Hellenizing Women in the Biblical Tradition:
The Case of LXX Genesis[*]

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The rise of feminist studies and gender studies has led to an increased interest in how women are described in ancient sources. Within biblical studies, a wide range of research devoted to that question has been published, and more is ongoing. Most of these studies, however, are focused on the MT. The present paper tries to contribute to the interdisciplinary dialogue of gender studies and LXX research, through a comparative study that proceeds from a collection of the differences between the MT and the text of the LXX, insofar they seem to be relevant to the question of how the representation of women was changed in the transition from the Hebrew to the Greek textual tradition.[1] Following a synchronic description of these differences, historical explanations will be suggested in a second step. The material is categorized into thematic units:

1) Giving the name to a new born child;
2) Bearing or begetting?;
3) De-anonymization of women;
4) Marriage and the status of married women;
5) Gendering of children; and
6) Women and religion.

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[1] Thus, the approach followed in the present study significantly differs from that of W. Loader in *The Septuagint, Sexuality, and the New Testament: Case Studies on the Impact of the LXX in Philo and the New Testament* (Grand Rapids; Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2004). Loader explores the changing perception of sexuality, and this study is devoted to the changing perception of females.

1. Giving the Name to a New Born Child

In the book of Genesis, in both the MT and LXX, fathers or mothers name newborn children. In the LXX, however, the number of cases in which women play the active part is significantly higher than in the MT:

	MT	LXX
Man gives the name	8	8
Woman gives the name	18	24
Impersonal formulation	6	–

The increase from 18 (MT) to 24 (LXX) for women doing the naming among the 32 instances of naming in both textual traditions does not mean that the influence of men has been diminished, because the LXX contains the same number of cases of the father naming the newborn. In fact, the eight references in both textual traditions are identical. The additional six instances in the LXX are solely the result of changes to the cases in which the MT has an impersonal formulation.

The most obvious case is 29:34:

And yet again she conceived and bore a son and said, "At the present time my husband will be on my side, for I have borne him three sons; …"

MT   therefore *one* called his name (קרא שמו) Levi."
LXX*   Cf. SP קראה שמו
LXX   [καὶ συνέλαβεν…—and she conceived…]
        therefore *she* called his name (ἐκάλεσεν δὲ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) Levi."

No male appears in the context, therefore the masculine singular formulation of the MT (קרא שמו) must be taken as an impersonal formula. The LXX, on the other hand, continues the feminine subject referring to Leia (καὶ συν-έλαβεν … ἐκάλεσεν…). As to the background of this change, the reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch (SP) (קראה שמו) suggests that it was already part of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the LXX and thus did not originate with the translator.

Further cases that avoid the impersonal formula by having a feminine subject occur in 25:24–26:

25:24–25 "And the days for her to give birth were completed, and she had twins in her uterus. And the firstborn son came out …

MT   and *they* called his name (ויקראו שמו) Esau."
LXX   [v. 24: … ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς —… in her uterus]
        and *she* called his name (ἐπονόμασεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) Esau."

25:26

MT   and *one* called his name (ויקרא שמו) Jacob.
LXX   [v. 24: … ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς —… in her uterus]
        and *she* called his name (ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) Jacob.

In the MT, both the plural in v. 25 (ויקראו) and the masculine singular in
v. 26 (ויקרא) imply impersonal subjects, "And one called his name," because
neither a possible plural nor a masculine singular subject appear in the con-
texts. The LXX, on the other hand, uses the verbal form of the third person
common singular, and the subject "she" (Rebecca) is provided by the context
(ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ αὐτῆς … ἐκάλεσεν).

As expected, in most of the six additional instances in which the LXX has a
women as the name-giver, it is the mother of the child to whom the text refers.
In one instance, it is the midwife, 38:28–29:

> And the midwife bound scarlet material on his hand, saying, "This one will
>   come out earlier." …

MT	And *one* called his name (ויקרא שמו) Perez.
LXX*	Cf. SP ותקרא שמו
LXX	[ἡ δὲ εἶπεν …—and she said …]
	And *she* called his name (ἐκάλεσεν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ) Fares.

As in the case of 29:34 (see above), the change seems to have been in the
Vorlage of the LXX. From the perspective of gender studies, the introduction
of the midwife seems interesting insofar as the text attributes the active part to
a woman different from the mother.[2] This shows that the difference between
the MT and the LXX is not restricted to the duties of the mother, but rather
extends to the role of women in general: At least in the field of name-giving,
women are more prominent in the LXX than in the MT.

If we look for the reason behind the emergence of this difference, it is
appropriate to start with the observation that the reading attested by the MT
seems to be original in each of the six instances under consideration, while the
ones in the LXX are most probably the outcome of a secondary development.
Most obviously, however, the motive behind these textual changes was not to
avoid men having an active part in name giving, because all eight instances of
that kind were unchanged. The fact that only impersonal subjects were
replaced by concrete female characters suggests a connection to the general
tendency of LXX Genesis to be more explicit than the MT and to fill narrative
gaps.[3] It seems hardly accidental, nevertheless, that the gaps left by the im-
personal subjects were filled with women in every case. The most probable
explanation is that the textual changes under consideration occurred in a
cultural and social environment in which women were responsible for naming

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[2] The whole HB contains only one account in which someone other than the mother
names the child, the neighbor women who name Naomi's child, Obed (Ruth 4:17). Compare
K. G. Bohmbach, "Names and Naming in the World," in *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary
of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deutero-Canonical
Books, and the New Testament* (ed. C. Meyers et al.; Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin,
2000) 37.

[3] See P. Prestel and S. Schorch, "Das Buch Genesis: Einleitung," in *Septuaginta Deutsch*.

the newborn, and so it would have been natural for scribes and translators to attribute the act of name-giving to women and not to men.

A further question should be considered: Does the difference between the two texts have its roots in the thinking of the translator or was it already in the *Vorlage*? We should take note of two observations regarding to this question:

1) LXX Genesis uses the impersonal formula with καλέω (ἐκλήθη), with reference both to place names[4] and to personal names.[5] This is an indication that the tendency to avoid impersonal subjects by using female subjects is not the result of a translation technique or the language of the translators.

2) In four of the six cases, the SP attests a Hebrew text parallel to the LXX, having a feminine subject, and does not use the impersonal formula.[6] In addition to the two instances already noted (29:34; 38:29), this is found at 38:3 and 30.

It seems, therefore, that this phenomenon was already part of the Hebrew *Vorlage* of LXX Genesis and was not introduced by the translator. The environment that motivated, or at least enabled, such a textual change was thus not restricted to the Jewish community in Hellenistic Egypt, but was made also by their Jewish contemporaries in Palestine.

2. Bearing or Begetting?

With regard to the question under consideration in this article, a further thematic field seems to be opened by 25:26:

Isaac was sixty years of age …

MT   when *he begot* them (בלדת אתם).
LXX   when *Rebecca bore* them (ὅτε ἔτεκεν αὐτοὺς Ρεβεκκα).

Although the MT provides a time reference for Isaac's begetting of Jacob and Esau, the LXX refers to their birth and explicitly mentions their mother, Rebecca. If we just compare the two textual traditions, here is a further instance for the inclination of the LXX to refer to the role of women, this time even at the expense of men.

From a diachronic perspective, the MT seems to preserve the original text, while the reading of the LXX is secondary. This change may have less to do with a greater interest in women than with historical changes in language: In classical Biblical Hebrew, the *qal* of the verb ילד could have both the meaning

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[4] Gen 11:9, "Therefore its name was called (ἐκλήθη) Confusion;" Gen 31:48, "Therefore its name was called (ἐκλήθη) the Heap witnesses."

[5] Gen 25:30, "Therefore his name was called (ἐκλήθη) Edom;" Gen 27:36, "Rightly was his name called (ἐκλήθη) Jacob."

[6] Note, however, that the SP has no clear tendency in this point, because it contains a reverse variant in Gen 4:26: "And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son…" (NETS); MT, "…and *she* named (ותקרא את שמו) him Seth;" SP, "…and *he* named (ויקרא את שמו) him Seth." I am grateful to Tal Ilan for drawing my attention to this verse.

"to bear" and "to beget."[7] At the time of the Greek translator, however, the second meaning was much less common and even disappeared in some traditions.[8] Thus, the translator (or his *Vorlage*), being unaware of ילד *qal* meaning "to beget," could apply the verb to Rebecca only, and so the introduction of her name seems to be nothing more than an accommodation to this.

3. De-anonymization of Women

The lower social status of women in ancient Israel as compared to men is well illustrated by the fact that in many instances the biblical text, when referring to women, does not provide names.[9] It seems noteworthy therefore that in at least one case LXX Genesis introduces by name a woman who is anonymous in the MT, appearing only with her father's name:

> 38:2: And there Joudas saw a Chanaanite man's daughter, …

> MT   and his name (ושמו) was Shua.
> LXX   and *her* name (ἦ ὄνομα) was Sava.

> 38:12:

> MT   And the wife of Judah, *Shua's daughter* (בת שוע), died.
> LXX   And the wife of Joudas, *Sava* (Σαυα), died.

Judging by the important function attributed to personal names in ancient times,[10] explicitly mentioning the name meant that crucial information was provided. Therefore, the text of the LXX seems to exhibit a much stronger interest in the person of Judah's wife than the MT.[11]

As to the question of which was original, neither the direction of the textual change nor its reasons are clear. In any case, it is improbable that the change has anything to do with different attitudes toward women. Instead, one may guess that it is connected to the inclination of the tradition represented by the LXX, as referred to above, to make the text more explicit and to fill narrative

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[7] See W. Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament,* 18th ed. (ed. R. Meyer and H. Donner; Berlin: Springer, 1987–) 2.464.

[8] Thus, it is unknown in Samaritan Hebrew, a Hebrew dialect originating in the second–first centuries B.C.E., on which see S. Schorch, *Die Vokale des Gesetzes: Die samaritanische Lesetradition als Textzeugin der Tora* (BZAW 339; Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 2004) 1.99. For the dating of Samaritan Hebrew, see Z. Ben-Hayyim, *A Grammar of Samaritan Hebrew: Based on the Recitation of the Law in Comparison with the Tiberian and Other Jewish Traditions,* (Eng. ed.; with assistance of A. Tal; Jerusalem: Magnes; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2000) 520; and Schorch, *Die Vokale*, 34–35.

[9] H. J. Marsman, *Women in Ugarit and Israel: Their Social and Religious Position in the Context of the Ancient Near East* (OTS 49; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2003) 275.

[10] Compare M. Rose, "Names of God in the OT," *ABD, s.v.*

[11] Similarly S. Brayford, *Genesis* (Septuagint Commentary Series; Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007) 398: "Saua, as a character in the story, has a stronger presence than her Hebrew counterpart."

gaps.[12] Obviously, the anonymity of a person as prominent as the wife of Judah is likely to have been such a gap to many.[13]

4. Marriage and the Status of Married Women

An important and rather large number of differences between the MT and the LXX comprise marriage and the status of married women. A very interesting example is 34:11–12, where Shechem asks to marry Jacob's daughter, Dinah, and says:

"Whatever you say, we will give. Increase the …

MT   bride price and gift (מהר ומתן)."
LXX   dowry (φερνή)."

The word φερνή—"dowry,"[14] used by the translator of LXX Genesis, is a *terminus technicus* in Hellenistic law. It refers to the amount of money or

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[12] See above.

[13] The tendency to fill this gap is characteristic for many post-biblical traditions: "Noah's wife (Gen 6:18; 7:7, 13; 8:18), for example, has been assigned more than 103 names in postbiblical discussions of the Genesis flood story." (Carol Meyers et al., eds., *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books, and the New Testament* [Boston; New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000] xi). The extent of this process is demonstrated by Tal Ilan, who speaks of a literary "genre of inventing names for nameless persons to fill in historical gaps…. There exists a literary genre which originates in Second Temple Palestinian Judaism which dealt with assigning names to nameless biblical heroines." ("Biblical Women's Names in the Apocryphal Traditions," *JSP* 11 [1993] 3).

[14] In the NETS, Gen 34:12, Hiebert rendered φερνή as "bride price," with a footnote: "Perhaps *dowry*." His rationale is found in R. J. V. Hiebert, "Deuteronomy 22:28–29 and its premishnaic interpretations," *CBQ* 56 [1994] 203–20. While he is aware that the "primary meaning" of φερνή is "dowry" (p. 209), he argues on account of Exod 22:15 "that the semantic range of φερνή has been expanded to include the concept of a bride-price paid by the prospective bridegroom to the father of his intended," and continues: "In Gen 34:12 … the translator of Genesis uses the term in the same way" (p. 210). His argument is neither exact, because the text leaves open the question of who receives the payment, nor compulsory, because the dowry—although legally provided by the bride's family—may in fact be paid by the prospective bridegroom. That this is not a theoretical construct, but was a living practice in ancient Judaism, is demonstrated by Gen 24:53, Jer 3:19 and Ezek 16:10–12 (see below). While, therefore, the contexts of Gen 34:12 and Exod 22:15 are no proof for φερνή as "bride-price," all external evidence, and most importantly the Greek legal papyri from Hellenistic Egypt, unanimously exhibit the meaning "dowry." In his comprehensive analysis of the term φερνή as part of his study of the marital property laws in Hellenistic Egypt, Günther Häge concluded: "Eine andere Bedeutung als Mitgift kommt dem Wort φερνή nicht zu." (G. Häge, *Ehegüterrechtliche Verhältnisse in den griechischen Papyri Ägyptens bis Diokletian* [Graezistische Abhandlungen 3; Köln; Graz: Böhlau Verlag, 1968] 24). On account of this evidence, the translation "dowry" was used for "La Bible d'Alexandrie" in both Gen 34:12 and Exod 22:15. Interestingly, Symmachus seems to have noted that the use of φερνή, as opposed to the meaning of מהר ומתן, in Gen 34:12 changed the meaning of the text, because he replaced the former with ἕδνον "wedding-gift," on which see M. Harl:

goods intended for the maintenance of the wife. The φερνή was entrusted to the husband in the course of marriage, but its purpose was the sustenance of the wife.[15] It even remained the wife's property and, therefore, in the case of divorce or death of the husband it was given to her.[16] Although the φερνή was usually provided by the bride's family, the Greek text of this verse says that Shechem—the prospective husband—was prepared to provide Dinah's dowry.

> The Greek marriage documents from Egypt do not attest a single case where the dowry is provided by the husband,[17] as in this text. It appears, therefore, that this feature should rather be seen in the context of Jewish law. Even the Hebrew Bible attests a number of cases in which the groom contributes to the dowry (Gen 24:53; Jer 3:19) or provides it (Ezek 16:10–12).[18] As shown by Bickerman, the peculiar use of φερνή attested in the LXX is part of the historical development of the Jewish marriage dotal system, which finally led to the Rabbinic identification of *mohar* with *ketubbah*, that is, "the stipulation in the marriage contract … by which the husband promises a certain sum for the maintenance of the divorced wife or widow."[19] Thus, in Palestinian sources, "the rabbis used *pherne* for either the dowry, the marriage settlement promised by the husband …, or the marriage contract."[20] The LXX to Gen 34:11 is the oldest testimony to the first meaning.

"Cadeaux de fiançailles et contrat de mariage pour l'épouse du 'Cantique des cantiques' selon quelques commentaires grecs," in *Mélanges d'histoire des religions offerts à Henri-Charles Puech* (ed. A. Bareau et al.; Paris: Presse universitaires de France, 1974) 256.

[15] "Als φερνή wurde von jeher in den Papyri [*sc.* Ägyptens] … das H e i r a t s g u t bezeichnet, das anläßlich der Eheschließung dem Mann für seine Frau … bestellt wurde." (Häge, *Ehegüterrechtliche Verhältnisse*, 23–24). Bickerman's claim that the "separate property of the wife was not considered … in the Hellenistic world" (E. Bickerman, "Two Legal Interpretations of the Septuagint," in *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* [AGJU 9; Leiden: Brill, 1976], 1.214) is not correct. Rather, as has been successfully demonstrated by Häge, the wife indeed owned "selbständige Vermögens- und Erwerbsfähigkeit" in the framework of Hellenistic law (Häge, *Ehegüterrechtliche Verhältnisse*, 156). She was "unbeschränkt geschäftsfähig" (p. 64) and continued to execute the κυριεία and the κράτησις over her own property (p. 155).

[16] "Bei der Auflösung der Ehe durch den Tod eines der Ehegatten … (fällt) die Mitgift an die Witwe bzw. ihre Kinder oder die Frauenfamilie zurück …." (Häge, *Ehegüterrechtliche Verhältnisse*, 131); compare Bickerman, "Two Legal Interpretations," 210–11.

[17] See U. Yiftach-Firanko, *Marriage and Marital Arrangements: A History of the Greek Marriage Document in Egypt 4th century BCE—4th century CE* (MBPF 93; Munich: C.H. Beck, 2003) 276.

[18] R. Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law* (JSOTSup 113; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1991) 148–49. This situation as attested in biblical sources seems in accordance with the law in ancient Mesopotamia (pp. 143–44).

[19] Bickerman, "Two Legal Interpretations," 210.

[20] M. A. Friedman, *Jewish Marriage in Palestine: a Cairo Geniza Study* (Tel Aviv: The Chaim Rosenberg Scholl of Jewish Studies; New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1980) 1.77.

In the MT, the same story sounds very different: the prospective husband, Shechem, is expected to pay the father a certain bride-price for a future wife: "Such compensation was required because in the agricultural economy the bride leaving her family deprived the latter of a worker and transferred her operational force to her husband's family."[21] One may even say, therefore, that in the MT the wedding is regarded as Shechem's purchase of Dinah's working force from her father,[22] who owned it before her marriage.[23]

The comparison of the two versions makes the differences very clear: According to the MT, Shechem is prepared to make a payment for Dinah to her father; but according to the LXX, he would have had to make payment to Dinah. Thus, the Greek text not only avoids the association of the marriage as the purchase of a wife by the husband, but additionally implies that Dinah, through the marriage, would be granted property owned solely by her, thus providing her with economic independence from both her husband and her family.[24] The consequences of this shift are easily discernible in the restrictions that appear in marriage documents from Ptolemaic Egypt with regard to the κυριεία of the husband: The documents exhibit not only "the tendency … to regard the family property as belonging to both partners," but even attest to "the wife's position as 'mistress' (*kyrieousa*) of the family possessions together with her husband"[25] during their marriage.

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[21] Bickerman, "Two Legal Interpretations," 202.

[22] Ancient Israelite marriage can certainly not be described as simple purchase: See C. J. H. Wright, "Family, Old Testament," *ABD*, *s.v.*; the most detailed juristic treatment of the subject can be found in J. Neubauer, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des biblisch-talmudischen Eheschließungsrechts: Eine rechtsvergleichend-historische Studie* [MVAG 24–25; Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs, 1920], 16–20). It appears, however, that sometimes the procedures for marriage had close similarities with purchase; see the discussion in M. L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001) 77–78. Some support for this suggestion comes from the story of Rachel and Leah: their statement in Gen 31:15 with regard to their father shows that women in ancient Israel sometimes may have felt treated like objects of purchase: "Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and also completely consumed our money." On the other hand, however, the very fact that this verse is used as an argument against Laban shows that it was neither unusual nor wrong to expect better.

[23] "Legally, a man's children were considered to be his property." (Marsman, *Women*, 69). This is well illustrated by the fact that he could sell his children as slaves in case of poverty (Exod 21:7) and that he was entitled to compensation if someone caused his wife a miscarriage (Exod 21:22).

[24] "Die Mitgift blieb nicht ein Teil des Vermögens der Frauenfamilie, sondern war ein selbständiger, unmittelbar auf die Frau bezogener Vermögenswert." (Häge, *Ehegüter-rechtliche Verhältnisse*, 131–32.)

[25] Yiftach-Firanko, *Marriage*, 121–22, referring to a formula known from *P. Tebt.* 1.104.15 (92 B.C.E., from Kerkeosiris) and *P. Tebt.* 3.2 974.2 (early second century B.C.E.), according to which the wife is κυριεύουσα μετ' αὐτοῦ κοινῶι τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐτο ῖς. With regard to marriage documents from early Roman Oxyrhynchus (first–second century C.E.), Yiftach-Firanko concludes: "It can … be assumed that besides the passive elements of the

This relatively independent, influential, and economically strong position of the wife in Ptolemaic Egypt, both during her marriage and in its aftermath, stands in sharp contrast to the situation in ancient Israel in several aspects:[26]

– Although it seems to have been usual to endow the bride with a dowry, it was a voluntary gift: "Without underestimating the powerful social factors that would normally ensure that a daughter would be dowered to the best of her father's ability, legally speaking she appears to have been at the mercy of her father, or of her brothers after his death."[27]

– Unlike in Ptolemaic Egypt, in ancient Israel the wife had no share in the family property, which was solely owned by a single head of household.[28] Even the wife's dowry became part of her husband's property, although she retained potential rights over it.[29]

As can be seen, the difference between the Hebrew and the Greek text of 34:11–12 is clearly the result of the translation: By using a Hellenistic legal term, the translator changed the legal context and evoked Hellenistic marriage and personal law instead of that of ancient Israel. Obviously, this change of the legal framework implies that a status more like that of men was attributed to Dinah by the translator.

It seems that the Hellenistic perspective on marriage influenced the translation of other passages, too, and caused further textual differences between the MT and the LXX. A further example in 20:3 will illustrate this tendency:

MT   She is *ruled by a husband* (בעלת בעל).
LXX   She is *married to a man* (συνῳκηκυῖα ἀνδρί).

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kyrieia … the wife's position as *kyrieousa* also meant an active participation in the management of the family estate throughout the marriage" (p. 191).

[26] It should be mentioned that even in pre-Hellenistic Egypt, "the position of women … compares favourably with that in other parts of the ancient Near East.… In the field of the law of property and obligations we find women enjoying full equality" (R. Yaron, *Introduction to the Law of the Aramaic Papyri* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961] 42). It has been stressed by Pomeroy, on the other hand, that the position of women in the context of Ptolemaic Egypt was favorable to that of other ancient Greek societies: "… in the economic sphere, as in the political and social realms, there was less distinction between the genders in Ptolemaic Egypt than there was, for example, in Athens, or in Greek society in general of an earlier period." (S. B. Pomeroy, *Women in Hellenistic Egypt From Alexander to Cleopatra* [New York: Schocken, 1984] 173). The combination of these two observations suggests that the more balanced gender relation is a regional development in Egypt and not due to external influence. Interestingly, the same conclusion has been drawn by Yaron with regard to the Persian period (Yaron, *Introduction*, 42).

[27] Westbrook, *Property*, 158. Rachel's and Leah's complaint in Gen 31:14–15, that their father Laban did not give them "portion or inheritance" (i.e., dowry, see ibid., 157–58) in his house, shows that this would have been the usual way, although they obviously could not sue their father for a dowry.

[28] Ibid., 14.

[29] Ibid., 152.

The Hebrew designation of Sarah as בעלת בעל means literally that she was "ruled/ owned by a lord."[30] Although semantic developments may have led to a perception of the term that deviated from the basic meaning (as is generally assumed,[31] although it would be hard to prove this suggestion), the latter must have been easily recoverable to any ancient reader of the Hebrew text, and could certainly be expected from the translator of LXX Genesis, as is demonstrated by the translation itself. In 49:23 the MT contains the expression בעלי חצים, employing the noun בעל in the secondary meaning "expert."[32] The Greek translator was most probably not aware of this specific meaning of בעל,[33] and therefore he chose a literal equivalent and translated κύριοι τοξευμάτων – "masters of arrows." Thus, the translator not only knew the basic meaning of בעל, but he applied it when confronted with a use of this word with which he was unfamiliar.

Moreover, the literal meaning seems to be in accordance with concepts of marriage and family in ancient Israel, as described above, especially with regard to the payment of a compensation fee for the bride by the groom and by the fact that family property was owned and managed by a single head of household. Neither aspect was acceptable within the framework of the law in Ptolemaic Egypt. The translation of the LXX acknowledges this cultural difference and accordingly gave the passage a rendering that avoids both the association of marriage with the relation between an owner and his property and with the attribution to the husband of the ruling position in marriage.[34]

A further example for the different attitude of the LXX to the relationship of women and men is attested in 38:16:

> MT   *Come on* (הבה נא), I will come in to you (אבוא אליך).
> LXX   *Allow me* (Ἔασόν με) to come in to you (εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς σέ).

According to the MT, Judah simply indicates his intention to Tamar, who is disguised as a prostitute: "Come on, I will come in to you!" (הבה נא אבוא אליך). According to the LXX, however, Judah seeks Tamar's consent to sexual intercourse. The source for this difference was neither a Hebrew *Vorlage*

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[30] Compare Marsman, *Women*, 145–47. The formula reappears in Deut 22:22.

[31] Compare Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch* 1:162 s.v. בַּעַל 2: "Eheherr;" most detailed in Neubauer, *Beiträge*, 39–42.

[32] Compare, for example, Gen 37:19 (בעל חלמות) and Eccl 10:11 (בעל לשון).

[33] בעל as "expert" occurs two times, in Gen 37:19 and 49:23. The Greek translation, however, captured this meaning in neither instance, nor in any further place. In Gen 37:19, where the Hebrew has בעל חלמות "expert of dreams," the Greek has ἐνυπνιαστής "dreamer," which is most probably a contextual guess.

[34] It should be noted, however, that the concept of the husband's dominance over his wife is expressed in both MT and LXX Gen 3:16 in the context of Eve's punishment: "… to the woman he [the Lord God] said, … he [your husband] shall rule over you."

different from the MT, nor a misunderstanding of the imperative הבה.[35] Instead, it was the translator who introduced the change. We may presume that he wanted to make the text more acceptable within the cultural framework of Ptolemaic Egypt, and we should therefore consider the different contexts of the two versions. Although there are no direct parallels to 38:16 in the Hellenistic legal papyri, the different approaches to the issue of consent to intercourse may be found within the legal frameworks of how marriages were arranged in ancient Israel and in Ptolemaic Egypt.

In ancient Israel, the arrangement of a marriage was negotiated between the groom and the bride's father.[36] Additionally, the proprietary interest over a specific woman, being a basic element of the marriage agreement and the marriage in ancient Israel, extended above all to that woman's sexuality.[37] In Ptolemaic Egypt, however, marriage was an agreement between the bride and the groom.[38] This can be illustrated by the fact that the act of *ekdosis* ("'giving away' of the bride for the purpose of marriage"[39]) not only "was commonly performed by women as well" but could even be performed by the bride herself.[40] Thus, contrary to the situation in ancient Israel, marriage and the consummation of marriage in Ptolemaic Egypt were dependant on the bride's consent. By making Judah's address to Tamar a plea for consent, the change by the Greek translator most probably reflects this cultural attitude. In consequence, Tamar appears less subordinated in the LXX than in the MT.

5. Genderizing of Children

The introduction of Hellenistic law into LXX Genesis, as observed in the preceding point, extends to yet another context: According to Hellenistic law, daughters could inherit, and married women could own property.[41] This institution of Ptolemaic Egypt also found its way into the LXX Genesis at 31:43:

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[35] Gen 38:16 is the only case in LXX Genesis where הבה is not rendered literally. See, for example, Gen 11:3 הבה נלבנה לבים—δεῦτε πλινθεύσωμεν πλίνθους (similarly 11:4, 7); Gen 29:21 הבה את אשתי—ἀπόδος τὴν γυναῖκά μου (similarly 30:1; 47:15).

[36] See Neubauer, *Beiträge*, 32–33; and Marsman, *Women*, 72; compare Satlow, *Jewish Marriage*, 125–26.

[37] See Marsman, *Women*, 146–47.

[38] So Häge, according to whom marriage in Ptolemaic Egypt was "eine eigene Angelegenheit der Nupturienten" (Häge, *Ehegüterrechtliche Verhältnisse*, 27).

[39] Yiftach-Firanko, *Marriage*, 41.

[40] Ibid., 42–43.

[41] See above, and compare H. J. Wolff, "Hellenistic Private Law," in CRINT*, Section I: The Jewish People in the First Century* (ed. S. Safrai and M. Stern; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974) 1.538: "… women were, in principle, capable without limitation of possessing property and acting in their own right."

> Then in reply Laban said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, and the sons my sons, and the livestock are my livestock; and all things that you see …

MT   are mine (הבלי הוא). And with regard to my daughters, what can I do to them (ולבנתי מה אעשה לאלה) or to their children…"

LXX   are mine and my daughters' (ἐμά ἐστιν καί τῶν θυγατέρων μου). What shall I do today for these (τί ποιήσω ταύταις) or for their children …."

Although the consonantal text of the Hebrew is not entirely clear at this point, the Masoretes were most probably right in placing the *atnaḥ* under הוא, thus separating it from ולבנתי.[42] According to the MT, therefore, the list of Laban's properties closes with the final statement, "All things that you see are mine." According to the LXX, however, this last sentence includes the daughters of Laban: "All things that you see are mine and my daughters'." Therefore, Laban's daughters are presented as owning property, although they were married.

Obviously, under Hellenistic law the capability of daughters to inherit and to be the owners of property led to a diminishing of the difference in status between sons and daughters and was part of a larger cultural complex in which the difference in status between men and women practically disappeared.[43] It seems that this development is reflected in the occasional translation of Hebrew בן with Greek τέκνον "child" instead of the usual equivalent υἱός "son." In 31:16, this rendering appears again in the context of property law: "All the wealth …

MT   is ours and our *sons'* (ולבנינו).
LXX   shall belong to us and to our *children* (καί τοῖς τέκνοις ἡμῶν).

Although Hebrew בן is not restricted to the designation of sons but may sometimes refer to children in general, the present reading of the MT most probably refers to sons only: The family inheritance would be owned by sons, and normally not by daughters.[44] The translation of the LXX implies, on the other hand, that both sons and daughters have property rights.

Additionally, the Hellenistic tendency to diminish the difference in status between sons and daughters is likely to have had the consequence that the gender of a child was less important than in ancient Israel:[45] Having sons was less important. Most probably, this difference left its traces in cases like 30:1:

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[42] See J. W. Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Genesis* (SBLSCS 35; Atlanta: Scholars, 1993) 520.

[43] See Wolff, "Hellenistic Private Law," 538.

[44] Note, however, that according to Israelite law, "daughters had a right to inherit in the absence of sons" (Marsman, *Women*, 291).

[45] "In all ancient Near Eastern societies sons were preferred over daughters" (Marsman, *Women*, 289).

And Rachel … said to Jacob:

MT   Give me *sons* (בנים).
LXX   Give me *children* (τέκνα).

With regard to the correspondence of בנים and τέκνα, it not important for this argument to determine whether בנים should be understood as "sons" or "children" in a given context. What is important is to note that in the LXX Rachel does not express a preference for a daughter or a son. Thus, the more equal legal status of sons and daughters in Hellenistic law seems to have led to a new balance in the way the gender of children was regarded.

6. Women and Religion

Finally, the rendering of two passages in LXX Genesis most probably was influenced by a somewhat different attitude toward women in the realm of religion. The first is 2:17: "Of the tree for knowing good and evil …

MT   *you* (sg) shall not eat (תאכל), for … *you* (sg) shall die (תמות).
LXX   *you* (pl) shall not eat (οὐ φάγεσθε), for … *you* (pl) shall die (ἀποθανεῖσθε).

In the MT, the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge is addressed to Adam only, which is appropriate because he is the only person living at that time. However, the prohibition in the LXX already includes Eve, although she is not yet present at that point in the narrative.[46] Notwithstanding the question of the reason for this change, the result is a new balance of the two genders: God's interdiction is directed to both, which means that both have an equal status in God's eyes.

The second possible instance of a higher religious status for women occurs in 4:1:

"Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said:

MT   I have acquired a *man* (איש) with the LORD.
LXX   I have acquired a *man* (ἄνθρωπον) through GOD.

After giving birth to her first child—the first child ever born according to this narrative—, Eve says: "I have acquired a man with the LORD/through God." The Hebrew איש means "man" both in the sense of male and in the generic, gender inclusive sense.[47] In the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2, however, in each case it seems to carry the first meaning, "male."[48] In these

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[46] A parallel at Jub 3:17, also, seems to refer to a plural, as pointed out by an anonymous reviewer, to whom I am grateful. The reading of Jubilees is a possible indication that the plural was already part of the *Vorlage* of the translator.

[47] See Gesenius, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch* 1:50–51.

[48] See Gen 2:23–24; 3:6, 16.

contexts איש is generally rendered by LXX Genesis as ἀνήρ "male,"[49] while ἄνθρωπος "man" serves as the equivalent to האדם.[50] In the present instance, however, the LXX translates איש with ἄνθρωπος, which changes the focus of the text: While the MT speaks about the birth of the first son, the LXX version tells how humans start to reproduce themselves. It is important to note that in the beginning it was God who created ἄνθρωπος "man" (cf. 1:26–27 and 2:8). The wording of the LXX in the present passage uses the same Greek word, underlining that from now on Eve takes part in the ongoing creation, *creatio continua*, a concept that is clearly expressed in the LXX,[51] but is absent from the MT. This religious view of pregnancy and birth is familiar to Rabbinic thinking as well,[52] and obviously attributes a very prominent religious and social role to women.

Conclusion

Although the differences between the depictions of men and women in the MT and the LXX belong to different categories, the overall impression is that in comparison with the MT, LXX Genesis tends to present women as more active, less economically dependent on men, and holding a higher status in the contexts of family, the public, and religion.

Considering the differences from a text-historical perspective, the MT probably preserves the original text in most cases, while the LXX reflects later textual developments. Some of the differences seem to have been in trans-lator's *Vorlage*, but others were obviously introduced by the translator.

Not all the changes came into the text due to different attitudes toward women. Some are simply the result of textual or lexical developments. Most of them, however, are the result of a process of contextualizing the biblical text in the framework of Ptolemaic Egypt rather than in the world of the Ancient Orient.

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[49] See Gen 2:23; 3:6, 16; 4:23; etc.

[50] See Loader, *The Septuagint, Sexuality, and the New Testament*, 33.

[51] The idea of *creatio continua* is most clearly expressed in LXX Gen 2:3: καί ηὐλόγησεν ὁ θεὸς τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἑβδόμην καί ἡγίασεν αὐτήν ὅτι ἐν αὐτ ῇ κατέπαυσεν ἀπὸ πάν - των τῶν ἔργων αὐτοῦ ὧν ἤρξατο ὁ θεὸς ποῖησαι "And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it he ceased from all his works which God *began* to do." In the LXX, the use of ἄρχω for ברא is attested only here.

[52] See D. Salzer, "Women's world in Massekhet Rosh ha-Shanah: Women and creation in bRosh ha-Shanah 10b-11b," in *A Feminist Commentary on the Babylonian Talmud: Intro-duction and Studies* (ed. T. Ilan et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) 197–215.