THE TRANSLATION OF ˁāpār ‘DUST’ IN THE LATVIAN BIBLE

Introduction

This paper investigates the translation of ˁāpār ‘dust’ in the Latvian Bible, from Johann Ernst Glück’s first translation in 1689 to the present. After surveying the history of translation in Latvian, we address the lexical semantics of ˁāpār ‘dust’, noting the senses and translation equivalents. We then examine Glück’s approach to translation and the subsequent revisions. Glück rendered ˁāpār as pišļi ‘dust’ in 97 of the 110 occurrences of the word, yet he also translated the term with seven other translation equivalents, including zeme ‘earth’ and putekļi ‘fine dust’. Subsequent revisions have followed Glück in employing pišļi ‘dust’ as the principal translation equivalent. However, changes in the semantics of pišļi ‘dust’ and putekļi ‘fine dust’ coupled with a reevaluation of Glück’s translation strategy, have prompted a steady move from pišļi as the primary translation equivalent. The paper concludes with proposals for future revisions of the Latvian Bible.

Latvian language and translations

Latvian is a Baltic language spoken primarily in Latvia, with approximately 1.3 million native speakers. Together with Lithuanian, it forms the Baltic sub-family within the Indo-European family of languages. The Latvian language was not written and used in
education until the Protestant Reformation.¹ The first published book in Latvian that has survived to the present is a Catholic catechism published in Vilnius in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1585. A Lutheran catechism was published the following year in Vilnius. The first secular book to be published was Georgius Mancelius’ Vademecum in 1631. Mancelius also produced the first dictionary, Lettus, in 1638 and laid the foundations for the language’s orthography.²

The translation of the Bible into Latvian is widely recognized as the greatest landmark in the literary development of the Latvian language. With the petition and royal sanction of Charles XI, the king of the Swedish Empire, the German Lutheran pastor Johann Ernst Glück (1652–1705) undertook the task.³ He published the New Testament in 1685 and subsequently the Old Testament in 1689. However, the completed work, entitled Ta Śwehta Grahmata, was not released until 1694.⁴ This translation remained the standard in Latvian religious life until well into the 20th century, going through six subsequent editions, the latest in 1898.⁵

In 1920, the British and Foreign Bible Society began to work with the Lutheran Church in the newly independent Latvia with the goal of revising the Latvian Bible. The revision of the New Testament was completed and published in Latvia in 1936.⁶ However, the Second World War and subsequent Soviet occupation delayed the work on the Old Testament. In 1965, the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Latvian community in exile published a revision of the entire Bible, containing the 1936 New Testament and subsequent revisions of the Old Testament.⁷ In 1997, the Latvian Bible Society published a revision of the 1965 edition of the Bible.

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¹ The beginnings of the Protestant Reformation in Livonia can be traced to the work of a pastor by the name of Andreas Knopke, who arrived in Riga in 1517 and began preaching Lutheran doctrine in 1522. See Agnis Balodis, Latvijas un latviešu tautas vēsture (Rīga: Kabata, 1990), 64–65.

² For the history and development of Latvian literature, see G. Berelis, Latviešu literatūras vēsture: No pirmajiem rakstiem līdz 1999. gadam (Rīga: Zvaigzne ABC, 1999).


⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. See Bībele (London: The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1965).
In January 1995, the Latvian Bible Society started translating a new Latvian Bible. After publishing portions from the New Testament, the entire New Testament appeared in 2005. In 2012, the Latvian Bible Society published the complete Latvian Bible, including, for the first time, a translation of the deuterocanonical books, both Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox. The new translation shares characteristics in common with Glück’s translation from 1689, but also retains some of the modern language introduced in the 1965 revision.

After investigating the semantics of ḥāpār ‘dust’, we will examine in depth Glück’s approach to the translation of this term. After Glück’s Bible (hereafter, LB1689), we will also note the minor revisions in the final 1898 edition (hereafter, LB1898) and then the more extensive revisions in the 1965 London edition (hereafter, LB1965). Finally, we address the translation of ḥāpār in the 2012 Latvian Bible Society’s work (hereafter, LB2012).

Semantics of ḥāpār ‘dust’

The Hebrew noun ḥāpār ‘dust’ has nine distinct senses, clustering in four semantic domains. The first domain includes three senses related to natural materials associated with the ground, glossed as ‘dust’, ‘loose earth’, and ‘soil’. The second consists of a single term referring to a building material made from the natural materials in the first group: ‘mud plaster’. The third domain has four senses denoting various remains of items intentionally destroyed: ‘powder’, ‘debris’, ‘rubble’, and ‘ashes’. The final domain refers to the location from which the materials in the first domain originate, glossed as ‘ground’. In the following section, we examine these senses in greater detail, also noting the related figurative usages. We also provide the standard translation equivalents in English and Latvian, based on a survey of the major translations in each language. A table summarizing the analysis concludes the section.

The first sense of ḥāpār is ‘dust’, referring to fine particles of earth, located on the ground, yet fine enough to be airborne. In Josh. 7:6 and Job 2:12, mourners tore their clothes and put ḥāpār on their heads. In Deut. 28:24, ḥāpār is mentioned as coming down from the sky during a time of drought as part of God’s curse on Israel.

 очернение

See Bībele jaunā tulkojumā (Rīga, Latvia: Latvijas Bībeles biedrība, 2012).

humiliation is communicated by two expressions that refer to consuming ‘dust’: ‘eat
dust’ as in Gen. 3:14 and ‘lick dust’ as in Mic. 7:17.

In the major English translations from the Reformation era until today, the transla-
tion equivalent for this sense is dust. The Latvian equivalent is primarily pišļi ‘dust’, but
the term putekļi ‘fine dust’ is also used.

The second sense of ‘āpār is ‘loose earth’, denoting material composing part of the
surface of the earth, dislodged from the earth by natural or human causes and hence
‘loose’. This sense is seen in Gen. 26:15 where the Philistines are reported to have filled
up wells with ‘āpār ‘loose earth’. In Hab. 1:10, military forces piled up ‘āpār ‘loose earth’
in order to build an earthen siege ramp. Similarly, in Lev. 17:13, blood is poured out on
the ground and then covered with ‘āpār ‘loose earth’.

‘āpār ‘loose earth’ occurs in three figurative expressions. First, the concept of abun-
dance is conveyed by the expressions ‘pile up like loose earth’ in Job 27:16 and ‘heap
up like loose earth’ in Zech. 9:3. Second, the concept of being despised is expressed
with ‘pour out like loose earth’ in Zeph. 1:17. Third, human frailty and mortality is com-
municated with a metaphorical association of humanity with ‘loose earth’ in Ps. 103:14.

The translation equivalents for this sense in English are dust and earth, with the for-
er used most often in figurative usages of the term. The term earth has been used in
Gen. 26:15 with reference to the material that was used to fill wells. The translation equiv-
alent for this sense is predominantly pišļi ‘dust’ in the Latvian translations. However, in
Lev. 17:13 the term zeme ‘earth’ has been used from LB1689 until today. Smiltis ‘sand’ was
Glück’s choice in Gen. 26:15; more recent versions also employ zeme ‘earth’ for this verse.

The third sense of ‘āpār is ‘soil’, denoting the material composing part of the sur-
face of the earth, yet still in the earth in contrast to the prior senses of ‘loose earth’
and ‘dust.’ In Job 14:19, the torrents wash away the ‘āpār, referring to soil. In Isa. 34:9,
Edom’s streams, land, and ‘āpār ‘soil’ will become burning pitch and sulfur, referring
to the arable soil that will no longer yield crops. The first two senses, ‘loose earth’ and
‘dust’, refer to material no longer part of the earth; they differ primarily in the degree of
fineness of the material, but not in their location. The third sense, ‘soil’, differs in terms
of location; it is an instance of a secondary sense based on metonymy, a semantic rela-
tionship of association.

The primary English translation equivalents for this sense are dust and soil. Of these
two terms, dust has been used more frequently; however, modern English translations
also use soil in Isa. 34:7, 9. Pišši ‘dust’ is the primary translation equivalent in Latvian.
However, in Job 28:6, the terms graudi ‘granules’ and smiltis ‘sand’ have been used.

The fourth sense of ‘āpār is ‘mud plaster’\(^\text{10}\). It refers to a mixture of loose earth, wa-
ter, and other ingredients such as straw, applied to the interior wall of a house to

produce a smooth surface. In Lev. 14:42, instructions are given for removing the stones in the wall of a house and then replacing the stones and applying ‘āpār ‘mud plaster’ to refurbish the wall. This sense is also a case of metonymy; with loose earth being the primary ingredient of plaster, the term ‘āpār is used metonymically to refer to the whole in terms of one of its parts.

The three primary translation equivalents for this sense include dust, mortar, and plaster. In the first English translation from Hebrew, William Tyndale translated ‘āpār in Lev. 14:41 with reference to the plaster that was scrapped off as dust; however, in Lev. 14:42, 45, he translated the term as mortar to convey the concept of a building material. Subsequent English translations followed Tyndale until the American Standard Version of 1899 translated these three instances of ‘āpār with one term, mortar ‘mortar’. The Revised Standard Version continued the practice of using only one term, but replaced mortar with plaster, which has become a significant translation equivalent for ‘mud plaster’ in modern English translations. Māli ‘clays’ is the primary translation equivalent in Latvian from LB1689 to LB1965, but the modern versions have introduced apmetums ‘plaster’ and java ‘mortar’.

The fifth sense of ‘āpār is ‘powder’. It denotes the remains of objects intentionally destroyed by grinding to a fine consistency. In Deut. 9:21, after grinding the golden calf to ‘āpār, Moses threw its ‘āpār ‘powder’ into a brook. Similarly, in 2 Kings 23:6, idols were burned and beaten to ‘āpār ‘powder’, and then their ‘āpār was thrown away. This sense and the following three senses refer to a material resulting from the intentional destruction of an object; the terms differ primarily in the degree to which the object was destroyed, whether to a fine degree as in the case of ‘powder’ or coarsely and minimally in the case of ‘debris’ and ‘rubble’. These senses are related to the first semantic domain metaphorically, sharing the feature of being material, which is broken, crushed, or even reduced to a fine consistency, usually found on the ground.

The English translation equivalents for this term include dust and powder. The term powder was used in 2 Kings 23:6a, 15 in the Reformation-era translations; the New International Version is a modern translation with powder in these verses. However, the majority of modern English translations prefer dust. In Latvian the translation equivalent is primarily pīšļi ‘dust’, but the term putekļi ‘fine dust’ has been used in the LB1965 in 2 Kings 23:6a–b, 15 and in the LB2012 in Deut. 9:21a–b.

12 Clines, “’, Dictionary of Classical Hebrew, 6:515. Clines prefers “dust” but adds the qualification “of pulverised ashes.”
The sixth sense of ʿāpār is ‘debris’, denoting course remains of objects intentionally destroyed and left on the ground. In contrast to ‘powder’, the objects were not ground up as part of being destroyed. In 2 Kings 23:12, various altars were removed and broken into pieces, and the resulting ʿāpār ‘debris’ was thrown into the Kidron valley. Similarly, in Ezek. 26:4, the walls and towers in Tyre were destroyed; then the resulting ʿāpār ‘debris’ was removed.

The translation equivalents for this term include dust, rubble, soil, and debris. Most English translations have employed the term dust. However, in Ezek. 26:4, the remains of Tyre are translated as soil in the Revised Standard Version and English Standard Version, rubble in the New International Version, and debris in the New American Standard Bible. In the Latvian translations, the translation equivalent is primarily pišļi ‘dust’, but the modern translations also use drazas ‘debris’ and atliekas ‘remains’ in 2 Kings 23:12, and gruveši ‘rubble’ and gruži ‘rubbish’ in Ezek. 26:12.

The seventh sense of ʿāpār is ‘rubble’. It refers to broken fragments of material resulting from the destruction of a building, wall, etc. In contrast to the previous senses, ‘powder’ and ‘debris’, ‘rubble’ is larger and potentially still useful in construction. In Neh. 4:2, the workers in Jerusalem mention that there are heaps of ʿāpār ‘rubble’ that contain stones that might be salvaged for rebuilding the wall. Later, in Neh. 4:10, the workers complain that there is so much ʿāpār ‘rubble’ that they are not able to work.

The translation equivalents for this term include dust, rubbish, and rubble. Dust is the most common term; however, in Neh. 4:2, 10, the remains of Jerusalem’s walls are translated as rubbish in the Authorized Version and Revised Standard Version, but as rubble in modern translations such as the NIV. The principal translation equivalent in Latvian is pišļi ‘dust’. However, in Neh. 4:2, pelni ‘ashes’ was used in LB1889 and LB1965; in LB2012, the heaps of ʿāpār are rendered with drupas ‘ruins’. Similarly, in Neh. 4:10, the terms drupas ‘ruins’ and gruveši ‘rubble’ are used instead of pišļi ‘dust’.

The eighth sense of ʿāpār refers to the remains of something burnt, glossed as ‘ashes’. In Num. 19:17, priests are instructed to take ʿāpār from the burnt remains of an offering. Similarly, the burnt remains of idols destroyed in the fields of the Kidron are referred to as ʿāpār in 2 Kings 23:4. The translation equivalent for this term is ashes; it is consistently translated as pelni ‘ashes’ in Latvian.

The ninth and final sense of ʿāpār is ‘ground’. In Isa 2:19, people live in holes in the ʿāpār ‘ground’. In Job 38:2, iron ore is taken out of the ʿāpār, referring to the ground. Finally, in Job 41:33, the Leviathan has no creature like it on the ʿāpār, referring to the

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13 Clines, “ʾapp,” Dictionary of Classical Hebrew, 6:515. Clines does not distinguish debris and rubble; nonetheless, the translations require more specificity than the lexicons.

14 Ibid., 6:515. Clines distinguishes between the senses related to the ground and places these under the first sense, “dust, (dry) earth, soil”; he has a separate sense for place as a grave under
dry land in contrast to its aquatic habitat. The previous senses refer to physical materia-
als, but this sense refers to a location, the source of the material in the first semantic
domain, constituting another instance of metonymy.

ʾāpār ‘ground’ occurs in several figurative expressions. First, the concept of humilia-
tion is conveyed by the expression ‘go to the dust’, as in Lam 3:29. Snakes are described
as animals that ‘crawl in the dust’ in Deut. 32:24. Second, exaltation and honor are ex-
pressed by the phrases ‘rise from the dust’ and ‘stand on the dust’ in Ps. 113:7 and Job
19:25, respectively. Finally, concepts of death, burial, and the grave are also conveyed.
The phrase ‘in the dust’ designates the grave in Job 7:21; ‘return to dust’ refers to being
buried and decomposing in Job 10:9. Finally, by metonymic extension, ʾāpār refers to a
cadaver in a grave in Ps. 30:9.

The translation equivalents for this sense in English include dust, earth, and ground,
with dust the predominant term, especially in figurative usages. In Job 41:33, the term
earth is used with reference to dry land in contrast to the aquatic habitat of the Levia-
than. Furthermore, in Isa. 2:19, ʾāpār refers to a specific, local area of the earth and,
consequently, it is translated as ground. In Latvian, the translation equivalent is pre-
dominantly pīšļi ‘dust’, especially in the figurative expressions. The terms zeme ‘earth’
and putekļi ‘fine dust’ are used in some non-figurative expressions. For instance, in Job
41:33, Glück and all subsequent translations have employed zeme ‘earth’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>English equivalents</th>
<th>Latvian equivalents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>dust</td>
<td>fine particles of earth, fine enough to be airborne, typically on the ground</td>
<td>dust</td>
<td>pīšļi, putekļi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>loose earth</td>
<td>material composing part of the surface of the earth, displaced from the earth</td>
<td>dust, earth</td>
<td>pīšļi, zeme, putekļi, smiltis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>soil</td>
<td>material composing part of the surface of the earth</td>
<td>dust, soil</td>
<td>pīšļi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 The senses of ʾāpār with glosses, definitions, and English and Latvian translation equivalents.

the first sense. However, he has a separate sense for “land, field.” We prefer to group all refer-
ences to a location in a single sense.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>mud plaster</th>
<th>mixture of earth, water, and other ingredients used to form a smooth layer on the surface of a wall</th>
<th>dust, mortar, plaster</th>
<th>māli, apmetums, java</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>powder</td>
<td>remains of object intentionally destroyed by grinding</td>
<td>dust, powder</td>
<td>pišļi, putekļi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>debris</td>
<td>coarse remains of objects intentionally destroyed and left on the ground</td>
<td>dust, rubble, soil, debris</td>
<td>pišļi, putekļi, drazas, atliekas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>rubble</td>
<td>broken fragments of material resulting from the destruction of a wall, building, etc.</td>
<td>dust, rubbish, rubble</td>
<td>pišļi, pelni, drupas, gruveši</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>ashes</td>
<td>remains of something burnt</td>
<td>ashes</td>
<td>pelni</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>ground</td>
<td>surface of the earth comprised of material such as soil, typically a limited extent of the surface</td>
<td>dust, earth, ground</td>
<td>pišļi, zeme</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Translation of ˁāpār as ‘dust’ in Glück’s Bible**

In this section, we investigate the translation of ˁāpār ‘dust’ in the Latvian Bible. First, Glück’s translation strategy is addressed, with particular attention to the historical influences of other Reformation-era translations. Second, we note the minor revisions in the subsequent editions. The major changes in translation strategy in the 1965 revision (LB1965) are examined in depth. Finally, the manner in which the 2012 translation (LB2012) diverges from the LB1965 and, in other instances, agrees with its attempt to modernize the language, is discussed.

Johann Glück translated ˁāpār with primarily one translation equivalent, pišļi ‘dust’, utilizing this term in 97 of the 110 occurrences of the word. Glück employed seven other translation equivalents as was seen in Table 1. The evidence suggests that Glück did not follow the translation approach of Luther’s German Bible nor the Vulgate, two translations that would have been very familiar to him. Interestingly, his approach resembles the French translation of Pierre-Robert Olivétan in his preference for a single term.15 In the following section, we will examine Glück’s translation according to the different senses of ˁāpār, considering in more depth possible influences on his translation decisions.

Whenever ˁāpār had the sense of ‘dust’, Glück utilized pišļi ‘dust’ in 24 of the 26 instances. In Deut. 28:24, however, he translated ˁāpār as pelni ‘ashes’, following the Vulgate, Luther’s German Bible, and the French Bible. Furthermore, in 2 Kings 13:7,

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he used *puteķļi* ‘fine dust’ to describe the fine particles of dust associated with the threshing floor, possibly influenced by Luther’s use of *Drescherstaub* ‘threshing dust’. However, Glück did not follow the Vulgate and other Reformation translations in Gen 3:14 by employing a term referring to loose earth or soil. Instead, Glück employed *pišķi* ‘dust’, as found also in the French Bible *pouldre* ‘dust’. Glück and the French Bible also agree in their translation in Job 2:12, 7:15; Ps. 72:9, Isa. 40:12, 65:25, while differing with Luther, who preferred *Erde* ‘earth’.

With the sense ‘loose earth’, Glück utilized *pišķi* ‘dust’ in 11 of the 14 instances. In Gen. 26:15, Glück translated *ápār* as *smiltis* ‘sand’ in reference to the ‘loose earth’ being used to fill a well, following the Vulgate, Luther’s German Bible, and the French Bible. In Lev. 17:13, loose earth is translated as *zeme* ‘earth’, in agreement with Luther but not the French translation. In Gen. 18:27, *puteķļi* is also employed in Abraham’s reference to himself as *ʕāpār wā-ʔēper* (‘dust and ashes’). Furthermore, in Hab. 1:10, Glück did not follow any of the major translations in using a term that communicates the concept of earth piled up for a ramp, rather, he utilized *pišķi* ‘dust’. Thus, Glück’s preference for *pišķi* ‘dust’ resembles the French translation, with 10 of the 14 verses translated in the same way. However, Glück also agreed with the German translation and not the French rendering in Lev. 17:13.

When *ʕāpār* had the sense of ‘soil’, Glück utilized *pišķi* ‘dust’ in 5 of the 6 instances. In Job 28:6, though, Glück used a diminutive form of *pišķi* (*Piʃkiʃki*) ‘dust’ to convey the concept of small pieces of earth. In Job 38:38, Glück and the major translations agreed in using a term referring to fine particles. However, in Job 28:6, Glück used *pišķi* ‘dust’, while Luther used *Erdenklöße* ‘clods of earth’. Glück and the French translation employed terms for ‘dust’ in Prov. 8:26, Job 17:19, Isa. 34:7, 9; Luther, however, used the terms *Erde* ‘earth’ and *Erdbodens* ‘ground’.

With regard to ‘mud plaster’ in Lev. 14:41–42, 45, Glück used two translation equivalents, *nokasījums* ‘scrapings’ and *māli* ‘clays’. His use of *māli* ‘clays’ indicates the influence of Luther’s translation; Luther translated *ʕāpār* as *Leimen* ‘clay plaster’ (also plural) in Lev. 14:41–42, 45. Glück employed *māli* ‘clays’ for the fresh building material in 14:42 and the debris in Lev. 14:45. However, he parts with Luther in Lev. 14:41, where he uses *nokasījums* ‘scrapings’. Interestingly, Glück does not use *pišķi* in Lev. 14:41, but prefers a term that is the only instance of a translation equivalent referring to man-made as opposed to naturally occurring material, as is implicit in *nokasījums* ‘scrapings’. The use of this term followed by a second, distinct term in the following verses resembles the translation in the French Bible, with *poudre* ‘dust’ in Lev. 14:41 and then *mortier* ‘mortar’ in Lev. 14:42, 45.

With the senses of ‘powder’, ‘debris’, and ‘rubble’, Glück consistently employed *pišķi* ‘dust’. The German and French translations agreed in using *Staub* ‘dust’ and *poudre* ‘dust’ for these senses. However, the French translation used *terre* ‘earth’ in Neh. 4:10,
yet Glück preferred pišļi ‘dust’, as did Luther in his translation. Finally, with the sense ‘ashes’ in Num. 19:17, Glück translated ‘āpār as pelni ‘ashes’. It is noteworthy that the French translation has poudre ‘dust’ in this passage. If Glück’s translation strategy were to follow the French consistently, we would expect him to translate ‘āpār as pišļi in Num. 19:17, but he did not, suggesting that he was working more independently in his translation.

Finally, the sense of ‘ground’ was translated with pišļi ‘dust’ in 44 of the 47 instances of the sense. In Job 28:2, iron is described as coming out of the ‘āpār ‘ground’; similarly, in Isa. 2:19, people hide in holes in the ‘āpār ‘ground’. In both verses, Glück employed zeme ‘earth’. Furthermore, Glück employed zeme ‘earth’ in Job 41:33, which describes the Leviathan as having no rival on the ‘āpār, referring to the dry land in contrast to its aquatic habitat. Glück agrees with the French in 41 verses with ‘dust’, and in three with ‘earth’. However, in three remaining verses, he agrees with Luther’s Staub ‘dust’ (such as in Job 8:19).

In summary, Johann Glück translated ‘āpār with a preference for the translation equivalent pišļi ‘dust’. He also employed translation equivalents referring to naturally occurring materials in agreement with other translations, e.g., pelni ‘ashes’ and māli ‘clays’. Glück did not follow closely the translation approach of the Vulgate and German Bible, but rather his approach resembles the French translation in its preference for a single term. However, the influence of Luther’s Bible is seen in the use of māli ‘clays’ in Lev. 14:42, 45. On the other hand, the distinct influence of the French translation may be seen in the use of two translation equivalents in Lev 14:41–42, 45. These observations suggest that as Glück translated from the Hebrew, he consulted other translations, even adapting some of their translation decisions, but he did not appear to follow one translation so systematically as to suggest a dependence on one Reformation-era translation over another. These preliminary observations regarding Glück’s translation of a single Hebrew term concur with Kazakėnaitė’s finding that Glück’s New Testament translation was a ‘heterogeneous’ translation, showing influence from a variety of sources.

Translation of ‘āpār as ‘dust’ in LB1898

The 1898 edition of Glück’s Bible underwent minor revisions, with only 11 changes in the translation of ‘āpār ‘dust’. One notable revision was the change of pišļi to putekļi in Ps. 78:27, where the term is used to describe the abundance of meat descending from heaven. The revision suggests that the translators recognized that

*putekļi* denoted airborne particles. Conversely, the term *putekļi* was revised to *pišļi* in 2 Kings 13:7 and Gen. 18:27 because the particles of earth in these contexts are not airborne.

Furthermore, ‘āpār has the sense of ‘loose earth’ in 1 Kings 18:38 and, consequently, was revised from *pišļi* to *zeme* ‘earth’. ‘āpār has the sense of ‘soil’ in Job 28:6 and, consequently, it was revised as *graudi* ‘granules’. Although Glück translated ‘āpār with the sense of ‘rubble’ as *pišļi* ‘dust’, the 1898 revision has *pelni* ‘ashes’ in Neh. 4:2 and *gruveši* ‘rubble’ in Neh. 4:10.

In Job 30:6, ‘āpār has the sense of ‘ground’ and, consequently, was revised from *pišļi* to *zeme* ‘earth’. Similarly, *pišļi* was revised as *smiltis* ‘sand’ in Job 39:14. Finally, in Isa. 47:1, *pišļi* was revised as *zemes pišļi* ‘earth’s dust’, a new translation equivalent.

**Translation of ‘āpār as ‘dust’ in LB1965**

The 1965 work undertaken by the British and Foreign Bible Society resulted in a major revision, differing from 1898 edition in 37 verses. One significant change was the use of *putekļi* ‘fine dust’ in ten more verses than in prior versions; *zeme* ‘earth’ was also used more frequently. Furthermore, 10 new translation equivalents were introduced, such as *apmetums* ‘plaster’ and *drupas* ‘ruins’.

In the verses in which ‘āpār refers to ‘dust’, *pišļi* ‘dust’ remains the primary translation equivalent. However, in five instances, *pišļi* was revised as *putekļi* to convey the concept of a finer dust than associated with *pišļi*, as in Num. 5:17, where the referent is fine dust from the floor. Furthermore, *putekļi* was preferred over *pišļi* in Num. 23:10 to express the concept of abundance. *Pišļi* was also replaced by *putekļi* in the expression ‘to beat as fine as dust’ in 2 Sam. 22:43 and Ps. 18:42. These revisions reflect the semantic broadening of the term *putekļi*, from ‘airborne dust’ to ‘dust’.

When referring to ‘loose earth’, *pišļi* is revised as *putekļi* in Zech. 9:3, but as *samazgas* ‘silt’ in Zeph. 1:17, *pišļu kaudze* ‘pile of earth’ in Job 27:16, and *smilšu valnis* ‘wall of sand’ in Hab. 1:10. With the sense of ‘soil’, *pišļi* was translated as *zeme* ‘earth’ in Prov. 8:26, Isa. 34:7, 9 and *zemes virsus* ‘top of the earth’ in Job 38:38.

Finally, in the verses referring to ‘mud plaster’, the term *nokasījums* ‘scrapings’ was revised with *atkritumi* ‘remains’, a more general term for the broken pieces of plaster scraped off the wall. In Lev. 14:42, the term *māli* ‘clays’ was retained, but in v. 45, *māli* ‘clays’ was replaced by a term referring to a kind of construction material, namely, *apmetums* ‘plaster’.

In the verses with ‘āpār referring to ‘powder’, *pišļi* is revised as *putekļi* in 2 Kings 23:6a, 6b, and 15, suggesting, as seen earlier, that the translators considered *putekļi* a better term for fine material than *pišļi*. When ‘āpār has the sense of ‘rubble’, *gruveši* was revised as *drupas* in Neh. 4:10.
Finally, with the sense ‘ground’, pīšļi was revised as zeme in Job 14:8, Isa. 2:10, and Isa. 29:4a. The translators also employed other terms, including zemes pīšļi ‘earth’s dust’ in Job 5:6, putekļi in Ps. 44:25, kapa smiltis ‘grave sand’ in Job 21:26, and zemes klēpis ‘lap of the earth’ in Ps. 22:29.

Translation of ‘āpār as ‘dust’ in LB2012

The 2012 Latvian Bible was a new translation, differing in many respects from the previous three versions, but it also reflects an appreciation for Glück’s translation over LB1965. LB2012 agrees with the LB1965 version in employing putekļi more frequently, with 17 usages as opposed of 11 in LB1898 and only one in LB1689. However, LB2012 prefers the term pišļi to terms like zeme and pelni. Furthermore, LB2012 directly continued the use of only one of the 10 new translation equivalents in the 1965 revision, namely, apmetums ‘plaster’.

In the verses in which ‘āpār refers to ‘dust’, the term putekļi ‘fine dust’ is used instead of the traditional pišļi in 9 verses: Gen. 13:16a–b, 28:14; Exod. 8:16, 17a–b; 2 Chr. 1:9, 2 Kings 13:7, and Isa. 49:23. In four verses with putekļi in the LB1965, LB2012 preferred pišļi: Num. 5:17, Ps. 78:27, 2 Sam. 22:43, Mic. 7:17. In addition, the traditional rendering as pelni ‘ashes’ in Deut. 28:24 was replaced with pišļi. Similarly, pišļi was used in Job 7:5, in agreement with LB1689 (ne∫chkih∫teem Pih∫chleem ‘unclean dust’) in contrast to puveši ‘rot’ in LB1965.

A similar preference for pišļi is seen in the verses wherein ‘āpār has the meaning of ‘loose earth.’ Pišļi is used instead of pelni ‘ashes’ in 1 Kings 18:38, pišļi kaudze ‘pile of dirt’ in Job 27:16, samazgas ‘silt’ in Zeph. 1:17, and putekļi ‘fine dust’ in Zech. 9:3. Furthermore, when ‘āpār refers to ‘soil’, LB2012 prefers pišļi to zeme in Job 38:38, Prov. 8:26, and Isa. 34:7, 9.

In the verses in which ‘āpār refers to ‘mud plaster’, LB2012 exhibits two translation equivalents, apmetums ‘plaster’ for the dry material in Lev. 14:41 and java ‘mortar’ for the malleable building material and its remains in Lev. 14:42, 45. This approach resembles the use of two terms in LB1689 as opposed to the three terms in LB1965. However, LB2012 does not employ māli ‘clays’, but introduced a new translation equivalent, java ‘mortar’, and retains one of the terms introduced in LB1965, apmetums ‘plaster’.

With the sense of ‘powder’, pišļi is revised as putekļi in Deut. 9:21a–b. However, the translators preferred pišļi to putekļi in 2 Kings 23:6a–b, and verse 15. Furthermore, with reference to ‘debris’, LB2012 introduced a new term, atliekas ‘remains’ in 2 Kings 23:12. But in 1 Kings 20:10, pišļi is putekļi, not a term for ‘debris’. In the verses referring to ‘rubble’, gruveši is used in Neh. 4:10 instead of drupas ‘rubble’. In Neh. 4:2, though, drupas is used instead of LB1965 pelni ‘ashes’. The translators continued to use pišļi in Ps. 102:14 and Ezek. 26:4.
Finally, with the sense ‘ground’, LB2012 preferred *pišļi* ‘dust’ over other translation equivalents. Furthermore, they agreed with the traditional renderings in 1898 and did not accept the new translation equivalents from 1965, including *kapa smiltis* ‘grave sand’ in Job 21:26 and *zemēs klēpis* ‘lap of the earth’ in Ps. 22:29. However, the LB2012 differed with LB1898 by revising *pišļi* as *putekļi* ‘fine dust’ in two verses, Ps. 119:25 and Isa. 2:10.

Proposed revisions of the translation of ˁāpār as ‘dust’

In this final section, we propose revisions to the translation of ˁāpār in 33 verses of the LB2012. Of the 33 revisions, three involve returning to a translation decision originating with Glück’s 1689 translation while three others agree with revisions of 1898. Furthermore, nine proposed revisions agree with LB1965 against LB2012. However, 18 of the revisions are new, especially those employing a new translation equivalent, *augsne* ‘soil’.

Revisions of the translation of ˁāpār with the sense ‘dust’

ˁāpār has the sense of ‘dust’ in 26 of its 110 occurrences, referring in these verses to fine particles of earth. From Johann Glück’s translations until the LB2012, the principal translation equivalent has remained *pišļi* ‘dust’. However, the meaning of this term appears to be narrowing semantically, from fine particles of earth to particles of earth originating from the remains of a cadaver.

Note, for example, the following usage of *pišļi* in *Mērnieku laiki* (1879), the first modern Latvian novel:17

…kad tautas kronis, gods un greznība gul *pišļos* pie viņas nicinātāju un tēvijas smējēju kājām…

“… when the crown of the nation, its honour and splendour, lie in the dust at the feet of her fatherland’s jeerers and mockers …”

*Mērnieku laiki*, chapter 218

The context and usage of *pišļi* in this example clearly evidences overtones of humiliation (if not outright death). It is not difficult to posit a semantic development from the

17 Latvian literature in the modern period began with the literary work produced by the New Latvians during the first national awakening in the mid 19th century.
predominant location of *pišļi* (namely, the ground) to the location being the place of humiliation and death.

Jēkabs Janševskis’ 1928 novel *Bandavā* has 5 occurrences of *pišļi*, all semantically associated with death and decay to varying degrees.¹⁹ The following is a striking example:

> “Pēc dažām dienām viss jau pārvēršas *pišļos*, top par zemes pīti,” viņš domāja. „Nu es redzu pats savu kapu. Tā tas reiz patiesi izskatīties, un es tur gulēšu apakšā un sapūšu, un iznīkšu…”

> “‘After a few days, everything already turns into dust, becoming earth,’ he thought. ‘Now I see my own grave. One day it will truly look like that, and I will lie there underneath and rot away and decompose…’ ”

Chapter 42 (*Pēc bērēm*)²⁰

Finally, for a recent example, note Ojārs Vācietis’ poem *Si minors*:

> *Ja tu no savas patiesības bīsies, klūs pišļos viss, kas bija dzīvs un zelīš, un kamoliņā varavīknes tīsies, un tēvi nesīs zārkus atpakaļ.***

> “If you’ll be afraid of your own truth, then everything which once was living and green will turn to dust, and rainbows will roll up into a ball of yarn, and will fathers carry back coffins.”

*Si minors* (1982)²¹

As can be seen from the above examples, the term *pišļi* has connotations of mourning, death, and judgment. By contrast, *puteķši* ‘fine dust’ appears to have broadened semantically, from airborne particles to any fine particles, regardless of location. For example, Edvarts Virza’s famous work *Straumēni* (1933) clearly indicates the use of *puteķši* to refer to fine dust that has accumulated and settled, and is no longer airborne: ...*ar slotu aizslaukot projām zirnekļu tiklus un puteķšus, kas še bija sakrājušies no pērnā gada kulšanas* (“...sweeping away with a broom cobwebs and dust that had accumulated

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¹⁹ Other examples are also illustrative. Chapter 14 (*Liela uzdevuma priekšā*) mentions autumn leaves that have been stomped into the dust (*rudeni nobīrušas, pišļos samītas lapas*). In chapter 15 (*Kā pasakā*), life is described in the following way: *projām no pelēkās ikdienišķības, no zemes nicības un pišļu dzīves* (“away from gray daily existence, from the transitoriness of the earth, and a life of dust”).


here from the previous year’s threshing.”).\textsuperscript{22} Given these ongoing semantic changes in the language, we suggest the following revisions.

We propose that *puteķi* ‘fine dust’ is the preferred term when *ʕāpār* refers to fine particles of earth. For example, in Num. 5:17, *ʕāpār* refers to fine particles of earth from the floor of the tabernacle, fine enough to be mixed in water. In Ps. 78:27, *ʕāpār* is used figuratively to convey the concept of food descending in abundance from the sky; thus, *puteķi* more accurately conveys these concepts with its association of being fine enough to be airborne. Furthermore, in 2 Sam. 22:42 and Isa. 41:2, *ʕāpār* is used in a simile to express the concept of being reduced to a fine consistency; thus, we propose that *puteķi* be employed over *pišķi*.

Finally, the concept of licking *ʕāpār* as an expression of humiliation occurs in Ps. 72:9, Isa. 49:23, and Mic. 7:17. LB1965 translated *ʕāpār* as *puteķi* in Mic 7:17 but as *pišķi* in the other two verses; however, LB2012 translated *ʕāpār* as *puteķi* in Isa. 49:23, but as *pišķi* in the other two verses. We propose that *puteķi* be employed in all three verses for consistency and because this term more accurately conveys that the material on the feet would be fine, even sufficiently fine to be airborne.

<table>
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<td><em>pišķi</em></td>
<td><em>puteķi</em></td>
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\textbf{Revisions of the translation of *ʕāpār* with the sense ‘loose earth’}

*ʕāpār* has the sense ‘loose earth’ in 14 verses, referring to material dislodged from the earth. Following Glück, the Latvian translations have preferred *pišķi* ‘dust’ or another term such as *smīltis* ‘sand’, *pelni* ‘ashes’ or *samozgas* ‘silt’ instead of *zeme* ‘earth’. However, given the semantic narrowing evidenced by *pišķi*, we propose the following revisions.

\textsuperscript{22} Edvarts Virza, “Vasara”, in *Straumēni* (Rīga: Liesma, 1989), 112.
In 2 Sam. 16:13, ‘āpār refers to loose earth on the side of a path, possibly loosened when Shimei picked up adjacent stones to throw at King David. In this context, we suggest smiltis ‘sand’ as preferable to pišļi ‘dust’. In 1 Kings 18:38, Elijah built an altar and had a trench dug around it; when fire descended on the altar, it burned the altar itself as well as the ‘āpār. In this context, we suggest that the ‘āpār refers to the earth dislodged by digging the trench, not simply dust that might have been on the ground. Similarly, in Ezek. 24:7, a reference is made to pouring blood on the ground and then covering it with ‘āpār; we suggest that zeme ‘earth’ better communicates that loose earth was taken to cover the blood.

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In Job 27:16 and Zech. 9:3, the expression ‘to heap up silver like [‘āpāˉr]’ conveys the concept of abundance; furthermore, in these verses, ‘āpār is used in parallel with ‘mud’ and ‘clay’, suggesting that ‘āpār refers to dislodged earth. We propose that zeme ‘earth’ better conveys the image of heaping up earth in abundance.

Finally, in Gen. 3:19a, Adam is referred to as ‘āpār ‘dust’. In this verse, ‘āpār has been traditionally translated as pišļi ‘dust’; however, in LB2012, it was translated with a singular form of the noun, pīslis, meaning ‘a piece of dust’. However, pišļi was retained in Gen. 2:7 and other verses referring to human creation. Thus, we propose retaining the traditional rendering in Gen. 3:19a.

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Revisions of the translation of ‘āpār ‘loose earth’ with the sense ‘soil’

‘āpār has the sense ‘soil’ in 6 verses, referring to material in the earth. Following Glück, the Latvian translations have preferred pišļi ‘dust’. However, we propose reconsidering the use of modern terms for ‘soil’ or kinds of earth in place of pišļi ‘dust’, especially in view of the changes in meaning associated with the term.

In Job 14:19, a flood washes away the ‘āpār and leaves man without hope, a reference to soil; thus, the term smiltis ‘sand’ conveys the notion of a kind of soil that
would be prone to damage by flooding. In Job 38:38, ‘āpār refers to the soil, which hardens due to lack of rain. In Prov. 8:26, ‘āpār is used in parallel with ‘éreṣ ‘land’ and conveys the idea of the material covering the earth. In these two verses, we propose zeme ‘earth’ in lieu of pīšļi ‘dust’.

Finally, in Isa. 34:7, ‘āpār is used in parallel with ‘éreṣ ‘land’ to refer to the ground, which swells with the blood and fat of sacrifices. Similarly, in Isa. 34:9, ‘āpār and ‘éreṣ ‘land’ occur in parallel in reference to the materials, which are destroyed in judgment. In these verses, we propose a new translation equivalent, augsne ‘soil’.

Table 5  Translation of ‘āpār ‘soil’ with proposed revisions.

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Revisions of the translation of ‘āpār with the sense ‘mud plaster’

In Lev. 14:41, ‘āpār refers to the dry, broken remains of mud plaster, which has been scraped off the walls. The traditional terms nokasījums ‘scrapings’ and atkritumi ‘re- mains’ convey the idea of remains, but LB2012 used apmetums ‘plaster’ and allowed the context to communicate that it was broken into pieces. In Lev. 14:42, fresh mud plaster is applied to the wall. LB2012 employs java ‘mortar’ to express that this is fresh material, but we propose apmetuma java ‘plaster’ to distinguish fresh plaster from mortar. Finally, Lev. 14:45 contains a reference to the broken remains of the house, doubtless including the mud plaster. We propose the term gruveši ‘debris’, in view of the fact that the debris in question would include more than broken plaster.

Table 6  Translation of ‘āpār ‘mud plaster’ with proposed revisions.

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<td>java</td>
<td>gruveši</td>
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Revisions of the translation of ˁāpār with the sense ‘powder’

The term ˁāpār ‘powder’ is used in 2 Kings 23:6, 15 with reference to the remains of Asherah poles and altars that were destroyed and reduced to ˁāpār ‘powder’, before being scattered on graves as well as thrown into the Kidron. We propose that ˁāpār ‘powder’ be translated with putekļi ‘fine dust’, since this term refers to fine particles of material. The LB2012 translators used the term putekļi for the powdery remains in Deut. 9:21a–b; thus, this revision would produce a consistent rendering of the sense ‘powder’ with putekļi.

Table 7  Translation of ˁāpār ‘powder’ with proposed revisions.

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Revisions of the translation of ˁāpār with the sense ‘rubble’

In Neh. 4:2, 10, the term ˁāpār refers to the rubble of the destroyed wall. We propose that drupas ‘rubble’ be used in both verses. In Ps. 102:14, ˁāpār occurs in parallel with ‘stones’, and in 104:16, a reference to building the city is made, suggesting a context of destruction with the hope of rebuilding. We propose that ˁāpār has the sense of ‘rubble’ as opposed to ‘dust’ in this passage. In Ezek. 26:4–5, the destruction of the city of Tyre is prophesied; the walls and towers of the city will be destroyed, and then the ˁāpār of the city will be scraped into the sea, revealing the bedrock on which the city was built. We propose that after the destruction of the city, it is more probable that ‘rubble’ would need to be removed than pišļi ‘dust’ or zeme ‘earth’.

Table 8  Translation of ˁāpār ‘rubble’ with proposed revisions.

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</table>
Revisions of the translation of āpār with the sense ‘ground’

āpār has the sense ‘ground’ in 19 verses, referring to a location instead of material associated with the location. Following Glück, the Latvian translations have preferred pišļi ‘dust’ but also employed other terms such as zeme ‘earth’ and zemes pišļi ‘earth’s dust’. We propose that the phrase zemes pišļi ‘earth’s dust’ in Job 4:19 and 41:33 be revised as zeme ‘earth’. In fact, āpār was translated as zeme in Job 41:33 from Glück’s translation until 1965. The phrase zemes pišļi does not convey the sense of ‘ground’ more clearly than the simple term zeme ‘earth’, and so we propose the traditional rendering. Similarly, āpār was translated as zeme ‘earth’ in Job 28:2 in Glück’s translation; we propose that the 2012 revision to pišļi be reversed to restore the traditional zeme ‘earth’ in this verse.

In Job 39:14, the ostrich is described as leaving her eggs on the ground to warm on the āpār; we propose that smiltis ‘sand’ better describes the location than pišļi ‘dust’. In Isa. 2:10, āpār is used in parallel with šûr ‘rock’ to refer to a place that someone could enter to hide; thus, we propose zeme ‘earth’ to convey the idea of a subterranean refuge. Furthermore, in Amos 2:7, the expression ‘dust of the earth’ is used; we propose that it be consistently translated with putekļi when referring to fine material on the surface of the ground. Finally, when āpār ‘ground’ is used in a context referring to plants, we propose employing augsne ‘soil’, as in Job 8:19 and 14:8.

Table 9 Translation of āpār ‘ground’ with proposed revisions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation</th>
<th>LB1689</th>
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<th>LB1965</th>
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<td>pišļi</td>
<td>putekļi</td>
<td>zeme</td>
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<td>Amos 2:7</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

We have investigated the translation of ‘āpār ‘dust’ in the Latvian Bible, from Johann Ernst Glück’s translation in 1689 to the most recent translation of the Bible in 2012. We have noted that Glück did not follow closely Luther’s translation in German, as other Lutheran translations in the Reformation era did. On the contrary, Glück translated with one principal translation equivalent, pīšļi ‘dust’, and employed seven other terms, preferring terms that refer to naturally occurring materials. Glück’s approach has significantly influenced subsequent versions, especially the 2012 Latvian Bible Society translation. Following our study of the translation of ‘āpār ‘dust’, we propose 33 revisions to the 2012 Latvian Bible. Of the 33 revisions, three involve returning to a translation decision associated with Glück’s 1689 translation while three others agree with revisions of the 1898 edition. Furthermore, nine proposed revisions agree with the London revision of 1965 against the 2012 translation. However, 18 of the revisions are new, especially those employing a new translation equivalent, augsne ‘soil’. We hope that our research sheds further light on the history of the Latvian Bible while contributing to future Latvian translation.

KOPSAVILKUMS

Vārda ˤāpār ‘pīšļi’ tulkošana latviešu Bībelē

