DIVINITY DENIED: NEBUCHADNEZZAR
DIVINE APPOINTEE BUT NO GOD

GREEK JEREMIAH RECONSIDERED

I. INTRODUCTION

According to a recent assessment, Greek Jeremiah “is one of the most literalistic [translations] in the whole Septuagint”\(^2\). If literalism is then understood to be a mode of translation which champions translational consistency (i.e., \(x = y\) consistently—as it is commonly understood to mean, according to James Barr\(^3\)—one would scarcely expect to find in this book much, if any, room for exegesis or exposition. It should, however, be first-rate for retroversion to its reputed source text and thus prove to be an ideal tool for redaction criticism.

Yet, as Barr argues, though literalism should be called the baseline of Septuagintal translation, it comes in several modes within the corpus. Barr delineates no fewer than six\(^4\). Of particular interest here is his third mode, described as one that features consistency or non-consistency in the rendering, i.e. the degree to which a particular versional term is used for all (or most) cases of a particular term of the original.

Arguably, however, this mode itself might best be divided into, on the one hand, (1) literal translations that are characterized by an \(x = y\) (qualitative) lexical consistency, in distinction from, on the other hand,

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1 Though all English citations of the Septuagint are from NETS (A. Pietersma – B. G. Wright [eds.], A New English Translation of the Septuagint (Oxford – New York, Oxford University Press, 2007), biblical names in this essay proper will be in traditional English form, for ease of identification.

2 A. Aemmelæus, “Nebuchadnezzar, my Servant”: Redaction History and Textual Development in Jer 27, in F. García Martínez – M. Vervenne (eds.) Interpreting Translation: Studies on the LXX and Ezekiel in Honour of Johan Lust (BETL, 192), Leuven, University Press – Peeters 2005, 1-18, here p. 10. This is said to apply both to its translator (cf. chapters 1-28) and its recensionist (cf. 29-52). The latter, we are told, however, is “not yet of the και/γε type” (p. 14).


4Barr, Typology (n. 3), p. 294.

5 Ibid. For its prototypical form, Barr uses the descriptive “readback”. See ibid., p. 305.
(2) literal translations that are characterized by (quantitative) morphemic equivalence, i.e., isomorphic translations. The difference between these two modes of literalism is not incidental, for (1) might be said to champion one-to-one lexical consistency, while (2) features more simply a one-for-one morphemic equivalence including grammatical markers. Whereas (1) may be said to offer minimal scope to the ancient translator’s exegetical interest but maximum opportunity for the modern scholar to retrovert to the source text, for (2) these two features stand in reverse order.

A few examples may help clarify, the first being the Hebrew-Greek equivalence that forms the subject of this essay, namely, the rendition in Greek Jeremiah of Hebrew דָּבָר, “serve, work”. Had דָּבָר on all (or at least most) of its twenty-six occurrences been rendered by Greek δοῦλεύω (and cognates), we might then have labeled this equivalence a literalistic rendering of the $x = y$ (lexemic) type, though equally an equivalence of the isomorphic (morphemic) variety, seeing that a morpheme in the source text would have been matched by a morpheme in the target text. As it is, of the twenty-six occurrences of דָּבָר in Jeremiah, fourteen have been rendered by δοῦλεύω, whereas twelve have ἔργαζομαι as their counterpart. In this case, therefore, we can speak of literalistic isomorphism but we cannot speak of $x = y$ lexical consistency.

A second example (not discussed further below) is the rendering of Hebrew נָבִי, “prophet”. Of the fifty-six times that נָבִי is represented in the Greek translation, forty-eight times it is rendered by προφήτης, “prophet”, but eight times by ψευδοπροφήτης, “pseudo-prophet”, a rare word, elsewhere occurring only in Zech 13.2 and not attested prior to the Septuagint. Here again we have a case of isomorphism but not one of the $x = y$ (lexemic) type. Ψευδοπροφήτης happens to be of special interest, since it seems so clearly exegetical, the more since the word may well be a neologism in Greek Jeremiah.

As a final and more general example of isomorphic literalism, one may note that Greek Jeremiah, with great consistency, represents structural items of the source text such as Ν (nota accusativi) and pleonastic pronouns and adverbs, though these obviously play no semantic role; they do play a quantitative role and to that extent tell us something about the translator’s aims.

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6 Yet Tov, Jeremiah, (n. 3), pp. 50 and 71, classifies not only ἔργαζομαι but also ψευδοπροφήτης as an instance of Hebraizing revision and foundational to his theory of revision. At the same time, however, he calls the latter an instance of “exegetical consistency” (emphasis added).
Isomorphic literalism happens to be very prominent in Greek Jeremiah. As a result, calling Greek Jeremiah “literalistic” without qualification is misleading and tends to steer one wrong with regards to interpretation.

II. GREEK JEREMIAH AND THE REVISION HYPOTHESIS

Emanuel Tov’s theory on the text of Greek Jeremiah is well known and until recently has gone largely unchallenged, partly, it would seem, due to its complexity. In brief, Tov believes, taking H.St.J. Thackeray’s two-translators theory as a point of departure, that chapters 1–28 represent the Old Greek (OG) translation of the book, whereas chapters 29–52 constitute the second half of an ancient Hebraizing revision. Be it noted, however, that since Tov’s theory is (ostensibly) based on lexical consistency between source text and target text, the mode of literalism presupposed is that of the $x = y$ (lexemic) type, rather than of the more simple isomorphic variety. This is not to say that Tov excludes structural items from his supporting data, but it is to say that when structural items are included they are cited for their translational (qualitative) role, in distinction from their representational (quantitative) role.

A number of scholars have recently raised objections to Tov’s theory, notably Hermann–Josef Stipp7. I myself have written a couple of articles questioning Tov’s results8 and more recently have done a study of the methodology that undergirds Tov’s theory9. My methodological conclusions may be summarized as follows:

(1) Since the defining characteristic of biblical Hebraizing revisions of our acquaintance is an increased rate of one-to-one Hebrew–Greek consistency over the text so revised, an increased rate of said consistency might reasonably be expected in Jer 29–52 if it be a Hebraizing revision.

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9 My paper, entitled, Of Translation and Revision: From Greek Isaiah to Greek Jeremiah, may temporarily be found at http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/.
(2) The textual data provided by Tov in demonstration of a Hebraizing revision\(^{10}\) shows as often a lower rate of consistency as a higher rate, and most often shows neither,

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consistency</th>
<th>Occurrences</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>+1</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) As a result Tov’s hypothesis must be deemed falsified and Thackeray’s two-translator theory rules by default, albeit with questionable authority.

III. INTERPRETATION VERSUS REVISION

In view of my conclusion on Tov’s theory of revision, the weakness of Thackeray’s two-translator theory – as shown by Tov, and Tov’s own evident awareness of the exegetical dimension of Greek Jeremiah, in what follows I shall take an interpretive route against the backdrop of variation in Hebrew-Greek lexical equivalence. My approach will therefore be two-pronged: (1) to show why on its own merits ἐργάζομαι is not a Hebraizing revision of δουλεύω and thus to underscore my conclusions based on methodology, and (2) to suggest that the variation of the two terms makes excellent sense from an interpretive, exegetical perspective. As a result, not even Thackeray’s two-translators theory is required as explanation.

I begin with the presentation of the data in parallel columns. Column 1 (Jer 1–28) represents, in Tov’s terms, the Old Greek version of Greek Jeremiah and column 2 (Jer 29–52) his Hebraizing revision (= Jer-R). Both are thought to have comprised the entire book originally.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Col. 1: Jeremiah 1–28</th>
<th>Col. 2: Jeremiah 29–52</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2,20 καὶ ἐπιάς οὐ δουλεύσω</td>
<td>34,5 (27,6) ἐδωκα τὴν γῆν τῷ Ν. βασιλεί B. δουλεύειν αὐτῷ καὶ τὰ θηρία τοῦ ἄγρου ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτῷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,19 ἄνθ᾽ ὑπὲρ ἐδουλεύσατε θεοῖς ἄλλοτροῖς</td>
<td>34,7(27,9) οὐ μὴ ἐργάσητε τῷ βασιλεί B.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5,19 οὕτως δουλεύσετε ἄλλοτροίς (gods?)</td>
<td>34,9(27,11) καὶ ἐργάσηται αὐτῷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8,2 καὶ ὅσος ἐδούλευσαν (i.e. the host of heaven)</td>
<td>34,9(27,11) καὶ ἐργάσηται αὐτῷ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11,10 ὁ πόλεως θεῶν ἄλλοτρών τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτοῖς</td>
<td>34,10(27,12) καὶ ἐργάσασθε τῷ βασιλεί B. δουλεύειν αὐτοῖς</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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\(^{10}\) Tov, Jeremiah (n. 3), pp. 41–75 (chapter III).
13,10 óπίσω θεών ἀλλοτρίων τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτοῖς
16,11 óπίσω θεών ἀλλοτρίων καὶ ἐδούλευσαν αὐτοῖς
16,13 καὶ δουλεύσετε ἐκεῖ θεοὶ ἐτέροις
22,9 καὶ ἐδούλευσαν αὐτοῖς [θεοὶ ἀλλοτρίοις]
22,13 παρὰ τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ἐργάται δωρεάν καὶ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ οὐ μὴ ἀποδώσει αὐτῷ
25,6 óπίσω θεών ἀλλοτρίων τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτοῖς
25,11 καὶ δουλεύσουσιν ἐν τοῖς ἐθνεῖν ἐβδομήκοντα ἐτή

35(28),14 ἐργαζεθαί τῷ βασιλεῖ Β.
37(30),8 καὶ οὐκ ἐργάσεται αὐτοὶ ἐτὶ ἀλλοτριοῖς
37(30),9 καὶ ἐργάσται τῷ κυρίῳ θεῷ αὐτῶν
41(34),9 πρός τὸ μή δουλεύειν ἄνδρα ἐξ Ιουδα
41(34),14 καὶ ἐργάται σοὶ ἐξ ἔτη
44(35),15 ὁπίσω θεῶν ἐτέρων τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτοῖς
47(40),9 καὶ ἐργάσασθε τῷ βασιλεί β.

All italicized items in the above grid are translations of Hebrew יִשָּׁב, but ἐργάζομαι in col. 2 has been identified by Tov as a revision of δουλέω in col. 1. Hence where col. 2 now reads ἐργάζομαι, the Old Greek (OG) is thought to have read δουλέω. More particularly, Tov classifies ἐργάζομαι under “More Precise Renditions”, thus identifying it as a more precise rendering of יִשָּׁב than is δουλέω.

The revision is deemed significant, according to Tov, because ἐργάζομαι in classical Greek is said to lack the sense “to serve someone”. As possible motivation for the revision he suggests that the reviser may have wished “to represent both meanings of יִשָּׁב (‘to carry out work’, ‘to serve someone’) with one verb”12 or “may have opted for a verb which was connected with יִשָּׁב – ἔργον”13.

There is, of course, no doubt that, at first blush, the lexical contrast set out above attracts some attention — at least when viewed from the vantage point of the source text. It attracts the more attention if one assumes that the Greek translation of Jeremiah is lexically consistent as well, as a result of which one might reasonably expect the same Greek equivalent throughout, unless in individual cases obligatory differentiation demands otherwise.

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11 In footnote 38 (p. 83) Tov amplifies: “This assumption is based on the fact that both in classical Greek and in the LXX ἐργάζομαι is used primarily as ‘to carry out work’. However, neither ἐργάζομαι nor יִשָּׁב occur in Jer-LXX and Jer-MT in this meaning, so that our suggestion is conjectural.”

12 In footnote 39 (p. 84) Tov explains: “By this practice Jer-R [i.e., Tov’s reviser] enlarged the semantic range of ἐργάζομαι.”

Not to be overlooked is that, to a large degree, each verb appears in its own repetitive context and to that extent the two are respectively predictable. The explanation offered by Tov for the lexical variation fails to convince and in fact raises serious problems when analyzed inductively and lexicologically. It is equally difficult to see how Aejmelaeus can write

In the recension part (= chapters 29–52) . . . the reviser obviously changed δουλεύειν to ἑργαζόμαι in order to be more consistent [emphasis added] in his lexical choices.

What can “greater consistency” mean in light of the clear statistics on ἑργαζόμαι versus δουλεύειν not only in chapters 1–28 of Greek Jeremiah but throughout the Septuagint?

One may begin here with the question of motivation for revision, since, when a reviser revises or corrects, he/she presumably does so for a reason and according to a perceived standard of correctness. Significantly, even though Tov’s reviser (hereafter Jer-R, as labeled by Tov) is often said to be motivated by the desire to match the Hebrew source text more closely than did the OG translator, Tov does not cite this explicitly15 as the aim in this case—and that for a good reason, since both Greek words are well attested in the Septuagint as translations of (rx), albeit that  – δουλεύειν outnumbers  – ἑργαζόμαι by a considerable margin. Be it noted as well that a count based on Hatch–Redpath16 shows that ἑργαζόμαι translates  (33x), nearly as often as it does  (39x).17

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14 AEMELEAEUS, Nebuchadnezzar (n. 2), p. 15. In footnote 40 she further rejects W. M. Lemke’s suggestion (Nebuchadrezzar, My Servant, in CBQ 28 [1966], 45–50) that the translator employed ἑργαζόμαι rather than δουλεύειν to refer to “serving the king of Babylon” on the grounds that this phrase occurs only in the second half of the book and is thus ipso facto revisional. Since the Hebrew text of the first half contains no reference of this kind, a corresponding Greek phrase could scarcely have been expected there. Moreover, the equation  – ἑργαζόμαι does appear in 22,13. It is nonetheless interesting to see that, rather than focusing on the Hebrew – Greek equation in isolation, Aejmelaeus recognizes that the use of ἑργαζόμαι may be dictated by context rather than by the source text. Lastly, Aejmelaeus finds the use of the dative with ἑργαζόμαι peculiar and thus an indication of its having been placed in the slot originally occupied by δουλεύειν! Fact is, however, that in an expression such as ἑργαζόμαι παρὰ γὰρ “to till the soil” the object is in the accusative case but when such a task is performed for someone, the recipient is put in the dative. Moreover, the phrase in question does not mean “to serve the king of Babylon” (as it might with δουλεύειν) but “to work for the king of Babylon.” The only question is: why?

15 Yet he implicitly labels it so by placing it under the heading “More Precise Renditions” (Jeremiah [n. 3], p. 46).

16 E. HATCH and H.A. REDPATH, A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the OT (including the Apocryphal Books). Oxford, Clarendon, 1897.

17 Since no verbal form of ἃπτεσθαι occurs in Jeremiah, that variation is not applicable to our book.
The issue here is, therefore, not one of stereotyped equivalence. As a result, it cannot be argued that Jer-R sought to bring a minority Hebrew–Greek equivalence into line with a majority equivalence in Jer 1–28 and/or elsewhere in the Septuagint. The opposite would in fact have to be concluded and, from that perspective, 1–28 would look more like a revision than does 29–52.

Moreover, though Jer-R may arguably have overlooked correcting δουλεύω in 34,5; 41,9 and 42,15 (= 21%), on the basis of Tov’s theory one cannot explain ἐργάζομαι in 22,13 in this manner—unless 1–28 be deemed the work of an inconsistent reviser in turn. Hence ἐργάζομαι in 22,13 and δουλεύω 34,5; 41,9; 42,15 fail to support Tov’s theory and for that reason do not allow themselves to be swept under the carpet.

One might next ask whether the δουλεύω/ἐργάζομαι variation is a case of semantic differentiation. That is to say, since no two words in different languages can be assumed to have an identical range of meaning, one–to–one pairing can only be maintained at a price. Tov’s answer in this case is a partial affirmative, though differentiation is apparently occasioned more by the source text than by the target text, seeing that Tov maintains that whereas Hebrew ḫĕḇrub includes the meaning “to serve someone”, ἐργάζομαι in standard Greek does not mean “to serve someone”. Jer-R is therefore said to have expanded the semantic range of ἐργάζομαι by including the component “to serve someone” in order to make it a more precise rendition of ḫĕḇrub than δουλεύω is!

Along the same source–driven lines, Tov suggests that Jer-R’s preference for ἐργάζομαι over δουλεύω might be due to the pairing of Greek ἔργον with Hebrew נבצון. The latter explanation falls short when it is realized that נבצון does not occur in Jeremiah (1–28 or 29–52) and that, in the Septuagint generally, this pairing is by no means standard, since נבצון is paired with λειτουργία (33χ) almost as often as it is with ἔργον (37χ). Moreover, even δουλεία occurs at least sixteen times, with an assortment of additional matches.

Further to be noted is that δουλεία—unlike either λειτουργία or ἔργον < נבצון—does in fact occur in Jeremiah (41[34],13) in the phrase (ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου) ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας for נבצון תַּנְבָּר. Had there thus been a desire by translator or reviser for matching verbs with cognate nouns, one might have expected δουλεύω instead of ἐργάζομαι in chapters 29–52. It would therefore seem certain that the ἔργον – נבצון link did not trigger revision in Greek Jeremiah.

All in all, then, one cannot help but ask why, since no inspiration for the use of ἐργάζομαι came from the pairing of cognates and since, by purely linguistic standards of both biblical and extra–biblical Greek,
nothing would seem to preclude the continued use of δουλεύω—why would a partial switch have been made to ἔργαζομαι? Might the reason conceivably have been ideological, the more since ἔργαζομαι tends to occur in virtually identical contexts?

As for Tov’s claim about the meaning of ἔργαζομαι—it too fails to convince. What does it mean to say that ἔργαζομαι in classical Greek does not mean “to serve someone”? If that is taken to mean that ἔργαζομαι appears regularly in secular rather than sacral contexts, a TLG search readily confirms this, and the same is true for its use within the Septuagint. If “to serve someone” is taken to mean “to carry out work for someone” (i.e., “to be in someone’s employ”) the claim cannot be sustained, since every (normal) use of ἔργαζομαι in the Septuagint can be paralleled in standard Greek.

That ἔργαζομαι occurs more commonly in S(subject)-V(erb)-O(object) sentences (e.g., “to till the soil”) or in S-V sentences (e.g., “to work”) than in S-V-O(I(ndirect)O(bject) sentences (e.g., “to craft x for y”) or in S-V-adv(erb) sentences of the type “to work for x”, is not the issue. All one needs is a sentence like ὡς διαπότη ἔργαζόμενοι “as men working for a master” (Herodotus 5.78.6) to realize that ἔργαζομαι + the dative case in Greek Jeremiah reflects normal Greek usage and that it can, furthermore, denote a debilitating infringement on a people’s freedom, the kind envisaged in Jeremiah vis-à-vis Nebuchadnezzar, the world ruler.

Lexicographically Tov’s claim that Jer-R added a semantic component to ἔργαζομαι poses serious problems as well. Given the communal nature of language, no translator or reviser could have accomplished what Jer-R is deemed to have accomplished. The most he would have been able to do was to use a Greek word awkwardly or incorrectly in any given context, under perceived constraints from his source text. In such a case, one could then speak of interference or negative transfer from the source language. It is of course possible that a given instance of negative transfer, through repeated use in the language community, might at some point become institutionalized. But in that case one would expect to see confirmation of a semantic shift in compositional literature. I am not aware of any attestation to that effect. What a translator

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18 Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, CD ROM.

19 Literally closer to home one might cite here Aristeas §249, where one of the Jerusalem elders is said to have answered King Ptolemy: “. . . καλὸν ἐν ἑαυτῷ καὶ ζῆν καὶ τελευτάν. ἡ δὲ ξυπνία τοῖς μὲν πίνουσι κατοφρόνησιν ἔργαζεται, τοῖς δὲ πλουσίοις ὡθεῖται, ὡς διὰ κακίαν ἐκπεπτωκόσιν (. . . it is good to live and die in one’s country. Residence abroad brings contempt upon poor men, and upon rich disgrace, as though they were in exile for some wickedness.” Moses Hadas).
or reviser clearly cannot do is to create his own private lingo—unless his aim be to represent the source text at the expense of translating it. Thus the assumption of an instantaneous expansion of ἔργαζομαι is lexicologically highly dubious.

As will be noted later, a semantic shift has in fact been suggested, but for δουλεύω rather than for ἔργαζομαι. This shift, however, was scarcely accomplished by the reputed whim of an individual translator. As we will see later, it is precisely this semantic shift in δουλεύω that occasioned most of the instances of ἔργαζομαι in Greek Jeremiah.

There is no evidence that chapters 1–28 or 29–52 or Jer–R in any way misused ἔργαζομαι. The latter is eminently intelligible in terms of its standard semantic range in every context in which it is made to serve, without even the slightest recourse to Hebrew יָבִט. But a closer look is nevertheless of interest.

IV. ἘΡΓΑΖΟΜΑΙ IN JEREMIAN CONTEXT

As has already been noted, both verbs appear for the same Hebrew lexeme in both so-called halves of the book. So we find ἔργαζομαι in 22,13 and δουλεύω in 34,5; 41,9; 42,15. In Tov’s theory, the three instances of δουλεύω in chapters 29–52 are to be attributed to Jer–R’s carelessness in revising, but 22,13 cannot be so written off. Given the fact that both verbs everywhere make good contextual sense, that neither can be regarded a “superior” rendition, to the other, of Hebrew יָבִט per se, and that no occurrence can be deemed an instance of negative transfer from the source language, one must proceed to examine contextual specifics.

Most obvious is perhaps the use of ἔργαζομαι in 22,13. Since the passage speaks explicitly of a wage (μισκός), which, though earned, would be withheld, δουλεύω would not have been a logical option, seeing that slaves typically did not receive a wage. Had the Greek translator nevertheless insisted on δουλεύω, we would have had an oddity and possibly a case of negative transfer. Here we might thus speak of obligatory differentiation, i.e., a change in translation equivalent due to contextual factors.

Secondly, that יָבִט + ב, in 22,13 as well as in 30,8 and 34,9.10, was misunderstood (or deliberately misconstrued), as Aejmelaeus\textsuperscript{20} believes,

\textsuperscript{20} Aejmelaeus, Nebuchadnezzar (n. 2) p. 15. If Aejmelaeus is correct one would have to conclude, of course, that the misunderstanding is Old Greek (rather than Jer–R), since it occurs in both so-called halves of the book.
may well be relevant from an exegetical perspective but can in no way be made to support the notion that the standard meaning of ἐργαζόμαι has been skewed. Arguably the Hebrew phrase might more accurately have been translated by καταδουλοῦ + accusative, as happens in Exod 1,14, but since JeremiahOG clearly knows καταδουλόω and employs it to translate the hiphil of ἔβαπτο in 15,14, he evidently had his reasons for not selecting it in 22,13 to render ἔβαπτο + β. One can only surmise that he wanted to convey something different, whether or not that conformed to his source text. Rather than speaking explicitly of enslaving (καταδουλόω) or even being a slave (δουλεύω), in 22,13, he opted to do so implicitly with a tantalizing reversal of master and de facto slave, as Aejmelaeus correctly notes. The effect is not only that a blatant injustice is exposed but also that the perpetrator (apparently Judah’s king [see 22,15]) will receive a punishment that fits the crime (cf. Deut 24,15). As the perpetrator sowed, so shall he reap!

A similar avoidance of the terminology of slavery is clearly at issue in 41,14 as compared to 41,9. Both passages speak of the servitude of an Israelite to a fellow Israelite for a six year period preceding the (seventh) year of release or remission (ἀφεσις). How was that familial servitude to be characterized? Exod 21,2 and Deut 15,12 describe it as the servitude of a slave (δουλεύει οἱ ζύγι ET Ἐτη) and both passages add that, at the request of the releasee, the servitude (δουλεύω) might become life-long, sealed with an earmark of ownership (Exod 21,6; Deut 15,16–17). Lev 25,39–40, on the other hand, emphatically rejects the notion of slavery, even though temporary, in such a case, by stating:

Now if your brother . . . is sold to you, he shall not be subject (δουλεύω) to you with the subjection (δουλεία) of a domestic (οἰκετήρι). He shall be to you as a hired laborer (μισθωτός) or a resident alien (παροικος). He shall work (ἐργαζόμαι) with you (παρά σοι) until the year of the release.

In Lev 25,42 the prototypical slavery of Israel in Egypt is then cited as a foil to what should be practiced among fellow Hebrews. By noting in Jer 41,9 that the six years of servitude of a Hebrew to a fellow

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21 Apparently the only instance of this equivalence in the LXX.
22 According to BHS “mtl Mss” read ἠπέκρυψεν in place of MT’s ἠπέκρυψεν. For the same Hebrew–Greek equivalence see Exod 6,5 and Ezek 29,18.
23 Ibid. It is perhaps not without interest that twice Greek Jeremiah speaks of Judah’s king working for (ἐργαζόμαι + dative) the king of Babylon (34,7.10). One might further note that to have used δουλεύω in 22,13 would have rendered δοριήσει meaningless (cf. Gen 26,15).
24 Israel is typically called an οἰκετής (“household slave”) including vis-à-vis God (cf. Exod 5,15.18; Lev 25,42.55; Num 32,5; Deut 5,15; 6,21; 15,15; 16,12; 24,18.20.22 etc.).
Hebrew are not to be characterized as slavery (δουλεύω) but instead as labour
(ἔργαζομαι), according to 41,14, Greek Jeremiah emphatically sides with Greek
Leviticus against Greek Exodus and Deuteronomy25. The issue here is
therefore clearly one of ideology, rather than of obligatory differentiation.
Furthermore, it is not without interest that Greek Jeremiah also took a cue
from Greek Leviticus in his use of ἀβατος “untrodden” in both so-called halves
of the book (see Lev 16,22)26.

The next group of references to be examined all have to do with servitude
(σὐνδρομῇ) to the king of Babylon, all of which happen to occur in the so-called
second half of the Greek book. In point of fact, the majority of
instances of έργαζομαι in chapters 29–52 falls into this category (34,5.7.9bis.10; 35,14;
47,9), with none in this group occurring earlier in the book.

The string begins with 34,5, which states that God has given the earth to
Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, to be subject (δουλεύω) to him, and the wild
animals to work (ἔργαζομαι) for him. Aejmelaeus27 notes difficulties with
reconstructing the Hebrew source text of this verse, but the point to be made
here is that the Greek, as it stands, poses no problems and conveys an
eminently clear and intelligible message—as Aejmelaeus also notes28.
Schenker29 does not think that “to serve him” at the end of JerLXX 34,6a can
be original, but δουλεύν ὁμό in contrast to έργαζομαι ὁμό in v. 6b makes
perfect sense. Tov30, echoed

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25 A similar contrast may be observed in the Jacob–Laban account. Whereas Laban uses
ἔργαζομαι to describe Jacob’s service (Gen 29,27: δόσασεν σοι καὶ τούτην ἀντὶ τῆς ἐργασίας ἦς ἔργω [τοῖς]), Jacob employs δουλεύω (Gen 30,26 γυνώσκεις τὴν δουλέαν [τὸς] ἴχνον δουλεύει [τὸν]
σοι). See further Exod 5,18 versus 14,12.

26 Pietersma, Greek Jeremiah and the Land of Azazel (n. 8).

27 Aejmelaeus, Nebuchadnezzar (n. 2), p. 16. On the question of the Hebrew Vorlage of
dουλεύν ὁμό nothing strikes me as more logical than that it, like MT, had "ἀμετρέτως. Not only is the
presupposed change by the Greek translator well within his modus operandi (cf. 22,13 and 41,18,
discussed above and below respectively), but that he might balk at calling Nebuchadnezzar a
servant of God need not be surprising in view of his strictures on using δουλεύω in reference to
the vaunted god-king. That Nebuchadnezzar’s epithet was absent from the Greek’s Vorlage of
25,9 and 43,10 seem reasonably clear, but that is a different issue.

28 Though Aejmelaeus (Nebuchadnezzar [n. 2], p. 8) correctly notes that the preceding verse (v.
4) contains a declaration of divine sovereignty, her gloss of ὦ ἐὰν δοξῇ ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς μου as “to the
one who is pleasing in my sight” gives the wrong impression. It is not Nebuchadnezzar who is
pleasing in God’s sight (“my servant”, as MT calls him in v. 5), but rather that God has the right to
give to whomever he sees fit, whether that be Nebuchadnezzar or anyone else. Moreover, though
the statement may well have a deuteronomic source in its Hebrew form, as Aejmelaeus notes, on
the Greek side the phrasing is notably different.

29 A. Schenker, Nebukadnezars Metamorphose vom Unterjocher zum Gottesknecht, in RB 89

30 E. Tov, Exegetical Notes on the Hebrew Vorlage of the Septuagint of Jeremiah 27
by Aeijmelaeus\textsuperscript{31}, wonders whether “countries” (see MT’s הָעָצָמַי מַעָצָמַי נֹשֵׂא מַעָצָמַי v. 6) can be spoken of as worshiping God. This, however, seems to be begging the question. Whatever the Hebrew Vorlage, the Greek here speaks very improbably of worship. All it states is that the earth (יָרְדֵּנ) has been placed in subjection (δουλεύω) to the king of Babylon, an idea also encountered in DanLXX 4,18: καὶ πᾶσι αἱ χώραι σοι δουλεύουσιν (“and all the countries will be subject to you”), the “you” being none other than King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. In fact, the concept of Nebuchadnezzar as the divinely appointed world ruler cannot but make the reader think of Daniel 4 in its entirety\textsuperscript{32}. If a repetition of δουλεύω in Jer 27,6(34,5) is awkward, as Tov thinks, the same cannot be said for its Greek equivalents. That for the second instance of δουλεύω Greek Jeremiah should use ἐργάζομαι is to be expected seeing that its grammatical subject is the wild animals of the earth. Had he repeated δουλεύω, he would have ended up with an oxymoron, since earth’s animals could scarcely have escaped a de facto state of slavery if the entire earth was to be a slave to the King Nebuchadnezzar\textsuperscript{33}. Intentionally or otherwise the Greek is made to say that it is the wild animals, rather than the domesticated ones, that work the land for the world ruler; hence subjection is total. Moreover, animals typically work, except for the donkey and dogs in Aesop’s fables, who are said to endure slavery (δουλεύω)\textsuperscript{34}. Only peoples can exercise a choice about to serve or not to serve, though the latter may have dire consequences.

Whether or not the Greek translator exegeted his source text at this point—a couple of conclusions would seem patently obvious: (1) that the Greek text as it stands makes excellent sense whatever its source text, and (2) that to posit a reviser, who failed to correct δουλεύω in the first clause to whatever form of ἐργάζεσθαι might best represent the source text but who nevertheless corrected an OG form of δουλεύω in the second clause to ἐργάζεσθαι, inspired by ἡμῖν in his source, can make sense only if revision is presupposed rather than to be demonstrated. Without such a presupposition, the non-obligatory differentiation and recourse to a non-default equivalent should surely qualify as exegesis.

\textsuperscript{31} AЕJMELAEUS, Nebuchadnezzar (n. 2), p. 10.

\textsuperscript{32} The concept of Nebuchadnezzar as world ruler is not to be confused, however, with Nebuchadnezzar as god-king (Dan 3 and Jdt). It was the latter Greek Jeremiah rejected, not the former.

\textsuperscript{33} See moreover Schenker’s schema of subordinating (humans and) animals to earth in Nebukadnezzars Metamorphose p. 501.

\textsuperscript{34} Cf. SCHENKER, Nebukadnezzars Metamorphose, p. 520, n. 26.
The rest of my current string of references follows from 34,5. That is to say, if the earth has become subject to the king of Babylon, other rulers can either decide to work for (ἐργάζομαι) the divinely appointed world ruler or refuse to do so—and that includes Judah’s king. Such will be the state of world affairs until God shatters Israel’s yoke, with the result that they will no longer work (ἐργάζομαι) for foreigners (ἄλλοτροι) (37,8) but, instead, be in the employ (ἐργάζομαι) of the Lord God himself (37,9).

Two passages with ἐργάζομαι remain to be commented upon, 41(34),18 and 42,15. Jer 41,18 predicts punishment for Judah’s officials who breached Zedekiah’s agreement for the emancipation of slaves. It reads:

And as for the men who have transgressed my covenant (διαθήκη), those that did not stand by my covenant that they made before me, I [God] will render them as the bull calf (τῶν μύσχων), which they made to work (ἐργαζόμοι) for it.

All but the last segment (“they made2⁰ – it”) finds a virtually exact parallel in MT, but Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) marks ἐποίησαν ἐργάζομαι αὐτῷ as “dub(ium)” presumably because the parent text is in serious doubt³⁵. If the calf of the Greek text is meant to refer to the Golden Calf of Exodus 32, the calf’s role is obscure³⁶. Of interest here is the reversal of agent and patient, reminiscent of Jer 22,13. Whether we have in 41,18 a deliberate parody of Exod 32,8 must remain uncertain. Ironically, though, the god the Israelites created at Sinai is to become their employer. Tellingly, as we will see later, the relationship of Israel to its bovine god is described in terms of ἐργάζομαι, not in terms of δουλεύω.

Lastly Jer 42,15, which at the same time forms an apt transition to chapters 1–28. Just as all references to working for Nebuchadnezzar occur in 29–52, so all references to being subject to (δουλεύω) deities other than κύριος ὁ θεός appear in 1–28—with the exception of 42,15,

And I have sent to you my servants the prophets, saying, “Turn, everyone from his evil way, and make your doings better, and do not go after other gods to be slaves (δουλεύω) to them, and live in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.” And you did not incline your ears and did not obey.

Jer 42,15 is reminiscent of 5,19; 8,2; 11,10; 13,10; 16,11, 13; 22,9, 25,6, all of which speak of service to gods other than κύριος ὁ θεός and

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³⁵ W. McKANE, Jeremiah (ICC), vol. 2, Edinburgh, T & T Clark, 1996, p. 873 too notes that the LXX has no text-critical value.
³⁶ For another such instance of transfer from Exod 32 see Ps 28(29),6.
all of which, like 42,15, use δοῦλεύω to convey the kind of service envisaged. And just as the instances of ἔργαζομαι in reference to service to Nebuchadnezzar logically derive from 34,5, so all instances of δοῦλεύω just noted logically derive from 2,20, a verse which complains that Israel, already in its youth, refused to be subject (δοῦλεύω) to the Lord but, instead, opted to become subject (δοῦλεύω) to other gods.

Together, these two sets of passages noted above suggest that, in Greek Jeremiah, the selection of the one word over the other cannot be explained either by an appeal to Hebrew יִבְצָר or by obligatory differentiation in Greek (with the exception of 22,13). Instead it raises an ideological question. We have already seen that, in passages like 34,5; 41,9,14, one or the other word was selected for its linguistic distinctiveness. We now see that in the majority of passages the choice was made for apparently ideological reasons; and with that our focus shifts from ἔργαζομαι to the first member of the pair with which I began, namely, δοῦλεύω.

V. ΔΟΥΛΕΥΩ AND THE PENTATEUCH

One does not need to look very far to realize that to denote being subject to a foreign ruler or to foreign nations is regularly described by means of δοῦλεύω. Within Greek Jeremiah one can point to 25,1137 and (probably) 5,19b. Elsewhere in the Septuagint one can point to passages such as Gen 14,4; 15,14; Judg 3,8,14; 1 Rgns (1 Sam) 4,9; 11,1; 17,9; 2 Rgns (2 Sam) 10,19; 22,44; 3 Rgns (1 Kings) 2,26b; 4 Rgns (2 Kings) 18,7; 1 Chron 19,19; 2 Esd 19,35 (Neh 9,35); Jdt 8,22; 1 Macc 6,23; 2 Macc 1,27; PsSal 17,30; Isa 14,3; 19,23; 60,12; Bar 1,12. Moreover, at times King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon is mentioned by name: 4 Rgns (2 Kings) 25,24; 2 Chron 36,5a; Jdt 11,1,7. All of these passages show that there would have been sound precedent for Greek Jeremiah to have characterized servitude to a foreign king (including Nebuchadnezzar) by means of δοῦλεύω. That in the case of Nebuchadnezzar our translator failed to do so, but instead used ἔργαζομαι, must, therefore, have something to do specifically with Nebuchadnezzar. Given that he deviates from his default equation, ἴππος – δοῦλεύω (adhered to from 2,20 until 22,13 and reused four times thereafter) an explanation is called for. Moreover, since the deviation in most cases is not obligatory in terms of Greek usage, it would appear that our translator is deliberately interpret–

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37 Note, however, that the LXX, unlike MT, does not speak of subjection/service? to the king of Babylon.
ing his source text. Whether this is exegesis at the level of word or discourse or somewhere in between is not immediately obvious or relevant.

The Greek Pentateuch may be called “classical” in its use of both ἐργαζόμαι and δουλεύω with conceivably two exceptions, Exod 23,32–33 and Deut 28,64,

You shall not make a covenant with them [the peoples of Chanaan] and their gods. And they shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me. For if you are subject to (δουλεύω) their gods, these people shall be an obstacle for you.

And the Lord your God will disperse you to all nations, from an end of the earth to an end of the earth, and there you shall be subject to (δουλεύω) other gods, of wood and stone, which you and your fathers did not know.

At first glance, one might assume that δουλεύω in both passages includes what it is thought to include in later books of the Septuagint (including Jeremiah), namely, religious service rendered to gods or God. This likelihood is diminished once one realizes that, everywhere else in both Exodus and Deuteronomy, λατρεύω (“to minister”) is used to translate ἔργον whether the object of service be other gods or God. There may thus be good reason to believe that in Deut 28,64 and in Exod 23,33 δουλεύω is intended to mean nothing more than “x is a slave of y”. Yet, when all is said and done, it remains of interest that δουλεύω in both instances is placed in a sacral context, therefore possibly anticipating later usage, including in Greek Jeremiah.

As for the classical Greek meaning of the word group δοῦλος, δούλη, δουλεύω, δουλεία—Rengstorf in *TWNT* characterizes the Greek view of slavery as the antitype to human self-identity as a free, autonomous agent. From that perspective slavery can only be seen as an infringement on freedom (ἐλευθερία), and that holds true, according to Rengstorf, even for passages in Plato like the following:

... a person should pride himself more upon serving (δουλεύω) well than upon ruling (ἀρχέω) well: first upon serving (δουλεύω) the laws (τοῖς νόμοις), which is also the service (δουλεία) of the gods (Laws 6, 762 E).

For even here—so Rengstorf—when all is said and done, the δουλεία in question is δουλεία that aims at self-realization rather than δουλεία to others. It would thus appear that, at least as Rengstorf sees it, there is a basic contradiction between the Greek notion of δουλεύω + and the

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38 Other gods: Exod 20,5; 23,24; Deut 4,19.28; 5,9; 7,4,16; 8,19; 11,16; 12,2; 13,3.7.14; 17,3; 28,14.36; 29,17.25; 30,17; 31,20. God: Exod 3,12; 4,23; 7,16.26; 8,16; 9,1; 10,7.8.24.26bis; 12,31; 23,25; Deut 6,13; 10,12.20; 11,13; 28,47.

manner in which this word group is used in much of the Septuagint. What may be at issue in the final analysis is not so much the concept of what it means to be a “slave” (δοῦλος) as much as what it means to be “free” (ἐλευθερος) and, consequently, the extent to which slavery in the eyes of one person is freedom in the eyes of another, and vice-versa. Moreover, it can scarcely be denied that for Plato δουλεύω and δουλεία could, in certain contexts, be a positive relationship.

Rengstorf sees two complementary developments as a bridge from the Greek understanding of δουλεύω + to its use in the Septuagint, namely, (1) a pairing of δουλεύω with ἄνευ in the translation process and (2) a resultant expansion of the semantic range of δουλεύω to include a positive notion of being a δοῦλος.

Since the Greek Pentateuch, with possibly two exceptions, testifies to the classical Greek (i.e., negative) notion of δουλεύω, it is perhaps understandable that Rengstorf begins his survey of ἄνευ – δουλεύω with the historical and prophetic books. Yet, this omission hides the fact that the positive sense of δουλεύω at issue is not attested in the Pentateuch and scantily so in the books directly following (Josh [24,30], Judg [2,8; 10,6; 15,18]), at least in their present order, which may or may not reflect the order of translation. Since Rengstorf focuses exclusively on the pairing of ἄνευ with δουλεύω, even though this is clearly a secondary historical development, what gets overlooked is that ἄνευ had a prior history in Greek translation. Moreover, judging from the ἄνευ – δουλεύω distribution, it would seem that the latter was only gradually recognized as a standard (though never sole) equivalent of the former. One therefore wonders whether the pairing does not have more of a conceptual origin than a purely linguistic one. Rengstorf suggests that the Semitic (and Egyptian) context of the Jews was responsible for semantic transfer. But in that case, why does the real shift take place subsequent to the Greek Pentateuch and, therefore, post early-third-century BCE?

That the Greek notion of δουλεύω would have had a certain appeal for Jews is not difficult to imagine. After all not only could it express a desirable and therefore positive relationship (see the citation from Plato supra), it also bespeaks radical dependence on the δεσπότης ("master") as well as exclusive service and unconditional obedience. Moreover, did not ethnic tradition say that God ransomed (λυτρώω) Israel from Egypt, from the house of slavery (ἐξ οἴκου δουλείας), hence making God in some sense its new δεσπότης? Furthermore, already in the Penta-

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40 Though δεσπότης for God is not common in the LXX, it does occur: Gen 15,2,8; Josh 5,14; 1 Esd 4,60; Jdt 5,20, 9,12; Tob 8,17; 2 Macc 5,17,20; 6,14; 9,13; 15,22; 3 Macc 2,2; 5,12; 6,5,10; Job 5,8; Wis 6,7, 8,3; 11,26; 13,3,9; Sir 23,1; 34,24; 36,1;
teuch Israel is spoken of as both Pharaoh’s and God’s household slave (οἰκήτης).

Adolf Deissmann⁴¹, it may be recalled, used sacral manumission in ancient Greece⁴² as an explanation for the terminology of manumission in the New Testament. The ceremony in question was one by which a slave was sold to a god for a price/ransom (λύτρων) on condition of freedom.

There is, furthermore, the question of theory versus practice. Admittedly, it might be difficult to see how, in theory, δούλευσα could ever be a state into which one would enter willingly or gladly. Yet in practice we know of many instances in which the relationship between δεσπότης and δοῦλος was one of mutual respect and affection.

Clearly at the formal level there is no difference between δούλευσα as it is used in extra-biblical literature and its usage in the Septuagint. That is to say, both attest to occurrences of δούλευσα θεῷ “function as a slave to a god”. What difference there may have been must therefore have been conceptual: what does it mean to be a slave to God/a god? Does it mean to lose one’s freedom or to gain it? Manumission records suggest the latter by making the sale to a god conditional on freedom for the one sold.

VI. ΔΟΥΛΕΥΣΑ IN THE PROPHETS

My aim here is not to demonstrate the difference between a Jewish (Septuagintal) and a Greek (Classical/post-Classical) understanding of δούλευσα, nor to determine how or why exactly that difference (if indeed there was one) arose⁴³, but rather more modestly to sketch briefly that Rengstorf and Muraoka were correct in recognizing that, in the Septuagint, the δούλος-word-group is often used to express a positive relationship to Israel’s God.

Since the most pertinent evidence comes from the Prophets, I will limit myself to the Prophets and cite a passage or two from each. Given

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⁴¹ A. DEISSMANN, Licht vom Osten, Tübingen, Mohr, 1923 pp. 270–284.
⁴² For further documentation see M.M. AUSTIN, The Hellenistic World from Alexander to the Roman Conquest, Cambridge, University Press, 1981 no. 127 dated 144 B.C. (a) and 167 B.C. (b).
⁴³ Interestingly T. MURAOKA, A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint, Leuven, Peeters, 2002, defines δούλους as “to perform the duties dutifully and obediently incumbent upon oneself” with an explanatory note stating: “What is prominent is not, despite the etymology, so much (often odious) slavery and bondage as service”.

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Jonah 4,3; Isa 1,24; 3,1; 10,33; Jer 1,6; 4,10; 15,11; Bar 6,5; Dan 3,37; 9,8(LXX). 15(LXX).16(LXX).17(LXXbis).19(LXX).
that the object of my interest is a verb, I will further focus on the verb in the group, δουλεύω. Thereafter I will ask why it might be that Greek Jeremiah avoided using δουλεύω in relationship to Nebuchadnezzar.

Λατρεύω, the standard translation of לְבָשׁ in the Pentateuch, has been entirely eclipsed by δουλεύω in the Greek Minor Prophets. Though ἐργάζομαι for obvious reasons continues to appear, it regularly translates לְבָשׁ. In Zech 13,5, however, ἐργάζομαι translates לְבָשׁ since the context demands it. Several passages can be cited in which δουλεύω denotes subjection to God, which presumably included a positive attitude toward this subjection. 

Because then I will change the tongue for peoples in its generation, that all might call upon the name of the Lord to be subject (δουλεύω) to him under one yoke. From the ends of the rivers of Ethiopia they shall bring my offerings (Zeph 3,9–10).

The point being made here is that, at some future time, all peoples will serve under the divine yoke (τοῦ δουλεύειν αὐτῷ υπὸ ζυγὸν ἑνα) and in its use of both δουλεύω and ζυγός the passage is reminiscent of Jer 2,20 noted above. Jer 2,20, however, (cf. also 5,5) speaks of subjection (δουλεύω) to God, rejected by Israel in favour of subjection (δουλεύω) to other deities, whereas in Zeph 3,9–10 it is held out as a promise of God’s universal rule. (See further Mal 3,13.14.17.18.)

Like The Twelve, Greek Isaiah has no instances of the λατρεύω – לְבָשׁ equivalence. Eight instances of ἐργάζομαι are found, half of them for לְבָשׁ (4x), one instance for ἔρως, one for דֵּדֶה, and two for דֵּדֶה (19,9 and 23,10), both due to obligatory differentiation. Most of the instances of לְבָשׁ are translated by δουλεύω (14,3; 19,23; 60,12; 65,8.13tris.14.15). Even ἔρως in 56,6, regularly translated elsewhere in the Septuagint by λειτουργέω and expressive of cultic service, is here rendered by δουλεύω, with “the Lord” as recipient of the service.

And to the aliens who cling to the Lord, to be subject (δουλεύω to him, to love the name of the Lord, so that they may be his male (δοῦλος) and female slaves (δούλη). (Isa 56,6)

Though this is cast in terms of slavery, the relationship between master and slave is nevertheless pictured as a positive one (see further 60,12; 65,8.13.14.15).

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44 Not without interest is προσκυνέω as a parallel to δουλεύω, since the former like the latter had a sacral as well as a secular sense (cf. Ps 71,11; Jer 8,2; 13,10; 16,11; 22,9; 25,6; Dan 6,28). In earlier books προσκυνέω is used in parallel to λατρεύω.

45 For the yoke of the king of Babylon see JerLXX 34,8.11; 35,2.4.11.14.
Unlike The Twelve, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, Ezekiel has one instance of λατρεύω, although as a translation of ἔργον (20,32) rather than of ἔργον. Interestingly, though Ezekiel uses δουλὸς a half dozen times with a positive sense for Jacob, David and the prophets as slaves of God (28,26; 34,23; 37,24, 25bis; 38,17) δουλεύω occurs but in a single passage together with its deverbal noun δουλεῖα. There is little doubt, however, that in Ezekiel we see the same trend of λατρεύω being eclipsed by δουλεύω in sacral contexts as we have seen thus far in Prophetic literature. The one passage featuring the verb δουλεύω is, however, of great interest not because of the semantic shift in question, but because of what it says about Nebuchadnezzar, our personage of interest in Greek Jeremiah.

Son of man, Nabouchodonosor, king of Babylon, treated his force as slaves (καταδουλώ) with great slavery (δουλεῖα) against Tyre. Every head was bald, and every shoulder hairless, and no wage (μισκοῖ) accrued to him and to his force against Tyre even in return for the slavery (δουλεία) with which they slaved (δουλεύω) against it. This is what the Lord says: Behold, I am giving to Nabouchodonosor . . . the land of Egypt, and he shall foray for its booty and seize its spoils, and there shall be a wage for his force. In return for his ministry (λειτουργία), which he slaved (δουλεύω) against Tyre, I have given him the land of Egypt (Ezek 29,18-20).

According to this passage Nebuchadnezzar will be rewarded for his arduous but unrewarded effort against Tyre with the spoils of Egypt. In view of the fact that Nebuchadnezzar is a divine agent against Tyre as well as against Egypt his service is here described as a “ministry”, a rather surprising description, seeing that the root ἔργον, “work”, is nowhere else in the Septuagint glossed with λειτουργία. Rather, its standard Greek equivalent is ἔργον and cognates. Since √ἔργον occurs only here in Ezekiel, it is of course not impossible that the Greek translator was unfamiliar with its meaning, but that seems dubious in view of its relative frequency in the Septuagint as a whole. More likely it is that the translator interprets on the basis of information provided elsewhere about Nebuchadnezzar’s divine appointment, for example, 26,7; 29,6.10. The sacral use of δουλεύω is clearly not at issue here, since both δουλέω and καταδουλῶ are used to express Nebuchadnezzar’s strenuous effort against Tyre, which earned him the spoils of Egypt as his reward.

Greek Ezekiel’s use of λειτουργία is, of course, not out of line with Jer 34,5(27,6) nor for that matter with what historic role Nebuchadnezzar is made to play elsewhere, as God’s punishing rod. But that role scarcely makes him into a god-king, and it is the latter with which the
translator of Greek Jeremiah takes issue by his refusal to use δουλεύω when it might be given a sacrificial interpretation.

In conclusion a look at Daniel. From a source perspective, our survey is complicated by the mix of Hebrew and Aramaic in this book. So, for example, Daniel furnishes a mixture of Hebrew דיבר and Aramaic דיבר both with the meaning of ‘slave, servant’. On the verbal side, however, there are no occurrences of Hebrew דיבר but nine of Aramaic דבר. Both verbs can mean, “to carry out work”, “to serve someone”.

Whether the difference in source language had any bearing on the choice of Greek equivalents is uncertain but appears unlikely at least on the nominal side. In all eleven cases of Aramaic/Hebrew דבר the Old Greek of Daniel opts for παῖς, whether the referent be Daniel, Daniel and his three friends, the ancient prophets, or Moses. Theodotion, on the other hand, uses δούλος in five out the eleven cases, when the referent is Moses, Daniel in prayer, and the ancient prophets. Theodotion thus confirms what is obvious from elsewhere, namely, that to be a δούλος of God was a positive term, seemingly even a badge of honour for ancient worthies.46 The verbal side gives the impression that λατρεύω has made a comeback at the expense of δουλεύω.

Most occurrences of Aramaic דבר are rendered by λατρεύω (7x each in OG and Theodotion). In OG δουλεύω occurs three times (4,18.30c; 6,27) but for undetermined Aramaic/Hebrew, while Theodotion has it twice (7,14.27) for דבר.

The use of δουλεύω in DanOG 4,18 has already been cited in support of Jer 34,5(27,6) to show the fact that “countries” can indeed be said to be subject (δουλεύω) without implying worship. In DanOG 4,30c Nebuchadnezzar is told to be subject to/ to serve (δουλεύω) “the holy God of heaven”, and in 6,27 Darius vows to do obeisance (προσκυνέω) and to be subject (δουλεύω) to Daniel’s God instead of to idols. DanTheod 7,14 has “all peoples, tribes, languages” render service (δουλεύω) to “a son of man” and, finally, DanTheod 7,27 predicts that “all authorities (ἀρχαὶ) will be subject (δουλεύω) to him [the Most High] and obey him”.

Our brief survey of prophetic literature in the Septuagint clearly confirms what is also patently obvious from Greek Jeremiah, namely, that δουλεύω and cognates, while not losing the sense of deprivation of freedom, often signals radical dependence and unconditional obedience to Israel’s God in a positive sense.

46 As an interesting aside it may be noted that Greek Jeremiah in two consecutive verses (26, 27.28) has δοῦλος μου Ιακώβ and παῖς μου Ισαάκ for identical Hebrew.
VII. CONCLUSION

I now return to the use of ἐργάζομαι in place of δουλεύω with reference to Nebuchadnezzar in Greek Jeremiah. Since the differentiation of ἐργάζομαι from δουλεύω cannot be considered (linguistically) obligatory, it has all the earmarks of deliberate interpretation. While δουλεύω might have been used to express slavery under the world ruler, the translator, perhaps under the influence of his portrayal in Daniel and Judith, decided not to do so, lest Nebuchadnezzar be viewed as simply a replacement for the gods of Israel’s idolatrous past, serving (δουλεύω) other or foreign gods in preference to κύριος ὁ θεός.

Some such interpretation would seem to be demanded by the text even if one were to hold to Tov’s revision theory. To argue that (1) ἐργάζομαι was introduced to replace δουλεύω in order to produce a more precise rendition of Hebrew תבש, but (2) to argue at the same time that said reviser expanded the semantic range of ἐργάζομαι to match Hebrew תבש more closely, is more than the evidence can bear and defies Ockham’s rule of parsimony. No semantic shift is detectable in ἐργάζομαι but a credible one has been suggested for δουλεύω. In any case, δουλεύω means what it means, shift or no shift.

The exegetical note sounded by Tov on a number of occasions in his book clearly needs to be taken more seriously. Though exegesis by the Greek translator of Jeremiah should not be taken for granted—judging from its textual–linguistic make-up—that scarcely means it cannot be identified.

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