**TRAILS OF DIFFERENT *VORLAGEN* AND A FREE TRANSLATOR IN PROVERBS: A TEXT-CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF PROV 16:1-7**

***ABSTRACT***

*In recent scholarly debate, more attention has been given to the Book of Proverbs. This book, unlike others, has not been extensively studied when it comes to translation techniques or text-critical research. Nevertheless, the textual witnesses of Proverbs demonstrate some variants, more particularly a lot of minuses and pluses, which are relevant to our understanding of the text. This article provides a text-critical analysis of Prov 16,1-7 using the methodology proposed by Bénédicte Lemmelijn presented in her book ‘A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called ‘Plague Narrative’ in Exodus 7,14-11,10’. The results of this analysis lead to the conclusion that the LXX translator, who translated freely, had a different Vorlage, which had another verse order than the Vorlage of MT and 4QProvb. This contribution offers a step forward in the quest for a better understanding of the translation technique of LXX-Proverbs.*

KEYWORDS: LXX, Proverbs, Text Criticism, Translation Technique

**A INTRODUCTION**

In recent scholarly debate, more attention has been given to the Book of Proverbs[[1]](#footnote-1). This book, unlike others, has not been extensively studied when it comes to translation techniques or text-critical research. Nevertheless, the textual witnesses of Proverbs demonstrate quite some variants, more particularly a lot of minuses and pluses, which are relevant to our understanding of the text. In this contribution, I will make a modest attempt to analyse Prov 16:1-7 in a text-critical way.

The methodology used in this article is the one proposed by Bénédicte Lemmelijn presented in her book ‘*A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called ‘Plague Narrative’ in Exodus 7,14-11,10*’[[2]](#footnote-2). Her methodology consists of three parts: the collection of variants in a synoptical survey (*i.e.* registration), the description of variants and the evaluation thereof[[3]](#footnote-3).

Before we start our own text-critical investigation, a brief state of affairs will be given concerning text-critical issues in Prov 16:1-7. Afterwards, we will analyse the verses, in three stages, using Lemmelijn’s methodology. In the first part, we will register all the variants by comparing the Masoretic Text (MT), Septuagint (LXX) and 4QProvb [[4]](#footnote-4), by means of a textual synopsis. In the second part, we will describe the variants in detail. Every variant will be described in an objective way without adding any interpretation yet. In the third and final part, we will evaluate all the different variants based on the results of part 1 and part 2. At the end of this contribution, some concluding remarks will be made as well as some questions formulated for further research.

**B PROV 16:1-7: A STATE OF AFFAIRS**

Before performing our own text-critical analysis and describing the textual problems concerning Prov 16:1-7, it would be helpful to look at what has already been written about it. This succinct state of affairs will try to present the scholarly debate concerning Prov 16:1-7.

Looking at a number of classical Biblical commentaries on Proverbs, we can see that almost none explicitly mention textual problems relating to Prov 16:1-7[[5]](#footnote-5). However, when we look at the Hebrew version as well as the Greek version of the text itself, we can see a couple of major minuses in the LXX. Some verses are completely missing in the LXX. When we take a look at the specific literature that has been written about text-critical problems in the Book of Proverbs, we see that Emanuel Tov[[6]](#footnote-6), Johann Cook[[7]](#footnote-7) and Michael Fox[[8]](#footnote-8) have described the textual issues regarding Prov 16:1-7 more thoroughly than the commentaries did.

Tov describes chapter 16 as having one of the major visible differences between MT and the LXX, namely ‘*transpositions* of verses and group of verses’[[9]](#footnote-9). He disagrees with de Lagarde, who argues that the reason for these transpositions is connected to textual transmission[[10]](#footnote-10). De Lagarde argues that the Hebrew *Vorlage*, which the translator would have known, did not contain verses 16:6-9, nor verses 1-3 and 5[[11]](#footnote-11). The translator read the chapters, which were standing next to each other in adjacent columns, incorrectly and miscopied the verses. De Lagarde writes:

[M]it 15, 27-29 lief ein nach semitischer anschauung [*sic*] *rectum folium* aus, und auf dem linken rande [*sic*] desselben war 16,6-9 so nachtgetragen, dafs [*sic*] 166 neben 1627, 167 neben 1528, 168 neben 1529 zu steh[e]n kam, während 169 seine stelle [*sic*] unter 168 am untern rande [*sic*] fand. [D]er übersetzer [*sic*] nahm nun an, dafs [*sic*] 166 hinter 1527 gehöre, und so fort[[12]](#footnote-12).

Against de Lagarde, Tov argues that MT and the LXX ‘represent *recensionally different traditions*’[[13]](#footnote-13). In this regard, Tov states that:

The sequence of most sayings in these chapters is loose, and as each one is more or less independent, two different editorial traditions could have existed concerning their sequence […] Furthermore, the type of parallelism of the verses in the arrangement of MT does not make it a more coherent unit than that of the LXX[[14]](#footnote-14).

Cook, in turn, has pointed out that text-critical reflections on Proverbs are very scarce in Old Testament/Septuagintal research. Therefore, he wrote a modest article in the year 2000[[15]](#footnote-15), in which he listed some textual problems concerning the Book of Proverbs. In that article, chapter 16 is mentioned as well, although not as thoroughly as chapter 15. Cook argues that chapter 16 of Proverbs contains the same kind of textual problems as chapter 20[[16]](#footnote-16). The Hebrew version of both chapters contains a lot of verses which have no equivalent in the LXX[[17]](#footnote-17). Except for quite some pluses, it has a lot of apparent inner-textual corruptions as well[[18]](#footnote-18).

Although Cook and Tov have looked into the problem in a serious way, they did not look at the Qumran fragment 4QProvb, whereas, I think, this could offer more insight and lead to an even more profound analysis of the matter. Fox, however, took this fragment into account in his analysis of the verses. He argues that the relocation of verses in Prov 16:1-7 are due to ‘a single person, be it a scribe in the Hebrew transmission, or the Greek translator, or a scribe in the early Greek transmission’[[19]](#footnote-19). According to Fox, ‘scribes in the proto-MT transmission [that] were inspired by the context to add additional relevant proverbs’[[20]](#footnote-20) can explain the absence of verses in the LXX. Fox also agrees with Tov that Prov 16:1-7 could be explained due to different recensions of the text[[21]](#footnote-21).

Having described the scholarly debate with regard to Prov 16:1-7, we will now confront it to our own analysis.

**C REGISTRATION OF THE VARIANTS**

We do not have many variant texts when it comes to Proverbs 16:1-7. We can only take a look at MT and the LXX, since there are no manuscripts found in the Judean desert, in which Prov 16:1-7 is extant[[22]](#footnote-22).

Nevertheless, although no Qumran scrolls have been discovered for the verses discussed in this article, it can still be of some importance to take a look at 4QProvb[[23]](#footnote-23). This fragment contains parts of ‘13,6–9; 14,5–10; 14,12-13; 14,31–35; 15,1-8 and 15,19–31; and possibly 7,9-11’[[24]](#footnote-24). In this respect, Prov 15,19b-31 can be of some importance to our research. Indeed, verses 27a and 28a of chapter 15 are attested in the LXX as verses 6 and 7 of chapter 16 in MT[[25]](#footnote-25).

In our synopsis below, the same symbol register will be used as in Lemmelijn’s book: ‘a combination of three short hyphens (---) designates a minus. Exclamation marks (!) point to a different location of words in the respective columns’[[26]](#footnote-26).

| MT  | LXX  | 4QProvb |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **15:27**עֹכֵ֣ר בֵּ֭יתֹו בֹּוצֵ֣עַ בָּ֑צַע------------! וְשֹׂונֵ֖א מַתָּנֹ֣ת--- יִחְיֶֽה׃!!!!!!!!---!!**15:28**לֵ֣ב צַ֭דִּיק יֶהְגֶּ֣ה לַעֲנֹ֑ות וּפִ֥י! רְ֝שָׁעִ֗ים יַבִּ֥יעַ רָעֹֽות׃---!!!!---!---!!!!**16:1**לְאָדָ֥ם מַֽעַרְכֵי־לֵ֑ב וּ֝מֵיְהוָ֗ה מַעֲנֵ֥ה לָשֹֽׁון׃**16:2**כָּֽל־דַּרְכֵי־אִ֭ישׁ זַ֣ךְ בְּעֵינָ֑יו וְתֹכֵ֖ן רוּחֹ֣ות יְהוָֽה׃---------------------**16:3**גֹּ֣ל אֶל־יְהוָ֣ה מַעֲשֶׂ֑יךָ וְ֝יִכֹּ֗נוּמַחְשְׁבֹתֶֽיךָ׃**16:4**כֹּ֤ל פָּעַ֣ל יְ֭הוָה לַֽמַּעֲנֵ֑הוּ------ וְגַם־רָ֝שָׁ֗ע לְיֹ֣ום רָעָֽה׃ **16:5**תֹּועֲבַ֣ת יְ֭הוָה כָּל־גְּבַהּ־לֵ֑ב יָ֥ד לְ֝יָ֗ד--- לֹ֣א יִנָּקֶֽה׃**16:6**בְּחֶ֣סֶד וֶ֭אֱמֶת יְכֻפַּ֣ר עָוֹ֑ן וּבְיִרְאַ֥ת יְ֝הוָ֗ה ס֣וּר--- מֵרָֽע׃**16:7** ---**!****---**בִּרְצֹ֣ות------! יְ֭הוָה------------ דַּרְכֵי־אִ֑ישׁגַּם־אֹ֝ויְבָ֗יו יַשְׁלִ֥ם אִתֹּֽו׃ | **15:27**------------ἐξόλλυσιν ἑαυτὸν ὁ δωρολήμπτηςὁ δὲ μισῶνδώρων λήμψειςσῴζεταιἐλεημοσύναιςκαὶ πίστεσινἀποκαθαίρονται ἁμαρτίαι, τῷ δὲ φόβῳ κυρίου ἐκκλίνειπᾶς ἀπὸ κακοῦ. **15:28**καρδίαιδικαίωνμελετῶσινπίστεις!στόμαδὲἀσεβῶνἀποκρίνεταικακάδεκταὶ παρὰ κυρίῳ ὁδοὶ ἀνθρώπων δικαίων, διὰ δὲ αὐτῶν καὶοἱ ἐχθροὶφίλοι γίνονται.**16:1**---**---****---****---****---****---****16:2** πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ ταπεινοῦ φανερὰ παρὰ**---****---****---**τῷ θεῷ,οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται.**16:3** ------------------**16:4** !!!---!!!!!!**16:5**ἀκάθαρτος παρὰ θεῷ πᾶς ὑψηλοκάρδιος,χειρὶ δὲ χεῖρας ἐμβαλὼν ἀδίκως οὐκἀθῳωθήσεται.**16:6**!!!!!!!!!!!**16:7**ἀρχὴὁδοῦ ἀγαθῆς!τὸ ποιεῖν τὰ δίκαια, δεκτὰ δὲ παρὰ θεῷ μᾶλλον ἢ θύειν θυσίας.!!!!---!!**16:9** πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ κυρίου ---μετὰ δικαιοσύνης, φυλάσσεται δὲ ὁ ἀσεβὴς εἰς ἡμέρανκακήν. | **f. 13**[ר]עכ[ביתו] בצע בצע------------! ושונא[תנת] מ---[יחיה]---------------------------------**f. 13**[לב] צדיק--- לענות ופי!רשעים[יע] יב[רעות]------------------------------------ |

**D DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIANTS**

On the basis of the synopsis made above, we can describe all the different textual variants of Prov 16:1-7. This description will be an exhaustive one, in which even smaller textual differences will be discussed.

In describing the textual differences, we will use the same format as the format used by Lemmelijn[[27]](#footnote-27). In the left column, the biblical reference will be noted followed by a definition of the relationship between the textual witnesses for the respective variant[[28]](#footnote-28). Sometimes, the chapter of the text is indicated in superscript (*e.g.*, MT16,6 = MT Prov 16:6) in order to clarify a specific variation concerning transposed words. In the right column, the variant will be described and discussed. Whenever a variant represents a plus, a plus sign will be placed next to the siglum in which the variant in question is found[[29]](#footnote-29). The description will follow the same order as the synopsis above. Doing so, Prov 15 will be inserted in this analysis as well.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | עכר ביתו בוצע בצע = MT4QProvb+: larger plus. |
| Prov 15:27 MT≠ 4QProvb | בוצע / בצע: the ו is missing from 4QProvb. |
| Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | ἐξόλλυσιν ἑαυτὸν ὁ δωρολήμπτης = LXX+: larger plus. |
| Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | λήμψεις = LXX+: accusative feminine plural noun. |
| Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | ἐλεημοσύναις καὶ πίστεσιν ἀποκαθαίρονται ἁμαρτίαι, τῷ δὲ φόβῳ κυρίου ἐκκλίνει πᾶς ἀπὸ κακοῦ = LXX+: larger plus. The Qumran scroll doesn’t attest it but MT records these words (except for πᾶς) in verse 6 of chapter 16.  |
| Prov 25:27 LXX≠ MT16,6 | בחסד / ἐλεημοσύναις: the Hebrew word is a singular form whereas the Greek word is a plural (dative feminine) form. The meaning differs as well. The Hebrew word conveys the meaning of ‘goodness/kindness’, whereas the Greek word conveys the meaning of ‘kind deeds’. |
| Prov 25:27 LXX≠ MT16,6 | אמת / πίστεσιν: the Hebrew word is a singular form whereas the Greek word is a plural (dative feminine) form. |
| Prov 25:27 LXX≠ MT16,6 | יכפר / ἀποκαθαίρονται: the Hebrew uses a piel yiqyol 3rd masculine singular, whereas the LXX uses a medium/passive indicative present 3rd masculine plural. the verb ἀποκαθαίροντω only occurs once in LXX version of Proverbs[[30]](#footnote-30). Most of the time the Hebrew כפר is translated by ἐξιλάσομαι (to propitiate/ to make atonement/ to be atoned for). Here both words convey to meaning of ‘to purge’. |
| Prov 15:27 LXX ≠ MT16,6 | πᾶς = LXX15+: adjective. |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | צדיק / δικαίων: the Hebrew texts use a masculine singular form whereas the LXX uses a plural form. |
| Prov 15:28 4QProvb ≠ MTLXX | יהגה / μελετῶσιν: MTLXX+: the Hebrew texts use a qal yiqtol 3rd masculine singular form (root: הגה) whereas the LXX uses an active indicative present 3rd plural form (root: μελετάω). |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | לענות / πίστεις: the LXX version attests a noun accusative feminine plural, whereas the Hebrew versions attest a preposition ל + a verb qal infinitive construct (root: ענה). The meaning of the two are different. The Greek word means ‘faithful’ and the Hebrew word means ‘to answer’. |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb | δεκταὶ παρὰ κυρίῳ ὁδοὶ ἀνθρώπων δικαίων, διὰ δὲ αὐτῶν = LXX+: larger plus. We can see the same phenomenon as in the previous verse. LXX attests a plus here but MT attests these words (except δεκταὶ, δικαίων, δὲ) in chapter 16 verse 7. |
| Prov 15:28 MT ≠ LXX | δεκταὶ = LXX+: adjective feminine plural. |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT16,7 | איש / ἀνθρώπων: This word occurs in 15,28 of the LXX and in 16,7 of MT. The LXX word is slightly different than the MT word in 16:7. The Greek ἀνθρώπων is a plural form whereas the Hebrew איש is singular. |
| Prov 15:28 MT ≠ LXX | δικαίων = LXX+: adjective genitive masculine plural. |
| Prov 15:28 MT ≠ LXX | δὲ = LXX+: conjunction. |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT16,7 | ו / αὐτῶν: the Hebrew is a suffix personal pronoun 3rd singular. The Greek equivalent is a personal pronoun 3rd masculine plural. The number of both differs. |
| Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT16,7 | ישלם / φίλοι γίνονται: the LXX version and MT differ from each other. They have a slightly different meaning but they are conveying one and the same thought. The Hebrew uses a hiphil yiqtol 3rd masculine singular (root: שלם), which means ‘to be at peace’. The LXX records a word pair consisting of a nominative plural masculine adjective and a verb indicative present middle 3rd person plural from γίνομαι, which means ‘to become kindly’ or even stronger ‘to become friends’[[31]](#footnote-31). |
| Prov 16:1 MT ≠ LXX | לאדם מערכי לב ומיהוה מענה לשון = MT+: larger plus |
| Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX | τοῦ ταπεινοῦ / איש: a different word is being used in Greek. It specifies the Hebrew use of ‘man’ (איש) to ‘a humble man’ (τοῦ ταπεινοῦ). |
| Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX | עיניו = MT+: noun dual עין + suffix personal pronoun 3rd person masculine. |
| Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX | ותכן = MT+: verb qal participle masculine singular absolute (root: תכן). |
| Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX | רוחות = MT+: noun plural. |
| Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX | οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται = LXX+: larger plus. |
| Prov 16:3 MT ≠ LXX | גל אל יהוה מעשיך ויכנו מחשבתיך = MT+: larger plus. |
| Prov 16,4 MT ≠ LXX16,9 | פעל / τὰ ἔργα: MT 16:4 attests a qal qatal 3rd masculine singular, whereas the LXX 16:9 attests a nominative neutral plural noun. |
| Prov 16:4 MT ≠ LXX | למענהו = MT+: preposition ל + ה article + noun singular מענה + suffix personal pronoun 3rd person masculine singular ו. |
| Prov 16:4 MT ≠ LXX16,9 | μετὰ δικαιοσύνης φυλάσσεται = LXX+: the LXX records a plus in 16:9. A preposition μετὰ + noun genitive feminine singular δικαιοσύνης + verb passive indicative present 3rd singular (root: φυλάσσω). |
| Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX | תועבת / ἀκάθαρτος: תועבת is a noun whereas ἀκάθαρτος is an adjective. The meaning of these two words differs slightly. Although they convey almost the same: the meaning of the Hebrew word (something detestable/abominable) is stronger than that of the Greek word (unclean, impure).  |
| Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX | גבה לב / ὑψηλοκάρδιος: the Greek word is a *hapax legmonenon* in the LXX-*corpus*. They both mean ‘high-hearted’ or ‘arrogant'. |
| Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX | ἐμβαλὼν ἀδίκως = LXX+: verb participle aorist active nominative masculine singular (root : ἐμβάλλω) + adverb. |
| Prov 16:6 MT ≠ LXX | 16:6 = MT+: larger plus. However, this verse is attested in LXX 15:27 (see *supra*). |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | 16:7 = MT+: larger plus. Although a lot of pluses can be found, this verse is partly attested in LXX 15:28 as well (see *supra*). |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | ἀρχὴ = LXX+: noun nominative feminine singular. |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | ἀγαθῆς = LXX+: adjective genitive feminine singular. |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | רצות / τὸ ποιεῖν τὰ δίκαια: the Hebrew verb form is a qal infinitive construct. The Greek variant shows a different reading in chapter 16. It reads τὸ ποιεῖν τὰ δίκαια (to do righteous things[[32]](#footnote-32)). This clause consists of an article τὸ (nominative neutral singular) + the verb ποιεῖν (active infinitive present of the root ποιέω) + the article τὰ (accusative neutral plural) + the adjective δίκαια (accusative neutral plural). |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | δεκτὰ = LXX+: adjective neuter plural. |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | δὲ = LXX+: conjunction.  |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | μᾶλλον ἢ θύειν θυσίας = LXX+: larger plus. |
| Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX | יו = MT+: suffix personal pronoun 3rd masculine singular. |
|  |  |

**E EVALUATION OF THE VARIANTS**

Now that we have described all the variants, we can evaluate them. Some variants listed above do not present any textual problems. These variants concern a different rendering of the number of nouns (*e.g.*, Prov 25:27 LXX≠ MT16 אמת / πίστεσιν; Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb צדיק / δικαίων, *etc.*), an addition of a conjunction (Prov 15:28 MT ≠ LXX δὲ; Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX δὲ) or a scribal error (Prov 15:27 MT≠ 4QProvb  בוצע / בצע.). The registration and description thereof suffices. However, some other variants do form textual problems. We can divide them into two categories: ‘minor’ and ‘major’ variants. We will first discuss the ‘minor’ variants. The ‘major’, or using Lemmelijn’s label, ‘text-relevant’ variants[[33]](#footnote-33), will be evaluated thereafter.

**1 ‘Minor’ variants**

If we look at the minor variants, we can see that most of them can be explained by the translation technique[[34]](#footnote-34) of the LXX translator. Most scholars agree that the LXX translator of Proverbs rendered his *Vorlage* in a ‘free’ way[[35]](#footnote-35). Although there is general consensus concerning the ‘free’ character of the translation, there are still some on-going discussions with regard to the ‘faithfulness’[[36]](#footnote-36) of the translation[[37]](#footnote-37).

The following variants can be explained by looking at the LXX translator’s translation technique.

1a Prov 25:27 LXX≠ MT16,6 (בחסד / ἐλεημοσύναις)

We can see that the number of both words differ. The Hebrew word is singular whereas the Greek word is in a plural form. As mentioned in the description (see *supra*), the meaning differs as well. MT uses a more general term ‘goodness/kindness’ than the LXX. The Greek conveys a more specific meaning: ‘kind deeds’[[38]](#footnote-38). The LXX translator rendered this word in a rather free way as he tried to specify the meaning of the Hebrew word. Still he remained faithful to his *Vorlage*, and the meaning of the verse remains the same.

1b Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT16,7 (ישלם / φίλοι γίνονται)

We can see that the LXX attests a stronger expression than MT. The translator seems to have made the expression stronger and contrasted οἱ ἐχθροὶ to φίλοι[[39]](#footnote-39). This contrast is less visible in the Hebrew text. We get the impression that the translator wanted to go further than just mere forgiveness which is attested in the Hebrew text. He is speaking about reconciliation with the enemies. It pertains to the renewal of a relationship that was once broken by the infliction of evil.

1c Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb (לענות / πίστεις)

The LXX notes a noun feminine plural, which the Hebrew does not. MT attests a verb in the infinitive form. The meaning of the two differs completely as well: ‘faithfulness’ (Greek) vs. ‘to answer’ (Hebrew). Here, we can see the translator correcting the poetical structure of the Hebrew. The Greek word forms a better word pair with κακά than לענות with רעות. Word pairs are often used in poetry to create parallelism. The parallelism works better in the Greek version than it does in the Hebrew version[[40]](#footnote-40). The LXX-translator is being a ‘creative’ translator,[[41]](#footnote-41) by improving the poetical structure of the verse.

1d Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX (איש / τοῦ ταπεινοῦ)

In this case, we can see that the translator dealt with his *Vorlage* in a free and creative way. איש covers a very broad meaning whereas τοῦ ταπεινοῦ (the humble) conveys a more specific quality of איש. In Prov 15:28 he translates איש by ἀνθρώπων, which conveys a more general meaning than τοῦ ταπεινοῦ. In Prov 16:2 the translator probably wanted to specify איש by translating it to τοῦ ταπεινοῦ and to contrast it with ἀσεβεῖς (the impious). By doing so, he creates a word pair τοῦ ταπεινοῦ/ ἀσεβεῖς, which results in some sort of parallelism in the verse.

1e Prov 16:4 MT ≠ LXX (פעל / τὰ ἔργα)

The Hebrew verb used here conveys the same semantic meaning as the Greek noun (tautology). We can see the translator changing the verb to a noun in relation to his plus μετὰ δικαιοσύνης φυλάσσεται. We will discuss this plus more in detail, below.

1f Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX (תועבת / ἀκάθαρτος)

In this rendering, we can see the LXX translator softening the meaning of the Hebrew. The Hebrew noun means ‘something detestable/abominable’, which has a stronger meaning than the LXX adjective ‘unclean/impure’. It could be that the translator found the Hebrew word too harsh and therefore, he rendered it to a Greek synonym that carries a toned-down meaning.

1g Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX גבה לב) / ὑψηλοκάρδιος)

The Greek translator handled the idiomatic expression גבה לב to an idiomatic Greek word instead of translating it literal to ὑπερήφανος ἐν τῇ καρδία.

1h Prov 16:5 MT ≠ LXX (ἐμβαλὼν ἀδίκως)

We could argue that this specific variant is (a) due to a different *Vorlage* or (b) due to the translator who handled his *Vorlage* in a free way. The present author wants to argue for the latter. The Hebrew *Vorlage* reads ‘an abomination to God is all who are high-hearted, hand in hand will not be unpunished’[[42]](#footnote-42), whereas the Greek text reads ‘everyone who is arrogant is impure with God, and he who unjustly joins hands will not be deemed innocent’[[43]](#footnote-43). The translator might have thought his Hebrew *Vorlage* made no sense and was too vague. Therefore, he specified the Hebrew text by clarifying the holding of hands.

1i Conclusion

In our evaluation of the minor variants, we have analysed the translation technique of the LXX translator. We can see that the translator rendered his Hebrew *Vorlage* in a free way. He tried to soften, strengthen or specify the meaning of the Hebrew language in specific cases. The translator also corrected the poetical structure by improving the parallelisms sometimes by means of contrasting[[44]](#footnote-44). In this way he can be seen as a creative translator. Nevertheless, he remained faithful to his *Vorlage* by not changing the context or content of the verses.

**2 ‘Major’ variants**

A lot of major pluses are found in Prov 16:1-7; some of them are transposed verses. If we look at the various textual witnesses, we can see that 4QProvb follows the same sequence as MT in Prov 15:27-28. The plus attested to the LXX version of chapter 15 does not occur in the Hebrew versions of the text. Therefore, we can argue that it could be possible that the LXX translator had another *Vorlage* than the one seemingly presented in the other two Hebrew textual witnesses. These *Vorlagen* differed from each other in the order of the verses.

On the one hand Tov expresses the same idea but he uses the word ‘recension’[[45]](#footnote-45), indicating a revision of a text. According to Tov, the *Vorlage* used by the LXX translator of Proverbs reflects an editorial stage of the MT text[[46]](#footnote-46). On the other hand, Scoralick argues that there were no different versions of the text existing side by side[[47]](#footnote-47). She argues that the transpositions can be explained due to the translator’s freedom[[48]](#footnote-48).

Against Tov and Scoralick, I would like to argue for different versions of the text, which existed next to the each other and that were of equal value. I want to consider all the textual witnesses as valuable witnesses since the different manuscripts can no longer be seen as deviations or errors from their ‘original’[[49]](#footnote-49). In contrast to this view, it seems to me that Tov, when using the word ‘recension’, sees the LXX version as a revision/reworking (which carries a rather negative connotation) of the, according to him, original Hebrew text, which would be attested in MT. In my view, this thesis can no longer be maintained. The larger plusses attested in Prov 16:1-17 can be ascribed to a *Vorlage* that differed from MT. It would be very hard to explain them on the level of the translator. The following variants could then be explained due to this different *Vorlage*:

2a Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb (עכר ביתו בוצע בצע)

2b Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb (ἐξόλλυσιν ἑαυτὸν ὁ δωρολήμπτης)

2c Prov 15:27 LXX≠ MT4QProvb (ἐλεημοσύναις καὶ πίστεσιν ἀποκαθαίρονται ἁμαρτίαι, τῷ δὲ φόβῳ κυρίου ἐκκλίνει πᾶς ἀπὸ κακοῦ)

2d Prov 15:28 LXX≠ MT4QProvb (δεκταὶ παρὰ κυρίῳ ὁδοὶ ἀνθρώπων δικαίων, διὰ δὲ αὐτῶν)

2e Prov 16:1 MT ≠ LXX (לאדם מערכי לב ומיהוה מענה לשון)

2f Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX (οἱ δὲ ἀσεβεῖς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κακῇ ὀλοῦνται);

2g Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX (עיניו)

2h Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX (ותכן)

2i Prov 16:2 MT ≠ LXX (רוחות)

2j Prov 16:3 MT ≠ LXX (גל אל יהוה מעשיך ויכנו מחשבתיך)

2k Prov 16:4 MT ≠ LXX (μετὰ δικαιοσύνης φυλάσσεται)

2l Prov 16:6 MT ≠ LXX (16:6)

2m Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX (16:7)

2n Prov 16:7 MT ≠ LXX (μᾶλλον ἢ θύειν θυσίας)

**F CONCLUSION**

Having presented a detailed text-critical analysis on Prov 16:1-7, we can draw a twofold conclusion.

Firstly, the translator of the LXX-version of Proverbs tried to handle his *Vorlage* in a free and creative way by softening, strengthening or specifying the Hebrew language. He also corrected the Hebrew text to improve its poetical structure. Nevertheless, and although he moved from his *Vorlage* in a free way, he remained faithful to it. He did not change the content to such an extent that it would change the context in a dramatic way.

Secondly, we have seen that there are lots of transpositions of verses in the different versions. These are due to different versions of the text. I argued that the LXX translator had a different *Vorlage*, which had another verse order than the *Vorlage* of MT and 4QProvb.

To conclude, Prov 16:1-7 is, of course, a very small fragment of a whole *corpus*. Therefore, and most probably, this preliminary study is (too) limited. Nevertheless, we hope that it will stimulate other scholars to look into Proverbs in a more profound way and to engage in an exhaustive text-critical analysis of the whole book. It is worthwhile to check and test whether text-critical research of the whole book of Proverbs would give us similar insights as the ones produced here.

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1. Especially the scholars Michael V. Fox and Johann Cook have given a lot of attention to the Book of Proverbs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Bénédicte Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts? A Text-Critical Study of the So-Called ‘Plague Narrative’ in Exodus 7,14-11,10* (Leiden — Boston: Brill, 2009). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Ibid.*, 13 and 22-27. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For these specific verses, there are no Dead Sea manuscripts found bearing witnessing to Prov 16:1-7. There are, however, some discoveries that have preserved other fragments of the Book of Proverbs namely ‘4QProva (= 4Q102), preserving parts of 1:27–2:1, and 4QProvb (= 4Q103), with parts of 13:6b–9; 14:6–10; 14:31–15:8 and 15:19b–31’. Michael V. Fox, “LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource,” *Textus* 22 (2005): 95. 4QProvb can be of some interest to our analysis with regard to Prov 15:27-28 (see *infra*). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. The following commentaries have been consulted: Crawford H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1959; repr., 1959), 319-323; Robert B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs* (AB 18; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965), 104-107; Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs. Chapters 15-31* (NICOT; Grand Rapids, Mich., Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2005) 3-15. Although the latter does not mention the text-critical problem thoroughly, it does mention the different version of the LXX and its minuses. The other two, however, do not mention the LXX version and take MT as a starting point for their analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See his article concerning Proverbs: Emanuel Tov, “Recensional Differences Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs,” in *The Greek & Hebrew Bible: Collected Essays on the Septuagint* (ed. E. Tov; Leiden: Brill, 1999) 419-431 (= Emanuel Tov, “Recensional Differences Between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs,” in *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies on the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism, and Christian Origins Presented to John Strugnell on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ed. H. W. Attridge, J. J. Collins & T. H. Tobin; CTSRR 5; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1990), 43–56). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. See especially Johann Cook, “Textual Problems in the Septuagint Version of Proverbs,” *JNSL* 26/1 (2000): 163-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs*. *An Eclectic Edition with Introduction and Textual Commentary* (HBCE 1; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL Press, 2015). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 426. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *Ibid.*, 427. See also note 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Paul de Lagarde, *Anmerkungen zur Griechischen Übersetzung der Proverbien* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1863) 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. *Ibid., loc. cit.* [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 427. This idea is also defended by Richard Clifford who states that the ‘LXX is a relatively free translation of a recension different from the proto-rabbinic’. Richard J. Clifford*,* “Observations on the Text and Versions of Proverbs,” in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm., on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (ed. M. L. Barré; CBQMS 29; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997), 55. See also Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs. A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 28: “Evidently, a different Hebrew recension of Proverbs was the basis for the Greek translation of the second century B.C.E.”. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Tov, “Recensional Differences,” 427. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Johann Cook, “Textual Problems in the Septuagint Version of Proverbs,” *JNSL* 26/1 (2000): 163-173. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. *Ibid.*, 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. *Ibid.*, *loc. cit.* [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. *Ibid.*, 176-178. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Fox, *Proverbs*, 240. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Fox, *Proverbs*, 240-241. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. *Ibid*., 241. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. For MT *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Karl Elliger et al., eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (5th ed.: Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1977) is used and for the LXX: Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece iuxta LXX Interpret*es (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006)*.* With regard to the latter I want to make the remark that there is still no edition available for Proverbs in the Göttingen Septuagint Series. Peter J. Gentry is currently editing the volumes of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs for Göttingen Septuagint Series. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The text from 4QProvb is taken from Emanuel Tov et al., eds., *Qumran Cave 4, XI* (DJD 16; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 186. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Tov, *Qumran Cave 4,* 183. For a full overview of the text see p. 184-186. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. We will not look at the MT version of 16:9, otherwise it would lead us too far astray. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts?*, 219. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. See Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts?*, 33-34. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. *Ibid*., 33. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts?*, 34. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. **ʼ**Aποκαθαίροντω occurs four times in the LXX: Tbs 12:9; Prov 15:27; Job 7:9; Job 9:30. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. This translation (‘to become friends’) is based upon the NETS-translation of Proverbs made by J. Cook. Johann Cook, “Proverbs,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint. And the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title* (ed. A. Pietersma & B. G. Wright; New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 635. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Cook, “Proverbs,”635. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. See Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts?*, 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. With translation technique, we are referring to the way(s) in which the translator translated his Hebrew *Vorlage*. However, this does not imply that the translator consciously used one specific technique to do so. By utilising this definition of translation technique, we are following the footsteps of the ‘Finnish school’ where Anneli Aejmelaeus plays an important role. In her article ‘*What We Talk About When We Talk About Translation Technique’* she states what she understands under the term ‘translation technique’: “I suggest that ‘translation technique’ be understood as simply designating the relationship between the text of the translation and its *Vorlage*. What is needed is a neutral term to denote the activity of the translator or the process of translation that led from the *Vorlage* to the translation, and I think that the term “translation technique” actually suits this purpose very well. But ‘translation technique’ should not be thought of as a system acquired or developed or resorted to by the translators”, Anneli Aejmelaeus, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Translation Technique,” in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators. Collected Essays* (ed. A. Aejmelaeus; CBET 50; Leuven — Paris — Dudley, Mass.: Peeters, 2007), 205-206 (= Anneli Aejmelaeus, “What We Talk About When We Talk About Translation Technique”, in *X Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* (ed. B. A. Taylor; SBLSCS 51; Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001), 531-552). In German language, the neutral word “Übersetzungsweise” is being used to refer to ‘translation technique’. Aejmelaeus has borrowed this term from her teacher, Soisalon-Soininen. *Ibid.*, 205. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. See Johann Cook, “Translation Technique and the Reconstruction of Texts,” *OTE* 21/1 (2008): 63: “[...] [I]ts translation technique can be defined as extremely free in some instances”; Cook, “Proverbs,” 621: “Elsewhere, I have characterized its *modus operandi* as often extremely free, while in other cases the parent text was rendered in a rather literal way”; 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), 319: “He has a clearly defined approach towards his parent text which, in terms of my analysis of his *translation technique*, has to be described as a free rendering of his parent text”; Emanuel Tov, “A Textual-Exegetical Commentary on Three Chapters in the Septuagint,” in *Scripture in Transition. Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo* (ed. A. Voitila & J. Jokiranta; SJSJ 126; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 276: “The LXX translation provides a free and often paraphrastic translation of its Hebrew parent text […]”; Fox, “LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource,” 95-128, and more specifically Johann Cook, “The Dating of Septuagint Proverbs,” *ETL* 69/4 (1993): 388: “There is a general consensus that Septuagint Proverbs represents a rather free translation unit”. Although the general consensus is that it is a free translation, Theo A. W. van der Louw has argued that a ‘literal translation constitutes the backbone’ of the LXX Proverbs. Theo A. W. van der Louw, “Transformations in the Septuagint. Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies” (Ph.D. diss., Leiden, 2006), 276 (= Theo A. W. van der Louw, *Transformations in the Septuagint. Towards an Interaction of Septuagint Studies and Translation Studies* (CBET 47; Leuven – Paris – Dudley, Mass.; Peeters, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Lemmelijn, *A Plague of Texts?*, 114, n. 83. On the faithfulness of a translation see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “The Significance of Clause Connectors in the Syntactical and Translation- Technical Study of the Septuagint,” in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translators. Collected Essays* (ed. A. Aejmelaeus; CBET 50; Leuven — Paris — Dudley, Mass.; Peeters, 2007), 278: “Changing the structure of a clause or a phrase, and by so doing replacing an un-Greek expression by a genuine Greek one closely corresponding to the meaning of the original, is quite a different thing from being recklessly free and paying less attention to the correspondence with the original. A distinction should be made between literalness and faithfulness. A good free rendering is a faithful rendering”; Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen, “Die Auslassung des Possessivpronomens im griechischen Pentateuch,” in *Studien zur Septuaginta-Syntax* (ed. I. Soisalon-Soininen, A. Aemelaeus & R. Sollamo; AASF Series B 237; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1987), 88: “Sie haben den Text möglichst getreu wiedergeben wollen, nicht aber wortwörtlich […]’. In this context, Bénédicte Lemmelijn and Hans Ausloos have introduced a new category that goes beyond faithfulness *i.e.* creativity. See also Hans Ausloos & Bénédicte Lemmelijn, “Faithful Creativity Torn Between Freedom and Literalness in the Septuagint’s Translations,” *JNSL* 40 (2014): 59-62. This creativity becomes evident in a ‘content- and context-related’ approach (based upon content- and context-related criteria such as Hebrew wordplay in the context of parallelism, Hebrew absolute *hapax legomena*, and Hebrew wordplay in the context of aetiologies), which can be seen as ‘an artificially created laboratory situation in which a specific test is set up in order to elicit a reaction’. Cf. Ausloos & Lemmelijn, “Faithful Creativity,” 62-63. The way in which the LXX translator dealt with these difficult situations can, sometimes, be seen as being very creative. An example of a creative translator can be found in Proverbs, see *ibid.*, 64-66. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Cook argues that LXX Proverbs, as well as LXX Job, is less faithful to his Hebrew *Vorlage*, Johann Cook, “Were the LXX Versions of Proverbs and Job Translated by the Same Person?,” *HS* 51 (2010): 134: “It should be clear that both LXX Proverbs and Job are less faithfully translated units”. There are some scholars who have underlined the faithful character of the translation. See *e.g.*, Fox, “LXX-Proverbs as a Text-Critical Resource,” 95-96: “Still, the freedoms the translator takes are not anarchic, and when he has the MT or something like it, he almost always tries to address its essential meaning as he understands it” and Bénédicte Lemmelijn, “The Greek Rendering of Hebrew Hapax Legomena in LXX Proverbs and Job. A Clue to the Question of a Single Translator?,” in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes. Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus* (ed. T. M. Law, K. De Troyer & M. Liljeström; CBET 72; Leuven — Paris — Walpole, Mass.: Peeters, 2014), 149: “However, we have repeatedly observed that his translation in Prov 4:24, even though not ‘literal’, remains very ‘faithful’”. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. According to Fox, this ‘refinement’ of words is a typical characteristic of the LXX-translator of Proverbs. See Fox, *Proverbs*, 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. According to Cook, contrasting is a typical characteristic of the translation technique of the translator of LXX-Proverbs. See Johann Cook, “Contrasting as a Translation Technique in the LXX of Proverbs,” *The Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Biblical Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (ed. A. C. Evans & S. Talmon; Leiden: Brill, 1997), 403–14. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. The enhancement of parallelism by the LXX-translator is something that is typical for the LXX version of Proverbs. See Fox, *Proverbs*, 52-54. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Cf. supra, n. 36. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. My own translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Cook, *Proverbs*, 635. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ruth Scoralick agrees on the fact that the LXX translator was a sort of poet who tried to enhance the poetical structure of the text. See Ruth Scoralick, „Salomos griechische Gewänder. Beobachtungen zur Septuagintafassung des Sprichwörterbuches,“ in *Rettendes Wissen: Studien* *zum Fortgang weisheitlichen Denkens im Frühjudentum und im frühen Christentum* (ed. K. Löning & M. Faßnacht; AOAT 300; Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2002), 72: “Der Verfasser der griechischen Übersetzung tritt uns in all den genannten Beispielen als ein poetisch begabter Gelehrter gegenüber, der erstaunlich frei mit dem Text umgeht, gleichzeitig jedoch in den meisten Fällen die Aussagen und Orientierungen des hebräischen Textes zum Leitfaden nimmt”. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. See Tov, “Recensional Differences,”419-431; Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd ed.; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press; Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 1992), 337. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. See Tov, “Recensional Differences,”431. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. See Scoralick, „Salomos griechische Gewänder,“ 58: “Eine abweichende hebräische Vorlage, die für heute in keiner Weise (außer durch die Septuaginta) mehr greifbar wäre, ist demgegenüber die unwahrscheinlichere Annahme”. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. See *ibid*., 59: “Nach meiner Analyse sind sowohl der hebräische als auch der griechische Text planvoll angeordnet […]. Der Septuagintatext weist dabei Gestaltungsprinzipien auf, die nur in der griechischen Fassung des Sprichwörterbuches möglich sind, insofern auf eine kreative Eigenleistung des Übersetzers hindeuten und die Annahme einer nicht überlieferten hebräischen Vorlage unwahrscheinlich machen”. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. See *e.g.*, Bénédicte Lemmelijn, “Textual Criticism,” in *Oxford Handbook of the Septuagint* (ed. A. Salvesen & M. Law; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, forthcoming). [↑](#footnote-ref-49)