A theology of the Greek version of Proverbs

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This contribution demonstrates that it is possible to formulate a theology of LXX Proverbs. It limits itself to a pilot study of three passages, Chapters 1, 2 and 8. A contextual approach is followed and the following conclusions, that have implications for a theology, are reached:

1. 1:1–7 indicates what Proverbs is not, i.e. speculative philosophical ideas
2. Chapter 2 demonstrates that the wisdom is foreign wisdom – the Hellenism of the day
3. Sophia in chapter 8 has a subordinate role in relation to God.

Introduction[1]

There is a difference of opinion on the question as to whether it is possible to formulate a theology of the Septuagint, as is done with the Hebrew Bible. There are effectively two theoretical positions in this regard. The first is a minimalist view held by, among others, the Septuagint scholars Albert Pietersma and Raija Sollamo, who are more sceptical. But some scholars (Martin Rösel, Joachim Schaper, etc.) adopt a maximalist approach. However, it has become clear that these scholars do not differ so much on the question of *whether* a theology (depending on definitions) of the LXX is viable, but rather on *how* this could in fact be achieved as a matter of fact the differences between these approaches seem to be rooted in questions of methodology.

In a keynote article presented at the congress of the International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT) I argued[2] that it is possible to formulate a 'theology' – or rather 'theologies' – of the Septuagint. One of the prerequisites I mentioned at that stage was that it is first of all necessary to prepare exegetical commentaries[3] on each individual Septuagintal book. It is the aim of this paper to demonstrate how a theology of the Septuagint, in the broad sense of the word, could be formulated. Naturally, it can deal with this question only within a limited scope (LXX Proverbs), and the results are applicable only to the book of Proverbs.

Methodological issues

This article will focus on one translated unit, the book of Proverbs, always remembering that this book cannot be deemed representative of the LXX. As is well known, this unit poses various problems, a prominent one being that the Old Greek has not yet been determined systematically.[4] The pocket edition by Rahlfs (1979) is used as the basis for this contribution. Basic to all interpretative endeavours is the issue of the way the translator(s) rendered the parent text. This unit is unique in that its translation technique can be defined as extremely free in some instances (Cook 2001a:195–210). This means that one could expect the translator to interpret his parent text. Finally, the object of the interpretations is the Old Greek text. The reception of the LXX is therefore deliberately not included in this stage.

Thematic issues

One of the definite advantages of an exegetical commentary is that one can analyse passages contextually.[5] This ensures that researchers do not fall into the trap of *ad hoc* interpretations. In

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1.I use standard abbreviations that are applied in LXX studies. I also use less known abbreviations that appear in Liddel and Scott (1968).

2.See my main paper at the International Organisation for the Study of the Old Testament (IOSOT) congress of Ljubljana 2007 (Cook 2010:621–640).

3.This article, which I dedicate to Prof. Pieter de Villiers, is based upon *Text and tradition – An exegetical commentary on the Septuagint of Proverbs.* This monograph will be published by the *Society of Biblical Literature* as part of the Septuagint commentary series (in preparation). See also Cook (1997b:44–65).

4.In the series of the *Septuaginta Unternehmen* in Göttingen, Peter Gentry is responsible for the book of Proverbs. The researcher should be aware of pertinent textual problems (Cook 2000:163–173).

5.*Text* and *context* should be accounted for in the exegesis of texts. Moreover, this translator had a contextual approach towards the parent text.

this regard I will deal with one central issue in Wisdom literature, the topos wisdom, specifically the role of wisdom. I focus on Proverbs chapter 1 verses 1–7, chapters 2 and 8, which must act as a pilot study.

1 Wisdom in Proverbs 1:1–7 (Cook 1997b: 33–50)

Chapter 1 is as an introduction to the whole book of Proverbs. McKane (1970:262) divides the Hebrew version into three pericopes; 1–7 Introduction; 8–19 (flee sin and violence) and 20–33 (Wisdom as preacher). To be sure, this division agrees with the Massoretic division. This chapter contains many differences in comparison with MT that could be the result of several theoretical possibilities: a different parent text, the translator's approach,[6] or the transmission history of the manuscripts.

Scholars differ as far as the literary role of this chapter is concerned. D'Hamonville (2000:158) sees the first 6 verses as a superscription to the whole book. Whybray (1965:37) takes verses 1–5 as preface to Proverbs 1–9. McKane (1970:262) argues that verses 1–7 act as an introduction to the book as a whole. In the LXX verses 1–7 form an introduction, since they define what true wisdom is.

Verse 1:

מִשְׁלֵי שְׁלֹמֹה בֶן־דָּוִד מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל

[The Proverbs of Solomon, son of David, king of Israel.][7]

παροιμίαι Σαλωμῶντος υἱοῦ Δαυιδ ὃς ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν Ισραηλ

[The Proverbs of Salomon, son of Dauid, who reigned in Israel.]

The term παροιμίαι is used rarely in the LXX. In Proverbs it appears in chapter 1:1 and in some manuscripts in 25:1 as equivalent for מָשָׁל. It is clear from the beginning that the translator is interpreting his parent text. In verse 1 the noun phrase מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל is understood as a verbal phrase ὃς ἐβασίλευσεν ἐν Ισραηλ. All the other versions follow the construction in MT. D'Hamonville (2000:158) immediately resorts to discussing the reception of the LXX, including the NT. In the NETS project the intention is to focus on the Old Greek text.

Verse 2:

לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר לְהָבִין אִמְרֵי בִינָה

[For learning about wisdom and instruction, for understanding words of insight]

γνῶναι σοφίαν καὶ παιδείαν νοῆσαί τε λόγους φρονήσεως

[To learn wisdom and discipline and to understand words of prudence,]

This verse is filled with sapiential terminology. Σοφία is a significant word in Proverbs, where it occurs 48 times, mostly as equivalent for חָכְמָה. The lexeme παιδεία is another typical wisdom term. It is used abundantly in Proverbs and Ben Sira, and appears four times in the first chapter of Proverbs (1:2, 7, 8 and 29). In practically all passages in Proverbs it has מוּסָר as the underlying Hebrew reading. Both lexemes have the meaning of 'instruction'/'education' as part of their semantic field.

Verse 2 is translated relatively literally, although the abundant use of the conjunction τε in the first 6 verses is a sign of the translator's literary style and first-hand knowledge of the Greek language. The same applies to the addition of νοῆσαί in verse 3, where in the MT an *ellipsis* occurs. I think the translator probably took verse 2 into account in this regard, harmonising without a reference to an underlying Hebrew reading.

Verse 3:

לָקַחַת מוּסַר הַשְׂכֵּל צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט וּמֵישָׁרִים

[for gaining instruction in wise dealing, righteousness, justice, and equity;]

δέξασθαί τε στροφὰς λόγων νοῆσαί τε δικαιοσύνην ἀληθῆ καὶ κρίμα κατευθύνειν

[and to grasp subtlety of words and to understand true righteousness and to direct judgment]

Verse 3 contains laden renderings such as στροφὰς λόγων for מוּסָר. The Greek word στροφή occurs only four times in the LXX, in Sap Sal 8:8; Sir 39:2; Ps Sal 12:2 and here in Proverbs. It is used frequently in other Greek sources. Sir 39 (1–11) is instructive in this regard; the word refers to the wise, describing the true, enigmatic nature of his studies. In this context the combination στροφαῖς παραβολῶν is used to describe the 'problematic' nature of the sayings studied by the wise. The same meaning is found in Sap Sal, where this lexeme is used in conjunction with αἴνιγμα, which also occurs very rarely in the Septuagint (cf. Pr 1:6). In the context of Sap Sal 8:8, wisdom is described as the source of knowledge concerning 'the past, the future, the intricate meanings of arguments and riddles, and even signs and wonders'. To be sure, the same combination of στροφὰς λόγων also occurs in this passage (Pr 1:3). It seems to be a technical term, even though it does not appear frequently. It is therefore evident that the translator of Proverbs had the same intention of stressing the meaning of 'problematic, complicated' in using these words. If he therefore actually had the same Hebrew reading as MT (Barucq 1964:48), then it would seem as if he interpreted מוּסָר as deriving from the verb סור (the Hof'al masc part) 'to turn aside, to withdraw, to evade'. A hint as to the possible interpretation of this lexeme is in fact found in Sir 6:22, where the Hebrew indeed reads מוסר (Skehan & Di Lella 1987:191). The stich provides the necessary semantic contents: 'For discipline is like her name: she is not obvious to many.' According to this interpretation, מוסר indeed has to do with the 'enigmatic, problematic'.[8]

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6. In this regard H-J Stipp (2014:30–31) adds two prerequisites: *'Es muss befriedigende Gewissheit über den Wortlaut der Vorlage des Übersetzers herrschen, um die Möglichkeit auszuschliessen dass er lediglich eine abweichende Lesart reproduzierte'* and *'Es muss hinreichend gesichert sein, dass der Übersetzer (sic) der Differenz zwischen der Vorlage und ihrer zielsprachlichen Repräsentation bewusst war'.*

7. The translation of the Hebrew is the NRSV and that of the Greek NETS (Cook 2007).

8. Unfortunately the Greek version of Sir 6:22 does not have the lexeme στροφή.

On the one hand, it is possible that the verbal form νοῆσαί could be an infinitive as a rendering of the *Hif inf* of שׂכל. On the other hand, it is also possible that the infinitive was added in conjunction with the previous verse. However, this would then leave שׂכל unaccounted for. In this regard the combination of στροφὰς λόγων is instructive, for λόγων seems to have been added in conjunction with the previous verse in order to explicate מוּסָר. The translator consequently probably created the antithesis of the combination λόγους φρονήσεως in verse 2. Contrasting is in fact a specific technique that is used extensively in the LXX of Proverbs (Cook 1997a).

The final two stichs in verse 3 also do not represent a literal rendering of the MT. Δικαιοσύνη is probably taken from צֶדֶק, but ἀληθῆ seems to be an addition either as an adjective or as a noun referring to 'truth' (τὰ ἀληθῆ). The translator seemingly glossed צֶדֶק with δικαιοσύνην ἀληθῆ. I also think κρίμα is the equivalent of מִשְׁפָּט, whereas κατευθύνειν has been introduced in connection with ישׁר (מֵישָׁרִים) by the translator. This Greek verbal form occurs in Proverbs 1:3 (מֵישָׁרִים); 4:26 (כון); 9:15 (ישׁר); 13:13 (-); 15:8 (ישׁר) and 21 (ישׁר); 21:2 (תכן); 23:19 (אשׁר) and 29:27 (ישׁר). All these lexemes are semantically related.

The fact that מוּסָר is rendered differently in these two verses is interesting. The Hebrew lexeme occurs 28 times in Proverbs. In practically all these passages one Greek lexeme, παιδεία, was used as the equivalent. This is not the normal practice of this translator, since he tends to vary expressions. In verse 2 מוּסָר is thus translated relatively literally as a noun παιδεία; however, in verse 3 it is brought into connection with the root סור. Again, this could be the result of the translator's free approach, or he could have misunderstood the Hebrew. Another possible Hebrew reading is suggested by De Lagarde (1863:3). However, I think this particular reading is not applicable (Cook 1997b:51).

Verse 4:

לָתֵת לִפְתָאיִם עָרְמָה לְנַעַר דַּעַת וּמְזִמָּה

[to teach shrewdness to the simple, knowledge and prudence to the young]

ἵνα δῷ ἀκάκοις πανουργίαν, παιδὶ δὲ νέῳ αἴσθησίν τε καὶ ἔννοιαν

[in order that he might give shrewdness to the innocent and both perception and insight to the young child.]

In verse 4 the infinitive is expressed differently from the way it is done in previous examples. Whereas the final clauses in verses 2 and 3 were expressed by means of infinitives, in this verse the translator uses the particle ἵνα plus a subjunctive. Only the Latin evidence exhibits a similar possible construction. All available material has the phrase '*ut detur parvalis …*' This is an indication of the translator's intention to create cohesion between these verses (Tauberschmidt 2004:112).

The object of the first stich is πανουργία, which appears seven times in the LXX, consistently as a rendering for עָרְמָה. This Hebrew lexeme has the connotation of 'shrewdness' as part of its semantic field in certain contexts such as Gen 3:1. This is in accordance with the way πανουργία is used, for example,

by Aristotle (HA 488b20)[9] for describing the 'cunning' of animals. The meaning of 'clever', 'smart' also applies in Arist EN 1144a28 and Plu 2.28a.

Ἄκακος appears 9 times in Proverbs, 1:4 (פֶּתִי) and 22 (פֶּתִי); 2:21 (תְּמִימִים); 8:5 (פֶּתִי); 13.7 (תם); 14:15 (פֶּתִי); 15:10 (*) and 23 (*) and 21:11 (פֶּתִי). Here it has פֶּתִי as *Vorlage*, a Hebrew lexeme that is rendered in various ways in chapter 1. In verse 22 ἄκακος is used, but in verse 32 νήπιος is the equivalent. In the other passages the distribution of פֶּתִי is as follows: 7:7 (ἀφρόνων); 8:5 (ἄκακος); 9:4 (ἄφρων) and 16 (ἄφρων); 14:15 (ἄκακος) and 18 (ἄφρων); 19:25 (ἄφρων); 21:11 (ἄκακος); 22:3 (ἄφρων) and 27:12 (ἄφρων). Three lexemes are thus used as equivalents for פֶּתִי, with the cluster of lexemes concerning ἄφρων the most frequently used, namely seven times. Four examples are of ἄκακος, with νήπιος as the apparent exegetical rendering.

There is a pertinent difference between ἄκακος and ἄφρων in Greek literature. The first denotes the innocent in many contexts. In the LXX, for instance, Job is called an ἄκακος ἀνήρ. This is also the case in Plato's Timaeus 91d, where the innocent are described as ἄκακοι ἄνδρες. Philo Judaeaus (Spec Leg III, 119) uses this term in connection with innocent children. He also applies a related term, ἀκακία, in order to depict the state of existence in paradise. Ἄφρων, on the other hand, expresses a more negative meaning in most contexts. The Hebrew lexeme נָבָל (fool) is rendered, *inter alia*, by means of this Greek equivalent in the OT. It is also used to render אֱוִיל and אִוֶּלֶת in both the Psalms and Proverbs.

The adjective νέος has no equivalent in MT, although נַעַר does have the connotation of youth (as does *adulescentus* in V) or novice as part of its semantic field, which probably led to the explanatory addition. This is an example of a combination of words that the translator uses in order to make clear his understanding of the parent text. He is clearly distinguishing between and describing different groups of people. This verse mentions the innocent and the inexperienced, who are in need of prudence, insight and knowledge.

Αἴσθησίς occurs 22 times in Proverbs and, according to HR, consistently as the equivalent of דַּעַת. The meaning of 'insight' is therefore the prevailing one (cf. also Plu Luc 11; Pl Ap 40c and Plot 4.7.15). Ἔννοια, on the other hand, appears 12 times in Proverbs. In 1:4; 3:21 and 8:12 it is used in conjunction with βουλή, whereas in 5:2; 8:12 (2x); 18:15; 23:19 and 24:7 it is applied in the context of σοφός/σοφία. These contexts stress the meaning of 'knowledge', as is the case in Plu Def 414a and 2.1077d.

Verse 5:

יִשְׁמַע חָכָם וְיוֹסֶף לֶקַח וְנָבוֹן תַּחְבֻּלוֹת יִקְנֶה

[let the wise also hear and gain in learning, and the discerning acquire skill.]

τῶνδε γὰρ ἀκούσας σοφὸς σοφώτερος ἔσταιὸ δὲ νοήμων κυβέρνησιν κτήσεται

[for by hearing these things the wise will become wiser and the discerning will acquire direction]

9. I use the abbreviations of Liddel and Scott (1968).

The alliteration in this verse is striking. Syntactically LXX differs from MT, since the Hebrew imperfectum/jussive is rendered by means of a participle. In addition, τῶνδε γὰρ has no equivalent in MT and is an attempt to relate verse 5 and the previous verses 2–4, which in their turn refer to the Proverbs of Solomon. וְיוֹסֶף לֶקַח is interpreted freely as σοφώτερος ἔσται. According to KB, the lexeme לֶקַח has the connotation of 'understanding' in Is 29:24; Proverbs 1:5 and 9:9. In the context of Proverbs 1 it is particularly the wise who have understanding.

Κυβέρνησις occurs only in Proverbs, namely 1:5; 11:14 and 24:6 and is also used rarely in Greek writings. Pl R 488b applies it in the sense of "steering" and in Plu 2.162a and in the NT (1 Corinthians 12:28) it has the connotation 'government, administration'. According to HR, the Hebrew word תַּחְבֻּלוֹת which, according to KB, has 'skilful direction, steering' as part of its semantic field, is the basis for these passages. The Greek is therefore an obvious equivalent for this Hebrew lexeme.

Verse 6:

לְהָבִין מָשָׁל וּמְלִיצָה דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים וְחִידֹתָם

[to understand a proverb and a figure, the words of the wise and their riddles.]

νοήσει τε παραβολὴν καὶ σκοτεινὸν λόγον ῥήσεις τε σοφῶν καὶ αἰνίγματα

[and he will understand an illustration (analogy) and an obscure word, both the sayings and the riddles of the wise.]

Παραβολή occurs only this one time in Proverbs. Here it is the equivalent for מָשָׁל, as is the case in practically all of the 41 examples in the Septuagint. It is used by Arist Rh 1393b3 in the sense of 'illustration, analogy'. The NT usage of 'parable' is also well known. Αἴνιγμα appears very rarely in the Septuagint (Nm 12:8; Dt 28:37; iii Ki 10:1; ii Ch 9:1; Pr 1:6; Sap Sal 8:8; Sir 39:3 and 47:11 and Dn 8:23). This is in fact the sole occurrence in the book of Proverbs, where it renders חִידָה. This is also the only example of the Hebrew lexeme in Proverbs. In Sap Sol it is wisdom which provides insight into the solving of riddles, whereas in Sir 39 it is the wise in general and in chapter 47 more specifically Solomon, who has the necessary insight to interpret the αἰνίγματα. In Proverbs these Greek lexemes all have related semantic fields. This applies to their counterparts in other Greek sources too.

Ῥῆσις appears almost exclusively in the book of Proverbs; in 1:6 (דָּבָר) and 23 (-); 2:1 (אָמָר); 4:5 (אָמָר) and 20 (דָּבָר); 7:24 (אָמָר); 15:26 (אָמָר); 19:27 (אָמָר); 27:27 (*) and 31:2 (-). The only other passage where it is found is ii Es 5:7. It is applied in a variety of contexts, for example, in Homer Od 21.291; Pi N 1.59; Hdt 8.83 and Plu Prov 1.62.

On a syntactic level the translator does not use an infinitive as in MT; however, he utilises the same verb, νοέω, he had used in verse 2 – in both passages the Hebrew verbal form is לְהָבִין. The phrase σκοτεινὸν λόγον is the equivalent for מְלִיצָה.

The Hebrew form is a noun which, according to KB, is in the final analysis derived from ליץ and which in the *Hif* expresses the meaning 'to interpret' in some contexts. There are only two occurrences of the noun מְלִיצָה in the Hebrew Bible, Proverbs 1:6 and Hab 2:6; according to KB, in both contexts the translation 'allusive saying' is applicable.

The first six verses are grouped together closely by the translator, that is, by means of the conjunction τε. It is part of the introduction of the wisdom book and stresses the need for the wise to have wisdom, instruction, insight, prudence, eloquence (dealing in words), direction, discernment and to understand true justice and to make correct decisions. Verse 6 is particularly instructive, for it contains suggestive concepts relating to the unknown, the enigmatic and the uncovered. The final segment in the introduction is verse 7, which acts as a clear statement of the way the wise should endeavour to solve all the riddles and enigmas referred to earlier.

Verse 7:

יִרְאַת יְהוָה רֵאשִׁית דָּעַת חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר אֱוִילִים בָּזוּ

[The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.]

ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος θεοῦ, σύνεσις δὲ ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτήν εὐσέβεια δὲ εἰς θεὸν ἀρχὴ αἰσθήσεως σοφίαν δὲ καὶ παιδείαν ἀσεβεῖς ἐξουθενήσουσιν

[Beginning of wisdom is fear of God, and understanding is good for all those who practice it, and piety unto God is the beginning of perception; the impious, however, will despise wisdom and discipline.]

The addition of two stichs represents the first major plus in the Septuagint of Proverbs. There are conspicuous correspondences and differences between the texts under discussion. Even though the contents of the words in the first stich are formally the same as in the MT, the order of these words is inverted. Moreover, the last stich seems to be a relatively literal rendering of the second stich in MT and the third stich of MT 7a. Finally, the second stich has no equivalent in MT or in any of the other versions. The most conspicuous characteristic of these stichs is the fact that a and b correspond to a large extent to Ps 110 (LXX) verse 10, which reads as follows:

ἀρχὴ σοφίας φόβος κυρίου σύνεσις ἀγαθὴ πᾶσι τοῖς ποιοῦσιν αὐτήν ἡ αἴνεσις αὐτοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τοῦ αἰῶνος

The MT (Ps 111:10) of this verse reads:

רֵאשִׁית חָכְמָה יִרְאַת יְהוָה
שֵׂכֶל טוֹב לְכָל־עֹשֵׂיהֶם
תְּהִלָּתוֹ עֹמֶדֶת לָעַד׃

In the Septuagint versions of Psalms and Proverbs the first two stichs correspond to a large extent. There are only two differences. The first concerns the name of God. Mss 23, S, B, Arab, Syh, La, 248mg and Ach all read θεοῦ. The second is a typical feature of the translator of Proverbs, namely the

abundant application of particles, in this case δέ. It is therefore possible that the translator of Proverbs in fact used the Psalm text in this regard. This at least provides an interpretation for the second stich in the current verse in Proverbs that has no equivalent in MT. Moreover, translators used additional textual material, whereas Origen was less apt to apply external material, mostly sticking to his Hebrew text. If in this case the translator actually used the material from the Psalms, then it would naturally mean that the translator of Proverbs already knew the Psalms version of the Septuagint (Cook 2001b:228).

It is rather difficult to determine which of these stichs in the Septuagint are original. If one follows a theory according to which the Hebrew of the translator did not differ substantially from MT, then it would seem as if stichs a and d are the logical candidates for the OG. As already stated, however, one problem in this regard is that the order of the first stich is reversed compared to MT. One could therefore, on the one hand, argue that there are significant differences between the two, an argument which De Lagarde (1863:6) apparently accepts. On the other hand, the translator does vary constructions at times for literary effect. Thirdly, a similar stich occurs in Proverbs 9:10a, but where the order of the Hebrew (MT) is followed in the LXX. It is therefore possible that the translator changed the order of one of the phrases in the light of the other. Fourthly, Weingreen (1973:411) has argued that this verse actually contains an example of rabbinic-type exegesis.

The Peshitta has the same word order as the LXX in the first stich. This could naturally be an indication that there was a Hebrew *Vorlage* containing this order of words. However, the relationship between LXX and Peshitta is a complex one and I have demonstrated that only in a few cases did the Peshitta translator in Proverbs in fact follow the Septuagint.[10] This was seemingly the case when he experienced a specific problem in his Hebrew text. It could therefore be that LXX and Peshitta actually share a common Hebrew *Vorlage* for which there is unfortunately no evidence except these versions.

On the basis of external material, Fritsch (1973:170) deems stichs a and b as the Old Greek. He follows the Origenian sigla, which were noted in the Syh and according to which stichs a and b have been tagged with the obelus. These instances he calls '[e]xamples with the Origenian signs correctly noted'. If these sigla are in fact correct, then this is certainly a strong possibility, at least as far as the first stich is concerned. According to him, stichs c and d are closer to the Hebrew and are consequently hexaplaric (1973:170). He does not discuss the fact that Syh also has an obelus in connection with an additional stich that is vaguely related to the third stich in the LXX. De Lagarde (1863:6), contrary to Fritsch, seems to think that stichs a and b are secondary.

10. Cf. Cook (1993:125). This is contrary to Fox (2013). Cf. also the discussion of verse 5.

Evidently there is no consensus concerning these additions. The question as to what the origin of the added stichs is thus remains unanswered. One possibility would be to take them as double translations according to the rules formulated by De Lagarde (1863:3). It is also a question of deciding which of these stichs would in fact be the doublets. One possibility is that stich c is a double translation of MT 7a and stich d of MT 7b. Another viable option would be to argue that c and d actually represent the OG, as stich c is after all not that literal an equivalent of MT 7a. If this is the case, then one could argue that a and b are later additions, as suggested by De Lagarde. It remains to determine what actually led to this extension and when this took place.

As far as double translations are concerned, it remains difficult to determine whether such additions were brought about purposely by the translator (Talshir 1987:27). It is therefore a question of whether it is possible that the translator thought the original statement in this verse somewhat abrupt and consequently decided to interpret. In this case he could himself have been responsible for stichs c and d. Contrary to De Lagarde's view, it seems more than probable that the translator actually made use of Psalm 110 (LXX) in the translation of this verse. The problem, therefore, remains that in a translation unit as freely rendered as Proverbs it is not easy to distinguish between the work of the translator and possible later hands. A lexical study of the lexemes in the pluses, for example, indicates that they are all used relatively regularly in LXX Proverbs, which could point to the fact that the same person has added these stichs. One lexeme, ἐξουθενέω, is found only in this single passage in LXX Proverbs in stich d, but this is the case with a number of other Greek words as well and this is typical of the translator of Proverbs. Therefore either the translator was responsible for this addition, or a later revisor who knew the subject matter added this stich. Significantly, this verse is also the end of the first pericope before the fatherly instructions follow. Perhaps this would naturally lead to explication.

It is difficult to reach a definite conclusion in this instance. Before proposing a conclusion, therefore, it is important to determine to what extent this translator did indeed make use of quotations from other biblical passages (Cook 2010). The external data, especially Syh, attest to stichs a and b being part of the OG. It would then be possible that stich c, being a relatively literal translation of the Hebrew of stich a and d of MT stich b, is part of the hexaplaric text. This conclusion is problematic, for it does not follow logically from the rules of thumb formulated by De Lagarde, because the third stich is not that literal a translation of the MT. The solution is to be found in a more holistic approach to these first seven verses. As I stated above, they act as an introduction to the book as a whole. These verses give an indication of what a wise man needs in order to be wise, or to become even wiser (verse 5); he needs the παροιμίαι Σαλωμῶντος. However, says the translator, the most fundamental aspect of wisdom – the beginning thereof – is the φόβος θεοῦ. Consequently, no specific form of wisdom, or some speculative or even

esoteric knowledge, is basic to understanding, but a religious phenomenon, the fear of God. This is of course the intention of the Hebrew too, but the translator adds the passage from Psalm 110 (LXX) in order to underscore this meaning.

It is clear to me that the translator deliberately quotes from the Psalm in order to make a clear statement as to where knowledge and wisdom originate. This is of course an indication of the 'ideological' orientation of the translator, for by implication he is remaining within his Jewish tradition by referring to this biblical text. It is moreover interesting that Ben Sira also uses the phrase or idea of 'the fear of the Lord' extensively in his opening chapter (vv. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18, 20, 27, 28 and 30).

In the final analysis I therefore take all four stichs as the Old Greek. The first two are a direct quotation from the Psalms by the translator, who is also responsible for the last two, which are renderings of the Hebrew that in this instance correspond with MT.

To summarise: these first seven verses have been rendered coherently by the translator and they make excellent sense – the sense he intended his audience to understand. Or as Van der Kooij (1987:127) states fittingly about the book of Isaiah (LXX): it is at the same time an appropriate *translation* and *interpretation*. The translator saw these verses as the introduction to the chapter (and to the book as a whole), even though he had a different view on the syntactic coherence of the verses and the chapter as a whole for that matter. The particle τε, for example, is employed extensively to connect the different stichs syntactically. This makes the introduction a closer knit unit than is the case in MT.

Chapter 1 is thus seen by the translator as an introduction to the whole of the book of Proverbs (the collection he had in front of him). It functions especially as an introduction to chapter 2, where the wisdom teacher is directly instructing the son into the ways of wisdom. Chapter 1 is an introduction to these teachings and consequently the dualism between the good and the bad, which is already implicit in the Hebrew text, is depicted much more explicitly in the Greek translation. This dualism is again the overriding theme in chapter 2.

Wisdom in Proverbs 2

The אִשָּׁה זָרָה as foreign wisdom

I have demonstrated in various contexts that the person(s) responsible for the book of Proverbs in its Greek guise adopted a fairly systematic approach towards the parent text. As far as the figure of the strange woman (אִשָּׁה זָרָה) is concerned, five chapters from the first nine chapters are relevant. These are chapters 2, 5, 6, 7 and 9 (Cook 1994). This prominent figure plays a decisive role in this first part of the book. Scholars have divergent perspectives on the loose woman. Some see her as a foreigner, others regard her as literary figure, Fox (2000:361) interprets her in a literal sense

and yet to others she is a personification of foreign wisdom (Hengel 1973).

Proverbs 2

In the Hebrew this chapter is an acrostic passage, which is the case with chapters 8 and 31 verses 10–31 as well. The chapter can be divided into two main parts: the protasis, verses 1–4 and the rest of the chapter that makes up the apodosis. Verses 16–19 are directly relevant to the issue at stake.

11 βουλὴ καλὴ φυλάξει σε ἔννοια δὲ ὁσία τηρήσει σε

[11 *good* counsel will guard you, *and holy* intent will protect you,]

16 τοῦ μακράν σε ποιῆσαι ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ εὐθείας καὶ ἀλλότριον τῆς δικαίας γνώμης

[16 in order to remove you far from *the straight way* and to make you a stranger to a righteous opinion.]

17 υἱέ, μή σε καταλάβῃ κακὴ βουλὴ ἡ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θείαν πιλελησμένη

[17 *My son, do not let bad counsel overtake you*, that which forsakes the teaching of youth and has forgotten the divine covenant;]

As far as contents are concerned, chapter 2 can be divided into two parts. Verses 1–12 refer to the good realm and verses 13–22 describe the bad realm. Verses 11 and 17 are significant and contain related but contrasting concepts. Verses 16 and 17 are especially crucial and contain an addition compared to MT and the other witnesses. Verse 16 in MT reads as follows:

לְהַצִּילְךָ מֵאִשָּׁה זָרָה

מִנָּכְרִיָּה אֲמָרֶיהָ הֶחֱלִיקָה:

The LXX has:

τοῦ μακράν σε ποιῆσαι ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ εὐθείας καὶ ἀλλότριον τῆς δικαίας γνώμης

It is clear that the translator does not deliberately avoid the אִשָּׁה זָרָה, but reinterprets it in order to make a theological point that is expressed even more clearly by the translation of verse 17.

Whereas MT has two stichoi:

הַעֹזֶבֶת אַלּוּף נְעוּרֶיהָ

וְאֶת־בְּרִית אֱלֹהֶיהָ שָׁכֵחָה:

LXX has three (Fox 2015:95):

υἱέ, μή σε καταλάβῃ κακὴ βουλὴ ἡ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θείαν ἐπιλελησμένη

The first strophe has no equivalent in the other textual witnesses and in my view is a deliberate addition by the translator with reference to *bad counsel* (κακὴ βουλή). The antithesis of this concept, *good counsel* (καλὴ βουλή), is found in verse 11 and is, as stated above, part of the good realm. I have indicated that these two Greek concepts are not typically Greek, but have as their cultural background the Jewish concepts היצר הרע and היצר הטוב (Cook 1997b:134–139). Fox differs from this interpretation, since according to him 'the

counsels' described here are not internal impulses (Fox 2000:361). I think he does not take seriously enough the fact that the two concepts are part of the two realms, as I demonstrated above. I also do not think our interpretations are that far apart. After all, he concedes that good counsel is wisdom and bad counsel is folly. The difference lies in the fact that he does not accept a further level of abstraction, whereas I argue that bad counsel is indeed a metaphor for foreign wisdom, namely Hellenism. He also seems to accept that the strange woman is a symbol, what he calls a stable metaphor.[11]

In my view the conservative Jewish translator has reused typical Jewish exegetical traditions regarding the good and evil inclinations that, according to Judaism, are found in each person. It is clear that the translator did not intend to avoid the sexual issues inherent in the Hebrew – in chapter 7 a corresponding phrase is translated literally. I have taken this interpretation of κακὴ βουλή to be a reference to foreign wisdom in the sense of un-Jewish/non-Israelite wisdom (Cook 1994:465).

In this regard I find that the view of Yee, who has argued for a literary interpretation of the various speeches – the seductive words of the loose woman, on the one hand, and those of the father, on the other hand – opens interesting perspectives on the understanding of this figure. According to her, it is not literal things, such as the physical body of the woman, that are dangerous, but rather her words, her speeches. Hence I have argued (Cook 1994:465) that also in the LXX it is not the אִשָּׁה זָרָה herself who is dangerous, but her words, or rather her bad words, bad counsel.

I have demonstrated that bad counsel in this context is indeed a metaphor for foreign wisdom, namely Hellenism (Cook 1994:465). I follow Hengel (1973:281), although he is not clear about what this strange wisdom is, in that I argue that it refers to the strange wisdom, namely the Hellenism of the day.

Proverbs 8

This chapter contains one of the classic passages on creation in the Hebrew Bible. It has been composed beautifully and has a structure of 4 sections in the Hebrew, 1–11; 12–21; 22–31 and a peroration 32–36. It has apparently been structured acrostically. The first and third sections are made up of 22 lines, but the middle section has only 21 lines. However, this is the result of the transmission history of this chapter. This chapter moreover contains crucial exegetical renderings of which many are aimed at emphasising the omnipotence of God. Here I will only deal with verses 22–31.

Verses 22–31 the role of Wisdom in creation

The LXX's understanding of this pericope differs from that of MT.

11.Fox, 'Strange woman', 34 footnote 7.

Verse 22:

יְהֹוָה קָנָנִי רֵאשִׁית דַּרְכּוֹ קֶדֶם מִפְעָלָיו מֵאָז

[The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old.]

κύριος ἔκτισέν με ἀρχὴν ὁδῶν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἔργα αὐτοῦ

[The Lord created me as the beginning of his ways, for the sake of his works.]

There are a few exegetical renderings in these passages. The translator has opted for a specific meaning as far as the polyvalent Hebrew lexeme קנה is concerned ('to acquire'/'to create'). This Hebrew verb is used 11 times in Proverbs. The verb κτίζω occurs 63 times in the LXX, but only this once in Proverbs. Seemingly the translator is interpreting. Walters (1973:200) argues that κτίζω in this context is the result of a confusion between it and κτίασθαι. Be that as it may, from the context it is clear that this verb is used in order to underscore the meaning of creation and not that of 'to acquire'. The deliberate omission of the combination מאז is conspicuous. The preposition קֶדֶם (before) is never used with the connotation of εἰς (for the sake of) and is an exegetical rendering. I think the interpretation of wisdom being created 'for the sake of' the works is a deliberate endeavour by the translator to play down the 'independent' role of the wisdom. Hence she was created for the sake of …

Verse 23:

מֵעוֹלָם נִסַּכְתִּי מֵרֹאשׁ מִקַּדְמֵי־אָרֶץ

[Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.]

πρὸ τοῦ αἰῶνος ἐθεμελίωσέν με ἐν ἀρχῇ

[Before the present age he founded me, in the beginning.]

The tendency to underscore the creative action of God is continued in this verse. The Hebrew verb נִסַּכְתִּי is a passive and is rendered by means of ἐθεμελίωσέν, he founded me. This is indeed the sole occurrence of this Greek verb for נסך.

Verses 24:

בְּאֵין־תְּהֹמוֹת חוֹלָלְתִּי בְּאֵין מַעְיָנוֹת נִכְבַּדֵּי־מָיִם

[When there were no depths I was brought forth]

πρὸ τοῦ τὴν γῆν ποιῆσαι καὶ πρὸ τοῦ τὰς ἀβύσσους ποιῆσαι, πρὸ τοῦ προελθεῖν τὰς πηγὰς τῶν ὑδάτων

[Before he made the earth and before he made the depths, before he brought forth the springs of the waters.]

The first part of the first stich is part of verse 23 in the Hebrew. In the second stich the Greek has God as the subject where the Hebrew is ambivalent or uses a passive form. This is in line with the trend discussed above. Stylistically this verse and the next one exhibit an interesting phenomenon. The combination πρὸ τοῦ plus an infinitive is applied abundantly. In these instances the subject of the verbs is consistently the Lord, deliberately avoiding misunderstanding.

Verse 25:

בְּטֶרֶם הָרִים הָטְבָּעוּ לִפְנֵי גְבָעוֹת חוֹלָלְתִּי

[Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills I was brought forth]

πρὸ τοῦ ὄρη ἑδρασθῆναι, πρὸ δὲ πάντων βουνῶν γεννᾷ με

[Before the mountains were established, and before all the hills he begets me.]

The Greek is once again more explicit as to who is responsible for the creation of wisdom, hence the translation 'he begets me'! Moreover, stylistically the equivalent of בְּטֶרֶם, namely πρό, is added in the 2nd stich.

Verse 26:

עַד־לֹא עָשָׂה אֶרֶץ וְחוּצוֹת וְרֹאשׁ עַפְרוֹת תֵּבֵל

[When he had not yet made earth and fields, or the earths first bit of soil.]

κύριος ἐποίησεν χώρας καὶ ἀοικήτους καὶ ἄκρα οἰκούμενα τῆς ὑπ' οὐρανόν

[The Lord made countries and uninhabited spaces and the habitable heights of that beneath the sky.]

Again the Lord as creator is specified and the LXX has a different syntactic structure to MT. Whereas MT has a temporal clause in the 1st stich, the translator changed it into a main clause. The 2nd stich is also rephrased since the Hebrew has no reference to 'under the heaven'.

Verse 27:

בַּהֲכִינוֹ שָׁמַיִם שָׁם אָנִי בְּחוּקוֹ חוּג עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם

[When he established the heavens, I was there when he drew a circle on the face of the deep.]

ἡνίκα ἡτοίμαζεν τὸν οὐρανόν, συμπαρήμην αὐτῷ καὶ ὅτε ἀφώριζεν τὸν ἑαυτοῦ θρόνον ἐπ' ἀνέμων

[When he prepared the sky, I was present with him, and when he marked out his own throne on the winds]

συμπάρειμι is used in three passages only in the LXX: in To 12:12; here in Proverbs 8:27 and Sap Sal 9:10. It has no underlying Hebrew in these passages and in the present verse is related to שָׁם אָנִי. It is consequently difficult to decide whether the translator actually intended to use an exegetical rendering in this case. In the passage in the Wisdom of Solomon שָׁם אָנִי is part of Solomon's prayer to God for wisdom and understanding. The terminology attributed to Solomon represents an interpretation of Sophia's role in the creation, which is a much more independent role than is the case either in MT or LXX. It therefore seems to me that συμπάρειμι is most probably used in an exegetical sense, or at least in order to stress the specific position of wisdom. This is underscored by the addition of αὐτῷ [with him]. This preposition has no equivalent in the MT and stresses the fact that wisdom was together with the Lord.

It is difficult to determine whether the deviations in stich b are indeed exegetically determined. חוג is used as an indication of vaults, but apparently only in the heavens. Θρόνον could therefore be an acceptable translation of this lexeme. If this is indeed the case, then a throne would hardly be situated in the deep, which could have prompted the translator to change the location to the winds. Elsewhere in the Old Testament reference is made to the Lord sitting on his throne on the heavens (Pss 11:4, 47:9 and 103:19. It is also implied in Is 14:13–14). It is naturally possible that this represents an internally motivated harmonisation with verse 28.

Verse 28:

בְּאַמְּצוֹ שְׁחָקִים מִמָּעַל בַּעֲזוֹז עִינוֹת תְּהוֹם

[when he made firm the skies above, when he established the fountains on the deep.]

ἡνίκα ἰσχυρὰ ἐποίει τὰ ἄνω νέφη καὶ ὡς ἀσφαλεῖς ἐτίθει πηγὰς τῆς ὑπ' οὐρανόν

[When he made strong the clouds above, and when he made secure the springs beneath the sky.]

There is a tendency to avoid referring to the 'deep' in verses 27 and 28, which is probably the result of internal harmonisation.

Verse 29:

בְּשׂוּמוֹ לַיָּם חֻקּוֹ

וּמַיִם לֹא יַעַבְרוּ־פִּיו

בְּחוּקוֹ מוֹסְדֵי אָרֶץ:

[when he assigned the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth]

καὶ ἰσχυρὰ ἐποίει τὰ θεμέλια τῆς γῆς

[When he made strong the foundations of the earth,]

The first two stichs are omitted in the main LXX manuscripts and therefore do not appear in Rahlfs.

Verse 30 (Cook 1997b:3–50):

וָאֶהְיֶה אֶצְלוֹ אָמוֹן

וָאֶהְיֶה שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים יוֹם יוֹם

מְשַׂחֶקֶת לְפָנָיו בְּכָל־עֵת

[then I was beside him, like a master workman; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always]

ἤμην παρ' αὐτῷ ἁρμόζουσα ἐγὼ ἤμην ᾗ προσέχαιρεν καθ' ἡμέραν δὲ εὐφραινόμην ἐν προσώπῳ αὐτοῦ ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ

[I was beside him, fitting together, it is I, who was the one in whom he took delight.]

And each day I was glad in his presence at every moment;]

This verse is the *locus classicus* as far as arguments concerning the so-called Stoic colouring of the LXX are concerned. The verbal form ἁρμόζουσα has been taken as 'to join, to accommodate, bring into harmony', which is then seen as an idea 'indigenous to the Stoic view of nature' (Gerleman 1950:26). The Greek lexeme ἁρμόζω occurs only in 10 passages

in the LXX: in ii Ki 6:5 (*) and 14 (עֹז(?); Ps 151:2 (-); Prov 8:30 (אָמֹון),[12] 17:7 (נָאוָה) 19:14 (שֹׂכֶל), 25:11 (אֹפֶן) (only in S2); Na 3:8 (אָמֹון); ii Ma 14:22 and iii Ma 1:19. It is thus used to render different lexemes in Proverbs. In Proverbs 17:7 the Hebrew contains a contrast between the speech of a fool and of a king:

לֹא־נָאוָה לְנָבָל שְׂפַת־יֶתֶר אַף כִּי־לְנָדִיב שְׂפַת־שָׁקֶר

The Septuagint has the following translation: οὐχ ἁρμόσει ἄφρονι χείλη πιστὰ οὐδὲ δικαίῳ χείλη ψευδῆ. In this context the meaning of 'fitting' clearly prevails. In Proverbs 19:14 the Hebrew reads: בַּיִת וָהֹון נַחֲלַת אָבֹות וּמֵיהֹוָה אִשָּׁה מַשְׂכָּלֶת. House and wealth are inherited from parents, but a prudent wife is from the Lord. οἶκον καὶ ὕπαρξιν μερίζουσιν πατέρες παισίν παρὰ δὲ θεοῦ ἁρμόζεται γυνὴ ἀνδρί. In this context the meaning of 'betroth' is dominant. Nahum 3:8 is the closest parallel to the passage under discussion.

The Hebrew has:

הֲתֵיטְבִי מִנֹּא אָמֹון הַיֹּשְׁבָה בַּיְאֹרִים מַיִם סָבִיב לָהּ

אֲשֶׁר־חֵיל יָם מִיָּם חֹומָתָהּ:

['Are you better than Thebes that sat by the Nile, with water around her, her rampart a sea and water her wall'.]

The LXX reads:

ἑτοίμασαι μερίδα ἅρμοσαι χορδήν ἑτοίμασαι μερίδα. Αμων ἡ κατοικοῦσα ἐν ποταμοῖς ὕδωρ κύκλῳ αὐτῆς ἧς ἡ ἀρχὴ θάλασσα καὶ ὕδωρ τὰ τείχη αὐτῆς

['Prepare a portion, tune the cord, prepare a portion for Ammon; she that dwells among the rivers, water is around her, whose dominion is the sea, and whose walls are water'.]

The Greek seems to be an interpretation of the Hebrew and the verb ἁρμόζοσαι could therefore be related to אָמֹון as suggested by HR. The problem is that the Hebrew lexeme is also rendered literally as Αμων.

The meaning of 'harmonising' suggested by Gerleman is, therefore, not imperative in any of these passages. I would consequently argue that it is also not necessarily to be accepted in the one under discussion. In extra-biblical writings this lexeme is used with other connotations. In Sap Sal 36:17 in the sense of 'adapt, accommodate' and in Hegesipp Com the meaning of 'to prepare' applies. Also, the sense of 'joining, fit together' occurs in classical Greek sources. It is used, *inter alia*, to describe the work of a joiner in Od 5.247. Pi N 8.11 applies it in the meaning of 'to regulate, set in order and to govern'. It also appears in the meaning of 'fitting', namely clothes or armour that fit well (Pi P 4.80).

It is therefore not easy to determine what the translator actually had in mind in this specific instance. As I indicated earlier, the Hebrew lexeme אָמֹון is already a problematic one, for it appears only twice in the Hebrew Bible. The main Greek mss also have no text available for Jer 52:15. אָמֹון as a proper noun is also used for the Egyptian god Amun and it can also be related to the root אמן (support, assist, bind together). As I

have already said, some scholars have indeed connected it with אָמָן 'master-workman, craftsman' (Scott 1965:72), which is also how the author of the Wisdom of Solomon understood it. In Sap Sal 7:21 and 8:6 wisdom is described as τεχνῖτης. It is not immediately evident how the author would have arrived at this interpretation. Taking into account the Hellenistic milieu in which he lived, it is equally possible that he could have interpreted it in a Platonic manner according to the idea of the Demiurge, or that he simply understood the Hebrew אָמֹון in that sense.[13]

Because of the limited application of the Greek verb, it remains difficult to decide what meaning the translator actually had in mind. Consequently the context must provide the decisive evidence. To start with, because of the limited evidence, I find it unacceptable to formulate a theory of possible external influence, as was done by Gerleman regarding Stoic perspectives adopted by the translator. Hengel (1973:292) followed Gerleman in this regard and on the basis of the passage under discussion talks about '*popularphilosophische Züge*'. Indications of such signs are the pre-existence of wisdom (verse 22); the fact that she was created for the sake of God's works (v. 22) and the question of wisdom experiencing joy (vv. 30b and 31) in this regard. Hengel (1973:293) poses the question whether the description of wisdom is not to be seen '*als eine Art von Weltseele*', which is the way it functions in Plato's *Timaeus*. He opts for this explanation, because the typical Stoic notion of the identification of God and matter would certainly have been a problem for a Jewish translator. According to Hengel, the Platonic version with its reference to Demiurges as personal creation gods would have been more acceptable to Jews.

I do not regard the small number of references to typical Stoic or popular philosophical traits referred to by the above-mentioned scholars as convincing evidence. The connotations of 'to join, prepare, harmonise' for ἁρμόζουσα, which are certainly found in extra-biblical writings, need not to be reconstructed in this context. In my view the verb ἁρμόζουσα actually describes wisdom's relationship with the creator. It is not used to depict her relationship towards creation. This relationship is described in the rest of the verse as well. The Greek ἐγὼ ἤμην ᾗ προσέχαιρεν, 'I was the one in whom he took delight', is less ambiguous than MT. Conspicuous is the addition of the personal pronoun ἐγώ. It could be a case of stressing the subject, underlining the privileged role wisdom actually had beside God. The final hemistich is a literal rendering of the Hebrew.

The emphasis of the whole pericope in its Greek version is thus on God's activity in the creation process. She has no other role to play than that of being happy and joyful, which also need not to be seen as an exclusive characteristic of Stoicism. Therefore I translate ἁρμόζουσα with 'fitting together', a meaning that appears in specific contexts. In my view the translator underscores the creative role of God in

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12.De Lagarde (1863:29) has reconstructed a *Vorlage* of אמינה.

13.Cf. Keel (1974:17), Gerleman (1950:26) and Hengel (1973:285).

the creation. This is once again borne out by the translation of the next verse.

Verse 31:

מְשַׂחֶקֶת בְּתֵבֵל אַרְצוֹ

וְשַׁעֲשֻׁעַי אֶת־בְּנֵי אָדָם

[rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the sons of men.]

ὅτε εὐφραίνετο τὴν οἰκουμένην συντελέσας καὶ ἐνευφραίνετο ἐν υἱοῖς ἀνθρώπων

[when he rejoiced after he had completed the world and rejoiced among the sons of men.]

The problematic Hebrew lexemes שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים and מְשַׂחֶקֶת (Piʿel participle feminine singular of שָׂחַק) overlap as far as specific meanings in their respective semantic fields are concerned. They are apparently rendered interchangeably in these verses, as the verb εὐφραίνω is the equivalent in both verses 30 and 31. This could of course be the stylistic work of the translator, for he uses εὐφραίνω in the last instance. This lexeme occurs only in these two passages in the LXX and also in different mss.

There are, however, significant differences between the Hebrew (MT) and the LXX. Syntactically this verse is structured differently from MT, in that it is a final clause. The Hebrew simply placed verses 30 and 31 paratactically next to one another. Moreover, the Piʿel participle feminine, מְשַׂחֶקֶת, was intentionally changed into a third person masculine singular by the translator. In addition he interpreted the noun phrase בְּתֵבֵל אַרְצוֹ as a verbal phrase τὴν οἰκουμένην συντελέσας. It is difficult to decide what the underlying Hebrew was in this case. In verse 26 תֵּבֵל was probably translated as οὐρανός, although it is possible that the translator actually referred to οἰκουμένα in this regard. I suppose it is theoretically possible that he had the root בלל (to mix, prepare) as underlying Hebrew for συντελέσας (this lexeme occurs only four times in Proverbs). It does have the connotation of 'smear, paste together' in specific contexts. However, this option would leave אַרְצוֹ unaccounted for. In my opinion there is another possible explanation. I think συντελέσας should be seen as an exegetical rendering, for the translator actually intentionally paraphrased the stich in order to stress that God is the subject of the creational activity. He also did the same in the case of שַׁעֲשֻׁעַי in the same verse. He deliberately changed the person from feminine to masculine, in order to leave no room for misunderstanding that it is indeed the Lord that is creating and not Lady Wisdom.

This chapter contains many differences compared to MT and other textual witnesses. The translator applied the acrostic principle more stringently than the author of the Hebrew. One example is the addition to verse 21. This chapter also contains the classical pericope on creation and I argued that in the LXX it should not be interpreted in line with Platonic and/or Stoic perspectives. Rather, the translator consistently emphasised the fact that the Lord is the independent creator

and that Lady Wisdom has only a secondary role to play in the creation process.

Conclusion

I have demonstrated that the translator of the Septuagint Proverbs adopted a contextual approach towards its parent text. Hence inter- and intra-textual interpretations abound. In some instances he applied external exegetical perspectives, primarily Jewish-orientated traditions in order to formulate an ideological view. Three aspects play a role in connection with the formulation of a theology of LXX Proverbs:

1. 1:1–7 indicates what Proverbs is not, i.e. speculative philosophical ideas
2. Chapter 2 demonstrates that the wisdom is foreign wisdom – the Hellenism of the day
3. Sophia in chapter 8 has a subordinate role in relation to God.

Acknowledgements

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