

UNGODLY ADDITIONS? AN ANALYSIS OF THE PLUSES OF ἀσεβής IN LXX PROVERBS

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Abstract. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the transformations of the Septuagint (LXX) compared to the Masoretic Text (MT). These transformations often entail shifts of a theological or ethical nature. LXX Proverbs, being a free translation, is a prime example in which such transformations took place. Therefore, in order to contribute to the question of the theology and ethics of LXX Proverbs, this contribution analyses the pluses of ἀσεβής (‘ungodly, impious’) in LXX Proverbs. Since this word can be considered a *locus theologicus et ethicus*, examining its pluses, which are explicit differences between the Hebrew and Greek text, might shed light on the translation technique and the theology and ethics of LXX Proverbs.

Keywords: Septuagint, Proverbs, ἀσεβής, Ethics, Translation Technique.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the transformations of the Septuagint (LXX) compared to the Masoretic Text (MT). These transformations often entail shifts of a theological or ethical nature. In an attempt to examine whether the LXX of Proverbs attests a different theology than MT, I have recently analysed the pluses in LXX Proverbs containing κύριος and θεός.¹ The results of these studies have indicated that the LXX translation of Proverbs attests a more nuanced theology than its Hebrew counterpart. Next to the study of theological transformations, there is the question whether the LXX text of Proverbs attests a different view on ethics. Several scholars have already indicated, often very briefly, that the LXX translator of Proverbs has tried to moralise his text.² However, none

¹ See Bryan BEECKMAN, “De Nomine Dei: Theological Exegesis in Verses of the Septuagint Version of Proverbs Containing ὁ θεός Without Any Counterpart in the Masoretic Text?,” *Louvain Studies* 43.4 (2020): 372–387; Bryan BEECKMAN, “De Nominibus Sacris: Theological Exegesis in Verses of LXX-Proverbs Containing ὁ κύριος Without Any Counterpart in MT?,” *RB* 128.4 (2021): 501–524; Bryan BEECKMAN, *One or Two Translators? Translation Technique and Theology of LXX Proverbs and its Relation to LXX Job*, BZAW 549 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2024), 262–295.

² See Gillis GERLEMAN, *Studies in the Septuagint. III. The Book of Proverbs*, LUA 52/3 (Lund: Gleerup, 1956), esp. 36ff.; Michael B. DICK, “The Ethics of the Old Greek Book of Proverbs,” in *The Studia Philonica Annual. Studies in Hellenistic Judaism Volume II 1990*, ed. David T. RUNIA,

of these studies has systematically examined the usage of Greek lexemes pertaining to morality.

Therefore, in order to contribute to the question of the theology and ethics of LXX Proverbs, this contribution will analyse the pluses of ἀσεβής ('ungodly, impious') in LXX Proverbs.³ The adjective ἀσεβής occurs 90 times in the Greek text of Proverbs and can, thus, be regarded as part of the translator's (moral and theological) register.⁴ Since this word can be considered a *locus theologicus et ethicus*,⁵ examining its pluses, which are explicit differences between the Hebrew and Greek text, might shed light on the translation technique and the theology and ethics of LXX Proverbs. First, all pluses of ἀσεβής in LXX Proverbs will be registered. Afterwards they will be evaluated in order to discern whether they stem from the translator or not. If so, this might give us more information about the translation technique and possibly also about the so-called theology and ethics of the Greek text.

1. Registration of the pluses of ἀσεβής in LXX Proverbs

Before we can start evaluating the pluses of ἀσεβής in LXX Proverbs, we need to register all the instances where ἀσεβής records a plus. The Hatch & Redpath Concordance (HR) to the Septuagint gives an overview of these pluses.⁶ According to HR, the following verses of LXX Proverbs contain a plus of ἀσεβής: Prov 10:24; 11:3;⁷ 12:26; 15:6;⁸ 15:18; 16:2; 18:22; 21:22.26.

Brown Judaic Studies 226 (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991), 20–50, esp. 21–26; Johann COOK, *The Septuagint of Proverbs. Jewish and/or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs*, SVT 69 (Leiden — New York — Köln: Brill, 1997); Michael V. FOX, *Proverbs An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary*, HBCE 1 (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2015), 43–45.

³ The English translation of the Greek words used in this article are taken from Johan LUST, Erik EYNIKEL and Katrin HAUSPIE, *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint. Third Corrected Edition* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2015) (= LEH).

⁴ See David-Marc D'HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbes*. BA 17 (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 2000), 82. In the majority of instances where ἀσεβής is used in LXX Proverbs, it is used as a translation of words stemming from the root עשׂר .

⁵ The adjective ἀσεβής denotes unethical behaviour which is directed towards God. Therefore, the word has both an ethical and theological meaning. See Sven LESEMANN and Ralph BRUCKER, "ἀσεβεία, ἀσεβής, ἀσεβέω," in *Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint. Volume I: Alpha – Gamma*, ed. Eberhard BONS (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2020), 1191–1214, esp. 1202–1207 (ἀσεβής).

⁶ See Edwin HATCH and Henry A. REDPATH, *A Concordance to the Septuagint. And the Other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (Including the Apocryphal Books)*. Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House Company, 1998), 170–171 (= HR).

⁷ HR has 11:4 instead of 3. See HR, 171.

In this article, only the clear pluses will be examined, the instances where HR records a dagger (†), *i.e.* Prov 21:30; 24:22 and 28:2, will not be discussed since they do not present a clear-cut plus. Moreover, before starting our evaluation, several pluses of ἀσεβής proposed by HR can be eliminated and will not be discussed in this article. It concerns the following instances:

- (1) Some of the pluses registered in HR only occur in Codex Alexandrinus (A). It concerns the pluses in Prov 10:24 (καρδία δὲ ἀσεβοῦς ἐκλείψει) and 12:26 (αἰ δὲ γινῶμαι τῶν ἀσεβῶν ἀνεπιεικεῖς).⁹ Since they only occur in this codex, they cannot be considered to be part of the Old Greek (OG) text.¹⁰ Therefore, they will not be evaluated here.
- (2) Next to these instances, the proposed plus in 11:3 is not a plus, since ἀσεβής is used in this verse as a rendering of מִתְּלַחֵץ ('to act faithlessly').¹¹ Since it cannot be considered a plus *vis-à-vis* the Hebrew text, it falls outside the scope of the present research.

Thus, there are six pluses of ἀσεβής in LXX Proverbs in total: 15:6; 15:18; 16:2; 18:22; 21:22.26. These textual features will be discussed and evaluated in the next section.

2. Evaluation of the pluses of ἀσεβής in LXX Proverbs

Having registered all the instances where the LXX text of Proverbs attests a plus of ἀσεβής compared to MT, we will now examine whether they stem from the translator and, if so, whether they reveal a diverging view on ethics and/or theology than the Hebrew text.

⁸ HR has 15:5 instead of 6. See HR, 171.

⁹ The stich of Prov 10:24 which only occurs in A, is not attested in the main text of Rahlfs. The stich of Prov 12:26, on the other hand, is attested in Rahlfs' text.

¹⁰ Michael V. Fox regards these pluses of A as later additions during the transmission process of the Greek text. See FOX, *Proverbs*, 183 (Prov 10:24) and 204 (Prov 12:26).

¹¹ The translation of the Hebrew words used in this article are based on the dictionary of David J. A. CLINES, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew Volume I–IX* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2016).

2.1 Prov 15:6

MT ¹²	LXX ¹³
בֵּית צַדִּיק תְּפִיךָ רַב וּבֵית בְּזוּיָאֵת רְשָׁע נִצְרָתָהּ:	(a) ἐν πλεοναζούσῃ δικαιοσύνῃ ἰσχὺς πολλή, (b) οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ὀλόρριζοι ἐκ γῆς ὀλοῦνται. (c) οἴκοις δικαίων ἰσχὺς πολλή, (d) καρποὶ δὲ ἀσεβῶν ἀπολοῦνται.
In the house of the righteous there is much treasure, but trouble befalls the income of the wicked. ¹⁴	(a) In abounding righteousness is great strength, (b) but the impious will be removed root and branch from the earth. (c) In the homes of the righteous there is much strength, (d) but the fruits of the impious will perish. ¹⁵

In LXX Prov 15:8, ἀσεβής is attested twice. One of those attestations is a rendering of the Hebrew עֲשָׂרָה (‘wicked, criminal’).¹⁶ Most scholars argue that stichs c and d of Prov 15:6 do not belong to the OG since the Syro-Hexapla (Syh) considers them hexaplaric and since they can be deemed corrections towards the Hebrew compared to the more free translation attested in stichs a and b.¹⁷ However,

¹² For the Hebrew text of Proverbs, the *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (BHQ) has been used. See Jan DE WAARD, *Proverbs*, BHQ 17 (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2008).

¹³ For the Greek text of Proverbs, the edition by Rahlfs-Hanhart has been used since the Göttingen edition is not yet available. See Alfred RAHLFS and Robert HANHART, *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpretes* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006).

¹⁴ The English translation of the Hebrew is taken from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

¹⁵ For the English translation of LXX Proverbs, see Johann COOK, “Proverbs,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under that Title*, ed. Albert PIETERSMA and Benjamin G. WRIGHT (New York – Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 621–647.

¹⁶ In LXX Proverbs, ἀσεβής is in the majority of cases used as a rendering of עֲשָׂרָה. See HR, 170–171.

¹⁷ See, *i.a.*, Paul DE LAGARDE, *Anmerkungen zur Griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: F. A. Brockhaus, 1863), 49–50; Antoine J. BAUMGARTNER, “Étude critique sur l’état du texte du livre des Proverbes d’après les principales traductions anciennes” (Ph.D. diss. Faculty of Philosophy, University of Leipzig; Leipzig, imprimerie orientale Wilhelm Eduard Drugulin, 1890), 144; Charles T. FRITSCH, “The Treatment of the Hexaplaric Signs in the Syro-Hexaplar of Proverbs,” *JBL* 72.3 (1953): 169–181, 175; D’HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbes*, 49 and 248; Johann

in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, Lorenzo Cuppi has argued that these stichs might stem from the translator himself.¹⁸ Some of the elements in these verses align with what we know about the translation technique of the LXX translator.¹⁹ He comes to this conclusion on the basis of a fivefold argument:

- (1) The rendering of עכר by ἀπόλλυμι: The translator did not know the meaning of עכר and therefore used a form of ἀπόλλυμι as he did for כרת in 2:22 and 10:31;²⁰
- (2) The LXX translator read חסך by חֹזֶק ('strength') instead of חֶסֶד ('wealth, treasure') in 15:6a and 27:24 and consequently rendered it by ισχύς;²¹
- (3) The rendering of the conjunction ו with δὲ, instead of καί, which the LXX translator applies elsewhere and which is only shared by Symmachus (σ);²²
- (4) The remarkable translation of תְּבִיבָה ('product, revenue') by καρπός ('fruit') which occurs elsewhere in LXX Proverbs (*i.e.* 3:9; 10:16 and 18:20);²³
- (5) The usage of the plural form in Greek for lexemes used in the singular in Hebrew, *i.e.* οἴκοις, δικαίων, καρποί and ἄσεβῶν, which can also be observed in other parts of LXX Proverbs.²⁴

Consequently, the additional stichs can be regarded as a double translation.²⁵ According to Cuppi, the translator has chosen to provide a double translation

COOK, "Textual Problems in the Septuagint Version of Proverbs," *JNSL* 26.1 (2000): 171–179, 173–174; FOX, *Proverbs*, 232.

¹⁸ See LORENZO CUPPI, "Long Doublets in the Septuagint of the Book of Proverbs: With a History of the Research on the Greek Translations" (PhD diss. University of Durham, 2012), 198ff.

¹⁹ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 198–200.

²⁰ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 199.

²¹ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 199–200.

²² See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 200.

²³ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 200. See also HR, 723–724.

²⁴ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 200.

²⁵ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 200. See also HERMANN VON LIPS, RUTH SCORALICK and HANS-WINFRIED JÜNGLING, "Paroimiai / Proverbia / Sprichwörter / Sprüche Salomos," in *Septuaginta Deutsch: Erläuterungen und Kommentare zum griechischen Alten Testament. Band II: Psalmen bis Daniel*, ed. Martin KARRER and Wolfgang KRAUS (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2011), 1950–2000, 1975 (= LXX.D).

because he struggled to render וְעָרַר וְעָרַר .²⁶ Moreover, he was also motivated by the attestation of וְעָרַר , which meaning depends on its vocalisation (see *supra*), in his *Vorlage*.²⁷ Indeed, based upon arguments regarding the translation technique of the LXX translator of Proverbs, stichs c and d can also be attributed to the work of the translator.

Thus, our plus of $\alpha\sigma\epsilon\beta\eta\varsigma$ in Prov 15:6 is a double translation of $\nu\psi\gamma$. Although this double translation is based upon the translator’s struggle to render his Hebrew *Vorlage*, it strengthens the imagery of the verse. The double translation repeats the idea that being righteous leads to strength, whereas being impious (as a contrast to being righteous) leads to destruction. By doing so, he makes the text more moralising, which is a trend that can be observed throughout LXX Proverbs.²⁸

2.2 Prov 15:18

MT	LXX
<p>$\text{אִישׁ שֶׁהוּא מְבֹרָךְ מְדַוֵּן וְאִתְּרָם יִשְׁקֵיט רֵיב׃$</p>	<p>(a) ἀνὴρ θυμώδης παρασκευάζει μάχας, (b) μακρόθυμος δὲ καὶ τὴν μέλλουσιν καταπραΰνει. (c) μακρόθυμος ἀνὴρ κατασβέσει κρίσεις, (d) ὁ δὲ ἀσεβής ἐγείρει μᾶλλον.</p>
<p>Those who are hot-tempered stir up strife, but those who are slow to anger calm contention.</p>	<p>(a) A passionate man stirs up fights, (b) but he who is slow to anger appeases even an incipient one. (c) A man slow to anger will extinguish disputes, (d) but an impious person stirs them up exceedingly.</p>

The plus of $\alpha\sigma\epsilon\beta\eta\varsigma$ in Prov 15:18 is located in the second distich. Here as well, there is a discussion which part of the verse belongs to the OG and which can be deemed hexaplaric. According to Charles T. Fritsch, Antoine J. Baumgartner and Johann Cook, stich c and d present the OG, whereas a and b are hexaplaric.²⁹

²⁶ See CUPPI, “Long Doublets,” 200.

²⁷ See CUPPI, “Long Doublets,” 200.

²⁸ See footnote 2.

²⁹ See FRITSCH, “The Treatment of the Hexaplaric Signs,” 175; BAUMGARTNER, “Étude critique,” 147; COOK, “Textual Problems,” 174. Baumgartner elaborates that the structure of c and d is mixed up. They should be structured the other way around (= first d and then c). According to

Michael V. Fox argues that stichs a and b probably attest the OG text,³⁰ whereas c and d are part of a later addition, inserted during the textual transmission of the Greek text.³¹

However, both distichs might stem from the LXX translator. As Cuppi has indicated, the rendering of י by δέ is common in LXX Proverbs and is only shared by σ'.³² Also δὲ καί is often employed by the translator to render י.³³ This is not shared by any of the revisors.³⁴ As such, the stichs a and b, c and d might be a double translation.³⁵ In stich a and b, the translator translated הַמָּוֹדֵד by θυμώδης ('passionate, furious, angry, hot-tempered'),³⁶ which he also did in 22:24. For his translation of stich c and d, he read הַמָּוֹדֵד as חַמְדָּוֹת ('violence, wrong') which he, consequently, translated by ἄσεβής since multiple lexemes of ἄσεβ* often served as a rendering of words stemming from the root חמד.³⁷

By providing a double translation of the Hebrew text, the LXX translator has changed the meaning of the text by adding ἄσεβής and, by doing so, moralising the verse.³⁸ The Greek verse calls people to be patient. If one is patient, he will be able to settle disputes. However, it are the hot-tempered and the impious that provoke fights. One can also conclude that whoever is patient, will receive favour in the eyes of the Lord since they are not considered ungodly.

him, this change is to be attributed to a later scribe who was unable to discern the LXX translator's work in this verse and who has mixed up stichs c and d. See BAUMGARTNER, "Étude critique," 147.

- ³⁰ David-Marc d'Hamonville also believes verse 18 (stich a and b) belong to the LXX translator since it attests the vocabulary and style used by the translator elsewhere. See D'HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbs*, 49 and 251.
- ³¹ See FOX, *Proverbs*, 236.
- ³² See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 144 and 200. Aquila (א') and θ' would render it by καί.
- ³³ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 167 and 174.
- ³⁴ See CUPPI, "Long Doublets," 168.
- ³⁵ See LXX.D, 1975.
- ³⁶ LEH attests 'passionate' for Prov 15:18, see LEH, 280. However, 'passionate' can also have a positive meaning. Therefore, the other meanings recorded in LEH, i.e. 'furious, angry,' seem to be more appropriate. Takamitsu Muraoka's lexicon has 'agitated by or given to anger.' See Takamitsu MURAOKA, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Leuven: Peeters, 2009), 334.
- ³⁷ See DE LAGARDE, *Anmerkungen*, 50. For the rendering of words of the root חמד by ἄσεβ*, see HR, 169–171.
- ³⁸ See COOK, "Textual Problems," 174. Fox, however, does not agree with Cook on this matter since he regards stich c and d, where the plus of ἄσεβής is attested, as a later addition and adds that the ethical shift is too small. See FOX, *Proverbs*, 236–237.

2.3 Prov 16:2

MT	LXX
כל־דרכי־אִישׁ טַיִם בְּעֵינָיו וְהַיְהוָה יִשְׁקָלֵם׃	πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ ταπεινοῦ φανερά παρὰ τῷ θεῷ, οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται. ³⁹
All one's ways may be pure in one's own eyes, but the Lord weighs the spirit.	All the works of the humble are manifest with God, but the impious shall perish in an evil day.

LXX Prov 16:2 attests a different translation than MT. The plus of ἀσεβής occurs in the second stich of Prov 16:2. Fox asserts that it cannot be satisfactorily determined whether stich b belongs to the LXX translator or an earlier scribe.⁴⁰ Moreover, Fox states that stich b is not found in Codex Vaticanus (B). This is incorrect. B does attest this stich.⁴¹ When we look at Origen's Hexapla, we find the following for 16:2:⁴²

Hebrew (MT)	Hexapla
כל־דרכי־אִישׁ טַיִם בְּעֵינָיו	O': πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ ταπεινοῦ φανερά παρὰ τῷ θεῷ. Ἄλλος: πᾶσαι ὁδοὶ ἀνδρός ... α': ... διαυγεῖς ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς αὐτοῦ
וְהַיְהוָה יִשְׁקָלֵם	O': Vacat. ※θ': καὶ ἐδραζων πνεύματα κύριος

Interestingly, for stich b, wherein our plus of ἀσεβής is attested, O' has nothing. Theodotion (θ') attests a translation that is faithful to the Hebrew text. The fact that οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται is not attested in Origen's version of the LXX is remarkable. However, in the footnote of 16:4 (LXX 16:9), which reads πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ κυρίου μετὰ δικαιοσύνης φυλάσσεται δὲ ὁ ἀσεβής εἰς

³⁹ The original scribe of Codex Vaticanus (B) wrote ἀσεβής, but it was later corrected by a later scribe to ἀσεβεῖς. See Al WOLTERS, *Proverbs. A Commentary Based on Paroimiai in Codex Vaticanus*, SCS (Leiden – Boston, MA: Brill, 2020), 198.

⁴⁰ See FOX, *Proverbs*, 245.

⁴¹ The text of B has been consulted online. See https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr. See also WOLTERS, *Proverbs*, 66.

⁴² See Frederick FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum vetus testamentum fragmenta. Tomus 2 Jobus – Malachias* (Oxonii: Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1875), 343.

ἡμέραν κακὴν and whose second stich closely resembles the stich of our verse in question, Frederick Field mentions that the LXX reads οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται.⁴³ Thus, only the Greek text of Origen did not attest οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται of Prov 16:2, hence the *vacat* in Fields' edition.

Moreover, nothing indicates that this verse is not the translator's own work. Based on the vocabulary used, οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται might have been the work of the translator. Important to note in this regard is that ὄλλυμι is used ten times by the LXX translator of Proverbs and in the majority of instances it is used in connection with ἀσεβής (see 1:32; 2:22; 10:28; 11:7; 15:6 and 16:2).⁴⁴ Next to this, the attestation of δέ instead of καί might also point in the direction of the LXX translator. Thus, we can assume that the verse under discussion is the work of the translator. However, the question is: does the Greek text of 16:2 stich b reflect a diverging *Vorlage* which differed from MT, or is it a new proverb created by the translator? Elsewhere, I have argued that the plus of οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται in 16:2 reflects a diverging Hebrew *Vorlage*.⁴⁵

Thus, the plus of ἀσεβής in 16:2 does not provide us with additional information regarding the theological or ethical worldview of the LXX translator of Proverbs. However, the text itself is more ethical than the verse attested in MT. Those who are humble are held in high regard with God whereas the impious, who are not humble, shall perish.

⁴³ See FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum*, 343, n. 7: “[A]d LXX pertinent versiculus, οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς – ὀλοῦνται, qui quasi posterior pars v. 2 vulgo legitur.”

⁴⁴ The verb ὄλλυμι is used only 24 times in the LXX: 10 times in Proverbs, five times in Job and nine times in Jeremiah. See HR, 987.

⁴⁵ See Bryan BEECKMAN, “Trails of a Different *Vorlage* and A Free Translator in LXX-Proverbs. A Text-Critical Analysis of Prov 16:1–7,” *OTE* 30.3 (2017): 571–591, 586–588. See *ibid* for a full discussion.

2.4 Prov 18:22

MT	LXX
<p>הַיִּשְׁתֵּי אִשָּׁה מְצֵא חַיִּים וְחֵן מֵיְהוָה׃</p>	<p>ὁς εὗρεν γυναῖκα ἀγαθὴν εὗρεν χάριτας, ἔλαβεν δὲ παρὰ θεοῦ ἰλαρότητα</p> <p>(a) ὁς ἐκβάλλει γυναῖκα ἀγαθὴν ἐκβάλλει τὰ ἀγαθὰ· ὁ δὲ κατέχων μοιχαλίδα ἄφρων καὶ ἄσεβής.</p>
<p>He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.</p>	<p>He who has found a good wife has found favors and has received cheerfulness from God.</p> <p>(a) He who rejects a good wife rejects the good, but he who keeps an adulteress is foolish and impious.</p>

The plus of ἄσεβής in Prov 18:22 is located in 22a. As is the case for 15:6.18 (see *supra*), scholars do not agree whether the additional lines belong to the work of the translator or to a later revisor or scribe. However, the majority of scholars tend to regard them as part of the OG text.⁴⁶ Elsewhere, I have argued that the translator added 22a in order to transform the ethical meaning of the text:⁴⁷

By adding the additional stichs, the LXX translator makes clear what happens when one rejects a good wife. If one rejects a good wife, he rejects the good and is considered to be impious and foolish. Therefore, he also falls in disgrace in the eyes of the Lord. Whereas if one finds a good wife and keeps her, he receives joy from the Lord (ἔλαβεν δὲ παρὰ θεοῦ ἰλαρότητα). The additional stichs, thus, add an

⁴⁶ See DE LAGARDE, *Anmerkungen*, 59; FRITSCH, “The Treatment of the Hexaplaric Signs,” 176; Emanuel TOV, “Recensional Differences Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs,” in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible. Collected Essays on the Septuagint*, ed. Emanuel TOV, VTS 72 (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 419–431, 423; Gerhard TAUBERSCHMIDT, *Secondary Parallelism. A Study of Translation Technique in LXX Proverbs*, AcBib 15 (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 49. Crawford Howell Toy and Fox regard them as a later addition. See TOY, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Proverbs*, ICC (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, ²1904), 366; FOX, *Proverbs*, 270. For a full discussion, see Johann COOK and Bryan BEECKMAN, “A Transformation of the Theme of Women in LXX Proverbs? An Examination of the minuses of הַיִּשְׁתֵּי and the pluses of γυνή in Proverbs,” in *XVIII Congress of the IOSCS, Zürich, 2022*, ed. Joshua ALFARO, Marieke DHONT, Gideon KOTZÉ and Alison SALVESEN, SBLSCS (Atlanta: SBL Press, forthcoming).

⁴⁷ Moreover, by adding the additional lines, the LXX translator created an antithesis which is not present in MT. See GERLEMAN, *Proverbs*, 21; TAUBERSCHMIDT, *Secondary Parallelism*, 49–50.

additional ethical layer to the text and spell out what will happen when one rejects a good wife.⁴⁸

The addition of ἀσεβής can, thus, be explained against the translator’s need to provide an explanation to what happens when one rejects a good wife. Only the impious reject a good wife and by doing so reject the good. Therefore, they do not receive the blessings of the Lord.

2.5 Prov 21:22

MT	LXX
עֵיר גְּבָרִים עָלָה חֲכָם וְיָרַד עָז מִבְּטָחָהּ:	πόλεις ὀχυράς ἐπέβη σοφός καὶ καθεῖλεν τὸ ὀχύρωμα, ἐφ’ ᾧ ἐπεποιθισαν οἱ ἀσεβεῖς.
One wise person went up against a city of warriors and brought down the stronghold in which they trusted.	A wise person attacked strong cities and demolished the strongholds in which the impious trusted.

Fox has argued that the plus of ἀσεβής in this verse is a deliberate addition by the LXX translator to provide an explanation of why the wise person would attack strong cities and bring down its strongholds.⁴⁹ Indeed, the Hebrew seems vague in this regard. It does not provide a motivation why the wise person attacked a city of warriors. The LXX translator has provided the readers with a motivation, *i.e.* because it was inhabited by the impious. By doing so, he, intentionally, moralises the verse under discussion.⁵⁰ The σοφός is contrasted with οἱ ἀσεβεῖς, which also happens elsewhere in LXX Proverbs (see 3:35 and 20:26).⁵¹ By making this contrast, the translator emphasises that those who are ungodly are not considered wise.

⁴⁸ See COOK and BEECKMAN, “A Transformation of the Theme of Women in LXX Proverbs?”

⁴⁹ See Michael V. FOX, *Proverbs*, 294.

⁵⁰ See also GERLEMAN, *Proverbs*, 40–41. Baumgartner asserts that the LXX text provides another meaning than the Hebrew text. MT suggests that the wise person can overcome everything, even a fortified city guarded by warriors. The LXX, on the other hand, states that the wise will conquer the cities and strongholds which the impious entrusted. See BAUMGARTNER, “Étude critique,” 195.

⁵¹ In the majority of instances where σοφός is attested in LXX Proverbs, it is contrasted with ἄφρων.

2.6 Prov 21:26

MT	LXX
<p>כִּלְיֹם הַיְהוֹנָן מִתְאַוָּה וְלֹא יִתְאַוָּה יְהוֹן וְלֹא יִתְאַוָּה יְהוֹן</p>	<p>ἀσεβής ἐπιθυμεῖ ὅλην τὴν ἡμέραν ἐπιθυμίας κακάς, ὁ δὲ δίκαιος ἐλεᾷ καὶ οἰκτίρει ἀφειδῶς.</p>
<p>All day long one covets covetously,⁵² but the righteous give and do not hold back.</p>	<p>The impious longs for wicked desires all day long, but the righteous has compassion and pity unsparingly.</p>

In Prov 21:26, the LXX attests a different translation than MT. With regard to the plus of ἀσεβής, it has been noted by scholars that the LXX translator has added this word in order to specify the subject of the first stich of 21:26.⁵³ Compared to MT, which has no explicit subject but whose subject is explicitated in verse 25 (לַצָּר/ὄκνηρός [sluggard]), the LXX translators shift the subject to ἀσεβής. Moreover, the choice for ἀσεβής is inspired by רַיִתָּז/δίκαιος of the second stich and by doing so the translator created a better contrast and an antithetical parallelism that is absent in MT.⁵⁴

Interestingly, the LXX translator has transformed the meaning of the verse on an ethical level. Not only did he do so by adding ἀσεβής, but he also added κακός to indicate what the impious are longing for.⁵⁵ Moreover, he also changed the meaning of the second part of the verse. By reading יהי instead of MT’s ית, he opted for a double translation,⁵⁶ i.e. ἐλεάω and οἰκτίρω, which are common translation equivalents in the LXX for words of the root ית.⁵⁷ By doing so he adds

⁵² The NRSV reads “All day long the wicked covet” for the first stich. This is a translation of the Greek text, since the Hebrew text does not make sense in the context of the verse. However, the translation of the Hebrew text is presented. This translation is also supported by Dominique Barthélemy, see Dominique BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament. Tome 5: Job, Proverbes, Qohélet et Cantique des Cantiques*, OBO 50.5 (Fribourg – Göttingen: Academic Press – Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 677: “Toute la journée il convoite de convoitise.”

⁵³ See TAUBERSCHMIDT, *Secondary Parallelism*, 208–209; FOX, *Proverbs*, 295; BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle*, 676. The explicitation of subjects that are lacking in MT is a common technique of the LXX translator of Proverbs. See, e.g., D’HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbes*, 62ff. (esp. 64–65 for Prov 21:26); TAUBERSCHMIDT, *Secondary Parallelism*, 19; BEECKMAN, *One or Two Translators?*, 283 and 328.

⁵⁴ See Johannes G. JÄGER, *Observationes in Proverbiorum Salomonis versionem Alexandrinam* (Meldorpi et Lipsiae: Apud Reinhold Iacob Boie, 1788), 153; TAUBERSCHMIDT, *Secondary Parallelism*, 208–209.

⁵⁵ See FOX, *Proverbs*, 295; BARTHÉLEMY, *Critique textuelle*, 677.

⁵⁶ See FOX, *Proverbs*, 295.

⁵⁷ See, resp., HR, 449 and 982–983.

the theme of compassion which is not present in MT.⁵⁸ The focus on compassion is also visible elsewhere in LXX Proverbs. Prov 13:9a reads ψυχαὶ δόλῳ πλανῶνται ἐν ἀμαρτίαις δίκαιοι δὲ οἰκτίρουν καὶ ἐλεῶσιν (‘crafty souls go astray in sins, but just people are compassionate and have pity’). These stichs are a plus compared to MT and are, probably, also additions by the LXX translator.⁵⁹ Also in Prov 13:11, οἰκτίρω records a plus. These instances indicate that the LXX translator of Proverbs wanted to emphasise that compassion is a trait of righteous people. The ungodly, on the other hand, do not have this particular trait.

3. Conclusion

The aim of this article was to examine the pluses of ἀσεβής in the Greek text of Proverbs in order to discern whether the LXX translator has transformed the theological and ethical meaning of the text compared to MT. Based upon our evaluation, we can draw the following conclusions with regard to the translation technique and theology and ethics of LXX Proverbs. With regard to the translation technique, the following observations can be made:

- (1) The additional verses where ἀσεβής is attested and which have no counterpart in MT, are often double translations made by the LXX translator. This is the case in Prov 15:6 and 18;
- (2) In two verses, *i.e.* 18:22 and 21:22, the LXX translator added ἀσεβής in order to provide an explanation or motivation which is lacking in MT;
- (3) Only in one instance, *i.e.* Prov 16:2, the plus ἀσεβής has to be explained due to a different Hebrew *Vorlage* that differed from MT. Nonetheless, the verse of the Greek text is more ethical than the verse attested in MT;
- (4) In multiple instances, ἀσεβής is used as a contrast of δίκαιος (15:6 and 21:26), ταπεινός (16:2), μακρόθυμος ἄνθρωπος (18:22) and σοφός (21:22). The use of contrasts is also a trait of the translation technique of LXX Proverbs.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ See D’HAMONVILLE, *Les Proverbes*, 281; LXX.D, 1981.

⁵⁹ See FOX, *Proverbs*, 208.

⁶⁰ See Johann COOK, “Contrasting as a Translation Technique in the LXX of Proverbs,” in *The Quest for Context and Meaning. Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders*, ed. Craig EVANS and Shemaryahu TALMON (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 403–414, esp. 409.

With regard to the ethics and theology of LXX Proverbs, the following can be concluded: Compared to the righteous, the impious is regarded as unrighteous, arrogant, impatient and foolish. He even rejects the good (18:22) and longs for wicked things and lacks compassion (21:26). This unethical behaviour is not deemed good in the eyes of the Lord (16:2). Furthermore, due to his immoral acts, the impious will never be able to receive the blessings of the Lord but will eventually perish (16:2; 18:6 and 21:22). As such, the ethical and the theological are intertwined.

Although this article has aimed to advance the research regarding the ethics of LXX Proverbs, more research is needed in order to come to a complete picture of the ethical transformations of the Greek text. Other pluses of ethical language in LXX Proverbs, such as κακός, ἄκακος, καλός, δίκαιος, δικαιοσύνη, ἀδικία, ἄδικος and ἀδίκως, need to be examined. Consequently, the results of these studies need to be compared with one another. This will not only shed more light on the ethics of the LXX text of Proverbs, but will also tell us something about the ethical worldview of Hellenistic Judaism wherein the LXX translation of Proverbs was made.

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UNGODLY ADDITIONS? AN ANALYSIS OF THE PLUSES OF ἀσεβής IN LXX PROVERBS

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