

# The Missing Bones of the Septuagint

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## Abstract

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There are eighteen instances in the Hebrew Bible in which the word *yvm*, or “day,” is associated with the word *'tsm*, which in its simple singular form means “bone.” This paper examines the text of the Septuagint (LXX) translation of those eighteen instances to determine whether the Greek translation reflects the presence in the Hebrew text of the word *'tsm*. Direct analysis of the parallel Greek suggests that the Hebrew *'tsm* was not in the text from which the LXX was translated. Analysis of the LXX translations of other Hebrew phrases that reference the word *yvm* supports that conclusion as does analysis of the translations of other instances of the Hebrew *'tsm*. Evidence from a computer assisted translation analysis, from Aramaic Targum translations, and from analysis of dictionary entries is also examined. I conclude that the word *'tsm* did not appear in the Hebrew text from which the LXX translations of those eighteen instances were made.

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Abstract:

There are eighteen instances in the Hebrew Bible in which the word *yvm*, or “day,” is associated with the word *'tsm*, which in its simple singular form means “bone.” This paper examines the text of the Septuagint (LXX) translation of those eighteen instances to determine whether the Greek translation reflects the presence in the Hebrew text of the word *'tsm*. Direct analysis of the parallel Greek suggests that the Hebrew *'tsm* was not in the text from which the LXX was translated. Analysis of the LXX translations of other Hebrew phrases that reference the word *yvm* supports that conclusion as does analysis of the translations of other instances of the Hebrew *'tsm*. Evidence from a computer assisted translation analysis, from Aramaic Targum translations, and from analysis of dictionary entries is also examined. I conclude that the word *'tsm* did not appear in the Hebrew text from which the LXX translations of those eighteen instances were made. Keywords: Bible, Hebrew Bible, Septuagint, Targum, Peshitta, Translation -----

There are eighteen instances in the Hebrew Bible in which the word *yvm*, or *day*, is associated with the word *'tsm*. The Hebrew *'tsm* in its simple singular form almost always means *bone* in the Masoretic Text (MT). In other forms, it is understood differently. Standard dictionaries give the form *'tsvm*, for example, meanings of *mighty*, *powerful*, or *numerous*. In an uncommon verb form it can mean *to close the eyes*. And in rare cases such as in Exod 24:10, it is understood as *substance* or *essence*. Standard dictionaries also allow a tertiary understanding as *self*, which raises interesting questions that I will discuss below.

In fourteen of our eighteen instances, the phrase found in the Hebrew is *b'tsm hyvm hzh* where the preposition *b-* means “on” or “in” the day being described. In three of the eighteen instances the preposition introducing the phrase is *'d*, meaning “until.” The phrase in those cases is *'d 'tsm hyvm hzh*. That phrase can be prospective, where *'d* conveys the idea of a time period extending forward, as in “until” a certain condition occurs. It can also be retrospective, conveying the idea that a certain condition has existed “until” the day

of the reference. In one instance, the 'tsm term of the phrase is preceded by the Hebrew direct object marker t, giving us t 'tsm hyvm hzh.

Table 1, below, identifies the eighteen instances in which yvm and 'tsm are associated, provides the LXX translations of the Hebrew phrases, and gives the Strong's Greek Lexicon number for each of the words in the Septuagint phrase.

Table 1: LXX Translations of Subject 'tsm Phrases

*MT Verse Greek Translation Strong's Greek Numbers (1)*

Where the Hebrew in MT is: b'tsm hyvm hzh

Gen 7:13 εν τη ημερα ταυτη [1722, 3588, 2250 , 3778]

Gen 17:23 εν τω καιρω της ημερας εκεινης [1722, 3588, 2540, 3588,2250 , 1565]

Gen 17:26 εν τω καιρω της ημερας εκεινης [1722, 3588, 2540, 3588,2250 , 1565]

Ex 12:17 εν γαρ τη ημερα ταυτη [1722, 1063, 3588, 2250, 3778]

Ex 12:41 The LXX has no parallel to MT phrase.

Ex 12:51 εν τη ημερα εκεινη [1722, 3588, 2250 , 1565]

Lev 23:21 τατην την ημεραν [3788, 3588, 2250 ]

Lev 23:28 τη ημερα ταυτη [3588, 2250, 3778]

Lev 23:29 τη ημερα ταυτη [3588, 2250 , 3778]

Lev 23:30 τη ημερα ταυτη [3588, 2250 , 3778]

Deut 32:48 εν τη ημερα ταυτη [1722, 3588, 2250 , 3778]

Josh 5:11 εν ταυτη τη ημερα [1722, 3588, 2250 , 3778]

Ezek 24:2 απο της ημερας της σημερον [575, 3588, 2250 , 3588, 4594]

Ezek 40:1 εν τη ημερα εκεινη [ 1722, 3588, 2250 , 1565]

Where the Hebrew in MT is: 'd 'tsm hyvm hzh

Lev 23:14 εως εις αυτην την ημεραν ταυτην [2193, 1519, 1473, 3588,2250, 3778]

Josh 10:27 εως της σημερον ημερας [2193, 3588, 4594, 2250 ]

Ezek 2:3 εως της σημερον ημερας [2193, 3588, 4594, 2250 ]

Where the Hebrew in MT is: t 'tsm hyvm hzh

Ezek 24:2 απο της ημερας ταυτης [575, 3588, 2250, 3778]

Note: The Strong's number for the Greek ημερα, meaning "day" is 2250. Note: The Strong's number for the Greek οστεων, meaning "bone," is 3747.

Three things are immediately evident from Table 1:

1. In each of the seventeen cases in which the LXX has a phrase parallel to that of the MT, the phrase includes a form of the Greek word ημερα, meaning "day." [Strong's 2250]
2. In none of those seventeen cases does any form of the Greek word for "bone," or οστεων, [Strong's 3747] appear, and
3. The LXX translations, while similar, are not uniform.

We might expect the LXX translations to vary somewhat reflecting differences in context or syntax. We should also not be surprised at translation variations among the books of the MT. As Kim has shown, there were probably five different translators involved in the Pentateuch translation.<sup>11</sup>Kim, H. *Multiple Authorship of the Septuagint Pentateuch*. Brill. Leiden. 2020 And, the books of Joshua and Ezekiel were translated by others, probably decades later. But in the case of these specific phrases, there are different Greek translations of the parallel Hebrew phrase even within the same book. That is true in Genesis, in Exodus, in Leviticus, and in Ezekiel. So, not only is the translation approach not consistent from book to book; it is inconsistent within books. And if each book was translated by a single translator, as has been suggested in the case of the Pentateuch, there is inconsistency at the level of the translator.

The fact that the translations of the phrases under study do not appear to reflect the presence of the Hebrew 'tism suggests that we examine the translators' treatment of the word in other locations. The most direct and relevant comparisons seem logically to be to the texts in which our eighteen instances occur, so our initial search is for all instances of 'tism forms in the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel. Table 2 contains the result of that search.

Table 2: *Instances of 'tism in the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel*

With LXX Translation Approach	With LXX Translation Approach	With LXX Translation Approach <i>Clear Greek Translation as:</i> Bone (1)	With LXX Tran <i>Clear Greek Tra</i>
Verse			
Gen 2:23		X	
Gen 18:18			
Gen 26:16			
Gen 29:14		X	
Gen 50:25		X	
Ex 1:7			
Ex 1:9			
Ex 1:20			
Ex 12:46		X	
Ex 13:19		X	
Ex 13:19		X	
Ex 24:10			
Num 9:12		X	
Num 14:12			
Num 19:16		X	
Num 19:18		X	
Num 22:6			
Num 24:8			
Deut 4:38			
Deut 7:1			
Deut 8:17			
Deut 9:1			
Deut 9:14			
Deut 11:23			
Deut 26:5			
Josh 23:9			
Josh 24:32		X	
Ezek 6:5		X	
Ezek 24:4		X	
Ezek 24:5		X	
Ezek 24:5		X	
Ezek 24:10		X	

Ezek 32:27	X
Ezek 37:4	X
Ezek 37:4	X
Ezek 37:5	X
Ezek 37:7	X
Ezek 37:7	X
Ezek 37:7	X
Ezek 37:11	X
Ezek 37: 11	X
Ezek 39:15	X

Total #: 24 15 4

1. The translation of the form of 'tsm here is clearly as “bone,” using forms of οστέων.
2. The translation of the form of 'tsm here is clearly as might, strength, power, or a great number. For example: Gen 18:18 has πολυ for populous; Gen 26:16 has δυνατος for strong or mighty; Deuteronomy often uses ισχυροτερα in “stronger-than” phrases.
3. There is no direct parallel in the LXX for the MT use of 'tsm.
4. Two of the instances in 37:7 are clear. The third is less so.

The LXX translators of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel clearly understood the Hebrew word 'tsm in its typical forms and uses. In their translations of these six books of the MT they provided straightforward Greek parallels in essentially all instances *except* the eighteen that are the subject of our study.

Another approach to our question is to ask how the LXX translators treat phrases that contain the Hebrew yvm but *not* the Hebrew 'tsm. The aim being to determine what effect the presence of 'tsm, or its absence, has on the Greek translations. If we find the same translation in cases where yvm occurs without an 'tsm term that could suggest that the term is absent in our specific cases. For this purpose, we will again limit our analysis to the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel. We will begin with the simplest phrases that include forms of yvm and proceed to more complex cases.

#### Case 1: *LXX Translations of the Hebrew hyvm :*

Most often the LXX translates the Hebrew hyvm as σημερον, simply meaning “today,” which is straightforward and expected. In three cases, though, the LXX treats hyvm quite differently.

In Deut 5:1 LXX gives the following translation for hyvm: εν τη ημερα ταυτη, which is the same translation found for our 'tsm phrase at Deut 32:48. That is, the simple hyvm is translated in Deut 5:1 in precisely the same way as the much more complex b'tsm hyvm hzh in Deut 32:48 is treated.

In Josh 5:9 and Josh 22:29, hyvm is translated as: εν τη σημερον ημερα, which differs from the 'tsm phrases at Josh 10:27 and Ezek 2:3 only in the initial term: that is, εν replaces εως. That difference is not substantive in the context of this analysis. For practical purposes, the treatment of hyvm in those two verses is the same as in the Deut 5:1 instance.

Thus, in these three cases, the LXX translators of Deuteronomy and Joshua understand the simple hyvm, with no 'tsm associated with it, in the same way as they understand the MT phrases that do associate hyvm and 'tsm.

#### Case 2: *LXX Translations of the Hebrew hyvm hzh :*

The Hebrew hyvm hzh without some other introductory element, is uncommon in the texts we are reviewing. In five cases, though, hyvm hzh is translated by the LXX as εν τη ημερα ταυτη which is the same as the LXX for the 'tsm phrases at Gen 7:13 and Deut 32:48. [See Deut 2:25, 26:16 & 29:9; Josh 3:7, 22:22] It is also the same translation as the Lev 23:28, 29 & 30 phrases, except those lack the initial εν.

Case 3: *LXX Translations of variations of the Hebrew hyvm hhv :*

In Josh 9:27 byvm hhv is translated as εν τη ημερα εκεινη, which is the same translation given for the 'tsm phrases at Exod 12:51 and Ezek 40:1.

In Ezek 39:22 mn hyvm hhv is translated in the same way as the 'tsm phrase at Ezek 24:2.

Case 4: *LXX Translations of the Hebrew 'd hyvm :*

In three cases: Gen 19:37 & 38 and Exod 20:31, the LXX translates 'd hyvm just as it translates the phrase 'd 'tsm hyvm hzh in Josh 10:27 and Ezek 2:3.

Case 5: *LXX Translations of the Hebrew 'd hyvm hzh:*

The Hebrew phrase 'd hyvm hzh is common in the MT texts we are reviewing.

In seven cases the LXX translates this phrase, which does not include 'tsm, in the same way it translates the phrases that do include 'tsm at Josh 10:27 and Ezek 2:3. [See Num 22:30, Deut 11:4; Josh 4:9, 5:9, 6:25 & 22:3; Ezek 20:29]

In twenty additional cases, the LXX translates this phrase in the same way as the instance in Ezek 24:2 that reads t 'tsm hyvm hzh except that in these cases the phrase is introduced by εως instead of απο, which is not a significant difference for our purposes. [See Gen 32:33, 47:26 & 48:15; Exod 10:6; Deut 2:22, 3:14, 10:8, 29:3 & 34:6; Josh 7:26, 8:28, 8:29, 9:27, 13:13, 14:14, 15:63, 16:10, 22:17, 23:8 & 23:9]

Case 6: *LXX Translation of the Hebrew t hyvm hzh :*

In Exod 12:17 and 13:3 the LXX gives the same translation to t hyvm hzh that it gives to t 'tsm hyvm hzh in Ezek 24:2, except the initial απο, found in Ezek 24:2, is not in Exod 12:17 or 13:3. That is not a material difference for our purposes.

*Conclusion of Review Outlined in Cases 1 through 6 :*

There are several other cases that we could cite to extend the theme of the review outlined in Cases 1 through 6, above, but none adds materially to the analysis.

The conclusion is clear: The Greek translations of the MT phrases that *do* include the 'tsm term are not systematically different from some translations of similar, simpler MT phrases that *do not* include the 'tsm term. There is no indication from this analysis that the LXX recognizes the presence of the Hebrew 'tsm in its source text.

*The Polak and Marquis CATSS Study:*

Emanuel Tov and Robert Kraft co-directed a project for the creation of a database designed to allow the study of the Septuagint with the aid of computer technology. The project was known as “Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies”, or CATSS.<sup>11</sup> Tov, E. and Kraft, R. eds . *Computer Assisted Tools for Septuagint Studies (CATSS): A computerized data base for Septuagint studies: the parallel aligned text of the Greek and Hebrew bible* . United States: Scholars Press, 1986. The database contains “the major types of data needed for the study of the Septuagint (LXX) and its relation to the Masoretic Text (MT) ... in particular ... translation techniques, variant readings, grammar, and vocabulary of the LXX.”<sup>22</sup> Polak, F. and Marquis, G. *A Classified Index of the Minuses of the Septuagint: Part 1: Introduction* . Tov, E. ed. Stellenbosch. Cape Town. 2002, Preface. Polak and Marquis in 2002 used the CATSS database to produce a comprehensive analysis of the “minuses” exhibited by the LXX of the Pentateuch when that text is compared to the MT. A “minus” in formal terms is found “if a given element is present in the MT but is lacking” in another text form.<sup>33</sup> Polak and Marquis. Introduction. p 7 In regard to a comparison between texts in different languages, such as the MT and the LXX, though, there are two possible explanation for variances. It is possible that the Hebrew from which the Greek was translated did not include the element that appears to be a minus. It is also possible that the apparent minus simply reflects the choice made by a translator. While the data available in the study by Polak and Marquis does not include the Joshua and Ezekiel instances in our study,

it does provide a means to analyze the instances in those books. And an analysis that is in part mechanical should help avoid potential bias. On the other hand, the output of database manipulation is dependent on the accuracy of both the database itself and the method of its manipulation. What does the CATSS database tell us when it is subjected to the analysis of minuses by Polak and Marquis?

First, CATSS finds the entire *b'tsm hyvm hzh* phrase to be lacking in the LXX of Exod 12:41. In this instance, it supports all our previous analyses. In five other instances, the CATSS analysis identifies the *'tsm* element of our phrase as a minus; that is, it finds that the word *'tsm* was not in the text from which the LXX was translated. Those five instances are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: *Instances Identified by CATSS as “Minuses” in the LXX* Polak, F. and Marquis, G. *A Classified Index of the Minuses of the Septuagint: Part II: The Pentateuch*. Tov, E. ed. Stellenbosch. Cape Town. 2002. Preface.

*MT Verse LXX Translation Indicated Hebrew Text* Page 55 Indicates page number in Polak and Marquis Part II.

Gen 7:13 *εν τη ημερα ταυτη* *hyvm hzh* 9

Exod 12:17 *εν γαρ τη ημερα ταυτη* *hyvm hzh* 160

Exod 12:51 *εν τη ημερα εχεινη* *hyvm hzh* 160

Lev 23:21 *τατην την ημεραν* *hyvm hzh* 192

Deut 32:48 *εν τη ημερα ταυτη* *hyvm hzh* 338

While the Polack-Marquis study does not address the other instances of our study directly, it provides interesting evidence. For example:

1. Polak-Marquis does not identify a minus in any of the three Leviticus verses that detail the requirements of the Yom Kippur observance. That suggests that the CATSS database *does* have the *'tsm* element in the MT of Lev 23:28–30. But the LXX text of our phrase in each of those verses is the simple: *τη ημερα ταυτη*. It does not seem reasonable that the translator of Leviticus would use that translation where the MT *did include* *'tsm* but essentially the same phrase; that is, *τατην την ημεραν* in Lev 23:21, where *'tsm* is identified as a minus.
2. Polak-Marquis does not identify a minus in either of the two verses that frame the text of the Abrahamic circumcision event: Gen 17:23 & 26. The LXX in both cases is *εν τω χαρω της ημερα εχεινης*. If the MT contains *'tsm* in those verses—that is, if there is no minus—we must ask where the word *'tsm* is reflected in the Greek. Since we have the word *εχεινη* in Exod 12:51, which does exhibit a minus, the only “new” element in the Greek phrase in Gen 17:23 & 26 is the word *χαρω*, meaning “time,” which we would not expect to represent the Hebrew *'tsm*.<sup>66</sup> We do find *'tsm* paralleled by the Aramaic *zmn* or, time, in the later *Targum Neofiti*, discussed below. How is it that there is no minus in these cases?
3. While Polak-Marquis does not extend to the book of Joshua, we can observe that the LXX of Joshua 5:11, *εν ταυτη τη ημερα*, is the clear equivalent of the LXX of both Deut 32:48 and Gen 7:13, which read *εν τη ημερα ταυτη*, both of which are identified as representing minuses with respect to *'tsm*. If there is a minus in those two cases, we would expect there to be one in Joshua also.
4. Similarly, Polak-Marquis does not extend to Ezekiel, but we can observe that in Ezek 40:1, the LXX has *εν τη ημερα εχεινη* which is identical to the passage in Exod 12:51, which is identified as exhibiting a minus. That suggests that the Ezekiel 40:1 instance would also exhibit a minus.

In each of the five cases where the Polak-Marquis analysis finds that the LXX exhibits a minus relative to the MT, the balance of the phrase; that is, *hyvm hzh*, is shown as present in the MT. And, as we have seen above (see Case 2), that phrase, lacking the *'tsm* term, is translated in exactly the same way as some of our instances that do include *'tsm*.

Mechanical analyses do protect against bias but, by their nature, they are liable to miss unusual cases and

our set of eighteen MT instances where 'tsm and yvm are associated represent a systematically unusual case. Raising questions about a small number of the many thousands of conclusions the Polak-Marquis study presents is not intended to impugn either its quality or its value, or the quality of the CATTS database. In this specific case, though, the output of the study does seem inconsistent. If it is true that, in the case of the five instances specifically cited as minuses (six, if we include Exod 12:41), the text from which the LXX was translated did not include the term 'tsm, both logic and comparison of those instances to others would suggest that most, and perhaps all, of the other instances were also lacking that term. And that does seem to be likely. We can interpret the output of the Polack-Marquis study as explicitly supportive of our analysis in the six cases cited and as generally or implicitly supportive overall.

Next, we want to avoid the possibility that a decision to look only at instances of 'tsm that appear in the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel might cause us to miss an important treatment of the word in the other books of the Hebrew Bible. So, we will now review all instances of 'tsm in the MT *other than* those included in Table 2 and the eighteen that are our subject. For convenience, the results will be presented at the level of the book, rather than the verse.

Table 3: *Instances of 'tsm in Other Books of the Hebrew Bible*

Categorized by LXX Translation Approach<sup>77</sup>For example, this table indicates that there are 2 instances of the Hebrew 'tsm in the book of Judges, both of which are clearly translated in the LXX using forms of the Greek word meaning *bone* . In Isaiah, there are 3 instances clearly meaning *bone* , 5 that have meanings of *strength, might, power or a large number* , 2 have the unusual meaning of *closing the eyes* , and 1 has the unusual and less clear meaning of *your counsels* .

*Clear Greek Translation as: Unclear/Unusual:*

*Book Bone s, p, m, n (1) Other*

Judges 2

1 Samuel 1

2 Samuel 10

1 Kings 4

2 Kings 7

Isaiah 3 5 3

Jeremiah 7 3

Joel 4

Amos 2 2

Micah 2 2

Nahum 1

Habakkuk 1

Zechariah 1

Psalms 16 10

Proverbs 3 2 2 1

Job 10 2 2

Lamentations 3 1

Ecclesiastes 1

Daniel 5

1 Chronicles 2 1

2 Chronicles 1

Totals 75 37 4 8

Meanings including forms of **s** trength, **p** ower, **m** ight, or **n** umerous/multitude.

In Table 2, which presented the translation approach to the Hebrew 'tsm in the LXX Pentateuch, Joshua, and Ezekiel we found that in 112 cases of 122, the LXX rendering was clear and common. The Greek words used to render the Hebrew were unambiguous and reflected the most common meanings of the Hebrew. In the analysis in Table 3, we looked at the instances of the Hebrew 'tsm in all the other books of the Hebrew Bible to confirm that limiting the analysis in Table 2 did not cause us to miss an important systematic pattern. It did not. There is nothing unusual; certainly, nothing systematically unusual; in the LXX treatment of 'tsm in any of the books of the Hebrew Bible, *except* in the eighteen cases we are studying where there is an association between 'tsm and yvm.

#### *Evidence from the Targums :*

The Septuagint was the earliest translation from the Hebrew, but it was not the only early translation. The Aramaic Targum translations were made in the rabbinic period, and they were the product of knowledgeable Jewish translators working from the Masoretic Text. We know those translators faced the problem of rendering into Aramaic the unusual phrases in which the Hebrew 'tsm is associated with the Hebrew yvm. Their solutions to the problem provide valuable insight. The Targums that are of specific interest to us are those whose aim was the literal reproduction of the texts of the Pentateuch and Prophetic books. For the Pentateuch, *Targum Onkelos* is the most common, and for the Prophetic books, *Targum Jonathan* is the standard text. Those texts represent a version of Aramaic that Fleisher and Chilton term Jewish Literary Aramaic (JLA) and they were the versions accepted by the medieval Jewish commentators.<sup>88</sup> Paul V. M. Fleisher and Bruce Chilton. *The Targums: A Critical Introduction*. Baylor University Press. Waco, TX. 2011. p 9 Another dialect of Aramaic, Jewish Palestinian Aramaic (JPA), is represented in *Targum Neofiti*, which translates the entire Pentateuch. So, in *Onkelos* and *Neofiti* we have two Aramaic versions of the same Hebrew text of the Pentateuch, giving us two different rabbinic views from the early rabbinic period.

There is a clear and common Aramaic word for “bone,” i.e., grm, and its meaning is familiar from uses such as “bone of my bones” in Gen 2:23; in references to the bones of the Passover sacrifice in Exod 12:46 and Num 9:12; and, in the account of the prophet’s vision of the “dry bones” in Ezek 37. But that is not the word the authors of the Targums use in the locations where the MT has the word 'tsm in the phrases of interest to us. In both *Onkelos* and *Jonathan*, the same Aramaic phrase is used consistently and exclusively to render the Hebrew b'tsm hyvm hzh. The Aramaic is bkrn yvm hdyn. The Aramaic parallels of the variants of the phrase follow the same pattern. Where the MT has 'd 'tsm hyvm hzh the Targums have 'd bkrn yvm hdyn and in Ezek 24:2, the direct object marker t is replaced by the equivalent Aramaic yt.

Not only is the Aramaic krn the consistent parallel to the Hebrew 'tsm in each of the eighteen cases under study; it is unique to those eighteen cases. It is found nowhere else in the Aramaic text except in two instances in which it is used as a proper name. The Targum translators, faced with the problem of rendering a Hebrew word that had a clear and common meaning, but one that was unusual in the specific context, chose to use an Aramaic word that *did not* have a clear and common meaning. Later Aramaic dictionaries find meanings for krn but those meanings do not come from the use of that word in Targum translations. Jastrow, for example, gives “roundness, fullness, essence” as meanings for krn.<sup>99</sup> We can find some support for those understandings by looking at other words that share the same consonants. He also notes that krn yvm is the Aramaic equivalent of b'tsm hyvm and that it can be understood as “the very day.” I will address dictionary issues more fully below but will note here only that Jastrow seems to have constructed his dictionary entry in this case more from Hebrew translation history than from Aramaic evidence.



Ramban tells us centuries later that he had seen a version of *Onkelos* in which the word appears as qrn rather than krn. That does have a clear and common meaning, i.e., horn, corner, projection, ray. Ramban argues that the two words mean the same thing; that krn means the same thing as qrn and so he can avoid the issue of the unusual word. Regardless, it is clear and interesting that the translators of *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* seem to have selected an Aramaic word for which we have no contemporaneous evidence of meaning, to use in rendering our eighteen instances. The Aramaic phrase directly parallels the Hebrew, and it includes *both* the word for day and the word uniquely chosen to translate the Hebrew 'tsm when it is associated with the word yvm.

*Targum Neofiti* presents a very different Aramaic equivalent of the 'tsm phrases. Like *Onkelos*, it is a translation of the Pentateuch only, and like *Onkelos* it includes clear parallels to each of our subject phrases. But unlike *Onkelos*, *Neofiti*'s translation is not the same in all eighteen cases. Its approach is consistent, but its actual language varies; not dramatically, but still obviously. Where *Onkelos* and *Jonathan* use krn as their parallel to 'tsm, *Neofiti* uses zmn, which has the same meaning in Aramaic as it does in Hebrew, i.e., *time*, or a *specified time*. The phrase as it appears in *Neofiti*'s Genesis 7:13, for example, is bzmnm yvm hdynt. There are several variations on that phrase in *Neofiti*, 1010 bzmnm yvm hdynt, bzmnm yvm hdynt, zmn yvm hdynt, hkmnm yvm hdynt, kmnm yvm hdynt, kmnm yvm tsvmh but all include separate words that directly and clearly parallel 'tsm and yvm. And, lest there be any doubt about the Hebrew source, in two instances, Gen 7:13 & 26, the manuscript of *Neofiti* provides an actual translation note, in the scribe's text itself, informing the reader that bzmnm yvm is the translator's rendering of b'tsm hyvm. The Hebrew phrase is given as a note in the body of the Aramaic text.<sup>1111</sup> The text I refer to is a photocopy of the hand-lettered *Neofiti* scroll held in the Vatican library.

The differences in *Neofiti*'s translations do not materially affect meaning. In the case of Lev 23:29, though, the "day" referenced is not described by hdynt as it is elsewhere, but rather by tsvm, specifically identifying the day—Yom Kippur—as a fast day. The key distinction for our purposes between the Targums written in Jewish Literary Aramaic and *Targum Neofiti*, is that *Neofiti* constructs its translation of the 'tsm phrase around an Aramaic word that is both common and clear.

The key distinction between the LXX translations and the Targum translations is that the Targums provide direct parallels for the word 'tsm whereas the LXX does not. The differences between the *Onkelos*/*Jonathan* use of krn and *Neofiti*'s use of zmn is an interesting study in itself, but the fact that both are direct renderings of the Hebrew 'tsm is unambiguous. The evidence from the Targums suggests that the translators of the LXX *did not* work from a Hebrew text that included the word 'tsm in the eighteen verses that are our subject.

There is another translation from roughly the same period as the Targums that we should consider also, and its evidence is less straightforward. The *Peshitta* is an important translation from the Hebrew to the Syriac dialect of Aramaic made in the first centuries CE. Tov says that its Hebrew source was "close to MT, although reflecting more variants than the Targumim."<sup>1212</sup> Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 152 Flesher and Chilton conclude that its source was proto-MT.<sup>1313</sup> Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums*, 356 The word peshitta means "simple," which is understood to convey an idea similar to that of the Latin Vulgate. That is, it intended to be a plain and understandable version of the text. The translation of the individual books was done "at different times by different authors . . . using different translation approaches."<sup>1414</sup> Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums*, 357 But the *Peshitta* phrases that are parallel to the Hebrew 'tsm phrases are very close to being uniform. In twelve of the fourteen instances of the Hebrew b'tsm hyvm hzh the *Peshitta* gives the Syriac bh byvm hn,<sup>1515</sup> For convenience I do not use the Syriac script. which is specific and emphatic but lacks a word directly corresponding to 'tsm. In one additional case the difference is inconsequential. In the three 'd 'tsm variants the *Peshitta* gives clear parallels to the Hebrew, also lacking the 'tsm term, with minor differences in form.

Flesher and Chilton note that the *Peshitta* translators took a generally literal approach to their renderings of the Hebrew text but that, in seeking clarity, they used substitution, omission, addition, transposition, and paraphrase. They find that, "the *Peshitta* frequently uses omission . . . by simply leaving out words without

making any changes in the surrounding text.”<sup>1616</sup>Flesher and Chilton, *The Targums*, 360 If the source text of the *Peshitta* was very close to the MT of the first centuries CE, it almost certainly contained the Hebrew phrases that are our subject. The Targum translators, working at the same time, found it necessary to represent the 'tsm term. It seems likely that the *Peshitta* translators, seeking simplicity, did not find it necessary to do so. They retained the Hebrew references to a specific day, and they did so with an approach that is consistent and uniform. Allowing themselves to avoid the difficulty of providing a direct parallel to the word 'tsm might have seemed a reasonable choice. We cannot be certain, of course, but the lack of certainty from the *Peshitta* evidence does not diminish the strength of the evidence from the Targums.

#### *A Comment on “The Dictionary Objection”:*

An objection might be raised that Hebrew dictionaries allow 'tsm to have a meaning of “self,” and that a reading of the LXX translations might find a similar meaning, even absent a Greek term directly parallel to the Hebrew 'tsm. There are Hebrew sources that support such a meaning, e.g., *Mishnah Pirke Avot* 1:15, where l'tsmy is understood to mean “for myself.” Jastrow gives several examples from the Talmud, the *Tosefta*, and the early halachic midrashim to further illustrate such uses.<sup>11</sup>Jastrow, Marcus. *Dictionary of the Targumim, Talmud Bavli, Yerushalmi and Midrashic Literature* . The Judaica Press. New York. 1996 But where we find 'tsmy in the biblical text, the word is understood to have its common meaning of *bone* . In Gen 29:14 and in several other instances, for example, 'tsmy vbshry is understood as “my bone and my flesh” (NRSV) or in other versions sometimes idiomatically as “my flesh and blood.” Vocalized differently it is understood as a plural possessive in several instances, e.g., Hab 3:16 or Psalm 31:11, or as all the bones together as in Psalm 139:15, where it is understood as “my frame,” meaning the complex of bones comprising the skeleton. Similarly, instances that later Hebrew might understand as an inflected form of a pronoun or noun such as 'tsmv or 'tsmk are not understood in that way in the biblical text. They are understood as referring to *actual bones* as opposed to either actual or metaphorical *selves* . There are a few unusual uses of forms of 'tsm in the Hebrew text, besides those that are our subject, e.g., Exod 24:10 vk'tsm hshmy which is understood to mean “very,” as in “like the very heaven.” In that specific case, as we found in Table 2, there is no direct parallel to 'tsm in the LXX. Or, in Job 21:23 where b'tsm tmv is understood by NRSV to mean “full prosperity” or by NJPS as “robust health.” But ideas of 'tsm as meaning “self” in Hebrew dictionaries seem to derive from two sources: 1) usage that is later than the biblical texts,<sup>22</sup>Of the texts found in the Judean Desert, only the Temple Scroll (11QT) contains our subject phrase. At Col 25:12 the phrase is found in text that parallels Lev 23:29, which deals with observance of Yom Kippur. At Col 18:3 it includes a parallel to the variant of the phrase found in Lev 23:14 marking the beginning of the period of counting the *omer* , leading to Shavuot. which does not provide evidence for earlier use, or 2) attempts to support a meaning using our subject instances as examples. In that case the argument becomes circular.

Brown-Driver-Briggs (BDB)<sup>33</sup>Brown, F, Driver, S., and Briggs, C.*The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* . Hendrickson; Peabody, MA Seventh Printing. Reprinted from 1906 edition by Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston. p 782, for example, cites our subject phrase to support the definition “self” as used in “this selfsame day.” But that phrase comes from the first translation of the Hebrew to English by John Tyndale in 1530. And Tyndale, as he searched for a way to render the unusual phrase, might have found it in Chaucer's use of “selfsame” in *The Canterbury Tales* .<sup>44</sup>The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites lines 1037–1040 of Chaucer's 1386 work, *The Wife of Bath's Tale*, as the earliest use of self-same. Some editions of Chaucer lack the word self-same in that passage but include it in *The Knight's Tale* , *The Nun's Tale* , or *The Man of Law's Tale* . The example given in the OED entry supports an understanding of the word as meaning “exactly.” BDB built on the work of Wilhelm Gesenius whose German version of the *Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* was translated into English by Samuel Tregelles in 1857.<sup>55</sup>Gesenius, Wilhelm. *Hebrew Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* . Samuel Tregelles, trans . S. Bagster. London. 1857 Gesenius allowed the Hebrew 'tsm the meaning, “itself ... but only used of things, e.g., b'tsm hyvm hzh.” That is contrary to the personal use in *Pirke Avot* , but similar to the approach taken by *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (HALOT),<sup>66</sup>Koehler, Baumgartner, et al. *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* . Leiden. Brill. 2000 which finds that 'tsm in our phrases functions as “an expression of complete agreement,” finding it to mean “this day

exactly.” The understandings of both Gesenius and HALOT are consistent with the way Chaucer used the word “selfsame” and the idea that Tyndale might have wanted to convey in his translation. Cline’s *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH) 77 Cline, David J. A. *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*. 7 vols. Sheffield Academic Press. Sheffield. 1993-2001 provides a meaning of ’tśm as “self, substance,” citing “’tśm hyvm hzh, this selfsame day, this very day, lit. ‘bone of this day.’” DCH, then, acknowledges both the literal meaning and the renderings found in prior translation history. “This selfsame day” and “this very day” are both common English translations. But using a translation to support a definition is not the same as finding independent support in the text itself or in other contemporaneous sources.

There is no question that forms of ’tśm came to be used in reflexive senses by the time of the early midrashim and of the *Mishnah*, but we do not find ’tśm having the meaning of “self” in the MT, certainly not in the simple singular form. Later understandings found in both Hebrew and Aramaic dictionaries have been influenced by the uses in the early rabbinic period and by the early English translation history. But that is not evidence of the approach the translators of the LXX would have taken. It seems far more likely that the LXX translators, or at least one of them, would have approached the problem as the Targum translators did, finding a specific Greek word to occupy the place of ’tśm in association with the Greek equivalent of yvm. What purpose might have been served by a deliberate and systematic decision to avoid providing a literal translation or at least an unambiguous parallel to a common Hebrew word in the eighteen cases of interest to us? The dictionary objection does not seem persuasive.

#### Summary :

1. In eighteen instances, the text of the MT associates the Hebrew word for “day” with the Hebrew word for “bone.” In one case the LXX has no parallel to the MT. In the seventeen cases where the LXX does have a parallel, none contains the Greek for the word “bone;” that is, no form of the Greek οστέων parallels the Hebrew ’tśm (see Table 1).
2. It is clear, however, that the LXX translators understood quite well the common meanings of ’tśm. In the biblical books in which the instances we are studying appear, we can find many other cases in which forms of ’tśm are used and in essentially all of those cases the LXX translators provide clear Greek equivalents. Our eighteen instances are notable as exceptions. It is the association of “bone” and “day” that defines those exceptions as a class (See Table 2).
3. Analysis of the LXX translations of other MT instances of the word yvm finds that the same Greek translations that parallel our eighteen instances are often used to translate Hebrew phrases that do not include the word ’tśm. That is, in some cases a Hebrew instance as simple as hyvm or hyvm hzh is translated in the LXX in the same way as the more complex b’tśm hyvm hzh. (See Cases 1–6, above). One obvious explanation for the lack of a reflection of ’tśm in the Greek is that it was not present in the Hebrew.
4. Frank Polak and Galen Marquis produced a comprehensive study of the cases in which the LXX does not contain material that is found in the MT, which they term “minuses.” Their study found that the LXX had no parallel for the MT instance at Exodus 12:41, confirming other approaches detailed above. It also identified five of our instances as specific “minuses;” that is, cases in which the LXX does not reflect a Hebrew source text that contained the word ’tśm. The Polak-Marquis study was only of the Pentateuch, but we can see by direct examination that the instances in both Joshua and Ezekiel would fit the pattern of “minuses” produced by their study. There are other instances in which Polak-Marquis found a given *more complex* Greek translation of a phrase to exhibit a minus, which suggests that *less complex* Greek phrases among our eighteen are also likely to be minuses. The Polak-Marquis study provides support to the argument that the Hebrew text from which the LXX was translated lacked the ’tśm term in the instances we are studying.
5. The Aramaic Targum translations render our subject Hebrew phrases into parallel Aramaic phrases. Both *Targum Onkelos* and *Targum Jonathan* consistently use the unique word, krn, to translate the Hebrew ’tśm. That word is used nowhere else in the Aramaic except as a proper name. Both the Hebrew words for “bone” and for “day” are clearly paralleled in the Aramaic phrase. The Hebrew is directly paralleled also in *Targum Neofiti*. In that version, the translator varied the Aramaic parallel

text somewhat, but in all cases provided a direct parallel for the word 'tsm using the Aramaic zmn. We would expect that, among the multiple translators of the LXX texts, at least one would have taken an approach similar to that of the Targum translators, providing a directly parallel Greek word to render the Hebrew 'tsm if, in fact, 'tsm were present in their Hebrew source.

6. The “dictionary objection” can be answered. The understanding of the word 'tsm as “self” is not found in the biblical texts. The fact that it came to have such a meaning later cannot be used to argue that the LXX translators would have found it to have that meaning. Nor can the use of English translations of our phrase that include the word “selfsame” to render 'tsm be used as evidence of such a meaning.

*Conclusion:* There is no evidence that the Hebrew text from which the LXX was translated included the Hebrew word 'tsm in the eighteen instances under study. We can conclude that the Hebrew source of the LXX did not include 'tsm in those eighteen locations.

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