A CONSISTENCY AND AN INCONSISTENCY OF THE LEVITICUS TRANSLATOR

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Abstract. This paper has a few goals. First is to discover if the Greek translator of Leviticus uses literal (consistent) and / or free (inconsistent) translation technique. Then, this paper will list and group the evidences of the consistency of the Greek translator in this book. If there are any examples that show the inconsistency to the MT or looseness of the translator, then this paper will study every example carefully and it will categorize into a group. This group will be created based on the examples that share the same pattern or the similarities.

Keywords: Septuagint, Old Testament and Translation Technique.

INTRODUCTION

This paper has a few goals. First is to discover if the Greek translator of Leviticus uses literal (consistent) and / or free (inconsistent) translation technique. Then, this paper will list and group the evidences of the consistency of the Greek translator in this book. If there are any examples that show the inconsistency to the MT or looseness of the translator, then this paper will study every example carefully and it will categorize into a group. This group will be created based on the examples that share the same pattern or the similarities.

The comparison of MT and LXX will be used as the methodology of this paper. Every verse will be analyzed and presented in comparison format until chapter five to have a basic knowledge of the patterns and the characteristics of the Greek Translator. The patterns, however, will be scrutinized in the whole book of Leviticus.

In depth and a detailed analysis of this comparison will be put on the appendices. This methodology will be employed to accomplish the goals of this paper.

The Consistency of the Greek Translator

As the following examples will show, the translator is consistent in word order, preposition and the article, lexical meaning, cognate words, grammatical and on the syntax level.

The Word Order

| 1:5 | שָׁחַטְאֶת־בֶן הָבָּקָר | καὶ σφάξουσι τὸν ἁμαρτωλόν έναντι Κυρίου καὶ προσόκουσιν οἱ νιστί Άρων οἱ ἱερεῖς τὸ αἷμα καὶ προσχεοῦσιν τὸ αἷμα ἐπὶ τὸ | עֲשֵׂתָהָרָה לֶחֶם | μόσχον ἑναντὶ Κυρίου καὶ προσοικοῦσιν οἱ νιστί Άρων οἱ ἱερεῖς τὸ αἷμα καὶ προσχεοῦσιν τὸ αἷμα ἐπὶ τὸ | Heb. | Grk. | LXX | MT | Grk. | Heb. | MT | LXX |}
In 1:5, the translator follows the word order of MT perfectly. The first sentence consists of conjunctive (and), the verb and the subject (implicit), the article and the object, the preposition and the Lord. The following sentence contains: conjunctive (and), the verb and the article + the explicit subject, the article and the object. The last sentence consists of conjunctive (and), the verb and the subject (implicit), the article and object, the preposition + noun, relative pronoun, and the preposition + noun.


The Preposition and the Article

In 3:5, the translator does not only follow (copy) all the prepositions and the articles, but also translate them in the literal meaning such as preposition in Greek: ὑπὲρ for ἐπὶ.

The Lexical Meaning

The Greek translator consistently translates “κτήμα” or cattle as owned and used by man as “κτήμας” (1:2; 7:25-25; 11:3, 26, 39, 46; 19:19, 20:16, 25; 24:18, 25:7; 26:22, 27:9-11, 26, 28). This translator also transliterates πυρῖ and it becomes λιβανὸν in Leviticus 2:1-2.

The Cognate Words

The following examples will show that the translator has a keen eye for the cognate words.
In 2:13, the translator maintains the cognate words of salt (מלח: in Hebrew) for both noun and verb; and he uses wordplay in his translation ἁλι (in dative case as a substitute for a preposition ב in Hebrew) and ἁλισθίεται (ἁλίζω is the lexical form). In 5:12, the translator also keeps the cognate words of grasp with hand (קָמַץ: in Hebrew) for both noun and verb: δράκα and δραξάμενος.

**Grammatical Level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2:4</th>
<th>2:10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>תָּלֹת</td>
<td>τὸ δὲ καταλειφθὲν</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>קָמַץ</td>
<td>ἀπὸ τῆς θυσίας</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>קָמַץ</td>
<td>Αֶרֶב וַעֲוֹזֵי אֶמֲרוֹ בַּאֲרֵי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מְּשֻׁחִים</td>
<td>הַנּוֹתֶרֶת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בְּלוּלֹת</td>
<td>מְּשֻׁחִים</td>
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<tr>
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<td>מְּשֻׁחִים</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 2:4, two Hebrew verbs are בְּלוּלֹת and מְּשֻׁחִים in qal passive participle plural form.

They have been formed into two Greek participles perfect passive accusative plural:

πεφυραμένους and διακεχρισμένα. In 2:10, notice how precise the Greek translator is to translate every element in הַנּוֹתֶרֶת. It consists of a particle conjunction; ה article; ו ר verb is niphal participle feminine singular absolute. He translates τὸ δὲ καταλειφθὲν which contains the same elements in הַנּוֹתֶרֶת: δὲ is the particle conjunction; τὸ is the article; and a verb from participle aorist passive nominative neuter singular from καταλείπο. He translates with a slight different order than the MT; LXX: article, conjunction and verb, MT, on the other hand, has conjunction, article and verb.

**Syntax Level**

This pattern appears also in 1:3, 10, 14, 3:1 [4x], 6, 7, 12, 4:2, 3, 13, 22, 27, 32:5:23; 6:11, 20 [2x], 23; 7:12, 18 [2x]; 20; 11:32, 33 [2x], 34, 35, 37, 38, 39; 12:2, 5, 8; 13:2, 4, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 31, 35, 37, 38, 40, 41, 42, 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57; 14:21, 36, 43, 48; 15:2, 4 [2x], 6, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23 [2x], 24, 25, [2x], 26, 28, 31; 17:16; 19:5, 6, 7, 20, 33; 20:2, 4, 6, 11, 12, 14, 17; 21:9, 17; 22:6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 29; 24:15, [2x], 19, 25:2, 14 [2x], 20 [2x], 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 35, 39, 47, 49, 51, 52, 54; 26:3, 14, 18, 21, 23, 27, 27:5, 7 [3x]; 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 26 [2x], 27 [2x], 28, 29, 31, 32, 33. The examples below are a part of clause of one verse.
The MT uses three particles (וֹאֶ, מִמְּ; מִמְּ) and qal imperfect to introduce the conditional clause. The Greek translator, on the other hand, uses ἐὰν plus subjunctive to match the syntax in the Hebrew text to create conditional clause; ἐὰν is not only a marker of condition as BDAG states, but also it is a marker of a new paragraph or idea in the book of Leviticus.

**The Inconsistency of the Greek Translator**

There are some reasons why the Greek translator does not follow MT: being faithful to the Greek, clarification, emphasis, Idiomatic / Stylistic Translation, homoioteleuton/ homeoarchy, smooth translation reason, avoiding repetition, and unpointed-text problem.

**Faithful to the Greek.**

This category has a definition that the Greek translator is consistent with the literary structure and Greek grammar while translating. The translator, therefore, has to unfollow (be unfaithful) to MT.

The Article in Greek.

This pattern appears in 1:4, 10, 3:2, 8, 13; 4:4, 15, 24, 29, 33; 8:9, 12, 14, 18, 22; 14:18, 29, 16:21; 21:10, 24:14.

In the whole book of Leviticus, MT does not have article before the head (ἔκαστον) and after the preposition on (ὑπὸ). The translator, however, puts an article consistently throughout the entire book.

**The ‘Sentence’ Pattern in Sacrificial Offering.**

Notice that MT does not have the red words in Greek. In other words, the translator adds this clause. This additional clause appears 5 times both in Hebrew and Greek in Leviticus (1:4; 4:4, 24, 29, 33). This clause is always preceded by a particular animal (1:4 is cattle; 4:4 is calf; 4:24 is a kid of goats; 4:29 is a kid of goats, a male without blemish; and 4:32 is lamb, a female without blemish), and followed by a clause: they shall kill it (1:4; 4:4, 24, 29, 33). MT, however, does not maintain this pattern only in verse 1:10. The translator, on the other hand, keeps this pattern as we see in those verses. om this information, the Greek translator, therefore, is more consistent than MT in providing this pattern: a specific animal, laying his hand on the head and slaying the animal.
Clarification

The previous section illustrated a few places where the translator is different from the MT because of his faithfulness to the Greek grammar and sentence pattern. This section, moreover, will illustrate places where the translator has clarified MT.

The Lexical Meaning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1:5</th>
<th>זָרַק</th>
<th>προσχέω</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

זָרַק, in qal form, has a few meaning such as toss, sprinkle and throw. The translator, nevertheless, limits the definitions of word זָרַק; by translating as προσχέω: to pour on/ to (see also 1:5, 11; 3:2, 8, 13; &c:2, 14, 8:19, 9:12, 18, 17:6). For sprinkle, Greek translator uses προσράνω. In other word, the translator uses the word ‘προσχέω’ to clarify and specify זָרַק to his Greek readers.

Singular translated with Plurals

| 2:6 | ποιήσετε is using suffix 3 fs. | αὐτὰ (accusative neuter plural) |

MT employs singular form; the translator, on the other hand, utilizes plural form. Based on the context, the translator is being consistent to the plurality of the subject in Greek: ἀζυμα (2:5).

Grammatical Level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1:2</th>
<th>דַּבֵּר</th>
<th>λάλησον</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

The translator uses aorist imperative for piel imperative mood in Hebrew. It seems the translator employs aorist imperative to specify his discussion to burnt offering (compare Lev. 4:2). As Wallace states that the difference between aorist and present imperative is the aorist is most frequently used for a specific command rather than a general precept (usually the domain of the present).

The Ending Marker of Literary Structure

The translator adds the clause above which MT does not have. It seems that the translator adds this clause arbitrarily. The data, however, disapprove this view. This clause also appears in Leviticus 19:22 and this clause serves as an ending marker of the discussion. In addition, a clause ‘ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ’ is always employed to close a discussion and before starting a new topic (4:26, 31, 35; 5:10, 13, 16, 18, 26; 19:22). In summary, the translator adds ‘νῦν ἤμαρτεν καὶ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ ἡ ἁμαρτία’ because he is consistent with his literary structure’ marker which helps his readers to be aware of a closing section.

Emphasis

This section will illustrate places where the translator has a stronger nuance than MT; either put emphasis on the subject or the action.

The Subject through Grammatical Selection

| 2:11 | ποιήσετε: verb indicative future active 2nd person plural from ποιέω. |

There are many discrepancies from the table observation above, except the future aspect and the lexical meaning. The translator obviously puts emphasis on the subject (the
ones who offer), instead of the offering like what MT communicates. In summary, the translator focusses on the responsibility of the offerer through grammatical selection.

**The Action through Additional Verb**

4:2, 5:17 οὐ δεῖ ποιεῖν

The translator adds δεῖ here to put emphasis on action about things that should have not been done as it is viewed as breaking the law of God. As BDAG states, “it is necessary of happening of the compulsion of law or custom”.

**Idiomatic / Stylistic Translation**

The main characteristic of the Greek translator is using idiomatic and stylistic expression. This use is all over the book of Leviticus: on suffix, article, form, noun, verb, meaning (synonym) of the word, preposition / conjunction, relative particle, adverb, and independent pronoun. All information and examples will be presented in appendices. This section, however, will exhibit some of those categories and one or a few examples of each of them.

**On Hebrew Suffix**

The translator translates the suffix in Hebrew either with an article in Greek or personal pronouns interchangeably.
On Independent Pronoun

The last example of idiomatic or stylistic pattern is on independent pronoun. Table below is the places in which the translator leaves independent pronoun untranslated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>ἀνθρωπος μαρτυς</td>
<td>וַאֲנַאֹ ב</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:3</td>
<td>δε γνυ και</td>
<td>פָּמֶלְדַּק</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The next table is the places where he translates an independent pronoun as demonstrative pronoun or personal pronoun or ἐστίν.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Hebrew</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:1</td>
<td>ἐστίν</td>
<td>καὶ οὕτως μάρτυς</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:18</td>
<td>ἐστίν</td>
<td>καὶ αὕτως οὐκ ἔδει</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:20</td>
<td>βεβλυγματα</td>
<td>ἐστιν οἱαν</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on this observation, the translator leaves this independent pronoun untranslated for a few times (3:1, 7, 5:2, 3). Sometimes, he translates it as demonstrative pronoun (5:1) and personal pronoun (5:18) and uses ἐστίν for the rest. It brings to the conclusion that he handles this independent pronoun in HT in various ways.

Homoioiteleuton / Homeoarchy

Homoioiteleuton means the “same ending”. Homoioiteleuton occurs when two words / phrases / lines end the same sequences of letters. The scribe, having finished copying the first, skips to the second, omitting al intervening words. Homeoarchy refers to eye-skip when the beginnings of two lines are similar.
In 3:9, the translator probably misses that line / phrase since there are two clause that contains the words of fat and entrails. There are two arguments to support this theory. First is the characteristic of Greek translator; he always translates the Hebrew words, either being consistent or his work is being idiomatic / stylistic translation, and adds more words to clarify MT. He never leaves a clause or even a phrase being untranslated. The last argument is the comparison of this verse with verse 3:3, 14 and 4:8; because the translator translates both clauses that contains the words of fat and entrails in those three verses. Leviticus 3:9 is the only occurrence that the translator only translates one clause and leaves the other clause.

**Smooth Translation**

The other characteristic of the Greek translator is a proneness to smoothen his translation through preposition and the usage of adverb.

**Preposition**

There are a few more examples in the appendices.

In 5:16, there are two ἄν καὶ ἐπιπέμπτον in MT. The translator, nevertheless, translates in two different forms: (1) ἐπὶ αὐτό, and (2) περὶ αὐτοῦ. These two different translations of preposition לִפְרִי tells us that the translator does not employ a rigid translation, but he smoothen it according to the Greek grammar.

**Adverb**

In 5:22, נִשְׁבָע לִעְלִיָּהֶר is translated as he swore on (the basis of) deception (literal translation). Instead of employing a preposition for preposition, the translator uses adverb to smoothen his translation: if he swore unjustly. This phenomenon also appears in 5:24 (רָעָם : by deception; it consists of ַג preposition; ַג article; רְעָם noun ms absolute). The translation of MT will be, “which he swore on (about) it with the deception”. In order to produce a smooth translation, the translator ignores the preposition and the article in Hebrew and uses the adverb. The Greek translates, “which he swore concerning it unjustly”.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5:22</th>
<th>נִשְׁבָע לִעְלִיָּהֶר</th>
<th>ὁμόση ἀδίκως</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5:24</td>
<td>ἀναίρεσαι</td>
<td>ὁμόσεν περὶ αὐτοῦ ἀδίκως</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questionable Examples of Clarification

There are some questionable examples of the Greek translator such as the words that have not been translated.

**The Word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:14</td>
<td>ἐὰν δὲ ἀπὸ τὸν πετεινῶν κάρπωμα προσφέρῃς δόρον τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ προσοίσει ἀπὸ τὸν τρυγὸν ἡ ἀπὸ τὸν περιστρέφον τὸ δόρον αὐτοῦ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the word study of יְהוֹנָה, this is the only verse in which the translator does not add the word νεοσσος in Greek or young (compare to 5:7, 11; 12:6, 8; 14:22, 30; 15:14, 29). It could be just an idiomatic / stylistic expression. Nonetheless, the fact that this is the only verse with stylistic expression, it makes this view questionable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew</th>
<th>Greek</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3:11</td>
<td>ἀνοίσει οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον ὁσμῇ εὐωδίας κάρπωμα κυρίῳ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:16</td>
<td>καὶ ἀνοίσει οἱ ἱερεῖς ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον κάρπωμα ὁσμῇ εὐωδίας τῷ κυρίῳ πᾶν τὸ στέαρ τῷ κυρίῳ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In those two verses, the translator does not translate לֶחֶם. The word study of מֶן shows that the translator translates מֶן as δῶρα or gifts in Leviticus 7:13; 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25; the rests are ἀρτος: bread/loaf. Further study is needed to examine the usage of מֶן in the book of Leviticus and why the translator leaves מֶן untranslated in 3:11 and 3:16.

**Conclusion**

In light of the examples collected in this paper, one cannot immediately assume that the translator is always consistent or inconsistent to MT. This paper shows that the translator is both consistent and inconsistent with MT. Nonetheless, someone cannot see the inconsistencies of translation as an arbitrary work. In addition, Dines states that these alterations are intended, apparently, to improve the Greek style. For other reasons for inconsistency, Wevers and Taylor state that the translator loves to translate a recurring Hebrew collocation in various ways, while remaining close to the original; he creates new idioms while necessary, especially when finding Greek equivalents for the technical cultic terms in which the book abounds.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


