagint text, because both were textually fluid. The focus rather should be on the extant texts and a description and explanation of the kinds of differences between texts, as promoted by editorial theory. In addition, the notion of 'translation technique' as used by many Septuagintal scholars is outdated. Translation strategy (e.g. Baker 2011; Naudé 2008; Van Rooyen & Naudé 2009) should be used instead and the entire range of translation strategies should be considered.

Finally, we have demonstrated that in certain cases, it is very clear that the choice of translation strategy relates purely to ideological concerns of the translators. In other cases, there is a far more complex interplay of ideological concerns with textual and contextual concerns. Finally, in some cases, it is clear that the Septuagint translators were not able to make a precise botanical identification of the names of trees in series and attempted to convey a local or contextual substitute for the tree.

Acknowledgements

We thank our research assistant, Suthea van der Westhuizen, for her assistance in collecting the data for this article.

Competing interests

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and not an official position of the institution or funding sources.

Authors' contributions

C.L.M.-N. and J.A.N. jointly conceptualised, researched and wrote the article.

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