

# Χλωρός in the Septuagint: Color or State?

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## ■ Abstract

The adjective *χλωρός* appears in the Septuagint to translate Hebrew terms that not only denote color, but state as well. In fact, in biblical Hebrew color is not a quality, but rather a “state” of the entities it describes. It is logical to wonder, then, whether it also expresses this in the Septuagint or if it denotes only color. To answer this question, it is necessary to carry out an interdisciplinary study of color and color language. The methodology followed will first study the concept of color in the Hellenistic world and in the Septuagint, as well as the cultural context in which the Septuagint translators lived. Subsequently, an approximate account of the “encyclopedic knowledge” that those translators possessed will be given, followed, finally, by a semantic analysis of *χλωρός* in the Septuagint. After applying this methodology, it will be shown that in the Septuagint, as in the Hellenistic world in general, natural color expresses both color and state, with color being the visual reflection of that state.

## ■ Keywords

Septuagint, color, state, encyclopedic knowledge, cognitive linguistics, green



## ■ Introduction

The color term *χλωρός* appears fifteen times in the Septuagint.<sup>1</sup> According to Johan Lust and Takamitsu Muraoka, the adjective *χλωρός* in the Septuagint denotes color.<sup>2</sup> However, modern translations of the Septuagint do not always consider this to be the case. They are unanimous in affirming that *χλωρός* expresses color, specifically the color green, when it functions as an adjective (Gen 1:30, 30:37a; 4 Kgdms 19:26; Isa 15:6, 19:7; Ezek 17:24, 20:47). The only exception to this is found in the Spanish version, which translates it as “amarillento” (4 Kgdms 19:26) and “fresco” (Ezek 20:47).<sup>3</sup> The disparity arises when *χλωρός* is used as a noun, perhaps because, as the Italian version of the Septuagint suggests, *χλωρός* is at times employed as a metonymy to designate “grass.” In those cases, the English translations tend to translate it with terms from the semantic field of plants: “verdure,” Gen 2:5 (NETS), or “herb” (Brenton); “greenery,” Num 22:4 (NETS), or “green herbs” (Brenton); “vegetation,” Deut 29:23 (NETS); “herbage,” Prov 27:25 (Brenton).<sup>4</sup> Spanish translation, in the majority of cases, nominalizes the adjective “verde,” which is often used in Spanish, and thus respects the Greek text by maintaining the chromatic meaning of *χλωρός* (“el verde,” Gen 2:5, 30:37b; “lo verde,” Num 22:4, Job 39:8; “verdor,” Prov 27:25), while the French translation (“verdure,” Gen 2:5; Num 22:4; Deut 29:22; Prov 27:25; “le vert,” Gen 30:37b; “vert,” Exod 10:15) and the Italian translation (“vegetazione,” Gen 2:5; “il verde,” Gen 30:37b; “niente di verde,” Exod 10:15; “verde,” Num 22:4<sup>5</sup>; “erba,” Deut 29:22; “ogni cosa verde,” Job 39:8) combine the two modes of translating it.

These interpretations are related to the modern concept of color<sup>6</sup> and perhaps also to that found in New Testament lexicography, in which scholars have proposed that color is an “intrinsic quality”<sup>7</sup> or feature of an object.<sup>8</sup> This does not occur, however, in

<sup>1</sup> This article is part of a larger study that I have undertaken as principal investigator of the research group LECObi (G20/3-08) and the project *El Apocalipsis: un universo de color. Del texto a la imagen I* (MPFI21LG), both under the auspices of the Universidad San Pablo CEU, CEU Universities. Unless otherwise indicated, the translations are my own.

<sup>2</sup> LEH, 664, s.v. *χλωρός*; GELS, 733, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>3</sup> *La Biblia griega. Septuaginta*, vol. 2, *Libros históricos* (trans. Natalio Fernández Marcos and María Victoria Spottorno; Salamanca: Sígueme, 2011); *La Biblia griega. Septuaginta*, vol. 4, *Libros proféticos* (trans. Natalio Fernández Marcos, María Victoria Spottorno Díaz-Caro, and José Manuel Cañas Reillo; Salamanca: Sígueme, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> *La Biblia Griega* omits part of Exod 10:15 in its translation; *La Biblia griega. Septuaginta*, vol. 1, *Pentateuco* (trans. Natalio Fernández Marcos and María Victoria Spottorno; Salamanca: Sígueme, 2008).

<sup>5</sup> An explanatory note states that this is a metonymy for “erba”: *La Bibbia dei Settanta*, vol. 1, *Pentateuco*, (ed. Paolo Lucca; Brescia: Morcelliana, 2012) n. 633.

<sup>6</sup> See section “A. The Concept of Color in the Hellenistic World” below.

<sup>7</sup> Dámaris Romero argues that adjectives that express an intrinsic quality are those which “denote a quality of the subject that has value in itself, that is, which does not come from outside, as it is possessed in all circumstances and does not depend on this or on certain extrinsic considerations”; *El adjetivo en el Nuevo Testamento. Clasificación semántica* (Córdoba: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 2010) 110–11 and 520; <http://hdl.handle.net/10396/3535>.

<sup>8</sup> L&N, 79 Features of Objects, G. Color (79.26–79.38).

biblical Hebrew.<sup>9</sup> According to the study by Reinier de Blois, color expresses state and is not merely an attribute of an object or person but is an “event.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed, when de Blois defines Hebrew color adjectives in the *Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew*, he usually first establishes the category of the term, which is nothing other than its “state,” and then goes on to specify the hue it denotes. Thus, the more or less standard definition applied to color adjectives that describe objects is, for example, a “state in which objects are white/reddish”<sup>11</sup> and in the case of people a “state in which humans have an unusually white complexion.”<sup>12</sup> This proposal is corroborated by the LECOBI research group,<sup>13</sup> which, on studying the lexical family of ירק, demonstrated that in it color denotes state, whether it describes plants (Gen 1:30, 9:3; Exod 10:15; Num 22:4; 2 Kgs 19:26; Isa 15:6, 37:27; Ps 37:2; Job 39:8), mold (Lev 13:49, 14:37), metals (Ps 68:14), or persons (Jer 30:6). Thus, the presence of color terms in the texts provides information that transcends the merely external description of an object and reveals its state, a reality that affects its interior and is made visible through color. ירק and ירוק, then, show the lushness and freshness of plants, while ירקרק reveals the impurity of gold when alloyed with other metals (Ps 68:14) or the impurity produced by mold (Lev 13:49, 14:37), and ירקון the fear experienced by soldiers before an enemy attack (Jer 30:6).

It is thus logical to wonder whether, as Lust and Muroaka claim,<sup>14</sup> χλωρός in the Septuagint denotes only and exclusively color, or whether, as in Hebrew, it also denotes state. To answer these questions, it is necessary to carry out an interdisciplinary study that addresses the two fundamental aspects of this research: defining the concept of color that predominated in the Hellenistic world and permeated its culture; and conducting a semantic analysis of the lexeme χλωρός. Focusing on only one of these aspects would suppose placing a series of limits that would distort the results of this research. On the one hand, color theory may become overvalued in relation to the study of the color adjectives found in the texts; at the same time, if the concept of color that characterized the Hellenistic world

<sup>9</sup> Earlier research by Gradwohl, Brenner, and Hartley is based on color as a luminous sensation having three elements: hue, saturation, and brightness; in other words, they transfer our modern categories of color to the biblical text without questioning whether this might not have been the case in antiquity: Roland Gradwohl, *Die Farben im Alten Testament. Eine terminologische Studie* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1963); Athalya Brenner, *Colour Terms in the Old Testament* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982); John E. Hartley, *The Semantics of Ancient Hebrew Colour Lexemes* (ANESSup 33; Walpole, MA; Leuven: Peeters, 2010).

<sup>10</sup> Reinier de Blois, “Lexicography and Cognitive Linguistics: Hebrew Metaphors from a Cognitive Perspective,” *Davalogos* 3.2 (2004) 97–116, at 102; idem, “Semantic Domains for Biblical Hebrew,” in *Bible and Computer: The Stellenbosch AIBI-6 Conference; Proceedings of the Association Internationale Bible et Informatique “From Alpha to Byte,” University of Stellenbosch, 17–21 July 2000* (ed. Johann Cook, Leiden: Brill 2002) 209–29, at 221.

<sup>11</sup> *Semantic Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew* (hereafter *SDBH*), s.v. אָדָם H0122 Reinier de Blois; s.v. לָבָן H3836 H3837 Reinier de Blois.

<sup>12</sup> *SDBH*, s.v. יָרֵק H3420 Reinier de Blois.

<sup>13</sup> Lourdes García Ureña et al., *The Language of Colour in the Bible: Embodied Colour Terms Related to Green* (trans. Donald Murphy; Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2022) 39–80.

<sup>14</sup> LEH, 664, s.v. χλωρός; *GELS*, 733, s.v. χλωρός.

is not considered, anachronisms may be committed in their interpretation through the application of our modern-day concept of color to antiquity.

For these reasons, the methodology employed will be the following: first, we will approach color theory based on the most relevant contributions of Greek civilization, focusing primarily on the Hellenistic culture in which the Septuagint was produced. Subsequently, we will determine the extent to which this concept of color is reflected in the Septuagint. We will then consider the Septuagint translators themselves, in order to approximate the cultural horizon in which they lived, the foundations from which they carried out their translation, and their knowledge of the languages they spoke. The purpose of this is to acquire what, in the field of cognitive linguistics, is known as “encyclopedic knowledge.” Once this has been acquired, we will carry out our semantic analysis of *χλωρός* based on the concept of color that existed in the Hellenistic world.

## ■ The Concept of Color in the Hellenistic World and in the Septuagint

### *A. The Concept of Color in the Hellenistic World*

It was in the Hellenistic world that the first treatise on color would appear: *De coloribus*. However, the concept of color had already awakened the interest of the period’s most important philosophers. Plato defined color as that which is perceived first visually (*Charm.* 167c–d); indeed, he argued, without color the sense of sight would be incapable of perceiving (*Charm.* 168d): ἡ ὄψις γέ που, ὃ ἄριστε, εἴπερ ὄψεται αὐτὴ ἐαυτήν, χρῶμά τι αὐτὴν ἀνάγκη ἔχειν: ἄχρων γὰρ ὄψις οὐδὲν ἂν (Sight, my dear friend, if it is to see, must have some kind of color; as sight does not perceive what is colorless).

This insistence on the visual nature of color appears in two of Plato’s other texts as well, *Tim.* 67c and *Meno* 76d, where he states that colors are like flares given off by objects. Through this, a nexus of union between color and the physical object in which it appears is established. This intimate relationship between the two is described in another fragment of the *Theaetetus* where, in distinguishing between whiteness and the color white, he states that the color white is what we find on the surfaces of objects; thus, wood is white, as is stone:<sup>15</sup> ἐγένετο οὐ λευκότης αὐτὴ ἀλλὰ λευκόν, εἴτε ξύλον εἴτε λίθος εἴτε ὄψον συνέβη χρῶμα χρωσθῆναι τῷ τοιούτῳ χρώματι ([color] does not become whiteness but rather that which is white, whether this is a tree or a rock or any other figure which is characterized by its being infused with this color [156e]).

These two aspects, visibility and physical object, will reappear again and again in later authors when they examine or define color. Thus, Aristotle would define

<sup>15</sup> In any case, the interpretation of this fragment has been the subject of debate among philosophers: Ekai Txapartegi, “Platón sobre los colores,” *Teorema* 27.2 (2008) 5–25.

color as “what is visible”: τὸ γὰρ ὁρατὸν ἐστὶ χρῶμα (what is visible is color [*De an.* 418a]). Later, the stoic Zenon would blend visibility and physical object in his own definition: τὰ χρώματα ἐπίχρωσιν τῆς ὕλης ὑπέλαβεν (colors are the surface tint of matter).<sup>16</sup>

We then come to the Hellenistic period, where the interest in color increased<sup>17</sup> and led, as we have said, to the first treatise on color itself, *De coloribus*.<sup>18</sup> In that work, the author is not concerned with defining color, but rather with characterizing and explaining the presence of color in the reality that surrounds him. In his reflections, the author again insists on the two essential features of color: its visual nature as being dependent on light in order to be perceived (793b); and the intimate connection of the object itself with color (792b): γινόμενα ἐν φυτοῖς καὶ καρποῖς καὶ τριχώμασι καὶ πτερώμασι καὶ τοῖς τοιοῦτοις πᾶσιν ([colors] appear in plants, fruits, hair, feathers, etc).

Color was not seen as an abstract but as a concrete reality: that is, that which is visible in a given entity (whether object or person). Its origins are diverse, however; some colors come from nature, while others originate in the process of dyeing. The author thus makes a distinction between what can be called natural color and what is pigment color (794a–b).

As a fact of observation, the author of *De coloribus* perceives that natural color is not a permanent reality but one that is ephemeral and changes according to stages of development, moistness, time of year, and the passage of time. He emphasizes and describes this aspect in greater detail (794b–799b)<sup>19</sup> when he examines the ripening process of fruits and plants in general. The color these acquire depends on their degree of maturity or moistness, revealing the close connection between color and state. Specifically, on examining the coloration process of plants, he affirms that when they are born, they have the color of grass; that is to say, they are ποώδης:<sup>20</sup> ἐν πᾶσι δὴ τοῖς φυτοῖς ἀρχὴ τὸ ποώδες ἐστὶ τῶν χρωμάτων (at first, all plants are the color of the green grass [794b]). He later observes that a plant has different hues depending on whether it sprouts from the earth or remains hidden within it. Its visible part is described with the adjective χλωρός: διὸ καὶ τὰ μὲν ὑπὲρ γῆς χλωρὰ πάντων τῶν φουμένων τὸ πρῶτόν ἐστὶ (And so, in all plants, the part that springs up from the earth is at first green [794b]). Even water

<sup>16</sup> *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (ed. Hans von Arnim; 4 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1924) 1:3–71, <http://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/Cite?0635:001:51701>.

<sup>17</sup> See section “E. Χλωρός in Greco-Roman Egypt” below.

<sup>18</sup> *De coloribus* is the first specific treatise on color, dating from the late 4th to early-3rd cent. BCE. Its authorship has long been attributed to Aristotle, although this is contested today, as its style and the manner of presenting its content are quite removed from the usual Aristotelian dialectical and speculative discourse (Aristotle, *I colori e i suoni* [ed. Maria Fernanda Ferrini; Milan: Bompiani, 2008] 41–42, 56, 67 n. 3).

<sup>19</sup> *De coloribus* 794b–797a correspond to the study of plants, fruits, and flowers, while 797b deals with other living entities, but principally with the human being.

<sup>20</sup> *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, s.v. ποώδης, 1733. In antiquity, the description of colors based on other entities was frequent.

acquires this tonality (τὰ γὰρ ὕδατα πάντα . . . γίνεται χλωρά [794b]). This hue is destined to disappear, however, as the loss of moisture produces dryness and modifies the color. To express this he uses the verb μελαίνω, “to make dark” (τὸ ὑγρὸν . . . καθ’ ἑαυτὸ παλαιούμενον καὶ καταξηραίνόμενον μελαίνεται [794b]). What is more, when plants reach the end of their ripening process and wither, they lose their characteristic hue and instead acquire a yellow color (ξανθός): ἔτι δὲ ὁ τε σῖτος καὶ τὰ φύομενα πάντα· καὶ γὰρ ταῦτα τὸ τελευταῖον γίνεται ξανθά (The same occurs with grains and all plants. In the end, all become yellow [797a]).

For the author of *De coloribus*, the color of a plant varies according to its stage of growth. If it has just sprouted, it is ποώδης, then becomes χλωρός, later blackens due to a lack of moisture, and finally yellows when it has withered completely. That is to say, color and state appear intrinsically united as two inseparable realities, to the point where a change in state necessarily implies a change in color. Color, then, is the visual reflection of a particular state (birth, development, death, dryness, etc.). We can thus conclude by affirming that in the Hellenistic world color was not an abstract concept but a concrete one: that which is visible and found on the surface of an object or person, the reflection of a state (stage of maturity, moistness, emotion)<sup>21</sup> whose origin could be either natural or artificial (natural color/pigment color).

As the above shows, the concept of color that we find in the Hellenistic world differs from our own modern-day concept, the legacy of Newton. Today, color is defined as a “sensation produced by luminous rays which make impressions on the visual organs and which depend on wavelength.”<sup>22</sup> This sensation consists of three elements: hue (the length of the wave; that is to say, its coloration); brightness (the quantity of light emitted, by which we may refer to darker or lighter colors); and saturation (the intensity of that aspect that causes colors to appear bolder or more faded). These elements are not found as such in the Hellenistic worldview. Color and state as they are perceived in the modern world constitute two independent categories. While color is a quality of objects (“the grass is green”), state is a mode of being (“the grass is fresh”). We must, then, abandon this division of concepts when studying the language of color in the Hellenistic world, since, in that worldview, when grass is said to be green, it is understood to be fresh.

### *B. The Concept of Color in the Septuagint*

The most direct way of determining whether the Septuagint reflects the concept of color that we have just presented is to analyze the use it makes of two lexemes that in Greek denote color: χρωμα and χροα. Unlike the Hebrew Bible, which lacks a

<sup>21</sup> In the same vein, Sandra Bussata, “The Perception of Color and the Meaning of Brilliance among Archaic and Ancient Populations and Its Reflections on Language,” *Antrocom Online Journal of Anthropology* 10.2 (2014) 300–347, at 312; Maria Fernanda Ferrini, introduzione ai Colori: *I Colori e la riflessione antica sulla visione, I Colori* (ed. Ferrini) 56–65.

<sup>22</sup> Real Academia Española, *Diccionario de la lengua española* (23rd ed., Madrid: Planeta, 2014) s.v. color, <https://dle.rae.es/?id=9qYXXhD>.

specific lexeme for “color,”<sup>23</sup> the Septuagint uses these two different terms: χρῶμα (four times) and χρώα (three times). Both are found in books written directly in Greek (Wisdom, 2 Maccabees, and the Greek additions to Esther) and in translations of the book of Exodus (Exod 4:7, 34:29–30). Although its presence is sporadic, its use is particularly relevant for understanding the concept of color reflected in the Greek version of the Bible.

Χρῶμα and χρώα are used indiscriminately to describe the appearance of objects and persons in very similar contexts. In the first case, for the description of objects, χρῶμα and χρώα appear in a specific context: the making of idols. Both lexemes are used to describe the hues with which the statues of these idols are decorated:

ἢ ζῶφ τινὶ εὐτελεῖ ὁμοίωσεν αὐτὸ  
καταχρίσας μίλτω καὶ φύκει ἐρυθθῆνας χρώαν<sup>24</sup> αὐτοῦ  
or made it like some vile beast,  
smeared with vermilion, and with red paint infused with color (Wis 13:14)

εἶδος σπιλωθὲν χρώμασιν διηλλαγμένοις  
a figure stained with varied colors (Wis 15:4)

In Wis 13:14, χρώα refers to the color red, which is mentioned in two ways: with the verb ἐρυθθαίνω, “to dye red,” and with the noun φύκος, which denotes a red dye. In contrast to this, in Wis 15:4, χρῶμα refers to the wide range of colors with which the idols could have been painted (διαλλάσσω). Χρῶμα and χρώα are thus used exclusively to denote color. Specifically, this is color in the form of dyes and pigments; that is to say, what today we refer to as “pigment color,”<sup>25</sup> which is used to cover the surfaces of objects. In Wis 13:14 and 15:4, these objects are the idols.

As for people, χρῶμα and χρώα are used to describe physical appearance in some specific contexts: when an individual experiences a strong, intense emotion (Esth 15:7; 2 Macc 3:16),<sup>26</sup> or when someone is restored to health (Exod 4:7) or has a personal religious experience (Exod 34:29–30). It is well known that strong emotion has psychosomatic repercussions, and in the Septuagint this can be observed in the famous episode of the queen, Esther, when she appeals to her husband, the king, to intercede on behalf of the people. The story tells us that, when the monarch turned his gaze on her, the queen, seized with panic, turned pale and fainted: καὶ ἔπεσεν ἡ βασίλισσα καὶ μετέβαλεν τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς ἐν ἐκλόσει (the queen fainted and her color was drained by this fainting) (Esth 15:7 [D. 7]).

<sup>23</sup> García Ureña et al., *Language of Colour*, 11–12.

<sup>24</sup> It might be considered that χρώα in this pericope has the meaning of “surface”; however, the Vulgate interprets this as “color” and therefore translates it with the lexeme *color: ubicundum faciens fuco colorem illius*.

<sup>25</sup> Juan Carlos Sanz and Rosa Gallego, *Diccionario Akal del color* (Madrid: Akal, 2001) 260, s.v. color pigmento.

<sup>26</sup> Esther 15:7 corresponds to one of the Greek additions to the book of Esther denominated “D” and absent from the Hebrew Masoretic Text; *La Biblia griega. Septuaginta, 2: Libros históricos*, 648.

The Septuagint describes this loss of color from fainting with the expression μεταβάλλω τὸ χρῶμα, “change the color.” The use of the expression is understandable, as earlier the language of color has been used to describe the healthy appearance and beauty of the queen, with the verb ἐρυθρίω, “to blush” (Esth 15:5),<sup>27</sup> noting the rosiness of her complexion. Then, as a result of fear and panic, she loses this rosy hue: μετέβαλεν τὸ χρῶμα αὐτῆς, “her color changed.” Fainting made her become pale, since, as we know today, the flow of blood is interrupted in such cases. Χρῶμα, then, alludes to what we refer to today as natural color, as it emerges in a person as the result of health or well-being and not from the application of a pigment, as in the case of the idols. We can conclude that in this pericope χρῶμα denotes both the color and the state of a person, here in the act of fainting from fear. The change of color is a symptom of the panic being experienced. Color and state thus appear intrinsically united.

Something similar occurs in 2 Macc 3:16, when Heliodorus decides to execute the king’s order to take possession of the treasure. The anguish that this decree causes in the high priest is described in the following manner: ἡ γὰρ ὄψις καὶ τὸ τῆς χροᾶς παρηλλαγμένον ἐνέφαινε τὴν κατὰ ψυχὴν ἀγωνίαν (his face and its change of color made visible the anguish of his soul).

It is significant that the Septuagint uses color to describe the high priest’s anguish. It would have sufficed to mention only ὄψις, “face,” but there is an express allusion to its color as well. What is more, it is the Septuagint itself that explains how a change in color ἐμφαίνω, “makes visible,” this ἀγωνία, “anguish,” that is to say, the high priest’s state of affliction. As occurs with χρῶμα, χροᾶ denotes the natural color of a person’s face. A change of color reveals a change in this state, as here the high priest is seized with anguish. Once again, color and state appear united, with color as the outward sign of an emotional state (anguish).

After analyzing Esth 15:7 and 2 Macc 3:16, we can thus conclude that χρῶμα and χροᾶ, when these refer to people, denote the natural color of a person’s complexion when that person feels well, both physically and emotionally. Color is therefore linked to state. A change from χρῶμα or χροᾶ implies the loss of that state of well-being and reflects an emotion such as fear or anguish; it is evident that this change of color shows—or, more precisely—makes visible, the emotions (fear, anguish, etc.) which that person is experiencing.

As for Exod 4:7, this pericope is from the episode in which God shows to Moses two extraordinary signs as manifestations of his power. One of these is leprosy. Moses puts his hand into his garment and when he takes it out, it is covered with the disease. For apologetic reasons, the translator of Exodus omits the express reference to leprosy that is contained in the Hebrew version (מצרעת, “afflicted with a rash, with a skin disease,” “leprous”)<sup>28</sup> and limits this to only a chromatic simile, “as snow”: ἐγενήθη ἡ χεὶρ αὐτοῦ ὡσεὶ χιῶν (his hand became as snow [Exod 4:6]).

<sup>27</sup> Esther 15:5 [D.5]: αὐτὴ ἐρυθρίωσα ἀκμῆ κάλλους αὐτῆς.

<sup>28</sup> HALOT, s.v. מצרע.



After this, Moses, following the instructions of Yahweh, puts his hand back in again, and when he takes it out this time, to the astonishment of the patriarch, it is completely healthy. To describe this, the Septuagint maintains the language of color used in the preceding verse. This is explicitly absent from the Hebrew version, which only mentions that the hand was restored:

והנה־שבה כבשרו

behold, it was restored like his flesh

πάλιν ἀπεκατέστη εἰς τὴν χροῖαν τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ.

again (the hand) took on the color of his flesh

The reappearance of the color that is natural and proper (χροῖα) in the body reveals the disappearance of the disease, that is, a change of state: the restoration of physical health. Once again, χροῖα is the external sign of a person's state, in this case health. And again, color and state are intrinsically united.

Finally, Exod 34:29–30 describes the effect on Moses of speaking face-to-face with God, even if the patriarch himself is not aware of this: Μωσῆς οὐκ ᾔδει ὅτι δεδόξασται ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ λαλεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ (Moses did not know that the appearance of the color of his face was glorified, when God spoke to him). The translator of Exodus modifies the Hebrew version in a synthetic manner by alluding simply to the quality of brightness: קרן עור פניו (the skin of his face shone). Although we do not have enough information to understand the meaning of קרן, “send out rays,”<sup>29</sup> what can be deduced from the Hebrew version is that this brightness is an outward sign of Moses's intimate communion with God.<sup>30</sup> The Septuagint retains this sense but uses a verb of deep theological content: δοξάζω, “to glorify.” This verb, as Gerhard Kittel has effectively shown, carries the biblical meaning of δόξα, “the divine radiance,” an expression of the divine nature of God in both his perceptible and imperceptible forms.<sup>31</sup> However, by using ἡ ὄψις τοῦ χρώματος τοῦ προσώπου αὐτοῦ as the subject, there is an insistence on the visible aspect of mystical experience. This participation in the communion with God is reflected in the patriarch's face and, once again, in its color. Thus, χρῶμα again shows a change of state in a person; that is, to be or not to be in communion with God.

After analyzing these terms, we can affirm two things. First, when describing objects (idols), χρῶμα and χροῖα denote an artificial color produced by a pigment or dye. And second, when referring to a person, χρῶμα and χροῖα denote a natural color that arises as a visible sign of the state of that person; color, then, is presented in these pericopes not as an intrinsic quality of a person, but as a state that changes according to that person's emotional circumstances, health, or relationship to God.

<sup>29</sup> BDB, s.v. קרן.

<sup>30</sup> John I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Accordance electronic ed.; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992) 467.

<sup>31</sup> Gerhard Kittel, “δοκέω, δόξα, δοξάζω, συνδοξάζω, ἔνδοξος, ἐνδοξάζω, παράδοξος,” *TDNT* 2: 232–55, at 244, 253.

In light of this, we can conclude that in the Septuagint *χρῶμα* and *χρόα* designate natural tonalities (facial color, the color of skin), as well as artificial hues derived from dyes or pigments. They describe the outer appearance of a person, which in this case coincides with his or her state, or that of an object. Thus, the concept of color that we find in the pericopes we have studied is the same that we find in the Hellenistic world and shows, in the case of natural color, the intimate relationship that exists between color and state. This (natural) color is, then, the visual reflection of that state in an object or person and is perceived through the eyes, thanks to the presence of light.

### ■ The Septuagint Translators and Their Cultural Context

Now that the concept of color in the Hellenistic world and how this is reflected in the Septuagint have been examined, it is necessary to give an approximate account of the cultural and linguistic context in which the Septuagint translators lived.

In recent years, the world in which the Septuagint was created has become clearer, although a number of questions remain unanswered. For one, we do not know who the specific authors of such an undertaking were. We know, however, that the first translations of the Bible were the work of many different translators, who began the task by translating the Pentateuch in the first half of the third century BCE. Next came the Former and Latter Prophets, and perhaps the Psalms (second century BCE), while Ruth, Lamentations, the Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes were translated later, sometime in the first century CE.<sup>32</sup>

These translators belonged to an illustrious group of Jews based in Alexandria, perhaps in circles connected with the Temple of Jerusalem. Natalio Fernández Marcos describes them as “cultured scribes, bilingual intellectuals with a remarkable knowledge of the two languages and traditions, . . . in close connection with the intellectual climate that characterized the court of the Ptolemys and the Library of Alexandria.”<sup>33</sup> If this is true, it seems reasonable to believe that these intellectuals were familiar with the concept of color that existed at the time, given the Hellenistic cultural milieu in which they were immersed and the use they make of *χρῶμα/χρόα* in the Septuagint as color/state. To this must be added their deep knowledge of Hebrew, in which color constitutes a state. Indeed, as we will see, the use of *χλωρός* in the Septuagint is strikingly significant.

Although we do not know exactly which Hebrew text was the source of the Septuagint translation, what appears to be clear is that *χλωρός* was used to translate several different Hebrew lexemes: two from the lexical family of *קָרַךְ*, others from the domain of plants, and the adjectival lexeme *לֵל*, “moist”:

<sup>32</sup> Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Septuaginta. La Biblia griega de judíos y cristianos* (Salamanca: Sigueme 2014) 37, 46–47.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 42–43.

### A. The Lexical Family of ירק

The term *χλωρός* is the one chosen in the Septuagint to translate the Hebrew lexeme ירק, almost systematically, and in both its nominal and adjectival functions.<sup>34</sup> Thus, *χλωρός* is the equivalent of the nominal lexeme ירק, “verdure” (Exod 10:15; Num 22:4) and of ירוק, “greenery” (Job 39:8). Both Hebrew lexemes have in common the fact that they denote the assemblage of plants or parts of a plant that are characterized by their state of lushness and freshness.<sup>35</sup> The Hebrew nominal lexeme blends together two aspects in its meaning: color (greenness) and state (freshness). The Greek adjective is presented as such in its neuter form, either singular *χλωρόν* (Exod 10:15; Job 39:8) or plural *χλωρά* (Num 22:4). This is a novelty in literary Greek, as in earlier (classical) literature it appears always as an adjective.

However, ירק, a noun, functions as an adjective to describe lexemes belonging to the domain of plants (עשב, “herb” [Gen 1:30; 9:3] and דשא, “grass” [Ps 37:2]). For this purpose, it is placed before a noun. Its meaning is “the color of grass when it sprouts and grows in the spring, a sign of freshness and lushness.”<sup>36</sup> This new meaning of ירק arises from a cognitive metonymy of the SALIENT PROPERTY—ENTITY type: vegetation is characterized by a predominance of the color green, resulting from its state of freshness and lushness, and so ירק begins to be used not so much to denote plants themselves but their color.<sup>37</sup> In Gen 1:30, the Septuagint translators use *χλωρός* as an adjective (the habitual use of this lexeme in Classical Greek).

### B. Lexemes That Denote Plants in General

*Χλωρός* is used to translate Hebrew lexemes belonging to the domain of plants: עֵשֶׂב, “bush” (Gen 2:5); עֵשֶׂב, “herb” (Deut 29:22); and דֶּשֶׁא, “grass” (Prov 27:25).<sup>38</sup> According to Harold and Alma Moldenke, these plants belong to the category of herbaceous plants and are difficult to identify, especially דֶּשֶׁא.<sup>39</sup> However, what characterizes them is that they present a potentially green tonality. This perhaps explains why the Septuagint again employs *χλωρός* in its neuter form to serve

<sup>34</sup> On only three occasions—Gen 9:3, Isa 37:27, and Ps 36:2 (Ps 37:2 MT)—*χλωρός* does not appear. On the first, the translator of Genesis uses the expression *λάχανα χόρτου*, “herb vegetables” (Gen 9:3). The absence of *χλωρός* may be justified by the translator’s desire to make explicit the products that will serve as food for human beings (*Pentateuco* [ed. Lucca], n. 92). In Ps 36:2, *λάχανα* is used again but accompanied by *γλόης*, perhaps for the presence of *χόρτος* in the first part of the verse. Finally, in Isa 37:27, the lexeme ירק is not translated in the LXX.

<sup>35</sup> García Ureña et al., *Language of Colour*, 49.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 47–48.

<sup>38</sup> There is a clear divergence between the Hebrew and Greek texts; Emanuel Tov and Frank Polak, *The Revised CATSS Hebrew/Greek Parallel Text* (Accordance electronic ed.; Altamonte Springs: OakTree Software, 2008), paragraph 36. *La Bible d’Alexandrie* considers that the LXX translator perceives the image but re-elaborates it to his own taste (Prov 27:25–26); David-Marc d’Hamonville and Epiphane Dumouchet, *La Bible d’Alexandrie. Les Proverbes* (Paris: Cerf, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> Harold and Alma Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible* (Waltham, MA: Chronica Botanica, 1952) 253–54.

generically for the various nominal forms in the Hebrew text (Gen 2:5; Deut 29:22; Prov 27:25). An exception to this is Isa 19:7, where *χλωρός* appears as an adjective to complete *ἄχι*, perhaps due to the textual divergence that exists between the two versions.<sup>40</sup>

### C. The Lexeme *πῶ*, “Moist”

Finally, *χλωρός* is also used three times (Gen 30:37a; Ezek 17:24, 20:47 [MT 21:3]) to translate an adjective from a different cognitive domain, one which certainly indicates state: *πῶ*, “moist,” “fresh.”<sup>41</sup> What is more, *SDBH* affirms that the meaning of *πῶ* is a “state in which a fruit, tree branch, or other natural product still contains some of its internal juices and has not yet dried up.”<sup>42</sup> In fact, *πῶ* is used to describe the rods of storax, almond, and plane wood (Gen 30:37a) that Jacob uses to breed his flock, as well as the tree in the prophecies of Yahweh (Ezek 17:24, 21:3). The use of *χλωρός* in these pericopes is significant, as the translator could have used other adjectives, such as *ύγρός* (Judg 16:7, 8; Job 8:16; Sir 39:13) or *πρόσφατος* (Num 6:3; Qo 1:9), which denote mainly state, but did not. Curiously, the binomial *χλωρός/ξηρός* that we find in Ezekiel also appears in a later and quite different text, a type of work contract in the form of a tenancy agreement: *χλωρούς καὶ ξηρούς χόρ[τ]ου* (BGU 17. 2696, 616 CE). With respect to Genesis, the fact that *χλωρός* appears in Gen 30:37b with no parallel term in the Hebrew version suggests that the translator of Genesis preferred *χλωρός* over other Greek lexemes.

It can thus be concluded that the Septuagint translators opted for *χλωρός* because they saw its semantic content as being wide enough to translate Hebrew lexemes from different categories: those which denote color and state simultaneously; those that denote state only; and, finally, non-differentiated plants characterized by a common element, their green color.

With respect to the semantic content of *χλωρός*, the Septuagint translators knew the Greek that was spoken at the time. We know that this was Koine, a language that was unified during the empire of Alexander the Great. John A. Lee believes that the Greek vocabulary found in the Septuagint version of the Pentateuch is that which was in use at that time, something which testimonies in other papyrus scrolls confirm.<sup>43</sup> As it was the first part of the biblical text to be translated, its specific features (reflecting changes in Koine) would continue to be found in the vocabulary of the other Septuagint books as well.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Tov and Polak, *Hebrew/Greek Parallel Text*, paragraph 65. In the MT, the *hapax* ערוה, “meadow” (Isa 19:7) appears; Liliana Rosso Ubigli, *La Bibbia dei Settanta*, vol. 4, *Profeti* (Brescia, Morcelliana, 2019) n. 539.

<sup>41</sup> BDB, p. 3892, s.v. *πῶ*.

<sup>42</sup> *SDBH*, s.v. *πῶ*, H3892 Reinier de Blois.

<sup>43</sup> John A. L. Lee, *A Lexical Study of the Septuagint Version of Pentateuch* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983) 131, 145–46.

<sup>44</sup> William Ross, “Lexical Possibilities in LXX Research: Revision and Expansion,” in *XV Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies, Munich 2013* (ed. Wolfgang

To approximate as closely as possible the meaning of *χλωρός*, we would need to acquire what in cognitive linguistics is referred to as “encyclopedic knowledge,” that is, “the overall knowledge that typical members of the speech community have.”<sup>45</sup> As no native speakers of the language are still living, we have no access to the Koine Greek that the Septuagint translators spoke; we can, however, increase our understanding of it through the use of three specific tools: the information provided by the leading dictionaries of Greek; the recent study by Anna Passoni dell’Acqua on the language of color in Greco-Roman Egypt;<sup>46</sup> and the present research on the use of *χλωρός* in papyrus scrolls from the third century BCE to the first century CE.

#### *D. Χλωρός according to the Leading Greek Dictionaries*

In Classical Greek, *χλωρός* was considered to be a polysemic term that, according to the leading Greek dictionaries, had two basic meanings: state and color<sup>47</sup> (although BDAG recognizes only color).<sup>48</sup> With regard to “state,” *χλωρός* had a meaning of “liquid,” “moist,” from which is derived “young,” “fresh,” and “blooming.”<sup>49</sup> According to Eleanor Irwin, the meaning “liquid,” “moist,” would be the principal meaning of *χλωρός*,<sup>50</sup> while Anatole Bailly, on the contrary, tends to explain this interpretation as being based on its chromatic meaning<sup>51</sup> and Pierre Chantraine insists upon the difficulty of the adjective to express its original sense.<sup>52</sup> The meaning of *χλωρός* as a state usually appears when the adjective is used to describe liquids (tears, dew, blood,<sup>53</sup> wine), although it is also applied to cheese and, in a metaphorical sense, to vigor (“vigorous knee”). It is in any case significant that Irwin does not extend this meaning to include the description of water (Euripides, *Hel.* 349–350; *De coloribus* 794b) and instead considers that *χλωρός* has the chromatic meaning of “covered with green growth.”<sup>54</sup>

As for “color,” *χλωρός* retains its polysemy, encompassing a broad chromatic spectrum between blue and yellow. If we group together these tonalities according

Kraus, Michaël N. van der Meer, and Martin Meiser; Atlanta: SBL Press, 2016) 341–59, at 352.

<sup>45</sup> Ronald W. Langacker, “Context, Cognition and Semantics: A Unified Dynamic Approach,” in *Job 28: Cognition in Context* (ed. Ellen J. Van Wolde; BibInt 64; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003) 179–230, at 187.

<sup>46</sup> Anna Passoni dell’Acqua, “Notazioni cromatiche dall’Egitto greco-romano. La versione dei LXX e i papiri,” *Aegyptus* 78 (1998) 77–115; and eadem, “Colori e trasparenze nella *haute couture* dell’Egitto greco-romano,” *Semitica et Classica* 1 (2008) 113–38.

<sup>47</sup> LSJ, s.v. *χλωρός*; DELG, 1264; s.v. *χλωρός*; Bailly, 960, s.v. *χλωρός*; *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, 2366, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>48</sup> BDAG, 1085, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>49</sup> LSJ, s.v. *χλωρός*; *The Brill Dictionary of Ancient Greek*, 2366, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>50</sup> Eleanor Irwin, *Colour Terms in Greek Poetry* (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974) 31–77.

<sup>51</sup> Bailly, 960, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>52</sup> DELG, 1264, s.v. *χλωρός*.

<sup>53</sup> However, the meaning of *χλωρός* when it describes blood has been debated; P. Ferrarino, “Χλωρὸν αἷμα. Soph. Trach. 1055,” in *Scritti scelti* (ed. Pietro Ferrarino, Opuscoli accad, XV; Florence: Olschki, 1986) 25–28.

<sup>54</sup> Irwin, *Colour Terms*, 46–48.

to the entities described (in concordance with the concept of color set forth in section 2 above), *χλωρός* denotes “yellow,” “various shades of green” and “pale” or “greenish grey.” “Yellow” emerges when the adjective of color describes entities whose natural color is yellow or a yellowish green, such as honey, egg yolk, or sand. This meaning is found in both Homer (*Il.* 11.631; *Od.* 10.234) and Sophocles (*Aj.* 1064). Surprisingly, *χλωρός* is not used to describe grass or vegetation when it withers. Instead, “various shades of green” arise when *χλωρός* describes plants. A lighter or darker shade of green is determined by the plant itself. Thus, Eleanor Irwin affirms that *χλωρός* describes the dark green of trees, such as the laurel (Euripides, *Iph. aul.* 751) or fir (Euripides, *Bacch.* 38),<sup>55</sup> but also denotes a light green, as in *χλωραὶ ῥῶπεες*, “green leaves” (Homer, *Od.* 16.47). *Χλωρός* is also used to describe mountains: ὄρος [. . .] *χλωρόν*, “green with trees” (*h.Ap.* 223).<sup>56</sup> And, finally, *χλωρός* denotes “pale,” “greenish gray,” when it describes individuals suffering from an intense emotion such as fear (Homer, *Il.* 10.376; 15.4) or love, *χλωροτέρα . . . ποίας ἔμμου* (Sapph. 2.14), or from some type of affliction. It is thus a lexeme which is frequently used in the *Corpus Hippocraticum*, where it is seen as a symptom from which to diagnose illness.<sup>57</sup> This meaning reveals the close connection between color and state, as *χλωρός* may indicate that a person is in love or suffering from an illness.

#### E. *Χλωρός* in Greco-Roman Egypt

The study by Anna Passoni dell’Acqua examines not only the Septuagint but also apocryphal literature of Egyptian origin such as *Joseph and Aseneth*, as well as various papyrus scrolls (marriage contracts from the first to third centuries CE being especially useful, as those of the Ptolemaic period are highly synthetic), Roman-era portraits of Egyptian mummies, and textiles.

For the Italian researcher, Greco-Roman Egypt was characterized by a chromatic sensibility that is reflected in its literature as well as in its artistic techniques and the elaboration of textiles. All of this brought with it an expansion of the lexical repertory with regard to color. Thus, in this period, new lexemes appear in the

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>57</sup> A discussion of the meaning of *χλωρός* in this context is beyond the scope of the present research. On this question, see Dikaios B. Bagiakakos, “Χλωρός, μέλι χλωρόν. μελίχλωρος καὶ τινα σύνθετα,” *Ἀθηνᾶ* 58 (1954) 98–119; Rita D’Avino, “La visione del colore nella terminologia greca,” *Ricerche linguistiche* 4 (1958) 99–134; Irwin, *Colour Terms*, 62–64; Alberta Lorenzoni, “Eustazio. Paura ‘verde’ e oro ‘pallido’ (Ar. Pax 1176, Eup. fr. 253 K.-A., Com. adesp. fr. 390 e 1380 A E.),” *Eikasmos* 5 (1994) 139–63; Evelyne Samama, “Constance, l’empereur ‘verdâtre,’” in *Le corps polychrome. Couleurs et santé; Antiquité, Moyen Âge, Époque moderne* (ed. Franck Collard and Évelyne Samama; Paris: L’Harmattan, 2018) 241–52; Marta González, “Homérico χλωρόν δέος. El significado de χλωρός en la poesía griega arcaica,” *Minerva* 18 (2005) 11–23; Franco Giorgianni, “Colori dell’eros nella Grecia antica,” *Medicina nei Secoli* 32.2 (2020) 443–76; Amneris Roselli, “Colorito della pelle e sistema degli umori. Galeno interprete di Ippocrate Epidemie VI 3, 13 e VI 2, 6,” *Medicina nei Secoli* 32.2 (2020) 477–90.

papyrus scrolls that denote color in relation to elements of nature: *ναρκίσσινος* for a flower, *ἀμπέλινος* for a plant, *ἀμυγδάλινον* for a fruit, and many others produced by derivation or composition.<sup>58</sup>

With this increase in the chromatic lexicon, the use of color adjectives would proliferate. Adjectives of color appear in both the enumeration of pigments and the description of clothing. An example of the former is the roster of colors detailed in the ostrakon of Oxyrhynchus (SB 1.2251, fourth century CE), which includes, among others, *χλωρός*, *σαππειρίου*, *χλωρῶν*, *λευκοῦ*, *γαλμίνου*, *μελανοῦ*, *κοκκίνου*, *πορφυροῦ*, *ροδίνου*, *λαμπροῦ*.<sup>59</sup> For clothing, a broad spectrum of colors is found: white, yellow, red, and more. Notable in terms of our study is the use of green to describe various garments, as shown in the portraits and scrolls. In the latter, lexemes that refer to the spectrum of green multiply in accordance with the different hues found in clothing: *ἀμπέλινον*, “vine green,” is used to describe two cloaks (P.Hamb. 1.10, 25.27); *πράσινος*, “light green,” describes a tunic and other garments (P.Tebt. 2.405, 1); *κισσίνη*, “ivy green,” a robe (P.Mich. 5.343, 6, Tebtynis, 54–55 CE); *ζμαράγδινος*, “emerald green,” two other robes (P.Hamb. 1.10, 25.27; StudPal. 20.15, 8, Arsinoite, 190 CE); and perhaps *χλωρός*, again for robes (P.Laur. 3.82, 5, although only *χλ* is found, which may be interpreted as either *χλωρά* or *χλοανά*).<sup>60</sup> According to Passoni dell’Acqua’s exhaustive study, which focuses on clothing in that period, *χλωρός* denotes pigment color and not natural color, in contrast to the data provided by the dictionaries. Of the various meanings for *χλωρός*, she inclines toward that of “green,” as other lexemes are used for yellow.<sup>61</sup>

Also helpful for analyzing the use of color language, specifically of *χλωρός*, in Greco-Roman Egypt are a number of papyrus scrolls from the third century BCE to the first century CE<sup>62</sup> that contain agricultural documentation such as receipts, lists of income and expenses, debts, private communications giving instructions for land management, and the like. In them, *χλωρός* appears frequently, both as an adjective and a noun, revealing that, as an adjectival lexeme, *χλωρός* describes terms from the plant domain or used in an agricultural context: *σίτος*, “grain” (P.Cair.Zen. 4.59631, dated between 275 BCE and 226 BCE); *φοῖνιξ*, “date palm” (P.Cair.Zen. 4.59628, 263–229 BCE; *ZPE* 172 2010 S. 183, 14–15 CE); *γῆ*, “ground” (P.Coll.Youtie 1 8, 3, 224 BCE); *[ἀρ]τύματα*, “spices” (P.Cair.Zen. 1.59083, 3, 257 BCE); *ἐλαών*, “olive tree” (BGU 11.2105, 3–4, 114 CE); *χόρτος*, “grass” (P.Col. 4.95, 263–229 BCE; P.Lond. 3.1165, 2 & 5, 100–199 CE; P.Oxy. 3.496, 127 CE); *[ἄ]ρακος*, “grass

<sup>58</sup> Passoni dell’Acqua, “Notazioni cromatiche dall’Egitto greco-romano,” 109.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 111 n. 178.

<sup>60</sup> Passoni dell’Acqua, “Colori e trasparenze,” 129.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 128–29.

<sup>62</sup> A search made at [papi.info](http://papi.info) found more than 240 scrolls in which *χλωρός* and its derivatives appear, dating from the 3rd cent. BCE to the 7th cent. CE. The present study focuses on scrolls from the 3rd cent. BCE to the 1st cent. CE. Papyrus scrolls in which the term described by *χλωρός* is not clear have been excluded.

pea” (*Lathyrus annuus*) (P.Mich. 1.56, 15, 251–248 BCE; BGU 13.2322, 3, 180–212 CE); σταφυλή, “bunch of grapes” (P.Oslo 2.53, 4, 101–200 CE).

Unlike the papyrus scrolls that contain marriage contracts, *χλωρός* is used here as a natural color to describe plants (grains, grasses, olive trees, grass pea), fruit (grapes), and the earth itself. The only case where it might be doubted that *χλωρός* denotes state rather than color is when it describes ἀρτύματα, “spices” (which, in fact, the APIS Translation renders as “fresh condiment”).<sup>63</sup> However, this is not so clear since, on occasion, the spice trade deals directly with the plant itself and not the condiment extracted from it. In that case, *χλωρός* would denote the color of those plants (indeed, many of the spices common in antiquity, such as ginger [ζιγγίβερι] or mustard [σίναπις] are characterized as having long green stalks and flowers of a different color) and, along with this, their state.

As for the hue expressed by *χλωρός*, in the case of grass, date palm, olive trees, and grass pea, this is characteristically “green.” The same can be said of grains, depending on their degree of maturity, and of grapes, although for the latter one must know the type of grape to determine whether it is green because it has not ripened or simply because it is the color of that variety of grape. When *χλωρός* describes γῆ, it has a meaning similar to that which appears in Classical Greek<sup>64</sup> to describe mountains: “green with trees and/or plants.”

For cases in which *χλωρός* denotes color and state simultaneously, P.Cair. Zen. 4.59631, 7 may shed some light, since the fact that σῖτος, “grain” (wheat or barley), is *χλωρός* would lead to its being stored away, both to prevent it from being stolen<sup>65</sup> and to protect it from birds: ὅτε μὲν *χλωρός* ἦν ὁ σῖτος, κατε[νέμει] τ[ο] ὑπὸ τῶν βοῶν τῶν ὑμετέρων/ [[παρ’ ὑμῖν]] (when the grain is green, it will be stored in your stables). Color, then, is a clear indicator of the state of this grain; in fact, *De coloribus* 796b would describe σῖτος with the adjective ξανθός when it is dry. A similar use appears in Classical Greek. Thucydides 4.6.1 describes the color/state of grain to explain the shortage of grain for troops: σίτου ἔτι *χλωροῦ* ὄντος ἐσπάνιζον τροφῆς τοῖς πολλοῖς (since the grain was still green, most of them were short of food).

Similarly illustrative is a letter from Philo to Zenon (P.Mich. 1.56, 15) regarding a payment that he proposes to pay in ἄρακος, “grass pea.” This plant, belonging to the legume family, is known by the name *Lathyrus annuus*, the fruit of which grows within a pod, similar to that of the pea. It was used as forage but also as food for human beings.<sup>66</sup> The fact that in a private letter, with no literary pretensions, the author describes ἄρακος with the adjective *χλωρός* is because this plant, being *χλωρός*, must now be sold, and for this reason the author proposes ἄρακος *χλωρός*

<sup>63</sup> See Papyri.info, at <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.cair.zen;1;59083>.

<sup>64</sup> See section “D. *Χλωρός* according to the Leading Greek Dictionaries” above.

<sup>65</sup> This scroll contains a letter in which the author complains that Zenon’s cattle have grazed on his corn (<https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.cair.zen;4;59631>). However, as we no longer have the complete text, nothing more can be specified.

<sup>66</sup> *Diccionario Griego-Español (DGE)*, s.v. ἄρακος, <http://dge.cchs.csic.es/index.en>.



as a medium of exchange. Here it is clear that *χλωρός* indicates color (green) and state (freshness) simultaneously:

εἰ δέ σοι χρεία ἐστὶν  
 15 ἀράκου χλωροῦ ἢ Σω-  
 στράτωι, λαβὲ ὅσον  
 θέλεις, εἴτε δὴ  
 παντὸς εἴτε τοῦ κερματίου/ μέρος.  
 εἰ δὲ μή γε, τέταγμα  
 20 ποιμέσιν, οἱ μοι δώσου-  
 σιν τιμὴν/, ὥστε ἐκ παντὸς σε  
 ἐγδιουκῆθῆναι.

If you or Sostratos need any green wild chickling (*arakos*), take as much as you wish, whether to the value of the whole sum or to part of it. If not, I have agreed with some shepherds who will pay me a price for it, so that in any case your claim shall be settled.<sup>67</sup>

As a nominal lexeme, *χλωρόν* appears frequently beginning in the third century BCE. Expressions referring to the payment of *χλωρόν* as an agricultural product are found in a number of documents: *λογέα χλωρῶν* (P.Hamb. 2.184, 6, 275–226 BCE) or *λογεία χλωρῶν*, “collection of *χλωρῶν*” (P.Hamb. 2.186, 275–226 BCE; P.Hib. 1.51, 2, 5, 245–244 BCE); *χλωρῶν διοίκησις*, “renting of *χλωρῶν*” (P.Lille 1.37, 1, 244–243 BCE); *τιμὴ χλωρῶν*, “the price of the *χλωρῶν*” (six times: P.Koeln 3.146, 10–9 BCE; P.Oxy. 2.279, 13, 44–45 CE; P.Sarap. 61, 4, 18, 90–133 CE; P.Sarap. 66, 6, 90–133 CE; P.Lond. 2.171, 4, 102–103 CE; P.Sarap. 67, 128 CE) or the variant *τιμὴ χλωρῶν* (SB 20.14526, 28, 60–61 CE); and *ἐπιμέλεια τῶν χλωρῶν*, “oversight of *χλωρῶν*”<sup>68</sup> (P.Mich. 5.311, 34–35 CE).

The expression *τὰ χλωρά* is also used to refer to food for animals (P.Rain.Cent. 42, 5, 259–258 BCE; PSI 4 372, 250–249 BCE; BGU 7.1507, 4, 205–204 or 188–187 BCE) or with terms related to an agricultural context: *χλωρῶν εἰς σπέρμα*, “the seed of *χλωρῶν*” (P.Hib. 1.117, 4, 10, 11, 239–238 or 214–213 BCE), *σπóρον τῶν χλωρῶν*, “the harvest of *χλωρῶν*” (P.Cair.Zen. 2.59268, 35, 252–251 BCE).

These uses show that *χλωρόν* served to designate an assemblage of plants characterized by their green color that grew in the fields and used as both a commercial product and as food for animals. This second use (as in BGU 7.1507, 14, *ἔσθουσι οἱ ὄνοι χλωρά*), reveals in turn that these plants were fresh and lush, characteristic of the natural food of herbivorous animals. Therefore, it can be proposed that the meaning of *χλωρόν* was “an assemblage of undifferentiated plants characterized by their state of greenness and lushness and thus appropriate as food for both humans and animals.” That is to say, *χλωρόν* denoted an entity imbued with color that in turn revealed its state. Possible translations might be: “vegetable” or “crop.”

<sup>67</sup> APIS Translation, <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich;1;56>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. gives this as “green crops”; <https://papyri.info/ddbdp/p.mich;5;311>.

We are faced, then, with the lexicalization of an adjective that seems to stem from what in cognitive linguistics is referred to as a conceptual metonymy of the SALIENT PROPERTY—ENTITY type. That is, the speaker, in his daily use of the language, chooses *χλωρόν* to designate an *entity*, in this case undifferentiated plants growing in the fields, based on a *salient property* found in all of them: the color green.<sup>69</sup>

#### *F. Synthesis of the Encyclopedic Knowledge Acquired*

From this analysis, it can be concluded that the Septuagint translators were well acquainted with the lexeme *χλωρός*, as it was an adjective frequently used in both Classical and Koine Greek. In the latter, the two lexemes *χλωρός* and *χλωρόν* coexisted. *Χλωρός* was a color adjective that was used to denote both natural color and pigment color. In the first case, which is the most relevant for our study, *χλωρός* was frequently used in an agricultural context to describe plants that were cultivated and sold. At first glance, its meaning is chromatic, designating green, and it was used in the classical period to describe plants and the characteristic feature of the plants mentioned in the papyrus scrolls. However, the fact that *χλωρός* appears in contexts and documents in which there is no intention of any literary description of a chromatic type, but rather to show the state, perceived by the cultivator, of a given agricultural product and whether it should be stored or sold, reveals that *χλωρός* denoted color and state simultaneously. That is to say, in the Hellenistic world, the concept of color as the visible indicator of a state is observable not only in the color treatises of the time, but in the everyday language of the native speaker in Greco-Roman Egypt. Thus, the Septuagint translators considered *χλωρός* an appropriate translation for קרר, which denotes both color and state, as well as for הל, which denotes state.

Lexicalized as early as the third century BCE, *χλωρόν*, was the product of a cognitive metonymy (SALIENT PROPERTY—ENTITY) and was used as a noun to refer to an “assemblage of undifferentiated plants characterized by their state of greenness and lushness and thus serving as food for both humans and animals.” Thus, *χλωρόν* denoted an entity that was imbued with color, and by this revealed the state of that entity.

#### ■ Semantic Analysis of *Χλωρός* and *Χλωρόν*

Now that the necessary encyclopedic knowledge has been acquired, the specific use of *χλωρός* and *χλωρόν* in the Septuagint can be analyzed from a semantic perspective, with the objective of determining whether it denotes or connotes only color or color/state.<sup>70</sup> In doing this, we must also take into account the fact that the

<sup>69</sup> Antonio Barcelona, “La metonimia conceptual,” in *Lingüística cognitiva* (ed. Iraide Ibarretxe-Antuñano et al.; 2nd ed.; Barcelona: Anthropos, 2016) 123–46.

<sup>70</sup> The meaning “moist” is excluded, since in Classical Greek this occurs only in the domain of liquids, and we have not found this use in the papyrus scrolls.

point of union between color and state occurs when the color denoted is “natural color” and not “pigment color.”

The starting point for this semantic analysis will be the entity described, since, as we have shown, in the Greek world color was something concrete that imbued a particular entity; that is to say, it always appears embodied<sup>71</sup> (in objects, plants, animals, persons). Once this entity has been analyzed, the narrative form of the pericope, the context, and all of the elements relevant for determining the meaning of these lexemes will also be considered.

Given that in the third century BCE, *χλωρός* and *χλωρόν* were two different lexemes, each will be analyzed separately.

### *A. Χλωρός in the Septuagint*

*Χλωρός* is an adjective of color that appears seven times in the Septuagint and is always used to describe plants:<sup>72</sup> *χόρτος*, “grass” (Gen 1:30; Isa 15:6); *ράβδος στυρακίνην καὶ καρυίνην καὶ πλατάνου*, “rod from a storax, almond, or plane tree” (Gen 30:37a); *βοτάνη*, “pasture grass” (4 Kgdms 19:26); *ἄχι*, “grass, herb” (Isa 19:7); and *ξύλον*, “tree” (Ezek 17:24; 20:47).<sup>73</sup> If we take into consideration the information provided by the dictionaries of Classical Greek and by LEH and *GELS*, when *χλωρός* describes plants, it denotes the color green and not yellow, *ξανθός*,<sup>74</sup> which is used when the plant has withered. Furthermore, the plants that are mentioned are characterized as having that tonality. This includes: grass; storax,<sup>75</sup> almond,<sup>76</sup> and plane<sup>77</sup> trees; and the generic “tree.” However, does it also denote a state, as can be observed in *De coloribus* and in the papyrus scrolls of the time?

Genesis 1:30 comes at the end of the Priestly narrative in which God describes the food designated for animals: *πάντα χόρτον χλωρόν εἰς βρωθῶν*. This is the first time that a color adjective appears in the biblical text, in a narrative text characterized by its sobriety, making the presence of the adjective *χλωρός* significant: the food promised by God is not simply *πάντα χόρτον*, “all grass,” but that which is *χλωρός*, that is, grass that is edible and appetizing to animals, that is fresh and lush. *Χλωρός* here denotes color and state simultaneously and may be defined as “the color of

<sup>71</sup> This is not from the perspective of cognitive linguistics, but in the sense that color has a physical form.

<sup>72</sup> This is not the case in the NT, where it is used to describe a horse (Rev 6:8). See Lourdes García Ureña, “ἵππος χλωρός (Rev 6.8): A Methodology for the Study of Colour Terms in the New Testament” *NTS* 67(2021) 205–19, doi:10.1017/S0028688520000375.

<sup>73</sup> *Ezekiel* (ed. Joseph Ziegler; SVTG 16.1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1952), Ezek 20:47.

<sup>74</sup> See section “A. The Concept of Color in the Hellenistic World” above.

<sup>75</sup> Santiago Segura Munguía and Javier Torres Ripa, *Las plantas en la Biblia* (Bilbao: Universidad de Deusto; Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2011) 55.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 88–89.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 74–76.

grass when it is fresh and lush, appropriate as food for animals.” This is the same meaning that we find in the papyrus scrolls.<sup>78</sup>

Genesis 30:37a is from the patriarchal narrative of Jacob, which tells of Jacob’s trickery over his master. This episode is striking for its use of color language, language that enables Jacob to separate Laban’s flock from what will become his own (Gen 30:30–43). Thus appear terms such as λευκός, μέλας, ποικίλος, and χλωρός. The adjective χλωρός describes the rods from which Jacob strips one part so as to leave λεπίσματα λευκά, “white stripes” in them. The fact that the rods are χλωρός, “green” (color), makes the whiteness of these λεπίσματα stripes possible, from the color of the sap inside the plant. Therefore, in this particular chromatic context, χλωρός denotes the green color proper to plants that are fresh and lush, that is, “full of sap” (state).

The prophetic texts of Isaiah (Isa 15:6; 19:7) and 4 Kgdms 19:26 pertain to a completely different context, one in which a form of divine punishment is announced; hence, the absence of χλωρός /χόρτος, “grass” (Isa 15:6), ἄχι,<sup>79</sup> “grass, herb” (Isa 19:7), and βοτάνη, “pasture grass” (4 Kgdms 19:26) is a sign of destruction, famine, and death. The pericope Isa 15:6 is particularly revealing in this sense. First, the prophet announces that the fountains of water will dry up and, as a result, the grass will die (ὁ χόρτος αὐτῆς ἐκλείψει); accordingly, the χόρτος will lose its natural color (γὰρ χλωρός οὐκ ἔσται, “for there will be no green grass”). The death of χόρτος, its state, is the reason that χλωρός οὐκ ἔσται, on losing its green color, also loses its state of lushness, and the grass withers and dies. Once again, χλωρός denotes color and state simultaneously.

Finally, we must turn to the pericopes in Ezekiel (Ezek 17:24; 20:47) that deal with the power of God in the allegory of the cedar tree (Ezek 17:24) and the divine punishment that sets the forest of Negeb on fire (Ezek 20:47). In both pericopes we find the binomial ξύλον χλωρόν καὶ . . . ξύλον ξηρόν, which shows how the power of God transcends the processes of nature: no matter what the state of a tree might be, divine omnipotence is capable of either destroying ξύλον χλωρόν or of giving life, ξύλον ξηρόν (Ezek 17:24), or of devastating both with fire (Ezek 20:47). The pericopes describe the state of plants, in this case trees, a clear example of the use of ξηρός, “dry,” as opposed to χλωρός. The difference between the two is presented to the eye by color. A tree which is χλωρός is green and therefore lush and alive. Once again, χλωρός denotes color and state simultaneously. This explains the fact that the Septuagint translator does not hesitate to translate the Hebrew lexeme πλ, “moist,” “fresh” (Ezek 17:24, 21:3) as χλωρός (Ezek 17:24, 20:47).

We can conclude, then, that χλωρός, when used as an adjective in both the Septuagint and in the papyrus scrolls, denotes color and state simultaneously, as this color is what makes visible the state of freshness and lushness of the plants described.

<sup>78</sup> See section “F. Synthesis of the Encyclopedic Knowledge Acquired” above.

<sup>79</sup> Loanword from Egypt; *GELS*, s.v ἄχι.

### B. *Χλωρόν in the Septuagint*

Χλωρόν is a noun that appears eight times in texts of diverse literary forms (narrative, poetic, prophetic). Despite this thematic diversity, however, they have in common the fact that χλωρόν always appears within a context of plants, whether in a real or figurative sense. Thus, it appears together with: χόρτος, “grass” (Gen 2:5; Prov 27:25); λέπισμα, “peel” (Gen 30:37b); βοτάνη, “pasture,” καρπός, “fruit,” and ξύλον, “tree” (Exod 10:15); πόα, “grass” (Prov 27:25); νομή, “pasture” (Job 39:8); and βόσκημα, “animal pasture” (Isa 27:10). What is more, χλωρόν maintains a close link with these terms, expressed through a variety of syntactic relationships, such as that of the circumstantial complement, χλωρόν οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις καὶ ἐν πάσῃ βοτάνῃ τοῦ πεδίου (Exod 10:15), or coordination within an enumeration, καὶ κερεῖς πόαν καὶ σὺναγε χόρτον ὄρεινόν (Prov 27:25).

As mentioned earlier, beginning in the third century BCE, χλωρόν has signified an “assemblage of undifferentiated plants characterized by their state of greenness and lushness” and, for this reason, because of their state: “serving as food for both humans and animals.” We will see now whether this meaning is also maintained in the Septuagint.

It seems evident that this is the case in those pericopes of the Septuagint that speak of food for animals (Num 22:4; Job 39:8), although the contexts themselves are different (no longer are we dealing with the objectivity of third-century BCE agricultural documentation, but rather with the poetic similes of the prophecies):

ὡς ἐκλείξει ὁ μόσχος τὰ χλωρὰ ἐκ τοῦ πεδίου

like the calf licks up the green plants of the plain (Num 22:4)

καὶ ὀπίσω παντὸς χλωροῦ ζητεῖ

It [the wild ass] will inspect the mountains, its pastures and it will go in search of greenness (Job 39:8)

The same is true in those which mention the cultivation of the land. This is the case of Gen 2:5, Deut 29:22, Prov 27:25, and Isa 27:11. In the first case, χλωρόν appears at the start of the narrative, when the narrator begins to relate how creation has come to be, specifying that in the beginning the earth was barren, with one stream of water covering it (Gen 2:6): καὶ πᾶν χλωρόν ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντα χόρτον ἀγροῦ πρὸ τοῦ ἀνατεῖλαι (Before all the green plants of the fields sprouted upon the earth [Gen 2:5]).

This manner of explaining that the earth had not yet been cultivated is a graphic one, mentioning only two types of plants: the more common type, which sprouts naturally in the fields when it rains, πάντα χόρτον; and, in a more general sense, an assemblage of undifferentiated plants (trees, vegetables, bushes) characterized by their state of greenness and lushness: πᾶν χλωρόν ἀγροῦ.

The same occurs in Deut 29:22, although the context is the opposite, that is, the destruction of nature as a divine punishment for sin:

θεῖον καὶ ἄλα κατακεκαυμένον, πᾶσα ἡ γῆ αὐτῆς οὐ σπαρήσεται οὐδὲ ἀνατελεῖ, οὐδὲ μὴ ἀναβῆ ἔπ' αὐτὴν πᾶν χλωρόν, ὡσπερ καταστράφη Σοδομα καὶ Γομορρα, Αδαμα καὶ Σεβωιμ ἅς κατέστρεψεν κύριος ἐν θυμῷ καὶ ὀργῇ

Sulphur and burnt salt, nothing of the earth will be sown nor will it produce, nor will any green plant grow on it, in the same way that Sodom and Gomorrah, Adama and Seboim, were destroyed, which the Lord destroyed with anger and wrath.

The author of Deuteronomy announces that the earth will no longer sustain cultivation, and does this with great drama, by mentioning the three phases of the process of destruction: there will be no sowing, no germination, no growth. It is here that we find the term *χλωρόν*. Its presence adds even more intensity to the image: there will be nothing to eat, as the plants that characterize that stage of development by their greenness and lushness will not be able to grow.

A similar context is found in Isa 27:11. The destruction of all arable land has been announced in the preceding verse (Isa 27:10), and in Isa 27:11 this becomes visible: there will be no *πᾶν χλωρόν*, as the drought will bring the destruction of all that is green and fresh, that is, of vegetation in general, and, as a consequence, its color will change to yellow. The prophet does not mention this color but emphasizes that there will be no *πᾶν χλωρόν*. In this way the image is charged with symbolism, as the absence of *πᾶν χλωρόν* signifies death: καὶ μετὰ χρόνον οὐκ ἔσται ἐν αὐτῇ πᾶν χλωρόν διὰ τὸ ξηρανθῆναι (And after a time there will be no greenness in it for its having dried up). Finally, Prov 27:25 contains an idea rooted in folk wisdom: the farmer who is attentive to the land he cultivates will surely gather its harvest: ἐπιμελοῦ τῶν ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ χλωρῶν καὶ κερεῖς πόαν καὶ σύναγε χόρτον ὄρεινόν (Concern yourself with the greenness of the plain and you will cut the herb, and gather the fodder of the mountains).

Three actions are enumerated: on the first of these, the care and observation of *χλωρά*, depends the harvest that will be reaped, the crop that will be cut down and gathered up. Thus, *χλωρά* seems to be a generic term that encompasses both *πόα* and *χόρτος* but that includes a powerful, revelatory chromatic connotation of state, one that lets the farmer know when to harvest.

We must turn now to Gen 30:37b, Exod 10:15, and Isa 27:11. Genesis 30:37 has been discussed in the previous section,<sup>80</sup> and so we will be less concerned with it here. The lexeme *τὸ χλωρόν* appears just at the end of the pericope, when the narrator explains that *τὸ χλωρόν* can be seen in the rods when the *τὸ χλωρόν* has been removed: καὶ ἐλέπισεν αὐτάς Ιακωβ λεπίσματα λευκά περισύρων *τὸ χλωρόν* (and Jacob made some white stripes in these, by peeling away the greenness).

*Χλωρόν* does not refer here to undifferentiated plants, but rather to the green part of the rods that has been stripped away. Genesis 30:37b shows that *χλωρόν* can also be used to refer to the part of a plant that is characterized as having a green color, and which in turn reveals its state of being “full of sap.” This makes it possible for the white stripes of sap to appear when the greenness is stripped away.

<sup>80</sup> See section “A. *Χλωρός* in the Septuagint” above.

Something similar occurs in Exod 10:15, which tells of the destruction wrought by the plague of locusts. Here, *χλωρόν* refers not only to an entity but also to a color, as it is part of the trees and the plants:

καὶ κατέφαγεν πᾶσαν βοτάνην τῆς γῆς καὶ πάντα τὸν καρπὸν τῶν ξύλων, ὃς ὑπελείφθη ἀπὸ τῆς χαλάζης· οὐχ ὑπελείφθη χλωρόν οὐδὲν ἐν τοῖς ξύλοις καὶ ἐν πάσῃ βοτάνῃ τοῦ πεδίου ἐν πάσῃ γῆ Αἰγύπτου.

and [the locusts] devoured all the grass of the land and all the fruit of the trees that was left from the hail. Nothing green was left on the trees and on all the herbage of the plain in the whole land of Egypt.

It remains to be seen, then, whether color is here united with state. The conclusion seems clear; as we have said, green is the natural color of plants when they are fresh and lush, and so the presence of the color green is united to state in these cases as well.

We can therefore conclude that *χλωρόν* in the Septuagint denotes not only an assemblage of undifferentiated plants (as in the papyrus scrolls) but also a part or parts of a given plant. In both cases, it is presented as an entity imbued with the color green as a sign of its freshness and lushness.

## ■ Conclusion

At the outset of this research, we asked ourselves whether *χλωρός* denoted color only, as Lust and Muraoka proposed, or whether it was possible, as occurs in Hebrew, that color was in fact a state. To answer this question we have studied the concept of color in both the Hellenistic world and the Septuagint; we have given an approximate account of the cultural context in which the Septuagint translators lived; and we have tried to acquire the necessary encyclopedic knowledge as proposed by cognitive linguistics, making use of the tools at our disposal (the information provided by the dictionaries of Greek and the use of color adjectives in Greco-Roman Egypt). Finally, we have carried out a semantic analysis of *χλωρός* in the Septuagint.

Our study of the concept of color in the Hellenistic world and in the Septuagint has shown that it differs from our concept today. Color in ancient Greece was what is visible on the surface of a person or object (in which case it indicates a state), and its origin may be natural or artificial (as in pigment color). It is characterized, then, by its visibility, thanks to the presence of light, and by its intimate union with the entity it imbues. In the case of natural color, color is the reflection, the visible sign, of a state. Thus, when natural color appears embodied in a person, it denotes a state of well-being or health, or, on the contrary, one of sickness or strong emotion (fear, anguish, etc.). When embodied in plants, it indicates their birth (*ποώδης*), their maturity and full vigor (*χλωρός*), or the reverse, their withering or drying up (*ξανθός*, *μελαίνω*). This concept of color is reflected in language, and the study of color terms thus requires a detailed semantic analysis that also examines the entity in which they are embodied.

It has been established that the cultural universe in which the Septuagint translators lived was one that was infused with color. It was present in art, in literature, in clothing, in the production of dyes and pigments, in an increased chromatic lexicon, and even in the various terms that were used to describe shades of a given color. Greco-Roman Egypt was, then, a chromatic Egypt whose language, Koine Greek, reflected this faithfully. The Septuagint translators were well acquainted with the language of color and with the concept of color that permeated their culture, a concept that was similar to what we find in biblical Hebrew.

With regard to the encyclopedic knowledge of *χλωρός* possessed by these bilingual translators, they would have known the meanings of *χλωρός* in Classical Greek and that in the Hellenistic period it was used to denote both pigment color and natural color, that is, “green.” In the first case, *χλωρός* was included in a list of pigments and perhaps was used to describe the clothing of women in that period. As a natural color, *χλωρός* appears circumscribed to terms from the domain of plants and agriculture. The contexts provided by P.Cair.Zen. 4.59631, 7 and P.Mich. 1.56, 15, both from the third century BCE, reveal that the lexeme denoted color and state simultaneously. The use of this terminology would seem to bear out the affirmations of the author of *De coloribus*.

The Septuagint translators were also familiar with the lexicalization of *χλωρόν* to designate plants in general, of which we have testimonies beginning in the third century BCE. This lexicalization is not surprising if we keep in mind that in this same period the lexical repertory for color was enriched by the appearance of terms that designated color according to plants and other elements of nature.

Our semantic analysis of *χλωρός* and *χλωρόν* in the Septuagint has made it clear that both color terms are used for natural color in plant contexts such as those found in the agricultural document scrolls. *Χλωρός* describes plants by showing the color that they acquire in their phase of growth and/or maturity, simultaneously revealing their vitality, freshness and lushness, while *χλωρόν* refers to the assemblage of plants or parts of plants growing in a given territory, showing their state of verdure, lushness, and freshness and their appropriateness as food for animals. Thus, both *χλωρός* and *χλωρόν* point to the intrinsic unity of color and state. Indeed, color is nothing other than the visual reflection of a state, as *De coloribus* affirmed.

A lexicographical study of the Septuagint based on the concept of color that existed in antiquity may spur lexicographers of classical Greek to reconsider the meanings of such color terms, especially *χλωρός*, and to observe the ways in which color is in effect inseparable from state when it is embodied in human beings or plants.