Falsehood and False Prophets in Jeremiah

A View on LXX-Jer and P-Jer

Srećko Koralija | ORCID: 0000-0002-5283-6841

School of Business and Economic, Faculty of Religion and Theology, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
s.koralija@vu.nl

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Abstract

This article explores the use of שֶקֶר in MT-Jer, and the manner in which the Septuagint (LXX) and Peshitta (P) read it. In that regard, the article also discusses lying, falsehoods (ψευδής, ψεῦδος, δήκος, μάτη, ψεύδαμεν, ψεύδομαι), and false prophets (ψευδοπροφήτης, διάλογος) in LXX and P. As such, it pioneers the examination of P-Jer’s perspective on false prophets. The article demonstrates that the translators of LXX and P approached the Hebrew source text in a manner that was not strictly literal, aligning with the nuances of the target language. It is argued that both LXX-Jer and P-Jer illuminate the polysemy inherent in the Hebrew lexeme שֶקֶר. In addition, both versions demonstrate a degree of textual liberty and interpretative renderings. Finally, the article demonstrates that unlike LXX, which labels Hananiah as a false prophet only once (LXX-Jer 35:1), P systematically designates him so throughout P-Jer 28. Consequently, the article also adds weight to the argument opposing a direct textual influence of LXX on P.

Keywords

Jeremiah – falsehood – false prophets – Septuagint – Peshitta

Compared to other texts within the Hebrew Bible, the book of Jeremiah displays a heightened focus on lying prophets and falsehoods. The attention to this aspect is also evident in ancient translations such as the Septuagint (LXX)
and the Peshitta (P), as they showcase diverse renderings of the Hebrew text. Both LXX and P are relatively close translations of the Hebrew, incorporating an extensive range of word-formation and semantic innovations. Sometimes, both LXX and P provide syntactical facilitations of the Hebrew Vorlage (e.g., Jer 3:23), introduce neologisms (e.g., LXX-Jer 6:14), or inverse the word order (e.g., P-Jer 6:13). Both LXX and P demonstrate a propensity for interpretative understanding of the Hebrew text, albeit in two distinct ways (e.g., Jer 23:13, 26; 29:23 [LXX 36:23]).

1 Insights from Previous Research

Recent investigations have witnessed a growing interest with the book of Jeremiah. Many of these investigations put an emphasis on the examination of ancient translations, with a specific focus towards LXX. The P corpus, in contrast, has attracted less scholarly scrutiny. With respect to P-Jer, Greenberg's work stands as the sole study that thoroughly examines the Syriac translation.

1.1 Textual, Lexical, and Semantic Questions

There have been debates regarding the existence of two distinct Hebrew versions of the book of Jeremiah, one longer and one shorter, with the prevailing

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1 In this article, I employ the following abbreviations: MT: Hebrew Bible (Masoretic Text; see n. 29), P: Peshitta, VT: Vetus Testamentum Syriac (the critical edition from 2019), LXX: Septuagint.
2 See Rajak, Translation and Survival, 162. Rajak has previously employed this argument in the context of LXX, and I am now expanding its application to P as well. However, it is worth noting that the degree of semantic innovation observed in P-Jer is not as extensive as what is evident in LXX-Jer.
5 See Greenberg, Translation Technique; further Williams, "A Study on Translation Technique."
6 As the preparation of the text of Jeremiah for the Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ) is an ongoing process, this article uses the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS). Concerning the Septuagint (LXX), prominent critical editions were published by Rahlf and Hanhart (2006) and Ziegler (1976). Naturally, there have been multiple earlier editions of Rahlf’s Septuagint. Moreover, Ziegler’s edition is considered superior compared to the one produced by Rahlf’s, and the NETS translation relies on Ziegler’s edition. The translation by Pietersma and Anders is available online: A New English Translation of the Septuagint. 34. Jeremias; upenn.edu). In contrast, a comprehensive critical edition of the Syriac text (VT) of Jeremiah was only made available in 2019. Prior to the release of this edition, no comprehensive critical edition of P-Jer had been published. An earlier re-edition of the Mosul edition was published by Gorgias Press in 2013, featuring an English translation. See Kiraz and Juckel, Jeremiah According to the Syriac Peshitta Version with English Translation, VII. Their edition is based on
consensus tending toward the shorter version as being the more original one. Since the main focus of this article is to explore lying, falsehoods, and false prophets in MT-Jer, LXX-Jer, and P-Jer, discussions regarding the development of the Hebrew text and the Vorlage of LXX and P lie beyond its immediate scope. The Syriac translation, as displayed in P-Jer, generally maintains the essence of the Hebrew text while diverging from it in style. It is characterized by its accessibility and precision, incorporating specific lexical choices where the translator considered it crucial. Moreover, in addition to a thoughtful choice of lexical counterparts, both LXX-Jer and P-Jer showcase a level of textural liberty and interpretative renderings. Sporadic resemblances between LXX and P led to disputes on LXX-Jer’s influence on P-Jer. Most assume sporadic influences rather than consistency.

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7 See Jobes and Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, 123.
8 See Dines, Septuagint, 23.
9 See Greenberg, Translation Technique, 44. The critical edition of the Syriac text of Jeremiah, as we read it today, is based on manuscript 7a1 (i.e., from the 7th century), which does not always share the readings of other witnesses. An example is manuscript 6pk10, which, despite containing only eight verses, has four unique readings. See Ter Haar et al., Vetus Testamentum Syriace II.12.6–7. The P translation also emerged after the translation of LXX-Jer and existing Jeremiah fragments from Qumran. Moreover, P as corpus serves as evidence for the textual content of the Hebrew Bible long before its final standardization by the Masoretes, in the 10th and 11th centuries. See Tully, Translation and Translator, 3.
10 The actual discourse about this question in P-Jer commences with Fränkl, and is further developed by Weitzman who, in his study Syriac Version of the Old Testament, 68, refers to Fränkl, Studien über die Septuaginta und Peschito zu Jeremia, 1872. The central thesis posited by Weitzman is that P-Jer primarily corresponds to the extended Hebrew text, “rather than the shorter form reflected in some mss from Qumran (4QJerª) and in LXX” (Weitzman, Syriac Version of the Old Testament, 57). In addition to Fränkl, Weitzman also refers to Bogaert who argued that two forms of Jeremiah circulated, one of which is preserved in the Masoretic Text (MT) whose structure, as attested by ancient Greek revisions (Theodotion, Aquila, Symmachus), the Vulgate, and the Peshitta, was already known around 200 BCE (Bogaert, “Le Livre de Jérémie,” 370). Greenberg considers Weitzman’s development of the argument (Translation Technique, 226), noting that his main focus was on the application of statistical techniques in establishing the pattern of manuscript tradition, not precisely relevant to the definition of style that she discusses (Translation Technique, 291). She also provides insights concerning the correlation between MT, LXX, P, and versions from Qumran (4QJerª, 4QJerb, 4QJerª, 4QJer4, and 2QJer). See also Ter Haar et al., Vetus Testamentum Syriace II.12.5.
Sporadic influences on a given text may have originated from several potential sources. In the case of LXX and P, theoretically the following scenarios are possible: a) direct derivation of P from LXX; b) derivation facilitated by language contact, a process distinct from corpus contact of P with LXX; c) derivation via a shared historical and theological framework. When considering the likelihood of influence, it becomes apparent that direct influence from LXX on P is not very plausible, the discernible structural disparities between P and LXX speak against it. Conversely, the influence of LXX on P mediated through language contact or the exchange of theological concepts, appears to be a more plausible scenario.

Referring to Jer 6:13, Greenberg argues that despite the fact that the falseness of the prophets is clearly indicated in both P and LXX, there is no basis to presume that the Greek version influenced the Syriac translation, as it is plausible that both P and LXX emerged independently. Notably, there remains the possibility that the creative agency of both the LXX and P played a significant role, which potentially diminishes the prominence of discussions regarding translational interference between LXX and P. Additionally, it is worth acknowledging that the language attested in the Septuagint differs from conventional Greek. This distinction is exemplified by the presence of a substantial number of neologisms. It could be attributed to the socio-historical context of post-Classical Greek, or innovations introduced during the translational process.

In this context, it is further noteworthy that the figure of Hananiah, who is recurrently mentioned in the book of Jeremiah, is identified as a false prophet in an explicit list of false prophets from Qumran (4Q339) as well as in P, but not in MT. Regardless of the specific translation techniques employed by the translators of P, it is important to reckon with the possibility that texts like the list of false prophets may have been in circulation within Jewish communities.

1.2 Falsehood and False Prophets
While a few studies on LXX have made contributions to semantic analysis and linguistic comparison of words around falsehood and truth, the scholarly examination of the lexical aspects has been more prominently undertaken

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11 See Greenberg, Translation Technique, 93. Moreover, P-Jer 6:13 represents the solitary instance where Greenberg addresses the issue of false prophets within P-Jer.
12 According to Muraoka (Lexicon, XIII) there are approximately 1900 neologisms in LXX, but this figure can be debated. See a brief discussion on this matter in Horton et al., “Additional Evidence,” 615.
14 See Knight, “Use of Aletheia.”
within the realm of Hebrew scholarship. For example, Klopfenstein’s work\textsuperscript{15} presents a thorough semantic analysis of three Hebrew root terms—שֶקֶר, רַקְשָׁ, and בַּכְזָ. In contrast, there has been no analogous scholarly investigation examining the Greek and Syriac vocabulary of falsehood as attested in LXX and P. Concerning the semantic nuances of the Hebrew vocabulary, Shemesh\textsuperscript{16} noticed that in contexts devoid of legal implications, the Bible condemns falsehood, especially in Psalms and wisdom literature, whereas the legal literature of the Bible does not contain a general directive against falsehood. Similarly to Shemesh, Weiss\textsuperscript{17} observed that the Bible explicitly forbids lying in numerous references, whether in judicial or non-judicial contexts, but it seldom provides a clear evaluation of individuals and their actions.

Furthermore, many scholars have analyzed the phenomenon of lying prophets in the Hebrew Bible more broadly.\textsuperscript{18} In this regard, the utilization of the neologism ψευδοπροφήτης in LXX and the explicit labeling of Hananiah as a false prophet in P-Jer 28, serves to better understand the evaluation of certain biblical figures by the translators. Furthermore, Arena\textsuperscript{19} contends that the book of Jeremiah exhibits a preeminent concern with the dissemination of falsehoods by the prophetic class. These insights are significant, as they can be gleaned from both LXX and P. Hence, this article aims to supplement prior scholarly discussions and initiate a discourse on false prophets in P.

2 Method and Data Analysis

Within the book of Jeremiah, individuals deemed as false prophets are identified by their defiance towards Yahweh, a characteristic which results in their role as those who prophesy falsehoods. The way these features are depicted varies in the different versions (MT, LXX, P). To elucidate textual features, in the following I will first outline the usage of שֶקֶר in the Hebrew text of Jeremiah and then compare the lexical choices in LXX and P against the Hebrew.\textsuperscript{20} The

\textsuperscript{15} Klopfenstein, \textit{Die Lüge}.

\textsuperscript{16} See Shemesh, “Lies by Prophets,” 83. It is further argued that the Hebrew Bible does contain commandments like: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exod 20:16; cf. Deut 5:20), but they pertain to the strict legal context.

\textsuperscript{17} See Weiss, “Ethics of Deception,” 2.


\textsuperscript{19} See Arena, “False Prophets,” 188–189.

\textsuperscript{20} Instead of HB for the Hebrew Bible, I utilize the MT abbreviation due to its demonstration of the vocalization tradition which likely saw extensive use during the early stages.
data analysis adheres to the Hebrew version, presenting divergent readings, while abstaining from discussing verbal forms and syntactical features. The principal emphasis in the data analysis centers on the Hebrew lexeme רָקֵר and, by extension, the concept of the false prophet.

In the interest of clarity and due to spatial constraints, the data analysis refrains from providing full quotations of the biblical verses. After identifying the lexemes through which P reads the Hebrew, these lexemes are checked in the database to determine if they occur elsewhere in P-Jer. The contrasting findings are included in the discussion. The comparative table illustrates the lexical choices of LXX and P in respect of the Hebrew text:

**TABLE 1  Comparison of lexical choices for “falsehood”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MT</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בְשֶקֶר (3:10; 29:9)</td>
<td>ἐπὶ ψεύδει (3:10), ἀδικα (36:9)</td>
<td>רָקֵר (3:10),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בְשֶקֶר (5:31; 23:14)</td>
<td>ἀδικα (5:31), ἕν ψεύδει (23:14)</td>
<td>רָקֵר (5:31),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בַשֶקֶר (3:23; 5:2; 7:9; 8:8)</td>
<td>ἐις ψευδος (3:23), ἐπὶ ψεύδεισιν (5:2), ἐπ᾽ ἀδικῳ (7:9), ἐις μάτην (8:8)</td>
<td>רָקֵר (5:2),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לַשֶקֶר (27:15)</td>
<td>[ἐπ᾽ ἀδικῳ] ε ὑπέρ (34:12)</td>
<td>לַשֶקֶר (7:9),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>לַשֶקֶר (27:15)</td>
<td></td>
<td>רָקֵר (27:15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The LXX data presented accord priority to Ziegler’s edition.

b Attested in Q4Jer.

c ἐπ᾽ ἀδικῳ occurs twice in the verse. In contrast to Rahlfs and Hanhart, Ziegler encloses the second occurrence within square brackets. Whether the second instance is read with or without the inclusion of ἀδικῳ, the verse maintains its semantic integrity. In other instances in the table, the verse numbering in square brackets indicate Rahlfs and Hanhart.

d The verse numbering varies between Ziegler’s edition (34:12) and that of Rahlfs and Hanhart (34:15).

of the Hebrew text. Additionally, removing vocalization does not contribute to a deeper understanding of earlier Hebrew texts. The references from MT are also compared with witnesses from Qumran (Q4Jerab,cde). The edition used for that purpose is Ulrich et al., *Quarmon Cave 4, x: The Prophets*. References to Qumran witnesses are indicated in footnotes accompanying the tables presenting the main data.
From the data, it becomes evident that the readings of LXX and P do not consistently exhibit distinctive lexical selections pertaining to particular context situations. With regard to lexical choices, they merely exemplify the polysemy inherent in the Hebrew term רָשֶׁקֶר. In contrast to LXX, P-Jer introduces pluses with interpretive and stylistic renderings (16:19; 23:26; 29:23; 37:14).

2.1 **MT**
The table demonstrates that the Hebrew word רָשֶׁקֶר, typically translated as “falsehood” or “lie,” occurs 37 times in the book of Jeremiah, and 113 times in
total in the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{21} Jeremiah also displays the largest number of occurrences of שֶקֶר within a single book of the Hebrew Bible.\textsuperscript{22} Other nouns related to the concept of falsehood are less prevalent in the Hebrew Bible. The term כָזָב appears 31 times, but it is absent from Jeremiah. Likewise, the word שֶקֶר occurs only once (Isa 30:9).

The data from the table elucidate that, in the book of Jeremiah, the term שֶקֶר is usually used to underscore the deceitful nature of the prophetic messages put forth by Jeremiah’s adversaries;\textsuperscript{23} the contexts in which the lexeme is used revolve around the semantic field of communication.\textsuperscript{24} At times, the term שֶקֶר can refer to evil, such as the god Baal, while in other instances, it pertains to falsehoods as the subject of prophecy (9:2; 14:14; 16:19; 20:6; 23:26, 32; 27:10, 14, 15, 16; 28:15; 29:9, 21, 23, 31; 40:16; 43:2), actions carried out deceitfully (9:4), false appearance (3:23; 10:14; 23:14), trusting in falsehoods and deceptive words (7:8; 13:25), or swearing wrongly (7:9). In a number of cases (3:23; 5:2, 31; 7:9; 8:8; 13:25, and 20:6), the Hebrew has the definite article. Lundblom\textsuperscript{25} proposed that these specific instances necessitate its translation as “the lie,” consequently implying a reference to Baal. However, LXX and P do not endorse such an understanding. Apart from nuances in the usage of the Hebrew term primarily translated as “falsehood,” “lie,” or “deception,” Jer 3:16 is the only passage where שֶקֶר has the meaning of “hypocrisy” or “appearance,”\textsuperscript{26} with an adversative sense here (בֵּיתֶר לָבְחַת).\textsuperscript{27} Furthermore, the Hebrew text acknowledges the presence of lying prophets, but it does not specifically employ the term “false prophet” as LXX and P do.

2.2 LXX and P

The data illustrate that both LXX and P adhere to the Hebrew Vorlage, but exercise judicious translation to suit the style of the Greek and Syriac languages.

\textsuperscript{21} To check the occurrences, I used a linguistic database of the Old Testament, known as BHSA and available via the SHEBANQ interface (https://shebanq.ancient-data.org).

\textsuperscript{22} See Fischer, 

\textsuperscript{23} See Reiling “Use of וּפֵשַׁע יָדֵךְ,” 147.

\textsuperscript{24} The most frequently used finite verb associated with שֶקֶר is בָּא והָיָה (qal), with 16 instances where שֶקֶר is its subject. Another verb commonly used with שֶקֶר is בָּא (piel), and it closely aligns with בָּא והָיָה (qal) in Jer 23:16–17, בָּא מִי הָיָה (hiphil) in 28:15–16, and בָּא נָשָׁה (piel) in 23:28. See Kelly, “How Prophecy Works,” 48.

\textsuperscript{25} See Lundblom, Jeremiah 1–20, 322.

\textsuperscript{26} See Klopfenstein, Die Lüge, 114.

\textsuperscript{27} There are verses in which a definite article is used, but it does not imply reference to Baal, as is the case in, for instance, 23:14, where the use of the article implies the false prophecy. See Lundblom, Jeremiah 21–36, 188.
and their respective audiences. In the context of the Hebrew lexeme רָשַׁפִּים, the Septuagint utilizes a diverse array of lexical selections: ψευδής, ψευδός, ἁδικός, and μάτης, thus reflecting the polysemy nature of רָשַׁפִּים. The lexemes ψευδής and ψευδός are the most frequently employed, denoting the act of lying, deception, and false statement. The lexeme ἁδικός implies someone or something that is unjust, and in the context of LXX-Jer is also understood as opposition to the truth. In LXX-Jer, ἁδικός refers to the false prophecies (53:1; 34:21, 12; 36:9, 31), swearing wrongly (7:9), and deception (35:15). Moreover, the lexeme μάτης is used in LXX-Jer 8:8 as adjective (ἐπὶ μάτημα) where it designs the lack of purpose. It has the same use in, for example, LXX-Jer 2:30 where it renders the Hebrew אָרָפִים (in vain). In addition to underscoring the polysemy of the Hebrew lexeme רָשַׁפִּים, LXX does not present particular renderings that would substantially alter comprehension.

P-Jeremiah follows the Hebrew Vorlage (and not the LXX) both in the wording and in the order of chapters. Like LXX, P’s lexical choices reflect the meanings of Hebrew רָשַׁפִּים. As the table demonstrates, the lexemes used to translate the Hebrew רָשַׁפִּים are שֶקֶר, שֶקֶר, שֶקֶר, and שֶקֶר, with the statistical predominance of שֶקֶר. Similarly to LXX, all lexical choices of P-Jer pertain to the lexical field of lying and falsehood. Both lexemes (שֶקֶר, שֶקֶר, שֶקֶר, and שֶקֶר).
demonstrate a level of semantic overlap. The meaning of ἄδικος, introduced by LXX, is inherent in both Syriac lexemes, thereby corroborating the polysemy of the Hebrew term רְשֶׁקֶר. Unlike the LXX, however, the Peshitta does not introduce specific interpretations that would significantly reshape the understanding. Occasionally, P employs stylistic translation techniques (e.g., 8:8: “Verily, the scribe’s deceitful pen is made for falsehood”), and foregrounds “lies” in difference to both MT and LXX (e.g., 23:26: “For how long will there be prophecies of falsehood in the mouths of the prophets, the prophecies of the deceit of their hearts?”; cf. 27:16 where P translates “lie” [ܫܘܩܪܐ] in difference to LXX, which emphasizes “wrong things” [חָוֵד]). Further examples are 16:19; 29:23, and 37:14.

Among the above mentioned Syriac lexemes, ܫܘܩܪܐ (ܫܘܩܪܐ) and ܕܓܠܘܬܐ, are used to translate not only Hebrew רְשֶׁקֶר but some other Hebrew lexemes as well (דָּג ב, מִרְמָה, and חָוֵד). The data indicate that ܫܘܩܪܐ can also connote infidelity and betrayal of agreement, and that ܕܓܠܘܬܐ is also employed within the context of faithlessness and mad prophesying.

### Table 2: Variations in lexical usage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MT a</th>
<th>LXX b</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>בָגוֹדָה (Jer 3:7)</td>
<td>ἀσυνθεσίαν [ἀύτῆς] (Jer 3:7)</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 3:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בָגוֹד (Jer 3:8)</td>
<td>ἀσυνθετος (Jer 3:8)</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 3:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>בְּגָדוֹת (Jer 3:11)</td>
<td>ἀσυνθέτου (Jer 3:11)</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 3:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>פֶּרֶךְ (Jer 9:5)</td>
<td>ψευδ (Jer 9:5)</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 9:5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כֵּרֶם בֶּרוֹן (Jer 12:1)</td>
<td>[πάντες οἱ ἀδετούντες] ἀδετήματα (Jer 12:1)</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 12:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>כִּפְרוֹת (Jer 23:13)</td>
<td>φρικτά (Jer 23:13) c</td>
<td>ܫܘܩܪܐ (Jer 23:13) d</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>יש שָׁמַע (Jer 29:26) e</td>
<td>פָנְתִי אֲנֹרִיָהּּ פּוֹרָהֲוַיִּיָּHEN כְּלָּהוֹנָה (Jer 36:26)</td>
<td>ܥܠ ܟܘܠ ܐܢܫ ܕܡܫ݀ܬܛܐ ܒܕܓܠܘܬܐ ܘܡܬܢ݀ܒܐ (Jer 29:26)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The Qumran witnesses Q4Jer a,b,c.d,e do not contain these verses.
b References to LXX in the table are provided for the sake of contrast. Our limited space does not permit an exhaustive examination of each verse and its corresponding lexical choices.
c “Lawless deeds”; see NETS.
d This verse is a good example of how P-Jer differs from LXX-Jer, which is much longer and more interpretative than P-Jer.
e Only a segment of the verse is presented in MT, LXX, and P, the one that is pertinent to comprehending its reading by LXX and P.
The data in the table also reveal that ܕܓܠܘܬܐ represents a plus in P (Jer 29:26 ܕܓܠܘܬܐ) in contrast to LXX. Another difference between LXX and P is in Jer 12:1. Here P has “all the peridious ones,”\(^{32}\) whereas LXX translates as “all who commit acts of faithlessness.”\(^{33}\) Our analysis shows that, all in all, both LXX and P approach the Hebrew text in a manner that does not significantly deviate from the core textual meaning with regard to the vocabulary of falsehood.

3 False Prophet(s) in LXX (ψευδοπροφήτης) and P (ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ)

In both LXX-Jer and P-Jer, a salient feature is the explicit mention of false prophets. This sets the two translations apart from the Hebrew text in which this distinction is not made. However, as much as LXX and P agree in general, there are instances where they also differ in this regard. The comparative table is guided by the LXX reading of the Hebrew:

**TABLE 3 False prophet(s)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MT</th>
<th>LXX</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>נביא (6:13)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήτου (6:13)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (6:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (26:7)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήται (33:7)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (26:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (26:8)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήται (33:8)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (26:8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (26:11)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήται (33:11)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (26:11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (26:16)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήτας (33:16)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (26:16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (27:9)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφητῶν [ὑμῶν] (34:9)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (27:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (28:1)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήτης (35:1)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (28:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (29:1)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήτας (36:1)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (29:1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>נביאים (29:8)</td>
<td>ψευδοπροφήται (36:8)</td>
<td>ܢܒܝܐ ܕܓܠܐ (29:8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\) This is the only verse in this table for which there is evidence in one of the Qumran witnesses (4QJer). The verse, as attested in the fragment, is identical to that in MT.

\(^{32}\) I agree with the translation published in Kiraz and Junckel, *Jeremiah According to the Syriac Peshitta Version with English Translation*, 77.

\(^{33}\) See NETS.
In the verses featuring false prophets, as evidenced in the table, a lexeme explicitly associated with the semantic domain of falsehood appears only once across all versions (6:13). In the remaining instances, such a lexeme is absent, yet the context permits the translator to impart the concept of a false prophet, as in 26:7, 8, 11, 16; 27:9; 28:1; 29:1, 8. As previously observed, the Hebrew text frequently links the lexemes “prophet” and “lie” (e.g., 5:31; 23:26). LXX and P, in contrast, more overtly establish this conceptual connection.

Some scholars have argued\textsuperscript{34} that \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} represents a clear exegetical translation in LXX-Jer primarily in chapters 26–29.\textsuperscript{35} Reiling\textsuperscript{36} noted that \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} (“false prophet”) appears 9 times in LXX-Jer,\textsuperscript{37} consistently rendering the Hebrew \textit{נביא} with an interpretive intent, or serves to literally link the conflict pericopes (LXX-Jer 33–36 [MT 26–29]) with the condemnation of false prophets in Jer 6:13–15, as argued by Verse.\textsuperscript{38} These interpretative interventions of the LXX translator(s) are statistically sporadic, but they are significant as lexical selections for Hebrew \textit{נביא}, which occurs a total of 94 times in LXX-Jer. The rationale for introducing \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} in LXX-Jer\textsuperscript{39} and the interpretive nuances it carries is not always clear since \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} is only used in certain contexts of LXX-Jer but not in others. For example, in instances where \textit{נביא} is paired with \textit{רפה} (falsehood) as in 5:31; 14:14, and 23:26, 32, the connection between \textit{נביא} and \textit{רפה} through the verb \textit{נבע} sufficiently conveys

\textsuperscript{34} See Fischer, \textit{Jeremia} 26–52, referred to by Lundbom, \textit{Jeremiah} 21–36, 330.
\textsuperscript{35} See Lundbom, \textit{Jeremiah} 21–36, 330.
\textsuperscript{36} See Reiling, “Use of \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης},” 148. The term neither appears in Classical Greek nor in the Greek papyri of the period contemporary to the the translation of LXX-Jer. Reiling explains the absence of the word in the period before the Septuagint with the argument that the Greek prophets had the relatively unimportant role of the Greek prophets in divination as compared to diviner[s] (μάντις). On the other hand, an idea of pseudo-diviner \textit{ψευδόμαντις} occurs occasionally, with Herodotus as probably the earliest occurrence of the word. It also occurs in other works like Euripides’ tragedy Orestes or in Lucian’s Alexander the False Prophet [TLG—Home (uci.edu)]. In contrast to the earlier period, \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} does occur in the period posterior to the Septuagint, for example, in a papyrus from the 5th century CE (P. Amh. Gr. 11).
\textsuperscript{37} 10 times in total in the Septuagint if we include LXX-Zech 132.
\textsuperscript{38} This is the primary argument of Verse’s article aiming to show that LXX-Jer portrays the sin of the false prophets in Jer 33–36 (MT 26–29) as trivially reacting to the Babylonian conquest of the region that Jeremiah identified as divine judgement. See Verse, “Literary Function,” 4. The article provides an insightful discourse on \textit{ψευδοπροφήτης} and prophetic conflicts.
\textsuperscript{39} GELS describes the word as neologism “false prophet,” which also confirms the thesis about the LXX first usage of the term. See Lust et al., \textit{A Greek-English Lexicon}, 673. This neologism is more commonly found in the New Testament, Philo, and Josephus, all of which reflect the impact of LXX terminology and wording. The statistics are verified through www.stephanus.tlg.uci.edu. See further Verse, “Literary Function,” 6 n. 13.
the intended meaning.\(^\text{40}\) In the rest of the chapters, LXX-Jer omits “prophet” as a title for Jeremiah, but also for Hananiah, who is explicitly designated as a false prophet in P-Jer.

Contrary to LXX, P explicitly uses the designation “false prophet” and “false prophecies” in Jer 23:26. In P-Jer, a “false prophet” is a first time mentioned in 6:13, like in LXX.\(^\text{41}\) Unlike LXX, P employs the plural form consistently, without any manuscript variants, likely guided by the Hebrew particle בָּנָשׁ usually having the plural sense. The subsequent occurrence is in 8:10, where P substitutes “false prophets” for the corresponding Hebrew term נביא, a distinction absent in LXX-Jer 8:10, probably given its brevity. In 29:8, P does not employ the phrase נבאים נבאים. Perhaps this is because of the inclusion of the term “diviner,” which in this context is construed as synonymous with “prophet.” Furthermore, the expression נבאים נבאים occurs mainly in the plural form in P-Jer 26:7, 8, 11, 16; 27:9, 14; 29:1. The tendency of P towards regular usage of “false prophets” does reveal individual tendencies of the translator(s), but cannot prove ties with LXX.

In P-Jer 28, a significant divergence emerges: the term is used in the singular form and consistently attributed to the prophet Hananiah. Unlike LXX, which labels Hananiah as a false prophet only in 28 [35]:1, P-Jer systematically designates him so (28:1, 5, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17).\(^\text{42}\) The P translator appears to deliberately intend to establish a juxtaposition between Hananiah, designated as the false prophet, and the prophet Jeremiah (28:5, 10, 12, 13, and 15). Hananiah is the only individual in P being consistently called a false prophet (LXX labels him as a false prophet only in 35:1). Interestingly, another false prophet, Shemaiah the

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\(^{40}\) See Reiling, “Use of ψευδοπροφήτης,” 149. According to him, employing ψευδοπροφήτης in LXX-Jer 23:26 would diminish the pointed contrast present in ἐν καρδίᾳ τῶν προφητῶν τῶν προφητευόντων ψευδή.

\(^{41}\) Based on the analysis of two databases employed for statistical purposes (Simtho: The Syriac Thesaurus | Beth Mardutho, Digital Syriac Corpus), there is no evidence to suggest the utilization of the expression in Syriac texts either antecedent to or contemporaneously with the translation process of P. “False prophet” occurs in translations or biblical commentaries in the later period, e.g., the Syriac translation of Eusebius of Caesarea’s Ecclesiastical History, Iṣḥadad of Merv’s Commentary on the Old Testament, Dionysius Bar Salibi’s works like Literal Commentary on Deuteronomy, Literal and Spiritual Commentary on Jeremiah etc. The incorporation of the concept of false prophets within Syriac extra-biblical literature attests to the broader assimilation of P vocabulary. The usage context, of course, differs in these instances.

\(^{42}\) It is worth mentioning here that the Targum designates Hananiah as “the false prophet” throughout the chapter as well (The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon; huc.edu). I have also examined the Qumran witnesses Q4 Jer a.b.c.d.e but none of them contain the verses in question.
Nehemite is mentioned on the famous list of false prophets in 4Q33, but neither LXX nor P designate him as a false prophet.

4 Conclusion

I summarize my findings as follows:

First, we have seen that in MT-Jer, the lexeme שֶקֶר is used to underscore the deceitful nature of the prophetic messages put forth by Jeremiah’s adversaries. It pertains to falsehoods as the subject of prophecy, actions carried out deceitfully, false appearance, trusting in falsehoods and deceptive words or swearing wrongly. It is also used in the meaning of “hypocrisy” or “appearance.”

Second, both LXX-Jer and P-Jer showcase a level of textual liberty and interpretative renderings. In addition to underscoring the polysemy of the Hebrew lexeme רֶפֶשׁ, LXX-Jer does not present particular renderings that would substantially alter comprehension. Like LXX-Jer, P-Jer lexical choices also reflect the meanings of the Hebrew רֶפֶשׁ.

Third, we have seen that ψευδοπροφήτης appears 9 times in LXX-Jer, consistently rendering the Hebrew נָבִיא with an interpretive intent. These interpretative interventions of the LXX translator are statistically sporadic, but they are significant as lexical selections for the Hebrew נָבִיא, which occurs a total of 94 times in LXX-Jer.

Fourth, in P-Jer, the concept of a “false prophet” is introduced in 6:13, akin to its initial occurrence in LXX. The data revealed that in all instances, except 8:10 and 29:8, the lexical choice of P-Jer overlaps with LXX-Jer. This observation does not prove that P is dependent from LXX, but it motivates speculation about the possibility of shared traditions.

Fifth, unlike LXX, which labels Hananiah as a false prophet only once (35:1), P-Jer systematically designates him so. The P translator appears to manifest a deliberate intention to establish a juxtaposition between Hananiah, designated as the false prophet, and the prophet Jeremiah. In this regard, this article strengthens the argument against a direct textual influence of LXX on P.

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This confirms the findings of previous scholarship on the subject.


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