Lexicography and the translation of ‘cedars of Lebanon’ in the Septuagint

Botanical terms in the Septuagint reveal a mass of uncertain and sometimes contradictory data, owing to the translators’ inadequate and inaccurate understanding of plants. To understand the metaphorical and symbolic meaning of plants, the new approach represented by Biblical Plant Hermeneutics places the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis by studying each plant in situ and gathering indigenous knowledge about the plant and its context in the biblical text. This article applies this methodology to the translation of the Hebrew source text term קֶדֶר (cedar) in the Septuagint as κέδρος [cedar] or κέδρινος (the adjectival form of κέδρος) and its interpretation in the light of lexicography, which lead to contradictory identifications. A complexity theoretical approach is proposed to provide a solution for the various identification choices in the light of lexicography to communicate the cultural values of the Hebrew source text and its Greek translation.

Introduction

Cultural knowledge is controlled, shaped and construed by means of the impact of designation, identification and classification assigned through the choices made in translation (Du Toit & Naudé 2005:33–58). A close look at the translation of botanical terms in the Septuagint reveals a mass of uncertain and often contradictory data. Owing to inadequate knowledge of the native plants and the tendency, in dubious cases, to assign to the plants of the Hebrew Bible names familiar to the translators, discrepancies, inaccuracies and confusion abound in translation (Zohary 1982:14). The botanical terms were interpreted and translated by the translators as a result of their own foreign frame of reference on the basis of anachronistic and undetermined botanical data available to them. On the one hand, ancient translators of the Septuagint often had no idea what particular species of tree or plant was the referent of the discourse and, as a result, provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute (Naudé & Miller-Naudé forthcoming a). On the other hand, even when the translators thought they knew what tree was referred to (given their knowledge of Hebrew, botany or earlier translations and traditions), they still frequently read into the text what suited them (Naudé & Miller-Naudé forthcoming b). Even the Septuagint names many plants that are not found in the land of Israel but may possibly grow elsewhere in the Mediterranean (Zohary 1982:14).

The new approach of Biblical Plant Hermeneutics places the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis – that is, each plant must be studied in situ and the indigenous knowledge about the plant and its uses must be considered as well as its context in the biblical text (Musselman 2012; Zohary 1962; 1973). Zohary (1982:12–13) uses Aramaic and Arabic as comparative languages for shedding more light on some of the uncertain botanical data, owing to the translators’ inadequate and inaccurate understanding of plants. To understand the metaphorical and symbolic meaning of plants, the new approach represented by Biblical Plant Hermeneutics places the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis by studying each plant in situ and gathering indigenous knowledge about the plant and its context in the biblical text. This article applies this methodology to the translation of the Hebrew source text term קֶדֶר (cedar) in the Septuagint as κέδρος [cedar] or κέδρινος (the adjectival form of κέδρος) and its interpretation in the light of lexicography, which lead to contradictory identifications. A complexity theoretical approach is proposed to provide a solution for the various identification choices in the light of lexicography to communicate the cultural values of the Hebrew source text and its Greek translation.

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The new approach of Biblical Plant Hermeneutics places the taxonomy of flora on a strong ethnological and ethnobotanical basis – that is, each plant must be studied in situ and the indigenous knowledge about the plant and its uses must be considered as well as its context in the biblical text (Musselman 2012; Zohary 1962; 1973). Zohary (1982:12–13) uses Aramaic and Arabic as comparative languages for shedding more light on some of the uncertain botanical terms in the Bible. His argument is that during the Roman and Byzantine occupations (70 BCE to 640 CE), Jewish (Aramaic-speaking) peasants continued to farm their land and that endeavour kept alive a rich vernacular tradition of terms pertaining to plants and agriculture. After the Muslim conquest in 640 CE, the long-established agricultural tradition of the local inhabitants was preserved through the absorption of the various plant names into Arabic. In quite a number of instances flora referred to in biblical discourse have metaphorical or symbolic applications (Bloch 1995:13–17). In these cases, the metaphorical and symbolic uses of flora must be contextually determined but consonant with the Israelite classification and valorisation of the plants.1

1Arabs (1999:97, 311) defines simile, metaphor and symbol as follows: Simile is a figure of speech involving the comparison of one thing with another of a different kind, as an illustration (A is like B). Metaphor is the application of a name or descriptive term or phrase to an object or action to which it is imaginatively but not literally applicable without asserting a comparison (A is B). Metaphors are regarded as condensed or elliptical forms of similes and consist of the presentation of the underlying analogy or similarity. In discussing literature, symbol is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event, which in turn signifies something (e.g. ‘the cross’). See also Todd and Clarke (1999:249–68) and Jenni (1994:34, 37).
These observations pertain to the translation of the Hebrew term אֶרֶז [cedar] translated as κέδρος [cedar] or the related adjective κέδρινος in the Septuagint but identified differently in lexicographical works. The aim of the article in the first instance is to provide a description of these identification choices in light of lexicographical contradictions within a complexity theoretical approach (Marais 2014). The second aim is to determine the Israelite classification and valuation of the cedar as well as the contextual, metaphorical and symbolic uses of it. The hypothesis is that the term אֶרֶז is utilised in the Hebrew source text with a specific species in mind and to convey a specific metaphorical or symbolic meaning, whereas the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms which were available to them and provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute. Although it is impossible to know who the translators were or precisely when or where they lived, it is indisputable that they lived at a time and culture, if not a location, different from those who produced the Hebrew source text. By a careful comparison of the translation terms as compared to the source terms, it is nonetheless possible to ascertain the level of botanical knowledge of the Greek translators.

The paper is organised as follows: In the next section the contradictory identifications in the Hebrew and Greek lexicographical works of the term אֶרֶז and its translation as κέδρος or κέδρινος in the Septuagint are discussed. This is followed by an exposition of the ethnomedical and ethnobotanical data and indigenous knowledge concerning the Israelite classification and valuation of the cedar as well as its contextual, metaphorical and symbolic uses.

The identifications in the lexica of the term אֶרֶז and its translation as κέδρος or κέδρινος in the Septuagint

According to Andersen and Forbes (1989:51) and Lisowsky (1993/1958:139–140) there are 73 occurrences of the form אֶרֶז, one occurrence of the form אֶרֶז (Zph 2:14) and one occurrence of the form אֶרֶז (Ezk 27:24) in the Hebrew Bible.

According to Muraoka (2010:154) there are five translation terms in the Septuagint for אֶרֶז. They are κέδρος [cedar] or κέδρινος (the adjectival form), κυπάρισσος or κυπαρίσσις (the adjectival form), and ξύλον [wood, tree]. There are also cases of non-translation of the source text item.

The translation term κέδρος is used in Classical Greek. Liddell and Scott (1968:934) translate it with ‘cedar-tree’, ‘anything made of cedar-wood’; ‘a cedar coffin’, ‘a cedar box’ and ‘cedar-oil’. According to Liddell and Scott (1968:934) the term was applied by ancient authors to the prickly cedar (Juniperus oxycedrus), Syrian cedar (Juniperus excelsa), Phoenician cedar (Juniperus phoenicea), Himalayan cedar (Juniperus macropeba) and juniper (Juniperus communis). Montanari, Goh and Schroeder (2015:1107) are less explicit. In addition to ‘object made of cedar wood’, they provide ‘cedar’ (‘Syrian cedar’ and ‘Phoenician cedar’) and ‘juniper’ as translations without providing the genera or species.

The Septuagint lexica of Chamberlain (2011:97), Lust, Eynikel and Hauspie (2003:336) and Muraoka (2009:394) provide only the English translation ‘cedar’ without mentioning the species; this presents a problem in light of Liddell and Scott’s more precise description of the various species that can be referred to with the term κέδρος. As a result, it is not clear if the identification of Liddell and Scott is supported by Chamberlain, Lust et al. and Muraoka. Lewis and Short (1945/1879:308) refer to Juniperus oxycedrus as the identification of the Latin cedrus, which is translated as ‘the cedar’, ‘juniper-tree’. According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:758) there are 38 cases of אֶרֶז in Rahlfis and Hanhart (2006) as translations for אֶרֶז in the Hebrew Bible and two cases in Sirach. The translation term κέδρινος is used to typify the products manufactured from cedar wood (Liddell & Scott 1968:934; Montanari et al. 2015:1107). According to Hatch and Redpath (1998/1902:758) κέδρινος is used in 23 cases in Rahlfis and Hanhart (2006) to translate אֶרֶז in the Hebrew Bible and two cases in 1 Esdras.

It seems clear that where the translation of the term אֶרֶז in the Septuagint is κέδρος, it refers to the genus Juniperus of the cypress family (Cupressaceae) but the precise species is debatable.

The term אֶרֶז has different nuances in the various traditions of the Hebrew lexica. Under the root אֶרֶז, the lexicon of Brown, Driver and Briggs (1979:72) handles the term אֶרֶּז (masculine noun), which refers to the (1) ‘cedar-tree, (a) as growing’; ‘(b) especially in similes, of outward power, staleness and majesty’; similes of straightforward and strength; (2) ‘cedar-timber, cedar-wood for building’; (3) ‘cedar-wood used in purifications’; the term אֶרֶּז (feminine noun), which refers to ‘cedar-panels’, ‘cedar-work’; the term אֶרֶּז (adjective) referring to the properties ‘firm, strong’ (reflecting the view of Albert Schultens); and אֶרֶּז as a noun proper name locative referring to Meron in northern Palestine. However, there is no specific botanical identification of the tree.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs tradition is based on the lexicon of William Gesenius (1847), as translated and enlarged by Naudé and Naudé (2018). The plant kingdom is divided into divisions, classes, orders, families, genera and species (Wilson 1980:8–9). For example, seed-bearing plants (like a daisy) belong to the division called Spermatophyta. Because it is a flowering plant, it falls into the class Angiospermae, and belongs to the order of Asterales, that is, the flowers are characteristically grouped into compact heads that superficially resemble individual flowers. The family is the Compositae, because the daisy has composite flowers – made up of many smaller flowers called florets. The daisy belongs to the genus Bellis. Within the genus there are a number of species, for example, perennis.
Edward Robinson. According to Robinson (1871) his dictionary is edited (i.e. corrected) and enlarged by condensations from the thesaurus of Gesenius as completed by E. Rödiger, as well as the German editions of Gesenius’ Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament. The Latin version of Gesenius (1847), which served as the basis for the translation of Edward Robinson in 1836 and then of Tregelles (1950/1857), is influenced by the dictionary of Winer (1828).

Winer (1828:90) relates the root ʾerāz inter alia to the Arabic ajzāʿ after Albert Schultens with reference to concepts like firm, stable; a tree that has firm roots. Hence, the participle ʾerāz in Ezekiel 27:24 refers to firm construction; although Winer (1828:90) states that there are others who interpret it as of cedar-wood/made of cedar. With reference to Leviticus 14:4, Numbers 19:6, 1 Kings 6:18 and so on, the term ʾerāz refers to cedar, because of strong and stable roots. Winer (1828:90) adds that Cedrus libani is native to the Lebanon mountains specifically but that Celsius considered ʾerāz as pine. Winer (1828:90) has the view that the origin of the word (etymon) is best within the pine domain, based on his reading of the testimony of Theophrastus on the length of its roots. The translation of Robinson (1871:85–86) (as well as that of Tregelles 1857:78) does not add new information to Gesenius (1847:85).

Following Winer (1828:90), Gesenius (1847:85) and the translations of Robinson (1871:85–86) and Tregelles (1950/1857:78) relate the term ʾerāz to the root ʾerāz with the Arabic meanings as indicated above. They also mention that many take the passive participle ʾerāz to mean ‘made fast, made firm’ but that almost all the old translators have rendered the participle as ‘made of cedar’ and this is the preferred interpretation. They also repeated the viewpoint of Winer (1828:90) that the term ʾerāz refers to ‘cedar’ and is so called because of ‘the firmness of its roots which is remarkable in trees of the pine kind’ with reference to the history of plants by Theophrastus. According to their interpretation of Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder they identified ʾerāz as the Cedrus conifera, a tree uncommonly tall (Is 2:13; 37:24; Am 2:9) and wide-spreading (Ezek 31:3), formerly very abundant in Lebanon (Ps 29:5; 92:13; 104:16) ‘but now reduced to a very small number’ according to botany literature of the time. It is further stated that its wood is odoriferous, without knots, and not liable to decay and was used therefore for building and adorning the temple and royal palaces, especially for wainscots and ceilings. Hence, it was used for cedar work as described in 1 Kings 6:18. Similar to the Ethiopic and Aramaic terms, the Arab term ʾarz is still used by the inhabitants of Lebanon. Gesenius (1847:85), Robinson (1871:85–86) and Tregelles (1950/1857:78) therefore concluded that there is no need to deny ʾerāz to be the ‘cedar’ and to make it the ‘pine’, as done by Celsius. Concerning ʾerāz, in contrast to Winer (1828:90), Gesenius (1847:85), Robinson (1871:85–86) and Tregelles (1950/1857:78) put the emphasis on ‘made of cedar’ instead of ‘firm, stable’.

The meanings in Gesenius (1847:85) are followed by Wilson (1972 [1870]:70). Mühlu and Volck (1878:73) provide a summary of Gesenius (1859:90), utilising only the term ‘cedar’ as translation.

According to Köhler and Baumgartner (2001:86), who represent a second tradition of Hebrew lexicia, the term ʾerāz refers to a kind of tree, and its wood, from Lebanon, is used for beams, paneling and pillars. They mention that it is traditionally translated as ‘cedar’ and identify it as Cedrus libani var. However, according to Köhler and Baumgartner (2001:86) the latter does not have a trunk that is long for building purposes or for flagpoles, and the term must rather be translated as ‘fir’ and be identified with Abies cedica or another evergreen with a long trunk or with other tall-growing conifers. This viewpoint is argued for by Köhler (1937:163–165).

Clines (1993:373, 2009:32) provides ‘cedar (of Lebanon)’ as the translation of the term ʾerāz but states that it is sometimes to be identified with a species of juniper (Juniperus oxycedrus or Juniperus phoenicea). It is not clear how Clines derived this identification, because in his lexicon meanings are determined only by context and not from data derived from cognate languages.

The Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew (SDBH) (www.sdbh.org) is an online dictionary currently in progress based upon cognitive semantics (see De Blois 2013). It describes ʾerāz as an ‘evergreen tree growing up to 40 m tall, with a trunk up to 2.5 m in diameter; as it grows older its branches spread out more and more horizontally; it grows in elevated places’. It is identified as Cedrus libani and is described as a ‘highly appreciated building material; also used in cleaning ritual; = associated with beauty, quality, pride, and strength’. English translations ‘cedar’ and ‘cedar wood’ are suggested. The following contexts are provided for the translations:

- beauty, size, status, strength: cedar (as a beautiful, strong and imposing tree)
- clean and unclean: cedar wood (used in a cleansing ritual)
- construction: cedar wood (of high quality; used for construction)
- plant > human: cedar (personified).

In Rabbinic Hebrew (Jastrow 1967:117) and in Modern Hebrew (Alcalay 1963–1965:155; Sivan & Levenston 1975) the

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6. His methodology is based on the contextual usage of the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish knowledge as reflected in their commentaries, and comparison with related dialects (Holtz 2013:507). With the emphasis on etymology, the words are not organised alphabetically but according to triliteral roots.

7. Köhler and Baumgartner published the first edition in 17 installments from 1948–1953 and a one volume issue in 1953. A second edition was published in 1958. The corrections to the first edition were published in a supplement, which also included a German-Hebrew and a German-Aramaic glossary, as well as lists of botanical and zoological terms. The third edition appeared from 1967 to 1996 in German with an English translation in 1995 and draws on the latest scholarship. The entries in all three editions are organised alphabetically by form. By including data from cognate languages, it maintains the traditional etymological focus.

8. Köhler (1937), Köhler and Baumgartner (1967) and Köhler and Baumgartner (2001) label the species as Abies cedica rather than Abies cedica. The term Abies cedica as found in Köhler and Baumgartner (1953, 1958) reflects the currently accepted term in the Catalogue of Life.

9. In this dictionary the meanings of words are determined strictly according to usage in context, without any mention of cognates. Entries report words’ relationships to other words by including collocational information such as the subjects and objects of verbs, adjectives that regularly modify nouns and words’ synonyms and antonyms. It includes all Hebrew textual sources before 200 CE (Holtz 2013:509).

10. See the criticisms levelled by Andersen (1995) against the dictionary with regard to the failure to acknowledge lexical meaning derived from cognate languages, the ancient versions and later varieties of Hebrew.
term יִרְז is only translated as 'cedar'. In Ugaritic (Gordon 1965:365) and Arabic (Wehr 1958:11) the cognate term is translated as 'cedar'. According to Payne Smith (1979 [1903]:28) the translation of the cognate Syriac term is ‘cedar’ or ‘pine’; however, Sokoloff (2009:97) has only ‘cedar’ as a translation.

To summarise, the Brown-Driver-Briggs tradition and SDBH utilise the term ‘cedar’ as translation and identify the tree with a species within the genus of cedar (Cedrus; SDBH = Cedrus libani). Earlier in the Brown-Driver-Briggs tradition there is also reference to ‘pine’ (Pinus), an identification that was later rejected. In contrast, the Köhler-Baumgartner tradition prefers the translation ‘fir’ and an identification with Abies cilicica. However, note that ‘cedar’, ‘pine’ and ‘fir’ refer to three different genera within the family of conifers, Pinaceae. It is only the Clines tradition which puts the identification within another family, namely, the cypress family (Cupressaceae) by identifying the term יִרְז with species within the genus Juniperus. It seems that the Clines tradition has a similar identification with the Septuagint species of trees constituting the genera Juniperus (the term κόρδος).

Although Noth (1968:90–92) supports the viewpoint of Köhler (1937), he has the further view that the term יִרְז does not refer to an exactly botanically defined species but to the mighty Lebanon trees. However, Noth (1968:91) explicitly states that it is not to be identified with the cypress species, for example, Cupressus sempervirens L.

It is clear that there are contradictions in Hebrew dictionaries themselves as well as between the Hebrew and the Greek dictionaries concerning identification. Dictionaries also differ in terms of the nature of information provided as well as the amount of botanical information that can be used for the identification of the species (providing botanical information or refraining from providing it). The nature of dictionaries will be addressed briefly in the next section.

**Dictionaries and the nature of botanical information**

In general terms one may describe the development in linguistics of the last two centuries as a movement from the study of words to that of the sentence and eventually to the study of language use, for example, in texts.\(^ {11}\) In line with the spirit of historicism of the 19th century, understanding the history of a word implied understanding it. In the first half of the 20th century this notion changed drastically with the advent of structuralism. Understanding an expression was no longer associated with its history (i.e. diachrony) but understanding the syntagmatic and paradigmatic relationships it may enter into (i.e. synchrony) (see Naudé 2002). The pragmatic turn in linguistics occurred at the beginning of the 1980s with the interest in the use of language. It involves *inter alia* developments in the field of pragmatics, cognitive linguistics and anthropological linguistics. Pragmatics accounts for both the cognitive and social realities of language use and impacts on lexicography. Assuming that the meaning of a word is more than linguistic information as such, and that it is also a cognitive and cultural representation of the world, implies that a relationship between images and words on the one hand and experience (cognition) of the language user on the other must be established in an attempt to find cultural explanations for these conceptions. However, in the past the information that was presented in dictionaries was primarily linguistic in nature.

Words and their meanings are too multifaceted to be adequately conceptualised in terms of only one elementary concept or idea. What is required is an explanation that is actually a whole set of simultaneous, interacting understandings. The open interplay of multiple interacting elements and forces, such as cognition, consciousness, experience, human interaction, society, culture, history and so on force the view that words and their meaning comprise a complex phenomenon in which the effects of these components are connected. Complexity theory has in the recent past emerged as a new paradigm, not only for applied linguistics (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008) but also for gaining a new perspective on language (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman 2009) and, recently, translation studies (Marais 2014).

This view clearly steers away from the modernist tendency to reduce the sole or main explanatory principle of the nature of words and their meanings in terms of a single dimension or modality of reality. Such explanatory one-sidedness or reductionist practice characterises lexicography throughout its history. A few examples will suffice: Older lexicons tended to catalogue uses of words rather than their meanings. Clines (1993; 2009) uses only the contexts of words and omitted cognate information and diachronic language data. SDBH uses only semantic domains. Though each of these approaches play a role in lexicography, none is sufficient to explain all aspects of meaning. At the same time, the complexity viewpoint sets itself apart from postmodernism, whose response is also a reductionist practice of reality by fragmenting it and to deny wholeness by making it multiple, hybrid and difficult to grasp (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008:1). In contrast to modernist and postmodernist tendencies, complexity theory embraces complexity, interconnectedness and dynamism (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008:1; see also Ellis and Larsen-Freeman 2009; Givón 2009; Sampson, Gil & Trudgill 2009). The argumentation is in favour of a multilevel, hierarchical view of the language reality in which causality is a non-linear, complex phenomenon that is reciprocal (Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008:7, 60).
In contemporary Biblical Plant Hermeneutics each plant must be studied in situ and the indigenous knowledge about the plant and its uses must be considered as well as its context in the biblical text (Musselman 2012; Zohary 1962; 1973). Botanical information thus comprises one aspect of lexicographical inquiry within a complexity approach. In understanding the terms ירק and קדר, the starting point must be their precise identification as flora. Both terms are understood to refer to conifers. Conifers are scientifically identified as the order Pinales (previously known as Coniferales). The family Pinaeaceae consists of eight families, of which two are important to our discussion, namely Pinaceae and Cupressaceae. The family Pinaceae consists of 11 genera: Abies (47 species), Cathaya (1 species), Cedrus (3 species), Keteleeria (3 species), Larix (11 species), Nothrotsuga (1 species), Picea (38 species), Pinus (113 species), Pseudolarix (1 species), Pseudotsuga (4 species) and Tsuga (9 species). The genus Cedrus has three species: Cedrus atlantica, Cedrus deodara and Cedrus libani, with two varieties, brevifolia and libani. Only Cedrus libani grows in the Levant. The family Cupressaceae has 30 genera, of which two are important here: Cupressus (15 species) and Juniperus (53 species).

The Hebrew and Greek lexica cited above are often vague and sometimes contradictory in their botanical identifications of the terms ירק and קדר. What is particularly fascinating is their reliance, in diverse ways, on two classical descriptions of flora – Theophrastus and Pliny the Elder – for the botanical features of the terms and their identification.

Based on the characteristics of plants, Theophrastus (370–285 BCE)14 in his Inquiry into Plants (Book III, XII:3) provides the following description concerning קדר:

The ‘cedar’, some say, has two forms, the Lycian and the Phoenician; but some, as the people of Mount Ida, say that there is only one form. It resembles the arkeuthos (Phoenician cedar),15 differing chiefly in the leaf, that of ‘cedar’ being hard, sharp and spiny, while that of arkeuthos is softer: the latter tree also seems to be of taller growth. However some do not give them distinct names, but call them both ‘cedar’ distinguishing them however as ‘the cedar’ and ‘prickly cedar’. Both are branching trees with many joints and twisted wood. On the other hand arkeuthos has only a small amount of close core, which, when the tree is cut, soonrots, while the trunk of ‘cedar’ consists mainly of heart and does not rot. The colour of the heart in each case is red: that of the ‘cedar’ is fragrant, but not that of the other. The fruit of ‘cedar’ is yellow, as large as the myrtle-berry, fragrant, and sweet to the taste. That of arkeuthos is like it in other respects, but black, of astrigent taste and practically uneatable; it remains on the tree for a year, and then, when another grows, last year’s fruit falls off. According to the Arcadians it has three fruits on the tree at once, last year’s, which is not yet ripe, that of the year before last which is now ripe and eatable, and it also shews the new fruit. Satyurus said that the wood-cutters gathered him specimens of both kinds which were flowerless. The bark is like that of the cypress but rougher. Both kinds have spreading shallow roots. These trees grow in rocky cold parts and seek out such districts. (translation 1999/1916:235, 237)

Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE) in his Natural History (Book XIII, IX:52–53) is even more explicit concerning the identification of different species:

Phoenicia has a small variety of cedar that resembles a juniper. It is of two kinds, the Lycian and the Phoenician, which have different leaves; the one with a hard, prickly, pointed leaf is called the oxycedros, while the other is a branchy tree and the wood is full of knots and has a better scent. They bear fruit the size of a myrtle-berry, with a sweet taste. The larger cedar also has two kinds, of which the flowering one bears no fruit, while the one that bears fruit does not flower, and in its case the previous fruit is replaced by a new one. Its seed is like that of the cypress. Some people call this tree the cedarpine. From it is obtained the resin held in the highest favour, while its actual timber lasts for ever, and consequently it has been the regular practice to use it even for making statues of the gods – the Apollo Sosianus in a shrine at Rome, which was brought from Seleucia, is made of cedar-wood. There is a tree resembling the cedar in Arcadia and a shrub in Phrygia is called the cedrys. (translation 1860:129, 131)

Both Theophrastus and Pliny utilise their own environment to attempt to describe and understand קדר. In so doing, they made identifications with trees that are not in Lebanon. A similar situation obtains in ancient Egypt, where it is problematic to identify any of the pertinent Egyptian terms for plant products (ς, σφ, μρω) specifically with Cedrus libani, even though cedars from Lebanon were a critical feature of trade between Egypt and the Levant (Ward 1991).

These early botanical descriptions are subsequently utilised in a variety of ways in the Hebrew and Greek dictionaries. Gesenius (Trelleges 1950/1857:78) uses Theophrastus to argue that קדר is the cedar based upon the features attributed to ירד in the biblical text: the tree is ‘uncommonly tall’, ‘wide-spread’ and used for building and adorning the temple and royal palaces. Citing Ritter as further confirmation, Gesenius argues that ‘there was therefore no need to deny ירד to be the cedar, and to make it the pine, as done by Celsius in Hierob. i. 106, seq’ (Tregelles 1950/1857:78). Gesenius is thus employing the methodology of Biblical Plant Hermeneutics within a complexity approach in which he utilises botany, the contexts of use within the biblical text, cognate languages and all information available at his disposal to identify the term. By contrast, Köhler (1937:163–165) employs a reductionist approach by understanding the characteristics of cedars based upon European varieties in which the trunks are branching and too short for the kind of massive building uses described in the biblical text. As a result, he identified ירד with another species, Abies cilicia,
which grows 10 m–25 m high and is of the genus Abies rather than Cedrus within the family Pinaceae. This mistaken identification could have been avoided by an examination of the species of trees in situ in Lebanon.

The Greek dictionaries – Liddell and Scott (1968:934) and Montanari et al. (2015:1107) – also employed a reductionistic strategy. They read Theophrastus and Pliny based upon their environmental worldview, which was far removed from the Levant. They read Theophrastus as making possible an identification of κέδρος with different species in the genera Juniperus in the cypress family (Cupressaceae). Pliny’s more explicit description strengthened their view connecting κέδρος to Juniperus. The reductionistic strategy of the Greek dictionaries in which plant hermeneutics did not play a proper role resulted in an incorrect identification of κέδρος with Juniperus rather than Cedrus.

In the following section is a description of the translation of the term לברון as κέδρος in the Septuagint. It will be determined if there are shifts in the specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text.

An analysis of the term יער והhis translation as κέδρος in the Septuagint

The translation of the term יער in the Hebrew Bible as κέδρος in the Septuagint

The term יער in the source text and its translation κέδρος are associated specifically with Lebanon, which is retained in the translation (compare examples 1 and 2).16 The cedars of Lebanon (Cedrus libani) (Hebrew, בַּלְבוֹן; Greek, κέδρος) never grew within the boundaries of Israel.17 They are restricted to higher elevations on the Lebanon ridge (1500 m–1900 m above sea level), where the western wind from the Mediterranean brings moisture in the form of rain, fog and snow. A tiny fraction of the original cedar forests remain in Lebanon. Natural stands of cedar also occur in Cyprus, Syria and in the Taurus Mountains of Turkey, where ample moist air provides a receptive habitat (Musselman 2006:576–577).

1. Zechariah 11:18

Open, Lebanon, your doors and let fire devour your cedars!

In the following cases the term יער occurs in a series with the term שְׂפָר in the Hebrew Bible and is translated as κέδρος and κυπάρισσος, respectively, in the Septuagint. In Isaiah 37:24 the terms are transferred without any change of the context.19

2. Sirach 24:13

[The Hebrew text is not extant.]

3. Isaiah 37:24

With your servants, you’ve insulted the Lord; you said, ‘I, with my many chariots, have gone up to the highest mountains, to the farthest reaches of Lebanon. I have cut down its tallest cedars, and to the utmost limits of my chariots I have gone up to the height of the mountains and to the utmost limits of Lebanon, and I will plant in the desert cedar, acacia, myrtle, and the oil tree (Aleppo pine); I will put in the dry land a cedar and a box tree and a myrtle and a cypress and a white poplar. (NETS)

In Isaiah 41:19 the two terms occur in a series with other species of trees, but a number of them as well as the Hebrew parallelism are deleted in the translation (see Elliger 1978:157–158).

4. Isaiah 41:19

I will put in the desert cedar, acacia, myrtle, and the oil tree (Aleppo pine); I will put in the dry land a cedar and a box tree and a myrtle and a cypress and a white poplar. (NETS)

Ben Sira 24:13–17, one of the most botanically rich passages of the Bible, mentions the flora in their ecological contexts. Lady Wisdom is compared to the flora by way of similes. Although the source text is lost, Sirach 24:13 makes a clear distinction between κέδρος and κυπάρισσος in terms of their ecological distribution, namely Lebanon and the mountains of Hermon, respectively.

In the following section is a description of the translation of the term יער as κέδρος in the Septuagint.

An analysis of the term יער and its translation as κέδρος in the Septuagint

The translation of the term יער in the Hebrew Bible as κέδρος in the Septuagint

The term יער in the source text and its translation κέδρος are associated specifically with Lebanon, which is retained in the translation (compare examples 1 and 2). The cedars of Lebanon (Cedrus libani) (Hebrew, בַּלְבָנ֑וֹן; Greek, κέδρος) never grew within the boundaries of Israel. They are restricted to higher elevations on the Lebanon ridge (1500 m–1900 m above sea level), where the western wind from the Mediterranean brings moisture in the form of rain, fog and snow. A tiny fraction of the original cedar forests remain in Lebanon. Natural stands of cedar also occur in Cyprus, Syria and in the Taurus Mountains of Turkey, where ample moist air provides a receptive habitat (Musselman 2006:576–577).

16 In the analysis that follows, the textual versions used are as follows: Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (1997) is used for the text of the Hebrew Bible, and Rahlfis and Hanshil (2006) for the Septuagint text.

17 See the extensive description of the cedars of Lebanon in Meiggs (1982:49–87).

18 Psalm 29:5 (28:5 LXX), 104:16 (103:16 LXX) and Jeremiah 22:6–7 are similar. The strength that the cedar projects serves as a measure of divine strength in Psalm 29:5 (28:5 LXX).

19 2 Kings 19:23 is similar.
Elliger (1978:157–158) provides various explanations for the discrepancy in the number of trees between the Biblical Hebrew text and the Septuagint translation, namely, a possibly different or damaged Hebrew vorlage or scribal error. It is interesting that the later Symmachus as well as the Vulgate reflect all the trees of the Biblical Hebrew text. We suggest in this paper that it is plausible that it was a translation strategy of deletion of the source text item is utilised and for the Hebrew term שֶׁמֶן [oil tree (Aleppo pine)] is never translated in the Septuagint. Note that the Hebrew term that refers to the term ‘white poplar’ is בהֵר (יַעֲבָר). By utilising λάσις the translators provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute for the Hebrew term רַחּ, which is to be identified with the elder tree. In both cases the specific metaphor or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text is retained, namely the height of the cedar and the beauty of the cypress in Isaiah 37:24 and the shadows of the trees in Isaiah 41:19 to make the desert viable so that it ceases to be an unsurmountable barrier between the exiles and their homeland (Beuken 1979:90–91; Elliger 1978:166–168; Westermann 1969:80). In the last instance it is clear that the Greek translator was not able to make correct identifications of the trees to which the Hebrew terms referred and some of them were even deleted, which support our hypothesis that the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms that were available to them and provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute.

Our hypothesis also receives support in the following cases (examples 5 through 7), where the term שֶׁמֶן occurs in a series with the term שִׁטְעָה in the Hebrew Bible; the first-mentioned term is translated as κέδρος but the second-mentioned term is substituted in the Septuagint by various terms that do not have the same referent as the term שֶׁמֶן in the Hebrew Bible (examples 5 and 6) or it is deleted (example 7). In Isaiah 14:8 the substitute is τὰ ξύλα τοῦ Λιβάνου, a general term for ‘trees of Lebanon’; in Zechariah 11:2 the substitute is πῦλος, a term for the Hebrew רַחּ; and in 1 Kings 5:26 the translation strategy of deletion of the source text item is utilised and there is no translation for the term.

5. Isaiah 14:8

Even the cypresses rejoice over you, the cedars of Lebanon: ‘Since you were laid low, no logger comes up against us!’

Isaiah 14:8 forms part of the rejoicing of the earth at the death of the tyrant. According to the Hebrew text the Syrian juniper trees (similar to the cypress) and the cedars of Lebanon are breaking into song over the death of their arch-enemy, who demanded their wood.20

6. Zechariah 11:2

κατεσπάσθη ὁ δρυμὸς ὁ σύμφυτος, ὅτι μεγάλως μεγιστᾶνες ἐταλαιπώρησαν· ὀλολυξάτω πῖτος διότι πέπτωκεν κέδρος, ὅτι μεγάλως μεγιστᾶνες ἐταλαιπώρησαν· ὀλολυξάτω πῖτος διότι πέπτωκεν κέδρος, ὅτι μεγάλως μεγιστᾶνες ἐταλαιπώρησαν· ὀλολυξάτω πῖτος διότι πέπτωκεν κέδρος, ὅτι μεγάλως μεγιστᾶνες ἐταλαιπώρησαν· ὀλολυξάτω πῖτος διότι πέπτωκεν κέδρος, ὅτι μεγάλως μεγιστᾶνες ἐταλαιπώρησαν.

Scream, cypress, for the cedar has fallen; those majestic ones have been devastated. Scream, oaks of Bashan, for the deep forest has fallen. (Contemporary English Bible)

7. 1 Kings 5:24

καὶ ἦν Ὑχρὰ διδοὺς τῷ Σαλωμῶν κέδρος καὶ πᾶν θῆλμα αὐτοῦ.
So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-wood and cypress-wood according to his whole desire. (NETS)

In the verse in example 8, Solomon spoke about plants from the cedar of Lebanon to marjoram, suggesting that the cedar was the greatest. This is retained in the Greek translation.

8. 1 Kings 5:13 (4:33 LXX)

καὶ ἔλλησαν περὶ τῶν ξύλων ἀπὸ τῆς κέδρου τῆς ἐν τῷ Λίβανῳ καὶ ἔλλησαν περὶ τῶν κτητῶν καὶ περὶ τῶν πετεινῶν καὶ περὶ τῶν ἱερῶν...

And he spoke of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon and as far as the marjoram that comes out through the wall, and he spoke of animals and of the birds and of the reptiles and of the fishes.

The cedar trees are valued on account of their lofty and luxuriant growth and the durability of their wood. At high elevations and low temperatures, growth is slow and centuries are required to produce the majestic trees, with their distinctive...
brown, resin-soaked heartwood and lighter sapwood (Musselman 2006:576–577). It is the largest indigenous tree in the Near East with a height of 30 m and a diameter of 2 or more meters. It has a pyramidal form with thick, spreading horizontal branches and may live for two to three thousand years. In Isaiah 2:13 the cedar is typified for its great height as the tallest tree known at its time. The first-mentioned term is translated as כֹּ֤ה אָמַר֙ אֲדֹנָ֣י יְהוִ֔ה וְלָקַ֣חְתִּי אָ֗נִי מִצַּמֶּ֧תֶרֶת

24. Ezekiel 17:22

and against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan;

10. Jeremiah 22:23

κατοικοῦσα ἐν τῷ Λιβάνῳ ἐννοσσεύουσα ἐν ταῖς κέδροις καταστανεάζεσθαι ἐν τῷ ἔλθην σου ὀδίνεις ὡς τικτούσης. You who live in Lebanon, nesting in the cedars, who will pity you when you are overcome in pain, like that of childbirth?

13. Ezekiel 17:23

ἐν ὅραι μετεώροι τοῦ Ἰσραήλ καὶ καταφυτεύσεται, καὶ ἔξοισε βλαστόν καὶ ποιήσει καρπὸν καὶ ἔσται εἰς κέδρον μεγάλην, καὶ ἀναπαύσεται ὑποκάτω αὐτοῦ πᾶν θηρίον, καὶ πᾶν πετεινὸν ὑπὸ τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ ἀκοπατήσαταιπάν θηρίον, καὶ πᾶν πετεινὸν ὑπὸ τὴν σκιὰν αὐτοῦ ἀκοπατήσαται.
On the mountain height of Israel I will plant it, and it will raise branches and bear fruit, and become a beautiful cedar. Every bird will live under it; every winged creature will live in the shade of its branches.

And I will hang him in a mountain of Israel high in the air. And I will transplant him, and he shall produce a shoot and bear fruit and become a large cedar. And every animal shall rest under him, and every winged creature shall rest under his shade, and his shoots shall be restored. (NETS)

The cedar is very scarce and is of great value as indicated in examples 14 and 15. This value is conveyed in the Greek translation in example 14, but it is lost in example 15, where it is indicated as part of a set of building materials. It is slow-growing, with the result that it produces solid hardwood, which has resistance against decay. It is of a beautiful, warm, red tone, solid and free from knots.

14. 1 Kings 10:27

κεὶ ἐδόκεν ο βασιλεύς το χρυσιον καὶ το ἀργυριον ἐν Ιερουσαλημ ὡς λίθους καὶ το κέδρους ἔδωκεν ως συκαμίνους τας ἐν ττ πεδινη εις πλήθης.

And the king gave silver in Jerusalem like stones, and he gave the cedars as sycamores that are in a plain in abundance.

15. Isaiah 9:9

Πλίθοι πεπτώκασιν, ἀλλα διότε λαξεύσωμεν λίθους καὶ ἑκόσιον συκαμίνους καὶ κέδρους καὶ οἰκοδομήσωμεν έκκόψωμεν συκαμίνους καὶ ἐκκόψωμεν κέδρους καὶ οἰκοδομήσωμεν καταπέτασμα της αὐλης τοῦ σεαυτῷ οἶκου τον κατά πρόσωπον τον ναον.

Bricks have fallen, but let’s rebuild with dressed stones; sycamores were cut down, but let’s replace them with cedars.

Cedarwood is used as a durable building material, as indicated in example 16. Historically, the cedar of Lebanon was one of the most important building materials in the Near East (Musselman 2006:576–577).

16. 1 Kings 7:11 (7:48 LXX)

και ἐπέτεκασαν τιμίως κατά το μέτρον ἀπελεκήτων καὶ κέδρους.

Above them were high-quality stones cut to measure, as well as cedar. (CEB)

And above with costly stones, according to the measure of unhewn (i.e. unhewn stones), and with cedars. (NETS)

Cedar is used as a building material, especially as wainscoting, as indicated in example 17, or as trimmed cedar logs, as in example 18.

17. Jeremiah 22:14

και ἐκδομήσωμεν την αὐλήν την ἐκκόσμησιν, τρεῖς στίχους ἀπελεκήτων καὶ στήριξις κατατεθήκη τῆς αὐλής τοῦ σεαυτοῦ οἰκον τον κατά πρόσωπον τον ναον.

He says: I will build myself a grand palace; with spacious upper chambers, provided with windows, paneled in cedar, and painted with vermillion.

18. 1 Kings 6:36

και ἐκδομήσωμεν την αὐλήν την ἐκκόσμησιν, τρεῖς στίχους ἀπελεκήτων καὶ στήριξις κατατεθήκη τῆς αὐλής τοῦ σεαυτοῦ οἰκον τον κατά πρόσωπον τον ναον.

He built the inner court with three rows of cut stone followed by one row of trimmed cedar. (CEB)

In Zephaniah 2:14 the description closes with an explanatory sentence about the destruction of the palace and state buildings so that the costly panelling of the walls is exposed. It seems that the Greek translation made a different interpretation of τῆς αὐλής τοῦ σεαυτοῦ οἰκον τον κατά πρόσωπον τον ναον.

19. Zephaniah 2:14

και νεκράσαντας επάνω τις οἰκον συμμετρον οὐκ ἐπιρράτωσαν, ὁπερίᾳ ρυπωτά δεσπαλαμενι θυρίσον καὶ εξυλωμένα ἐν κέδρου καὶ κεροσημένα ἐν μέλτῳ.

He says: I will build myself a grand palace; with spacious upper chambers, provided with windows, paneled in cedar, and painted with vermillion. (NETS)

Above them were high-quality stones cut to measure, as well as cedar. (CEB)

And above with costly stones, according to the measure of unhewn (i.e. unhewn stones), and with cedars. (NETS)

Cedar is used as a building material, especially as wainscoting, as indicated in example 17, or as trimmed cedar logs, as in example 18.

17. Jeremiah 22:14

και ἐκδομήσωμεν την αὐλήν την ἐκκόσμησιν, τρεῖς στίχους ἀπελεκήτων καὶ στήριξις κατατεθήκη τῆς αὐλής τοῦ σεαυτοῦ οἰκον τον κατά πρόσωπον τον ναον.

He says: I will build myself a grand palace; with spacious upper chambers, provided with windows, paneled in cedar, and painted with vermillion. (NETS)
Herds shall lie down in her, all the beasts of the field. Moreover, the owl and the porcupine will spend the night on its columns. A bird’s call will resound from the window. Desolation will be on the sill, for he will lay bare her cedar paneling.31

The cedar was likely the largest living thing that ancient people saw during their lifetimes and ‘was considered the prince of trees’ (Zohary 1982:104). What the lion was to the animal world, the cedar was to the plant world. Its impressiveness projects majesty, stateliness and outward power, which creates an image of the mighty ruler. As the most majestic plant, cedars were often used metaphorically, as when prominent people were likened in the form of similes below.

20. Psalm 92:13 (91:13 LXX)

This verse links itself to the cedar metaphor. The righteously caused to flourish like a palm, and like a cedar in Lebanon he will grow. Psalm 92:13 links the cedar to righteousness, that is, presumably, to its straightness and height above other trees.

21. Amos 2:9

The term for cedar, whether individual (κέδρος) or collective (κέδρινος), is an adjective. In collocation with nouns like θυγατέρα, it translates the Hebrew construct relation that is considered a suitable familiar or local substitute.

22. Canticles 5:15

It was famous for its great beauty as suggested by the simile in Canticles 5:15.

23. 2 Kings 14:9

To summarise, in the cases where the term גּוֹר is in the Hebrew Bible is translated as κόρος in the Septuagint, it can be concluded that there are no shifts in the specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text. In contexts where κόρος forms part of a set of trees, it is clear that the Greek translator was not able to make correct identifications of the trees to which the Hebrew terms refer and some of them are even deleted, which support our hypothesis that the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms that were available to them and provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute.

The translation of the term גּוֹר in the Hebrew Bible as κόρονος in the Septuagint

The term κόρονος is an adjective. In collocation with nouns like γυνή, it translates the Hebrew construct relation that is used to express the product-material relationship in Biblical Hebrew (Van der Merwe, Naudé & Kroeze 2017:220–229).

31. The form 약, a collective, is used.
32. The strength of prominent people is compared to the strength of oaks.
33. Its symbolic value is even retained in contemporary culture; for example, the cedar is the national emblem of Lebanon.
34. Sirach 50:12 is similar.
35. 2 Chronicles 25:18 and Judges 9:15 are similar.
A lesser-known use of cedar wood was in oblations for purification, as, for example, in ritual cleansing for leprosy (Musselman 2006:576–577).

24. Leviticus 14:46

καὶ προστάξαι ὁ ιερέας καὶ

λήμφοντα τὸ κεκαθαρισμένον δύο ὀρνίθια ζῶντα καθαρὰ καὶ

ξύλον κεδρίνον καὶ

καλλοσμένον κόκκινον καὶ

τάσσοντα.

and the priest shall give orders, and they shall take for the one who has been cleansed two living clean fowl and cedar wood and scarlet spun thread and hyssop. (NETS)

Our hypothesis concerning the Septuagint translators’ strategies also receives support in the following case (example 25), where the term ἄρεν occurs in a series with the terms πεύκη and σμύρνα in the Hebrew Bible. The first-mentioned term is translated as ἀρξα κόκκινα [cedar wood], but the second-mentioned term is substituted in the Septuagint by ἀρχείθυνα [juniper wood], which does not have the same referent as the term πεύκη [cypress] in the Hebrew Bible. The third term in the Hebrew Bible σμύρνα, which refers to juniper trees (Juniperus phoenicea or Juniperus excelsa), which grow at a higher elevation in the Lebanon and Amanus ranges, is translated with ἀρξα πάσκα [pine wood].37

25. 2 Chronicles 2:7

καὶ ἐπιστεκόμενοι μοι ἄρξα κόκκινα καὶ

ἀρχείθυνα καὶ πάσκα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου, δει ἐγὼ οὖς οἱ δοῦλοι σου ὀδούσαν κατά τοὺς ἄρξα ἐκ τοῦ Λιβάνου καὶ ἱδοι οἱ παῖδες σου μετά τῶν παίδων μου

Send me also cedar, cypress, and juniper timber from Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled in cutting Lebanon timber. My servants will work with your servants.

And send me cedar wood and juniper and pine from Lebanon, for I know how your slaves know about cutting wood from Lebanon. See, your servants will be with my servants. (NETS)

Valued as a high-quality timber, the use of cedar wood in both the temple in Jerusalem (1 Ki 5) and the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon (1 Ki 7:2) reflects on the wealth and power of the monarch and serves as a symbol of superior quality and durability.

26. 1 Kings 7:2 (7:39 LXX)

καὶ ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ θεοῦ ἔλεγεν ἄρεν ὑψιστός·

καὶ ἐξώθησαν τὸν οἶκον

δρυμοῦ τοῦ Λιβάνου ἕκατον

πήχων μήκους αὐτοῦ καὶ

πυκνότατα πῆχων πλάτος

αὐτοῦ καὶ τριάκοντα πῆχων

ὕψος αὐτοῦ καὶ τριῶν

πῆχων στίχων

στύλων κεδρίνων καὶ

μίμησα κόκκινος τοὺς

στύλους.

He built the House of the Forest of the Lebanon one hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide, and thirty cubits high, built on four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar engravings on the pillars.

27. 2 Samuel 7:2

καὶ εἶπαν οἱ ισραήλιται πρὸς

Ναθανὶelsen ὁ προφήτης ἰδίῳ ἐν

ἐγὼ κατοικῶν ἐν οἴκῳ κέδρινῳ, καὶ ἢ κιβώτιον τοῦ θεοῦ καθίσταται ἐν μέσῳ τῆς σκηνῆς.

The king said to Nathan the prophet, ‘Look! I’m living in a cedar palace, but God’s chest stays in a tent!’ (NETS)

28. Canticles 8:9

ἤδη ἔθρηκεν ἡ ἁπάντωσις ἡς

δύο ὀρνίθια ζῶντα καθαρὰ καὶ

κέδρινα καὶ ἱδοι οἱ παῖδες

σου μετὰ τῶν παίδων μου.

If she is a city wall, then we will build a turret of silver upon her. And if she is a door, let us build barricade her with a panel of cedar. (CEB)

To summarise, in the cases where the term ἄρεν in the Hebrew Bible is translated as a noun in collocation with the adjective κόκκινος in the Septuagint it can be concluded that there are no shifts in the specific metaphoric or symbolic meaning as conveyed in the source text. In contexts where the term forms part of a set of trees, it is clear that the Greek translator was not able to make correct identifications of the trees the Hebrew terms refer to, which supports our hypothesis that the translators of the Septuagint used Greek terms that were available to them and provided what they considered a suitable familiar or local substitute.

Conclusion

The names cedar, fir, pine, juniper and cypress refer to specific species of conifers. Although cedar, fir and pine are in the same family (family Pinaceae) they represent species of three


37. The identification of ἐπιστεύω will be discussed in a future article.

38.2 Samuel 5:11, 1 Kings 5:22, 1 Kings 6:10, 1 Kings 6:15, 1 Kings 9:11, 1 Chronicles 14:1, 1 Chronicles 22:4, Ezra 3:7, 1 Esdras 4:48 and 1 Esdras 5:53 are similar.

39.2 Samuel 7:7, 1 Chronicles 17:1 and 1 Chronicles 17:6 are similar.
different genera (Cedrus, Abies and Pinus). Juniper and cypress are in a different family (family Cupressaceae), whereas they represent species in two different genera, namely the cypresses (Cupressus) and junipers (Juniperus).

Determining the botanical identifications of the Hebrew term הָרֶץ and its translation by κέδρος or κέδρινος in the Septuagint is complicated by the vague and contradictory definitions provided in the Hebrew and Greek lexica. A complexity approach to lexicography utilising the insights of Biblical Plant Hermeneutics provides a means for evaluating the conflicting claims of the lexica, many of which are the result of reductionistic lexicographical methodologies. The Hebrew term הָרֶץ was found to refer exclusively to Cedrus libani of the genus Cedrus and not to other genera (Juniperus or Abies). The Septuagint translators use κέδρος as a translation of Hebrew הָרֶץ without any shifts in the metaphoric or symbolic meaning of the source text. However, the Septuagint translators use κέδρος as only one translational equivalent of הָרֶץ. When the term is found alongside other terms for trees, the Greek translator is not able to correctly identify all of the trees in the Hebrew but rather provides what he considers to be a suitable substitute.

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Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no financial or personal relationships that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Authors’ contributions

J.A.N. conceptualised the article. J.A.N. and C.L.M.N. jointly researched and wrote the article.

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