

Additional Evidence of Semantic and Syntactic Sensitivity in the Septuagint

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Abstract

In this article, a tribute to James Aitken by his students and postdoctoral collaborator, several case studies are presented that demonstrate how situating the Septuagint within its Post-classical Greek context can add significantly to our understanding of the textual-linguistic character of the Septuagint translations. They include a new approach to understanding parataxis with καί in the Greek Pentateuch, morphology and word formation in relation to presumed neologisms in Greek Jeremiah, lexical choice related to verbs of “pouring” in *kaige*, verbal periphrasis with ποιέω in Greek Genesis, the expression of motion in Greek Exodus, and the literary expression of “to die” in Greek Genesis. While we do not deny the existence of interference in the translations, we argue that its extent has been overstated. Through examples that showcase semantic and syntactic sensitivity on the part of the translators, we demonstrate various approaches to positioning the Septuagint within the history of Greek.

Keywords

Septuagint – Post-classical Greek – multicausality – linguistics

Introduction

The aim of this special issue on *The Septuagint within the History of Greek* is to show how the language of the Septuagint (LXX) can be contextualized as Post-classical Greek. This line of research has been one of the most significant aspects of James Aitken's research program¹ and has been formative for those of us working with him at Cambridge as doctoral students or postdoctoral collaborators in LXX studies over the last five years. In this article, written shortly after the news of his passing and while in the process of finishing the issue as a whole, we present case studies of language use in the LXX that show the value and necessity of positioning these translations within the history of Greek. As an epilogue to the issue as a whole, and as a tribute to Jim, these examples show that the extent of Semitic interference in the LXX has been overstated to the detriment of a more fully nuanced understanding of the character of the LXX.

¹ See, e.g., Aitken, *No Stone Unturned*; “Linguistic Variation”; “Greek Praise Epithets”; “Neologisms”; “Language of the Septuagint”; Aitken and Evans, *Biblical Greek in Context*.

Situating the LXX within the history of Greek involves a multicausal approach. Multicausality in LXX studies means studying the LXX not only as a translation in relation to the Hebrew, but also as a Greek document which participates in the broader Post-classical linguistic and textual world. These converging spheres of associations entail that no single factor can be taken as exclusively constitutive in the translation process. A multicausal approach to LXX translations stems from this recognition and suggests that only a variety of factors, working in concert, provide sufficient explanatory power to account for the shape of these texts.²

The notion that the Greek of the LXX exemplifies an artificial language characterized by interference, a so-called “translationese,”³ is still quite prevalent in contemporary scholarship.⁴ There are various reasons for this, as laid out in the introduction to this issue.⁵ One issue is the tendency to repeat the same few examples as evidence of Semitic interference. Oftentimes, these examples go back to early twentieth century scholarship and continue to be recycled into the twenty-first. Two paradigmatic examples of this are the prevalence parataxic καί and the use of εἰρήνη with the meaning of “well-being,” instead of “peace.”⁶ By singling out these examples and repeating them without novel analysis, scholars distort the picture in at least two ways.

Firstly, they have awarded these examples an emblematic status and therefore segregated their portrayal of the linguistic character of the LXX from much, if not most, of the evidence. Many dimensions of the text still await further research. Building upon the earlier work of Adolf Deissmann and John Lee, among others,⁷ LXX scholars are still working on situating the vocabulary of the LXX within the history of Greek.⁸ At the same time, building upon the

2 Aitken, “Origins of *kai ge*”; Dhont, “Multicausality.”

3 See, e.g., Pietersma and Wright, “To the Reader,” xiv; Mulroney, *Translation Style*, 53. Compare also the statement in the guidelines of the SBLCS commentaries: “It should not, however, be presupposed in any given instance that the translator’s primary intention was to produce a coherent text” (§1.4.2, cited in Hiebert, “Linguistic Interference,” 56).

4 For a discussion, see Evans, “Embracing Advances.”

5 Aitken† and Dhont, “The Septuagint within the History of Greek,” this issue.

6 In chronological order, on “peace,” see Thackeray, *Grammar*, 40–41; Tov, “Three Dimensions,” 88–89; Lee, “Equivocal and Stereotypical,” 116; Büchner, “Translation Technique,” 96–97; Rajak, *Translation as Survival*, 128; Dhont, “The Septuagint,” 22. On parataxis, see Thackeray, *Grammar*, 54–55; Aejmelaeus, *Parataxis*, 48–50; NETS, *passim* (e.g., 4, 239, 442, 479); Polak, “Context Sensitive Translation”; Hiebert, “Linguistic Interference,” 59–62.

7 Deissmann, *Bible Studies*; Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*; Lee, *Lexical Study*; Evans, *Verbal Syntax*.

8 See, e.g., Aitken, “Greek Praise Epithets,” but also the *Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint* (ed. Bons).

work of the so-called Helsinki school,⁹ we are also giving increased attention to syntax.¹⁰ Our understanding of how a text functions must account not only for its lexicon, but also for the details of its morphology and syntax. It is especially through further exploration of LXX syntax that its linguistic character will be illuminated.

Secondly, scholars have disregarded advances in adjacent disciplines, such as the study of linguistics more broadly and Post-classical Greek in particular. There have been significant advances in the study of language variation, bilingualism, and language contact.¹¹ Furthermore, our understanding of the landscape of Post-classical Greek has been expanded by an increase in available evidence for comparison, with large numbers of papyri from the Hellenistic period discovered, published, and made searchable through new databases.¹² Further, and related to this, the linguistic study of Post-classical Greek itself has seen recent and rapid growth, and scholars in this field have been more progressive in engaging insights from sociolinguistics into their own research than what we have seen in LXX studies thus far.¹³ Refined engagement with this broader range of Post-classical Greek studies offers scholars many opportunities for advancing our understanding of LXX texts.

The field of LXX studies is currently in the midst of important encounters with other disciplines and we have an opportunity to decide which avenues to pursue.¹⁴ This issue highlights the cross-fertilization between LXX studies and Post-classical Greek studies. It is only through a multicausal approach that considers the LXX within the history of Greek that we will gain an adequate sense of the relationship between interference and conventional Greek in these texts.¹⁵ In order to showcase the many avenues for further research, we have gathered case studies which demonstrate the presence of Post-classical Greek conventions in the language of the LXX. We do not deny that interference

9 See, e.g., Soisalon-Soininen, *Infinitive*; Sollamo, *Renderings*; Sollamo, *Repetition*; Aejmelaesus, *Parataxis*, among the many other works published by these scholars.

10 Lee, *Greek*; Aitken, "Linguistic Variation"; Dhont, "Syntax and Pronominal Syntax," this issue.

11 See Bayley et al., *Oxford Handbook of Sociolinguistics*; Chambers and Schilling, *Language Variation and Change*; Hickey, *Handbook of Language Contact*.

12 See, for example, papyri.info as well as the soon-to-be-released databases of EVWRIT (Everyday Writing in Greco-Roman Egypt, Klaas Bentein, University of Ghent) and PapyGreek (Digital Grammar of Greek Documentary Papyri, Marja Vierros, University of Helsinki).

13 See, e.g., Bentein and Janse, *Varieties*; Rafiyenko and Seržant, *Postclassical Greek*.

14 See Evans, "Embracing Advances."

15 On the use of the term conventional Greek as a descriptor in this context, see Maurais, "Language Contact."

in the LXX exists. It is, after all, a universal of translation,¹⁶ but we argue that it has been exaggerated. The first example (1 Parataxis in the LXX), from Travis Wright, discusses the prevalence of parataxis with καί. He shows that even stereotypical examples of interference need to be revisited in light of linguistic advances. Subsequent sections focus on aspects of the LXX that have not yet been noted. The examples move through various layers of the Greek language: Andrew Keenan looks at morphology and word formation in relation to presumed neologisms in Jeremiah (2 Neologisms) and Marieke Dhont examines verbal syntax in Genesis (3 Verbal periphrasis). Timothy Lee considers lexical choice in *kaige* (4 Verbs of pouring in *kaige*), Robert Walker looks at the modification of verbal ideas in Exodus (5 Expressing motion in Exodus), and Tyler Horton explores the use of literary expressions in Genesis (6 How to die in Greek).

1 Parataxis in the LXX

1.1 Introduction

In LXX Studies, scholars often assume a high degree of parataxis is evidence that the syntax of the LXX is “Hebraistic.”¹⁷

(1) Lev 10:2¹⁸

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

And a fire went out from before the Lord, and it devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

16 This is the so-called “law of interference.” See Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies*, 310–15.

17 Aejmelaeus, *Parataxis*, 10: 76% of clauses in the Greek Pentateuch are paratactic.

18 The edition of the MT as found in *BHS* is taken as a point of departure. The translation is that of NRSV. For the LXX, the Göttingen editions have been used where available; in the absence of a Göttingen edition for a specific book, we have used the 2006 edition of Rahlfs and Hanhart. The translation is that of NETS or LES, as noted, often revised. For literary sources, we have used the Loeb editions and their respective translations. For the papyri, we have used papyri.info, with the translations cited there, or provided by ourselves.

καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πῦρ παρὰ κυρίου καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτοὺς, καὶ ἀπέθανον ἔναντι κυρίου.

And a fire went out from before the Lord, and it devoured them, and they died before the Lord.

In fact, some have used examples like (1) to suggest that “in the Greek of the LXX there is no syntax, only parataxis.”¹⁹ Yet the matter is more complex than many scholars appreciate. For example, both Homer and Herodotus famously have a high degree of coordination. Even Thucydides, the “master of hypotaxis” (and a paragon of elevated register), “features an extraordinary amount of καί.”²⁰ Although influence from the Hebrew source is undeniable, the nature and consequences of parataxis in the LXX deserve a richer explanation. One such explanation comes from the role of “Gricean” reasoning in natural language.²¹

1.2 *Gricean Reasoning*

Building on the work of Paul Grice, Stephen Levinson developed an explanation which solves an important problem called *the articulatory bottleneck*. The problem is to explain the “almost miraculous speed, accuracy, and automaticity” of human communication when the communicative system is impeded by the fact that we articulate speech at a much slower rate than we process it.²² How is it that we are able to communicate faster than we can encode? The answer lies in the prevalence of inference. To maximize the efficiency of communication, natural language relies on a rich system of inference, sometimes referred to as Gricean reasoning: “inference is cheap” and “articulation expensive” so the system functions through maximizing inference.²³ Essentially, communication overcomes the articulatory bottleneck by encoding less information in utterances and relying on mutually salient mental reflexes to fill in the blanks. Therefore, “linguistic coding is to be thought of less like definitive content and more like interpretive clue.”²⁴

19 Conybeare and Stock, *Selections from the Septuagint*, 50.

20 Bonifazi et al., *Particles in Ancient Greek Discourse*, 8: the 10,231 uses in Thucydides amount to a significantly higher proportion than what is found in Herodotus.

21 Grice, *Way of Words*.

22 Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings*, 28: “Prearticulation processes in speech production seem to run at a speed three to four times faster than the actual articulation rate, and rates at which speech can be parsed and comprehended show the same kind of advantage over articulation rates.”

23 Levinson, 6 and 27–30.

24 Levinson, 29.

This reliance on inference provides an explanation for the high degree of coordination in the Hebrew source text. Repetition of the conjunction does not explicitly specify the relationships between clauses, but “minimal forms invite maximally rich interpretations.”²⁵ In fact, Levinson argues that parataxis “is an important instance of the tendency to find from minimal specifications maximally cohesive, rich interpretations.”²⁶ In other words, past events in narrative prose “tend to be read as temporally successive and, if at all plausible, as causally linked.”²⁷

Consider example (2). Although the product licenses parataxis from the source, an inference obtains between each clause in the product:

(2) Lev 10:2

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְהוָה וַתֹּאכַל אֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה

TEMPORAL: And a fire went out from before the Lord,
 RESULT: and it devoured them
 RESULT: and they died before the Lord

καὶ ἐξῆλθεν πῦρ παρὰ κυρίου καὶ κατέφαγεν αὐτούς, καὶ ἀπέθανον ἔναντι κυρίου.

TEMPORAL: And a fire went out from before the Lord,
 RESULT: and it devoured them
 RESULT: and they died before the Lord

Paratactic structures like these are not limited to Hebrew prose texts or their translations. Their prevalence crosslinguistically is warranted by the fact that our default interpretation is to enrich conjoint clauses pragmatically,²⁸ a fact recognized as early as the first century BCE by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (see *Comp.* 5).²⁹

In the LXX, parataxis is an example of pragmatic convergence between the source and target languages. Setting aside questions of register and purpose, parataxis is an eminent example of how pragmatic inferences in the source text can be licensed by the translator to result in a coherent and conventional

25 Levinson, 126.

26 Levinson, 126.

27 Levinson, 122.

28 Levinson, 122.

29 Horn, “Contrast and Clausal Order.”

product. Notice in (3) how the translator monitors the product by introducing ἄλλά, but otherwise leaves parataxis intact:

(3) Exod 16:20

וְלֹא־שָׁמְעוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּזְתְּרוּ אֲנָשִׁים מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר וַיֵּרָם תּוֹלְעִים
וַיִּבְאֵשׁ וַיִּקְצֹף עָלֵהֶם מֹשֶׁה

DISJUNCT: And they did not listen to Moses
MANNER: and some of them kept over some from it until morning
RESULT: and it bred worms
RESULT: and it stank
RESULT: and Moses was angry at them.

καὶ οὐκ εἰσήκουσαν Μωυσή, ἀλλὰ κατέλιπόν τινες ἀπ' αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ πρωί· καὶ ἐξέξεσεν σκώληκας, καὶ ἐπώξεσεν· καὶ ἐπικράνθη Μωυσὴς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς.

DISJUNCT: And they did not listen to Moses, but the men kept some from it until morning.
RESULT: and it burst forth with worms,
MANNER: and it was putrid.
RESULT: And Moses was angry at them.

It is unlikely that the translators did not intend these pragmatic enrichments as at least one such inference is detected and explicated using ἄλλά. Hearers and readers automatically enrich the logical content of an utterance to reach a maximally-informative interpretation: “minimal specifications get maximally informative or stereotypical interpretations.”³⁰ It is thus highly probable that the translator intended these inferences—and expected his audience to do the same. In fact, this may be one reason (among others) that parataxis is preferred. As recent research demonstrates, parataxis has a coherence-raising effect that facilitates text processing.³¹ In the LXX, both the source and target language converge pragmatically, resulting in a product whose discourse-pragmatic properties are conventional. Moreover, by licensing these inferences, the translator presupposes that his audience will recover them, since without them there would be an unclear relation between clauses and so the product itself would be incoherent. Scholars have overlooked how parataxis requires hearers to recover speaker-intended inferences using logical

30 Levinson, *Presumptive Meanings*, 37.

31 Pagin, “Pragmatic Enrichment.”

reasoning. Furthermore, a high degree of parataxis indicates that the translators had a pragmatic presupposition about the linguistic competence of their intended audience, since the presence of such inferences requires attentive reading.

1.3 *The Problems of Prescriptivism: Is Parataxis Primitive?*

Parataxis has been an important example of the so-called “primitive” nature of LXX Greek, a situation mirrored more broadly in linguistics. The situation is more complicated, however. Linguists once assumed that languages begin with parataxis and then evolve toward clausal embedding and hypotaxis, such that the earliest periods of human language lacked clausal embedding.³² Languages without clausal embedding were considered “primitive”:

It may be laid down as a general principle that in the progress of language parataxis precedes hypotaxis. The former is associated with the uncultivated mind; the latter, with the cultivated mind of civilized peoples.³³

However, the evidence does not demonstrate that syntactic subordination is a sign of complexity (and therefore sophistication) while coordination is more primitive (and crude).³⁴ Hypotaxis and parataxis are often extant concurrently even in the pre-literate stage of many language families,³⁵ and, in certain languages, parataxis evolved *from* hypotaxis.³⁶ While it is less complex in terms of code, parataxis is not less “complex” in meaning: it simply relies more heavily of Gricean reasoning. In this the LXX actually requires its audience to perform complex processes of meaning recovery on the product. These facts should caution scholars in their negative evaluation of parataxis in the LXX. As Jim demonstrated,³⁷ even hallmark “Hebraisms” are more complicated, and enlightening, than scholars often appreciate.

32 Dąbrowska, “Language in the Mind,” 230: “The earliest written texts in a language are usually highly paratactic ... while later texts typically show more use of subordination. The historical increase in the frequency of subordination is gradual.” See also Givón, *On Understanding Grammar*, 171; Hopper and Traugott, *Grammaticalization*, 175–84.

33 Small, *The Comparison of Inequality*, 125, cited in Walkden, “Parataxis and Hypotaxis.”

34 For further discussion, see Walkden, “Parataxis and Hypotaxis,” on which aspects of this section rely. For the development of *καί* coordination within the history of Greek, see Janse, “Co-subordination.”

35 Karlsson, “Origin and Maintenance,” 201: “Evidence from many language families indicates that non-finite clausal subordination and initial stages of finite clausal subordination existed already in preliterate languages.” See also Widmer et al., “NP Recursion,” 443.

36 Heine and Kuteva, *The Genesis of Grammar*, 171: The “agglutinating structure of Swahili was replaced by an analytic-isolating type of structure, and that hypotaxis gave way to parataxis as a means of structuring texts.”

37 Aitken, “Origins of *kai ge*.”

2 Neologisms

2.1 Introduction

Within the span of just two sentences, LXX Jer 6:13–14 (200 BCE)³⁸ contains three previously unattested words (bolded).

(4) LXX Jer 6:13–14

ὅτι ἀπὸ μικροῦ αὐτῶν καὶ ἕως μεγάλου πάντες συνετελέσαντο ἄνομα, ἀπὸ ἱερέως καὶ ἕως ψευδοπροφήτου πάντες ἐποίησαν ψευδή. καὶ ἰῶντο τὸ σύντριμμα τοῦ λαοῦ μου, ἐξουθενούντες καὶ λέγοντες Εἰρήνη εἰρήνη· καὶ ποῦ ἐστὶν εἰρήνη;

NETS: Because from their small even to their great, all carried out lawless deeds; from priest even to pseudo-prophet, all produced lies. And they were doctoring the fracture of my people with contempt and saying, “Peace, peace,” and where is peace?

While this example may seem extreme, the LXX as a whole is understood to contain an excessively high degree of neologisms.

A neologism, according to LXX lexicographers, is a word that is first attested in the LXX.³⁹ On the basis of their being first attested or presumably “newly” coined, it is then often suggested that these words are in some way unique to the LXX, whether it be a matter of formation or a new meaning.⁴⁰ In his *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint*, Takamitsu Muraoka claims that there are approximately 1,900 neologisms in the LXX.⁴¹ This would mean that nearly 20% of LXX vocabulary, or 1 in 5 words, were either created by the translators or are “proper to” the LXX.⁴² Such figures contribute to the impression that the language of the LXX is something other than conventional Greek.⁴³ One problem with characterizations of the LXX based on the apparent preponderance of neologisms, however, is that there are not as many neologisms as have been alleged to exist. One common situation in which a word thought to be a neologism has to be reconsidered, is following the emergence of new evidence predating the Septuagint, as often demonstrated since Deissmann and others

38 Shead, “Jeremiah,” 472–73.

39 Muraoka, *Lexicon*, xiii.

40 Lust et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, xiv.

41 Muraoka, *Lexicon*, xiii.

42 Lust et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, xiv.

43 See, e.g., Kugelmeier, “Bibel, Papyri und Philosophen,” 25.

in his footsteps,⁴⁴ but a multicausal approach to neologisms in the LXX allows for an analysis of more complex cases.

2.2 ἐξουθενέω

Consider, by way of a first example, ἐξουθενέω (“to set at naught”), which appears in Jer 6:14 and only seven times more through the rest of the LXX:

(5) LXX Jer 6:14

αἱ ἰῶντο τὸ σύντριμμα τοῦ λαοῦ μου ἐξουθενούντες καὶ λέγοντες Εἰρήνη εἰρήνη· καὶ ποῦ ἐστὶν εἰρήνη;

NETS: And they were doctoring the fracture of my people with contempt and saying, “Peace, peace,” and where is peace?

The fact that ἐξουθενέω seemingly does not occur in literary Greek prior to the LXX leads Muraoka and LEH to classify it as a neologism, but the issue is more complex.⁴⁵ There is a single documentary attestation of this word from 88 CE that provides an example of the sense “to act with contempt,” the same sense as in LXX Jeremiah:

(6) O.Did. 360, ll. 5–7 (88 CE)

ἔγραψες λέγων Ἰουλίῳ ὅτι πέν- | ψω σοι τὸν χαλκόν. ἀκούσας ἐ- | ξουθενή σε καὶ λέγει ὅτι ἀπολοῦ

You had written saying to Julius, that I will send to you copper, hearing he acted with contempt toward you and said that you had been killed.⁴⁶

This ostrakon occurs later than the LXX. As there are no grounds to establish any dependence of this text on the LXX, it shows ἐξουθενέω being used independently of the LXX. Therefore, it is likely that both LXX Jeremiah and this ostrakon used ἐξουθενέω because it was part of Post-classical Greek vocabulary more commonly than our extant evidence suggests.⁴⁷ The case against the LXX translators coining ἐξουθενέω is made stronger when phonological

44 Deissmann, *Licht vom Osten*. See also Aitken, “Neologisms.”

45 Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 255; Lust et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 218.

46 Translation is my own.

47 See also Aitken, “Neologisms.”

developments in Greek are considered. There are, in fact, four spelling variants of ἐξουθενέω which are produced by two points of orthographic interchange: ἐξου [θ/δ] εν [ε/ο] + ω. Henry St. John Thackeray suggested that ἐξουθενέω and ἐξουθενέω are different words, developed from οὐθείς and οὐδεῖς respectively.⁴⁸ However, ἐξουθενέω and ἐξουθενέω are used interchangeably in 1 Kgs 8:7, and in the New Testament we find both forms of ἐξουθενώ and ἐξουθενώ in Mark 9:12 and Luke 23:11 respectively. Geoffrey Horrocks argues that οὐθείς and οὐδεῖς were used interchangeably in Menander (4th–3rd c. BCE), probably as a reflection of a similar parallel use in spoken language.⁴⁹ If οὐθείς and οὐδεῖς are not being distinguished in this time period, it is hard to claim that ἐξουθενέω and ἐξουθενέω would have been treated as two distinct words. These spelling variants are better understood as examples of allomorphy (i.e., when a word appears in different forms with the same meaning), so that the θ-variant and δ-variant should be treated as one word.⁵⁰

There are several documentary examples of the δ-variant (ἐξουθενέω),⁵¹ including one, SB 5 7524, dated to 249 BCE, about a century earlier than the consensus date of the Greek translation of Jeremiah. Another example, BGU 4 1117 (7), an Alexandrian lease agreement from 13 BCE, provides a use of ἐξουθενέω in a more concrete sense than what we saw in the examples above.

(7) BGU 4 1117, ll. 29–32 (13 BCE)

ἐ[ἄ]ν δ[έ] | [τι] τούτ[ω]ν παραβαίνωσιν, εἶναι αὐτοὺς π[αρ]αχρ[ῆ]μα |
[ἄ]γ[ω]γίμ[ο]υς καὶ συνέχεσθαι μέχρι τοῦ ἐ[ξ]ουθενή- | [σαι] καὶ ἐκτελέσαι καὶ
ἐκτεῖσαι τ' Εἰρηναίωι

But if they transgress any of these things, (they agree) that they will be immediately liable for seizure and they will be detained until they settle the account, pay in full, and pay to Eirenaïos ...⁵²

The sense of the word here seems to be “to lower the amount owed to nothing.” In LXX Jeremiah, the sense was “to act with contempt,” which seems to be a figurative extension (treating someone as though they have no value) from the more concrete sense used in this papyrus. The fact that the earlier LXX

48 Thackeray, *Grammar*, 105.

49 Horrocks, *Greek*, 102.

50 Aitken, “Phonological Phenomena,” 272.

51 BGU 4 1117; P. Mich. 8 477; P. Laur. 2 39; O. Did. 31; P. Col. 10 278; SB 5 7524.

52 Translation is my own.

attestation is abstract is significant because it is not ordinarily the case that words have abstract or figurative uses, unless a concrete sense of the word has become conventionalized.⁵³ This is not to say that the concrete sense of ἐξου(θ/δ)ενέω was completely absent, and that the abstract could not have been inferred from context, but since the abstract meaning is attested in different sources, and abstraction is typically a later development, it is likely that the fact that our earliest attested use of the word is figurative suggests that ἐξου(θ/δ)ενέω was commonly used well before the time of the LXX.

The result of this brief survey is that ἐξουθενέω should not be counted as a LXX neologism, in the sense that it was created by the translators. With the spelling variants accounted for, the word occurs sixty-two times in the LXX and well over one thousand times in literary Greek texts, and no semantic division emerges in an analysis of the various forms.

2.3 ἐκριζόω

As a second example, and to stick with ἐκ-compounds, I wish to consider ἐκριζόω in LXX Jer 1:10:

(8) LXX Jer 1:10

ἰδοὺ κατέστακά σε σήμερον ἐπὶ ἔθνη καὶ βασιλείας ἐκριζοῦν καὶ κατασκάπτειν καὶ ἀπολλύειν καὶ ἀνοικοδομεῖν καὶ καταφυτεύειν.

Behold, today I have appointed you over the nations and the kingdoms to uproot and to ruin and to destroy and to rebuild and to plant.

This verb occurs thirteen times in the LXX and is listed as a neologism because it is first attested here.⁵⁴ However, ἐκριζόω is used in a contract dating to around 170 BCE:

(9) P. Ryl. Gr. 4 583, l. 16

καὶ ἀγρώστεως καὶ κιναίου καλάμου καὶ τῆς ἄλλης δίσσης⁵⁵ ἐκριζῶν πλὴν τῆς χέρσου τῆς ἐντὸς τῆς ἀπ[οσκαφῆς?]

53 Bauer, *Morphological Productivity*. 51.

54 Muraoka, *Lexicon*, 215.

55 I have read this as θίς, against the suggested translation “all the other tangle of roots” in Bagnall and Derow, *The Hellenistic Period*, 179–80.

and dog's-tooth grass and kinaios reed and the other uprooted shore reed except the dry ground within the cross trench ...

This papyrus suggests that the term ἐκριζόω likely occurred already during, and potentially before, the time of the LXX translation. The agricultural background of this papyrus is very similar to the agricultural metaphors evoked in Jer 11:10. Moreover, the constituent elements of the verb (ἐκ and ριζόω) are common and easily recognizable, and prepositional prefixing is a highly productive process. Since word formation is a natural language process, newly formed compound verbs would not appear strange to readers.⁵⁶ In the case of ἐκριζόω, it makes knowing when the word would have been coined particularly dubious. For these reasons, it seems unlikely that the verb ἐκριζόω was first coined by the translator of LXX Jeremiah.

2.4 Conclusion

An examination of some alleged neologisms in LXX Jeremiah within a broad linguistic framework of morphology and semantics strongly suggests that the translators used these words because they were already available within Post-classical Greek and that the attested word formations reflects natural language processes. A multicausal approach has yet to be more fully adopted in the study of neologisms in the LXX, in order to more accurately characterize the vocabulary of the LXX.⁵⁷ I would suggest that a significant portion of alleged neologisms fall off the list on similar terms as the two examples discussed here.⁵⁸ Since word formation is a natural language process, and not an arbitrary operation of “making up words,”⁵⁹ and as the list of LXX neologisms shrinks, so does the validity of its characterization as odd or unnatural Greek on these grounds.

3 Verbal Periphrasis

3.1 ποιέω ἔλεος

The Greek translation of Gen 24:12 reads as follows:

⁵⁶ Lee, *Lexical Study*, 92; Dhont, *Style and Context*, 124.

⁵⁷ Aitken, “Neologisms.” For a fuller discussion of the issues addressed in this section see: Keenan, “Question of Neologisms.”

⁵⁸ For example, I have identified 16 “neologisms” that are also preverbs which presumably would also be regarded similarly to ἐκριζόω. See Keenan, “Question of Neologisms.”

⁵⁹ Aitken, “Neologisms,” 329–30.

- (12) Theophrastus (3rd c. BCE), *apud* Dionysium Hal., *De Lysia* 15

οἷον ὡς ὁ Λυσίας ἐν τῇ τοῦ Νικίου ἀπολογία βουλόμενος ἔλεον ποιεῖν.⁶²

As much as Lysias in the apology of Nikios wants to show mercy.

The periphrastic use of ποιέω with an abstract noun is not only an idiomatic alternative to the verbal idea expressed by the simplex⁶³—in this case, ποιέω ἔλεος for ἐλεέω—but is a common feature of literary Greek.⁶⁴ While in the case of ποιέω ἔλεος in *De Lysia*, the periphrasis may be emphasizing the ceremonial aspect, in other instances the periphrastic construction is semantically interchangeable with the simplex verb:

- (13) P. Hermes 41 106, ll. 22–30 (Egypt, 2nd c. BCE), fragment from Sosylus, *Hannibal* (3rd c. BCE)

συμβαίνει | γὰ[ρ] τοὺς Φοίνικας ἐὰν | ἀντιπρώροις τιςιν | ἀντιταχθῶσιν, ἐπιφέ- |
ρεσθαι μὲν ὡς ποιησο- | μένους ἐμβολήν, οὐκ ἐμ- | [βα]λεῖν <δ'> εὐθύς, ἀλλὰ
δι- | εκπλεύσαντας ἐπιστρέ- | φειν.

For it happens that the Phoenicians, when they face certain opponents, come forward as though they will attack, but do not attack immediately, but having broken through the enemy's line, they turn around.⁶⁵

The author juxtaposes verbal periphrasis in parallelism with the simplex verb, creating variation in verbal form for literary effect, while being synonymous in meaning. These parallel usages of the verbal periphrasis in Greek sources show that the construction ποιήσον ἔλεος in Gen 24:12 not only formally matches the Hebrew, but also makes for perfectly idiomatic, even literary Greek, which should therefore be rendered into idiomatic English. Brill LXX's "to deal mercifully,"⁶⁶ potentially reflecting an attempt to render the use of ποιέω rather

62 The noun ἔλεος is masculine in Classical Greek, but undergoes inflectional reanalysis in Post-classical Greek, resulting in τὸ ἔλεος. See LSJ s.v. ἔλεος.

63 Rijksbaron, *Syntax and Semantics*, 149.

64 See Horrocks, *Greek*, 75, for further examples.

65 This translation is my own.

66 Brayford, *Genesis*, 99.

than the meaning of ἐλεέω, is slightly better than NETS in this respect. The most contextually accurate translation, however, is that of LES⁶⁷: “show mercy.”

3.2 ποιέω πένθος

Another example of this periphrastic construction is ποιέω πένθος:

(14) Gen 50:10b

וַיַּעַשׂ לְאַבְרָהָם אֶבְרָתָא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים

NRSV: and he observed a time of mourning for his father seven days.

καὶ ἐποίησεν τὸ πένθος τῷ πατρὶ αὐτοῦ ἑπτὰ ἡμέρας.

NETS: and he made mourning for his father seven days.

Brill LXX: and he made mourning for his father seven days.

LES: and he did the mourning for his father for seven days.

The Hebrew construction אָבַד הָפַח is an idiomatic expression, “to mourn ceremonially for someone” (HALOT s.v. אָבַד). The LXX here offers a word for word translation: הָפַח is rendered by ποιέω and אָבַד by πένθος. All modern translations of the LXX render the Greek into unidiomatic English: “to make/do mourning,”⁶⁸ thus suggesting that the Greek rendering of the Hebrew is unidiomatic. Yet, we find ποιέομαι πένθος as a periphrastic expression for πενθέω “to mourn” already in Greek literature from the fifth century BCE onwards:

(15) Herodotus, *Hist.* 2.1 (5th c. BCE)

Κύρου ἐὼν παῖς καὶ Κασσανδάνης τῆς Φαρνάσπεω θυγατρὸς, τῆς προαποθανούσης Κύρος αὐτὸς τε μέγα πένθος ἐποίησατο καὶ τοῖσι ἄλλοισι προεῖπε πᾶσι τῶν ἦρχε πένθος ποιέεσθαι.

He was the son of Cyrus and Cassandane, daughter of Pharnaspes, for whom Cyrus mourned deeply, and bade all his subjects mourn also, when she died before him.

67 LES adheres to the principle that “The English translation should feel idiomatic where the Greek is idiomatic ... It should feel foreign where the Greek feels foreign,” see Penner, *Lexham English Septuagint*, xiii.

68 See also Dhont, “Multicausality.”

(16) Diodorus Siculus, *Bib. hist.* 1.84.1 (1st c. BCE)

ἀλλὰ μὴν γε καὶ καθ' ἣν ἂν οἰκίαν εὐρεθῇ κύων τετελευτηκώς, ξυρώνται πάντες οἱ κατ' οἶκον ὄντες ὅλον τὸ σῶμα καὶ ποιοῦνται πένθος.

Furthermore, whenever a dog is found dead in any house, every inmate of it shaves his entire body and goes into mourning.

It can clearly be established that periphrastic ποιέω is idiomatic, but further research into the precise functioning of the periphrastic construction with ποιέω vis-à-vis the simplex verb is desirable.⁶⁹ As Geoffrey Horrocks noted, the construction is indicative of a higher register of Greek from the classical period onwards.⁷⁰ From a brief exploration in literature and papyri, the periphrastic use of ποιέω becomes particularly productive in Post-classical Greek.⁷¹ In Classical Greek, however, there is a semantic difference between the active and middle voice of ποιέω in periphrasis which relates to whether or not the subject as agent is involved in the state of affairs expressed by the verb.⁷² The use of voice in the LXX requires further study, since the translator of Genesis seems to prefer the active voice in the context of periphrasis, while in the non-translated examples cited above in literature and papyri (see n. 12) we more often find the middle. Yet, in the following example (17) from a private letter, the active voice appears in non-translated Greek as well, though this example is later than LXX Genesis.

(17) BGU 1 332, ll. 4–5 (Arsinoites, 2nd–3rd c. CE)

τὸ προ[σ]κύνημα ἡμῶν ποιῶ παρὰ τῷ | κυρίῳ Σεράπιδι

I make your obeisance before the lord Serapis⁷³

69 Klaas Bentein dedicated a monograph to verbal periphrasis with εἰμί and ἔχω and a participle, for example (see *Verbal Periphrasis*).

70 Horrocks, *Greek*, 41, 75.

71 See, e.g., APF 52.32 ll. 32–33 (τὴν ἀναφορὰν ποιήσασθαι, 2nd c. BCE), BGU 8.1851 l. 6 (τὴν ἀπαίτησιν ποιήσασθαι, 1st c. BCE), BGU 20.2845 ll. 17–18 (τὴν ἐπὶ σὲ ποιήσασθε καταφυγὴν, 1st c. BCE).

72 Rijksbaron, *Syntax and Semantics*, 149.

73 Translation cited from Bagnall and Cribiore, *Women's Letters*, 389. Here the periphrastic construction is equivalent to προσκυνέω “make obeisance” (LSJ).

It may also be added that in modern Greek, periphrases with *κάνω* “make, do” are very common, positioning verbal periphrasis with “to do” within the diachronic development of the Greek language.

3.3 Conclusion

The use of verbal periphrasis with *ποιέω* is a promising avenue for further research, requiring proper diachronic contextualization within Post-classical Greek.⁷⁴ What we can say, in any case, is that *ποιέω* with an abstract noun is frequently used, idiomatic, and indicative of a higher register in Greek. We can find many examples of the use of this construction in the LXX where it reflects the Hebrew *while also* being higher register Greek. Besides the examples in this paper, see, for example, *ποιέω κρίσιν* (equivalent of *κρίνομαι*) in Gen 18:19 and *ποιέομαι ἄδικον* (equivalent of *ἀδικέω*) in Gen 19:8. We also find periphrastic *ποιέω* in the LXX in instances where it does not have any source text motivation. One such example is *ποιέομαι λήθην* (equivalent of *λανθάνομαι*) in Job 7:21⁷⁵ where this expression even gives a literary flair to the translation. Interpretations and translations of the LXX that emphasize this rendering as a representation of the Hebrew are one-sided. By translating the Greek as though it is unidiomatic, the impression that the language of the LXX is encumbered by Semitic interference persists. As with its vocabulary, we need to adequately contextualize its syntax within the history of Greek. A multicausal approach can account for the translation both as rendering and as Greek product.

4 Verbs of Pouring in *kaige*

4.1 The Translation of *קצץ*

Among the books of the LXX, the *kaige* portions have been perceived as the most “literal or unintelligent.”⁷⁶ In this section, we will look at the translation of *קצץ* in *kaige* texts, in order to show that these translations also retain, or even explicate, subtle nuances between verbs of pouring found in the Hebrew Bible, going beyond the traditional negative descriptions of their character as a Greek text.

The narration of the death of Jehosaphat in 3 Kgdms 22:35 includes reference to his blood pouring out:

74 E.g., Kemmer, *The Middle Voice*; Lavidas and Papangelis, “Deponency.”

75 See Dhont, *Style and Context*, 151–55.

76 Thackeray, *Grammar*, 13.

The revisers match קצ׳ with a χέω-cognate, but the prefixed preposition ἀπό and the complementation with ἐκ make the source and direction of the flow explicit.

Two further examples show similarly subtle uses of χέω compounds and prepositions.

(19) 4 Kgdms 9:3

וַיִּצְקֵה עַל-רֹאשׁוֹ

καὶ ἐπιχεεῖς ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν αὐτοῦ (Vaticanus)

And you poured on his head

(20) 4 Kgdms 4:4

וַיִּצְקֵה עַל כָּל-הַכֵּלִים הָאֵלֶּה

καὶ ἀποχεεῖς εἰς τὰ σκεύη ταῦτα (Vaticanus)

And you poured out into these vessels

In both passages, the Hebrew has the preposition על, but the kaige revisers have included extra elements, namely a preposition prefixing the verb and another following it, which distinguish the precise details of the pouring in each instance. Such distinctions are maintained across all kaige texts, as the revisers translate the same Hebrew word (קצ׳) with different Greek compounds from χέω “to pour,”⁷⁹ namely:

1. ἐπιχέω + ἐπὶ when pouring on something (e.g., 4 Kgdms 3:11; 4:5; 9:3, 6).
2. ἀποχέω + εἰς when pouring into something (4 Kgdms 4:4).
3. ἀποχέω + ἐκ + εἰς when pouring out of something into something else (3 Kgdms 22:35).

Kaige revisers usually update towards common LXX translation equivalents, so why do we see this variation in their handling of קצ׳?⁸⁰ I suggest that these examples showcase the *kaige* revisers’ attention to semantics. Different prefixes are used with χέω because the translators were reflecting the subtleties of

79 ἐγχέω is also used as an imperative in (4 Kgdms 4:41). I strongly suspect the exception ἐνέχει (4 Kgdms 4:40) is a Greek corruption from ἐνέχεεν, given context and reading נִשְׁפָּךְ “he poured” in the Syro-hexapla.

80 On the tendency toward standardization see Lee, “Newly Discovered.”

the different situations narrated by the text.⁸¹ The differences in the motion of the pouring were not not explicit in the Hebrew but must be inferred from the context. The *kaige* translation of לַעֲרֹךְ varies depending on the direction of the pouring. It can be ἐπί when pouring onto something (4 Kgdms 3:11), or εἰς when pouring into an object (4 Kgdms 4:4). The *kaige* revision thus adopts Greek translations to match the direction for pouring while still pairing the Hebrew lexeme עָרַךְ with χέω compound verbs.

4.2 Further Example from Jonah

Furthermore, the careful use of χέω compound verbs extends to removing them when not used for verbs of pouring.

(21) Jon 4:1

וַיֵּרָע אֶל-יוֹנָה רָעָה גְדוֹלָה וַיַּחֲרֹר לוֹ

Καὶ ἐλυπήθη Ἰωνᾶς λύπην μεγάλην καὶ συνεχύθη. (OG)

And Iona was suffering great grief and was confused.

K[αὶ ἐ]λ[υπήθη ἰ]ωνᾶ λύ[πην μεγάλην] καὶ ἡθ[ύμησεν.] (8HēvXIIgr)

And Iona was suffering great grief and he was angry.

The *kaige* revision appears averse to using χέω compounds verbs when not reflecting עָרַךְ or עָרַךְ. In Jon 4:1, the Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8HēvXIIgr) shows that the *kaige* revision updated the translation of עָרַךְ “anger.” While the OG used the lexeme συγχέω “to put together, baffle,” *kaige* replaced this with the standard equivalent for עָרַךְ: θυμώ “to become angry.”⁸² A parallel move is made in 2 Kgdms 14:14 where ἐκχεόμενον “poured out” is updated to καταφερόμενον “brought down” when translating נָגַד “flow, be spilled.”

4.3 Conclusion

The curious use of χέω compound verbs in *kaige* revision suggests an educated desire to make explicit subtle nuances in the most “literal or unintelligent”⁸³ translations of the LXX. Through analysing the rendering of verbs of pouring,

81 See also Lee, “Subtlety.”

82 See Lee, “Newly Discovered.”

83 Thackeray, *Grammar*, 13.

we see that the *kaige* revision was accomplished with precision and care for Greek use. *Kaige* revision, while “literal” in the sense of pairing χέω compounds with קצ, was certainly not “unintelligent” or “relatively crude.”⁸⁴ The *kaige* revisers were attuned to Greek and Hebrew linguistic conventions, while still working loosely within the constraints of lexeme pairings.

5 Expressing Motion in Exodus

5.1 Introduction

In Greek Exod 19:21–22, motion toward the Lord is phrased in two distinct ways.⁸⁵

(22) Exod 19:21–22

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσήν λέγων Καταβὰς διαμάρτυραι τῷ λαῷ, μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοήσαι, καὶ πέσωσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν πλῆθος·
καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς οἱ ἐγγίζοντες κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ἁγιασθήτωσαν, μήποτε ἀπαλλάξῃ
ἀπ’ αὐτῶν κύριος.

And God spoke to Moses, saying, “After going down, testify to the people, lest they might draw near to God to observe and a multitude of them might fall.

And let the priests who draw near to the Lord God be consecrated, lest the Lord might get rid of some of them.”

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רֵד הַעֲד בָּעַם פְּנֵי־יְהוָה אֶל־יְהוָה לְרֹאשׁוֹת וְנִפְּל מִמֶּנּוּ רַב
וְגַם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל־יְהוָה יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ פְנֵי־פָרֶץ בָּהֶם יְהוָה

And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, warn the people lest they break through to the LORD to observe and many from them fall.

And moreover, let the priests who draw near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD breaks out against them.”

In v. 21 we find the preposition (πρὸς τὸν θεόν) but in v. 22 the dative case (κυρίῳ), even though both are translating the same Hebrew expression (אֶל־יְהוָה). John W. Wevers has suggested similar variation between the dative case and

84 Thackeray, 13; see also Sweeney, “Review of Greenspoon.”

85 All translations are my own.

the preposition occurs “indiscriminately” in Greek Exodus.⁸⁶ His explanation seems to address variation in the Pentateuch from within a long-standing paradigm in LXX scholarship—one that frames the translation process as word-for-word, focusing on the Hebrew lexemes, without consideration of the Greek language itself.⁸⁷ However, a better understanding of the variation in Greek is available through a consideration of language use in contemporary evidence.

5.2 *Documentary Evidence*

Contemporary Ptolemaic documentary texts show that multiple options were available in Post-classical Greek for the expression of motion toward a goal. Example (23) below uses *πρός* and (24) uses *εἰς*:

- (23) PSI 6.591, ll. 1–3 (Philadelphia, 263–229 BCE)

ἐνέ- | τυχόν σοι λέγων ὅτι πορ[εύ-] | σομαι πρὸς Ἀπολλώνιον...

I spoke with you saying that I will go to Apollonius ...

- (24) P. Cair. Zen 3.59467, ll. 2–3 (Arsinoites, 259–229 BCE)

ἔγραψας περὶ τῶν ὑποζυγίων ἵνα παραγένηται | εἰς Φιλαδέλφειαν...

You wrote concerning the donkeys in order that they might come to Philadelphia ...

86 Wevers, *Text History*, 210. Though Wevers' claim is made in reference to communication verbs, he apparently views the preposition and dative in spatial contexts as interchangeable. In his *Notes*, he suggests that variation in the Byzantine text from *πρὸς ὑμᾶς* to *ὑμῖν* (Exod 12:48) is “lexically insignificant” (see Wevers, *Notes*, 193).

87 For example, see John Srenock's recent characterization: “A particular type of isomorphism is characteristic of [the Old Greek] translation. Almost every morpheme in the Hebrew is represented by a corresponding morpheme in the Greek.” Later he states, “it seems apparent that the Greek of the OG is more of a code for the Hebrew *Vorlage* than a natural Greek text ... For each element (syntactical, lexical, or morphological) of the OG encountered, we could trace our way back, as if using a decipherment key, to the Hebrew element” (*Traductor Scriptor*, 28, 74–75). Likewise, Dirk Büchner has suggested “Word matching was more important than meaning transfer ... Meaning was not [the translator's] intention” (“Interpretive Intent,” 127–28).

In both contexts, the prepositional phrases clearly profile trajectory toward a goal.⁸⁸ The dative also appears in simple motion contexts (25):

(25) P. Cair. Zen 3.59393, ll. 2–6 (Philadelphia, 263–229 BCE)

προσῆλθέν μοι ὠνητῆς | περὶ τοῦ ἵππου τοῦ μεγάλου | τοῦ παρὰ σοῦ, ἐγὼ δὲ οὐ
δύνα- | μαι περιεργάσασθαι περὶ τῆς | τιμῆς...

A buyer came to me concerning the large horse which is from you, and
I am unable to bargain concerning the price ...

However, by the Post-classical period, Greek had seen an increase in the frequency of prepositions along with a decrease in the use of the dative.⁸⁹ It is no surprise then that the dative appears far less frequently than the preposition in simple motion contexts in the documentary evidence and Greek Exodus.⁹⁰

Though in these cases variation between the preposition and dative case may seem indiscriminate, each construction involves a slightly different nuance. For example, in (25), the topic of the letter and the semantics of προσῆλθεν focus the letter on the buyer's arrival, rather than his journey. Combined with the verb's (προσῆλθεν) natural telic profile, the locative sense of the dative complement may emphasize *contact with the endpoint* of direction, in contrast to constructions using a preposition instead.⁹¹

In Exodus, both προσέρχομαι and προσπορεύομαι appear with the dative to profile contact with an endpoint rather than simple trajectory.⁹²

88 Luraghi, *On the Meaning*, 66.

89 Bortone, *Greek Prepositions*, 179–83. Also, see Horrocks, *Greek*, 97. For dative/genitive interchange, see Stolk, "Dative and Genitive Case," 193. Preposition increase occurred in Asia Minor as well. See Thumb, *Die griechische Sprache*, 47–52, 123–33. For the decline of the dative in Asia Minor, see Dressler, "Der Untergang des Dativs." Also, see Manolassou, "Historical Background," 30–31.

90 Stolk's data (covering 3rd c. BCE – 4th–5th c. CE) has πρὸς + animate goal appearing 96 times with verbs of going, while the dative pronoun only appears 10 times. See Stolk, "Dative Alternation," 221.

91 See Stolk, "Dative Alternation," 221 on προσέρχομαι.

92 Of course, this does not exclude the preposition from appearing with the prefixed verb (e.g., 12:48: προσέλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς; 34:32: προσήλθον πρὸς αὐτόν; 28:43: προσπορεύονται λειτουργεῖν πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον; 30:20 and 38:27: προσπορεύονται πρὸς τὸ θυσιαστήριον), as is expected with the increased preposition usage in the Post-classical period. In a non-spatial sense, προσπορεύομαι at times appears with πρὸς (36:2: προσπορεύεσθαι πρὸς τὰ ἔργα). See Lee, "Equivocal and Stereotyped Renderings," 106–7. Several factors, including landmark animacy, contribute to realization of the dative or the preposition.

(26) Exod 19:15

γίνεσθε ἑτοιμοὶ τρεῖς ἡμέρας, μὴ προσέλθῃτε γυναῖκαί.

Become ready for three days, do not draw near to a woman.

הָיוּ נְכִינִים לְשִׁלְשֶׁת יָמִים אַל־תִּגְשׁוּ אֶל־אִשָּׁה

Become ready for three days, do not draw near to a woman.

(27) Exod 24:14

ἐάν τινι συμβῇ κρίσις, προσπορεύεσθωσαν αὐτοῖς.

If a legal case might arise for someone, let them go to them.

מִי־בַעַל דְּבָרִים יֵגֶשׁ אֲלֵהֶם

Whoever is a master of things, let him draw near to them.

It may be that the convention in Classical Greek of the dative case following a compound verb has some influence here, but the dative fits well with the semantics of these verbs. Further, there are other instances (including our original example [22] from Exod 19:21–22) where the dative profiles contact with the endpoint and is not preceded by a compound verb.

In Post-classical Greek, simple motion can thus be profiled by the preposition (πρός, εἰς) or by the dative case. The chief determiner for these alternative renderings appears to be cognitive, proceeding from the writer's conceptualization of the verbal event. The conceptualization of each event schema works in concert with the lexical-semantics of the verb and its participants to bring forth the realization of either the preposition or the dative case.⁹³ In other words, both lexical-semantics and cognitive processing drive syntax production.

Consider the following papyri where ἔρχομαι appears with the dative in one case, and the preposition in the other.

93 For this verb-sensitive approach, see Stolk, "Dative Alternation," 214–15. Also, see Goldberg, *Constructions*, 24–66. For an explanation of Talmy's verb-framing strategy, see Croft, *Morphosyntax*, 214–16.

- (28) P. Lond. 7.2036, ll. 8–10 (Philadelphia, 263–229 BCE)

ἐπεὶ δέ μοι οὐκ ἐξεποίει, | ἡλθόν σοι ἀξιοῦσα ἀφεῖναι μ[οι] | καὶ ἐπεχώρησας
(δραχμάς) δ ...

And since he has not given it over to me, I came to you asking to release it to me and you conceded 4 drachmas ...

- (29) P. Cair. Zen 1.59080, l. 6 (Philadelphia, 257 BCE)

[ἔμ]ελλον δὲ ἀποδράς ἐλθεῖν πρὸς σέ ...

And running away, I was going to come to you ...

In these cases, the author's personal conceptualization of the event schema likely drove realization. In the first letter, the dative profiles *contact* with Zenon's *personal sphere* (i.e., his administrative funds).⁹⁴ In the second letter, a weaver named Iollas intended to run away to Zenon and the preposition profiles *motion* toward Zenon's personal sphere (i.e., his protection).

These considerations offer important insight into our original example from Exodus (example 22). It appears that the translator has subconsciously distinguished between motion toward a goal and motion resulting in contact.

- (30) Exod 19:21–22

καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσῆν λέγων Καταβάς διαμάρτυραι τῷ λαῷ, μήποτε ἐγγίσωσιν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν κατανοῆσαι, καὶ πέσωσιν ἐξ αὐτῶν πλῆθος·
καὶ οἱ ἱερεῖς οἱ ἐγγίζοντες κυρίῳ τῷ θεῷ ἀγιασθήτωσαν, μήποτε ἀπαλλάξῃ
ἀπ' αὐτῶν κύριος.

And God spoke to Moses, saying, "After going down, testify to the people, lest they might draw near to God to observe and a multitude of them might fall.

And let the priests who draw near to the Lord God be consecrated, lest the Lord might get rid of some of them."

94 For more on "personal sphere," see Dąbrowska, *Cognitive Semantics*, 16–24.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה רֵד הַעֵד בְּעַם פְּנִי־הָרֹסוּ אֶל־יְהוָה לְרֹאוֹת וְנָפְלוּ מִמֶּנּוּ רַב
וְגַם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַנִּגְשִׁים אֶל־יְהוָה יִתְקַדְּשׁוּ פְּנֵי־פָרֶץ בֵּהֶם יְהוָה

And the LORD said to Moses, “Go down, warn the people lest they break through to the LORD to observe and many from them fall.

And moreover, let the priests who draw near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD breaks out against them.”

A distinction is made between the priests and the people. Both verses involve the same endpoint (i.e., the Lord’s personal sphere), both use the same Hebrew preposition (אֶל), and the LXX translator has used the same verb (ἐγγίζω) in both cases even though two different verbs appear in Hebrew (הָרַס and נָגַשׁ). Yet, the motion of the people is narrated with πρὸς and the motion of the priests with the dative. The difference is that priests are allowed to make contact with the Lord’s personal sphere and the people are not. In fact, when someone who is not a priest approaches the Lord’s personal sphere, they will die (v. 22).⁹⁵ Whether this was done consciously or not, the use of the dative case (i.e., the locative) to render the priest’s motion emphasizes contact in contrast to mere trajectory.

5.3 Conclusion

The variation between the preposition πρὸς and the dative case is not indiscriminate, but a product of cognitive processing. As this is the case, an approach to the LXX which frames the translation process as a set of lexeme-for-lexeme matches is inadequate. Instead, multicausal explanations are necessary. At times, the semantics of a verb work in concert with the Classical compound verb-dative pairing to bring about the appearance of the dative as a locative complement. In situations where the verbal form does not inherently profile contact with a goal, event conceptualization drives argument realization. Even so, these are only two causes in the vast multi-causal web of translation

95 Like the people, the priests are cautioned to remain consecrated “lest the Lord might get rid of some of them.” Even so, a clear hierarchy is set between Moses, the priests, and the people. While the priests must retain their consecration when they approach the Lord, even if the people are consecrated, they can only come to the foot of the mountain (v. 14–17). This contact-based distinction is in line with 24:1–2, where Aaron, Nadab, Abioud, and the elders may come up the mountain to worship from afar, while the people may not come up at all.

in antiquity.⁹⁶ It may be that cross-linguistic priming (i.e., Hebrew to Greek) brought about a higher frequency of certain constructions in the product.⁹⁷ Through careful attention, a more nuanced lens affords the ability to untangle the many causes and better understand the translation of Hebrew texts into Greek.

6 How to Die in Greek

6.1 *Introduction*

In Gen 35, the journey of Jacob's household from Bethel is interrupted by a dramatic moment as the beginning of Benjamin's life coincides with the end of Rachel's. In Genesis, deaths are typically reported from a fairly distant narratological perspective, but Rachel's death is different.⁹⁸ We read of her final moments as she dies with the name of her son, the last born of Jacob, formed by her final breath.

(31) Gen 35:18

LXX: ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν τῷ ἀφιέναι αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν, ἀπέθνησκεν γάρ...

LES: It happened as she was letting go of her soul (for she was dying) ...

The commentary tradition has focused on the naming of Benjamin, but the phrase about her soul departing is in focus here. This is an especially significant moment for a barren woman who had called out to her husband: "Give me children, or I shall die!" (Gen 30:1).

The LXX version of this account contains a subtle difference from the Hebrew. While the Greek version presents Rachel as releasing her soul, in Hebrew it is the soul itself which departs. The dissimilarity lies in the construal of agency.

96 For multicausality in Septuagint studies, see Dhont, "Multicausality"; Aitken, "Origins"; Walker, "Interrogatives."

97 See Walker, "Dative Alternation" for a delineation of variation as a product of cross-linguistic priming. This type of cross-linguistic influence is commonly referred to as positive transfer/positive interference. For more on transfer-related phenomena in translation, see Ožbot, "Common Framework." Likewise, see the introduction in the present issue.

98 Gen 9:29: "and he died" (תָּחַי); 11:28, 32; 23:2; 25:8, 17; 35:8, 29. Another example where the reader sits at the side of the dying is with Jacob in 49:29–33.

(32) MT Gen 35:18

וַיְהִי בִּצְאָת נַפְשָׁהּ כִּי מָתָה וַתִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בֶּן־אֹנִי וְאָבִיו קָרָא־לּוֹ בִּנְיָמִן

NRSV: As **her soul was departing** (for she died), she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

In Hebrew, the agency belongs to the soul, which departs, and in Greek it belongs to Rachel, who releases her soul.

6.2 *The Use of ἀφίημι ψυχήν*

The construction ἀφίημι ψυχήν as a denotation of death is relatively rare.⁹⁹ Three uses in the plays of Euripides¹⁰⁰ provide our earliest examples and there are only a few others which could predate LXX Genesis.¹⁰¹ In all, I identified only fifty-four uses of ἀφίημι ψυχήν for death up into the second century CE, but the vast majority are clustered in a few texts: four in the Hippocratic *Internal Affections*, fourteen in Josephus, seventeen in Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, and four in Achilles Tatius' novel *Leucippe and Cleitophon*.¹⁰²

What stands out is that the texts which use this construction tend to share an elevated literary posture and an inclination back into the Greek literary tradition. This is especially the case for those texts which have clusters of the construction. Josephus was an active participant in Roman literary circles and his works contain numerous echoes of the literary tradition, with Euripides apparently holding particular attraction.¹⁰³ Pausanias' reputation has suffered from the gratuitous disparagement of Post-classical Greek literature but is recovering with more nuanced evaluations.¹⁰⁴ His frequent use of ἀφίημι ψυχήν is best understood as part of his strategy to create "a direct channel to the myths and histories in which Greek identity is represented."¹⁰⁵ The literary pretensions

99 Examples were found using a ten word proximity search for ἀφίημι and ψυχή on the online Thesaurus Linguae Graecae database. No relevant examples were found on papyri.info or epigraphy.packhum.org.

100 *Tro.* 1135, *Orest.* 1171, and *Hel.* 1431.

101 Four in the Hippocratic *Internal Affections*, two in Aristophanes the Grammarian, and single instances in Demosthenes and Satyrus.

102 The remaining uses are scattered across Diodorus Siculus, Plutarch, Polemon, Lucian, Longus, and Philostratus (2x).

103 See Chapman, "Waters of Babylon"; Feldman, "Influence"; Mason, "Roman Historian"; Swoboda, "Tragic Elements."

104 See Hawes, *Pausanias*, 8–10; Strid, *Über Sprache*; Bowie, "Inspiration and Aspiration," 29.

105 Elsner, "Structuring Greece," 19.

of Achilles Tatius are obvious,¹⁰⁶ but similar aims are apparent even in the Hippocratic *Internal Affections*. This is the only treatise which uses ἀφίημι ψυχὴν for dying in the Hippocratic corpus, even while death frequently occurs. *Internal Affections* has been grouped with the more highly developed literary texts within the corpus on several grounds,¹⁰⁷ and the use of this construction fits well within that characterization.

It is not only that the ἀφίημι ψυχὴν construction appears in texts with a more literary posture, it is also used for literary effect. For example, when Josephus comes to retell the harrowing story of the Levite's wife, his use of this phrase increases the dramatic effect of the scene. While the LXX more plainly narrates that the woman fell down by the door (ἔπεσεν παρὰ τὴν θύραν, LXX Jdgs 19:26), Josephus sets the moment of her death vividly before the reader with this expression: καταπεσοῦσα τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφίησιν, "after falling down, she released her soul" (*Ant.* 5.148).¹⁰⁸

Authors also make use of the semantic flexibility of ἀφίημι and the structure of this phrase, doubling the objects of the verb. Aristophanes the Grammarian, for example, tells the story of dog which had been guarding his master's dropped money bag. When the man finally returns, the dog stood up and κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον καὶ τὴν φρουρὰν καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀφήκεν, "all at once gave up its post as guardian and its soul" (*Epitome of Aristotle* 2.202).¹⁰⁹ Didymus' commentary on *Oration* 18 by Demosthenes makes a similar move with two objects for ἀφίημι. He argues that Demosthenes is claiming that he would rather give up his soul than his intention to live in harmony with the Athenians (ἀφήσει τὴν ψυχὴν ἢ τὴν τοιαύτην διάνοιαν).¹¹⁰ The inclusion of two incongruent objects with ἀφίημι constitutes a literary device called "zeugma."¹¹¹ Similar wordplays involving ψυχή are exploited as early as Homer. When Patroclus puts a foot on the chest of Sarpedon to recover his spear, he pulls out his spear point and, at the same time, the fallen warrior's ψυχή (16.505: τοῖο δ' ἅμα ψυχὴν τε καὶ ἔγχεος ἐξέρευσ' αἰχμὴν).¹¹²

106 See Bartsch, *Decoding the Ancient Novel*; Gaselee, *Achilles Tatius*, ix-xi; Laird, "Style and Rhetoric"; Winkler, "Achilles Tatius," 173.

107 See Cañizares, "Special Features," 369; Craik, "Hippocratic Question," 223; Roselli, "Nosology," 42; Jouanna, "Rhetoric and Medicine," 41-42.

108 See *Ant.* 1.219 for a related example.

109 The literary posture of this text is apparent as this is followed immediately by an invocation of Homer's reference to Odysseus' dog Argos.

110 Dilts, *Scholia Demosthenica*, 18.1e.

111 Plath and Wagner, "Zeugma."

112 Deaths are also described as the ψυχή and μένος being simultaneously released (λύθη) at *Il.* 5.296; 8.123, and 315.

The use of the ἀφίημι ψυχὴν construction in Gen 35:18 is a sign of participation in the Greek literary tradition, alongside texts roughly contemporary to the LXX. The structure of the phrase, an articular infinitive (ἐν τῷ ἀφείναι) with accusative subject and object (αὐτὴν τὴν ψυχὴν), is a distinctively prominent feature of Post-classical Greek prose.¹¹³ Its appearance in LXX Genesis also reflects the use of ἀφίημι ψυχὴν in the Hellenistic scholia.¹¹⁴ Further, there are other examples of using idioms for death as a way to elevate the pathos of a text. The draft of a petition to Ptolemy VI, dated to 163 BCE, narrates the death of a father as “he died there from anguish” (ἀποθνήσκει ἐκεῖ ὑπὸ τῆς λύπης, UPZ 1.18). The edited version, which has been significantly altered, declares that “from despondency, he gave up his life” (ὑπὸ τῆς ἀθυμίας μετέλλαχεν τὸν βίον, UPZ 1.19).¹¹⁵

6.3 LXX Genesis in the Greek Literary Tradition

In narrating Rachel's death, the LXX translators could have more closely mirrored the Hebrew by attributing agency to her departing soul.¹¹⁶ It may be tempting to see this as a divergence of philosophical frameworks, but there is clearly a literary point to make outside of any speculative anthropological questions. Rather than mimicking Hebrew syntax, we find the LXX translators making a literary move which reflects strategies deployed by other Post-classical authors in their adoption of an elevated literary posture.¹¹⁷ What is more, we find the translators doing so in a place where, as was shown at the start of this section, the source text itself presented a particularly dramatic moment. Significant advances in our understanding of the LXX are being made on linguistic grounds, as is clear from other examples in this paper. At the same time, more literary concerns should also be considered.

113 Horrocks, *Greek*, 94–95.

114 For example, the note on Pindar, *Ol.* 8.39 where snakes “cast out” (βάλλω) their ψυχάς and the scholion uses “release” (ἀφίημι) to explain the less familiar collocation in Abel, *Scholia Recentia*. The phrase reflects a widely shared conceptualization of death; see Pelliccia, *Mind, Body, and Speech*, 28–29; Vermeule, *Aspects of Death*, 2; Garland, *Greek Way of Death*.

115 Appropriately, it was Jim Aitken who drew my attention to this example in discussion of this material.

116 There are a few examples of Greek writers presenting ψυχή as the subject of verbs of departure from humans. For example, Xenophon, *Mem.* 1.2.53 has ἐξέρχομαι and Plato, *Rep.* 614.b uses πορεύομαι.

117 For further such examples see Aitken, “Homeric Rewriting,” esp. 533 on the Hellenistic reception of Odysseus.

Conclusion

These six case studies span various books and may seem relatively isolated, but merge in a number of fruitful ways. The examples of paratactic *καί* and periphrastic *ποιέω* constructions show that interference as a cause in translation has been overemphasized. Even hallmark instances of interference need to be revisited with more nuance. The discussion of parataxis and word formation bring novel linguistic advances to bear on LXX studies. The analyses of *καί* parataxis and dative alternation demonstrate that the translator of Exodus in particular had more linguistic sensitivity than what they often have been given credit for in past scholarship. This conclusion also applies to the *kaige* translators. The case studies of dative alternation and complementation patterns to *χέω* compound verbs in particular evidence the competence of various translators in relation to verbal syntax. Together with the example of the formation of presumably new words in the LXX, these three show that many features in the LXX reflect natural language processes and that the translators generally had a high level of aptitude in Greek—perhaps even native or native-like ability.¹¹⁸ The examples of *ποιέω ἔλεος* and *ἀφίημι ψυχήν*, then, demonstrate that the LXX of Genesis contains moments of significant literary awareness on the part of the translator. The underlying methodology of all case studies is that of a multicausal approach to translation, looking at the various aspects of Greek morphology, syntax, and semantics that impact the translators' decisions. The case of verbal periphrasis shows that this literary awareness surfaces even when they translate within the bounds of an isomorphic approach. Above all, our hope is that the cumulative weight of these examples, as an epilogue to the other articles in this issue, adds evidence for the assessment that the translators were “a well-educated group of people trained in Greek literacy and in the reading of the Hebrew text”¹¹⁹ and will add momentum to a research trajectory which takes the LXX seriously as a participant in the linguistic and literary matrix of Post-classical Greek.

¹¹⁸ See also Dhont, “Syntax and Pronominal Competence,” this issue; Janse, “Aspects,” 379–80.

¹¹⁹ Aitken, “Origins and Social Context,” 14.

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