Proverbs 7 in MT and LXX: Form and Content

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Recent scholarship has placed an increasing emphasis on understanding the Septuagint in its own right, aside from its function as a translation.[1] This new trend indeed represents a corrective to previous scholarship that had been using the Septuagint mainly as a tool for textual criticism while neglecting the self-evident need to discern the actual meaning of the Greek text as intended by the translator. Even so, the more recent tendency to focus on the meaning of the Greek text has overstepped its bounds, upsetting the natural balance of text and translation. In this context, a few preliminary remarks are in order:

(1) There is no point in crediting the translator with the work of the author or blaming him for the shortcomings of the parent text. Why should we comment on the translator's sequence of tenses when it merely reflects the usage in the *Vorlage*, or acclaim his vocabulary when common equivalents are used?

(2) The basic assumption that the Greek text must have a reasonable meaning since the translator remains faithful to his task of offering an understandable text is incorrect. We encounter, time and again, a text that is set in non-Greek patterns, or that features a strange usage of words, or that simply makes no sense at all. There is hardly any point in forcing a learned

[1] See M. Harl, "La Bible d'Alexandrie dans les débats actuels sur la Septante," in *La double transmission du texte biblique* (ed. Y. Goldman and Ch. Uehlinger; OBO 179; Fribourg-Göttingen, 2001) 7–24.

meaning on a text that resulted from a misreading or misunderstanding of the *Vorlage*.

(3) The Septuagint translators usually reproduce their *Vorlage* faithfully, if not completely literally. It is only our misplaced expectation to find a verbatim, Aquilas-like, translation of the holy text that leads us to label fairly straightforward translations as 'free'.[2] Even the few translators that exercise freedom of translation operate within the scope of the text they are translating and do not easily rewrite it through omissions, additions and other substantial changes, or readily introduce ideas from their own milieu. Changes are usually triggered by a difficulty in form, content or concept occasioned by the *Vorlage*.

(4) Evidently, many changes could have emerged in the course of transmission of the Hebrew text and are not necessarily the work of the translators. Even small differences in grammar and syntax that used to be associated with the translators are attested in parallel Hebrew texts, not to speak of more serious changes. The extensive literary activity around the biblical texts is well attested within the Bible, in the Qumran scrolls, the apocryphal literature and the rabbinical writings. Translators may have adopted the practice of rewriting the biblical text current in their milieu, but we should not jump to the conclusion that the translators acted as redactors before carefully considering the possibility that they rendered a different text.

(5) Retrieving the *Vorlage* and establishing the method of translation move in a well-known vicious circle that can be breached only by a careful evaluation of the differences between the MT and the LXX in set categories: A. The *Vorlage*: (a) redactional differences. (b) random variants. B. The translation: (a) changes due to the translator. (b) problems created in the transmission process of the Greek text.[3]

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[2] See J. Barr, *The Typology of Literalism in Ancient Biblical Translations* (Göttingen, 1979).

[3] The latter is quite difficult to consider in the case of Proverbs, since we do not have a critical edition of the Greek text.

(6) An independent evaluation of the meaning of the Greek text is hardly recommendable. One should first consider the language, structure, literary devices, meaning and problems of the parent text before probing into the work of the translator in an attempt to evaluate his intended message. We should be very careful in attributing far-reaching intentions to the translator, who usually strives to render his source in a reasonable form.

(7) Once the meaning of the Greek text has been discerned, the translator's interpretation should not be imported into the Hebrew text. This last procedure involves a contradiction in terms, since, if the Greek has its own internal literary truth, this truth belongs within the Greek and should not be applied to another literary work whose meaning derives from its own makeup.

All these tenets become quite difficult to follow as one approaches a translation of the sort of Proverbs-LXX. The translator of Proverbs, unlike the majority of LXX translators, is a self-conscious writer.[4] He is aware of the needs and possibilities of the target language, often rewriting his *Vorlage* in order to create an eloquent Greek text. He is also notorious for introducing his own milieu into the text. Does he, nevertheless, remain within the limits set by the strings that bind him to the *Vorlage*? The attitude towards the translator of Proverbs has changed over time. While commentators in the 18th-19th centuries felt obliged to anchor every difference between the MT and the LXX in possible different readings,[5]

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[4] Thackeray lists LXX-Prov under "Paraphrases and free renderings," together with I Esdras, Daniel, Esther and Job (H. St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek* [Cambridge, 1909] 13). This evaluation is carried even farther by D.M. Hamonville, *Les Proverbes* (La Bible d'Alexandrie 17; Paris, 2000) 19, who asserts that the translator of Proverbs exercises a freedom incomparable to any other LXX-translator, as proven by the quality of his language, unbound to either his *Vorlage* or the conventions of the LXX (about 150 hapax legomena within the LXX).

[5] Thus, J.G. Jäger, *Observationes in Proverbium Salomonis Versionem Alexandrinam* (Meldorf, 1788), cited passim by Lagarde and Baumgartner; P. de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig, 1863); A.J. Baumgartner, *Étude critique sur l'état du texte du livre des Proverbes d'apres les principales traductions anciennes* (Leipzig, 1890).

modern commentaries rather tend to neglect Prov-LXX as a witness of text transmission altogether. However, scholars whose point of departure is the LXX version of Proverbs tend to overstate the translator's message and to exaggerate its contribution to the understanding of MT-Prov.[6] We would like to challenge this approach through a glimpse into the work of this intriguing translator, in the elaborate אשה זרה speech of Prov 7.[7]

MT Prov 7 is a self-contained speech, consisting of three obvious parts: Introduction (vv. 1–5); Argument (vv. 6–23); and Conclusion (vv. 24–27).

The introduction begins with the addressee, בני..., as do other lesson-speeches in chs. 1–9. It is followed by a series of imperatives that urge the listener's adherence to the teaching of the sage—שמר... תצפן ;שמר ;קשרם... כתבם ;תקרא ...אמר. The introduction culminates with a purpose-clause, beginning with an infinitive, and specifying the target of the entire speech: לשמרך מאשה זרה "To guard you from a forbidden woman" (v. 5).

The main part—the ingeniously constructed argument—begins with an incipient *ki* (v. 6). It is entirely constructed as a witness-monologue delivered by the wisdom-teacher, who shares with his listeners an encounter he witnessed. He first describes a simple young lad wandering in the streets (looking for action? for trouble?) (vv. 6–9). He then concentrates on the manipulative woman who sets out to seduce the lad, citing her words at large (vv. 10–20). Finally, he reports her inevitable success (vv. 21–23).

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[6] Thus, J. Cook, "אשה זרה (Proverbs 1–9 Septuagint): A Metaphor for Foreign Wisdom?," *ZAW* 106 (1994) 458–476. He states his approach at the beginning: "I shall concentrate here on the Septuagint version of Proverbs... for it may be that such views could prove enlightening to our understanding of the Hebrew version" (p. 459). He advocates the same approach in another paper: J. Cook, "The Septuagint as Contextual Bible Translation: Alexandria or Jerusalem as Context for Proverbs?," *JNSL* 19 (1993) 25–39.

[7] This relatively long speech (27 verses) is treated by Cook, אשה זרה, 27–28, in a surprisingly short passage (barely one page). Is this because the translator did not meet the scholar's expectations and did not offer new perspectives for the understanding of the lady in either the *Vorlage* or the translation?

The conclusion is marked by a new address: ועתה בנים..., calling for attention to the lesson to be drawn from the preceding scene (vv. 24–27). The introduction and conclusion thus form an inclusio.[8]

As will be demonstrated below, this threefold structure of the Hebrew text is marred in the Greek, since the clear-cut division between the introduction and the argument disappears. Instead of introducing a new scene as in the Hebrew, v. 6 continues to speak of the woman mentioned in v. 5, missing the effect of the witness-monologue altogether. This is the core difference in content and structure between the LXX and the MT.

Another main difference between the texts regards the pattern of parallelism. In the Hebrew the entire speech is built in *parallelismus membrorum*, taking a variety of routes. The introduction (vv. 1–5) and the conclusion (vv. 24–27) are constructed mainly of fully synonymous stichs. In the argument (vv. 6–23), the repetitious character of the parallel stichs persists to a certain extent in the description of the lad. However, beginning with v. 10, in the section dealing with the woman, the parallelism becomes synthetic: the second stich complements the first by adding new information rather than repeating preceding elements. The change certainly has its effect. The address in the introduction as well as the lesson in the conclusion are stated at length and are emphasized by the repetitions characteristic of synonymous parallelism. The pace of the rhythm increases as the wisdom-teacher begins to describe the encounter, and is intensified when he moves on to the resolute actions of the woman. On the whole, the translator retains the structure of his *Vorlage* in the introduction as well as in the conclusion, but in the course of the main body of the speech he forgoes the balance of his *Vorlage* time and again and loses the intensive rhythm

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[8] The אשה זרה speech in ch. 5 offers similar components: the introduction begins with בני..., goes on with imperatives, הקשיבה... הט אזנך, and culminates with the purpose verse, ...לשמר (vv. 1–2). The argument is introduced by a ...כי (vv. 3–6), and the conclusion addresses the audience with ...ועתה בנים (vv. 7ff). See P.J. Nel, *The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs* (BZAW 158; Berlin, New York, 1982); R.N. Whybray, *The Composition of the Book of Proverbs* (JSOTSup 168; Sheffield, 1994) 11–13.

created by the parallel stichs. He offers instead a more narrative-like style. We are not dealing either with different authors or different translators within Prov 7, and yet the mode of expression changes as the speech evolves, due to the thematic diversity of its different parts.

The Introductory Address (Verses 1–5)

In the introduction the wisdom-teacher calls for the attention of his listener to his teaching insistently and enthusiastically, to the point of actually identifying his teaching with wisdom itself (vv. 1–4). V. 5 explains the purpose of it all: wisdom will keep its followers from an אשה זרה. The Greek translator mainly retains the form, contents and spirit of these introductory sayings. The focus, nevertheless, shifts in the LXX because of an addition in v. 1a that introduces the reverence of the Lord.

  The five verses of the introduction each contain two parallel stichs, fairly structured, although not in identical symmetries. Except for v. 3 that offers straight parallels (a, b–a′, b′), the parallelism is chiastic: V. 4 features a fully chiastic structure (a, b, c–c′, b′, a′), whereas in vv. 1, 2 and 5 the second stich repeats only part of the elements of the first stich but enlarges one of them so that the number of items is largely preserved: v. 1 (a, b, c–c′, b′, d′), v. 2 (a, b, c–b′, d′), v. 5 (a, b–b′, c′). The parallelism is almost entirely preserved in the LXX, with only two variations: a minor change in word order in v. 4 and a paraphrase at the expense of the parallelism in v. 5.[9]

Verse 1

	c	b	a
υἱέ φύλασσε ἐμοὺς λόγους	בְּנִי שְׁמֹר אֲמָרָי		
	d′	b′	c′
τὰς δὲ ἐμὰς ἐντολὰς κρύψον παρὰ σεαυτῷ	וּמִצְוֹתַי תִּצְפֹּן אִתָּךְ		

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[9] The translations into English used below, unless otherwise stated, are the NJPS for the MT, and Brenton for the LXX.

The MT and the LXX structure the verse alike. The first stich begins with the vocative בני‎ // υἱέ, naturally not repeated in the second stich. The following שמר אמרי‎ // φύλασσε ἐμοὺς λόγους is echoed in the second stich by ומצותי‎ תצפן‎ // τὰς δὲ ἐμὰς ἐντολὰς κρύψον, with the verb expanded by the pronoun אתך‎ // παρὰ σεαυτῷ. Were the translator of Proverbs a literal translator, he could have similarly kept the balance of his *Vorlage* throughout, but he chooses to go his own way on many occasions, as we shall see.

Verse 1a LXX

υἱέ τίμα τὸν κύριον καὶ ἰσχύσεις   πλὴν δὲ αὐτοῦ μὴ φοβοῦ ἄλλον

The LXX has an additional verse vis-à-vis the MT. The addition is out of place in this speech, for several reasons: (1) Its structure does not fit the rest of the introduction: while vv. 1–5 are structured in synonymous parallelism, this additional verse is set in synthetic parallel stichs, the second stich offering a new idea rather than repeating the first. (2) It interrupts the continuity of vv. 1–2 that speak of adhering to the wisdom-teacher's words.[10] (3) Beginning as it does with the vocative υἱέ, it seems to be meant as an alternative to v. 1. (4) There is no reference to God in the entire speech —not even in the conclusion, where it would have been most expected if v. 1a had been original to the speech. (5) It would seem that this addition is part of an ongoing redaction that introduced, time and again, the Lord, especially the fear of the Lord, as a factor operating alongside or beyond human wisdom.[11] Such redactional activity seems to have continued

[10] As emphasized by Baumgartner, *Étude critique.*

[11] E.g., 1:2–6 and 1:7; 1:29; 2:2–3,10–11 and 2:5–8. B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos* (2nd ed.; HAT; Tübingen, 1963) 9, believes that the fear of the Lord was introduced into Proverbs at a later stage as part of a "religiös-moralisierende Umdeutung." W. McKane, *Proverbs* (OTL; London, 1970) 10–22, maintains that we are witnessing a Yahwistic reinterpretation of the "old wisdom" that originally focused on the successful life of the individual. Whybray, *Composition*, 19, argues that the combination of human wisdom and divine reverence either reflects different stages

beyond the stage attested in the MT, since the LXX features a series of additional references to God, unparalleled in the MT.[12] Noticeably, v. 1a stands out among these assumed expansions, since it emphasizes the Lord's uniqueness, an idea that operates on a completely different theological level. It may, however, be no more than a figure of speech, another way to express the Lord's greatness and significance in human life. It is not difficult to imagine how this addition came about in the context of vv. 1–2 that use terms such as תורה and מצוות. In addition, it may have been meant as a reaction to v. 1: someone felt that the wisdom-teacher overemphasized his own virtue, and made sure that the real authority—the Lord—received a place of pride.[13]

Despite the free spirit of our translator, he can hardly be responsible for the addition of v. 1a.[14] There is a difference between rewriting the *Vorlage*

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in the composition of the book, or is the result of simultaneous redactional activity in different literary circles. See also Rofé's meticulous analysis of Prov 31:30 אשה יראת יהוה היא תתהלל ≈ γυνὴ γὰρ συνετὴ εὐλογεῖται φόβον δὲ κυρίου αὕτη αἰνείτω; A. Rofé, "The Valiant Woman, γυνὴ συνετή, and the Redaction of the Book of Proverbs," in *Festschrift Rudolf Smend* (ed. Ch. Bultmann et al.; Göttingen, 2002) 145–155.

[12] We cannot go into this interesting question within the boundaries of this article. Let us just mention some raw statistics: God is mentioned 113 times in LXX-Prov (Θεός 34 times and Κύριος 79 times). In MT-Prov God is mentioned 92 times (יהוה 87 times and אלהים 5 times). The LXX, then, has 21 additional references to God compared with the MT. These data need analysis before they can be claimed to carry substantial significance.

[13] A similar antithesis is apparent in ch. 3: while vv. 1–4 enhance the virtue of the sage's wisdom, vv. 5–7 call to trust in God rather than in one's own wisdom.

[14] Hamonville, *Proverbes*, 9, refers to the numerous additional stichs—he counted 130—as characteristic of the translator, without considering the possibility that they emerged, at least partly, from a different Hebrew text. G. Gerleman, *Studies in the Septuagint: Proverbs* (3 vols.; LUÅ 52; Lund, 1956) 3:36–37, elaborates on the translator's tendency to turn an ethical vocabulary into a more religious and moralizing one. Thus, מדרך השכל is translated by ἐξ ὁδοῦ δικαιοσύνης (21:16), and מוסר אוילים turns into παιδείαν ἀσεβεῖς (1:7). Such cases definitely derive from the translator.

and substantial additions of this sort.[15] Moreover, were the addition
originally written in Greek, it would not have been set in a clearly hebraistic
pattern that can easily be retroverted into:

בני, כבד את יהוה וחזקת   מלבדו אל תירא אחר

"My son, honor the Lord and you shall be strong, and fear none but him."[16]

Without an actual Hebrew text, and given the flexible nature of the κοινή,
there is no way of knowing if the addition came from the *Vorlage* or the
translation. We may, nevertheless, speak of probabilities. In our view, the
translator is not engaged in redactional activity of this type.[17]

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[15] The concept of pluses and minuses in the LXX versus the MT needs modification
in cases such as the translator of Proverbs. Thus, all pluses and minuses are similarly
indicated in "The Parallel Aligned Text of the Greek and Hebrew Bible" (ed. E. Tov),
now available in *Accordance* (the Macintosh-based computerized concordance). The
addition in v. 1a is marked as a plus compared with the MT. The additional verb
ῥεμβεται in v. 12 is similarly marked as a plus versus the MT. But should these
pluses be weighed on the same scale? V. 1a is a real plus, while the additional verb
in v. 12 is the translator's addition in his attempt to render a nominal clause more
plausibly. Similarly, the expansive rendering of the enigmatic ונצרת לב by ἣ ποιεῖ
νέων ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας (v. 10) is not a plus versus the MT. The same goes for
minuses: neither בשוק nor יצעד are represented in the LXX (v. 8). Are they indeed
minuses compared with the MT? Since the translator has forgone them together
with the entire *parallelismus membrorum*, it is scarcely a real minus.

[16] Cf. 3:9 כבד את ה׳ מהונך "Honor the Lord with your wealth." Τιμάω probably
reflects כבד, as it usually does in the LXX. A more common formulation is ירא את ה׳
"Fear the Lord." However, the translator would have chosen φοβεῖσθαι for ירא; cf.
24:21 ירא את ה׳ בני φοβοῦ τὸν θεόν υἱέ.

[17] E. Tov, "Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint
of Proverbs," in *Of Scribes and Schools: Festschrift J. Strugnell* (ed. H.W. Attridge, J.J.
Collins, and T.H. Tobin; Lanham, 1990) 43–56, makes some distinctions between
differences that derive from the translator, mainly double translations, and those
that reflect redactional activity in the *Vorlage*, mainly transpositions. Cf. also E. Tov,
"Some Reflections on the Hebrew Texts from which the Septuagint was Translated,"
JNSL 19 (1993) 107–122. Cook, אשה זרה, 460, argues, *contra* Tov, that this translator,
independent as he is, may be considered responsible for the additions as well.

Verse 2

φύλαξον ἐμὰς ἐντολάς καὶ βιώσεις

<div dir="rtl">

¹⁸שְׁמֹר מִצְוֺתַי וֶחְיֵה
</div>

τοὺς δὲ ἐμοὺς λόγους ὥσπερ κόρας ὀμμάτων

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וְתוֹרָתִי כְּאִישׁוֹן עֵינֶיךָ
</div>

The texts are similarly structured and comprise the same elements, except for one: instead of תורתי the Greek reads τοὺς δὲ ἐμοὺς λόγους. The original wording in vv. 1–2 may well have been: מצותי... אמרי / אמרי... מצותי, as suggested by the Greek. On the other hand, תורתי may have been the original reading, replaced by the translator by λόγοι in assimilation with v. 1. This would be in accordance with his practice on other occasions where he replaces תורה—in reference to human teaching—with equivalents such as (בני) תורתי (אל תשכח) ומצותי (יצר ≈ θεσμοὺς μητρός σου (1:8; 6:20); תורת אמך) ≈ ἐμῶν νομίμων... τὰ δὲ ῥήματά μου (3:1)¹⁹ (לבך

Verse 3

περίθου δὲ αὐτοὺς σοῖς δακτύλοις

<div dir="rtl">

קָשְׁרֵם עַל־אֶצְבְּעֹתֶיךָ
</div>

ἐπίγραψον δὲ ἐπὶ τὸ πλάτος τῆς καρδίας σου

<div dir="rtl">

כָּתְבֵם עַל־לוּחַ לִבֶּךָ
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The translator keeps the parallelism and similes of the parent text literally.²⁰

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¹⁸ The verb is rendered in the future tense, as on other similar occasions; e.g., Gen 20:7; 42:18; and especially Prov 9:6 עזבו פתאים וחיו ἀπολείπετε ἀφροσύνην καὶ ζήσεσθε. The same phrase recurs in 4:4 שמר מצותי וחיה, where it does not have an exact counterpart in the Greek.

¹⁹ Gerleman, *Studies*, 45, argues that, unlike other translators, "…the Proverb translator failed to take the word תורה as a technical term." In our opinion, the variety of terms our translator chose speaks, rather, in his favor. He took תורה as a technical term where he believed it was indeed meant as such.

²⁰ The very same imagery is used in 3:3 and 6:20–21. In the context of תורה and מצוות, the author may also allude to Deut 6:8.

Verse 4

εἶπον τὴν σοφίαν σὴν ἀδελφὴν εἶναι

$$\overline{c}\quad\overline{b}\quad\overline{a}$$
אֱמֹר לַחָכְמָה אֲחֹתִי אָתְּ

τὴν δὲ φρόνησιν γνώριμον περιποίησαι σεαυτῷ

$$\overline{a'}\quad\overline{b'}\quad\overline{c'}$$
וּמֹדָע לַבִּינָה תִקְרָא

While the MT has a perfect chiastic parallelism (a, b, c–c', b', a'), in the LXX the first two elements in the second stich are shuffled (a, b, c–b', c', a'). The word order in the MT is preferable, since the emphasis should be on the novel feature, i.e., the characterization of wisdom as אחות ≈ ἀδελφή 'sister' (end of first stich), and מודע ≈ γνώριμον 'acquaintance' (beginning of second stich).[21] The translator reformulates the parallelism, while using an *accusativus cum infinitivo*: "Say that wisdom is thy sister, and gain prudence as an acquaintance for thyself."[22]

It is difficult to rely on this creative translator and assume that the elusive verb περιποίησαι 'preserve, procure' reflects תקנה rather than תקרא.[23] The translator could have been influenced by sayings such as קנה חכמה קנה בינה "Acquire wisdom, acquire discernment," without actually reading a different verb, especially since he chose such an unusual equivalent.[24]

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[21] While מודע—here parallel with אחות—presumably means 'kinsman,' it is rendered by an etymological equivalent γνώριμος, 'an acquaintance,' from γνωρίζω, 'make known,' 'become acquainted with.' LXX-Ruth came up with the same solution (2:1; 3:2).

[22] Hamonville, *Proverbes*, 200, renders the second stich as: 'attache-toi la prudence comme une familière.'

[23] As suggested by Lagarde, *Anmerkungen*, 25, and Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, 75. Consequently, they take the *lamed* of לבינה as an accusative, *contra* Jäger (*apud* Lagarde and Baumgarter) who reads הבינה. All this seems unnecessary.

[24] In the LXX περιποιέω renders mainly חיה and other verbs which connote 'keep alive', 'preserve'. While it is used twice for רכש in Genesis, it never renders קנה.

Verse 5

	b	a
	לִשְׁמָרְךָ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה	

	c′	b′
	מִנָּכְרִיָּה אֲמָרֶיהָ הֶחֱלִיקָה	

ἵνα σε τηρήσῃ ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ πονηρᾶς ἐάν σε λόγοις τοῖς πρὸς χάριν ἐμβάληται

MT: "She will guard you from a strange woman

     From an alien woman whose talk is smooth."

LXX: "that she may keep you from the strange and wicked woman, if she should assail you with flattering words."

This is the purpose clause, introduced by the infinitive לשמרך. The same pattern appears in other אשה זרה episodes, e.g., 2:16; 6:24.[25] While the only synonymous element is מנכריה // מאשה זרה, the structure is nevertheless of two parallel stichs.

   The translator preserved the pattern of parallelism quite faithfully throughout vv. 1–4, making no effort to introduce new literary or ideological perspectives into the text. This changes in v. 5, in which the parallel stichs are strung together, as the equivalents מנכריה // מאשה זרה become in the LXX: ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ πονηρᾶς, replacing the synonym by a new element. In addition, the translator expanded the phrase אמריה החליקה, again at the expense of the parallelism.[26] Why did he suddenly change his habit in this verse, compared with the previous verses? He may have wanted to restate its message and specify in advance that the woman in question is evil. However, in order to do this he could have simply replaced נכריה with πονηρᾶς. Rather, he had to solve the difficult syntactical phrasing of the second stich and offered a paraphrase that restructured the entire verse. Joining the synonymous items by a καί required him to offer equivalents that differ in meaning. Similarly, most of

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[25] See M.V. Fox, *Proverbs 1–9* (AB; New York, 2000) 119, 241.

[26] However, a variant may be involved here, caused by a dittography of the beginning of אמריה. A reading such as אם אמריה could have yielded the conditional clause ἐάν σε λόγοις.

the following cases in which he created a different structure are not ideologically motivated but rather are literary and translational moves.

Who is this נכריה/אשה זרה? Who is the strange woman that is going to be the subject of the wisdom-teacher's fierce speech? At this point in the speech, the meaning of אשה זרה or נכריה is not transparent. The translator, too, does not offer a solution: he uses the quite neutral term ἀλλοτρία, although he makes it clear that she is evil. She is said to master smooth talk and to have the appearance of a whore, but it is not until the end of her words (vv. 19–20)—where she assures the lad that her husband is not expected home for a long time—that the terminology used in the introduction becomes entirely clear. She is termed נכריה/אשה זרה since she is 'another man's wife'.[27] This meaning is supported by the rest of the אשה זרה speeches throughout chs. 1–9. In ch. 2, the strange woman (v. 16) is described as a woman "Who forsakes the companion of her youth" (v. 17). In ch. 5, men are urged to keep away from a strange woman: "Keep yourself far away from her; Do not come near the doorway of her house" (v. 8), "Lest strangers eat their fill of your strength, And your toil be for the house of another" (v. 10); instead, men are advised to find joy in the wife of their youth (v. 18). In ch. 6 the strange woman (v. 24) is straightforwardly called אשת איש "a married woman" (v. 26), and אשת רעהו "his fellow's wife" (v. 29), and the relationship with her is defined as adultery (v. 32). The strange woman, then, is someone else's wife.[28]

[27] Modern translators are quite at a loss in their attempts to render these terms. RSV: loose woman; NJPS: forbidden woman; Cook, אשה זרה, speaks of 'a loose woman' (458), but he also defines her as a 'harlot' (458, 465) or a 'strange woman' (466); Hamonville, *Proverbes*, 200, renders the phrase as 'femme étrangère', and refers to her as 'femme adultère' (199), 'séductrice' (201).

[28] Fox, *Proverbs*, 139.

The Argument—A witness monologue remodeled (Verses 6–20)

The main body of Prov 7 is constructed as a witness monologue, in which the wisdom-teacher shares with his listeners an experience whose lesson is the goal of his communication. This literary device renders the lesson more credible, and evokes the audience's involvement and readiness to listen and accept.[29] Witness monologues appear occasionally in wisdom-oriented compositions. Thus, the author of Ps 37 adds his own experience in order to emphasize his teaching: "I have been young and am now old, but I have never seen a righteous man abandoned, or his children seeking bread" (v. 25); "I saw a wicked man, powerful, well-rooted like a robust native tree. Suddenly he vanished and was gone; I sought him, but he was not to be found" (vv. 35–36). The entire teaching of Qoheleth is anchored in his personal deductions from his own experience, expressed in different ways, for example, by the repeatedly used introduction: "I said to myself..." (e.g., Qoh 2:1). In Prov 4:3–4 the wisdom-teacher evokes empathy in his 'son' by anchoring his teaching in the way he himself was coached: "Once I was a son to my father, the tender darling of my mother. He instructed me and said to me...".[30]

Witness monologues are not common in Proverbs. In fact, there are only two examples in which the wisdom-teacher makes ingenious use of this literary device, elaborating at length on an incident he experienced:[31] the elaborate אשה זרה speech under discussion (7:6–20), and the short but intense communication on the sluggard in 24:30–34. Interestingly, both of

[29] See McKane, *Proverbs,* 572; R.E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC; Nashville, 1998) 186; C.A. Briggs and E.G. Briggs, *The Book of Psalms* (2 vols.; ICC; Edinburgh, 1906) 1:329.

[30] See Ben Sira's nostalgic monologue on his own learning in his youth (Sir 51:13–22).

[31] Saadia Gaon defines these cases as allegories: 'The wisdom-teacher forwards allegories and articulates them as events that really took place'; Saadia Gaon, *Proverbs* (ed. Y. Kafiḥ; Jerusalem, 1976) 69–70 (Heb., translated from Arabic). In the introduction, 15–16, he mentions Prov 7 and 24:30–32 together with Qoh 9:14–15 as examples for such allegories. See Fox, *Proverbs,* 241.

these monologues fade away in the LXX. Let us first briefly look at the latter.

MT and LXX Prov 24:30–32 show considerable differences. The MT offers a vivid scene in which the wisdom-teacher deduces a lesson from a situation he observes:

עַל־שְׂדֵה אִישׁ־עָצֵל עָבַרְתִּי וְעַל־כֶּרֶם אָדָם חֲסַר־לֵב : וְהִנֵּה עָלָה כֻלּוֹ קִמְּשֹׂנִים... וָאֶחֱזֶה אָנֹכִי אָשִׁית לִבִּי רָאִיתִי לָקַחְתִּי מוּסָר :

'I passed by the field of a lazy man, By the vineyard of a man lacking sense. It was all overgrown with thorns... I observed and took it to heart; I saw it and learned a lesson'.

The LXX offers instead a completely different scene, beginning with two similes:

ὥσπερ γεώργιον ἀνὴρ ἄφρων καὶ ὥσπερ ἀμπελὼν ἄνθρωπος ἐνδεὴς φρενῶν. ἐὰν ἀφῇς αὐτόν χερσωθήσεται καὶ χορτομανήσει ὅλος... ὕστερον ἐγὼ μετενόησα ἐπέβλεψα τοῦ ἐκλέξασθαι παιδείαν.

'A foolish man is like a farm, and a senseless man is like a vineyard. If thou let him alone, he will altogether remain barren and covered with weeds... Afterwards I reflected, I looked that I might receive instruction'.[32]

MT's integrated speech on the lazy person is matched in the LXX by a disarrayed series of sayings: Vv. 30–31 present the mentioned simile. V. 32, which notably opens with ὕστερον 'afterwards', is set, as in the MT, in the first person, a formulation that, in the LXX, has no support either in the preceding or the following verses. Vv. 33–34, which speak of the lazy, become detached in this context.[33] The logically constructed speech in the Hebrew version loses its focus entirely in the LXX, because the translator did not realize he was dealing with a witness monologue or felt uncomfortable to reproduce it.

[32] The fool replaces the lazy person, a change probably triggered by the parallel חסר לב 'lacking in sense'. Gerleman, *Studies*, 54–56, believes that the change reflects "the opposition between Old Testament wisdom and Stoical view of life...".

[33] Brenton tries to make sense of the Greek text by adding an opening of his own, reintroducing the sluggard in v. 33: "The sluggard says...".

The witness monologue similarly disappears in the LXX of our chapter, forming the most remarkable difference in the literary design of Prov 7. In the MT, v. 6 obviously begins a new part, in which the wisdom-teacher shares with his listeners an incident he experienced. Throughout this long section, the wisdom-teacher tells about an encounter he himself witnessed and cites the words he overheard while looking through his window. A series of first person singular pronouns and verbs in vv. 6–7 sets the scene: חלון ביתי... אשנבי... "the window of **my** house... **my** lattice..."; ...נשקפתי ואברא... אבינה "**I** have looked out... and **I** have seen... **I** have perceived...". In the LXX all these turn into the third person, speaking about the woman, rather than the wisdom-teacher: it is her house and her window and it is she who is looking through it. While the change could have occurred in the *Vorlage*,[34] it seems more probable that it is the translator's doing and has nothing to do with different readings.

The translator thus entirely marred the structure of the speech. He may have misunderstood the relationship between vv. 5 and 6, assuming that vv. 6ff simply elaborate on the behavior of the woman just mentioned in v. 5. The scene depicted in v. 6 certainly contributed to this understanding, since it shows someone looking through the window, a picture that he easily associated with the well-known motif of a woman looking through her window in anticipation. This motif is embedded in three fateful biblical scenes that feature women of noble status: Sisera's mother (Judg 5:28), Michal daughter of Saul (2 Sam 6:16 // 1 Chr 15:29), and Queen Jezebel (2 Kgs 9:30).[35] The figure of a woman framed by a window is common in

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[34] Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, 75–76, argues that נשקפתי has been read נשקפה, and ואברא has been read ותרא, etc.

[35] Interestingly, all three women utter powerful words that, at least in the case of Michal and Jezebel, contribute to their condemnation. See Shula Abramski, "The Woman Looking Out of the Window," *Beth Mikra* 25 (1980) 114–124 (Heb.). H. O'Connell, "Proverbs VII 16–17: A Case of Fatal Deception in a 'Woman and Window' Type Scene," *VT* 41 (1991) 235–241.

ancient culture and art;[36] it has been interpreted in reference to temple prostitution and window-goddesses, from Mesopotamian Kilili to Aphrodite Parakyptusa.[37] Tempting as it may be, the woman looking through the window in our scene is neither a goddess nor a cult prostitute. While the translator was probably influenced by this common motif and rewrote our scene accordingly, he did not import the cultic setting in any visible form.[38]

The translator's misconstruction becomes apparent in v. 10, that in the MT begins the second part of the argument: after describing the lad strolling through the market, a woman appears on the scene, introduced with והנה "and behold...". The author is about to elaborate at length on the character and behavior of this woman. Her general type was mentioned in v. 5. Now, in vv. 10ff, a specific woman of this sort comes forward. No wonder that in the LXX v. 10 does not offer a counterpart for והנה, beginning instead with ἡ δὲ γυνὴ... "and the woman...," that is, the same woman that was the subject of the former verse.

The difference between the LXX and the MT extends beyond the change of scene. The translator seems to take the liberty of rewriting his *Vorlage* in ways that are unlikely to have happened in a Hebrew text. His interference

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[36] See C.E. Suter, "Die Frau am Fenster in der orientalischen Elfenbein-Schnitzkunst des frühen i. Jahrtausends v. Chr.," *Jahrbuch der Staatlichen Kunstsammlungen in Baden-Württemberg* (München, 1992) 7–28.

[37] While the very same verb—παρακύπτειν—is used, it is not necessarily drawn from the Greek cultural imagery. It is, after all, the most appropriate verb for the context and is used in scenes which have nothing to do with window-goddesses, cult prostitutes or women in general. Thus, "Abimelech king of the Philistines, looking out of the window..." is, in the LXX, παρακύψας δὲ Αβιμελεχ ὁ βασιλεὺς Γεραρων διὰ τῆς θυρίδος (Gen 26:8).

[38] The interpretation of the seduction scene of Prov 7 as representing a scene of sacral prostitution is primarily associated with G. Boström, *Proverbiastudien: die Weisheit und das fremde Weib in Spr. 1–9* (LUÅ 30; Lund, 1935) 103–155, 173. He has been criticized by McKane, *Proverbs,* 334–336; Fox, *Proverbs,* 134–141, 231–233, 252–258.

with the text is most obvious in his treatment of the *parallelismus membrorum*. The wisdom-teacher sets his words in concise parallel stichs, structured partly in parallelism, with varying techniques. Unlike his quite faithful rendering of the introductory verses, here the translator feels free to rewrite the text and forgo the literary form designed by the author. He may have found it difficult to reproduce the more sophisticated and variegated parallelism characteristic of the body of the argument. As things are, he seems more concerned with conveying the contents and message rather than handling the decoration of the poetic presentation.[39]

Verse 6

	b	a
	כִּי בְּחַלּוֹן בֵּיתִי	

	c′	b′
	בְּעַד אֶשְׁנַבִּי נִשְׁקָפְתִּי	

ἀπὸ γὰρ θυρίδος ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτῆς εἰς τὰς πλατείας παρακύπτουσα

The two texts offer different scenes, as described above. It is the form, however, that suggests that the scene shift was manufactured by the translator. The translator abandons the parallelism and creates a continuous participial sentence. In the same way that he turned the separate parallel items מנכריה // מאשה זרה into one phrase by replacing the repetitive element by a new one – ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀλλοτρίας **καὶ** πονηρᾶς, here he forgoes the parallel בעד אשנבי // בחלון ביתי by replacing the redundant element בעד אשנבי[40] with an entirely new element: "for through the window of her house she is surveying *the streets*." The difference suits the different pictures well: in the MT it is the wisdom-teacher looking out of his window

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[39] Hamonville, *Proverbes*, 201, believes that "Ce passage est l'un des plus caractéristiques de la liberté, de la recherche littéraire et de la culture mises en œuvre dans les Proverbes LXX." We dare say that this evaluation confuses the author with the translator since the contribution of the latter is not that far-reaching.

[40] An equivalent for אשנב may not have come to his mind. In its only other occurrence in the LXX, Judg 5:25, similarly parallel to חלון, the translator has replaced it with δικτυωτῆς 'formed into a network'.

and happening to see the encounter between the lad and the woman, while in the LXX the woman is intently examining the streets, seeking out her prey. A variant Hebrew text is not unthinkable,[41] but highly unlikely, in view of the translator's intensive interference with the text in these verses. He did not have to change the parallelism in order to put the verb in the third person. As the following verses will show, he also interferes with the structure in cases where he does not intend to change the meaning or introduce new ideas.

Verse 7

		b	a
		וָאֵ֤רֶא	בַפְּתָאיִ֗ם

	c′	b′	a′
אָבִ֤ינָה	בַבָּנִ֗ים	נַ֖עַר	חֲסַר־לֵֽב

ὃν ἂν ἴδῃ τῶν ἀφρόνων τέκνων νεανίαν ἐνδεῆ φρενῶν

While in the MT vv. 6 and 7 form separate units combined by a *waw*—he looked through the window and he saw a simple lad—the translator connected the two by devices that are characteristically Greek: he constructed the verb in v. 6 as a participle and the verb at the beginning of v. 7 as a subjunctive (...παρακύπτουσα ὃν ἂν ἴδῃ...): looking through the window in case she might detect a gullible young man.

  As in the previous verse, he does not reproduce the parallelism here. The obvious parallels אבינה בבנים // וארא בפתאים are condensed in the LXX into: "at one whom she may see of the foolish boys," with only one verb instead of וארא // אבינה and the parallel בפתאים // בבנים combined into one phrase: the boys devoid of sense. Here it becomes even clearer that the change originates with the translator.[42] He chooses to speak in continuous sentences rather than in stichs, even though he does not change the meaning in any way.

[41] E.g., כי מחלון ביתה אל הרחובות נשקפת 'For she looks from the window of her house into the streets'.

[42] The similarity between the juxtaposed words אבינה בבנים could have prima facie caused the omission of the verb, but his practice advocates a deliberate fusion of the parallel verbs.

Verse 8

<div dir="rtl">

b   a

עֹבֵר בַּשּׁוּק אֵצֶל פִּנָּהּ

a′   b′

וְדֶרֶךְ בֵּיתָהּ יִצְעָד

</div>

παραπορευόμενον παρὰ γωνίαν ἐν διόδοις οἴκων αὐτῆς

Vv. 6–7, which form a continuous long sentence in the LXX, continue in v. 8 with the participle παραπορευόμενον, referring to the lad just mentioned in v. 7. The parallelism disappears once again: the Greek offers a single verb—the participle at the beginning of the verse—instead of the pair עבר // יצעד, and the parallel specifications regarding the whereabouts of the lad—בשוק אצל פנה // ודרך ביתה—are conflated, leaving out בשוק altogether: "passing by the corner in the passages of her houses."[43] Since the following verse begins with a verb unparalleled in the MT (καὶ λαλοῦντα), it has been argued that it is a reflection of יצעד, which has no counterpart here. However, these two modifications are hardly connected. It would seem that the two verbs were rather strung together, as is done with other parallel elements in the adjacent verses. In fact, there remains no room for a second verb, since the parallel place specifications, too, have been conflated.

One wonders where the plural ἐν διόδοις οἴκων αὐτῆς—for ודרך ביתה—came from. The translator may have understood דרך literally ('way' rather than 'by'), influenced by vv. 25 and 27. In addition, a different reading may be involved—בתיה instead of ביתה—a simple enough metathesis variant. In any case, the result is an intensification of the picture: the lad seems to be trapped in between the passages to the houses of this powerful woman.

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[43] One can hardly deduce in the framework of this translation whether פנה was read with or without the *mappik*, as argued by Baumgartner, *Étude critique*.

Verse 9

<div dir="rtl">

b ‎ a
בְּנֶֽשֶׁף־בְּעֶ֥רֶב י֑וֹם

a′   b′
בְּאִישׁ֥וֹן לַ֝֗יְלָה וַאֲפֵלָֽה

</div>

καὶ λαλοῦντα ἐν σκότει ἑσπερινῷ ἡνίκα ἂν ἡσυχία νυκτερινὴ ᾖ καὶ γνοφώδης

The MT offers two parallel stichs, although the relationship between their elements is not altogether clear: "in the twilight, in the evening // at the time of night and darkness." Instead of the short, asyndetic, parallel stichs of the *Vorlage*, the translator creates quite a continuous narrative-like text, beginning with καί + participle, and continuing with ἡνίκα ἄν: "and speaking in the dark of the evening when there happens to be the stillness of night and of darkness."

The writer of Prov 7 went out of his way to create a pitch-dark setting: this unfortunate encounter could happen only under the veil of darkness. Furthermore, he creates an opposition between the present night and the full moon on which her husband is expected back.[44] Finally, the dark night on which the adultery takes place anticipates the punishment that will take the sinner to the sinister chambers of death, to Sheol. The translator, probably unaware of the meaning of אישׁון in this context, replaces it with ἡσυχία 'silence',[45] which he feels suits the nocturnal scene,[46] but he thus unfocuses the main goal of the writer.

The additional καὶ λαλοῦντα, which suits the translator's efforts to create a well-connected (conjunctive καί), continuous (participle λαλοῦντα) narrative, is nonetheless difficult to explain. It is not clear why he would

[44] Note the Akkadian *ina isin* that indicates the feast of the first day of the month; *CAD* 7:196, s.v. *isinnu*.

[45] Interestingly, one of the terms for the underworld is דומה, understood as 'silence'; Ps 94:17; 115:17 (rendered by ᾅδης).

[46] Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, 76, asserts that the translator derived אישׁון from ישׁן 'sleep', so also C.H. Toy, *Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh, 1899) 148; G. Mezzacasa, *Il libro dei Proverbi di Salomone: Studio critico sulle aggiunte greco-alessandrine* (Roma, 1913) 130. There is, however, a way to go between sleeping and silence.

describe the lad as talking at this point, unless he meant to create a contradiction between the talkative lad and the quiet of the night. This would mean that it is the translator's choice, since it is his misunderstanding of אישון that introduced the stillness of the night into the scene. It would have been best to explain the awkward καὶ λαλοῦντα as an internal-Greek corruption, but the suggestions offered are rather unconvincing.[47]

Verses 10–20: The Seductive Woman

In the MT, a woman suddenly appears on the scene: ...והנה אשה לקראתו. She is an incarnation of the type-woman mentioned in v. 5—an אשה זרה. Vv. 10–13 offer a general characterization, at the end of which she is described as boldly seizing the lad and addressing him with her words (v. 13), which are cited in great detail (vv. 14–20). She engulfs him with her convincing arguments and seductive promises. As envisaged in the introduction: אמריה החליקה (v. 5), and summed up in the conclusion: בחלק שפתיה תדיחנו (v. 21), the danger lies in her smooth talk. In the LXX the woman's dramatic appearance fades away, since she never left the scene after her first appearance in v. 5. This sums up the difference between the texts. As for the nature of this woman, the Greek text gives no reason to believe that the translator had in mind anything but the woman as described in the MT.

This part, like the preceding one, is constructed of short parallel stichs, but the synonymous character of the parallelism disappears entirely. The second stich rarely repeats elements from the first, but rather goes on building the scene with fresh details. The translator is more at home with this style, but his writing reads much more like a narrative compared with the MT, losing the cumulative rhythm and tension created by the successive short stichs.

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[47] Lagarde, *Anmerkungen*, χλιδῶντα 'be soft and delicate', and Jäger, *Observationes*, ἀλύοντα 'be at a loss', or πατοῦντα 'to tread'.

Verse 10

ἡ δὲ γυνὴ συναντᾷ αὐτῷ   וְהִנֵּה אִשָּׁה לִקְרָאתוֹ
εἶδος ἔχουσα πορνικόν ἥ ποιεῖ νέων ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας   שִׁית זוֹנָה וּנְצֻרַת לֵב

The MT, that last mentioned the woman in v. 5, begins here with והנה "And
lo...," creating the effect of the sudden appearance of a woman (10a) whose
provocative nature is described in the second part of the verse (10b).[48] The
Greek, that has not stopped talking about the woman, looses the dramatic
entrance. MT v. 10, then, begins a new section (And behold, **a** woman...),
while the LXX continues the former verses: ἡ δὲ γυνὴ… "and **the** woman...,"
referring to the same woman who has been the subject since v. 5.[49]

Three elements create the changeover to a more narrative style in the LXX:
(1) The translator introduces a verb instead of לקראתו—συναντᾷ αὐτῷ
"came upon him." (2) The short nominal phrase שית זונה "outfit of a
whore,"[50] is replaced with the more general and more prose-like εἶδος
ἔχουσα πορνικόν "having the appearance of a harlot." (3) The second
concise nominal phrase נצרת לב[51] is expanded and paraphrased into a full
relative clause: ἥ ποιεῖ νέων ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας. The translator probably
read the verb as a causative (e.g., נֹצֶרֶת), hence the use of ποιέω. He seems to

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[48] One may note, in passing, that the surprise is expressed from the point of view
of the wisdom-teacher witnessing the encounter: he sees the woman bursting onto
the scene. As for the lad himself, it is not clear whether he too is surprised at her
appearance or was rather hoping to meet her.

[49] Baumgartner, *Étude critique*. Toy, *Proverbs*, 150, prefers the definite form and
argues that the *he* fell out from the Hebrew through haplography (והנה האשה). This is
a severe misunderstanding of the relationship between the texts. The indefinite form
belongs in the MT and the definite form goes with the scene as perceived by the
Greek translator. They cannot be exchanged.

[50] See Ps 73:6 יעטף שית חמס למו "lawlessness enwraps them as a mantle."

[51] *HALOT*: "with a cunning heart"; NJPS: "with set purpose"; RSV: "wily of heart."
The phrase occurs only here (in 4:23 נצר לב functions differently: protect one's heart).
It should probably be explained from נצר 'guard, hide' (cf. Ezek 6:12; Isa 48:6), that
would refer to the manipulative nature of the woman who keeps her seductive
intentions hidden or guarded in her heart.

have guessed the meaning, providing a picturesque description of her "causing the hearts of youngmen to flutter," an image perfectly suited to the context.[52] The 'youngmen' are thus his own contribution. This completely upsets the balance between the two stichs. However, the translator did not use it as an opportunity to introduce a new idea or advance nuances that are not already there in his *Vorlage*.

Verse 11

ἀνεπτερωμένη δέ ἐστιν καὶ ἄσωτος   הֹמִיָּה הִיא וְסֹרָרֶת
ἐν οἴκῳ δὲ οὐχ ἡσυχάζουσιν οἱ πόδες αὐτῆς   בְּבֵיתָהּ לֹא־יִשְׁכְּנוּ רַגְלֶיהָ

Verse 11 goes on with the characterization of the woman. She is described as המיה וסררת (RSV: "loud and wayward"; NJPS: "bustling and restive") (11a), traits that result in her never being at home (11b).[53]

The contents and structure of the verse are fairly reflected in the translation. The translator on his part found particular definitions for this type of a woman: ἀνεπτερωμένη δέ ἐστιν καὶ ἄσωτος "and she is fickle and debauched."[54] For ישכנו 'dwell' he introduces ἡσυχάζω 'rest', which may
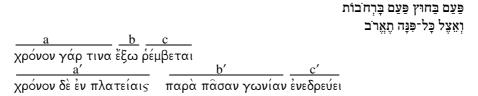
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[52] Again, one does not need to look for a variant text in order to understand how the translator came up with the picture he chose to draw. Mezzacasa, *Proverbi*, 130, offers the reading נצות לב from נצה, 'to fly'. Lagarde, *Anmerkungen*, 26, thinks of מצירת. See also Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, 76–78. The Vulgate, reading: parata ad capiendas animas, 'ready to catch hearts', may be explained as derived from צור 'besiege' or צוד 'hunt'. See also the imagery that describes the woman as setting traps in Qoh 7:26 and Sir 9:3; 26:22.

[53] The stupid woman is similarly defined as המיה 'bustling about' in Prov 9:13.

[54] ἀνεπτερόω 'animate', is used in the LXX again only in Cant 6:5 שהם הרהיבוני 'For they overwhelm me'. ἄσωτος 'unruly'—used only here in the LXX—is perfectly suitable as counterpart for סררת. Commentators have suggested that סררת should be corrected into סבבת; cf. Song 3:2 אקומה נא ואסובבה בעיר בשוקים וברחבות אבקשה את שאהבה נפשי "I must rise and roam the town, Through the streets and through the squares; I must seek the one I love."

not be a literal counterpart but is certainly in the spirit of the Hebrew text, and not too distant semantically.[55]

Verse 12

פַּעַם בַּחוּץ פַּעַם בָּרְחֹבוֹת
וְאֵצֶל כָּל־פִּנָּה תֶאֱרֹב

a	b	c

χρόνον γὰρ τινα ἔξω ῥέμβεται

a′	b′	c′

χρόνον δὲ ἐν πλατείαις   παρὰ πᾶσαν γωνίαν ἐνεδρεύει

Verse 12 describes the woman's whereabouts: she is never home, but out there, in the streets, lurking at every corner.[56]

The Hebrew verse is built of two stichs; the first is nominal, the second—beginning with a *waw*—is verbal: (1) Now [she is] in the street, now in the square, (2) And at every corner she lurks. The verse is completely restructured in the LXX. A verb is added (ῥέμβεται),[57] and the verse divides into two different stichs: (1) For at one time she wanders without (2) and at another time she lies in wait in the streets, at every corner.[58] The phrase פעם ...פעם, used in the MT within the first stich, triggered a new structure in the LXX, in which each stich begins with a counterpart for פעם, i.e., χρόνον γὰρ // χρόνον δέ. The practice in the surrounding verses, which are structured as complementary parallel stichs, speaks against the synonymous parallelism created in the LXX by the additional verb. Moreover, the parallel stichs created are far from symmetrical, the second stich awkwardly combining the streets with the corner into one long

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[55] Cf. 1 Chr 23:25 הניח יהוה אלהי ישראל לעמו וישכן בירושלם עד לעולם "The Lord, the God of Israel, has given peace to his people; and he dwells in Jerusalem for ever."

[56] Cf. 23:28 אף היא כחתף תארב ובוגדים באדם תוסף "She too lies in wait as if for prey, And destroys the unfaithful among men."

[57] He similarly adds a verb in v. 16.

[58] Or possibly three: (1) For at one time she wanders without (2) and at another time in the streets, (3) at every corner she lies in wait.

sentence. Finally, the MT is preferable since it lets 'the corner' occupy a stich of its own. The corner is a catch word, taking us back to the corner of her house where we left the witless lad wandering (v. 8). Indeed, in the following verse she gets hold of him.

Verse 13

εἶτα ἐπιλαβομένη ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν   וְהֶחֱזִיקָה בּוֹ וְנָשְׁקָה לּוֹ
ἀναιδεῖ δὲ προσώπῳ προσεῖπεν αὐτῷ   הֵעֵזָה פָנֶיהָ וַתֹּאמַר לוֹ

The woman makes her bold move. She grasps and kisses him as if he were the one and only she has been expecting, and audaciously begins her speech of seduction.[59]

The Hebrew has two pairs of paratactic verbal clauses. The translator re-styles them both: והחזיקה בו ונשקה לו is replaced by a participial pattern: "then, getting hold of him, she kissed him." One pronoun serves him for both בו and לו. As for the second part—העזה פניה ותאמר לו—he interlaces its two verbal components by turning העזה פניה into an adjectival phrase: "with a shameless face she addressed him."[60] The syntax changes, the contents and message remain the same.

Verses 14–20: The Woman's Words

The only initial characterization of the woman, except for her being זרה/נכריה, was that her talk was smooth (v. 5 אמריה החליקה). This is now spelled out as her slick words are cited in detail—a mixture of shamming piety (vv. 14–15), temptation and seduction (vv. 16–18), as well as practical precaution (vv. 19–20). The summary further emphasizes the power of her words (v. 21).

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[59] One may doubt whether, audacious as she may be, she is speaking to a complete stranger.

[60] Indeed, ἀναιδής 'shameless' stands for עז פנים in Deut 28:50 and Dan 8:23, and for פנים נזעמים in Prov 25:23. In Qoh 8:1 the Greek is phrased just like our text: ועז פניו καὶ ἀναιδὴς προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ. Note the interplay between προσώπῳ and προσεῖπεν.

Verse 14

θυσία εἰρηνική μοί ἐστιν   זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמִים עָלָי
σήμερον ἀποδίδωμι τὰς εὐχάς μου   הַיּוֹם שִׁלַּמְתִּי נְדָרָי

What a paradox: she is clean and free to whore! We recall that the author of
the David-Bathsheba story made sure to specify that והיא מתקדשת מטמאתה
"she had just purified herself after her period" before they performed
adultery (2 Sam 11:4).[61] V. 15 says it all: she has paid her dues and is
therefore available and ready for him. She may be tempting him with a
festive meal, but that is all there is to it. In spite of the sacrifices and vows
mentioned here, there is nothing in the entire speech that would suggest a
cult scene, let alone a cult prostitute or foreign cult habits.[62] The author may
be using terms from other contexts or hint at other scenes,[63] without
importing their actual meaning. Our scene is set in the streets, with no holy
places involved. It is a matter between a man away on a business trip, his
loose wife searching for adventure, and a naive lad who is about to fall into
the trap set for him.

The form of the verb שלמתי seems to indicate that the woman has already
paid her vows.[64] The Greek, however, is in the present: "I have a peace-
offering; today I pay my vows." If it is not a narrative-present, it would

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[61] As Fox, *Proverbs*, 246, puts it: "people may be punctilious in ritual and taboo
while shabby in ethics."

[62] As advocated by Boström, *Proverbiastudien*, e.g., 103–104.

[63] Such as suggested by Hos 4:14 לֹא-אֶפְקוֹד עַל-בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תִזְנֶינָה וְעַל-כַּלּוֹתֵיכֶם כִּי תְנָאַפְנָה
כִּי-הֵם עִם-הַזֹּנוֹת יְפָרֵדוּ וְעִם-הַקְּדֵשׁוֹת יְזַבֵּחוּ "I will not punish your [NJPS: their] daughters
for fornicating Nor your [NJPS: their] daughters-in-law for committing adultery; For
they themselves [RSV: for the men themselves] turn aside with whores And sacrifice
with prostitutes."

[64] See Fox, *Proverbs,* 246; McKane, *Proverbs,* 337. Qatal may, nevertheless, indicate
the present or the near future; see GKC § 106i. Boström, *Proverbiastudien*, prefers, of
course, the latter since he wants to promote the idea of a cultic scene that is about to
take place.

mean that, according to the translator's understanding, she is about to sacrifice and invites the lad to participate. The verbal modification hardly justifies burdening the translator with far-reaching intentions, let alone endow the Hebrew with the meaning attributed to the Greek. As she goes on, both the Hebrew and the Greek are very clear about her intentions, which are plainly sexual.

Verse 15

ἕνεκα τούτου ἐξῆλθον εἰς συνάντησίν σοι	עַל־כֵּן יָצָאתִי לִקְרָאתֶךָ
ποθοῦσα τὸ σὸν πρόσωπον εὕρηκά σε	לְשַׁחֵר פָּנֶיךָ וָאֶמְצָאֶךָּ

Having payed her dues, she went out to look for him. עד כן יצאתי לקראתך goes back to v. 10 והנה אשה לקראתו, where she first met him. Is this just a figure of speech or did she know him before and is now resolved to consummate their acquaintance?

The translator renders the verse faithfully, except for the participle that replaces the infinitive לשחר.[65]

Verse 16

$\overline{\text{κειρίαις}}$ $\overline{\text{τέτακα}}$ τὴν κλίνην μου	מַרְבַדִּים רָבַדְתִּי עַרְשִׂי
⎯⎯⎯⎯ ⎯⎯⎯⎯	
a b	
$\overline{\text{ἀμφιτάποις}}$ δὲ $\overline{\text{ἔστρωκα}}$ τοῖς ἀπ᾽ Αἰγύπτου	חֲטֻבוֹת אֵטוּן מִצְרָיִם
a′ b′	

In the MT, the first stich mentions that she has decked her couch with covers, while the second provides new information regarding these bed-covers: they are said to be of colored (חטבות) fine linen (אטון) from Egypt.[66] The translator probably did not know the meaning of either חטבות or אטון.

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[65] For the particular לשחר the translator found the appropriate, rarely used in the LXX, verb ποθέω 'desire, be anxious to do'.

[66] Different etymological explanations have been suggested for these words; the Egyptian context suggests that they are of Egyptian provenance.

Inventive as he is, he added a verb to the second stich,[67] creating a synonymous parallelism of his own: "I have spread my bed with sheets, and I have covered it with double tapestry from Egypt."[68]

Verse 17

a	b	c
διέρραγκα	τὴν κοίτην μου	κρόκῳ

b′	c′
τὸν δὲ οἶκόν μου	κινναμώμῳ

נַפְתִּי[69] מִשְׁכָּבִי מֹר

אֲהָלִים וְקִנָּמוֹן

MT: I have sprinkled my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
LXX: I have sprinkled my bed with saffron // and my house with cinnamon.

The Massoretic division has an Etnah under משכבי. A more plausible division would be: נפתי משכבי מר // אהלים וקנמון, the first stich offering a complete idea while the second complements it with additional information, just as in v. 16.[70] The Greek advocates this division of the verse. The second stich is constructed differently, creating a parallelism not extant in the Hebrew (cf. vv. 12, 16).[71] The translator is obviously working within

[67] The verb added, ἔστρωκα, is used in Job 17:13 רִפַּדְתִּי יְצוּעָי ἔστρωταί μου ἡ στρωμνή. In v. 12, he similarly created a parallelism by freely adding a verb.

[68] The Greek verb is hardly a good enough reason to correct the Hebrew text (*BHS*), nor is it an etymological rendering (נטה) of either of the Hebrew words; Toy, *Proverbs*, 154.

[69] The verb is derived from נוף2 'to sprinkle' (*HALOT*). The translator must have been familiar with this verb, since he offers an exact equivalent, διαρραίνω 'to sprinkle'.

[70] As noted in the *BHS*, some Hebrew MSS read ואהלים, with a conjunction (also in the translations), suggesting that the second stich of the verse began with אהלים, rather than with מר.

[71] Gerleman, *Studies*, 24, offers other such examples in which "the corresponding lines are balanced and made congruent one with another in a manner reminding of the *paridosis* of ancient rhetoric." In our verse, however, the translator is hardly after rhetoric patterns. He has a problem to solve.

the boundaries of his *Vorlage*, first misreading אֲהָלִים 'scent' as אֹהָלִים 'tents',[72] and then replacing it by οἶκος, in accordance with v. 8. The meaning of the text is blurred with the introduction of the more general scenery of her home, while the woman's words lead specifically to her bed and hence to the act of love in the following verse.

While different translators render מֹר appropriately with σμύρνα 'myrrh', our translator offers instead κρόκος 'saffron', which is used only one other time in the LXX, for כרכם (Cant 4:14). It would seem that the translator did not have a different *Vorlage*, nor did he have a problem with the meaning of מֹר. Rather, since he obviously calculated the parallelism that he created, he found it more appropriate to couple cinnamon with saffron rather than with myrrh.

Verse 18

ἐλθὲ καὶ ἀπολαύσωμεν φιλίας ἕως ὄρθρου   לְכָה נִרְוֶה דֹדִים עַד־הַבֹּקֶר
δεῦρο καὶ ἐγκυλισθῶμεν ἔρωτι   נִתְעַלְּסָה בָּאֲהָבִים

The bed is ready and the act of love is envisioned. She asks, she lures, she incites and encourages. In the Greek her insistence is further emphasized by the repeated interjection: ἐλθὲ… δεῦρο…, compared with the incipient לכה in the Hebrew. The verbs, naturally set in subjunctive forms, are less metaphorical than their Hebrew counterparts: for רוה and עלס 'drink one's fill' and 'eat, taste' (*HALOT*), the translator chose the rarely used verbs ἀπολαύω φιλίας 'enjoy love' (cf. 4 Macc 8:5) and ἐγκυλίω 'roll up in', 'be involved in love'.

Verses 19–20: The peak of the argument

At this point, the speech takes a turn. It now becomes clear for the first time that the woman in question is not a whore but rather a married woman who

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[72] It is not clear whether the translators knew the meaning of אהלים; in Cant 4:14 it is transliterated by αλωθ; in Ps 45:9 (44:8) it is rendered by στακτή 'myrrh oil'; in Num 24:6 it is mistakenly read as 'tents', as does our translator.

whores. One wonders whether the lad knew that she was married, since the
ultimate argument she uses to convince him is that the husband is far away
and there is plenty of time before he returns. Nothing much is said here
about the husband, but the threat is expressed unequivocally in Prov
6:27–35

נֹאֵף אִשָּׁה חֲסַר־לֵב מַשְׁחִית נַפְשׁוֹ הוּא יַעֲשֶׂנָּה... כִּי־קִנְאָה חֲמַת־גָּבֶר וְלֹא־יַחְמוֹל בְּיוֹם נָקָם׃
לֹא־יִשָּׂא פְּנֵי כָל־כֹּפֶר וְלֹא־יֹאבֶה כִּי תַרְבֶּה־שֹׁחַד

"He who commits adultery is devoid of sense; Only one who would destroy
himself does such a thing... The fury of the husband will be passionate; He
will show no pity on his day of vengeance. He will not have regard for any
ransom; He will refuse your bribe, however great."

Verse 19

οὐ γὰρ πάρεστιν ὁ ἀνήρ μου ἐν οἴκῳ   כִּי אֵין הָאִישׁ בְּבֵיתוֹ
πεπόρευται δὲ ὁδὸν μακρὰν   הָלַךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ מֵרָחוֹק

The way the translator chose to set his pronouns this time is quite
indicative. In the Hebrew she refers to her husband as האיש 'the man', and
to their home as 'his home', keeping her distance from the man she is about
to betray.[73] The translator moved the pronoun, making the implicit meaning
explicit: for **my** man is not at home.

Verse 20

ἔνδεσμον ἀργυρίου λαβὼν ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ   צְרוֹר־הַכֶּסֶף לָקַח בְּיָדוֹ
δι᾽ ἡμερῶν πολλῶν ἐπανήξει εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ   לְיוֹם הַכֵּסֶא יָבֹא בֵיתוֹ

Her frivolous attitude towards all that is decent finds further expression in
her timetable: she has time to whore until mid-month. This term must have
some religious connotation, but this does not bother her. The special effect
of the term ליום הכסא "at full moon he will come home," is lost in the LXX,
since the translator replaced the festive term with a general counterpart:

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[73] Fox, *Proverbs*, 248, thinks that she conveys contempt in denoting him 'the man'.

"after many days he will return to his house."[74] With this convincing argument – her husband is not due until mid-month – she rests her case.

Verses 21–23: The Woman's Inevitable Success

Her slick words have their fateful effect, just as the wisdom-teacher warned at the very beginning of the speech (v. 5).

Verse 21

	a	b
ἀπεπλάνησεν δὲ αὐτὸν πολλῇ ὁμιλίᾳ	הִטַּתּוּ בְּרֹב לִקְחָהּ	

	a′	b′
βρόχοις τε τοῖς ἀπὸ χειλέων ἐξώκειλεν αὐτόν	בְּחֵלֶק שְׂפָתֶיהָ תַּדִּיחֶנּוּ	

The author states his conclusion of her inciting words in synonymous parallelism, thus emphasizing the success she gained. The translator keeps the form; the only difference is that he provides the particles δέ and τε, in keeping with his more narrative-like style.[75]

The Hebrew offers a wordplay—חלק/לקח—naturally not echoed in the Greek counterparts. Besides, the translator was quite loose with his choice of equivalents. For לקח he offers ὁμιλία 'conversation', as suggested by the context.[76] He thus loses the possibly sarcastic use of לקח 'instruction' applied to her words of temptation. As for חלק 'smooth, flattering, seductive words', he again forgoes its exact meaning and offers a word that would comply with the context: the snares of her lips.[77] The Hebrew words

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[74] Cf. Ps 81:4 תקעו בחדש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו "Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon, on our feast day." The translator has there: ἐν εὐσήμῳ ἡμέρᾳ 'in the conspicuous (easily known by signs?) day'. Baumgartner, *Étude critique*, wonders why our translator did not use LXX- Ps to interpret the term. Aquilas translates εἰς ἡμέραν πανσελήνου, also understanding the term as 'full moon'.

[75] See also the addition of δέ in v. 22 and the series of καί's in v. 18.

[76] The word occurs six times in Proverbs and is rendered by a variety of equivalents.

[77] Cf. his use of the word for יקוש and מוקש (6:5; 22:25).

‫לשמרך מאשה זרה מנכריה אמריה החליקה‬ 5 .echo v ‫ לקח‬and ‫ ;חלק‬this too is lost in the translation.

Verses 22–23: The vanquished lad

Again we encounter the author's calculated use of parallelism in different parts of his speech. In these verses, for the first time, he chooses a three-stich structure, as if to intensify the lad's catastrophic reaction. However, the relationship between the stichs is not altogether clear. In the LXX the structure is somewhat clearer, but does not contribute to the understanding of the Hebrew.

Verse 22

ὁ δὲ ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτῇ κεπφωθείς	‫הוֹלֵךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ פִּתְאֹם‬
ὥσπερ δὲ βοῦς ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἄγεται	‫כְּשׁוֹר אֶל־טֶבַח יָבֹא‬
καὶ ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ δεσμοὺς	‫וּכְעֶכֶס אֶל־מוּסַר אֱוִיל‬

MT-NJPS: Thoughtlessly he follows her, Like an ox going to the slaughter, Like a fool to the stocks for punishment

MT-RSV: All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast

LXX: And he followed her, being gently led on, and as an ox is led to the slaughter, and as a dog to bonds, [v. 23] or as a hart...

‫ פתאם‬:‫ הולך אחריה פתאם‬is generally understood here in its regular sense of 'suddenly'. This would roughly suit the pictures of disasters that befall someone suddenly.[78] Others would rather understand the adverb, much under the influence of the LXX, as 'in a simple, naive manner'.[79] The biblical writers seem to employ puns with ‫ פתאם‬and synonyms of ‫ ;פתי‬cf. Ps 64:5 ‫ לירות במסתרים תם פתאם יירהו ולא יראו‬"to shoot from hiding at the blameless

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[78] E.g. 6:15 ‫ על כן פתאם יבוא אידו פתע ישבר ואין מרפא‬"Therefore calamity will come upon him without warning; Suddenly he will be broken beyond repair."

[79] Gemser, *Sprüche*, 42; J. Fichtner, in *BHS*, suggests actually correcting the text to ‫ פתאים‬or ‫ פתי‬on the basis of the LXX (and the Peshitta).

man; they shoot him suddenly and without fear"; Job 5:3 אני ראיתי אויל
משריש ואקוב נוהו פתאם "I myself saw a fool who had struck roots;
Impulsively, I cursed his home." Our verse may similarly use פתאם
'suddenly' as a word play with פתי, whose synonym—אויל—is used later in
the verse.

The translator obviously derived פתאם from פתי, and rendered it by the
peculiar κεπφόω 'ensnare like a feather-brained fellow (κέπφος)'. Even if the
Hebrew text itself uses an adverb describing the lad's naiveté, the translator
further intensifies the scene with this special word that seems to penetrate
into the soul of the outwitted lad.

כשור אל טבח יבא: The use of ἄγεται 'he is led' for active יָבֹא emphasizes the
helplessness and passivity of the captured lad. The formulation in Is 53:7
כְּכֶבֶשׂ לַטֶּבַח יוּבָל "Like a sheep being led to slaughter," and Jer 11:19 כְּכֶבֶשׂ אַלּוּף
יוּבַל לִטְבוֹחַ "like a docile lamb led to the slaughter," may have influenced the
translator, or his parent text.

וכעכס אל מוסר אויל: The MT in its given form remains incomprehensible.[80]
The translator, too, was at a loss, and replaced it by καὶ ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ
δεσμούς,[81] a well-known Greek proverb.[82] Needless to say, the Greek cannot
serve as a tool to retrieve the original form and meaning of the Hebrew.
One wonders, however, whether the translator would have exercised his
freedom and introduced a completely different saying from his own
cultural milieu were it not for the nature of the *Vorlage*: the Hebrew מוסר,
derived from אסר, suggested δεσμός 'bond, chain', and the enigmatic וכעכס,

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[80] Fox, *Proverbs*, 238, 249: 'like a stag bounding to bonds', reading: וכעכֶּס אל מוסָר אַיָּל
(אַיָּל is preferable). Alexander Rofé, in a private communication: 'like a fool [is led] to
punishment (מוסר) in fetters (כבעכס)'.

[81] One wonders whether he had in mind the metaphoric use of κύων, i.e., a male
prostitute.

[82] Gerleman, *Studies*, 32–33, adduces these verses as an example of cases in which
the translator introduced proverbs borrowed from the Greek maxim writers.

formulated as a parallel to כשור, called for an animal's name that he found in his own milieu.[83]

The last word of this verse – אויל – was read differently, and understood as part of the following verse.[84]

Verse 23

ἢ ὡς ἔλαφος τοξεύματι πεπληγὼς εἰς τὸ ἧπαρ   עַד יְפַלַּח חֵץ כְּבֵדוֹ
σπεύδει δὲ ὥσπερ ὄρνεον εἰς παγίδα   כְּמַהֵר צִפּוֹר אֶל־פָּח
οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτι περὶ ψυχῆς τρέχει   וְלֹא־יָדַע כִּי־בְנַפְשׁוֹ הוּא

The order of the MT, awkward as it may seem, is preserved in the LXX. The differences, however, are conspicuous. In the MT this verse continues the previous scene: "22 he follows her, like an ox... 23 Until an arrow...". In the LXX, on the other hand, a new simile develops: "or as a hart shot in the liver." This probably derives from the preceding אויל read as אַיָּל, 'deer, hart'. While a different reading is involved in this case, the change as a whole seems rather to derive from the translator, since the difference involves more than just the variant. The word assumes a new position and the MT's structure ('Until the arrow pierces his liver') is replaced by a participial clause that continues the previous series of metaphors.

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[83] The Vulgate seems to combine different possibilities: 'statim eam sequitur quasi bos ductus ad victimam et quasi agnus (כאיל ? ככבש) lasciviens et ignorans quod ad vincula stultus (אויל) trahatur (יובל?),' 'he follows her steadily, like an ox going to the slaughter, and like a lamb, wanton and ignorant, in that a fool is dragged to fetters'.

[84] The Peshitta—heavily dependent on the LXX in the book of Proverbs—copies the LXX: 22 והו אזל הוא בתרה איך שברא ואכי תורא דאזל לות טבחא ואכי כלבא לאסוריא 23 ואיך אילא.... It hardly has an independent value for the transmission of the Hebrew text. Similarly, the Targum of Proverbs is not an independent translation of a Hebrew text, but rather a version of the Peshitta. In our verse, the Targum copies the Peshitta; note, however, that while the Peshitta has איך שברא 'like an innocent child', deriving פתאם from פתי, the Targum has שליאית, a Syriac adverbial form that rather corresponds to פתאם. See M.P. Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament* (Cambridge, 1999) 68–86, and 109–110, where our verse is adduced as a case in which the pattern of the Targum can only derive from the Peshitta.

The Concluding Address (Verses 24–27)

The last paragraph introduces the lesson drawn from the experience described in the main body of the argument. It begins with ועתה בנים שמעו לי, echoing the incipient address בני שמר אמרי.... The inclusio thus formed is further emphasized through the structure shared by both the conclusion and the introduction, since both are set in synonymous parallelism, offering a balanced and emphatic exhortation regarding the perils of the forbidden woman.

The translator follows his *Vorlage* quite faithfully, passing the message along with the form, just as he did in the introduction (see, however, v. 25).

Verse 24

	d	c	b	a
νῦν οὖν υἱέ ἄκουέ μου		וְעַתָּה	בָנִים	שִׁמְעוּ־לִי

νῦν οὖν υἱέ ἄκουέ μου   וְעַתָּה בָנִים שִׁמְעוּ־לִי

καὶ πρόσεχε ῥήμασιν στόματός μου   וְהַקְשִׁיבוּ לְאִמְרֵי־פִי

The plural address in the conclusion (בנים followed by שמעו and הקשיבו) does not agree with the singular forms in the introduction (בני followed by שמר etc.).[85] Moreover, the conclusion itself then continues in the singular: אל ישט... לבך "let your heart not wander"; אל תתע... "do not stray..." (v. 25). Ch. 5 presents a similar case of plural-singular interchange within the Hebrew. The speech begins with a singular address (בני לחכמתי 5:1 הקשיבה...), an address later resumed in the plural (ועתה בנים שמעו לי... 5:7), but the teaching immediately following is in the singular throughout (5:8ff הרחק מעליה דרכך ואל תקרב...). The fact that the interchange occurs in two different cases might suggest that the style allows for such interchange. The plural disappears in the LXX in both cases, probably in an attempt to create a smooth text.[86]

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[85] While the regular address is to 'my son', in the singular (e.g., 1:8; 2:1), there are some verses that adopt a plural form (4:1; 8:32).

[86] The situation is not as clear in the other two cases of plural address. In 8:32 the LXX has a singular instead of the MT's plural, which suits the plural addresses at the

Verse 25

μὴ ἐκκλινάτω εἰς τὰς ὁδοὺς αὐτῆς ἡ καρδία σου

$$\underline{\text{c}} \quad \underline{\text{b}} \quad \underline{\quad\text{a}\quad}$$
אַל־יֵשְׂטְ אֶל־דְּרָכֶיהָ לִבֶּךָ

$$\underline{\text{b}'} \quad \underline{\text{c}'+\text{a}'}$$
אַל־תֵּתַע בִּנְתִיבוֹתֶיהָ

While the synonymous stichs are kept intact in the surrounding verses, in v. 25 the second stich is missing in the LXX altogether. The MT is undoubtedly original, as proven by the structure of these last verses. Is this the last expression of our translator's independence in this speech? Admittedly, he never skipped an entire stich but rather preferred to forgo repetition by fusing together parallel redundant elements. However, how can we explain the omission of the second stich? There is no apparent sign to suggest an accidental omission either in Hebrew or in Greek. Rather, after having translated the first stich literally, he must have felt that another line with a similar verb and a second reference to 'her ways' would be redundant. The contents, however, remains the same.

Verse 26

πολλοὺς γὰρ τρώσασα καταβέβληκεν

$$\underline{\text{b}} \quad \underline{\quad\text{a}\quad}$$
כִּי־רַבִּים חֲלָלִים הִפִּילָה

καὶ ἀναρίθμητοί εἰσιν οὓς πεφόνευκεν

$$\underline{\text{b}'} \quad \underline{\text{a}'}$$
וַעֲצֻמִים כָּל־הֲרֻגֶיהָ

The translator improves the parallelism by turning הרגיה 'her victims' into a verbal relative clause: οὓς πεφόνευκεν 'those whom she has slain'; cf. vv. 12, 16 where he added a verb to achieve a better parallelism. In the course of the reformulation he left out the word כל that in the Hebrew serves mainly to maintain the balance between the stichs.

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beginning of the speech (vv. 4–6). In ch. 4, on the other hand, the interchange of plural (4:1–2) and singular (4:10ff) is reflected in the LXX as well.

Verse 27

	c	b	a
ὁδοὶ ᾅδου ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς

דַּרְכֵי שְׁאוֹל בֵּיתָהּ

	b′	c′	a′
κατάγουσαι εἰς τὰ ταμίεια τοῦ θανάτου

יֹרְדוֹת אֶל־חַדְרֵי־מָוֶת

The severe consequences of the dangerous liaison with another man's wife
are similarly pictured in Prov 2:18–19. כי שחה אל מות ביתה ואל רפאים מעגלתיה
כל באיה לא ישובון ולא ישיגו ארחות חיים "for her house sinks down to death,
and her paths to the shades; none who go to her come back nor do they
regain the paths of life." The author goes as far as the underworld to depict
the disaster that will befall a man who becomes involved with another
man's wife. The translator follows suit.

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The translator clothed Prov 7 in new garb, but the contribution he made to
its content and message is minor. We have seen him striving for suitable
equivalents and forms. Occasionally he added a word or two, creating
parallelisms of his own where his *Vorlage* was satisfied with rhythmical
balance, while at other times he condensed the parallels found in his
Vorlage, mainly by fusing redundant elements. He reproduced the
synonymous parallelism, characteristic of the introduction and the
conclusion, but, as the parallelism became more elaborate and more
dependent on rhythm and balance, he departed from it, creating a
somewhat more narrative-like style. He sometimes repainted the contents
of his *Vorlage* with colors borrowed from his own milieu, but this, too, was
triggered by the problems he encountered in the Hebrew text, such as the
enigmatic עכס replaced by κύων. His main contribution was the change of
scene, when he presented the woman—rather than the wisdom-teacher—as
looking through her window. He may have misread his *Vorlage*, or changed
it deliberately, influenced by the common inter-cultural motif of the woman
at the window. However, he did not imbue this woman with an image that
she did not have in the *Vorlage*. The creative translator of Proverbs is surely
active in ch. 7 in multifarious ways—aesthetically and culturally, but his

influence on its message is minor. He had many opportunities during this long speech to remodel the image of the woman discussed, the lad she seduces and the perils intended for him, but nothing of the sort happened. The message remains the same. No hidden intentions suspected to underlie the Hebrew text become apparent in the translation.