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Problem of the Translation of Toponyms in the Septuagint Based on the Example of "Wool of Miletus" (Ez 27:18)

Problematyka przekładu toponimów w Septuagincie na przykładzie „wełny z Miletu" (Ez 27,18)

Abstract: In antiquity, wool was traded between the Levant countries and the rest of the known world. Clean, soft wool was especially desirable because it absorbed dyes perfectly, including the purple for which the Phoenician Tyre was famous. In his "Lamentation over Tyre" (Ez 27:1-36) the Hebrew author, followed by a Greek translator, lists a number of cities and regions with which Tyre traded. Ezekiel's material is therefore an excellent basis for research into translation techniques used in the translation of toponyms. Their analysis and comparison indicates the existence of several types of translation, among them the technique based on association, which will explain the introduction of Miletus to LXX Ez 27:18 in place of the Hebrew Sahar/Zahar. Evidence will be provided by Greek literary texts and papyrus documents from Ptolemaic Egypt.

Keywords: Septuagint, Book of Ezekiel, toponyms, wool, Sahar/Zahar, Miletus, Lamentation over Tyre

Abstrakt: Wełna w starożytności była przedmiotem wymiany handlowej pomiędzy krajami Lewantu a resztą znanego świata. Pożądano przede wszystkim tej czystej i miękkiej, ponieważ doskonale przyswajała ona barwniki, m.in. purpurę, z której słynął fenicki Tyr. W Lamencie nad Tyrem (Ez 27,1-36) autor hebrajski, a za nim tłumacz grecki wymieniają szereg miast i krain, z którymi handlował Tyr. Dostarczony przez Ezechiela materiał jest dzięki temu doskonałą podstawą do badań nad technikami translatorskimi stosowanymi w przekładzie toponimów. Ich analiza i porównanie wskazują na istnienie kilku rodzajów przekładu, a pośród nich techniki bazującej na asocjacji, która pozwoli wyjaśnić wprowadzenie do LXX Ez 27,18 Miletu w miejsce hebrajskiego Sacharu. Dowodów dostarczą greckie teksty literackie i dokumenty papirusowe z ptolemejskiego Egiptu.

Słowa kluczowe: Septuaginta, Księga Ezechiela, toponimy, wełna, Sachar, Milet, lament nad Tyrem

It is a well-known fact that the Greek translations in the LXX version of the Bible are of variable quality. The problems the translators faced can be perfectly illustrated by the way the names of the then everyday products, now difficult to identify, as well as proper names are translated. As Emanuel Tov shows in his short and important article, the canonical books of the LXX[1] contain a total of 27,413 proper names. Unfortunately, he failed to distinguish between the names of persons and toponyms. Nevertheless, Tov's study indicates a certain regularity – as much as 31% of the total number, or 29% if repetitions are excluded, of proper names appear in their Hellenised form. These percentages are relatively high in the books of the prophets because, as the researcher believes, these books contain by far the highest percentage of geographical names.[2] Tov did not explain how he assigned the towns from the LXX text if he did not find a proper equivalent for the Hebrew original name; he is supposed to have assigned them to appropriate groups with non-Greek and Greek endings because some translators transcribed the name according to the rules applied in Semitic languages (an example is שְׂנִיר Σανιρ; Ez 27:5a), others gave a foreign-sounding word a Hellenised character (בֵּית אַשְׁבֵּעַ/οἶκος Εσοβα; 1 Chr 4:21) or assigned it a different, generally known toponym (דְּדָן/Ῥόδιοι-Ῥόδος).

This text, though analysing a number of geographical names, is dedicated to one of them, Miletus, which in an inexplicable way became the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew צֹהַר. We will look at how the quality of the Greek Book of Ezekiel is assessed and what strategies the Greek author chose in the selection of toponyms. We will do this on the basis of the list of Tyre's exporters and importers that feature in the so-called Lament over Tyre (contained in Ez 27:1-24). We will attempt to describe the probable strategies of the Greek translator and we will subject to critical analysis the proposals to unravel the presence of Miletus on the Greek list. We will also put forward our own hypothesis, supported by arguments regarding the choice made by the translator.

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[1]   Tov refers, of course, to the Jewish canon, although in this case it is tantamount to the Catholic one, because only the books that have their Hebrew equivalent in the Masoretic Text are considered. E. Tov, *Transliterated Proper Names in the Septuagint: Some Statistics*, [in:] *Biblical Greek in Context, Essays in Honour of John A.L. Lee*, *Biblical Tools and Studies* 22, J. Aitken, T.V. Evans (eds.), Leuven 2015, pp. 241–245.

[2]   Ibidem, pp. 243–244.

Greek translation of Ezekiel

The quality of the Greek translation of Ezekiel has been addressed by many researchers, who usually focus, as in this article, on analysing selected fragments.[3] There are, however, comprehensive studies, such as *Ezekiel: A Commentary based on Iezekiēl in Codex Vaticanus* from 2009 by John Olley, which give an overview of the quality of the translation of this book in LXX. In his study, Olley provides a reliable current state of research, which will be referred to below.

The starting point for the assessment of quality and fidelity of LXX Ez for the researcher is the results of the Helsinki school, which are based on the analysis of infinitives and *semi-prepositions*.[4] The comparison of the Greek and Hebrew versions in this respect led the researchers to qualify LXX Ez as one of the most slavish translations. A similar opinion is held by Galen Marquis, who in his two articles,[5] which are analyses of the word order and the lexical consistency, proves that statistically in both cases the compliance reaches 90%. Tov and Wright, as Olley pointed out, concluded that the Greek version of Ezekiel is inconsistent or the translator undecided; they inferred on the basis of prepositions, pronoun suffixes, particles and conjunctions that reliable statistics require the material/book to be divided into smaller parts.[6] Similar research was performed by Katrin Hauspie,[7] who in her doctoral dissertation analysed

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[3]   The following papers are worth considering: J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel LXX and Exodus Comparisons*, "Vetus Testamentum" 59 (2009), pp. 116–122; H.F. van Rooy, *Translation Technique and Translating a Translation, with Special Reference to Treidel 8–11*, "Aramaic Studies" 5.2 (2007), pp. 225–238; D. Weissert, *The Verb חזז in LXX-Ezekiel*, [in:] *Bible and Jewish History*, Tel Aviv 1971, pp. 277–288; R. Frederic, *The Polemical Role of the ΑΡΧΟΝΤΕΣ and ΑΦΗΓΟΥΜΕΝΟΙ in Ez LXX*, [in:] *Ezekiel and His Book*, J. Lust (ed.), Leuven 1986, pp. 85–89.

[4]   I. Soisalon-Soininen, *Die Infinitive in der Septuaginta*, serie: *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae* B 132/1, Helsinki 1965; R. Sollamo, *Renderings of Hebrew Semiprepositions in the Septuagint*, serie: *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae* 19, Helsinki 1979.

[5]   *Word Order as a Criterion for the Evaluation of Translation Technique in the LXX and the Evaluation of Word-Order Variants as Exemplified in LXX-Ezekiel*, "Textus" 13 (1986), pp. 59–84; and *Consistency of Lexical Equivalents as a Criterion for the Evaluation of Translation Technique as Exemplified in the LXX of Ezekiel*, [in:] *VI Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Jerusalem 1986*, C.E. Cox (ed.), Atlanta 1987, pp. 425–444.

[6]   J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary based on Iezekiēl in Codex Vaticanus*, serie: *Septuagint Commentary Series*, Leiden–Boston 2009, p. 13.

[7]   K. Hauspie, *La version de la Septante d'Ézéchiel: traduction annotée d'Ez 1–24 et étude du grec d'Ézéchiel par une sélection de particularités lexicales et grammaticales*, Leuven 2002 (doctoral dissertation).

the concept of literality, recognizing the nuances associated with the target language and the differences between possible equivalents. Olley added that, although the translation of LXX Ez certainly follows the Hebrew original, this does not mean that the translator was able to fully meet the requirements of literality, due to numerous external and internal factors influencing him, such as the nuances of the meaning or the translator's own skills. A separate issue remains the details that originated in *Vorlage*. Nevertheless, in LXX Ez both "grammatical nightmares" and correct Greek constructions can be found.[8]

In this context, Tov's counts of proper names seem relevant. The researcher noted that the situation in the Greek Book of Ezekiel corresponds to the biblical median. Tov found as many as 629 proper names in the LXX Ez, 182 of which seem Hellenistic. This gives 29% of the total number of Greek-sounding names, which is the same as in the entire canon of Jewish books translated into Greek. Of these 629, 135 are individual lexemes, 49 of which seem to be of Hellenistic origin, which gives 36%, a greater percentage of Greek-sounding names than in the entire Bible.[9] Given the previously cited studies, which testify to the literalness of the translation of Ezekiel, the variety of toponyms seems puzzling.

Exporters and importers of Tyre

In order to better illustrate the translator's strategy in this area, we will use a table listing the names of Tyre exporters and importers in Hebrew (based on MT and confronted with BHQ) and Greek with their English equivalents.[10] Where necessary, we will add the goods or services related to a given toponym. This specification will enable us to discuss the translator's strategy quite precisely (though not in every case) and better understand the issue of Miletus from verse 18.

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8   J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary…*, op. cit., pp. 13–14; cf. K. Hauspie, *La version de la Septante d'Ézéchiel*; idem, *The Idiolect of the Target Language in the Translation Process. A Study of the Calques in the LXX of Ezekiel*, [in:] *The Septuagint – Texts, Contexts, Worlds. International symposium organized by Septuagint Deutsch (LXX.D), Wuppertal 20–23 July 2006*, M. Karrer, W. Kraus, M. Meiser (eds.), serie: *Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen Zum Neuen Testament 219*, Tübingen 2008, pp. 212–213.

9   E. Tov, *Transliterated Proper Names…*, op. cit., p. 243.

10 Cf. Iezekiel, *To the Reader*, http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/38-iezekiel-nets.pdf [access: 10.08.2020].

col.	hebrew version	transl. from hebrew	greek version	transl. from greek
	Importers and exporters of goods and services from Tyre by Ez 27			
ver. 5a	בְּרוֹשִׁים מִשְּׂנִיר	juniper wood from **Senir**	κέδρος ἐκ **Σανιρ**	cedar from **Sanir**
ver. 5b	אֶרֶז מִלְּבָנוֹן	cedar from **Lebanon**	κυπάρισσος ἐκ **τοῦ Λιβάνου**	cypress from **Lebanon**
ver. 6a	אַלּוֹנִים מִבָּשָׁן	oaks of **Bashan**	ἐκ τῆς **Βασανίτιδος**	from **Basanitis**
ver. 6b	מֵאִיֵּי כִתִּים	coastlands of **Kittim**	οἶκοι ἀλσώδεις ἀπὸ νήσων **τῶν Χεττιιν**	woodland houses from the islands of the **Chettiin**
ver. 7a	שֵׁשׁ מִמִּצְרַיִם	byssus from **Egypt**	βύσσος ἐξ **Αἰγύπτου**	byssus from **Egypt**
ver. 7b	תְּכֵלֶת וְאַרְגָּמָן מֵאִיֵּי אֱלִישָׁה	blue and Tyrian purple from the coasts of **Elishah**	ὑάκινθος καὶ πορφύρα ἐκ **τῶν νήσων Ελισαι**	blue and Tyrian purple from **Elisai**
ver. 8a	יֹשְׁבֵי צִידוֹן וְאַרְוַד	inhabitants of **Sidon and Arvad**	κατοικοῦντες **Σιδῶνα** καὶ **Αράδιοι**	those who inhabited **Sidon, and Aradians**
ver. 8b	חַכְמֵי צוֹר	sages of **Tyre**	σοφοὶ **Σορ**	sages of **Sor** (Tyre)
ver. 9	זִקְנֵי גְבַל	elders of **Gabal**	πρεσβύτεροι **Βυβλίων**	the elders of the **Byblians**
ver. 10	פָּרַס וְלוּד וּפוּט הָיוּ בְחֵילֵ	**Persia** and **Lud** and **Put** were warriors in army	**Πέρσαι** καὶ **Λυδοὶ** καὶ **Λίβυες** ἦσαν ἐν τῇ δυνάμει	**Persians**, **Lydians** and **Lybians** were in force
ver. 11	בְּנֵי אַרְוַד וְגַמָּדִים	sons of **Arvad, Gamadites**	υἱοὶ **Αραδίων**	sons of **Aradians**
ver. 12	תַּרְשִׁישׁ [...] כֶּסֶף בַּרְזֶל בְּדִיל וְעוֹפָרֶת	**Tarshish** [...] silver, iron, tin, and lead	**Καρχηδόνιοι** [...] ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον καὶ σίδηρος καὶ κασσίτερος καὶ μόλυβς	**Karchedonions** [...] silver and gold and iron and tin and lead
ver. 13	יָוָן תֻּבַל וָמֶשֶׁךְ [...] נֶפֶשׁ אָדָם וּכְלֵי נְחֹשֶׁת	**Javan**, **Tubal**, and **Meszech** [...] slaves and bronze vessels	ἡ Ἑλλάς [...] ψυχαὶ ἀνθρώπων καὶ σκεύη χαλκᾶ	**Hellas** [...] human souls and bronze vessels
ver. 14	בֵּית תּוֹגַרְמָה [...] סוּסִים וּפָרָשִׁים וּפְרָדִים	**Beth-togarmah** [...] horses, steeds, and mules	οἶκος **Θεργαμα** [...] ἵπποι καὶ ἱππεῖς	a house of **Thergama**, horses and riders

col.	hebrew version	transl. from hebrew	greek version	transl. from greek
	Importers and exporters of goods and services from Tyre by Ez 27			
ver. 15	בְּנֵי דְדָן [...] קַרְנוֹת שֵׁן (וְהוֹבְנִים)	sons of **Dedan** [...] ivory and ebony wood	υἱοὶ **Ῥοδίων** [...] ὀδόντες ἐλεφάντινοι	sons of **Rhodians** [...] ivory
ver. 16	אֲרָם [...] בְּנֹפֶךְ אַרְגָּמָן וְרִקְמָה וּבוּץ וְרָאמֹת וְכַדְכֹד	**Edom/Aram** [...] garnets, purple, embroidered cloth, fine linen, coral, and rubies	ἄνθρωποι [...], στακτὴ καὶ ποικίλματα ἐκ **Θαρσις** καὶ **Ραμωθ** καὶ **Χορχορ** אֲרָם = ἄνθρωπος (sic!)	human beings [...] myrrh and embroidered cloth from **Tharsis** and **Ramoth** and **Chorchor**
ver. 17	**יְהוּדָה וְאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל** [...] חִטֵּי מִנִּית וּפַנַּג וּדְבַשׁ וָשֶׁמֶן וָצֹרִי	**Judah** and **the land of Israel** [delivered] **Minnith** wheat, sweets, honey, oil, and resin	**Ιουδας** καὶ οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ **Ισραηλ** [...] σῖτος καὶ μύρον καὶ κασία [...] πρῶτον μέλι καὶ ἔλαιον καὶ ῥητίνη מִנִּית = μύρον?	**Ioudas** and the sons **of Israel** [in sale of] grain and perfume and cassia, [and they gave] first honey and oil and resin
ver. 18	דַּמֶּשֶׂק [...] **יֵין חֶלְבּוֹן וְצֶמֶר צָחַר**	**Damascus** [...] [exchanging] **Helbon** wine and **Zahar** wool	**Δαμασκός** [...] οἶνος ἐκ **Χελβων** καὶ ἔρια ἐκ **Μιλήτου**	**Damascus** [...] wine from **Chelbon** and wool from **Miletus**
ver. 19	וְדָן וְיָוָן מְאוּזָּל [...] בַּרְזֶל עָשׂוֹת קִדָּה וְקָנֶה	**Dan/Wadan**? and **Javan** [...] wrought iron, cinnamon, and sweet cane from **Uzal**	ἐξ **Ασηλ** [...] σίδηρος εἰργασμένος καὶ τροχός	from **Asel**, [...] wrought iron and wheel
ver. 20	דְדָן בְּבִגְדֵי־חֹפֶשׁ [...] לְרִכְבָּה	**Dedan** [...] saddlecloths	**Δαιδαν** [...] κτήνη εἰς ἄρματα	**Daidan** [...] beast for chariots
ver. 21	עֲרַב וְכָל־נְשִׂיאֵי קֵדָר כָּרִים וְאֵילִים וְעַתּוּדִים	**Arabia** and the sheikhs of **Kedar** ... lambs, rams, and goats	ἡ **Ἀραβία** καὶ πάντες οἱ ἄρχοντες **Κηδαρ** [...] κάμηλοι καὶ κριοὶ καὶ ἀμνοὶ	**Arabia** and all the rulers of **Kedar** [...] camels and rams and lambs
ver. 22	שְׁבָא וְרַעְמָה [...] בְּרֹאשׁ כָּל־בֹּשֶׂם וּבְכָל־אֶבֶן יְקָרָה וְזָהָב	**Sheba** and **Raamah** [...] best fragrances, all kinds of precious stones, and gold	**Σαβα** καὶ **Ραγμα** [...] πρῶτα ἡδύσματα καὶ λίθοι χρηστοὶ καὶ χρυσίον	**Saba** and **Ragma** [...] best spices and precious stones and gold

Importers and exporters of goods and services from Tyre by Ez 27			
col.	hebrew version	transl. from hebrew	greek version	transl. from greek
ver. 23–24	**חָרָן וְכַנֵּה וָעֶדֶן שְׁבָא אַשּׁוּר כִּלְמַד** [...] בְּמַכְלֻלִים בִּגְלוֹמֵי תְּכֵלֶת וְרִקְמָה וּבְגִנְזֵי בְּרֹמִים בַּחֲבָלִים חֲבֻשִׁים וַאֲרֻזִים	**Haran**, **Canneh**, and **Eden**, **Sheba**, **Asshur**, and **Chilmad** [trading in] rich garments, blue coats, embroidered fabric, varicolored carpets, twisted ropes and strong cords	Χαρραν καὶ Χαννα Ασσουρ καὶ Χαρμαν [...] ὑάκινθος καὶ θησαυροὶ ἐκλεκτοὶ δεδεμένοι σχοινίοις καὶ κυπαρίσσινα	**Charran** and **Channa Assour** and **Charman** [...] blue and decorative caskets bound with cords and cypress wood

The research results obtained by the text critics demonstrate that it is difficult to justify the equivalents introduced by the translator on the basis of the differences in the Hebrew text. The Greek translation of each of these 43 toponyms present in the Hebrew text of Ez 27:1-24 should be considered separately. However, in view of our objective, which is to examine the path from Zahar to Miletus, we will discuss it briefly, trying to point out some of the techniques (if technique, both in the case of unsuccessful translations, is a valid term) noticeable in the above list.

The first and most obvious technique, in case a given toponym is not known, is to transcribe the Hebrew term.[11] It should be noted here whether this toponym in the wording known to us from the LXX did not appear in earlier Greek literature. For the most reliable results, we use the TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae) database. The transcribed names in Ez 27:1-24 that were not certified as such before LXX include: שְׂנִיר – Σανιρ (ver. 5a), בָּשָׁן – Βασανίτις (ver. 6a), כִּתִּיִּים – Χεττιιν (ver. 6b), אִיֵּי אֱלִישָׁה – νῆσοι Ελισαι (ver. 7b), which is the focus of section צוֹר – Σορ (ver. 8b), בֵּית תּוֹגַרְמָה – οἶκος Θεργαμα (ver. 14),[12] חֶלְבּוֹן – Χελβων (ver. 18), אוּזָל – Ασηλ (ver. 19), דְּדָן – Δαιδαν (ver. 20), קֵדָר – Κηδαρ (ver. 21), רַעְמָה – Ραγμα (ver. 22), חָרָן – Χαρραν, כַּנֵּה – Χαννα, אַשּׁוּר – Ασσουρ and כִּלְמַד – Χαρμαν (ver. 23–24).[13]

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[11] Although transcriptions may also include known toponyms that were not codified in the target language, in this case in Greek.

[12] Translating the popular noun בַּיִת into οἶκος, also in toponomastics, seems to be a practice accepted by most Greek translators (cf. 1Chr 4:21).

[13] All data acquired from: Thesaurus Linguae Greace, http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/ [access: 16.05.2019].

Following the second technique, the translator identifies the toponym and uses a name common in Greek texts. Although in some cases the result is still a transcription but accepted in the times before LXX. This technique is most often applied to the names of larger areas such as countries and lands: לְבָנוֹן – Λίβανος[14] (ver. 5b), מִצְרַיִם – Αἴγυπτος[15] (ver. 7), צִידוֹן – Σιδών[16] and אַרְוַד – Ἀράδιος[17] (ver. 8a and 11), גְּבַל – Βύβλιοι (Βύβλος; ver. 9),[18] פָּרַס – Πέρσης,[19] לוּד – Λυδός,[20] פּוּט – Λίβυς[21] (ver. 10), תַּרְשִׁישׁ – Καρχηδόνιος[22] (ver. 12), יָוָן – Ἑλλάς[23] (ver. 13), יְהוּדָה – Ἰούδας[24] and יִשְׂרָאֵל Ἰσραήλ[25] (ver. 17), דַּמֶּשֶׂק Δαμασκός[26] (ver. 18), עֲרַב – Ἀραβία[27] (ver. 21), שְׁבָא – Σαβα[28] (ver. 22).[29]

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[14] Earliest evidence in Aesop's *Fab.* 293,12 (6th century).

[15] Several times already in Homer's works, in the 8th century BC (e.g. *Il* 3.300).

[16] Already in Homer's works (*Od.* 15,425).

[17] The city-state already mentioned by Phrynichus in the 6th century BC (*Fr.* 9,2), while Aradians were mentioned by Herodotus in the 5th century BC (*Hist.* 7,98,3).

[18] This form was confirmed by Hesiod in the 8th/7th century BC (*Fr.* 405,1). There is no doubt that Gebal (now Lebanese Jibayl) and Byblos are one and the same town; cf. G.A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel*, Edinburgh 1936, p. 299; P.C. Bosak, *Leksykon wszystkich miejsc biblijnych*, Krakow 2016, p. 347.

[19] Persians are mentioned many times, for example, by Herodotus (*Hist.* 1,4).

[20] The first mention of Lidians was found in fragments (*Fr.* 14,3) of the works of Mimnermus of Colophon, who lived in the 7th century BC.

[21] Problems with identification of פוט are summarized by lexicographers in: *Wielki słownik hebrajsko-polski i aramejsko-polski Starego Testamentu*, vol. 2, L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, J.J. Stamm (eds.), P. Dec (ed. of the Polish edition), serie: *Prymasowska Seria Biblijna*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 10–11. Lybia was mentioned in the Greek texts quite early; it can be found in the works of Hesiod (*Fr.* 150,15; 8th/7th BC).

[22] The Carthaginians are mentioned already in the 5th century BC by Thucydides (*Hist.* 1,14,1,1).

[23] The antiquity of this name needs no proof. The oldest mentions are to be found in Homer (*Il.* 2,683).

[24] The Greek name Judah was recorded by the mysterious magician Astrampsychus (*Sort.* cap 7), whose activity dates back to the 4th century. However, as for the author himself, there is no certainty as to when he lived and where he came from. Another source is the Letter of Aristeas (e.g. 47.2) from the period of LXX.

[25] Although the Greek version of the name of Israel is evidenced by Manetho (*Fr.* 6.9), who lived in the times of the LXX, as well as by the LXX itself, it is difficult to suppose that the Jews of Alexandria did not use it in such a version much earlier, even if we do not have material evidence to prove this practice.

[26] Evidenced by Theophrastus (*Hist. plant.* 3,15,3,8) in the 4th/3rd century, by his contemporary astrologer Berossus (*Fr.* 16,10) and in the receipt with a list of buyers of pickled fish (P. Cair. Zen. 1 59006 from the 3rd century BC).

[27] It can be found already in the 6th/5th century B.C. in the works of Aeschylus (*Prometh.* 420).

[28] Mentioned by Astrampsychus (*Sort.* 3,1,16) and Theophrastus (*Hist. plant.* 9,4,2,3).

[29] All data acquired from: 1Chr 4,21. All data acquired from: Thesaurus Linguae Greace, op. cit.

The third technique, based on association, seems most important from the perspective of this research. In a situation where the original name is difficult to identify, the translator took into consideration the type of goods exported by this place. In this way, in verse 15, the inhabitants of Rhodes (Ῥόδιοι) are mentioned in the place of an unknown toponym דְּדָן, which interestingly enough, was transcribed in verse 20. The island of Rhodes is believed to have been famous for ivory in the times the LXX was translated. A somewhat more mysterious case is that the widely discussed[30] תַּרְשִׁישׁ identified as Carthage (with the inhabitants of Καρχηδόνιοι; in verse 12). This is puzzling inasmuch as Tarshish, in the Greek version (Θαρσις), was only a few verses away (ver. 16). Much less mysterious is the presence of the wealthy Miletus, famous for his excellent wool, which the translator introduced in place of צָחַר. Whether it is justified to refer only to associations in such cases, we will prove later in this article.

The fourth type can barely be named a technique because the translation product results either from a manuscript error or an inability to identify the term properly. In the latter case, however, one can speak of a translator's strategy, whose primary goal was to remain faithful to the Hebrew originals and to translate even those terms that remained foreign to him. Hence, the target language contains toponyms that do not exist in the original or that are erroneously identified with common nouns. The first case can be recognised in ver. 16, where רָאמֹת וְכַדְכֹּד i.e. corals and rubies,[31] became toponyms Ραμωθ and Χορχορ, while the second when the well-known אֲרָם was identified as ἄνθρωπος, not surprisingly though, given how often translators have confused similar consonants ד and ר.[32]

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[30] We refer to such flagship discussions as: A. Lemaire, *Tarshish-Tarsisi: problème de topographie historique biblique et assyrienne*, [in:] *Studies in Historical Geography and Biblical Historiography*, K. Zecharia (ed.), Leiden–Boston–Köln 2000, pp. 44–62; C. López-Ruiz, *Tarshish and Tartessos Revisited: Textual Problems and Historical Implications*, [in:] *Colonial Encounters in Ancient Iberia Phoenician, Greek, and Indigenous Relations*, M. Dietler, C. López-Ruiz (eds.), Chicago–London 2009, pp. 255–280; and the latest text, critical of previous theories, by J. Montenegro, A. del Castillo, *The Location of Tarshish. Critical Considerations*, "Revue biblique" 123 (2016), no. 2, pp. 239–268, which criticises the failure to treat the biblical theme Tarshish holistically (or treating it selectively), based on a whole set of goods imported from this place.

[31] The meaning of the noun רָאמֹת is uncertain. Several possible meanings are suggested: silk (after *sericum* suggested by the Vulgate), black corals, pearls, sea shells; *Great Dictionary...*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 219–220; through its association with the Arabic noun כַדְכֹּד it has been assigned the meaning of a bright red object. Linguists identify it as a precious stone, probably ruby (after Is 54:12); *Great dictionary...*, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 435.

[32] This commentary is also confirmed by Olley, who adds that the LXX decides on "people," although the term אדם could also refer to Edom; J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary...*, op. cit., p. 426.

The last group of toponyms were neither identified nor transcribed but were omitted by the translator (or *Vorlage*), which should also be considered as a translation strategy (unless the reason for the difference is *Vorlage*). This applies to the unidentified גַּמָּדִים (Gamadites in ver. 11), תֻּבַל and מֶשֶׁךְ (in ver. 13), which may have caused some trouble. Another situation is found in ver. 19, in which the Greek author completely omitted דָן and יָוָן. In the latter case, the resignation from the translation can be explained by the presence of Miletus in ver. 18, which belonged territorially to יָוָן, the area of Ionia mentioned in the Hebrew text. Miletus therefore plays the role of *pars pro toto* in the Greek text. This phenomenon becomes visible in the specification of geographical lands/countries/islands to which BH and LXX refer.

Lands in MT	Lands in LXX (and Vul)
ver. 12–15 – Asia Minor (Ionia)	ver. 13 – Ionia ver. 14 – Armenia (according to the Hittite and Assyrian parallels) ver. 15 – Rhodes
ver. 16–17 – Palestine	
ver. 18–19 – Syria and Ionia (Javan)	ver. 16–19 – it starts with Damascus. Assyrian data mention Chelbon and Asel in north-east Syria ver. 18 – Ionia (Miletus)
ver. 20–22 – Arabia	ver. 20–22 – Arabia[33]
ver. 23–24 – Mesopotamia	ver. 23–24 – Mesopotamia

Wool from Zahar – or from where?

From the above concise analysis it can be concluded that a different toponym in LXX has its source not only in the ignorance of the Greek author, but may

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[33] L.C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, serie: *Word Biblical Commentary* 29, Dallas 2002, p. 86; Allen does not identify Dedan directly, although in the case of MT he seems to follow the Arabic interpretation. This, however, is dealt with by Block, noting that the Syrian identification of Danun is supported by both the sources and the goods traded in the place. D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 25-48*, serie: *The New International Commentary on the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids 1997, p. 74; Olley is unsure about identifying Ragma/Ramah. As noted by Σαβα, in the table of nations in Gen 10:7, it was located among the northern groups together with Ῥεγχμα and Δαδαν, and in Genesis 25:3-4 together with Δαιδαν and Θεργαμα. Ραμα, confirmed in B, provides some difficulties, although some interpreters identify this toponym with the Israeli Ramah. However, this identification is complicated by different interpretations present in P967 Ρεγμα and in A Ραγμα (see:

have placed by him consciously. This is probably the case with Miletus (ver. 18), a centre famous for its wool production, as evidenced by numerous extra-biblical authors, to whom we will return below. Before we focus our attention entirely on Miletus, we should consider whether there is any rational reason for the original toponym, Zahar, to be replaced with Miletus. Numerous studies prove that the problematic toponym Zahar can be interpreted as:

1. Region *aṣ-ṣaḥra* (Arabic: "desert") – a desert area northwest of Damascus; this suggestion of Rüger is supported by many exegetes, including Zimmerli, Cross, Baltzer,[34] Greenberg.[35]

2. *Sēḫas utnē* – "land of Sēḫa," a land/country inhabited by Luwians, located in north-western Anatolia.[36] This identification, however, seems unlikely, firstly because of its dating (the history of *Sēḫa* dates back to the end of the 13th century BC), and secondly because of its topography (territorially it does not overlap with the Carian Miletus).

3. *Suhru/Zuhru* – a town known from the Amarna Letters;[37] this is one of Block's suggestions; he also mentioned the area *aṣ-ṣaḥra*[38] from point 1.

4. *Ṣuḥār* in Yemen – Driver has no doubts that in Ez 27:18 the term refers to a place because each of the goods is accompanied by a toponym. He explains very succinctly that צֹחַר corresponds best to *Ṣuḥār* in Yemen as evidenced by the Arabic tradition. He refers to the *Dictionnaire détaillé des noms des vêtements chez les Arabes* by R.P.A. Dozy.[39] With such an identification it is

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table). Olley, however, seems to be convinced by the northern interpretation. J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, op. cit., p. 427. For the purposes of the text, however, the scheme proposed above is sufficient, as it is not Ραγμα/Ρεγμα/Ραμα that is its central focus.

34   W. Zimmerli, F.M. Cross, K. Baltzer, *Ezekiel. A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, serie: *Hermeneia – a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible*, Philadelphia 1983, p. 67.

35   He also mentions identification with "white" according to Peshitta; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21-37, A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, New Haven–London 2008, p. 557. Some of the contemporary translations (e.g. NAS, NKJ) are also in favour of such a translation, although Wujek also retains the idea of white, enigmatically repeating after the Vulgate about wool of "best colour."

36   F. Starke, *Sēḫa (Seha River Land)*, [in:] Brill's New Pauly, http://static.ribo.brill.semcs. net/entries/brill-s-new-pauly [access: 5.07.2019].

37   According to Aharoni, Zuhru/Suhru should be identified with either Lachish or the Biblical city of Zoar (see: Gen 19:20-23,30), which he himself located on the southern coast of the Dead Sea. Y. Aharoni, *The Land of the Bible. A Historical Geography*, transl. A.F. Rainey, Philadelphia 1979, p. 172.

38   D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel…*, op. cit., pp. 76–77.

39   See edition: Amsterdam 1845. G.R. Driver, *Ezekiel. Linguistic and Textual Problems*, "Biblica" 35 (1954), no. 2, pp. 156–157.

impossible to avoid some anachronism, because the sources that the Driver (indirectly) recalls are many centuries younger than the Biblical text. The topography is also questionable. Could the fame of the fleece of Yemen's sheep reach as far as Tyre? Moreover, the Arabic territories were mentioned by the Hebrew author only in verses 21–22, and it seems that he moves quite consciously and smoothly across the Mediterranean.

4. Brilliant colour צָחֹר, which Peshitta interprets as "white" (similarly to BTP translators).[40] "Those who ride on white donkeys (אֲתֹנוֹת צְחֹרוֹת), seated on saddle rugs, and those who travel the road, Sing of them" (Jgs 5:10).

What was then the interpreter's motivation when he decided to change the name of the centre that supplied Tyre with wool of excellent quality?[41] Is the exact localization/interpretation of צָחַר of any significance?

Miletus wool

When it comes to Miletus, Olley mentions that it is a toponym completely incompatible with the sites enumerated by the BH authors and LXX translators. As noted above, a similar issue applies to the island, or rather the inhabitants of Rhodes. Since the island replaced Dedan that provided Tyre with ivory and ebony wood, the reasons for mentioning Rhodes may be found in the kinds of imported goods. Did the island really trade in this valuable commodity? Olley's findings do not facilitate the inquiries. He claims that "probably the Rhodians originally bought ivory from Egypt and Ethiopia,"[42] yet he fails to support it with a source. It seems that the ivory from Rhodes was so renowned to be immortalised in well-known literary sources.[43]

But archaeology comes in handy. Richard D. Barnett claimed that craftsmen had been processing ivory in Cameiros/Camiros, Rhodes, since the 7th century BC, that is in the times well before LXX was created.[44] In Rhodes, bone

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[40] See: D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel…*, op. cit., pp. 76–77; G.A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary…*, op. cit., p. 303.

[41] The quality of wool was determined on the basis of its purity and softness. M. Papadopoulou, *Wool and the City. Wool and Linen Textile Trade in Hellenistic Egypt*, [in:] *Textiles, Trade and Theories. From the Ancient Near East to the Mediterranean*, K. Dross-Krüpe, M.-L. Nosch (eds.), serie: *Kārum-Emporion-Forum* 2, Münster 2016, p. 202.

[42] J.W. Olley, *Ezekiel: A Commentary…*, op. cit., p. 426.

[43] No information can be found in literary sources about the ivory trade both in Rhodes itself and in its largest cities: Camiros, Ialyssos or Lindos (after Thesaurus Linguae Greace, op. cit.).

[44] Ivory artifacts were discovered on the Camiros acropolis in 1984; R.D. Barnett, *Early Greek and Oriental Ivories*, "The Journal of Hellenic Studies" 68 (1948), pp. 16–17.

artifacts dating from the 9th and 8th century BC were also found and identified as Phoenician.[45] It cannot therefore be ruled out that this island was believed by the translator to have been an "ivory island." An additional clue, which should certainly be ruled out in the case of Miletus, is the apparent similarity of the Hebrew consonants in the name דד and in the name of Rhodes, if we take into account that the first consonant is pronounced as ר, and the final ן is related to one of the dependent cases (*acc. sg.* or *gen. pl.* as in the translation but referring not so much to Rhodes as to its inhabitants, Rhodians).

In the case of Miletus, the investigation seems easier because there may be several explanations here, although none of them can be regarded as the only one that is appropriate:

1. Firstly, the wool from Miletus was famous for its high quality; it was praised both by Pliny the Elder (HN 8.190)[46] and Strabo (Geogr. 12.716).[47] Its fame goes as far back as the 7th century BC (although textile manufacturing was already practiced in the Bronze Age), and it was appreciated until the end of Roman times. According to Athenaeus, coats made of Milesian wool were worn by the inhabitants of Sybaris (*Deipnosoph.* 12,17).[48] It was desired not only for its high quality, but also for its exceptional ability to absorb dyes.[49]

2. Secondly, the translators could associate the region called צָהַר phonetically with *Sēḫas utnē*, a region inhabited by the Luwians in northwest Anatolia, documented by the Hittites in the 15th–18th century BC. Commentators,

[45] S. Brown, *Perspectives on Phoenician Art*, "The Biblical Archaeologist" 55 (1992), no. 1, p. 9; see: D.J. Waarsenburg, *Astarte and Monkey representations in the Italian Orientalizing Period. The Amber Sculptures from Satricum*, [in:] *Akten des Internationalen Kolloquiums "Interactions in the Iron Age: Phoenicians, Greeks and the Indigenous Peoples of the Western Mediterranean", Amsterdam am 26. und 27. Marz 1992*, H.G. Niemeyer (ed.), "Hamburger Beiträge zur Archäologie" 19/20 (1992/1993), pp. 49–50; K.D.S. Lapatin, *Chryselephantine Statuary in the Ancient Mediterranean World*, serie: *Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology*, Oxford 2001, p. 38.

[46] According to Pliny the Elder, the Miletus wool was the third best. The one from Laodice was most valued: *Lana autem laudatissima Apula et quae in Italia Graeci pecoris appellatur, alibi Italica. Tertium locum Milesiae oves optinent*. For: Perseus Digital Library, G.R. Crane (ed.), http://www.perseus.tufts.edu [access: 14.05.2019]; cf. I. Benda-Weber, *Textile Production Centres, Products and Merchants in the Roman Province of Asia*, [in:] *Making Textiles in pre-Roman and Roman Times: People, Places, Identities*, M. Gleba, J. Pásztókai-Szeőke (eds.), serie: *Ancient Textiles Series* 13, Oxford–Oakville 2013, p. 178.

[47] φέρει δ᾿ ὁ περὶ τὴν Λαοδίκειαν τόπος προβάτων ἀρετὰς οὐκ εἰς μαλακότητα μόνον τῶν ἐρίων, ᾗ καὶ τῶν Μιλησίων διαφέρει. After: Thesaurus Linquae Graecae, op. cit.

[48] ἐφόρουν δ᾿ οἱ Συβαρῖται καὶ ἱμάτια Μιλησίων ἐρίων πεποιημένα. For: ibidem.

[49] Miletus was located at the seaside, which facilitated the development of purple dye industry. I. Benda-Weber, *Textile Production Centres...*, op. cit., pp. 173–175.

lexicographers and the author of the submitted text insist, however, on *aṣ-ṣaḥra*,[50] a desert area northwest of Damascus, i.e. territorially unrelated to Miletus or on Suhru/Zuhru mentioned in the Amarna letters.[51] The last two identifications seem more rational given the absence of ר in the Hettite name[52] and the Hebrew author's knowledge of the topography of the Eastern Mediterranean territory, more specifically of the Levant.

3. Thirdly, we may be dealing with yellow/light-coloured wool (cf. Jgs 5:10). The name has the same core as the adjective צָחֹר.[53] Such identification also perfectly corresponds to the Milesian product, namely wool with a fleece perfect for dyeing, i.e. certainly bright or white (in the perception of the ancient).

Conclusions

It is difficult to determine how Miletus found its way onto LXX pages as an equivalent to the troublesome צַחַר; are we dealing here with a simple association or should we seek an explanation at the lexical layer? The analysis done above enables us to propose a few feasible solutions and dismiss those less likely.

1. If the authors of LXX heard of *Sēḫas utne* and were able to associate this name with a particular region, they could have come to the conclusion that in the absence of a similar name in the Eastern Mediterranean, reference should be made to a place whose wool had been (and still was[54]) a familiar brand, which in this case would have been Miletus, located in the southwest, unlike *Sēḫas utnē*, which is located at the northwest coast of Asia Minor. Strict geographical consistency may not have been of much importance to the Alexandrians: it was important that Miletus and *Sēḫas utne* were also located in the west of Anatolia. This theory is difficult to defend because

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[50] *The great dictionary...*, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 96; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel...*, op. cit., p. 557.

[51] D.I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel...*, op. cit., p. 76; see: article by W.F. Albright, *The Town of Selle (Zaru) in the 'Amarnah Tablets*, "The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology" 10 (1924), pp. 6–8, devoted to the identification of Zuhru.

[52] We omit the proposal to locate the original Sahar (based on ṣuḥār) *ṣuḥār* in Yemen, which we considered unlikely. See: W. Zimmerli, F.M. Cross, K. Baltzer, *Ezekiel. And the Commentary...*, op. cit, p. 67.

[53] This explanation has many analogies in other Semitic languages: Syrian, Arabic, Ugric. *Great dictionary...*, op. cit., vol. 2, pp. 96–97.

[54] To this day, sheep farming in the area around the ancient city of Miletus is one of the important economic branches of the whole region.

of chronology. It is difficult to imagine that the 13th-century "*Sēḫa* land" would remain vividly in the awareness of the Hellenised Alexandrian Jews.

2. Perhaps the blame for the introduction of Miletus into the text can be found in the text itself, in the quality of *Vorlage* used by the translator. This problem becomes apparent in the case of the aforementioned דְדָן, which in the 15th century was associated with the island of Rhodes, while in the 20th century it was transcribed as Dedan. Some commentators, like Block, regard this onomastic coincidence unproblematic, identifying the two places differently, among other things, by the goods imported from them.

3. The strategy chosen by the translator, who in Ez 27 faced many onomastic and topographic difficulties, seems to be the most likely explanation for the "Miletus problem." As we have argued, he followed various methods to solve them, while at the same time doing his best not to distort the harmony of the text; at times he transcribed the unknown toponyms if he could not identify them, at times he resorted to associations, guided by his intuition. The third of the translation techniques seems to best explain the occurrence of Miletus. Even if the translator was able to associate Sahar with *aṣ-ṣaḥra* proposed by contemporary commentators, he may have decided to use a place famous for producing excellent wool. Even if the interpretation of Sahar was colour-oriented, Miletus wool was still perfectly suited for translation. Evidence of its fame is provided by Strabo, Pliny, Athenaeus, Cicero, and Virgil (the latter even mentioned the Miletus-Tyre cooperation in the production of woollen purples, if this is how *Georg.* 3,306 should be understood[55]). Papyrus texts – P.Cair. Zen. 3 59430 and P.Cair. Zen. 2 59195 – are an additional argument regarding the fame of Miletus wool as well as the place from the LXX Ez translation. They testify to the import of Miletus wool in the 3rd century BC to the translator's homeland – Ptolemaic Egypt – and indicate the popularity of woollen clothing production in the country of the pharaohs of the Hellenistic period.[56]

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[55] (…) *quamvis Milesia magno vellera mutentur Tyrios incocta rubores*; the ancient import of wool from Miletus into Tyre seems, especially in the context of the desired properties and colours of Miletus wool, which enables the absorption of dyes, to be very obvious.

[56] An example is the 3rd century documents from *nome* Arsinoe pertaining to the interests of a certain Onnofri. See: P.J. Sijpesteijn, *Receipts for Wool and a Woollen Garment, 215–213 B.C.*, [in:] *Yale Classical Studies: Papyrologists*, N. Lewis (ed.), Cambridge–London–New York 1985, pp. 67–71.

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