

Article

The Tyrian King in MT and LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–15

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Abstract: The biblical prophecy in Ezekiel 28:11–19 records a dirge against the king from Tyre. While the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) identifies the monarch as a cherub, the Greek Septuagint (LXX) distinguishes the royal from the cherub. Scholarly debates arise as to which edition represents the more original version of the prophecy. This article aims to contribute to the debates by adopting a text-critical approach to the two variant literary editions of the dirge, comparing and analyzing their differences, while incorporating insights gleaned from the extra-biblical literature originating from the ancient Near East, Second Temple Period, and Late Antiquity. The study reaches the conclusion that the current MT, with its presentation of a fluid boundary between the mortal and divine, likely builds on a more ancient interpretation of the Tyrian king. On the other hand, while the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–15 resembles the Hebrew text of the MT, the Greek translator modifies the text via literary allusions and syntactical rearrangement, so that the final result represents a later reception that suppresses any hints at the divinity of the Tyrian ruler. The result will contribute to our understanding of the historical development of the ancient Israelite religion.

Keywords: Bible; Masoretic Text; Septuagint; book of Ezekiel; Tyrian king; textual criticism; reception history; history of religion



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1. Introduction

The Hebrew version of Ezekiel 28:11–19 records a dirge against the Tyrian king. The word-event formula (וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי לֵאמֹר) inaugurates the prologue of the dirge (vv. 11–12a). The messenger formula (כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנִי יְהוָה) leads to the next section (vv. 12b–15), which describes the Tyrian king in detail, before a series of judgment oracle (vv. 16–18) is pronounced against him. The dirge ends with the בְּלִהוּת refrain (בְּלִהוּת הָיִיתָ וְאֵינְךָ עַד-עוֹלָם), echoing the ending of the previous dirge over Tyre (v. 19; cf. 27:36). This article will focus on the section of the dirge (28:12b–15) where the Hebrew Masoretic Text (MT) differs from the Greek Septuagint (LXX) most greatly. Both the MT and the LXX seem to connect the Tyrian figure with the Israelite high priest in varying degrees (MT and LXX Ezekiel 28:13; cf. MT and LXX Exodus 28:17–20; MT Exodus 39:10–13; LXX Exodus 36:17–20). Moreover, both the MT and the LXX envision the relationship between the Tyrian king and the cherub differently. While the MT identifies the monarch as the cherub, the LXX distinguishes the royal from the cherub (Ezekiel 28:14).

Such discrepancies have garnered much scholarly attention. Bogaert makes the groundbreaking argument that the LXX version preserves an earlier form of the dirge, which was transformed into a later form as attested in the MT (1983, pp. 131–53; cf. 1991, pp. 29–38). His argument is subsequently followed by Lust, Stordalen, and most recently by Nihan (Lust 1996, pp. 131–37; 2012, pp. 167–81; Stordalen 2000, pp. 334–48; Nihan 2017, pp. 251–84). On the other hand, based on the findings of the Ezekiel manuscripts in Masada and the text-critical analyses of the relevant dirge, Patmore and Richelle reach the opposite conclusion, arguing that the MT version preserves a more or equally original reading of the dirge (Patmore 2012, pp. 133–210; Richelle 2014, pp. 113–25). The aforementioned scholarly debate epitomizes the larger question with regard to the textual development of the book of Ezekiel, as discussed in the most recently published volume entitled *Das Buch Ezechiel: Komposition, Redaktion und Rezeption* (see esp. Fabry 2020, pp. 1–41; Konkel 2020, pp. 43–62).

The argument presented in this paper aligns with the position taken by Patmore and Richelle. At relevant places in the paper, I will refine their arguments, while responding to the challenges raised especially by Bogaert, Lust, and Nihan, which have not yet been addressed adequately. Given the Qumran discoveries of the variant Hebrew texts representing the archetypes of the MT and the LXX, the extant MT and LXX manuscripts are to be treated as historical products, whose parent text(s) have either crossed paths with or developed from each other during their long process of production, transmission, and interpretation (cf. [Tov 2001](#), pp. 100–17; [Ulrich 1999](#), pp. 99–120). From this historical perspective, I will make three arguments about the relationship between the MT and LXX in Ezekiel 28:12b–15. First, I suggest that a stage of the Hebrew text earlier than the MT can be partially reconstructed by an analysis of the internal evidence and a comparison with the textual witnesses (especially the LXX translations found in Papyrus 967 and Codex Vaticanus) of Ezekiel 28. Text-internal elements such as stylistic breaks, doublets, and thematic tensions have the potential to identify the secondary elements in the MT, while the other manuscripts of Ezekiel 28 can help us to ascertain whether the secondary elements in the MT were added before or after a particular ancient translation. Second, I will focus on the LXX translations, showing that some of the current differences between the MT and LXX, apart from the secondary additions found in the MT, result from the early Greek translators' variant understanding of the Hebrew vocalization and syntax.¹ Third, through a comparison with the extra-biblical literature from the ancient Near East, Second Temple Period, and Early Antiquity, I argue that the current MT, with its presentation of a fluid boundary between the mortal and divine, likely builds on a more ancient interpretation of the Tyrian king. On the other hand, while the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–15 resembles the parent text of the MT, the Greek translator modifies the text via literary allusions and syntactical rearrangement, so that the final result represents a later reception that suppresses any hints at the divinity of the Tyrian ruler. The result will contribute to our understanding of the historical development of the ancient Israelite religion.

2. A Hebrew Text behind MT Ezekiel 28:12b–15

MT Ezekiel 28:12b–15 is currently preserved in the 11th century Codex Leningradensis, which forms the base text of the two diplomatic editions of the Hebrew Bible, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS) and *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ) ([Würthwein 2014](#), pp. 39–52). Codex Leningradensis is not the only representative of the MT. The 10th century Codex Aleppo is another representative that builds the foundation for the diplomatic edition produced by the Hebrew University Bible Project (HUBP) ([Goshen-Gottstein and Talmon 2004](#), pp. xv–xvii). Neither Codex Leningradensis nor Codex Aleppo represents the only manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, and neither of them is the original Hebrew text. Given the long process of literary composition and scribal transmission, it is logical to think that the extant MT contains secondary elements (cf. [Craig 1990](#), pp. 156–57). On the other hand, the careful preparation of the manuscripts by the medieval Jewish scribes, as indicated by the masora magna and masora parva on the margins of the manuscripts, ensure the preservation of and continuity with a large part of the earlier traditions ([Kelley et al. 1998](#), pp. 1–2). For instance, the Hebrew vowels and accents on Codices Leningradensis and Aleppo are based on a system developed from the seventh century onwards ([Patmore 2012](#), pp. 188–90; [Tov 2001](#), pp. 29–36; [Würthwein 2014](#), pp. 24–35). The addition of this vocalization into the Hebrew consonantal text can reflect the later understanding of the Jewish scribes, but its main function is to preserve and pass down the earlier pronunciation that was not written down. Apart from some emendations, the vocalization can still provide guidance as to how the Hebrew consonantal text was understood before the MT. To reach this earlier understanding, we should first explore how the text was understood by the Masoretic scribes.

¹ The methodological approach taken here is inspired by Segal's article, which identifies secondary elements in both the MT and the LXX of Daniel before reconstructing a more precise textual development of the book of Daniel ([Segal 2017](#), pp. 251–84).

The extant Masoretic vowels and accents mark two parallel sections in this poetic description of the Tyrian king (Goldberg 1989, pp. 277–81, esp. p. 278 [Heb.]; Greenberg 1997, pp. 587–88; Richelle 2014, pp. 113–25). In the first section (Ezekiel 28:12b–13), the Tyrian king is addressed as someone who seals or gives approval to the correct measurement (חותם). The term חותם may derive from חָנַן, connoting an ideal standard or measurement (cf. Ezekiel 43:10; noted in Greenberg 1997, p. 580; Zimmerli 1983, p. 81). This connotation is further confirmed by the following characterization of the Tyrian king as “full of wisdom” (מלא חכמה) and “perfect in beauty” (כליל יפי). The MT peculiarly vocalizes חותם as a masculine singular active participle (חותם), which is unique in the Hebrew Bible (Zimmerli 1983, p. 81). The vocalization perhaps aims to highlight the Tyrian king’s authority, portraying the foreign ruler as someone who seals or ascertains the ideal standard. This authoritative figure is located in the garden of Eden (בעדן גן־אלהים היית). His glory is expressed through every precious stone that forms his covering (כל־אבן יקרה מסכתך). After listing nine precious stones and gold, references are made to the Tyrian king’s musical instruments (מלאכת תפיד ונקביר). All the aforementioned objects are established on the day of the king’s creation (ביום הבראך). The next parallel section (vv. 14–15) compares the Tyrian royal with another imagery, a cherub (כרוב), who, being either anointed or with outstretched wings (ממשח), covers or protects (הסוֹכֵךְ). The root סֹכַךְ also appears in Exodus 25:20; 37:9; 40:3; 1 Kings 8:7; 1 Chronicles 28:18, characterizing the cherubim that flank the ark or the mercy seat symbolizing the divine enthronement in the holy of holies (Wilson 1987, p. 215; Yaron 1964, pp. 31–32). The deployment of the same root in the lament of Ezekiel thus reinforces the initial proximity of the cherub-like king to the divine. YHWH creates or appoints (וַיַּחֲתִיךָ) him,² so that he is located on the holy mountain of God/gods (בהר קדש אלהים היית).³ The royal is walking amidst the fiery stones (באבני־אש הטהלכת), being perfect in all his ways (תמים). Like the previous section, the second section also ends with the reference to the day of the royal’s creation (מיום הבראך). The difference is that this latter reference is further supplemented by the phrase (ועד־נמצא עולתה בך), which creates an anticipation of the series of judgment befallen upon the Tyrian king in the subsequent verses (vv. 16–18, 19).

2.1. Identifying the Secondary Additions

Despite the rather neat structure in the extant MT, at least four literary peculiarities are likely secondary additions in light of the manuscript traditions and text-critical considerations. First, the perfect wisdom (מלא חכמה) characterizing the Tyrian king in MT Ezekiel 28:12 is absent completely in the corresponding verse of the pre-Hexaplaric LXX translations found in P967 and Codex Vaticanus (Zimmerli 1983, pp. 81–82; Block 1998, p. 121, n. 47). The Hexaplaric recensions and some other translations attest to the MT reading, reflecting later attempts to correct the earlier Greek translations toward a Hebrew text close to the MT (Ziegler 2006, pp. 222–23). The second century Peshitta also aligns with the MT reading (Mulder 1985, p. 61; Greenberg 2015, pp. 166–67). Origen’s third century commentary, which is preserved in Jerome’s Latin translation (379–81 CE), stands at the transition from the pre-Hexaplaric to Hexaplaric translations and interestingly preserves both the Greek and Hebrew readings of Ezekiel 28:12.⁴ This means that a reading close to the MT was already in place during the time of Origen, circulating alongside the variant Greek translations.

A question then arises: Which version represents the more original reading of Ezekiel 28:12? The extant manuscript traditions cannot offer us a definitive answer, but further text-critical deduction can provide us some insights. Wong observes that LXX Ezekiel 28:3–

² For the choice of this translation of וַיַּחֲתִיךָ, see (Lee 2016b, pp. 110–11).

³ The term אלהים in the Hebrew Bible can be understood either in a generic sense as referring to any divine being, or as a proper noun referring to YHWH only.

⁴ At one place, the commentary reads with P967 and Codex Vaticanus by not mentioning the wisdom motif and stating that the Tyrian king “was a seal of the likeness, a crown of beauty, raised in the paradise of delights” (Scheck 2010, p. 158). Yet, elsewhere in the same commentary, Origen remarks that the foreign ruler “was a seal of the likeness, full of wisdom, and a crown of beauty” (Scheck 2010, pp. 161–62). This juxtaposition of the king’s full wisdom alongside the signet imagery and the beauty motif coheres with the MT’s presentation.

5 portrays the Tyrian king more foolishly than the corresponding Hebrew verses in the MT (Wong 2005, pp. 447–61). Based on this study, one could argue that the LXX reflects a later reading, where the early Greek translators purposefully eliminated the wisdom reference in Ezekiel 28:12, so as to harmonize the current dirge with the negative assessment of the Tyrian king's intellect in 28:3–5. However, the Tyrian king's wisdom is presupposed in 28:17, and the Greek translators did not bother to eliminate the reference to wisdom there (Patmore 2012, p. 152). This means that the lack of a phrase equivalent to מלא חכמה in the LXX probably is not the result of the translators' intentional elimination. Instead, the phrase מלא חכמה most likely is absent in the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX. Assuming this Hebrew Vorlage is similar or even identical to the parent text of the MT, the phrase מלא חכמה can be a later insertion into the parent text of the MT after the LXX translations and before Origen's commentary on Ezekiel. The insertion at 28:12 serves to strengthen the connection between the dirge (28:11–19) and the previous judgment oracle (28:1–10) by mirroring the wisdom that has been attributed to the Tyrian ruler in 28:3–5, 7 on the one hand, and building a transition to the judgment of that wisdom in 28:17 on the other.

Second, the list of nine jewels in MT Ezekiel 28:13 presents another twist on the characterizations of the Tyrian king. The MT vocalization places the gold (זהב) along with the list of jewels. As Patmore rightly notes, gold is not a gemstone and זהב is better read in conjunction with the subsequent מלאכת תפיד (Patmore 2012, p. 196).⁵ In this light, the list of jewels looks like a secondary intrusion into the two parallel sentences (Zimmerli 1983, p. 84; Block 1998, p. 121, n. 51), one highlighting the precious stones on the king's covering or surrounding (כל־אבן יקרה מסכתך), another emphasizing the golden workmanship of the king's musical instruments (זהב מלאכת תפיד ונקביו בך). The terminology surrounding Ezekiel 28:13 contains verbal root ברא "to create," a Leitwort in the priestly account of God's creation (Genesis 1), and עדן, the primordial garden in the non-priestly account of God's creation (Genesis 2–3). In light of their presence, and given that many have noted the Pentateuchal influence on the Hebrew book of Ezekiel (Gile 2013, pp. 287–306; Lyons 2009; Kohn 2002), I suggest that the precious stones were added into Ezekiel 28:13 when both the priestly and non-priestly creation narratives had become interwoven in the Israelite theology.

The enumerated gems bear a strong lexical resemblance to the jewels on the high priestly pectoral in Exodus 28:17–20; 39:10–13, albeit with some minuses and a different order (Greenberg 1997, p. 582; Zimmerli 1983, p. 82). Some scholars have refused to acknowledge this connection to Exodus in the hope to dissociate Ezekiel 28:11–19 from the Israelite cultic traditions (Block 1998, pp. 111–12; Block 2013, p. 9; Gowan 1975, pp. 89–90). However, I argue that the literary elements pointing to the ancient Israelite cultic system also prevail in the surrounding of Ezekiel 28:13. For instance, in the preceding verse, the Tyrian king is described as a חותם. Despite the Masoretic vocalization, the Hebrew term should probably be rendered as a common noun, meaning a seal. All the Greek versions, Peshitta, Vulgate, and several medieval Hebrew manuscripts also understand the term as the construct form of a common noun (חותם), denoting a seal or signet ring (Greenberg 1997, pp. 580–81). The noun can refer to someone with a royal status⁶ as well as describe seal-like stones engraved on priestly garments (Exodus 28:11, 21, 36; 39:6, 14, 30). The term מלאכה "workmanship," in its construct form, appears after the list of jewels (Ezekiel 28:13). It is a common term featuring not only in the context of creation, such as the priestly account in Genesis 2:2–3 (cf. Exodus 12:16; 20:9–10; 31:14–15; 35:2), but also in the context of the construction of the Israelite tabernacle, the building of and the service in the Jerusalem temple (Exodus 31:3, 5; 35:21, 24, 29, 31, 33, 35; 36:1–8; 38:24; 39:43; 40:33; 1 Kings 5:30; 7:14, 22, 40, 51; 9:23; 2 Kgs 12:11, 15, 16; 22:5, 9). The two nouns תף and נקב spec-

⁵ Note that such syntactical understanding is reflected in the LXX counterpart (καὶ χρυσίου ἐνέπλησας τοὺς θησαυρούς σου).

⁶ In Jeremiah 22:24; Haggai 2:23, the Judean kings are portrayed as the signet ring on YHWH's right hand. Thus, the חותם in Ezekiel 28:12 might allude to this common imagery of royalty, indicating that the Tyrian king is like a signet ring in close proximity, albeit subordinate to, the God of Israel.

ify the kind of מלאכה envisioned in Ezekiel 28:13. The word נקבה appears around sixteen times in the Hebrew Bible. Except for the case in Ezekiel, its singular and plural forms always unambiguously denote “tambourine(s)” (Lee 2016b, p. 190). The term נקבִיךְ is obscure, but it can be derived from נקב “to bore,” and so can designate a drilled thing that acts like a pipe. Musical instruments in the Hebrew Bible are often related to the religious festivals, holy wars, and cultic ceremonies.⁷ The Israelite priests and kings are often in charge of playing the instruments.⁸ Given the royal and cultic coloring in the surrounding literary context, a redactor of the parent text of the MT might wish to interpret כְּלֵי־אֲבֵן יְקִרָה in Ezekiel 28:13 along the same line, by connecting the Tyrian king’s precious stones with the jewels on the high priestly pectoral in Exodus 28 and 29. Moreover, the early Israelite tradition records that the First Temple in Jerusalem was built with the help of Hiram the Tyrian king. Hiram the Tyrian king had a close relationship with David the second king of Israel (2 Samuel 5:11), and he also helped King Solomon to build the First Temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 5:1–12, 18; 9:10–28; 10:11, 22; 1 Chronicles 14:1; 2 Chronicles 2:3, 11–12; 8:18; 9:10, 21). In 1 Kings 7:13–14, 45, Hiram is also the name of a craftsman, who was sent from Tyre and participated in the temple building (Marti 2015, pp. 1105–7). In this light, the inserted precious stones of Ezekiel 28:13 become an innovative symbol of or effective allusion to the close connection between the Tyrian royal and the Israelite sacral traditions.

Despite the Israelite priestly touch on the Tyrian royal figure, undeniable is the fact that the nine gems in MT Ezekiel 28:13 do not correspond exactly to the twelve jewels on the high priestly pectoral in MT Exodus 28 and 39. By contrast, LXX Ezekiel 28:13 includes all twelve jewels enumerated in LXX Exodus 28 and 36.⁹ To account for this discrepancy between the Hebrew and Greek versions, Bogaert argues that the three missing stones and the different order of the nine stones in the MT reflect a later attempt to obscure the allusion to the Israelite high priest (Bogaert 1983, pp. 131–53; Bogaert 1991, pp. 29–38; cf. Cooke 1951, pp. 316–17; Lust 1996, pp. 131–37; Block 2013, p. 9; Block 1998, p. 111). Yet, Patmore rightly questions: “If a scribe were prepared to remove three stones from the list and confuse the order, why would he not eliminate any possible confusion by changing the section entirely—or even removing it—so that no confusion with the high-priest’s pectoral remained?” (Patmore 2012, p. 156). In my view, which stands in contrast to Bogaert’s proposal, the dissimilarities between MT Exodus and Ezekiel hint at an earlier textual development of the Hebrew dirge. The precious stones most likely were inserted into the dirge at a time when the association of the Tyrian king with the Israelite high priest was still at its nascent stage (cf. Fechter 1992, pp. 173–74). While a king in ancient Mesopotamia commonly embodied priestly functions (Kuhrt 1995, pp. 33–34, 507, 514, 604–5), the ancient Israelite society at the beginning of the establishment of the monarchy as reflected in the Hebrew Bible conceived priests and kings as separate entities (e.g., 2 Samuel 8:15–17; 1 Kings 4:1–4). It was not until the Babylonian exile, in the absence of a restored monarchy, that the Israelite high priest began to take over some of the sacral aspects of the king’s role (Rooke 2015). The merge between a priestly and a royal imagery as explicitly envisioned by the LXX more possibly appeared at a later stage of the ancient Israelite religion. In light of this, the LXX, embodying a more complete list of the precious stones, likely reflects a classic case of harmonization, where a later and more stabilized textual tradition enables bringing two different figures—the Tyrian king and the Israelite

⁷ For example, the sounding of a ram’s horn on the Day of Atonement in Leviticus 25:9; the blowing of the trumpets in the wars against Jericho and Midian in Joshua 6 and Judges 7 respectively; the praising of YHWH with all kinds of instruments in Exodus 15:20; 2 Samuel 6:5; Psalm 149:3, etc.

⁸ For example, the priests are entrusted with two silver trumpets (Numbers 10:2, 8; cf. Numbers 10:10; Joshua 6:4; 1 Chronicles 15:24; 16:6, 42; 2 Chronicles 7:6). Saul, the first king of Israel, sounds the trumpet and leads the Israelites into war (1 Samuel 13:3); the priests are responsible for blowing the trumpets during the coronation of the kings (2 Samuel 15:10; 1 Kings 1:34; 2 Kings 9:13; 11:14).

⁹ The Peshitta displays features of both lists, preserving a shorter list like the MT (the Peshitta has only eight stones), while deploying a syntax similar to the LXX (each gem except for the first one in the Peshitta list is preceded by the conjunction “and”).

priest—from two biblical texts into a more precise comparison.¹⁰ A closer examination of the Greek translations of the gems in the next section will justify this argument. For the moment, suffice it to say that the secondary insertion of the precious stones into the parent text of the MT likely predates the list found in LXX Ezekiel 28.

The third and fourth additions to be discussed appear in MT Ezekiel 28:12–13. While MT Ezekiel 28:12–13 presents the Tyrian figure as a priest-king living in the garden of Eden, the next two verses (vv. 14–15) identify the Tyrian king as an anointed cherub dwelling on the holy mountain of God. This change in imagery is reinforced by two insertions: the first is the insertion of the polal verb כוננו at the end of v.13, and the second is the addition of the obscure word ממשח at the beginning of v.14. The verb כוננו is marked with a silluq in the MT, indicating a major pause, and thus referring back to the aforementioned precious stones and musical instruments. Even without the word כוננו, the preceding phrase וזהב מלאכת תפיד ונקביוך בך could have been read together with וזהב מלאכת תפיד ונקביוך בך to render a complete sentence: “and golden workmanship of your tambourines and your pipes were upon you on the day of your creation.” The verb כוננו thus seems superfluous (Zimmerli 1983, p. 85; Eichrodt 1970, p. 390). Moreover, the LXX does not attest to the presence of this verb, which means כוננו is likely absent in its Hebrew Vorlage.¹¹ The early Greek translators linked ביום הבראך to the following sentence that inaugurates the next textual unit, reading ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἐκτίσθησθε εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν (‘‘from the day you were created, I placed you with the cherub’’). As such, the parallelism between the end of v.13 (ביום הבראך) and the end of v.15 (מיום הבראך) is disrupted. Later, a Hebrew redactor might react against such a reading reflected in the Greek translation by inserting כוננו into the parent text of the MT and by reading ביום הבראך כוננו ‘‘they were established on the day of your creation.’’ The insertion and subsequent accentuation of כוננו thus emphasize that ביום הבראך more properly marks the end of the textual unit that begins with חותם תכנית. The inserted and subsequently accentuated כוננו also signifies that the beginning of the next parallel unit should be read as such: את כרוב ממשח הסוכך, where את is treated as an archaic second person pronoun, referring to a male subject, and thus affirming the identification of the Tyrian king with the cherub (cf. 1 Samuel 24:19; Psalm 6:4; Job 1:10; Ecclesiastes 7:22; Nehemiah 9:6; see Barr 1992, pp. 215–16; Bunta 2007, p. 238; Greenberg 1997, p. 582; Patmore 2012, p. 198, n. 53; Richelle 2014, p. 121). As such, the parallelism between v.12 and v.14 is rendered more explicit: while the first metaphor in v.12 compares the Tyrian king as a signet ring (אתה חותם תכנית), the second metaphor in v.14 identifies the Tyrian king as a cherub (את כרוב ממשח הסוכך).

The correlation between the Tyrian king and the cherub is further reinforced by the qualification of the cherub as ממשח (Ezekiel 28:14). The word itself is a hapax legomenon in the MT. It could be a rare and thus more original reading, but no trace of it is found in the rather literal translation of P967 and Codex Vaticanus.¹² Taking this into consideration, the term is likely absent from the LXX’s Hebrew Vorlage, which reflects an earlier textual tradition of this Ezekiel lament, and the term in the extant MT is thus possibly an insertion at a later stage (Zimmerli 1983, pp. 85, 92). Later translations such as the Theodotian (καρχήσιμος) and Peshitta (ܡܡܫܚܐ) contain this added description of the cherub and understand it as deriving from ממשח, which means ‘‘to anoint’’ (Allen 1990, p. 91; Patmore 2012, pp. 199–200; Zimmerli 1983, p. 85). In the Hebrew Bible, the priests, kings, and prophets

¹⁰ Consider a later strand of the rabbinic tradition (e.g., Gen. Rab. 85:4), which specifies the identity of the Tyrian king in Ezekiel 28 even more, naming him as Hiram, who helps Solomon build the First Temple. For a summary of this interpretation, see (Patmore 2012, pp. 26–35; Sulzbach 2006, p. 132, n. 22).

¹¹ The Peshitta, which normally contains a rather literal translation of a Hebrew text similar to the MT, also does not attest כוננו. Unlike the LXX, the Peshitta deems the phrase ‘‘on the day of your creation’’ as a continuation of the preceding sentence, and thus separates the phrase from the following terms את כרוב.

¹² When the rare/difficult Hebrew terms תפיד ונקביוך appear in Ezekiel 28:13, both Greek translations attempt to make sense of them by translating them to other more intelligible words, but no such attempt is found here.

receive anointment into their office.¹³ If the proto-MT redactor has this meaning in mind, then the qualification of the cherub as מִשָּׁח intentionally echoes the priest-king imagery in the previous textual unit, thus strengthening the connection between the Tyrian royal and the cherub. The term can also be derived from the homonym מִשָּׁח “to measure, extend,” which underlies the translation of Symmachus (καταμετρημένος) and Vulgate (extensus) (Allen 1990, p. 91; Patmore 2012, pp. 199–200; Zimmerli 1983, p. 85.). In this case, the characterization of the cherub with מִשָּׁח invokes the idea of a correct measurement (תְּכִנִּית, v. 12) that typifies the Tyrian king in the previous textual unit. The identification of the king as the cherub is thus intensified through this semantic correlation. All in all, the insertions of מִשָּׁח and מִכֹּוֹנֵנו into the parent text of the MT strengthen the identification of the Tyrian king as a cherub in Ezekiel 28:14.

2.2. Removing the Secondary Additions

As seen from above, some of the textual elements seem discordant and superfluous in the literary context of MT Ezekiel 28:12–15. These peculiar elements are either absent or reflect a different order in the LXX and in the other early manuscript evidence. This adds weight to the suspicion about the secondary status of these elements in the MT dirge. As seen below in Table 1, if these elements are removed from the MT, we will reach an earlier Hebrew text, which consists of two parallel textual units (from right to left):

Table 1. The Reconstructed Parent Text of MT Ezekiel 28:12–15.

v.14	את כְּרוּב [...] הַסּוֹכֵךְ	אתה חוֹתֶם תְּכִנִּית [...] וְכִלִּיל יָפִי	v.12
	וְנִתְּחִיךְ		
	בְּהֵר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים הִיִּית	בְּעֵדֶן גִּן־אֱלֹהִים הִיִּית	v.13
	בְּתוֹךְ אֲבִנֵי־אֵשׁ הַתְּהַלַּכְתָּ	כְּלֵי־אֲבֵן יִקְרָה מִסַּכְתְּךָ	
		אֲדָם פִּטְדָה וִיהִלֶם תְּרַשִׁישׁ שֶׁהֶם וִישִׁפָּה סִפִּיר נֶפֶךְ וּבִרְקָתָה	
v.15	תָּמִים אַתָּה בְּדִרְכֶּיךָ	וְזֹהָב מְלֹאכֶת תְּפִיךָ וְנִקְבִּיךָ בָךְ	
	מִיּוֹם הַבְּרָאָה	בְּיּוֹם הַבְּרָאָה [...] עַד־נִמְצָא עוֹלָתָה בָךְ	

The symbol [...] indicates those additions inserted into the parent text of the MT after the composition of the LXX. The italicized Hebrew words signify the secondary additions into the MT's parent text before the LXX translations.

This reconstructed text differs from Patmore's recent reconstruction. According to Patmore, the Hebrew parent text of the MT, without the vowels and cantillation marks, once identified the Tyrian king not as a cherub, but as a god (v.14: אֱלֹהִים הִיִּית), but the MT scribe modified this reading in order to suppress the apotheosis of the Tyrian king (2012, p. 197). As Lee has argued, Patmore's derivation of the MT's parent text, despite being comprehensive in its investigation, contains several grammatical and logical problems (Lee 2016a, pp. 99–116). In particular, his reconstructed text treating the Tyrian king as a god does not take the parallelism between vv. 12b–13 and vv. 14–15 into serious account. In my view, the parallelismus membrorum is built into the parent text of the MT dirge. The parallels between the two textual units (vv. 12b–13; vv. 14–15) become even more conspicuous when the identified secondary additions are removed. Thus, Eden the garden of God (עֵדֶן גִּן־אֱלֹהִים) corresponds to the holy mountain of God (הַר קֹדֶשׁ אֱלֹהִים). Moreover, the fiery stones (אֲבִנֵי־אֵשׁ) echo the precious stone (אֲבֵן יִקְרָה). Both units also end with the theme of the day of creation (יּוֹם הַבְּרָאָה). Most importantly, the metaphorical comparison of the Tyrian

¹³ The anointment of the prophets (1 Kings 19:16; 1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 105:15); the priests (Exodus 29:29; 40:15; Leviticus 4:3; 16:32; Numbers 3:3); the kings (1 Samuel 9:16; 10:1; 1 Kings 1:34, 39).

king as a signet ring (אתה חותם תכנית) mirrors the figurative identification of the Tyrian king as a mythical cherub (את כרוב הסוכך).

As such, I conclude that the dual metaphors imposed on the Tyrian king are part and parcel of the original Hebrew dirge. The Tyrian king has been presented as both a human high priest and a mythical cherub from the very beginning. The text-critical approach employed here does not deny the rhetorical function served by the identified secondary elements in the current literary context of the MT dirge. In fact, my argument is that secondary elements added to the MT's parent text do not deviate from but enhance this dual identity. For instance, the added list of jewels in v. 13, building on the surrounding terminology that links the Tyrian king to the Israelite sacral traditions, highlights the king's status as a priest-king. On the other hand, the inserted כננו and ממשח in v. 14, presenting and qualifying the cherub in such a way that echoes the imagery of the Tyrian king in the first section of the dirge, reinforce the parent text's exaltation of the Tyrian king as a mythical cherub.

3. The Literary Modifications within LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–15

The pre-Hexaplaric Greek translations' portrayal of the Tyrian king forms the focus of this section. The pre-Hexaplaric Greek translations commonly known as the LXX are largely preserved in the extant manuscripts, such as Papyrus 967 (3rd century CE) and Codex Vaticanus (4th century CE).¹⁴ They contain readings different from the later Jewish recensions, such as Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotian, which are thought to have corrected the earlier Greek translations toward a Hebrew text close to the MT.¹⁵ All these Greek manuscripts have been collated for the reconstruction of the earliest inferable Greek translation of Ezekiel printed in the eclectic edition entitled Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum. The hypothesis is that the foregoing Hebrew consonantal text derived from the MT was once similar and even identical to the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX (cf. the Ur-text theory proposed by de Lagarde and explicated in [Tov 2001](#), pp. 164–97). The literary modifications within LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–15 analyzed below will confirm this hypothesis. As will be argued, the LXX, unlike the MT, does not see two parallel sections in the Hebrew Vorlage of Ezekiel 28:12b–15. Instead, the translators' variant interpretations and expansions of the Hebrew vocabulary, vocalization, and syntax constitute another significant factor in the current differences between the MT and the LXX, so that the LXX presents a more continuous and monolithic narrative highlighting the mortality of the Tyrian figure.

3.1. Identifying the Literary Allusions

Three unusual appearances of the Greek vocabulary concentrated at LXX Ezekiel 28:12b–13a point to the other LXX passages that describe the creation of humanity, and thus lend emphasis to the mortality of the Tyrian ruler.

First, the Tyrian king is compared to “a seal of likeness” (ἀποσφράγισμα ὁμοιώσεως; v.12). The Greek term ὁμοίωσις does not stand as a natural equivalent to the Hebrew term תכנית reflected in the MT. The Hebrew term is a rare and difficult term that appears only one other time in MT Ezekiel 43:10, where the LXX translation offers the equivalent διάταξις “command, plan, arrangement,” which in no way resembles the Greek term used at Ezekiel 28:12. The LXX translator might have read the Hebrew term תכנית, since כ and ב are graphically similar letters.¹⁶ Elsewhere (e.g., Deuteronomy 4:16–18; Joshua 22:28; Ezekiel 8:3; 10:8; Psalms 105:20; 143:12), the LXX renders תכנית “pattern, form” as ὁμοίωμα “likeness,” which is close but still not identical to the Greek term deployed here. In fact, the

¹⁴ For the facsimile and text of Ezek 28:12b–15 in P967, see ([Johnson et al. 1938](#), p. 161), Plate XXII. For the facsimile of the relevant text in Codex Vaticanus, see https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209/1175. For an enumeration and a description of this pre-Hexaplaric text-group, see ([Ziegler 2006](#), pp. 23–28). For an introductory summary of the textual transmission of the Greek text of Ezekiel, see ([Hauspie 2015](#), pp. 528–29).

¹⁵ The later Jewish recensions, such as Symmachus, Aquila, and Theodotian, only survived fragmentarily in the 6th century LXX manuscript Q (6th century CE) and in marginal notes of the LXX manuscripts Q and 88 (10th century CE). See ([Lust 2012](#), p. 170; [Olley 2009](#), p. 11). For the list of manuscript witnesses to the Hexaplaric recensions, see ([Ziegler 2006](#), pp. 32–44).

¹⁶ BHS apparatus notes that multiple medieval Hebrew manuscripts also read תכנית.

Greek term ὁμοίωσις at Ezekiel 28:12 is used elsewhere in the LXX exclusively to translate the Hebrew word דְּמוּת “likeness” (cf. Genesis 1:26; Ezekiel 1:10; 10:22; Psalm 57:5; Daniel 10:16).¹⁷ Out of all these attestations, Genesis 1:26 is particularly relevant, since the exact term ὁμοίωσις appears there to describe the creation of humanity (cf. Olley 2009, p. 432; Richelle 2014, pp. 116–17). Such a literary context corresponds to the context of the dirge, which envisions the creation of the Tyrian ruler in the very next verse (ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου τοῦ θεοῦ ἐγενήθη; ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἐκτίσθη σὺ; Ezekiel 28:13). Therefore, I surmise that the use of ὁμοίωσις in Ezekiel 28:12 reflects an exegetical move on the part of the translator to link the verse specifically to the creation motif in Genesis 1:26.

Second, the allusion to the creation motif is strengthened by the subsequent comparison of the Tyrian royal with “a crown of beauty” (στέφανος κάλλους; Ezekiel 28:12). στέφανος is a rather unusual equivalent for the Hebrew term כִּלִּי in the corresponding MT verse. Elsewhere in the MT, כִּלִּי, connotating the idea of completion or perfection, refers to the whole burnt offering.¹⁸ On the other hand, in the LXX, the Greek term στέφανος normally translates the Hebrew noun עֲטָרָה, which means “crown.”¹⁹ Patmore helpfully notes that כִּלִּי appears in the Aramaic Targumim in the sense of “crown” or “wreath” (Patmore 2012, p. 153). According to Tov, the LXX translations were made when Aramaic was the lingua franca of the inhabitants of Egypt and Palestine (Tov 2015, p. 120; Tov 1990, p. 170). It is thus not surprising that the Greek translator’s selection of στέφανος as the equivalent to כִּלִּי in this specific case shows some Aramaic influence. Such a translation in Ezekiel 28:12 recalls the identical phrase στέφανος κάλλους in Isaiah 62:3. The latter passage describes Jerusalem as the crown of beauty in YHWH’s hand. Does the Greek translator of Ezekiel 28 intend to compare the Tyrian royal beauty with the splendor of the city Jerusalem? In my view, a more contextually appropriate comparison can be made between LXX Ezekiel 28:12 and Psalm 8:6 (cf. Bunta 2007, p. 236). Both passages juxtapose the motif of crowning (στέφανος or ἐστεφάνωσας) with the motifs of beauty and glory. More importantly, the surrounding contexts of both passages deal with the creation of individuals—the Tyrian king (Ezekiel 28:13) and the primeval humanity (ἄνθρωπος; Psalm 8:5). Like the primal man who is crowned with glory and majesty (δόξη καὶ τιμῇ), the Tyrian ruler is a crown of beauty (στέφανος κάλλους) decorated with every precious stone (πᾶν λίθον χρηστὸν) on the day of his creation.

Third, the creation motif becomes most explicit in the direct reference to the delight of God’s garden (ἐν τῇ τρυφῇ τοῦ παραδείσου τοῦ θεοῦ) at the beginning of LXX Ezekiel 28:13. In the LXX, the Greek term τρυφή is used predominantly to translate the Hebrew noun נֶדְוָה and its cognate forms, in the common sense of “delight,” without necessarily denoting the proper name “Eden.”²⁰ Furthermore, in a couple of passages in LXX Genesis (Genesis 2:8, 10; 4:16; cf. 2 Kings 19:12), the proper name “Eden” (Ἐδεμ) is used instead of τρυφή to translate the Hebrew noun נֶדְוָה. Therefore, the selection of this Greek term τρυφή in this particular context of Ezekiel seems to tone down the original Hebrew dirge’s connection with the biblical creation theme. Patmore thus claims that “the translator found no special reason to form an allusion to garden of Genesis 2–3” (Patmore 2012, p. 154). However, on closer inspection, it can be observed that the same juxtaposition of τρυφή and παράδεισος in Ezekiel 28:13a appears precisely in Genesis 3:23–24, which narrates how the primal man is driven out from God’s garden for toil and labor (ἐκ τοῦ παραδείσου τῆς τρυφῆς). The literary context of this episode in Genesis parallels the Tyrian king’s subsequent eviction from the mountain of God (cf. Ezekiel 28:16). Given the lexical and contextual commonalities, LXX Ezekiel 28:13a’s allusion to LXX Genesis 3:23–24 seems un-

¹⁷ Daniel 7:5 attests the Aramaic term ܕܡܘܬ.

¹⁸ Cf. MT Deuteronomy 33:10; Psalm 51:21, where the LXX translation renders the Hebrew term כִּלִּי as διὰ παντός and ὁλοκαυτώματα, respectively.

¹⁹ Cf. LXX 2 Samuel 12:30; Isaiah 28:1, 3, 5; 62:3; Jeremiah 13:18; Ezekiel 16:12; 21:31; 23:42; Zechariah 6:11, 14; Psalms 21:4; 65:12; Job 19:9; 31:36; Proverbs 4:9; 12:4; 14:24; 16:31; 17:6; Song of Songs 3:11; Lamentations 5:16; Esther 8:15; 1 Chronicles 20:2; Sirach 6:31; 45:12; 50:12.

²⁰ Genesis 3:23–24; 49:20; Jeremiah 51:34; Ezekiel 28:13; 31:16, 18; 36:35; Joel 2:3; Psalm 35:9; Lamentations 4:5. τρυφή also corresponds to the Hebrew noun גַּן “garden” (Ezekiel 31:9); נוֹה “pasture” (Ezekiel 34:1); תַּעֲנוּג “delight” (Micah 2:9; Proverbs 19:10; Song of Songs 7:7; Sirach 11:27; 14:16; 18:32; 37:29); תַּפְאִרַת “beauty” (Proverbs 4:9).

mistakable. All in all, the deployment of the Greek vocabulary (ὁμοιώσις, στέφανος, and τρυφή) forms the cumulative evidence that demonstrates not a different Hebrew Vorlage, but rather the translator's intention to allude to the other creation narratives in the LXX in order to characterize the Tyrian royal in Ezekiel 28 as a primal man.

In addition to the above three cases of significant Hebrew–Greek equivalents, the LXX highlights the mortality of the Tyrian king by associating him not only with the mythological primal man, but also with the Israelite high priest (v. 13b). As argued previously, the secondary insertion of the nine precious stones, which resemble the Israelite high priestly pectoral, into the parent text of MT Ezekiel 28:13 is inspired by the cultic terminology in the surrounding verses. The comparison between the foreign monarch and the Israelite sacral tradition is already latent in this early Hebrew version. That the connection between MT Ezekiel and Exodus is not exact is probably due to the rather fluid textual tradition at the early stage of the dirge's composition. Here, I contend further that the nine precious stones are presumably present in the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX. Similar to Ziegler's view that the pluses in the pre-Hexaplaric Greek manuscripts are secondary in general (Ziegler 2006, p. 25),²¹ my argument is that the Greek translator chooses to expand, rearrange, and update the stones found in its Hebrew Vorlage so that the list of jewels bears an almost exact correspondence with the gems on the Israelite high priestly pectoral narrated in LXX Exodus 28:17–20; 36:17–20.²²

Nihan argues against Patmore and dismisses the link between the Tyrian figure and the Israelite high priest as “rather speculative (*assez spéculative*)” (Nihan 2017, p. 44; cf. Patmore 2012, pp. 177–78). In his view, the LXX's expansion of the gem list is simply motivated by the reference to “every precious stone” (πᾶν λίθον χρηστὸν) at the beginning of Ezekiel 28:13 (Nihan 2017, p. 44). The correspondence between LXX Ezekiel and Exodus merely reflects “the increasing authority of the list of the twelve stones of the pectoral during the Second Temple Period (*l'autorité croissante de la liste des douze pierres du pectoral à l'époque du Second Temple*)” (Nihan 2017, pp. 44–45). Elsewhere in his article, Nihan cites the descriptions of the heavenly Jerusalem in the pesher of Isaiah (4QpIsa^d) and the Apocalypse of John (Revelations 21:19–20) as testimonies to such significance of the list of the twelve stones (Nihan 2017, p. 33). Nonetheless, none of these texts reflects the kind of lexical links between the lists of the twelve stones in LXX Exodus and Ezekiel.²³ The lexical commonalities between the latter two passages are too specific for the sacral connotation to be dismissed easily.

Moreover, Nihan does not consider the surrounding context of the list of jewels cited in LXX Ezekiel 28:13, which enhances the priestly interpretation of the Tyrian figure even more. For instance, following the list of jewels, the LXX translation at Ezekiel 28:13 contains the phrase, “you filled your treasuries and your storerooms” (ἐνέπλησας τοὺς θησαυρούς σου καὶ τὰς ἀποθήκας σου), which hints at a priestly interpretation. If we attempt to retrovert the Greek phrase, we can reach the Hebrew phrase מלאת אוצרותיך ומשמרותיך. However, as Patmore rightly points out, it is unlikely that this Hebrew phrase underlies the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX before developing into the opaquer clause מלאכת תפך ונקיך preserved in the MT (Patmore 2012, p. 158). The principle *lectio difficilior potior* works in this case. More likely, the MT preserves the more original Hebrew reading, which coincides with the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX, but the Greek translator did not know how to make sense of this difficult phrase in the Vorlage. As Tov explicates, the LXX trans-

²¹ Ziegler states: “Wie ist das Plus und Minus von B (und verwandten Zeugen) zu beurteilen? Die Entscheidung über das Plus ist leicht zu fällen; es ist als sekundär in den App. Zu verweisen, da es aus stilistischen Gründen in Abhängigkeit von verwandten Stellen hinzugefügt wurde.”

²² Codex Vaticanus, unlike P967, contains a later insertion of silver and gold (ἀργύριον καὶ χρυσίον) between the fifth and sixth stones. The insertion harmonizes with the description of the Tyrian king's wealth in LXX Ezek 28:4 (καὶ χρυσίον καὶ ἀργύριον ἐν τοῖς θησαυροῖς σου). On the other hand, the placement of gold and silver in the treasuries of the house of the Lord is commonly described in LXX Joshua 6:19, 24; 1 Kings 7:37; 15:15, 18; 2 Kings 14:14; 16:8; 2 Chronicles 5:1; 16:2; 25:24; Ezra 2:69; Nehemiah 7:71. Cf. 1 Chronicles 29:3, 8 mention not only the gold and silver prepared by King David, but also the precious stones deposited at the treasury of the house of the Lord.

²³ LXX Exodus 28:17–20 lists twelve gems: σάρδιον, τοπάzion, σμάραγδος, ἄνθραξ, σάπφειρος, ἱασπις, λιγύριον, ἀχάτης, ἀμέθυστος, χρυσόλιθος, βηρύλλιον, ὀνύχιον. All of these stones appear in LXX Ezekiel 28:13 in the same order.

lator sometimes “guessed at the meaning of the letters and did not think of any particular vocalization,” while “disregarding such details as prefixes or suffixes” (Tov 2015, pp. 119–20). Since מלאכה in the Vorlage is graphically similar to מלאח, the translator took the liberty to render the word as ἐνέπλησας. Then, the translator, guessing at the meanings of the following Hebrew words, found inspiration from Ezekiel 28:4, where the dative word θησαυροῖς appears in the context of the Tyrian accumulated wealth. Significant is the use of ἀποθήκας at v.13 to supplement the adjacent θησαυρούς. The LXX contains twelve occurrences of the noun ἀποθήκη,²⁴ most of which are concentrated in 1 Chronicles, the translation of which is roughly contemporaneous with that of Ezekiel.²⁵ Within 1 Chronicles 28:11–13, the term appears four times, all in relation to the temple storehouses, some of which keep the sacred vessels.²⁶ Another occurrence of the term in 1 Chronicles 29:8 is particularly interesting, since it mentions a temple storehouse used specifically to keep the “(precious) stones” (λίθος). The sacral connotation conveyed through the translator’s choice of the Greek term is subtle but significant.

All in all, the LXX not only affirms the mortal status of the Tyrian king, but also places him more concretely within the Israelite context.

3.2. Identifying the Syntactical Rearrangement

The LXX continues to emphasize the mortality of the Tyrian king with a syntax arrangement that differs from the MT at Ezekiel 28:14–15. As argued in the previous section, the parent text of the MT consists of two parallel metaphors. While the first one compares the Tyrian king to a signet ring (אתה חותם תכנית, v.12b), the second one begins at v.14 and likens the Tyrian king to a semi-divine cherub (את כרוב הסוכך). The LXX, on the other hand, does not identify the royal as a cherub. The translator adopted a different reading strategy with regard to the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX Ezekiel 28:14–15.

For a start, the translator, neglecting the parallelism between vv. 12–13 and vv. 14–15 in the poetic Hebrew Vorlage, read the textual unit in vv.14–15 as marked by an inclusio that begins and ends with מיום הבראך or ביום הבראך (i.e., ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας ἐκτίσθης σύ, μετὰ τοῦ χερουβ ἔθικα σε ἐν ὄρει ἀγίῳ θεοῦ//ἀφ’ ἧς ἡμέρας σὺ ἐκτίσθης ἕως εὐρέθῃ τὰ ἀδικήματα ἐν σοί). As Tov notes, מ and ב are graphically similar letters that could reflect a genuine variant in the Vorlage or a pseudo-variant that existed only in the translator’s mind (Tov 2015, pp. 149, 178–79). Thus, either the Hebrew Vorlage of the translator at the beginning of v.14 read מיום הבראך or the translator made the adjustment at v.14 according to the same phrase appearing once again at v.15.

An interesting reading with regard to the identity of the Tyrian king emerges when individual elements within the inclusio of LXX Ezekiel vv. 14–15 are examined more closely. Whereas the MT reads את as a singular personal pronoun “you,” the LXX understands את as a preposition “with” (μετὰ). As argued in Section 2.1, the word ממשך is a hapax legomenon inserted later into the Hebrew text. Thus, it was probably not present in the translator’s Vorlage. On the other hand, the Hebrew term הסוכך found in the MT was likely present also in the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX, since the Greek translations seem to acknowledge its presence in the Vorlage when the indefinite כרוב is rendered definite τοῦ χερουβ. The presence of הסוכך in the Hebrew Vorlage of the LXX is especially likely in light of the fact that elsewhere in the book of Ezekiel, apart from 10:9, the MT and the LXX always treat the כרוב/חרουב as a common noun, whose definiteness requires an additional definite article (cf. Ezekiel 9:3; 10:1–8, 15–16, 18–20; 11:22; 41:18, 20, 25). Note also that MT 28:16 mentions כרוב הסוכך, with the corresponding Greek translation being the definite τὸ χερουβ (Allen 1990, p. 91). It seems likely that the Greek translation at v.14 renders the χερουβ

²⁴ Exodus 16:23, 32; Deuteronomy 28:5, 17; 1 Chronicles 28:11–13 (4x); 29:8; 1 Esdras 1:51; Jeremiah 27:26; Ezekiel 28:13.

²⁵ Tov mentions that “Chronicles is quoted by Eupolemos in the middle of the second century BCE,” and that “Prophets and several of the books of the Hagiograph were known in their Greek version to the grandson of Ben Sira at the end of the second century BCE” (Tov 2001, p. 137).

²⁶ For example, 1 Chronicles 28:11–13; 29:8; 1 Esdras 1:51. The sacral connotation is also apparent in Exodus 16:23, where the noun appears in a context referring to the storage of food for the sacred observance of the Sabbath. In Exodus 16:32, the term is used for the deposit of a small portion of manna in sacred remembrance of God’s provision for the Israelites.

Despite his careful observations of the recensions' readings, Lust's conclusion about the originality of the LXX reading in this specific case seems too hasty to be definitive. The situation is especially inconclusive when the Peshitta, which is generally dated to around 200 CE and thus roughly contemporaneous with the Greek recensions (Weitzman 1999, pp. 248–58; Mushayabasa 2014, p. 1), actually attests to the LXX's reading at Ezekiel 28:14,²⁹ while agreeing with the MT's reading at Ezekiel 28:16.³⁰ In this light, the two different readings found in the MT and the LXX seem to have equal rights to the claim of antiquity or even originality. Since the MT preserves a rarer and more difficult reading of נח, the reading preserved in the LXX is likely a secondary development grappling with the difficult text (Anderson 2000, p. 138; Barr 1992, p. 216; Richelle 2014, p. 121). Moreover, as Lust also admits, the Greek recensions of Ezekiel are preserved in a fragmentary state (Lust 2012, p. 170). Therefore, we cannot ascertain confidently if the influence of the LXX is completely absent in their corrections toward a Hebrew reading close to the MT. The recensions possibly followed the LXX reading rather than the MT reading here, because the former is a more common explanation of the Hebrew term נח. The possibility that the recensions concurred with the LXX reading rather than the MT reading out of a later ideological concern, which widens the gulf between the mortal and divine, must also be explored. Such an ideological milieu underpinning some later exegeses of Ezekiel 28 forms the focus of Section 4 of this article.

³⁰ כִּי־אֶמָחֵם אֶת־הַכְּרֻבִּים הַמְּכַסִּים (‘‘And I shall destroy you, O covering cherub, in the midst of the fiery stones’’). Thus, the Peshitta, like the MT, identifies the cherub with the Tyrian king here.

3.3. Retroverting to the Greek Translator's Hebrew Vorlage

Table 2 illustrates the Greek verses 14 and 15 as well as their retroversion into the Hebrew Vorlage perceived by the translator:

Table 2. Retroversion to the Hebrew Vorlage according to the LXX Translator's Perception.

LXX Ezekiel 28:14–15	The Retroverted Hebrew Vorlage
ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἐκτίσθης σύ, μετὰ τοῦ χερουβ ἐθικά σε ἐν ὄρει ἁγίῳ θεοῦ,	[מ]יום הבראך את[ה] כרוב הסוכך ונתתך בהר קדש אלהים
ἐγενήθης ἐν μέσῳ λίθων πυρίνων.	היית בתוך אבני אש
ἐγενήθης [P967:ἐπορεύθης] ἄμωμος σὺ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις σου	התהלכת תמים אתה בדרכיך
ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας σὺ ἐκτίσθης ἕως εὐρέθῃ τὰ ἀδικήματα ἐν σοί.	מיום הבראך עד נמצא עולות בך

As seen, the Hebrew Vorlage bears much resemblance with the parent text of the MT, but the LXX employs several techniques to read the Tyrian king in a more monolithic way. The unusual Greek–Hebrew equivalents that allude to the creation narrative, the strengthened comparison of the Tyrian king with the Israelite high priest, and the syntactical differentiation of the Tyrian king from the cherub all show secondary development and reflect the translator's conscious or subconscious intention to perceive the Tyrian king singly as a mere mortal instead of a semi-divine cherub.

4. The Literary Growth of the Tyrian King

The above textual analyses show that the MT, unlike the LXX, does not hesitate to envision a comparison and even an identification of the mortal Tyrian king with the supernatural cherub. That the MT's imagery of the Tyrian king likely represents an earlier interpretation than the LXX's presentation of the Tyrian king is reinforced by a wider range of comparisons with the ancient Near East iconography and Second Temple literature. Several MT texts do not hesitate to present an angelomorphic understanding of kingship, where the Israelite monarchs are compared with the “messenger of God” (מלאך in 1 Samuel 29:9; 2 Samuel 14:17, 20; Zechariah 12:8; cf. Fletcher-Louis 2000, p. 293). It is thus not surprising that the Tyrian ruler in MT Ezekiel 28 is made comparable to the cherub, which is conceived elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible as winged creatures (Exodus 25:18–22; 37:7–9; Numbers 7:89; 1 Kings 8:6–7; cf. 1 Kings 6:23–29) or heavenly beings functioning as guardians or throne carriers of YHWH (Genesis 3:24; Psalm 18:11 (=2 Samuel 22:11); Ezekiel 8–11; (cf. Wood 2008, pp. 51–138)). Given that the Hebrew Bible contains numerous descriptions of the heavenly council, which consists of God's sons (בני עליון in Psalm 82:6; בני אלים in Psalms 29:1; 89:7; בני האלהים in Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7), his servants (משרתים in Psalm 104:4; עבדים in Job 4:18; 44:26), spirits (הרוח in 1 Kings 22:21), and messengers (מלאך in Job 4:18; 33:23), the cherubim are most probably regarded as members of the divine council, as Tiemeyer helpfully points out (Tiemeyer 2008, p. 107).

Such an understanding also coheres with the Mesopotamian presentations of the *kīribu* and *kurību*, the winged creatures that bear the divine determinative in several cuneiform texts (Lee 2016a, pp. 111–13). Most pertinent to our analysis of MT Ezekiel is the excavation of multiple Phoenician winged sphinx thrones dating from the end of the second millennium all the way into the Hellenistic/Roman period (Keel and Uehlinger 1998, p. 168; cf. Albright 1938, pp. 1–2; Barnett 1969, p. 9; Pritchard 1954, figs. 332, 456–459; Keel 1977, p. 32, figs. 15–17). Some of the most famous iconographical depictions show the god Melqart of Tyre and King Ahiiram of Byblos seated on those cherub thrones. Keel and Uehlinger also find iconographical presence of these thrones in the ancient Israelite region (Keel and Uehlinger 1998, p. 168; cf. Stern 2017, pp. 40–48). According to both scholars, the cherubim, “[a]s those who carry the throne, ... reflect the nature of the figure who is enthroned above them, with such figures being primarily though not exclusively kings

or male deities—depicted either as an all-powerful king or as the ‘Most High God’” (Keel and Uehlinger 1998, p. 168). According to both scholars, Ezekiel 28:12–19 “makes use of an apparently older Phoenician mythology” (Keel and Uehlinger 1998, p. 234, n. 101). As such, the MT’s fusion of the mortal Tyrian king with the supernatural cherub in order to stress his proximity to the divine would not seem strange against the ancient Near Eastern background.

On the other hand, a survey of the extra-biblical literature from the Second Temple Period and Early Antiquity shows that the LXX’s differentiation of the Tyrian king from the supernatural cherub fits with one later trend consisting of a widening gulf between the divine and the mortal. Several LXX passages present this gulf more clearly than the Hebrew counterparts found in the MT. The LXX translators of the Pentateuch, especially those of the book of Exodus, as Fritsch argues, displayed an anti-anthropomorphic Tendency at numerous passages, such that the human qualities and emotions attributed to God were removed or toned down (Fritsch 1943, p. 1). For instance, whereas MT Exodus 4:24 envisions the Lord’s direct theophany to Moses (ויפגשו יהוה), the LXX counterpart describes the meeting as taking place between Moses and an angel of the Lord (συνήντησεν αὐτῷ ἄγγελος κυρίου) (Fritsch 1943, p. 56; cf. Tov 2001, pp. 127–28). An intermediary figure is used in the latter to set God apart and aloof from the human sphere (cf. Fritsch 1943, pp. 54–57). The setting apart is made effective by virtue of the fact that the angelic beings (ἁγγέλους) are ranked a little higher than the human beings (LXX Psalm 8:6; contra MT Psalm 8:6, which makes a direct comparison between human beings and אלהים “God”).

The gulf between the divine and the mortal became even greater in some literature from the Second Temple Period and Early Antiquity that witnessed a more highly developed scheme of angelic beings, who began to take on individual names, such as Michael (Daniel 10:21; 12:1; 1 Enoch 9:1), Gabriel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21; 1 Enoch 9:1), Shemihazah (1 Enoch 6:3), and Asael (1 Enoch 8:1), and to adopt specific roles as either archangels, guardian angels of Israel, or leaders of the Watchers. 1 Enoch 6–16, being an elaboration on the story of the “sons of God” in Genesis 6:1–4, makes clear that the transgression of the boundary between the divine and the mortal is strictly forbidden, and the result of such a transgression is disastrous. The prohibition for the mortals to participate in any part of the divine realm is perhaps carried out more effectively with rabbinic stories about the angelic misanthropy. Kosior cites an example from Gen. Rab. 85, which relates the very strong opposition of the ministering angels against God’s decision to create the first man (Kosior 2016, p. 8). Another midrash (Num. Rab. 12:3) records the divine messengers’ attempt to foil Moses from receiving the Torah on Mount Sinai (Kosior 2016, p. 8). The kind of cultural milieu, which highlights the transcendent status of YHWH above the mundane affairs, probably also influenced the early Jewish recensions to not identify the Tyrian king with the cherub and to choose a more common reading of אַס as a preposition “with.” The refusal to exalt a mortal to the status of a supernatural cherub comes out most strongly in Targum Jonathan. Despite the fact that this Targum contains an exegetical exposition of Ezekiel 28:12b–15 based on a Hebrew text close to the MT, it chooses to deviate from the Hebrew reading by not including any reference to the cherub (כרוב) in its exposition of vv. 14 and 16. (cf. Patmore 2012, p. 116). Instead, the Tyrian figure is referred to consistently as a mortal “king” (מלך).

All the foregoing examples have the potential to reconstruct the kind of cultural milieu in which the LXX translators of Ezekiel 28:12b–15 worked, and thus to explain the logic behind the translators’ consistent dissociation of the Tyrian king from the supernatural cherub, which by the Hellenistic time was probably associated more closely with the angelic beings. This is not to deny another trend of development in the Second Temple Literature, in which the high priest or the righteous are increasingly regarded as angelic. For instance, Sirach 45:6–22 and 50:6–7 stresses the angelomorphic priesthood by describing Aaron and the high priest Simon son of Onias in supernatural and astral language (Hayward 1996, pp. 63–71; Fletcher-Louis 2000, pp. 193–94). Jubilees 31:13–15 reworks Genesis 49’s blessing of Levi, so that his descendants, the Levites, are promised to “serve in his

[God's] sanctuary as the angels of the presence and the holy ones" (Fletcher-Louis 2000, pp. 294–95). As analyzed by Fletcher-Louis, a description of an angelomorphic priesthood appears starkly in 1QSb 4:23–28, where the priest is blessed "as an Angel of the Presence in the abode of holiness for the Glory of the God of Hosts" (Fletcher-Louis 2000, pp. 307–12). The LXX translation of Ezekiel 28:12b–15, which persists in associating the Tyrian ruler with the Israelite high priest, but dissociating him from the divine cherub, is thus at odds with this particular trend of development in the Second Temple Literature. Perhaps the LXX's denial of the cherubic or angelic status of the priest-like Tyrian king reflects a hidden polemic against the high priesthood in the Hellenistic period.

All in all, MT Ezekiel 28:12–15, in line with the biblical and ancient Near East iconographic understanding of cherubim, exalts the mortal Tyrian ruler to the status of a supernatural cherub, in anticipation of his ultimate defeat of the Tyrian king in the hand of YHWH. On the other hand, the LXX counterpart, alongside several later expositions of Ezekiel 28:12b–15, fits with one particular trend in the Second Temple period, in which YHWH's supremacy is highlighted through the introduction of angelic intermediary figures and the curtailed status of humanity.

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