

Isa 1:2-3: A Commentary

John F. Hobbins
jfhobbins@gmail.com

There are many ways to comment on a biblical text. The method followed here involves comparing the language of the original with translations of it. The act of comparison throws textual features we might otherwise miss into sharp relief.

The biblical text is not known to us directly. We lack the cultural and linguistic knowledge we would need to have to hear the text and immediately grasp its nuances. All interpreters, knowingly or unknowingly, approach the text indirectly.

Most interpreters' access to the text is limited to knowledge obtained through one or more translations, and a degree of familiarity with the larger text in which it is embedded. Contact with the text is reduced to that which carries over in translation. As everyone knows, even a good translation is only a partial transcript of what the original contains.

The better-equipped interpreter approaches the text in Hebrew, but still indirectly, through glosses offered by dictionaries of the individual words in the original, through a modicum of familiarity with the grammar and discourse conventions of the language and literature in question, and in light of detailed knowledge of the larger cultural tradition of which the text is an expression. The limits of this degree of knowledge of the original text are also patent, and should not be underestimated.

Unmediated access to the language of a text, like that a native speaker would have enjoyed at the time of the text's production, is unavailable to us. To be sure, the goal of interpretation is to approach that level of access asymptotically. But even interpreters with an in-depth knowledge of ancient Hebrew are wont to interpret a text based on the glosses in their native language which they associate with the individual words of the original, not on a Gestalt perception of the meaning of the words in the underlying text.

Given this state of affairs, a discussion of past translations of a text is a helpful means to the following ends: a reconstruction of the sense the words of the underlying text were thought to have had in various times and places, and an account of how that sense differs from the one that it might have had originally, in accordance with the author's intentions insofar as we may reconstruct them.

The text is presented according to a text model of ancient Hebrew poetry outlined elsewhere on www.ancienthebrewpoetry.typepad.com. Translation and commentary follow. The standard translations canvassed below are clearly not the only ones worth studying. For the sake of concision, Targum Jonathan and the Peshitta are referenced in passing only. Other important modern translations are likewise left to one side. For full references to sources referred to by abbreviation or author's last name in the body of the note, see the appended bibliography.

Isaiah 1:2-3

(2:2):2	כִּי־יְהוָה דִּבֶּר	וְהֶאֱזִינִי אָרֶץ	שְׁמְעוּ שָׁמַיִם	ⲉ 2
3:3		וְהֵם פָּשְׁעוּ בִּי	בָּנִים גְּדַלְתִּי וְרוֹמַמְתִּי	ⲉ
3:3		וְחִמּוֹר אֵבוֹס בְּעֶלְיוֹ	יָדַע שׂוֹר קִנְהוֹ	ⲉ 3
3:3		עָמִי לֹא הִתְבוּנָן	יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא יָדַע	ⲉ

Hear o heavens
 give ear o earth
 for Yahweh has spoken
 sons I reared and raised
 and they rebelled against me

 an ox knows its owner
 an ass its master's stall
 Israel does not know
 my people do not consider

OG

ἀκούε οὐρανέ καὶ ἐνωτίζου γῆ ὅτι κύριος ἐλάλησεν υἱοὺς ἐγέννησα καὶ ὕψωσα αὐτοὶ δέ με ἠθέτησαν ἔγνω βοῦς τὸν κτησάμενον καὶ ὄνος τὴν φάτνην τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ Ἰσραὴλ δέ με οὐκ ἔγνω καὶ ὁ λαός με οὐ συνῆκεν	Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord has spoken: sons I begat and exalted, but they set me aside. An ox knows its owner ^a , and a donkey its master's stall ^b ; but Israel does not know me, and the people pay me no heed. ^a Lit. <i>the owner</i> . ^b Or <i>crib</i> .
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Vulgate

audite caeli et auribus percipe terra quoniam Dominus locutus est filios enutrivi et exaltavi ipsi autem spreverunt me Cognovit bos possessorem suum et asinus praesepe domini sui Israhel non cognovit populus meus non intellexit	Douay-Rheims Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have brought up children, and exalted them: but they have despised me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel hath not known me, and my people hath not understood.
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KJV

Hear, O heavens,
 and give ear, O earth:
 for the LORD hath spoken,
 I have nourished and brought up children,
 and they have rebelled against me.

The ox knoweth his owner,
 and the ass his master's crib:
 but Israel doth not know,
 my people doth not consider.

NRSV

Hear, O heavens,
 and listen, O earth;
 for the LORD has spoken:
 I reared children and brought them up,
 but they have rebelled against me.

The ox knows its owner,
 and the donkey its master's crib;
 but Israel does not know,
 my people do not understand.

REB

Let the heavens and the earth give ear,
 for it is the Lord who speaks:
 I reared children and brought them up
 but they have rebelled against me

An ox knows its owner,
 and a donkey its master's stall;
 but Israel lacks knowledge,
 my people has no discernment.

Comment

Hear o heavens
 give ear o earth
 for Yahweh has spoken

In the English language, a long and venerable tradition of translation reproduces the parallelisms, assonance, and concreteness of the opening stichoi of Isa 1:2. KJV and Douay-Rheims are examples of this tradition.

The AB A'B' parallelism and the concreteness of the verb 'give ear' are also preserved in OG and Vulgate. NRSV drains 'give ear' of its color by translating more abstractly ('listen'). REB retains the expression and eliminates the less colorful verb ('hear').

In the Hebrew, the parallelism of the verbs is one of specification. שמע 'hear' is the holonym, האזין 'give ear' the meronym. The latter describes a constituent activity of the former. Or again, שמע is the hypernym, האזין the troponym, in the sense that the latter specifies a manner of doing of the former. An analogous pair: שמע and הקשיב 'incline (the ear).' It is possible to capture the parallelism of specification in English with an intonational emphasis on 'give ear.' Otherwise it is likely to be missed altogether.

A number of biblical translations mimetically reproduce the conjunctions, if any, that join clauses in the underlying Hebrew. The perfect example is Vg. It reproduces cases of apposition, syndetic coordination, and hypotaxis wherever they occur in Isa 1:2-3. KJV, NRSV, and REB are not completely consistent. OG is hard to judge, since it cannot be assumed that its Vorlage was identical to MT. The translation I offer mimics the overall terseness of the original by eliminating conjunctions where superfluous or misleading, and refraining from introducing new ones.

In Hebrew poetry, repeated syndetic coordination, and its opposite, repeated apposition, are forms of parallelism, and reinforce other parallelisms. The switch from syndetic coordination to apposition creates a staccato intensity in the subunit's conclusion: 'Israel does not know // my people do not consider.'

Except for REB, the translations quoted above translate the verb 'to speak' in the past tense. The issue is one of staging. In the original, the prophet reports a message communicated to him beforehand. REB stages Yahweh's speech as something occurring "now."

sons I reared and raised
 and they rebelled against me

In imitation of the Hebrew, OG and Vg foreground the object of the verbs in the first clause. Both also take the conjoined verbs וְרִוַּמְתִּי וְגִדַּלְתִּי as referring to distinguishable and sequential acts. OG seems based on a different text than that

preserved in MT (יְלֻדְתִּי rather than גִּדְלֵתִּי): ‘sons I begat and exalted.’ OG and Vg agree on rendering וְרוֹמַמְתִּי with ‘and I exalted.’ To be sure, Brenton and Silva translate OG ὑψώσασθαι with ‘I reared up’ and ‘I raised up,’ respectively: both translations can only mean ‘raise/nurture’ after ‘I begat.’ But ὑψόω is not attested, it would seem, with this meaning. The underlying Hebrew verb, רוּם, often means ‘exalt,’ but in coordination with גִּדְלֵתִּי and following בְּגִיִּם, the meaning ‘raise’ in the sense of ‘rear’ is more likely. Cf. Isa 23:4.

The וְ attached to הֵם is adversative in context, but the contrast is not between clauses, as the translation ‘but’ favored by NRSV and REB suggests. It is between ‘I’ and ‘they,’ a detail caught by Vg’s ipsi autem ‘they on their part,’ and well enough, I would argue, by ‘sons I reared and raised, and they . . .’

Vg’s rendering of the idiom פָּשַׁע בַּיָּד פְּשָׁע בַּיָּד ‘break with, rebel against’ is the least literal of the translations canvassed here. The Latin verb *sperno* has powerful undertones in the context of kin relations and may have been chosen for that reason. The undertones carry over in the cognate verb and associated expressions in English: e.g., ‘he spurned his own father.’

an ox knows its owner
an ass its master’s stall

OG translates the first clause idiomatically, omitting the possessive suffix: ‘an ox knows the possessor.’ The functional equivalent in Hebrew and English requires an explicit suffix.

אָבוֹס occurs 3x in ancient Hebrew. The term has two attested meanings in later Hebrew: ‘crib’ and ‘stall, stable’ (Jastrow; Hengel). Here and in one other case in ancient Hebrew, it plausibly refers to a stall or stable, not a feeding trough:

אָבוֹס בָּר	בְּאֵין אֱלֵפִים
בְּכַח שׁוֹר:	וְרַב־תְּבוֹאוֹת

Without oxen
a clean stall,
but abundance of crops
with a bull’s strength.

Prov 14:4

The meaning ‘a clean crib’ is not appropriate here. A crib is clean *with* oxen. They empty it by eating from it. There is also nothing positive about a clean crib. Its relevance to the context is unclear. A clean stall, on the other hand, is a positive thing, though not as positive as abundance of crops. Ergo, it is better to have oxen than not, even if one must clean up after them.¹ On this interpretation, the logic of the proverb is clear.

¹ Rightly in my view, REB translates אָבוֹס with ‘barn’ in this passage.

In Isa 1:3, אָבוּס in the same sense fits the context. Yahweh nurtured the people of his choosing like a father would his children, but they disregarded him (1:2). It is he, their master, who provides them room and board (figuratively speaking, a ‘stall’), but they pay no heed (1:3). They abandon him and turn away (1:4-5a). אָבוּס in the sense of a space to move in and out of and in the sense of a feeding location fits the context best. REB translates אָבוּס with ‘stall.’

Isa 1:3 אָבוּס ‘stall, stable’ receives support from TgJ, which translates אָבוּס with אֹרְיָא ‘stable.’ ‘Stable’ is the only gloss CAL provides for this word in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic (against Jastrow, who has ‘crib, stable’). P has אֹרְיָא(, the Syriac equivalent of אֹרְיָא. אֹרְיָא(is glossed by ‘stall’ in Payne Smith, but also by ‘manger.’

OG translates אָבוּס with φάτνη. Perusal of LSJ leaves the impression that the attested meanings of φάτνη include ‘crib’ but not ‘stall.’ In my view, φάτνη means ‘a feeding location (for cattle or horses),’ sometimes in the sense of a stall or stable and sometimes in the sense of a feeding-trough. I discuss the matter below, in an excursus on NETS Esaias 1:2-3.

Vg translates with *praesepe*, which has a broad range of meanings, including ‘enclosure, stall,’ ‘feeding trough,’ and ‘dwelling-place.’ Brenton and Silva’s translation of φάτνη by ‘crib’ and Douay-Rheims’ identical translation of *praesepe* may have more to do with conscious or unconscious influence of a traditional interpretation of φάτνη in Luke 2:7 than with an independent evaluation of the sense the word might have in OG and Vg Isa 1:3.

If syntax is any guide, אָבוּס means ‘crib’ in the third occurrence of the word in the Hebrew Bible. The preposition עַל means ‘upon’ or ‘up against,’ not ‘in’:

הַיֹּאבֶה רַיִם עִבְדֶּךָ אִם-יִלִּין עַל-אָבוּסֶךָ:

Is the wild ox willing to serve you,
or will he spend the night beside your crib? Job 39:9

אָבוּס in all three occurrences has been understood to refer to a feeding trough. The expressions שׁוֹר אָבוּס (Prov 15:17) and בְּרִבְרִים אָבוּסִים (1 Kgs 5:3), translated ‘fattened ox’ and ‘fattened geese’ or ‘poultry,’ respectively, may seem to point in this direction. But the expressions could just as well refer to animals confined to an enclosure and fed grain, as opposed to animals released to the range to eat stubble and herbage. The meat of grain-fed animals, of course, is fattier and tenderer. On this understanding, a ‘stalled calf’ is a ‘fatted calf’ by another name. Precisely this turn of phrase, a ‘stalled calf,’ is attested in ancient Hebrew: עֵגֶל-מְרִבֵּק ‘a stall(-fed) calf’ (1 Sam 28:24; cf. Mal 3:20; note BDB and Jastrow; HALOT in this instance is obfuscatory). If the Hebrew’s lone Semitic cognate is any guide (Akkadian *abūsu*, ‘storeroom, stall’), בְּרִבְרִים אָבוּסִים and שׁוֹר אָבוּס are

to be interpreted similarly.² According to Mordechai Cogan, בְּרִבְרִים אֲבוּסִים and שׁוֹר אֲבוּסִים literally mean ‘fowl of the stall’ and a ‘stalled ox,’ respectively.³

The meaning of קָנָה is ‘possessor.’ All translations get the meaning right in Isa 1:3. In the case of expressions like קָנָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ ‘possessor of heaven and earth’ (Gen 14:19, 22) and קָנִיתִי אִישׁ ‘I got a man’ (Gen 4:1), the tendency has been to translate in terms of standard idioms of the target language rather than by comprehensible but unusual expressions like those just offered.

The use/non-use of the article in ancient Hebrew is not well-understood. Differences in nuance in English are not obvious either in a case like ‘the ox/an ox.’

Israel does not know
my people do not consider

OG possibly, though not necessarily, reflects an occurrence of the conjunction before ‘my people’ in its Vorlage (see HUBP Isaiah for attestations of the ׀ in various sources). OG Isaiah, and KJV, NRSV, and REB in general tend to add connectors to phrases in apposition in Hebrew where it was thought appropriate. The apposition, however, has a rhetorical and poetic function.

In its translation of this couplet, OG expands on the Hebrew by adding objects to the verbs. In so doing, it unduly restricts the meaning of the text. The basic thought is that Israel is insensate to a degree not seen in an ox or a donkey. The verbs are objectless and as such carry this nuance. To be sure, applicable objects from the context codetermine the meaning of the larger construction. Israel acts as if it does not know who its owner and master is – the twice-repeated ‘me’ of OG. That this same owner provides it food and lodging fails to penetrate its thoughts.

TgJ also paraphrases and expands: ‘Israel has not learned to know fear of me; // my people have not considered returning to my law.’ This replaces the rich range of internal and external frames of reference to which the original points with another set of frames of reference. Something more all-encompassing than the absence of Torah-centric piety is at issue in the underlying text. The capacity of God’s people to take note of the one on whom they truly depend is at stake. They have lost that capacity.

Elsewhere in Isaiah, an end to the people’s inability to take note of the one who holds their fate in hand is predicted (6:9-11). The turning point will be the end of Assyrian domination and the appearance of a just king (31:8-32:8; 32:2-5).

² Paul V. Mankowski argues that אֲבוּסִים is not a direct loan from Akkadian (*Akkadian Loanwords in Biblical Hebrew* [HSS 47; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000] 15-16). A determination of the Hebrew lemma’s range of meanings cannot in any case be made on the basis of its Akkadian cognate alone.

³ Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings. A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 10: New York: Doubleday, 2000) 213. Cogan also allows for the possibility that בְּרִבְרִים אֲבוּסִים means ‘fowl of the crib.’

Yahweh also foretells and brings about the end of Babylonian domination, that the people might ‘know’ and ‘understand’ that he is their God (43:10).

Excursus on Luke 2:7

As Joseph A. Fitzmyer notes, besides meaning ‘feeding-trough,’ “the word *phatnē* can also mean a ‘stall, feeding-place.’” In Luke 2:7, “The verb *aneklinen* seems to the [sic] call for the meaning, ‘manger’” (idem, *The Gospel according to Luke (I-IX). Introduction, Translation, and Notes* [AB 28; New York: Doubleday, 1981] 408). Raymond E. Brown’s comment on Luke 2:7 also bears quoting:

The Greek *phatnē* can mean a “stall” for tying up animals, or a “manger,” i.e., a trough for feeding them. . . . [T]he picture of wrapping the baby and laying him down better suits a cradle-like manger. . . . The Christmas-crib scenes, popularized by Francis of Assisi, have fixed the image of the manger. Oxen and donkeys have been introduced into this nativity scene from a combination of Luke’s reference to the *phatnē* (both stall and manger imply animals) with the lament of God in the LXX of Isa 1:3: “The ox knows its owner, and the donkey knows the *phatnē* of its lord [*kyrios* as in Luke 2:11], but Israel has not known me.”

The Birth of the Messiah. A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (ABRL; New York: Doubleday, 2nd 1993 [1977]) 399.

A contemporary reader of the Bible may be struck by the freedom with which earlier exegesis filled in the gaps of one passage (Luke 2:7) with information, however decontextualized, from another (Isa 1:3). Prior to the Renaissance and Enlightenment, in Jewish and Christian interpretation, scripture was allowed to interpret scripture in precisely this way. The control mechanism in the process was a sense of what the author of history and the script of history (sacred writ) might have had in mind, the author being God, of course. A small number of these textual codeterminations have stood the test of time, and are now – happily – a feature of particular religious heritages.

Excursus on NETS Esaias 1:2-3⁴

Silva translates ὕψωσα in Isa 1:2 with ‘I raised up,’ not ‘I exalted.’ The translation is open to misunderstanding. As noted above, ‘I raised up’ can only mean ‘raise/nurture’ after ‘I begat.’ ὑψόω, however, is not attested with this meaning. ὑψόω means ‘exalt.’ The translation OG provides, it might be noted, saves the text from redundancy of expression and allows it to reflect the exaltation-abasement trope that was and is a commonplace of literature.

Silva’s rendering of the aorist verbs in Isa 1:2-3 is inconsistent. ἔγνων is translated as a present in its first occurrence, and as a past perfect, along with the parallel verb συνῆκεν, in its second occurrence. Translation in the present tense throughout suits English usage. Verb forms in ancient Hebrew (perfect), Greek (aorist), and Latin (perfect) whose typical function is to report an event that took

⁴ I wish to thank Al Pietersma for corresponding with me on matters discussed in this excursus. The opinions expressed here are of course my own.

place in the past are also used in tense-neutral contexts. A translation other than with present tense verbs is awkward in languages like English which do not make use of verb forms used to report past events for tense-neutral elocutions.

The OG's non-representation of the pronoun of ἡγεῖν with τὸν κτησόμενον 'possessor, owner' is apparently idiomatic Greek for the same level of determination. Silva is correct to add back the pronoun in translation.

Silva translates φάτνη with 'crib,' the equivalent one naturally reaches for following consultation of LSJ and Muraoka. But other lexica give 'stall' as an attested meaning, and I would contend that φάτνη in the sense of 'stall' is more likely than 'crib' in Esaias 1:3. In order to so argue, it must first be established that φάτνη sometimes means 'stall.' Then some reason must be given for thinking that the meaning 'stall' fits better than 'crib' in Esaias 1:3.

The lexica disagree about the range of meanings φάτνη has. Schleusner NT, Magnien, Preuschen-Bauer, LEH, and BAGD give 'stall/stable/pen' among its attested senses. LSJ, Pape, and Muraoka do not. Hengel discusses the evidence at length. In my view, he is right to conclude that φάτνη means 'crib' in Luke 2:7, but 'stall/stable/pen' in a number of other ancient attestations. To be sure, Hengel pares down to a minimum the number of occurrences to be construed in the latter sense, in reaction, perhaps, to attempts by Cadbury and others who claimed that meaning for too many attestations. According to one reconstruction, the base meaning of φάτνη is 'crib' with 'stall/stable/pen' a less common generic meaning via metonymy. In the same way, 'hearth (the floor of a fireplace)' comes to mean 'home' in English.

When the lexica disagree, it is necessary to examine the primary data. The following examples demonstrate that φάτνη sometimes means 'stall' or 'stable':

Ἦρος Ψασυτι χαίρειν. ἀηδία μοι γέγονεν πρὸς Δημήτριον. Ἀρτεμιδώρου γὰρ γράψαντος περὶ τοῦ οἰκήματος οὗ ἦν ὁ ὄχευτής, οὐκ ἔφη - - - οὖν αὐτός παραγίνεσθαι [[αὐτός]]. Φρόντισον οὖν ὅπως ἀποστείλῃ Ζήνων Ἀρτεμι[δ]ώρῳ ὅπως πλ[ί]νθος δοθῆ καὶ οἰκοδόμος φάτνην οἰκοδομήσῃ, ἔχω γὰρ τὸ οἶκημα μετὰ λοιδορίας, καὶ ἵνα μή, ἐὰν ὁ ὄχευτής παραγίνεσθαι ἵππος, πάλιν ἐγ[β]αλλώμεθα.

Horus to Pasy, greetings. I have had it with Demetrios. Artemidoros who wrote on the subject of the locale occupied by the stallion refused to come in person. Take care then to have Zenon send word to Artemidoros to have brick supplied and a mason build a stable, for my possession of the locale is in dispute, so that, when the stallion returns, we are not thrown out again. (Zenon Papyri V, 38-39 [59840 (+59529)]).

. . . Οὐαρδαν τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς πάθνης . . .

. . . Ouardan who is responsible for the stable . . . (Res Gestae Divi Saporis, line 58).

In a list of names of officials responsible for the hunt, the wine, the grain supply, etc. πάθνη is a byform of φάτνη.

. . . ἄλλως δὲ τοὺς ἐφόρους δεδοικῶς καὶ τὸν οἶκοι ζυγὸν οὐ φέρων οὐδ' ὑπομένων ἄρχεσθαι πλάνης ὀρέγεσθαι καὶ περιφοιτήσεως τινός, ὡσπερ ἵππος ἐκ νομῆς ἀφέτου καὶ λειμῶνος αὐθις ἤκων ἐπὶ φάτνην καὶ πρὸς τὸ σύνηθες ἔργον αὐθις ἀγόμενος.

. . . rather, really fearing the ephors, and unable to bear the yoke at home or endure authority, [Lysander] longed to wander and be footloose a bit, he who became like a horse which comes back from limitless and green pasture to the stall, and who is led once more to his accustomed work. (Plutarch's Lives IV, 288-291 [Lysander 20, M. 592]).

φάτνη in the sense of a space to move in and out of and in the sense of a feeding location fits the context best.

Πρὸς τὸ μὴ λακτίζειν ζῶα ἀλλήλων ἐν τῇ φάτνη.

So that the animals do not kick each other in the stall. (Corpus Hippiatricorum II 222, 24-25).

A superscription to a paragraph in a horse manual. Hengel suggests ἐν τῇ φάτνη means 'next to the crib,' but this is strained (52, n. 10).

As Hengel notes, there are a number of cases in which the meanings 'stall' and 'crib' seem equally fitting interpretations of φάτνη. For example, does the relevant expression in Pindar (Olympian Odes 13.92) refer to the 'cribs' or the 'stalls of Zeus' as accommodating Pegasus? It is difficult to say. These cases will not detain us here.

φάτνη probably means 'stable, stall' in OG 2 Chron 32:28. The context suggests this, with φάτνας 'stables' // μάνδρας 'folds,' both spatial designations, occurring in parallelism. It is hazardous to use the known or presumed meaning of a word in the parent text as evidence for the meaning of the equivalent in translation, but it bears noting that φάτνη translates [הַרְיָה] here. Usage of [הַרְיָה] in the Bible and its cognates in other Semitic languages point to the conclusion that it has one sense only, viz., "stall, stable" (against BDB; see HALOT; NRSV and REB translate 'stall').

To judge by the logic of the passage, φάτνη means 'stall' in OG Prov 14:4. I discuss the passage above in the course of commenting on אֲבִיבִים. NETS Prov 14:4, however, translates φάτνη with 'crib.' What the translator had in mind is not certain.

OG Hab 3:17 is a curious case. The text reads: ἐξέλιπον ἀπὸ βρώσεως πρόβατα καὶ οὐχ ὑπάρχουσιν βόες ἐπὶ φάτναις. NETS translates 'sheep have run out of food, and cows are not at the mangers.' Brenton reads 'the sheep have failed from the pasture, and there are no oxen at the cribs.' Brenton's knowledge of the underlying Hebrew, it appears, displaced his sense of what the Greek translation must mean. The OG translator appears to have understood הַמְלָה 'fold' in the sense of תְּלֵמָה 'food, provisions' (1 Kgs 5:25). ἐπὶ φάτναις translates בְּרִפְתֵּימָם. This is not a precise translation (the underlying Hebrew means 'in the yards/

enclosures’). It is possible that the translator rendered this rare word *ad sensum* based on the meaning he assigned in precedence to מְלֵהָהּ. The syntactic construction of which it is a part suggests that φάτναις refers here to mangers.

φάτνη also means ‘manger’ in OG Job 6:5, 39:9; and probably Joel 1:17. The text of the latter reads: ἐσκήρτησαν δαμάλεις ἐπὶ ταῖς φάτναις αὐτῶν. This is best understood to mean ‘heifers make a commotion at their mangers’ for lack of food. This is within the range of meanings the verb σκιστάω has according to Rocci. The translation offered by NETS Joel 1:17, ‘have jumped up at,’ while literal, lacks a transparent sense.

It is not easy to decide whether φάτνη means ‘crib’ or ‘stall’ in OG Isa 1:3. Both are possible in context, but, as noted before in the course of commenting on its underlying Hebrew equivalent, φάτνη in the sense of a space to move in and out of and in the sense of a feeding location fits the context best. The stall of its master is familiar to a donkey. Israel, on the other hand, takes no note of the one who provides it with a place to lay down and food to eat.

It’s time to recap. I argued in the main body of this note that אַבְיֹס, the Hebrew underlying φάτνη in Isa 1:3, means ‘stall’ and not ‘crib’ in Isa 1:3 on the basis of context, usage elsewhere, Targum Jonathan (which translates unequivocally with ‘stall’), and the meaning of cognates. In this excursus, I argued that φάτνη outside of translation Greek sometimes means ‘crib’ and sometimes means ‘stall,’ with the latter meaning more probable in the passage before us.

In my view, the translation would have come about in the following way. The lexicon the translator consulted, as it were, would have read as follows: accepted translation equivalent of אַבְיֹס: φάτνη. That’s the production level. At the level of reception, for the translator as well as for those he translated for, the question then was: what does φάτνη mean here? ‘Crib’ (*ex hypothesi* the more frequently attested, base meaning) or ‘stall’ (an acceptable generic meaning)? I argued above that the context suggests ‘stall.’

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