As a result of his studies in the Septuagint the author has come to the conclusion that the Vorlage of the Greek translators in many cases was closer to the MT than the emendations of various commentators and the notes in the Biblia Hebraica would lead us to think. The Septuagint contains many literalisms. Some of these may imply that the Greek interpreters had a high regard for the exact letter, and some of the crudities of rendering may have such an origin. Yet, surprisingly, we often meet in the same verse or in adjacent verses both literalism and extreme freedom of translation side by side. At times the reader of the Septuagint is reminded of the swing of a pendulum from one end of the arc to the other, as if the interpreter was working under a tension between literalism and freedom of rendering. In this way a certain balance of approach was maintained by the translator. We have good reason to believe that what the interpreters actually had in mind was to reproduce the sense of the original, even though they often were not facile translators. There are difficulties of rendering from one language to another, and beyond any doubt the Alexandrians as pioneers in Biblical translation had to face numerous problems.

For a number of years the writer conducted seminars on the Septuagint and Septuagint lexicography, and began to compile a dictionary of Septuagint Greek, with the assistance of his graduate students. Most of the work completed is now deposited on microfilm in the Speer Library of the Princeton Theological Seminary.

We shall consider here various phenomena of the vocabulary of the Septuagint as samples of what confronts the lexicographer.* For reasons of space, however, the range of citations will have to be limited.

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Obviously there is no need of discussing words whose meaning follows the normal classical usage, or of considering transliterations and proper names. A number of words, however, may be chosen and placed in categories which reflect the character of the Septuagint vocabulary. Manifestly such a classification is not always rigid, and there are cases where a word could easily be transferred from one section to another. In discussing various words in their Septuagint sense, we shall have to bear in mind that the “Seventy” were pioneers in Biblical translation. The Greek tongue had to be adapted to express a realm of thought foreign to the Hellenic culture and the Greek religion, and consequently the translators had to mould the language to render the concepts of the OT. In many instances this involved introducing vestiges of Hebrew syntax into Greek, in employing Greek words in a Hebraic sense, and giving to certain vocables new connotations which they did not have before. Generally, however, such a transformation or extension of the Greek vocabulary was not unreasonable and in many instances was developed under semantic principles.

II

In this survey of examples gleaned from the writer’s collection it may be appropriate to commence with examples that have preserved a clear Hebrew usage. We may call them literalisms.

'Ανήρ, used in a distributive sense like מִן לְכָּל — καὶ ἀπηλθὼν (G<sup>B</sup> καὶ ἐπορεύθησαν) ἀνήρ εἰς τὸν τόπον αὐτοῦ; 2 Κι. 3:25: ἢρρισιν ἀνήρ τὸν λίθον; Neh. 4:12: ...οἱ οἰκοδόμοι ἀνήρ...

'Από, in the sense of “toward”. In this case examples will first be chosen where MT has the hê – terminative: Josh. 17:10; 18:13, 14: ἐπέλεξε — ἀπὸ λαβὲς; 18:12, 18: ἔφησεν — ἀπὸ βορρᾶ. In this usage ἀπό may also represent מִן: Gen. 13:11: ὑπέστην πάντα, where ἀπὸ ἀνετολόν apparently has the meaning “eastward”.

'Αποκαλύπτω τὸ ὑπόν (οὐς) — “uncover the ear”, in the sense of “to inform”. This idiom is found in 1 Sam. 9:15; 20:2, 13; 2 Sam. 7:27; 1 Chr. 17:25 (ἀνοίγειν); Ruth 4:4. The meaning is obvious and caused no difficulty to a Greek reader who had no Semitic background.

Δίδομι, to express a wish, like Hebrew מִן is found in various books: Num. 11:29: מִן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כֶּל תַּם — καὶ τίς δοθὲν πάντα τὸν λαόν Κυρίου προφίτας; Deut. 5:29 (26): מִן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל כֶּלּוּם — τίς δοσάτα υἱός εἶναι

τὴν καρδιὰν αὐτῶν ἐν αὐτῶις. Other examples of the same idiom are found in Jud. 9: 29; 2 Sam. 18: 33 (19: 1); Job 19: 23; 29: 2; τίς ἐν μὲ θείῃ; Ps. 13 (14): 7; 52(53): 7; 54(55): 7. In Job 6: 8, where MT reads: ἡμῖν τῷ δύσαντεια εἴρεθα, G renders: εἰ γὰρ δόθη καὶ έξαιτοι μου ἡ αὕτης. 

Ei ("if"). The use of Hebrew אָ֣שֶׁר in a negative oath has been faithfully reproduced by ei: 1 Sam. 17: 55, Abner said: אָ֣שֶׁר יִדְוֹר. אָ֣שֶׁר — If I know = I do not know, or I cannot tell; in the Hex. this is rendered: ει oίδα; 1 Sam. 19: 6: אָ֣שֶׁר יִמְתֶּ֣הו || εἰ ἄποθανεῖται. No further examples of this are necessary. It may be observed, however, that ei may occur in G even though it has no exact equivalent in MT: 1 Ki. 1: 52: αὐτὸς έν οἴποις κατείχετο Αιαδία. Here in G the protasis is introduced by ἐν, and εὶ as a negative introduces the apodosis: εἰ προείχεται.

The preposition ἐν in many instances assumes in quite literal fashion the various meanings of ב: 1 Ki. 8: 24: ὁ πρεσβύτερος ὦμᾶς νόμοις ἐνεμέρα — here the instrumental ב is rendered in both cases by ἐν; Job 40: 29: ἐκκοπεῖται ὡς — G follows this literally: ἐν αὐτῷ. Also locative ב is rendered by ἐν: Gen. 14: 13: ἐν τῷ δρόμῳ τῷ Μαμβρῇ. Again accompaniment denoted by ב is expressed by ἐν: Gen. 9: 4: πλὴν κρέας ἐν αἰματί ψυχῆς. In connexion with an oath ב is used: 1 Sam. 17: 43: κατά ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς αὐτοῦ.

In Hebrew certain verbs are modified by a phrase introduced by the preposition ב, which again is represented by ἐν in G — a case of Hebrew syntax: 1 Ki. 10: 9: οὐκ οἴεσθαι μην ἐν σοί. In this case the verb carries over a special meaning from the Hebrew. ἐκλέγομαι, as a rendering of כַּלְלְכַל, should also be considered in this connexion: 1 Sam. 16: 8: ἐν τούτῳ οὐ οἶρεν εἶναι τὸν μήτε τοῦ καθός οὐκ εἰς τὸν μήτε τὸν. This is idiomatically translated: οὐδὲ τούτων ἐξελέξατο Κύριος. But in v.9, where the same phrase occurs, we have: ἐν τούτῳ. In 1 Ki. 8: 16 both idioms are found side by side: οὐκ ἐξελέξαμην ἐν πόλει... καὶ ἐξελεξάμην ἐν Ἰσραηλίτῃ... καὶ ἐξελεξάμην τῶν θανάτων. Thus we have Hebraic literalism and good Greek in the same verse or in adjacent verses. In 1 Ki. 8: 44, the Hebrew idiom occurs with attraction of the relative to the antecedent: ὁ δὲ τῆς πόλεως ής ἐξελέξασθαι ἐν αὐτῷ — "toward the city which thou didst choose". Here, as often elsewhere, ὁ δὲ stands for οὗ in the sense of "toward". The use of ב with nouns of measure after a numeral has occasionally been transferred to the Greek: 1 Ki. 6: 6 (2); 7: 10 (23); Ez. 40: 5: ἐν πῆχεν.

'Εξάηφα is a literal translation of נָטְשׁ ("to pull up stakes", "set out", "depart"): Gen. 35: 5: יָשֶׁם — καὶ ἔξηθεν Ἰσραήλ. In Ex. 14: 19 the same verb is used in connexion with the angel of the Lord and also the pillar of cloud. There are numerous examples of this usage in Numbers. Cp. also Jer. 4: 7: μεθύσατο τυράννοι καὶ ἔξηθεν.
This use of ἔχον to, however, is not too strange because ἐπάργο (a frequent rendering of יָד) in classical Greek is applied to the departure of ships or an army.

Ἂχθες καὶ τρίτην (ημέραν) is a literal rendering of הָלָשׁ (in 1 Sam. 21: 5) (6) the expression means “about these three days”, or “for some time”. In the sense of “in time past”, “heretofore”, “beforetime”, the expression is found in 1 Sam. 4: 7; 10: 11; 14: 21; 1 Chr. 11: 2. The same meaning is expressed in Ruth 2: 11 by ἔχθες καὶ τρίτης. In Gen. 31: 1, 5: ὅς ἔχιζες καὶ τρίτην ἠμέραν signifies “as formerly”; the expression is found also in 1 Mac. 9: 44, where no Hebrew original is extant. In 1 Sam. 19: 7 ὀσεί precedes this expression. In 2 Ki. 13: 5 καθός precedes ἔχθες καὶ τρίτης; in Susanna 1: 15 the genitive is also used after καθός; ἔχθες καὶ τρίτης ἠμέρας. With καθά (Josh. 4: 18) and καθάπερ (Ex. 5: 7; 14), where the accusative is used, the expression means “as aforetime”, “as heretofore”.

Προστίθημι as a translation of ἀρχή (‘add’) may be employed to denote the idea of repetition and be rendered “again”, as in Gen. 4: 2: τῆς αὐτῆς ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας — καὶ προστίθηκεν τεκενίν τόν ἀδέλφον αὐτοῦ; 8: 21: ἐν τῷ Κτίσματι τῆς ζωῆς — ὥσπερ προσθήσεως ἐτοί τοῦ καταράσασθαι. The same idiom is found, e.g., in Gen. 18: 29; Jud. 3: 12; 1 Sam. 3: 21. In Gen. 38: 5: καὶ οὐκ ἔδραμεν, G employs the participle: καὶ προσθήκεσα ἐτέκες, τινόν. This verb may also be employed to render בָּשָׁמ: 2 Ki. 1: 11: מִשָּׁם — בָּשָׁמ — בָּשָׁמ: καὶ ἀπέστειλεν. It is probable, however, that this idiom would not have caused trouble to a reader who did not know Hebrew.

The other verb in Hebrew to express “again” is בָּשָׁמ — בָּשָׁמ. A few examples will suffice: Deut. 30: 9: מִשָּׁה וּבָשָׁמ — בָּשָׁמ — בָּשָׁמ. Here G has the same construction as MT. When בָּשָׁמ is followed by a finite verb, the same construction is adopted by G: 2 Ki. 13: 25: וְהָרִיר וְבָשָׁמ — וְהָרִיר וְבָשָׁמ: καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν... καὶ ἔλαβεν; 2 Ki. 21: 3: οὕτως ἐκαίνισεν καὶ ἐπέστρεψεν καὶ ἐκάθισεν. Cp. 1 Sam. 3: 6, where MT has the verb בָּשָׁמ and G has προσθέσατο.

Τρισσός as a translation of יָד (‘adjutant’, ‘captain’) is a literalism and is to be understood in the Hebrew sense. In 1 Ki. 10: 25 (9: 22): καὶ τρισσός αὐτοῦ, as a rendering of יָד, is a Hexaplaric addition. In Ez. 23: 15: מִשָּׁם is rendered: διότι τρισσή τῶν πάντων. Cp. further v. 23: מִשָּׁם — מִשָּׁם. In this way G gave a technical meaning to a literalistic rendering. But in 2 Chr. 8: 9 the word is translated: διανοοί; this shows that the translators knew what the Hebrew word signified.

Χείρ to denote means or instrument as translation of יָד, generally seems to be a facile rendering, and it may be not too far afield in connexion with מִשָּׁם rendered לַחַמ (commission received), as in Mal. 1: 1: ἐν χειρὶ ἀγγέλου
However, in 1 Ki. 8: 53: ἡμεῖς ἐγκατέστησαν αὐτῷ. G presents a Hebrew literalism: ἐν χειρὶ δοῦλου σου Μωυσῆ. The word ἔδρα is also used in the sense of “monument” and χειρ is adopted to render this meaning: 1 Sam. 15: 12: καὶ ἄνεστε τακτάν αὐτῷ χειρά. The same usage occurs in 2 Sam. 18: 18, where a μνήμη (στήλη) is called Absalom’s monument (χειρ Ἀβέσσαλώμ).

III

There are numerous cases, where a Greek word received a Hebrew meaning. These cannot always be called literalisms. It should probably be said that these cases resulted from an extension of meaning or semantic development, or an interpretation through a confusing or throwing together of different Hebrew roots that have the same radicals. Accordingly, such examples may be placed in a separate category:

Ἀγγιστεύω — “be next or near of kin”, “be heir-at-law”. In Num. 36: 8, as a translation of שֵׁם, it acquired the meaning “inherit”, “possess” of the Hebrew.

It also translates ἀφίσκεται — “redeem”, “act as kinsman”. But there is a second root ἀφίσκεται — “defile”, which is used in Ezra 2: 62: “And they were excluded as unclean (ἄφισκεται) from the priesthood”. Here καὶ ἐγκατέστησαν ἀπὸ τῆς ἡρατείας of G certainly has to mean the same thing. It may be that the preposition ἀπὸ helped to clarify the sense. The expression again occurs in Neh. 7: 64. The interpretation of the verb was carried over to the noun ἀγγιστεύω (close kinship, right of inheritance). In Neh. 13: 29: ἀφίσκεται — the noun acquired the sense of “defilement”, which led to the negative meaning “exclusion from the right of inheritance”.

Ἀναβολή (“mound of earth”, “bank”) in 1 Chr. 19: 4 is employed as a euphemism for ἄποθέσαν (“posterior”, “buttock”): ἐκ τῆς ἀναβολῆς.

Ἀνάστημα, ἀνάστημα (“height”, “protuberance”, “prominence”, “erection”, “building”, “eruption”) is used to translate פניק (“substance”, “existence”, “living thing”) in Gen. 7: 23: πᾶν τὸ ἀνάστημα. In verse 4 of the same chapter this Hebrew word is rendered: ἓξανάστησας (literally “rising”); here G א reads: ἅναστημα. In the context, both ἅναστημα and ἓξανάστησας have taken over the Hebrew sense “living being”, “living thing”.

Ἀνατολή — “rising”. The verb ἀνατέλλω also carries the sense “to sprout” in connexion with plants, whence developed the meaning “shoot” for the noun as a rendering of פְּנֵי. The noun and the verb are brought together in Zech. 6: 12: ἀνατολή (ὂρα) ὀνόμα αὐτῷ καὶ ὑποκάτωθεν αὐτῷ ἀνατέλει (ἢσυχασμένω). In Zech. 3: 8: ἡμέρα ἡ ἄνατολή is rendered: ἔγω ἔγγο τὸν δοῦλον μου ἀνατολῆν.
'Αποκλείω ("shut off", "exclude from", "shut up", "close") corresponds in meaning to סמע, which in the qal means "close", "shut"; in the pi'el and hif'il, however, it signifies "deliver up". The pi'el is found in 1 Sam. 17: 46; 24: 19; 26: 8; 2 Sam. 18: 28. In all these cases ἀποκλείει, like the Hebrew, means "deliver up". In 1 Sam. 23: 11, 12 the hif'il is used three times; in G, which lacks verse 12, the verb ἀποκλείει in the passive is used twice in the sense of "deliver". The Greek verb clearly received an extension of meaning from the Hebrew.

In this connexion should be considered συγκλείει ("shut", "hem in", "close"), as a translation of סמע in the hif'il: Josh. 20: 5 G; Am. 1: 6, 9; Ob. 1: 14; Ps. 30(31): 9; 77(78): 50, 62. In all these cases this verb has appropriated the sense of the Hebrew "to deliver", "give over".

'Αποστολὴ "sending off (or away)", "dispatching", "payment", or "tribute". In 1 Ki. 4: 32 (9: 16) we read that the Pharaoh gave to his daughter Gezer as Σύνθεσις. In translating literally G gave the word the sense of "downy", which is a logical semantic development.

"Αρουρα ("tilled or arable land", "earth", "ground", "land") is in three passages a rendering of לָשֶׁן (tamarisk): Gen. 21: 33; ἐφότησαν Ἄβραμ άρουραν; 1 Sam. 22: 6: ἐκάθητο... ὑπὸ τῆν άρουραν; ib., 31: 13: καὶ θάπτουσιν ὑπὸ τῆν άρουραν τῆν Ιαβίς. This use of άρουρα is not recorded in our lexica; Josephus, Antiq. I, 6, 12, 4; 6, 14, 8 took the latter two occurrences as a place name, but in the context it is clear that the translator had in mind a certain kind of tree.

Εἰρήνη translates שָלָל, which is quite extensive in its meanings: "completeness", "soundness", "welfare", "health", "prosperity", "peace". In G ἐιρήνη has taken over all these meanings of שָלָל, which go beyond those referring to the absence of strife or war. In a number of instances שָלָל has a very comprehensive sense and cannot be limited to one shade of meaning. In the Aaronic benediction (Num. 6: 26) ἐιρήνη includes all the blessings of God, his protection and welfare, as well as the peace of God that passeth all understanding (Phil. 4: 7). The sense of completeness in שָלָל is taken over by ἐιρήνη in reference to death, and pertains to longevity and the satisfaction of having lived a full life; this includes an inner satisfaction or peace, an undisturbed mind: e.g., in reference to Abraham (Gen. 15: 15) and Josiah (2 Ki. 22: 20) and in the negative to Joab (1 Ki. 2: 6). Ἐιρήνη is also applied to freedom from worry in the affairs of this life; it refers to a state of assurance that things are all right: 1 Sam. 1: 17 (Eli to Hannah): πορεύου εἰς ἐιρήνην; 2 Sam. 15: 9 (David to Absalom): βεβοσίζε εἰς ἐιρήνην (cp. further 2 Ki. 4: 23).

The word ἐιρήνη is also closely allied to salvation; in this connexion should be noted Ez. 34: 25: "בְּרֵית שֶלֶם — διαθήκη ἐιρήνης", which brings safety and
security. In fact εἰρήνη may be parallel to salvation, as in Is. 52:7, where κοίνη εἰρήνης, ἀγαθά, and σωτηρίαν are parallel. In Ps. 37 (38): 4 θεος (“healing”, “remedy”) and εἰρήνη are parallel; here εἰρήνη clearly means “health”.

From this usage of εἰρήνη we note that asking about a person’s εἰρήνη (εἰρήνη) means to inquire about his health or welfare (Jud. 18:15 G; 2 Sam. 11:7; 18:29, 32 and 2 Ki. 4:2). “To greet” or “to salute”, as in Hebrew is expressed by ἔρωταμο plus the direct personal object plus (το) εἰς εἰρήνην, e.g., 1 Sam. 10:4. Εἰρήνη is widely used in connexion with greeting or saluting. From this we come to the expression ἐνεργεύομαι (εἰς εἰρήνην), which may mean “to visit”. In 2 Ki. 10:13 Jeph asked the kinsmen of Azariah: “Who are ye?” Their reply was: και κατέβης εἰς εἰρήνην των υἱῶν τοῦ βασιλέως (“And we came to salute — or visit — the royal princes”). In this way the translators appropriated all the meanings of εἰρήνη for εἰρήνη.

Ἐντρέσθω — middle and passive, “feel misgiving or shame”, “be ashamed”.

בב in the nifal means “to be humbled”, “subdued”. As a translation of the nifal התנכתה in Jud. 3:30, και ἐνεργεύμεν Μωβ means “And was subdued Moab”. The same is true in the reading of G in Jud. 8:28; 11:33. The sense of “humble oneself” occurs in 2 Ki. 22:19: καὶ ἐνεργεύμεν ἰσχύς τοῦ κυρίου; 2 Chr. 12:7: ὡς ἐνεργεύετον ἐν ἡμῖν. In the preceding verse, however, אינ in ἐνεργεύσατο is rendered: καὶ ἐνεργεύεσαν.

Ἡξοδότον (literally “outgoing”), whence it came to mean “finale of a tragedy”, “tragic conclusion” (also “gateway” in the papyri). In G, however, the word was connected with the Exodus, and so the solemn assembly (ἀνάφερε) on the seventh day of the Passover (Deut. 16:8) as well as that of the eighth day of Tabernacles was called ἡξοδότον (Lev. 23:36; Num. 29:35; Neh. 8:18). Also at the dedication of the Temple by Solomon (2 Chr. 7:9) the solemn assembly (ἀνάφερε) on the eighth day is called ἡξοδότον. In these cases ἡξοδότον means “solemn assembly”.

Ἐπιτίθημι — “put upon”, “impose”; middle, “make an attempt upon”, “attack”. κρατά in the qal means “bind”, “conspire”; in the hitpa`el “conspire together”. The noun κρατά has the sense of “conspiracy”, as in 2 Chr. 23:13, where Athaliah’s cry κρατά (“treason, treason”) is rendered: ἐπιτιθέμενοι ἐπιτίθησα. The qal of κρατά is employed to denote the conspiracies against Kings Zechariah and Amon (2 Chr. 24:21; 33:24, 25), where G translates with the middle of ἐπιτίθημι. In 2 Chr. 25:27, in the case of Amaziah: κρατά υἱὸς Δαυίδ κρατά. G also has a cognate accusative: ἐπιθέσαν αὐτῷ ἐπιθέσαν. In 2 Chr. 24:25, 26, where the servants conspired against Joash, the hitpa`el is used; in this case the Greek could do no better than use the middle of ἐπιτιθήμι.

A special meaning of ἐπιθέσα is found in Ez. 23:11: δι᾽ ἑαυτός ἐπιθέσαν αὐτής. In this case ἐπιθέσα, rendering ἐπηθή, in the context
acquired the sense of “erotic attention”, “sensual desire”, “lust”. In this connexion may be considered, ἐπιτίθημι which in the middle may mean “apply oneself to”. In a pejorative sense, however, as a translation of יָצֶלֶל it signifies “pay erotic attention to”, “dote upon” (Ez. 23: 5-20).

Ἐτομᾶζο — “prepare”. The root מָזוּנ means in the nif'al “to be set up”, “established”, “fixed”, and in the hif'il “to establish”, “set up”, “make ready”, “prepare”. In other words, there is an overlapping of two senses. In 1 Ki. 2: 12: מֵלֶכֶת מַלְכוּת מִדָּא is rendered by G: καὶ ἡτοιμάσθη ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ σφόδρα. In 1 Ki. 2: 24: τετεθηκείν is rendered by ἡτοιμάσθη με. It appears that in these examples ἔτοιμαι has received an extension of meaning, and is to be understood in the Hebrew sense. The adjective ἔτοιμος as a translation of the nif'al participle of מָזוּנ means “established”, as with reference to the throne of David (1 Ki. 2: 45); the throne of God (Ps. 92 (93): 2); the human heart (Ps. 56 (57): 8; 107 (108): 2).

Πιστός may be a rendering of the nif'al participle of מָזוּנ; as such, it takes over the Hebrew meaning: “made firm”, “sure”, “lasting”, “confirmed”, “established”. In connexion with οἶκος (πα — house, family), it may mean “sure” (1 Sam. 2: 35; 25: 28; 1 Ki. 11: 38). A prophet may be “confirmed” or “established”: 1 Sam. 3: 20: ὅτι πιστός Σαμουήλ εἰς προφήτην. An event may be “established to take place”, “determined”: Hos. 5: 9: ἔπαιξα πιστά. The adjective may also be used in a pejorative sense: Deut. 28: 59: νόσους πονεράς καὶ πιστάς—“diseases dire and sure”, i.e. lasting, or of long continuance.

If, however, the verb מָזוּנ in Hebrew is perfect or imperfect, the finite verb will be used in G: 2 Sam. 7: 16: γενομαι βασιλεία αὐτοῦ — πιστωθήσεται ὁ οἶκος αὐτοῦ καὶ ἡ βασιλεία αὐτοῦ.

In this connexion should be noted the verb ἐμπιστεύω. A word play on מזֵן in the hif'il (ἠμαίνω) and the nif'al (ἐμπίστευσατε) is taken over by G in 2 Chr. 20: 20: ἐπιστεύσατε ἐν Κυρίῳ θεῷ ὑμῖν καὶ ἐμπιστευθήσεσθε.