Euphony in the Septuagint:

Genesis 49 and Exodus 15 as Study Cases

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1. Problem: formal features in the Septuagint?

Can the Septuagint (LXX) be studied as a coherent Greek text, or should it be regarded only as a series of Greek words and expressions that give us the only possible access to the Hebrew *Vorlage* which has been lost? A. Deissmann once called it the LXX "a book from the Hellenistic world for the Hellenistic world."[1] This definition may sound strange since the LXX remained virtually unknown outside the Jewish community during the first ages of its existence. The earliest unquestionable quotation from it appears in Pseudo-Longinus (circ. 50 C.E.). All attempts to find earlier allusions are hardly convincing.[2]

The situation changed with the birth of Christianity which needed new skins for its new wine. Since Hellenized Judaism was the cultural environment of budding Christianity, it was no wonder that not only the very text of the LXX was adopted, but some of its characteristic features were also widely imitated in original Christian writings. These features played a very important role in the formation of Christian culture, in particular in Greek-speaking Christian literature that has been flourishing for more than a millennium and is known today under the name "Byzantine".

Until recently scholars have been mostly investigating in what way the formal

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1) A. Deissmann, *The Philology of Greek Bible, its present and future* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1908), 6.

2) G. Dorival, "La Bible Des Septante Chez Les Auteurs Païens (jusqu'au Pseudo-Longin)", *Cahiers de Biblia Patristica* 1 (1987), 9-26.

features of the Hebrew text were rendered in the LXX: its 'Hebraistic nature', as formulated by Tov.[3] It was rarely, if at all, regarded as a Greek text which may have its own formal features.

Perhaps the shift of paradigm started with the discussion about *homo(e)phony* in the LXX.[4] The natural tendency of the human mind to recall foreign vocables by finding similar sounding words in one's own language always produces the so called "translators' false friends", i.e., words that sound similar but have different meanings such as English *library* and French *librairie* (bookstore). However debatable some particular cases may be (see in particular the criticism of J. Barr to the examples proposed by E. Tov and J. de Waard),[5] it is obvious that the LXX translators were not immune to this sort of mental fallacy. Probably they were not so naive as to rely completely on mere phonetic resemblance between two words, but it is likely that the sound of words did sometimes affect their choice of a Greek correspondence.

Then, a few papers and monographs have paid attention to the influence of formal features of the Greek text on the choices made by translators. For instance, J. de Waard and Th. van der Louw[6] examine the structure of the LXX in connection with modern translational studies.

Now, it is quite trivial to speak about poetic rhetoric and poetry in LXX texts: this is exactly what J. Aitken studied in Ecclesiastes[7], and D. Gera in Exodus 15[8]. It is symptomatic that a collection of articles on "rhetorical and stylistic

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3) E. Tov, "The nature and study of the translation technique of the LXX in the past and present", C. E. Cox, ed., *VI Congress of the International Organisation for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1987), 337-359.

4) In the scholarly literature it is spelled both with and without *e.*

5) E. Tov, "Loan-Words, Homophony and Transliteration in the Septuagint", *Biblica* 60 (1979), 216-236; Jan De Waard, "Homophony in the Septuagint", *Biblica* 62 (1981), 551-561; J. Barr, "Doubts about Homoeophony in Septuagint", *Textus* 12 (1985), 1-77.

6) J. de Waard, "The Septuagint Translation of Proverbs as a Translational Model?", *The Bible Translator* 50 (1999), 304-314; J. de Waard, "Some Unusuial Translation Techniques Employed by the Greek Translator(s) of Proverbs", Sollamo, R. and Sipilä, S., eds., *Helsinki Perspectives on the Translation Technique of the Septuagint* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 185-194; T. A. W. van der Louw, *Transformations In The Septuagint: Towards An Interaction Of Septaguint Studies And Translation Studies* (Leuven: Peeters, 2007).

7) J. K. Aitken, "Rhetoric and Poetry in Greek Ecclesiastes", *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 38 (2005), 55-78.

8) D. L. Gera, "Translating Hebrew Poetry into Greek Poetry: The Case of Exodus 15", *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 40 (2007), 107-120. It shall be also noted that Gera and the author of this article independently made similar observations of

features of LXX" appeared in 2011[9], a subject that would not make much sense for the "old school" which treated LXX as a fairly literalistic translation lacking any style at all.

All this has to do with the origins of LXX. One may also ask: did the LXX bring something new to Greek literature? Was it indeed just an unattractive literal translation, a primitive auxiliary tool for a person who would not read Hebrew well? The exclusively important role played by this translation down the ages hints at a higher evaluation. To say it differently, the main question LXX scholars have been dealing with so far sounds like "how did this happen?" But one may also ask "what impact did it make?"

More than one century ago scholars asked questions about the origins of Greek rhythmic poetry (as opposed to classical metric) – see, e.g., the monograph by E. Bouvy.[10] More recently another French scholar, J. Irigoin,[11] suggested that such origins may be connected with the LXX. Still, this theory which deserved more attention remained mostly unexplored.

Taking this into consideration we can study the LXX as a unit in its own right with its own specific structures and techniques. Some of these structures and techniques were borrowed from Hellenistic literature and some may present an attempt to transpose Hebrew features on Greek soil. Sometimes Hellenic and Semitic features are synthetically combined, but such instances must be regarded as belonging to the same literary technique.

The present paper demonstrates that phonetic features would have influenced translators' choices. More concretely, it is argued that at times the choices they made resulted in forms of *euphony*, i.e., the repetition of sounds (alliteration and assonance) and certain rhythmic patterns. The paper also deals with the

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this material. She has read and mentioned my yet unpublished text in a footnote to her article, now I do the same to her.

9) See, first of all, E. Bons, "Rhetorical Devices in the Septuagint Psalter", E. Bons and T. J. Kraus, eds., *Et Sapienter et Eloquenter: Studies on Rhetorical and Stylistic Features of the Septuagint* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011), 69-82; Jennifer M. Dines, "Stylistic Invention and Rhetorical Purpose in the Book of the Twelve", ibid., 23-48; Thomas J. Kraus, "Translating the Septuagint Psalms – some 'Lesefrüchte' and their value for an analysis of the rhetoric (and style) of the Septuagint (Psalms)", ibid., 49-68.

10) E. Bouvy, *Poètes et Mélodes. Etudes Sur Les Origines Du Rythme Tonique Dans L'hymnographie de l'Eglise Grecque* (Nîmes: Lafare frères, 1886).

11) J. Irigoin, "La Composition Rythmique Des Cantiques de Luc", *Revue Biblique* 98 (1991), 5-50.

questions of methodology (what distinguishes a coincidence from a meaningful repetition) and the history of Greek literature (what impact it had on the development of Byzantine poetry in distant future).

2. Methodology: what counts?

It would be quite logical, once we are talking about poetry, to study poetic texts. The poetic passages of the Pentateuch seem to provide the best material for a closer inspection. First of all, there is a consensus in the scholarly world that the Pentateuch was the first portion of the Hebrew Bible to be translated; more than that, to some extent its rendering influenced the manner in which subsequent translations were undertaken.[12] Furthermore, there is hardly any LXX book more suitable for studying poetic features, though the word "poetic" is actually applicable to any form of artistic speech. In consequence, all the examples for this article will be taken from Genesis 49:2-27 (the blessings of Jacob) and Exodus 15:1-18 (the Song of the Sea).

As it is usual in LXX studies, our analysis will be based on comparison of the LXX and the MT. Our focus will be the places where they differ significantly, which is also customary for LXX studies. Primarily, we examine the following features of the text:

Sound repetitions; those sounds which are the result of a repetition of the same or similar grammatical forms are not mentioned as their appearance may be called merely accidental. This sort of sound repetition can be conventionally called "grammatical". Besides that, the relative frequency of a certain sound is considered: four sigmas or alphas within the same line are not worth mentioning since this is a rather common case, while four lambdas or omegas should draw our attention. There is no place to discuss here what the exact sounding of a certain letter was, so we shall follow their graphic representation. Nevertheless, it can be taken for granted that some sounds, like labial vowels o and ω, have always been close to one another. Thus repetitions of vowels of similar tone or

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12) E. Tov, "The Impact of the LXX Translation of the Pentateuch on the Translation of Other Books", P. Casetti, et al., eds., *Mélanges Dominique Barthélemy* (Fribourg: Editions universitaires, 1981), 577-592.

consonants of the same group (dentals, bilabials etc.) can be noted as well. Underlined letters (ἄρτος) indicate the repetitions that seem to be worth examining. In accordance with the principle expressed above, cases like τὸν ἄρτον are not marked.

Rhythmic patterning which can have different forms: two or more lines roughly follow the same rhythmic pattern or are roughly equal in length; sometimes syllables within one line also follow a certain rhythmic pattern. The same restriction applies as in the case with sound repetitions: the cases which can be explained as a side-effect of natural repetition of the same or similar grammatical forms should be discounted.

Important **textual variations** between the LXX and the MT which find no reasonable explanation on the ground of textual criticism, as variations between proto-LXX and proto-MT, and can be explained as changing Hebrew poetic images and figures of speech for better Greek equivalents.

An important reservation is to be made here: rhythm and sound repetitions can be merely coincidental. In our everyday life we see a lot of technical texts that can contain some of these formal elements to which no one usually pays attention:

> Please leave your payment on the table. (rhythm)
> See the sign-up sheet at the Switchboard. (alliterations)

For sure we have no right to call these texts poetic. Their authors never aimed at creating alliteration and rhythmic patterns; we know it since all the other texts of the kind lack them. If, however, we had noticed in an office or a cafe that every second inscription rhymes and the personnel speaks in the same manner, we would have taken these very examples as another proof of the strange policy adopted for some reasons in this place.

This is why we can hardly judge whether or not in a particular case the LXX translators aimed at producing a more phonetically ordered text. They may have done this unconsciously or semi-consciously, equally well this may have been pure coincidence. On the other hand, after studying a large number of examples we can draw some conclusions about general tendencies. So for the time being we will postpone the questions of consciousness and intentionality.

When we take into account all the factors that may have influenced the translators, answering the question "Why did they translate it like that?"

becomes as fascinating as a good detective story. To show all the turns of the plot, we can have a closer look at just one expression from Genesis 49:15b, a part of Jacob's blessing for Issachar. In Hebrew this verse says: "When he sees how good is his resting place and how pleasant is his land, he will bend his shoulder to the burden and submit to forced labour". The LXX, however, renders the last expression quite differently:

וַיְהִי לְמַס־עֹבֵד   καὶ ἐγενήθη ἀνὴρ γεωργός

⋯and became a slave at forced labour.   ⋯and became a rustic man.

There is no simple answer why. Even the detailed analysis by J. Wevers does not suggest any kind of solution.[13] Theoretically, there are at least five possible explanations:

1. Textual variations. This would be the easiest answer: the LXX just followed a different Hebrew original. In fact, we do not have any evidence that such an original existed; it would be hard even to imagine what the Hebrew equivalent of ἀνὴρ γεωργός would be like.

2. Poor understanding of the text. We can also suppose that the translator did not understand the meaning of מַס־עֹבֵד and therefor changed it for a rather vague Greek expression that would more or less suit the context.

3. Deliberate correction of the meaning. The translator may have considered this expression too harsh: according to 1 Kings 9:21-22, in Solomon's time the forced labour was not for Israelites but only for the remnants of the pre-conquest population of the Holy Land: "… their descendants who were still left in the land, whom the Israelites were unable to destroy completely – these Solomon conscripted for slave labor (לְמַס־עֹבֵד), and so they are to this day. But of the Israelites Solomon made no slaves". This is why the translator may have chosen a better fate for Issachar. This hypothesis is supported by R. Syren.[14]

4. Cultural adaptation. The translator may have seen the fate of the peasants of Ptolemaic Egypt, who were almost serfs, as the closest natural equivalent to Hebrew מַס־עֹבֵד. By employing ἀνὴρ γεωργός, he had in mind not an idyllic

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13) J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1993), 828-829.
14) R. Syrén, *The Blessings in the Targums: A Study on the Targumic Interpretations of Genesis 49 and Deuteronomy 33* (Åbo: Åbo akademi, 1986), 51-52.

Arcadian but a concrete social position in his own society.

5. The quest for a better organised text. It is worth noticing that the Greek expression ἐγενήθη ἀνὴρ γεωργός is full of alliteration (γ) and assonance (ε/η) and follows a certain rhythmic pattern: two unstressed syllable plus one stressed. We cannot exclude the hypothesis that it was for the sake of sound repetitions and rhythm that passive ἐγενήθη (which is rather rare in the LXX though not completely unknown) was used here instead of a more usual medial form ἐγένετο, which would have broken the rhythmic pattern. Can we say that the translator sacrificed the meaning for the sounds? I think this would be too bold. Nevertheless, a number of similar examples seem to prove well that sounds were not completely neglected when the translators were making their choice.

Looking for a suitable answer for the question "Why did they translate וַיְהִי לְמַס־עֹבֵד as καὶ ἐγενήθη ἀνὴρ γεωργός?" we have to remember that we cannot penetrate the minds of unknown people who lived two millennia and a quarter ago. Still, we can propose the following model: for some reasons the translator decided not to render the text literally (the hypothesis No 3 seems the most convincing although 2 and 4 are not impossible), while the tendency to organise the text phonetically (the hypothesis No 5) influenced his choice of words.

If this is true, as we are going to demonstrate, it has an important implication for the LXX lexicography. Normally, it seeks to establish direct correspondence between the meaning of the Greek and the Hebrew words or expressions or to explain its absence when this cannot be achieved. If we accept the quest for formal regularity as yet another factor that can explain anomalous translation in some cases, it will affect lexicographic studies as well as other domains of the LXX scholarship.

3. Analysis: what is there in the text?

Now, a series of examples will be presented. For the convenience of the reader, the text of each analysed verse will be quoted in four different versions:

The Masoretic text according to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*	The Septuagint text according to *Göttingen Septuaginta*
New Revised Standard Version	English Translation of the

(after the Masoretic text)   Septuagint

The English translation of LXX basically follows L. Brenton's version which is literal enough to serve our purposes but it follows the Göttingen text edited by J. Wevers and is adjusted to the wording of NRSV. Line division basically follows traditional editions with a few minor changes wherever a slight adjustment seemed to fit better the prosody of the text. Those lines which appear too long are presented in halves with an indent at the beginning of the second half. Such conventional breaks are shown only on the following pages.

At this point, we are going to investigate in more details those divergences between Hebrew and Greek which are likely to be explained by some irregularities in translator's choices, There are many more possible explanations of course but we will not seriously deal with textual criticism here, avoiding examples where this would be a major issue.

Genesis 49:11

אֹסְרִי לַגֶּפֶן עירה	δεσμεύων πρὸς ἄμπελον τὸν πῶλον αὐτοῦ
וְלַשֹּׂרֵקָה בְּנִי אֲתֹנוֹ	καὶ τῇ ἕλικι τὸν πῶλον τῆς ὄνου αὐτοῦ·
כִּבֵּס בַּיַּיִן לְבֻשׁוֹ	πλυνεῖ ἐν οἴνῳ τὴν στολὴν αὐτοῦ
וּבְדַם־עֲנָבִים סותה:	καὶ ἐν αἵματι σταφυλῆς τὴν περιβολὴν αὐτοῦ·

Binding his foal to the vine	Binding his foal to the vine,
and his donkey's colt to the choice vine,	and the foal of his ass to the branch of it,
he washes his garments in wine	he shall wash his robe in wine,
and his robe in the blood of grapes;	and his garment in the blood of the grape.

Here we see rich repetitions, mostly grammatical (like ων - ov), and alliterations π - λ, which is best attested in the word pair ἄμπελον - πῶλον. The word στολὴν echoes both σταφυλῆς (with the initial sounds) and περιβολὴν (with the final ones). There are some rhythmic repetitions at the end of lines, partially caused by the repetition of αὐτοῦ.

49:12

חַכְלִילִי עֵינַיִם מִיָּיִן	χαροποιοὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ οἴνου
וּלְבֶן־שִׁנַּיִם מֵחָלָב:	καὶ λευκοὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ ἢ γάλα

his eyes are darker than wine,   His eyes shall be more cheering than wine,
and his teeth whiter than milk.   and his teeth whiter than milk.

This verse is an exemplary case of grammatical sound repetitions. Nevertheless, out of five diphthongs οι two (in χαρο<u>ποι</u>ῖ and <u>οἴ</u>νου) are not Nom. Pl. endings.

49:13

זְבוּלֻ֕ן לְח֥וֹף יַמִּ֖ים   Ζαβουλ<u>ὼν</u> <u>παρ</u>άλιος κατοικήσει
יִשְׁכֹּ֔ן וְהוּא֙ לְח֣וֹף אֳנִיֹּ֔ת   καὶ αὐτὸς <u>παρ</u>᾽ ὅρμον πλοί<u>ων</u>
וְיַרְכָת֖וֹ עַל־צִידֹֽן׃   καὶ <u>παρα</u>τενεῖ ἕως Σιδ<u>ῶν</u>ος

Zebulun shall settle at the shore of   Zabulon shall dwell on the coast,
the sea;
he shall be a haven for ships,   and he shall be by a haven of ships,
and his border shall be at Sidon.   and shall extend to Sidon.

Here we see the prefix/preposition παρά in the middle of each line. Unlike in the previous verse, such a coincidence cannot be called automatic since there is no Hebrew equivalent for παρά in the second line. As in many other cases, the usage of the same prefixes and prepositions within one verse seems to be the translator's choice. Besides that, in each line we see the sound complex ων, basically, due to its repetition in the proper names Ζαβουλών and Σιδών.

49:17

יְהִי־דָן֙ נָחָ֣שׁ עֲלֵי־דֶ֔רֶךְ   καὶ γεν<u>ηθ</u>ήτω Δὰν ὄ<u>φ</u>ις ἐ<u>φ</u>᾽ ὁδοῦ
שְׁפִיפֹ֖ן עֲלֵי־אֹ֑רַח   ἐγκα<u>θ</u>ήμενος ἐ<u>πὶ τρ</u>ίβου
הַנֹּשֵׁךְ֙ עִקְּבֵי־ס֔וּס   δάκνων <u>πτέρ</u>ναν ἵππου
וַיִּפֹּ֥ל רֹכְב֖וֹ אָחֽוֹר׃   καὶ <u>πεσεῖ</u>ται ὁ ἱπ<u>πεὺς εἰς</u> τὰ ὀ<u>πίσ</u>ω

Dan shall be a snake by the roadside,   And let Dan be a serpent in the way,
a viper along the path,   besetting the path,
that bites the horse's heels   biting the heel of the horse
so that its rider falls backward.   (and the rider shall fall backward),

In this verse we see some remarkable sound repetitions: οφ - φο in the first line; επιτρ - πτερ in the second and the third lines; πεσει - πευσ - εισ - πισ in the fourth line.

One can also notice the link between the words ἐγκαθήμενος and γενηθήτω (γε - εγκ, θη). In fact, this resemblance appeared as the result of a rather indirect translation: ἐγκαθήμενος stays instead of the Hebrew שְׁפִיפֹן which designates a certain kind of poisonous snake (presumably, *Zamenis diadema*). The translators may well have had difficulties with identifying the concrete species as we do today; on the other hand, they may have chosen to avoid associating Dan with such an unpleasant creature (the same way they have dealt with the donkey in the verse 14). According to Syren,[15] all the Targums, just on the contrary, retained the snake in the text.

Wevers also notices[16] that the narrative in Greek is slightly remodeled in accordance with the usual narrative strategy principles which are characteristic for this language. In the MT we see a banal repetition of metaphors: "Dan shall be a snake by the roadside, a viper along the path…"; while the LXX starts a series of actions which is to be continued in the following lines: "Dan shall be a serpent by the roadside which is lying along the path…"

49:20

מֵאָשֵׁר שְׁמֵנָה לַחְמוֹ	Ασήρ, πίων αὐτοῦ ὁ ἄρτος,
וְהוּא יִתֵּן מַעֲדַנֵּי־מֶלֶךְ:	καὶ αὐτὸς δώσει τρυφὴν ἄρχουσιν

Asher's food shall be rich,	Aser, his bread shall be fat;
and he shall provide royal delicacies.	and he shall yield dainties to princes.

The key word in this verse is Ασήρ. Three other words: ἄρτος, αὐτός and ἄρχουσιν – sound similar; this is perhaps what F. de Saussure would have called an anagram (the compositional device which makes the text echo the name of the main character associated with it)[17]. In fact, the choice of the word ἄρχουσιν 'to rulers' can be considered an intentional strategy since it is a rather free rendering for the Hebrew מֶלֶךְ 'king': βασιλεῖ would have been a much closer equivalent. Perhaps this choice was influenced by the fact that the Israeli kingdom was not there anymore when this text was composed. Still, there seems to be a better explanation: such a rendering created the sound repetition at the

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15) Ibid., 41.
16) J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis,* 829.
17) P. Wunderli, *Ferdinand de Saussure Und Die Anagramme: Linguistik Und Literatur* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972).

end of the lines: ἄρτος – ἄρχουσιν. Both words have stressed ἄρ- as their first syllable.

Exodus 15:1b

אָשִׁירָה לַֽיהוָה֙ כִּֽי־גָאֹ֣ה גָּאָ֔ה סֽוּס וְרֹכְב֖וֹ רָמָ֥ה בַיָּֽם׃	ᾄσωμεν τῷ κυρίῳ, ἐνδόξως γὰρ δεδόξασται· ἵππον καὶ ἀναβάτην ἔρριψεν εἰς θάλασσαν
I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.	Let us sing to the Lord, for he is very greatly glorified: horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.

Here we can see a pair of words from the same root (ἐνδόξως - δεδόξασται), as well as rich rhythmic repetition, the second line almost exactly repeats the rhythm of the first one. That was achieved at the cost of the literal exactitude of translation:

1. The plural ᾄσωμεν translates the singular אָשִׁירָה (the corresponding Greek Singular ᾄσω has one syllable less). Theoretically this can be explained by the fact that Moses is mentioned as the only singer; on the other hand, elsewhere in the song we see 1st person plural and the LXX accurately retains this feature.

2. The pronominal suffix in רֹכְבוֹ 'his rider' is left without translation: ἀναβάτην (the exact equivalent ἀναβάτην αὐτοῦ contains two extra syllables).

3. The Greek ἐνδόξως γὰρ δεδόξασται, "because he has glorified himself gloriously", as the equivalent for the Hebrew כִּֽי־גָאֹה גָּאָה, literally "for triumphing he has triumphed", deserves our special attention. First of all, the Hebrew conjunction כִּי is usually translated by the Greek conjunction ὅτι even in those cases where the particle γάρ is needed according to the normative Greek usage (see for instance Exodus 15:19). Secondly, the Hebrew construction *absolute infinitive + finite verb* in the LXX is usually translated in three ways: (1) *participle + finite verb*; or (2) *noun in Dative + finite verb*; or (3) *finite verb alone* [18]. Actually, models (1) and (2) sound in Greek extremely

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18) See a detailed analysis in R. Sollamo, "The LXX Renderings of the Infinitive Absolute Used with a Paronymous Finite Verb in the Pentateuch", N. F. Marcos, ed., *La Septuaginta En La Investigacion Contemporanea,* V Congreso de La IOSCS (Madrid: Instituto Arias Montano, 1985), 101-113.

unnatural while model (3) does not give full justice to the original. The translator could choose one of these options. He could also find a stylistically blameless Greek expression, something like μεγάλην γὰρ ἤνεγκε δόξαν, "because he has obtained great glory", thereby loosing all the Hebrew flavour. Here, however, the translator did not try to force the Greek usage, neither did he refuse to render this peculiarity of the original: the absolute infinitive גָּאֹה is rendered by the Greek adverb ἐνδόξως. In the end, the repetition of the words from the same root is fully retained, as well as the rhythmic pattern (one stressed + one unstressed syllable).

15:2

עָזִּי וְזִמְרָת יָהּ	βοηθὸς καὶ σκεπαστὴς
וַיְהִי־לִי לִישׁוּעָה	ἐγένετό μοι εἰς σωτηρίαν·
זֶה אֵלִי וְאַנְוֵהוּ	οὗτός μου θεός, καὶ δοξάσω αὐτόν
אֱלֹהֵי אָבִי וַאֲרֹמְמֶנְהוּ:	θεὸς τοῦ πατρός μου καὶ ὑψώσω αὐτόν

The LORD is my strength and my might,	He was to me a helper and protector for salvation:
and he has become my salvation;	
this is my God, and I will praise him,	this is my God and I will glorify him;
my father's God, and I will exalt him.	my father's God, and I will exalt him.

It is very easy to note rich phonetic parallelism in these verses. In the beginning of the third and the fourth lines we see some similar words: οὗτός μου θεός - θεὸς τοῦ πατρός, while the word βοηθός echoes them in the first line. Rhythmically, the two concluding lines are almost identical. To achieve this similarity, the translator has put the words in a rather unusual order: μου θεός instead of expected θεός μου. A similar reason may have conditioned the choice of δοξάσω αὐτόν 'I will glorify him' as the equivalent for אַנְוֵהוּ 'I will praise him' (Wevers, however, links this verb to a cognate Arabic word and suggests the meaning 'to glorify' but it seems rather unlikely that the translators shared this interpretation).[19] This word sounds phonetically and rhythmically similar to ὑψώσω. It also links this word to the words from the same root in verses 1 and 6.

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19) J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek text of Exodus* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1990), 228.

15:4

מַרְכְּבֹ֥ת פַּרְעֹ֛ה וְחֵיל֖וֹ יָרָ֣ה בַיָּ֑ם
וּמִבְחַ֥ר שָֽׁלִשָׁ֖יו טֻבְּע֥וּ בְיַם־סֽוּף׃

ἅρματα Φαραὼ καὶ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ
    ἔρριψεν εἰς θάλασσαν
ἐπιλέκτους ἀναβάτας τριστάτας
    κατεπόντισεν ἐν ἐρυθρᾷ θαλάσσῃ

Pharaoh's chariots and his army
    he cast into the sea;
his picked officers
    were sunk in the Red Sea.

He has cast the chariots of Pharao
and his host into the sea,
the chosen mounted captains:
    they were swallowed up in the Red
Sea.

In this verse we see rich sound repetitions: αρ - αρα - ερρ - ρ - ερ and ατα - θα - ασσα - ατασ - στατασ - ατ - θρα - θα - ασσ. The second and the third lines show some rhythmic similarity. Again, the LXX differs from the MT in minor details which help to create this similarity:

4. The article in בַיָּם 'in the sea' is left without translation. This makes no real difference since the article is not reflected in the consonant spelling. At the same time, the article in Greek would have added another syllable to the first line which is already relatively longish.

5. The plural טֻבְּעוּ 'they were sunk' is replaced by Singular κατεπόντισεν 'he sank'. Proto-LXX may have had a different vocalisation here, as suggested by BHS critical apparatus: טָבַע; a different vocalisation may have been invented on purpose in order to point more clearly to the agent. Meanwhile, the verbal form κατεπόντισεν sounds similar to the preposition ἐν which would not be the case with any 3rd person Plural form.

15:6

יְמִֽינְךָ֣ יְהוָ֔ה נֶאְדָּרִ֖י בַּכֹּ֑חַ
יְמִֽינְךָ֥ יְהוָ֖ה תִּרְעַ֥ץ אוֹיֵֽב׃

ἡ δεξιά σου, κύριε, δεδόξασται ἐν ἰσχύι·
ἡ δεξιά σου χείρ, κύριε, ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρούς

Your right hand, O LORD,
glorious in power –
your right hand, O LORD,
shattered the enemy.

Thy right hand, O God, has been glorified in
strength;
thy right hand, O God, has broken the
enemies.

Alliteration is extremely rich in this verse: δ, ε, ξ/κ/χ, ε/ει, θ, ρ. Rhythmically,

the second line is quite similar to the first one, although it lacks two unstressed syllables if compared to it. Again, this effect to a large extent depends on the freedom taken by the translator:

6. The Hebrew Singular אוֹיֵב 'enemy' is rendered by the Greek Plural ἐχθρούς. One could say that the translator did justice to the fact that there were quite a few enemies. At the same time, verses 1 and 9 speak of them in singular in both the Hebrew and Greek. It seems that the choice of the plural form is rather conditioned by the quest for alliteration: ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρούς contained one more common sound than the exact equivalent ἔθραυσεν ἐχθρόν.

7. The same Hebrew expression יְמִינְךָ 'your right hand' is rendered in a twofold manner: ἡ δεξιά σου and ἡ δεξιά σου χείρ. In fact, usually the LXX uses a shorter rendering for the Hebrew word יָמִין. In Exodus it is used 4 times more. Only in Exodus 29:22, where it refers to a part of an animal, do we see ὁ βραχίων ὁ δεξιός. Elsewhere it is translated simply as δεξιά without χείρ (14:22, 14:29, 15:12). We may guess that here the addition of the word χείρ enriches the alliteration and makes the second line longer so that it would better match the rhythmic pattern.

15:9

אָמַר אוֹיֵב אֶרְדֹּף אַשִּׂיג אֲחַלֵּק שָׁלָל תִּמְלָאֵמוֹ נַפְשִׁי אָרִיק חַרְבִּי תּוֹרִישֵׁמוֹ יָדִי:	εἶπεν ὁ ἐχθρός Διώξας καταλήμψομαι, μεριῶ σκῦλα, ἐμπλήσω ψυχήν μου ἀνελῶ τῇ μαχαίρᾳ μου, κυριεύσει ἡ χείρ μου
The enemy said, 'I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my desire shall have its fill of them. I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them.'	The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoils; I will satisfy my soul, I will destroy with my sword, my hand shall have dominion.

Striking alliterations are apparent in this verse: π - μψ - μπ - ψ - μ; ξ - κ - σκ, as well as χαιρ - χειρ in the third line. The rhythm of the second and the third lines is rather similar, partly because of the word pair μεριῶ - ἀνελῶ (it should be noticed that the MT contains verbs which match rather by alliteration than by rhythm: אָרִיק - אֲחַלֵּק). As noticed by Wevers,[20] the translation considerably over colours the picture drawn in the original text:

8. ἐμπλήσω ψυχήν μου 'I will fill my soul' stays instead of תִּמְלָאֵמוֹ נַפְשִׁי 'my soul will be filled with them'. Here the 1ˢᵗ person singular was introduced in accordance with the other verbal forms in this verse.

9. ἀνελῶ τῇ μαχαίρῃ μου 'I will destroy (them) with my sword' renders חַרְבִּי אָרִיק 'I will draw my sword'. In the translation, the arrogance of the enemy is stressed even more. On the other hand, the form ἀνελῶ is metrically identical to the form μεριῶ in the second line.

10. κυριεύσει ἡ χείρ μου 'my hand shall rule' replaces תּוֹרִישֵׁמוֹ יָדִי 'my hand shall destroy them'. Evidently, here the hope for a single victorious action is expanded to the vision of a global triumph. Besides that, the expression κυριεύσει ἡ χείρ μου from the phonetic and rhythmical point of view makes a better match to the first half of the line (ἀνελῶ τῇ μαχαίρῃ μου) than an exact equivalent like ἀνελεῖ αὐτούς ἡ χείρ μου.

These examples demonstrate convincingly that the translators did not neglect the form of the Greek text completely. Even if it were at a subconscious or semi-subconscious level, they gave at least some attention to their translations phonetic and rhythmic features. Any of these can be coincidental, but hardly all of them together.

4. Background: the Greek context for a Greek text

It has been generally acknowledged that alliteration and rhythmic repetition (without any detectable fixed patterns) were characteristic features of Hebrew poetry.[21] Meanwhile, one may ask how these two features would have sounded for a Greek-speaking audience. We know that they were not standard poetic means employed by the original Greek writers, so could their presence or absence be noticeable or significant?

First of all, it is worth noticing that for too long a time the oral (or, better, aural?) aspects of ancient literature did not receive adequate attention. Inevitably, we often visualise distant past in terms of our present. A modern

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20) Ibid., 230-231.
21) See, for instance, W. G. E. Watson, *Traditional Techniques in Classical Hebrew Verse* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

reader of the eighth chapter of Acts, for instance, may wonder for what particular reason the Ethiopian eunuch was reading a book aloud to himself when no other audience was present. On the contrary, in the fourth century CE Augustine was ultimately astonished when he discovered that Ambrose used to read a book without uttering a sound or even moving his lips (*Confessions* 6.3)![22] Whether it was due to a poorer comprehensibility of ancient manuscripts which lacked proper punctuation and even spaces between words, or due to a venerable tradition of oral presentation of texts, the letter always remained a ghostly shadow of sound in Greco-Roman antiquity.

When analysing Greek literary techniques we are in a much better position than with Hebrew texts since we possess some theoretic treatises written by rhetoricians who still belonged to the same tradition. Nevertheless, we should carefully distinguish between the practice employed by Greek writers and the theories explaining this practice in terms that significantly differ from ours. The fact that the theories keep silence concerning a certain phenomenon does not necessarily infer the total absence of it. First of all, one has to agree with M. Gasparov[23] that "the extant works [of ancient rhetoricians] which are at our disposal are few in number and unrepresentative". Then, the whole categorical apparatus of the ancient rhetoricians differed a lot from our own: they may have failed to describe a certain phenomenon simply because it did not suit their models.

As for alliteration, Greeks did not have anything similar to what can be found in early Latin authors.[24] More than that, Greek rhetoricians known to us never mention alliteration. Still it would not be correct to say alliteration was not present in Greek literature. As was the case with Latin speaking Romans, Greeks knew alliteration from their folk songs. Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophistae* (8.60) quotes such a song:[25]

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22) See a brief but profound discussion of this subject in J. D. Harvey, *Listening to the Text: Oral Patterning in Paul's Letters* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1998), 51-54.

23) М. Л. Гаспаров, "Античная риторика как система", М. Л. Гаспаров, ed., Античная *поэтика. Риторическая теория и литературная практика* (Москва: Наука, 1991), 27-59, 27.

24) See, for instance, *fragmentum spurium 9* to *Annals* by Quintus Ennius: "Machina multa minax minitatur maxima muris". This can be rendered into English in the following way: "In the battle a battering ram breaks a breach in the bastion's bailey".

25) See a discussion in E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI Jahrhundert vor Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898), 823.

ἦλθ᾽ ἦλθε χελιδὼν	Come, little swallow,
καλὰς ὥρας ἄγουσα	bring us good times,
καλοὺς ἐνιαυτούς	good years!
ἐπὶ γαστέρα λευκά	Your belly is white,
ἐπὶ νῶτα μέλαινα.	your back is black.
παλάθαν σὺ προκύκλει	Provide us with cakes
ἐκ πίονος οἴκου	from a house of wealth,
οἴνου τε δέπαστρον	with a beaker of wine,
τυροῦ τε κάνυστρον.	with a basket of cheese.

It can be easily seen that this verse is based on repetition and parallelism backed up with sound repetitions like δέπαστρον – κάνυστρον.

Presumably, this sort of alliteration is characteristic of folk songs in many corners of the world. Some literary traditions make good use of them: ancient Germanic verse based on an elaborated system of internal alliteration can serve as an example. At the same time other literary traditions leave it aside as primitive. For the Greco-Roman writers alliteration was a very marginal tool which would have been be implemented only occasionally and would have been hardly worth mentioning in theoretic treatises. In *Orestes* by Euripides (140-143) we can find a brilliant example of alliteration in the lines[26]:

ΧΟΡΟΣ	σῖγα σῖγα λεπτὸν ἴχνος ἀρβύλης
	τίθετε μὴ κτυπεῖτ᾽.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ	ἀποπρὸ βᾶτ᾽ ἐκεῖσ᾽ ἀποπρό μοι κοίτας.
CHORUS:	Hush! hush! let your footsteps fall lightly! not a sound! not whisper!
ELECTRA:	Further, further from his couch! I beseech ye.

It is worth noticing that these alliterations are onomatopoeic: constant repetition of voiceless π, τ, κ, πτ, κτ perfectly depict the patter of a crowd. In the first century BC this very passage was chosen as a sample by Dionysius of Halicarnassus for his treatise entitled "On the Arrangement of Words" (*De compositione verborum*, 11). Amazingly, he failed to mention this striking onomatopoeic feature. The obvious reason is that Greek rhetoricians employed

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26) English version by E. P. Coleridge.

but paid no attention to sound repetition as a feature in their discourses on rhetoric.

The only context where they did speak about alliteration was in the discussion of certain poetic techniques, mainly *isocolon* (ἰσόκολον, equality of cola) or *parisosis* (παρίσωσις, equation). Here is the definition given prior to Aristotle by Anaximenes in *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* (28): "Paromoeosis (παρομοίωσις *assimilation*) goes further than *parisosis*, as it not only makes the members equal in length but assimilates them by employing similar words to construct them. Assimilate specially the terminations of words – this is the best way of producing paromoeosis. Similar words are those formed of similar sounding syllables".

An few lines from *Helena* by Gorgias (fifth – sixth centuries BC)[27] can show us how it was implemented in practice:[28]

ἄξιος οὖν ὁ μὲν ἐπιχειρήσας βάρβαρος	So the barbarian
βάρβαρον ἐπιχείρημα	who undertook a barbarian undertaking
καὶ λόγῳ καὶ νόμῳ καὶ ἔργῳ	in speech and in law and in deed,
λόγῳ μὲν αἰτίας	deserves to receive accusation in speech,
νόμῳ δὲ ἀτιμίας	debarment in law,
ἔργῳ δὲ ζημίας τυχεῖν·	and punishment in deed;
ἡ δὲ βιασθεῖσα	but the woman who was violated
καὶ τῆς πατρίδος στερηθεῖσα	and deprived of her country
καὶ τῶν φίλων ὀρφανισθεῖσα	and bereaved of her family
πῶς οὐκ ἂν εἰκότως ἐλεηθείη	would she not reasonably be pitied
μᾶλλον ἢ κακολογηθείη;	rather than reviled?
ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἔδρασε δεινά ἡ δὲ ἔπαθε·	He performed terrible acts, she suffered them;
δίκαιον οὖν τὴν μὲν οἰκτῖραι	so it is just to sympathize with her
τὸν δὲ μισῆσαι.	but to hate him.

One can easily see that this text employs extremely rich isocola; usually they are stressed by distinctive rhythmic and sound repetitions.

Still, outside the so-called early sophistic this approach met with little

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27) This passage was discussed in Т.А. Миллер, "От поэзии к прозе (Риторическая проза Горгия и Исократа)", М. Л. Гаспаров, ed., Античная *поэтика. Риторическая теория и литературн ая практика* (Москва: Наука, 1991), 60-105.

28) English version by D. M. MacDowell.

appreciation. Isocrates, who may have been a disciple of Gorgias, rejected this style as unnatural in his treatise *In sophistas,* composed about 391 BC. It was a judgement that became normative for ages to come. Even Isocrates was later blamed for the same sort of unnaturalness. For instance, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De compositione verborum*, 19) wrote that Isocrates' followers admit too much of boring sameness, also on the level of phonetics: φυλακὴ συμπλοκῆς φωνηέντων ἡ αὐτή *the same combinations of sounds*.

A similar idea was expressed in the first century CE by Demetrius (*De elocutione*, 26-27)[29)] who discusses *homoeoteleuta* (ὁμοιοτέλευτα *similar endings*), i.e., cola that end with similar or the same sounds. He insisted that the use of this technique was rather risky since it made the speech less natural. One may wonder what criteria he proposed for naturalness and how much of it could be found in ancient rhetoric in general, but for us it is important to notice his reservation regarding Gorgias' manner of speech.

Anyhow, be the rhetoricians in favour of sound repetition or not, they regarded it as merely an accessory to certain other features such as isocolon. In consequence, they were considered as belonging to the domain of rhetorical *prose*. It is no wonder, then, that Dionysius does not give attention to alliteration in Euripides: for him they were relevant for prose, while poetry was composed by completely different rules.

Still, it would not be correct to say that Dionysius paid no attention to the sounds in poetry at all. He was was just looking for something else, namely, the "quality" of different sounds and their compatibility. For instance, he quoted two lines from *Ilias* by Homer (xi, 36-37):

> τῇ δ᾽ ἐπὶ μὲν Γοργὼ βλοσυρῶπις ἐστεφάνωτο
> δεινὸν δερκομένη περὶ δὲ Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε.

> "…and there like a crown the Gorgon's grim mask – the burning eyes,
>   the stark, transfixing horror ─ and round her strode the shapes of Rout
>   and Fear."[30)]

One can easily notice sound repetition in these lines, especially in the second

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29) See also М. Л. Гаспаров, "Античная риторика как система", 51.
30) English version by R. Fagles.

one: δε - δειν - δε - μεν - δε - δειμ. Besides that, the ends of the lines are full of alliteration: ἐστεφάνωτο - Δεῖμός τε Φόβος τε. Nevertheless, Dionysius (*De compositione verborum*, 16) did not say a word about this repetition[31].

The artistry of the poet, according to Dionysius, was realised in the very choice of the sounds, in a certain phonetic toning of the text. In a word, relative links between sounds was of no importance for him: it was only absolute value ascribed to certain phonetic units that counted. Probably, this was conditioned to an extent by the general antagonism to phonetic repetitions shown by Dionysius, as well as by the whole Greek rhetorical theory as we know it.

It was also demonstrated by S. Averintsev[32] that even such a serious author as Plato paid certain attention to the sounding of his prose and occasionally used plays on words (paronomasia). This is not surprising if we remember that his favourite genre, dialogue, was considered as primarily oral in its origin. Here is a brilliant sample from his *Republic* (495e):

> Δοκεῖς οὖν τι, ἦν δ᾽ ἐγώ, διαφέρειν αὐτοὺς ἰδεῖν ἀργύριον κτησαμένου χαλκέως, φαλακροῦ τε καὶ σμικροῦ, νεωστὶ μὲν ἐκ δεσμῶν λελυμένου, ἐν βαλανείῳ δὲ λελουμένου, νεουργὸν ἱμάτιον ἔχοντος, ὡς νυμφίου παρεσκευασμένου, διὰ πενίαν καὶ ἐρημίαν τοῦ δεσπότου τὴν θυγατέρα μέλλοντος γαμεῖν;

> "Is not the picture which they present", I said, "precisely that of a little bald-headed tinker who has made money and just been freed from bonds and had a bath and is wearing a new garment and has got himself up like a bridegroom and is about to marry his master's daughter?"[33]

It is evident that word pairs like, πενίαν - ἐρημίαν and in particular λελυμένου - λελουμένου (with only one vowel slightly different!) helps in producing a strong rhetoric effect. This ironic passage, however, is by its nature close to a folkloric genre, perhaps influenced by some actual prick songs or street jokes known to the author.

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31) Instead, he was drawing reader's attention to the fact that Homerus had chosen for this frightening description special sounds: "as for the vowels – not the strongest ones but the most discordant ones; as for the consonants – the hardest to pronounce" (τῶν τε φωνηέντων οὐ τὰ κρ άτιστα θήσει ἀλλὰ τὰ δυσηχέστατα καὶ τῶν ψοφοειδῶν ἢ ἀφώνων τὰ δυσεκφορώτατα λήψεται).

32) С. С. Аверинцев, "Неоплатонизм перед лицом Платоновой критики мифопоэтического мы шления", Ф.Х. Кессиди, ed., Платон и его эпоха (Москва: Наука, 1979), 83-97.

33) English version by P. Shorey.

We can conclude that in practice alliteration was more or less regularly used in prose and occasionally in poetry although the theory prescribed to be extremely cautious in using them. From the extant texts we can judge that Greek scholars paid little attention to sound repetitions taking them as a very marginal and secondary feature.

As for rhythmic patterns, the picture is similar. Modern scholars use the word *metre* practically in the same sense as their ancient predecessors who usually applied it to regular patterns composed by certain numbers of long and short syllables in a certain order. At the same time the term *rhythm* now is used rather broadly. In this article it defines regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables. This, however, is rather far from ancient usage which is traced in detail in a work by A. Primmer[34] so here we can confine ourselves to giving just a couple of examples.

Aristotle (*Rhetorica*, 3.8) used to call rhythm "the measure for speech which has metres as its units" (ὁ δὲ τοῦ σχήματος τῆς λέξεως ἀριθμὸς ῥυθμός ἐστιν οὗ καὶ τὰ μέτρα τμήματα). Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*De compositione verborum*, 11) listed rhythm among the four factors that make the speech pleasant, together with melody (μέλος), diversity (μεταβολή) and relevance (πρεπόν). Melody in his system had to do with what we call prosody while rhythm, as was the case with Aristotle, apparently was used in application to quantitative versification.

So for them rhythm and metre were not at all to be opposed. This is not surprising as they hardly ever considered different systems of versification. This opposition, however, emerged in late antiquity when due to linguistic changes in Greek and Latin pronunciation ancient quantitative metres became inaudible and new sorts of versification was introduced both in the East and the West. Latin rhetoricians of the epoch[35] eventually started to call these new verses *rhythmic*, as opposed to classical *metric* verses which by the way they never ceased to compose till nowadays. To our astonishment, their Byzantine colleagues never bothered to notice the existence of these two rival systems of versification, both of which flourished in their culture.

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34) A. Primmer, *Cicero Numerosus. Studien zum Antiken Prosarhythmus* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1968), 17-41.

35) According to Гаспаров, *Очерк истории европейского стиха,* 89, the first to introduce this distinction was Marius Victorinus about 353 C. E.

5. The Byzantine continuation

Initially, Greeks rhetoricians and grammarians paid very little attention to stressed or unstressed syllables; they even did not have one term for such a phenomenon as stress which they called τόνος or προσῳδία. This negligence was determined by the role (or, better, the absence of any role) plaid by stresses in classical Greek verse. There was simply no practical reason to count them; as M. Gasparov noticed, "tones apparently plaid no role at all in the rhythmic structures of the ancient Greek verse"[36].

Things changed in late antiquity (presumably, not before the third century),[37] when the length of vowels became indistinguishable in spoken Greek and Latin. From this time, no one needed special training to be able to appreciate metric poetry. Since quantity was now inaudible, poets started to introduce order in stresses[38].

In artistic prose the situation was quite different. First, it should be specified that characteristic formal features of ancient prose are seen best in rhetorical prose. Its primary aim was formal perfection and it never ceased to be the subject of careful theoretical study.[39]

Ancient rhetoricians did say a few things about stressed and unstressed syllables: in fact, they advised to avoid repeating too many words that have the same number of syllables and length, or tonic structure[40].

In practice, however, stresses may have been more organised, basically due to repetitions of similar grammatical forms. Let us consider the lines quoted above from *Helena* by Gorgias:

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36) Ibid., 83-86.

37) The exact dating of these changes is a subject of constant debate. O. Shirokov, for instance, gives the diapason of 600 years: "the tonic accents started to be replaced by expiratory stresses from the second century BC; by the third-fourth centuries AD the vowels' length was levelled"; О. С. Широков, *История греческого языка* (Москва: Московский государственны й университет, 1983), 107.

38) See hexameters by Nonnus of Pannopolis as an example in Гаспаров, Очерк *истории европей ского стиха*, 90-94.

39) See such classical works as E. Norden, *Die antike Kunstprosa vom VI Jahrhundert vor Chr. bis in die Zeit der Renaissance* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1898); A. Primmer, *Cicero Numerosus. Studien zum Antiken Prosarhythmus* (Wien: Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1968).

40) Aristotle, *Rhetorica*, 3.8; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *De compositione verborum*, 19; Hermogenes of Tarsus, *Of Ideas*, 1.12.

λόγῳ μὲν αἰτίας
νόμῳ δὲ ἀτιμίας
ἔργῳ δὲ ζημίας...

Quite probably, Gorgias did care about the regular prosodic structure, the same way he cared about phonetic repetitions. He may have been done this intuitively. Both he and his audience may have taken it as a side-effect of the feature called *isocolon*.

When a vowel's length became indistinguishable in spoken Greek, stresses apparently became more important as a device to organise a text phonetically. In the example quoted above no one would have been able to discern regular patterns of long and short vowels. Stressed and unstressed syllables were, however, still audible. This factor initiated a change in the technique of composing rhetorical prose. By 1886 E. Bouvy[41] had formulated the "syntonic principle" (*principe syntonique*), according to which early Byzantine rhetors tended to finish each colon with a certain 'dactylic' sequence (*une dipodie dactylique*): two stressed syllables followed by two unstressed respectively. A few years later, in 1891, W. Meyer[42] formulated what became known as *Meyersgesetz*, Meyer's rule. In the fourth century, Greek rhetoric prose started to follow a certain rule pattern: whereby two unstressed syllables should preceed the last stressed syllable in a syntagm (i.e., before a pause). The quantity of these syllables (now merely theoretic) played no role at all.

Strangely enough, Greek speakers did not notice this change; it took a nineteenth century European scholar to formulate it. Greek writers did still appreciate and praise "the beauty in words and rhythm" (κάλλος ἐν λέξεσι καὶ ῥυθμοῦ), to take a nice expression by Synesius of Cyrene,[43] but they never managed to determine the true nature of this rhythm, neither in later antiquity nor in the Byzantine epoch. As S. Averintsev said, "for Byzantine theoreticians in general all the new developments concerning the accentual structure of Greek

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41) E. Bouvy, *Poètes et mélodes*, 183, 353-354.

42) K. Litzica, *Das Meyersche Satzschlußgesetz in Der Byzantinischen Prosa, Mit einem Anhang über Prokop von Käsarea* (München: Buchholz, 1898); W. Meyer, *Akzentuierte Satzschluß in der Griechischen Prosa vom IV bis XVI Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Deuerlich, 1891). See a more recent discussion in W. Hörandner, *Der Prosarhythmus in der rhetorischen Literatur der Byzantiner* (Wien: Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1981), 26-37.

43) His witness, as well as the witnesses by other authors, is discussed in detail Ibid., 20-26.

language were banned; the preconceived rhetoric theory had no conceptual and terminological apparatus to describe this change. Applied in practice, it remained outside theoretic models.''[44]

We know, however, that Byzantine scholars, however traditional, never refused to coin new terms and conceptions if a necessity was felt, patristic theology being the most prominent case. Indeed, where they saw no cardinal innovations they preferred to operate with the old concepts, sometimes with a slightly changed meaning: for instance, they kept calling themselves Ῥομαῖοι, Romans, long after all actual links with the city of Rome were broken. So we can guess that the changes that took place did not introduce anything completely unknown and substantially new. The rhythmic alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables was already present in classical prose as a secondary feature. Due to phonetic changes, this feature became predominant and was not seen as a revolutionary change that would demand careful theoretical study and new terminology.[45]

This process took place both in poetry and prose. In late antiquity, rhythm as alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, previously known as a secondary feature, became a support and substitution for disappearing quantitative metres. By the late fifth century it emerged in poetry as a new system of versification.[46]

As an example, these lines from the famous Akathistos hymn to Virgin Mary can be quoted (the date of the composition and the author both remain unknown):

Χαῖρε δι᾿ ἧς ἡ χαρὰ ἐκλάμψει·	Rejoice, you through whom joy will shine forth,
χαῖρε δι᾿ ἧς ἡ ἀρὰ ἐκλείψει·	Rejoice, you through whom the curse will cease!
χαῖρε τοῦ πεσόντος Ἀδὰμ ἡ ἀνάκλησις·	Rejoice, recall of fallen Adam,
χαῖρε τῶν δακρύων τῆς Εὔας ἡ λύτρωσις·	Rejoice, redemption of the tears of Eve!

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44) С. С. Сергей Сергеевич Аверинцев, "Византийская риторика. Школьная норма литературно го творчества в составе византийской культуры", М.Л. Гаспаров, ed., *Проблемы литератур ной теории в Византии и латинском Средневековье* (Москва: Наука, 1986), 19-90, 40.

45) See E. Bouvy, *Poètes et mélodes*.

46) See a general description in J. G. de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance* (Paris: Beauchesne, 1977), and a more specific discussion in М.Л. Гаспа ров, *Очерк истории европейского стиха* (Москва: Наука, 1989), 77-84.

χαῖρε ὕψος δυσανάβατον　　　　Rejoice, height inaccessible
ἀνθρωπίνοις λογισμοῖς·　　　　　　to human thoughts,
χαῖρε βάθος δυσθεώρητον　　　　　Rejoice, depth undiscernible
καὶ ἀγγέλων ὀφθαλμοῖς…　　　　　for angels' eyes!

The phonetic changes that eventually made the old metric poetry inaudible presumably took place after the completion of the LXX so that they apparently had no effect on it. One is therefore justified in asking: if there is any phonetic regularity, does it have to do with translation technique as such or rather with the reception of phonetic regularity by subsequent generations?

Indeed, to the best of our knowledge, Greeks in the third century BCE spoke more or less classical Greek.[47] Nevertheless, it is possible that changes, such as the leveling of vowel length, may have started to take place in the pronunciation of translators and the first readers of the LXX – the majority of whom were not Greeks – long before they were attested in normative Greek. There is no direct proof for such a claim, but the orthography of the Oxyrinchus papyri can be cited as support:[48] long vowels were mixed with short ones and unstressed vowels occasionally became reduced.

If this hypothesis is true, it becomes clear that Greek-speaking Jews would not have heard classical metres at all. They would learn them at school, but one would not expect them to imitate a complicated versification system foreign to their own indigenous natural language. This is why there is no point in trying to find any metres in the LXX.

All this made J. Irigoin[49] ask:

Il est donc probable que, dans les régions du monde hellénistique où le grec, devenant une *Koinè*, s'est trouvé concurrencer d'autres langues et a été pratiqué par des peuples dont la langue maternelle était autre et présentait en particulier un système vocalique et accentuel different, l'évolution des phonèmes et des types d'accent du grec a été plus rapide. Le grec employé en Égypte par des Juif a donc pu presenter plus tôt qu'ailleurs des virtualités rhythmiques mises en œvre par les traducteurs de la Septante. Il est alors permis de se demander si le substrat rhythmique de la version hébreu n'a pas servi de guide aux

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47) See, e.g. an overview in G. Horrocks, *Greek, A History of the Language and Its Speakers* (London: Longmans, 1997).
48) Ibid., 102ff.
49) J. Irigoin, "La composition rythmique des cantiques de Luc", 49.

auteurs de la version, les conduisant parfois à sacrifier au respect du rhythme
tel détail de la traduction.

Irigoin himself did not try to answer this question. Nor do I know of any other
attempt to do so. Our analysis, however, demonstrates that a cautious "yes" can
be given in response to his hypothesis.

6. Conclusion

The examples that we have analysed show that a certain quest for more formal
regularity could have influenced LXX translator's choices when they were
choosing non-standard equivalents. In other words, translational anomalies can
be explained, alongside with other reasons, by translator's intention to produce
more alliterations and assonances and more rhythmic regularities. This factor
has been usually neglected so far because the Septuagint itself was not regarded
as a literary text that can make an aesthetic impact on the reader. On the other
hand, classical Greek theories of literary composition pay no attention to these
features although they occasionally occur in practice.

Things changed in late antiquity, when the length of vowels became
indistinguishable in spoken Greek and Latin. Eventually a new system of
versification appeared, based on stressed syllables. It can be argued that the
LXX played a role in this transition, preparing some ground for these changes to
take place. If D. Barthélémy is right in assuming that the LXX provided
Alexandrinian Jews with liturgical texts,[50] then these passages would have been
frequently recited and chanted in synagogues, creating a new tradition,
continued later by Christians.

We cannot speak, however, about "Septuagint poetry" per se, for it never
existed. No clear border can be drawn between versified and prosaic LXX texts.
One may argue that the degree of liberty and artistry in Genesis 49 and Exodus
15 is considerably higher than in narrative texts, but this is a matter of degree.

If we approach our material from a reception perspective, we will see that

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50) D. Barthélemy, "Pourquoi la Torah a-t-elle été traduite en Grec?", Black M. and Smalley W.
A., eds., *On Language, Culture and Religion: In Honour of Eugene Nida* (The Hague: Mouton,
1974), 23-41.

these passages were regarded as songs, and more than that – as sacred songs to be recited and imitated. This is the basic reason why one can speak about their influence on a new kind of Greek poetry. We can be sure that the legendary elders, whoever they were in reality, never intended to create a text that would be rejected by the Jewish community of faith as a "golden calf" that replaced the original Torah.

But this was what actually happened. They certainly would not have imagined that a good half of Christendom would come to accept their version as its main text of the Scriptures. But this also happened. So it is justifiable to treat the LXX as a departure point of a long tradition even though the original translators would never have intended or anticipated such an eventuality. In summary, this article suggests that certain features that appeared in the LXX (first of all, sound repetitions and rhythmic patterns) would be imitated on a much larger scale by Christian Greek writers and would eventually develop into a completely new system of versification known today as Byzantine rhythmic poetry.

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<Abstract>

Euphony in the Septuagint:
Genesis 49 and Exodus 15 as Study Cases

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This article takes a closer look at some poetic passages in the Septuagint in order to determine if a certain quest for more formal regularity could have influenced translator's choices. This factor has been usually neglected so far because the Septuagint itself was not regarded as a literary text that can make an aesthetic impact on the reader. Anyway, the study demonstrates that at times translational anomalies can be explained, alongside with other reasons, by translator's intention to produce more alliterations and assonances and more rhythmic regularities than a standard equivalent would. Still, this research demands a rather balanced methodology so that meaningful solutions can be distinguished from mere coincidences. So the methodology is discussed here in detail. Another aspect which is considered in this study is the role played by the Septuagint in the history of Greek literature. One may ask if some Septuagint texts influenced to a certain degree the future rise of the Byzantine rhythmic poetry, and the present study gives a cautious approval to this hypothesis.