

Was the Levite's Concubine Unfaithful or Angry? A Proposed Solution to the Text Critical Problem in Judges 19:2

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ABSTRACT

Judges 19:2 poses a text critical problem that has vexed scholars for over a century. According to the MT, the Levite's concubine left her husband and returned to her father's house in Bethlehem because she had "played the harlot against him." According to LXX^A, the woman left her husband because she was "angry with him." However, no other Greek, Latin or Aramaic variant of the verse supports MT or LXX^A. This article proposes a new hypothesis for understanding the relationship among the various textual variants of Judg 19:2. It will be argued that the earliest Vorlage used the verb עבר in the hitpa'el form which has the meaning "to be furious". This Vorlage is reflected in LXX^A. Later scribes then read the verb עבר in the qal form that has multiple meanings that depend on context. LXX^B translated the verb in Greek with the meaning of "to move on". In contrast, Pseudo-Philo interpreted the verb with the meaning of "to transgress". The MT, which emended "to transgress" to "to play the harlot", represents the final stage in the redaction process.

KEYWORDS: Judges 19:2, Textual criticism, Septuagint, Pseudo-Philo, Masoretic Text

A INTRODUCTION

Judges 19 tells a gruesome story about the gang rape and murder of a nameless woman identified as the "Levite's concubine." After introducing the two principal characters in the narrative, the text states that the woman left her husband to return to her father's house in Bethlehem (Judg 19:2). The reason for her flight is because, according to certain translations of the verse, "His concubine *became angry with him* [the Levite]."¹ However, other translations propose: "His concubine *played the harlot against him*."² Was the woman unfaithful to her husband or did she become angry with him? Clearly, a story that revolves around a common place conjugal disagreement is a very different

* Submitted: 18/06/2020; peer-reviewed: 12/10/2020; accepted: 15/10/2020. William Krisel, "Was the Levite's Concubine Unfaithful or Angry? A Proposed Solution to the Text Critical Problem in Judges 19:2," *Old Testament Essays* 33 no. 3 (2020): 473–489. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17159/2312-3621/2020/v33n3a7>.

¹ NRSV; see also NJB, TOB.

² NAS; see also KJV, NKJV, NIV.

narrative than a story that describes the consequences of a woman’s adultery and abandonment of her husband. While the LXX^A variant of Judg 19:2 (καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ) supports the reading “she became angry with him,” the MT variant (וַתַּזְנוּהוּ עָלָיו) supports the reading “she played the harlot against him.” The relationship among the various textual variants of this verse has interested scholars for over a century. This article will propose a new text critical analysis that supports the anteriority of the LXX^A version of Judg 19:2 on different grounds than those that have been proposed to date. I will attempt to demonstrate that the *Vorlage* underlying LXX^A, LXX^B and MT read וַתַּזְנוּהוּ עָלָיו (and she was furious); that is, the *wayyiqtol* third person singular feminine of the verb עָבַר in the *hitpa’el* form.³

B STATEMENT OF THE TEXT CRITICAL PROBLEM

Judges 19:2 poses a complex text critical problem for two reasons. First, MT is not supported by any other version. Second, AL, B, T and V present variants that differ among themselves.⁴ The challenge is to identify the variant that most closely reflects the earliest *Vorlage* and to explain how and why different variants evolved. Most text critical scholars take the position that AL reflects the earliest *Vorlage* but they disagree on the Hebrew verb that underlies the Greek ὀργίζω (to be angry). George F. Moore argued in 1895 that the *Vorlage* for the Greek ὀργίζω probably used a form of the verb אָנַף (to be angry), which was then corrupted through a scribal inversion of the first two consonants into נָאָף (to commit adultery), which in turn was then corrected to זָנָה (to prostitute oneself; to commit fornication; to play the harlot) to reflect the fact that the Levite’s woman was a concubine rather than a wife.⁵

³ There is an absence of scholarly consensus on the text critical question of whether a single *Vorlage* underlies both LXX^A and LXX^B Judg or to the contrary, Greek translators worked from a variety of Hebrew texts circulating at the time of translation. For an overview of the question, see Natalio Fernández Marcos, “L’histoire textuelle: Les Livres Historiques (Juges)” in *L’enfance de la Bible hébraïque* (eds. Adrian Schenker and Philippe Hugo; Geneva, Labor et Fides, 2005, 148–169. In relation to LXX^B, I will consider both hypotheses; i.e., that LXX^B is based on the same or a different *Vorlage* than LXX^A. In relation to the MT, it should be remembered that the scholarly text is based on an early 11th century C.E. manuscript which is itself a variant of an earlier *Vorlage* often called “proto-MT.” The Qumran manuscripts add a valuable element to the text critical analysis of both LXX and MT. However, none of the extant Qumran texts relates to Judg 19:2.

⁴ I will follow the abbreviations used by *BHQ* in this chapter; i.e., (i) MT means Masoretic Text; (ii) AL means the *Codex Alexandrinus* as supported by variants from the group of Antiochian manuscripts known as *L*; that is, the Lucianic recension; (iii) B means the *Codex Vaticanus*; (iv) T means the *Targum Jonathan of Judges*; and (v) V means the *Vulgate*.

⁵ George F. Moore, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Judges* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1908), 409–410.

Charles F. Burney considered Moore’s proposal to be “almost too ingenious” and instead proposed in 1918 that the *Vorlage* used the verb זנה, which was then corrupted into זנה as a result of a scribal confusion between the letters נ and ה. Although the verb זנה is usually translated to mean “to reject”, Burney argued that the verb can, “when used absolutely (cf. e.g. Ps 74:1, 77:8, Lam 3:31) possess the sense ‘to be angry’ which regularly belongs to the Bab. equivalent *zinū* [sic].”⁶ Although all attested uses of זנה in the MT are transitive (i.e., take a direct object), Burney argued further that “the verb might be construed with על ‘was angry against,’ much as the Bab. verb is construed with *itti*, ‘be angry with’.”⁷ Burney thus took the position that the verb זנה has two meanings in Hebrew: “to reject” and “to be angry”. Following Burney, *BHS* emended the lexeme וַתִּזְנֶה (and she played the harlot) to read וַתִּזְנֶה, with the hypothesised meaning of “and she was angry”. This preferred reading is maintained in the most recent 1997 edition of *BHS*.⁸

It should be noted that Samuel R. Driver proposed a simplification of Burney’s theory in 1950. Driver argued that the Hebrew cognate of the Akkadian *zenū* (to be angry) was actually זנה rather than זנה.⁹ Thus, according to Driver, the verb זנה has two different meanings in Hebrew: to prostitute oneself and to be angry. Dominique Barthélemy follows Driver.¹⁰ *BHQ Judges*¹¹ disagrees with *BHS* and maintains the MT variant וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו as the preferred reading. However, *BHQ* is studiously silent as to how this phrase should be translated. Although Fernández Marcos presents the positions of Driver or Barthélemy in his monograph, it is not clear whether *BHQ* is proposing that the MT variant וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו should be interpreted to mean (i) “and she played the harlot against him” in accordance with the usual meaning of זנה or (ii) “and she was angry with him” as proposed by Driver and Barthélemy.¹²

The proposal of Burney (followed by *BHS*) to emend the verb זנה to זנה with the hypothetical meaning of “to be angry,” and the proposal of Driver (followed by Barthélemy) to interpret זנה as having a secondary meaning of “to

⁶ Charles F. Burney, *The Book of Judges, with Introduction and Notes* (London: Rivingtons, 1920), 460.

⁷ Burney. *Book of Judges*, 460.

⁸ K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997).

⁹ Godfrey R. Driver, “L’interprétation du texte masorétique à la lumière de la lexicographie hébraïque,” *ETL* 26 (1950), 348. Both Burney and Driver transcribed the Akkadian word for “to become angry” as *zinū*. Scholars today generally use the transcription *zenū*.

¹⁰ Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien testament*, vol. 1 (Fribourg: Éditions universitaires Fribourg, 1982), 116.

¹¹ Natalio Fernández Marcos, *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, vol. 7 (Stuttgart: DeutscheBibelgesellschaft, 2017).

¹² *BHQ*, 105.

be angry”, have two methodological disadvantages. First, they are unable to explain why none of the other principal variants of Judg 19:2 (i.e., B, MT, V and T) supports *AL*.¹³ Second, they both propose that the *Vorlage* used a verb, זנה or זנה, with a meaning of “to be angry”, that cannot be confirmed with reference to any occurrence of these two verbs in the MT.

C PROPOSED SOLUTION TO THE TEXT CRITICAL PROBLEM

I will attempt to demonstrate that the *Vorlage* underlying *AL*, B and MT Judg 19:2 read וַתִּתְעַבֵּר (and she was furious); that is, the *wayyiqtol* third person singular feminine of the verb עבר in the *hitpa’el* form. My proposal will be presented in three steps. First, the semantic breadth of the verb עבר as used in MT will be discussed, and in particular, the meaning of the verb in the *hitpa’el*. Second, it will be argued that a *Vorlage* using the verb עבר can explain most of the other variants of Judg 19:2 that accord with neither *AL* nor the MT. Third, an explanation for the shift from the verb עבר in the hypothesised *Vorlage* to the verb זנה in the MT will be presented.

1 Various Meanings of the Verb עבר in the MT

The verb עבר has a wide semantic range in Hebrew. The *qal* form of the verb connotes, *inter alia*, to cross a river, border or boundary; to overstep or transgress; to pass through, to traverse; to pass along, to pass by, to go beyond, to travel.¹⁴ In addition, the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר, which is used eight times in the MT, has, an apparently unrelated meaning: to be arrogant; to be furious, to be angry.¹⁵ When used in the *hitpa’el*, the verb עבר is intransitive or absolute; it is followed by the preposition בָּ in Deut 3:26 and Ps 78:62; by עִם in Ps 89:39; and by עַל in Prov 26:17. The *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר is not used in Aramaic. Instead, T uses the verb רגז to translate the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר in T Deut 3:26; Pss 78:21, 59, 62; 89:38. According to Michael Sokoloff, the Aramaic verb רגז means “to be angry.”¹⁶ In my view, the possibility should therefore be considered that the *Vorlage* underlying the *AL* variant καὶ ὀργίσθη

¹³ The *Peshitta*, the Syriac translation of the OT usually dated to the 2nd century C.E., will not be discussed in this article. It can be noted that the *Peshitta*’s variant of Judg 19:2 does not support *AL* and appears to be based on a proto-MT variant.

¹⁴ F. Brown, S.R. Driver and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody MA: Hendrickson Publishers 2005⁹); L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner & J.J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, tr. and ed. by M.E.J. Richardson (Leiden: Brill, 2001); David J. A. Clines, *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007).

¹⁵ *BDB*; *HALOT*; *DCH*. See, Deut 3:26; Ps 78:21, 59, 62; 89:38; Prov 14:16; 20:2; 26:17.

¹⁶ Michael Sokoloff, *A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic Periods* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2002), 1058.

αὐτῷ in fact read, וַתִּתְעַבֵּר עָלָיו, which I propose to translate as “and she was furious with him.”

Of the eight occurrences of the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר in the MT, it is likely that six have direct parallels in the LXX).¹⁷ The LXX “translates” the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר in three different ways.¹⁸ The verb ὑπεροράω is used in Deut 3:26; Ps 78:59, 62; the verb ἀναβάλλω in Pss 78:21; 89:38; and the verb παροξύνω in Prov 20:2.¹⁹

As there are only eight occurrences of the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר in the MT (and only six with parallels in the LXX), the variety of translations in the LXX can be interpreted in two ways. First, they add complementary dimensions of meaning to the narrow definition of the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר as “to be arrogant; “to be furious”; to be angry.” Second, they indicate that the translators worked from a *Vorlage* that contained a verb other than the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר. I will consider both hypotheses below.

¹⁷ The LXX versions of MT Prov 14:16 and 26:17 are significantly different, suggesting that they may be based on a different *Vorlage* than the MT versions of these two verses.

¹⁸ The proposition that the LXX “translates” specific Hebrew words is an oversimplification. As stated by James Barr, “Where the Greek text gives a sense different from the Hebrew, the hypothesis that it was translated from a different Hebrew text is only one of a number of possibilities. It may have had the same text, but misread it; or been careless in handling it, or guessed at the sense, or paraphrased, or assimilated it to another passage[.] [...] Only when we eliminate a number of these possible relations are we entitled to translate back the Greek into a Hebrew text and say that the translators ‘read’ this text.” James Barr, *Comparative Philology and the Text of the OT* (Oxford University Press, 1968; Winona Lake IN, Eisenbrauns, 1987 with additions and corrections), 245. However, when a relatively rare Hebrew verb in the MT such as the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר is reflected in the LXX with verbs that form part of a semantic field and signify something close to the assumed meaning of the Hebrew word, it can be concluded that it is likely that the *Vorlage* underlying the LXX variant was the same as the *Vorlage* underlying MT. John Srenock, “A New Approach to using the Old Greek in Hebrew Bible Textual Criticism,” *Textus* 27/1 (2018), 229–257. In the case of LXX Judg, many scholars consider that the text “is a generally accurate translation of a text-form almost identical to the Massoretic Text (MT).” Philip E Satterthwaite, “Judges” in *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (ed. J.K. Aitkin; London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 102. More precisely, Philip E. Satterthwaite states, “In general, LXX Judges follows a ‘word-for-word’ translational model.” Philip E. Satterthwaite, “Introduction to Judges,” in *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (eds. A. Pietersma & B.G. Wright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 197.

¹⁹ For ease of reference, I will refer to verses in the LXX using the book name and chapter and verse divisions of the MT. For example, a verse in LXX 3 Reigns will be cited as LXX 1 Kings.

A comparison of the MT and LXX variants of the verses in which the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר is attested (Deut 3:26; Pss 78:21, 59, 62; 89:38; Prov 20:2) is set out below. The English translation of the LXX verses is that of Philip E. Satterthwaite in *NETS*;²⁰ my proposed translation of the Greek verbs in question are indicated in square brackets. Translations from Hebrew are my own.

MT Deut 3:26a And YHWH was <i>furious</i> with me because of you. And he did not listen to me.	וַיִּתְעַבֵּר יְהוָה בִּי לְמַעַן כֹּכֶם וְלֹא שָׁמַע אֵלַי
LXX Deut 3:26a And the Lord <i>ignored</i> [<i>despised</i>] me on your account and did not listen to me.	καὶ ὑπερεῖδεν κύριος ἐμὲ ἕνεκεν ὑμῶν καὶ οὐκ εἰσήκουσέν μου

The verb ὑπεροράω also means “to disregard,” “to despise,” “to disdain” according to *LEH* and “to be willing to part with” according to Muraoka.²¹

Psalms 78 is instructive because the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר occurs three times in the MT version (in verses 21, 59, 62) and is translated in two different ways in LXX:

MT Ps 78:21 Therefore YHWH heard. And he <i>was furious</i> . And a fire was kindled against Jacob. And anger also went up against Israel.	לָכֵן שָׁמַע יְהוָה וַיִּתְעַבֵּר וְאֵשׁ נִשְׁקָה בְּיַעֲקֹב וְאַף עָלָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
LXX Ps 77:21 Therefore, the Lord heard and was <i>put off</i> , and a fire was kindled in Iakob, and anger mounted against Israel.	διὰ τοῦτο ἤκουσεν κύριος καὶ ἀνεβάλετο καὶ πῦρ ἀνήφθη ἐν Ἰακωβ καὶ ὀργὴ ἀνέβη ἐπὶ τὸν Ἰσραηλ
MT Ps 78:59 God heard. And <i>he was furious</i> . And he completely rejected Israel.	שָׁמַע אֱלֹהִים וַיִּתְעַבֵּר וַיִּמָּאֵס מְאֹד בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
LXX Ps 77:59 God heard and <i>disdained</i> , and he treated Israel with utter contempt.	ἤκουσεν ὁ θεὸς καὶ ὑπερεῖδεν καὶ ἐξουδένωσεν σφόδρα τὸν Ἰσραηλ

²⁰ New English Translation of the Septuagint (eds. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

²¹ J. Lust, E. Eynikel and K. Hauspie, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1992); T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009).

MT Ps 78:62 And he also delivered his people to the sword. And he was <i>furios</i> with his inheritance.	וַיִּסְגֵּר לְחָרֶב עָמוֹ וַיִּבְנֶה לְתוֹ הַתְּעַבֵּר
LXX Ps 77:62 And he consigned his people to a sword, and his heritage he <i>disdained</i> .	καὶ συνέκλεισεν εἰς ῥομφαίαν τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν κληρονομίαν αὐτοῦ ὑπερεῖδεν

The use of both ὑπεροράω and ἀναβάλλω in LXX Psalm 78 is problematic. In my view, both Greek verbs connote actions that are sufficiently close in meaning to each other to sustain the argument that they translate the *hitpa'el* form of the verb עָבַר. The use of different Greek verbs to translate a single Hebrew verb in the same psalm can be explained as a stylistic device. For example, it is possible that the Greek translator thought that ἀναβάλλω was more appropriate in v. 21 because it created a felicitous parallel with ἀναβαίνω in the same verse.

Psalm 89:39 is also instructive as it uses a series of three verbs that form part of a semantic field:

MT Ps 89:39 And you spurned. And you rejected. <i>You were furious</i> with your anointed.	וְאַתָּה הִנְחַתְּ וְהִתְעַבַּרְתָּ עַם־מְשִׁיחֶךָ
LXX Ps 88:39 But you spurned and rejected; you <i>put off</i> your anointed.	σὺ δὲ ἀπόσω καὶ ἐξουδένωσας ἀνεβάλου τὸν χριστόν σου

The LXX uses the verb παροξύνω in Prov 20:2 to translate the *hitpa'el* form of the verb עָבַר:

MT Prov 20:2 The terror of a king is like the growling of a young lion. He who <i>angers</i> him endangers his life.	נֶהֱמַם כִּפְפִיר אֵימַת מֶלֶךְ מִתְעַבְּרוֹ הוּטָא נַפְשׁוֹ
LXX Prov 20:2 The threat of a king does not differ from the rage of a lion, and he who <i>provokes</i> [angers] him sins against his own life.	οὐ διαφέρει ἀπειλή βασιλέως θυμοῦ λέοντος ὁ δὲ παροξύνων αὐτὸν ἁμαρτάνει εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ ψυχὴν

The verb παροξύνω also includes the meaning of “to irritate” according to *LEH* and “to anger” according to *Muraoka*. It should be noted that the verb

παροξύνω is also used 14 times in the LXX to translate the verb נאץ (to spurn; to despise).²²

In conclusion, the rare *hitpa‘el* form of the verb עבר is translated by T with the Aramaic verb רגז (to be angry) and by the LXX in a number of different ways that connote anger, hatred, disdain and rejection. The possibility should therefore be considered that the *Vorlage* underlying the AL variant, καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ, in fact read, ונתתעבר עליו, which I propose to translate as “and she was furious with him.”

2 Other variants of Judges 19:2 support the proposed emendation of זנה with עבר

As discussed, the text critical interpretation of 19:2 is problematic because no other Greek, Aramaic or Latin variant supports the MT or AL variant of the verse. I have argued that the *Vorlage* underlying AL might have been ונתתעבר עליו (and she was furious with him). I will attempt to demonstrate below that B and Pseudo-Philo support my hypothesis that the *Vorlage* could have been the verb עבר. Each of these variants will be discussed below.

2a Codex Vaticanus

The B variant of 19:2 differs from both the MT and the A variants.²³

MT Judg 19:2a And his concubine <i>played the harlot against him</i> . ^{2b} And she went away from him to the house of her father, to Bethlehem of Judah.	וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו פִּילְגָשׁוֹ וַתֵּלֶךְ מֵאֵתוֹ אֶל-בֵּית אָבִיהָ אֶל-בֵּית לְהָמָּה בְּהֵלֶם יְהוּדָה
LXXA Judg 19:2a And his concubine <i>became angry with him</i> . ^{2b} And she went away from him to her father’s house, at Bethleem of Ioudas.	καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ ἢ παλλακὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς εἰς Βηθλεεμ Ιουδα
LXXB Judg 19:2a And his concubine <i>left him</i> . ^{2b} And she went away from him to her father’s house, at Bethleem of Ioudas.	καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ ἢ παλλακὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀπῆλθεν παρ’ αὐτοῦ εἰς οἶκον πατρὸς αὐτῆς εἰς Βηθλεεμ Ιουδα

²² Num 14:11, 23; 16:30; Deut 31:20; 32:19; 2 Sam 12:14; Isa 5:24; 10:14; Pss 9:24; 10:13; 74:10, 18; 108:11; and Lam 2:6.

²³ All citations of LXX^A in this work are from the eclectic version of A prepared by Alfred Rahlfs (Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* [Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007]). Rahlfs’s text emends *Alexandrinus* to include certain preferred variants from L and the hexaplaric recension.

As there is considerable overlap in meaning between the verbs πορεύω and ἀπέρχομαι in Greek, and both verbs are used most frequently in the LXX to translate the verb הָלַךְ, the seemingly repetitive nature of B Judg 19:2a (καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ) and B Judg 19:2b (καὶ ἀπῆλθεν παρ' αὐτοῦ) is problematic. Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen argues that the use of the verb πορεύω in B Judg 19:2a is a corruption of the verb πορνεύω (to prostitute oneself) as a result of a scribal omission of the letter ν.²⁴ On this theory, B (rather than AL) reflects the *Vorlage* and accords with the MT. Paul Harlé follows Soisalon-Soininen.²⁵ Importantly, Harlé notes that a scribal confusion of πορνεύω with πορεύω also occurs in AL Judges. In Judg 2:15, B reads, ἐν πᾶσιν οἷς ἐξεπορεύοντο (in each case when they went out), which accords with the MT and the obvious context of the passage. Strangely, AL reads ἐν πᾶσιν οἷς ἐπόρνευον (in each case when they went whoring). Harlé considers the case of AL Judg 2:15 to be a scribal error due to the paronomasia of the two verbs.²⁶

I disagree with the positions of Soisalon-Soininen and Harlé for three reasons. First, the B variant of Judg 19:2a reads, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. If the verb πορεύω is a corruption of πορνεύω as proposed, the original phrase would have read, καὶ ἐπορνεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. Second, the use of the preposition ἀπό following the verb πορνεύω is not attested in the LXX. In contrast, the preposition ἀπό can follow πορεύω.²⁷ Third, the LXX translates the verb הָלַךְ in two ways: πορνεύω and ἐκπορνεύω. The former is used 13 times and the latter, 39 times. The verb πορνεύω has a rather limited distribution.²⁸ In contrast, the 39 occurrences of ἐκπορνεύω are more widely distributed, being used, *inter alia*, in every book of the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets (Joshua to Kings), including three times in Judges. In the case of Judges, both A and B use ἐκπορνεύω rather than πορνεύω. For these reasons, it is more likely that B would have used ἐκπορνεύω rather than πορνεύω in B Judg 19:2a

If my hypothesis is correct that the B variant, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, is not a scribal corruption of the verb πορνεύω, it must then be determined what verb was used in the *Vorlage* underlying the B text. The verb πορεύω is used in the LXX most frequently to translate הָלַךְ (to walk; to go). However, it is unlikely the *Vorlage* of B Judg 19:2a^A used הָלַךְ because MT uses the verb הָלַךְ in the immediately following phrase in Judg 19:2a^B, וַתֵּלֶךְ מֵאֵתוֹ אֶל-בֵּית אֲבִיהָ (and she

²⁴ Ilmari Soisalon-Soininen, *Die Textformen der Septuaginta-Übersetzung des Richterbuches* (AASF Series B, 72, 1; Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1951), 79.

²⁵ Paul Harlé, *La Bible d'Alexandrie : Les Juges*, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1999, 241.

²⁶ Harlé, *Les Juges*, 89.

²⁷ See, e.g., LXX Judg 6:21; 1 Chr 16:20.

²⁸ It is used four times in Hosea, four times in Jeremiah and three times in Ezekiel. Outside of these three books, the verb is attested once in Amos, once in Chronicles and once in Psalms.

went away from him to her father’s house). However, the *qal* verb עבר is also translated with πορεύω in LXX Josh 3:4; 15:4; Judg 12:1; 2 Sam 15:18, Isa 33:15; 34:10; 62:10; Ezek 9:5; Ruth 2:8. Although speculative, I propose to interpret the B variant, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, as using the verb πορεύω to translate the *qal* verb עבר.

As discussed, the *qal* verb עבר has a variety of different meanings, including that of “to move on”. The clearest example of the use of עבר with the meaning of “move on” is probably Ruth 2:18:

<p>MT Ruth 2:8 And Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field. Furthermore, <i>do not move on</i> from this one, but cling closely to my maids here.”</p>	<p>וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז אֶל־רוּת הֲלוֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּתִי אֶל־תִּלְכִּי לִלְקֹט בְּשָׂדֵה אֲחֵר וְגַם לֹא תַעֲבֹרִי מִזֶּה וְכֹה תִדְבְּקִי עִם־נַעֲרָתַי</p>
<p>LXX Ruth 2:8 And Boos said to Routh “Did you not hear, daughter? Do not go to glean in another field, and you <i>should not go</i> from this one. Stick close to my girls.</p>	<p>καὶ εἶπεν Βοος πρὸς Ρουθ οὐκ ἤκουσας θύγατερ μὴ πορευθῆς ἐν ἄλλῳ συλλέξαι ἑτέρῳ καὶ σὺ οὐ πορεύσῃ ἐντεῦθεν ὧδε κολλήθητι μετὰ τῶν κορασίων μου</p>

In this passage, the verb עבר (to move on) is contrasted with דבק (to cling; to stay close). It can be noted that LXX translates the verb עבר in Ruth 2:8 with πορεύω, as I am proposing is also the case in LXX^B Judg 19:2a.

In conclusion, I have attempted to demonstrate that the B variant of Judg 19:2a, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ, is not a scribal corruption as has been proposed by Soisalon-Soininen and followed by Harlé, but rather the translation of a *Vorlage* that used the verb עבר. I, therefore, propose that B Judg 19:2a can be translated as “And his concubine moved on from him. And she went away from him to her father’s house.” If this hypothesis is correct, it follows that the verb in the *Vorlagen* underlying both the AL and B variants of Judg 19:2a is עבר. It has been argued above that the verb in the AL *Vorlage* was most likely the rarely used *hitpa’el* form, וַתִּתְעַבְּרִי (And she was furious). In contrast, the translators of B appear to have read the *Vorlage* as if the verb were in the commonly used *qal* form, וַתַּעֲבֹרִי (And she moved on). This difference can be explained in two ways. First, the B *Vorlage* was the same as the AL *Vorlage*, but the translators of B interpreted the verb as if it were *qal*. Second, B worked from a later *Vorlage* than AL in which a scribe intentionally or accidentally omitted the second ת in וַתִּתְעַבְּרִי, thereby changing the verb from the *hitpa’el* to the *qal* form. Although speculative, I prefer the second hypothesis. This preference will be defended below in the discussion of Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicum* (LAB).

2b Pseudo-Philo's *LAB*

A number of ancient Jewish authors writing in Greek produced works that include "rewritten Bible"; that is, a literary genre common in the Greco-Roman world in which a Jewish author uses the Hebrew Bible as a source and then "rewrites" the text to advance the author's own ideological/theological positions.²⁹ Both Flavius Josephus and Pseudo-Philo address the story of the Levite and his concubine in their works. It is generally agreed that Flavius Josephus' text is a creative interpretation of Judges 19 without text critical relevance.³⁰ In contrast, Pseudo-Philo's text relating to Judg 19:2 is significant and will be discussed below.

As both the original Hebrew text and the Greek translation of Pseudo-Philo's *LAB* have been lost, scholars rely on a Latin translation from Greek. It is generally agreed that the Hebrew original of *LAB* was written in Palestine, shortly before 70 C.E.³¹ Pseudo-Philo "rewrites" Judges 19–21 in Chapters 45–47 of *LAB*. Chapter 45 opens the story of the Levite and his concubine with Judg 19:10, thus skipping entirely the narrator's background information concerning the woman having left her husband to return to her father. However, in Pseudo-Philo's recounting of the story of the concubine's gang-rape (Judg 19:25) in Chapter 45 of *LAB*, he adds a comment that explains the violent event as a punishment for the concubine's adultery (translation by Howard Jacobson):

They entered by force and dragged him and his concubine outside. After letting the man go, they abused his concubine until she died, for she had strayed from her man at one time (*quoniam transgressa fuerat virum suum quodam tempore*), when she committed sin with the

²⁹ According to Philip S. Alexander, "Rewritten Bible mimics the form of the original text, but weaves into it additional, explanatory matter. It is basically a genre that applies only to *aggadah*. It reproduces the biblical text selectively, and is used to integrate legend and tradition into the biblical narrative." Philip S. Alexander, "The Bible in Qumran and Early Judaism" in *Text in Context: Essays by Members of the Society for Old Testament Studies* (ed. A.D.H. Mayes; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 42. I am grateful to Bénédicte Lemmelijn for this reference.

³⁰ See, for example, Ariel Feldman, "The Book of Judges in Early Jewish Interpretation: The Contribution of the Dead Sea Scrolls" in *On Prophets, Warriors, and Kings: Former Prophets Through the Eyes of Their Interpreters* (eds. G.J. Brooke and A. Feldman; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 77–94, 90–91.

³¹ Daniel J Harrington, "Pseudo-Philo" in *ABD*, vol. 5 (ed. David N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 345. Some scholars argue for a post-70 dating of *LAB*. See, e.g., Frederick J Murphy, "Biblical Antiquities (Pseudo-Philo)" in *The Eerdmans Dictionary of Early Judaism* (eds. J.J. Collins and D.C. Harlow; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 440.

Amalekites (*cum peccasset cum Amalechitis*), and on account of this the Lord God delivered her into the hands of sinners.”³²

Pseudo-Philo thus presents the woman’s gang-rape and murder as divine retribution for adulteries she had committed earlier in her life. This introduces a theme that is absent in *AL* and *B* Judg 19:2 but that is implied in *MT* Judg 19:2 with the phrase וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו (and she played the harlot against him).³³ The question thus arises whether Pseudo-Philo based his retelling of the story on a *Vorlage* similar to *AL*, *B* and/or *MT*. In my view, Pseudo-Philo’s text indicates that he knew the *Vorlage* of *B*, as well as a proto-Masoretic text, and thus provides important evidence of the relationship between *B* and *MT*.

My position can be summarised as follows: First, as discussed, the *AL* phrase καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ (and she was angry with him) was probably based on a *Vorlage* that read, וַתִּתְעַבֵּר עָלָיו, which I propose to translate as “and she was furious with him.” Second, as discussed, *B* worked from a *Vorlage* that read וַתַּעֲרִי עָלָיו; that is, in which the verb עבר had been copied as a *qal* rather than a *hitpa’el* verb yielding the Greek translation, καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ (and she moved on from him). Third, while *B* translated עבר on the basis of its meaning of “to move on,” Pseudo-Philo translated the same verb with another of its meanings, as “to transgress.” My position concerning Pseudo-Philo’s reliance on the *Vorlage* underlying *B* is supported by two arguments.

First, the meaning of the Latin phrase, *quoniam transgressa fuerat virum suum quodam tempore* is not entirely clear. As mentioned, Jacobson translates the phrase as “for she had *strayed* from her husband at one time.” In my view, Christopher Begg’s translation, “because she had *transgressed* against her man” is more accurate.³⁴ It can be noted that *V* uses the verb *transgredior* with the meaning of “to transgress” in the following passages: Num 14:41; Deut 17:2; Isa 24:5; Hos 6:7; 8:1; Sir 19:21; 23:5; 31:10. The Greek verb in the corresponding *LXX* variants is παραβαίνω (which *LEH* defines *inter alia* as “to pass beyond, to overstep, to transgress”) in all of the above cited verses with the exception of *V* Deut 17:2. The Greek verb in *LXX* Deut 17:2 is παρέρχομαι, which *LEH* defines *inter alia* as “to overstep; to transgress; to disregard”. In conclusion, it is likely that the Latin translator of the phrase *quoniam transgressa fuerat virum suum quodam tempore* in Chapter 45 of *LAB* used the verb *transgredior*, with

³² Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s Liber “Antiquitatum Biblicum,” with Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 168.

³³ Pace Christopher Begg, “The Retellings of the Story of Judges 19,” *EB* 58 (2000), 37.

³⁴ Begg. “Retellings”, 39.

the meaning of “to transgress,” to translate the verb παραβαίνω (or possibly παρέρχομαι) in the underlying Greek version of *LAB*.³⁵

Second, as *LAB* was originally composed in Hebrew, the verb that underlies παραβαίνω (or possibly παρέρχομαι) remains to be determined. It can be observed that the *qal* verb עבר is used to mean “to transgress” 18 times in MT, with 15 parallels in LXX.³⁶ The verb is translated with (i) παραβαίνω in Num 14:41; Josh 7:11.15; 23:16; 1 Sam 15:24; 2 Kgs 18:12; Isa 24:5 Hos 6:7; 8:1; Dan 9:11; (ii) παρέρχομαι in Deut 17:2; 26:13; Jer 34:18; (iii) παραπορεύομαι in 2 Chr 24:20; and (iv) ἐγκαταλείπω in Judg 2:20. Thus, it is likely that the Hebrew verb underlying the Greek translation of the phrase “and she transgressed against her husband” in Chapter 45 of *LAB* was the *qal* verb עבר. I have argued above that the verb in the *Vorlage* underlying the phrase καὶ ἐπορεύθη ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ (and she moved on from him) in B Judg 19:2a was also the *qal* verb עבר. Thus, while B translated עבר in the sense of “to move on,” Pseudo-Philo translated the same verb, probably from the same *Vorlage* as B, with another of its meanings, as “to transgress”.

2c Targum Jonathan of Judges

Most scholars consider Targum Jonathan of Judges to have been composed in Jerusalem in the second century C.E. and then revised and amended in Babylon over the following five centuries.³⁷ W. Smelik’s English translation of the Targum’s Aramaic variant of Judg 19:2 is as follows: “But the concubine despised (בסר) him and went away from him, [back] to her father’s house.”³⁸ *BHQ* takes the position that T does not support *AL*, B or MT. I disagree. In my view, T follows MT for the reasons discussed below.

The Targumim are generally modest in relation to sexual matters and often substitute Aramaic euphemisms to translate a Hebrew word that is considered to be too bold to pronounce. For example, it can be observed that the

³⁵ Jacobson takes the position that it is the verb παραβαίνω that underlies the Latin translation *transgredior* in *LAB*. He states, “I do not know any exact Latin parallel [to *quoniam transgressa fuerat virum suum quodam tempore*]. However, Sirach 23:25 [=LXX Sir 23:18a] is close, *transgrediens lectum suum*, where the Greek has παραβαίνων ἀπὸ τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ, that is, ‘strays from his bed.’ Thus *LAB* means, ‘she had strayed from her husband.’” Jacobson, *Commentary on Pseudo-Philo’s*, 1034. As discussed above, the verb *transgredior* is frequently used in V with the meaning of “to transgress”. In particular, V Sir 23:25=LXX Sir 23:18a can more easily be translated as “and the man who transgresses his [marriage] bed” than as “and the man who strays from his [marriage] bed” as proposed by Jacobson.

³⁶ The three occurrences without parallels in LXX are Ps 17:3; Prov 8:29; and Esth 3:3.

³⁷ Daniel J. Harrington and Anthony J. Saldarini, *Targum Jonathan of the Former Prophets* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987), 13.

³⁸ Willem F Smelik, *The Targum of Judges* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), 607.

verb זנה is used four times in MT Judges; in 2:17; 8:27; 8:33; and 19:2. In addition, the Hebrew active participle used nominatively, זונה or זונה (prostitute), is used twice; in Judg 11:1 and 16:1. In all six cases, T replaces the Hebrew word with a more modest euphemism. In Judg 2:17, 8:27 and 8:33 זנה is replaced with an Aramaic verb meaning “to go astray”. In Judg 11:1 and 16:1, “prostitute” is replaced with an Aramaic word meaning “hostess” or “innkeeper”. In Judg 19:2 זנה is replaced with the Aramaic word בסר (to despise).

Because of T’s consistent “mistranslation” of the six occurrences of the verb זנה and its cognates in Judges, it is highly unlikely that T would rely on a *Vorlage* that was substantially different from MT for all six of these verses. In particular, it is unlikely that T relies on the same *Vorlage* as AL. As discussed, the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר is not used in Aramaic. Instead, T uses the verb רגז, meaning “to be angry, to be enraged.” If T worked from a *Vorlage* that used the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר as in AL, it could be expected that T would have used the Aramaic verb רגז. As T is otherwise generally close to MT in its choice of vocabulary, the fact that T elects to emend MT Judg 19:2 at all tends to suggest that T’s *Vorlage* contained a verb with a sexual connotation, such as זנה, which was unacceptable to the Aramaic translators for cultural reasons. It is thus preferable to view T’s reading of Judg 19:2 as “his concubine despised him” as an interpretative change to the underlying MT variant ותזנה עליו.

3 Change of the *Vorlage* in MT Judg 19:2

I have attempted to demonstrate above that the verb in the *Vorlage* underlying both B and Pseudo-Philo’s *LAB* was probably the *qal* form of the verb עבר. B translated the verb with its meaning “to move on” and Pseudo-Philo as “to transgress”. It can be hypothesised that a later redactor changed ותעברני עליו (and she transgressed against him) to ותזנה עליו (And she played the harlot against him), as reflected in MT. Three reasons for this change can be envisaged. First, the change clarifies that the verb עבר should be interpreted to mean “to transgress” rather than “to move on” as interpreted by B. Second, the change clarifies that the woman’s “transgression” was precisely that of adultery. Third, the change provides a theological explanation for the concubine’s gang-rape as a “measure-for-measure” or “talionic” retribution for her earlier sexual sins. In the Chronicler’s theology of retributive justice, every misfortune that befalls a person can be explained as a consequence of a moral failure committed by that person earlier in his or her life.³⁹ If this hypothesis is correct, it follows that the

³⁹ Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1989), 456. For example, it is reported in 1 Kgs 14:25, “In the fifth year of Rehoboam, King Shishak of Egypt marched against Jerusalem.” The Chronicler cites this phrase in 2 Chron 12:2, but adds, “for they had been unfaithful to YHWH.” Similarly, 1 Kgs 20:49 states, “Edom has been in rebellion against Judah [...] Libnah has rebelled against him.” The Chronicler cites these phrases in 2 Chron 21:10 but adds “because he had forsaken YHWH God of his fathers.”

change to וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו occurred late in the compositional history of Judges 19, after the finalisation of the *Vorlage* underlying B.

D CONCLUSIONS

The text critical analysis of Judges 19:2 is complicated by the fact that the lessons of *AL*, B, MT, T and Pseudo-Philo’s *LAB* are different and appear to be irreconcilable. I have proposed a hypothesis that attempts to explain all of these variants as based on a *Vorlage* that used the verb עבר to describe the concubine’s action in relation to her husband. In my view, the earliest *Vorlage* read וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי עָלָיו (and she was furious with him); that is, the *wayyiqtol* third person singular feminine of the verb עבר in the *hitpa’el* form. This *Vorlage* is reflected in the *AL* variant καὶ ὠργίσθη αὐτῷ (she was angry with him). The *Vorlage* then underwent two successive changes.

First, a scribe changed וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי עָלָיו (And she was furious with him), as reflected in *AL*, to וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי עָלָיו, as suggested by B and Pseudo-Philo. One can only speculate as to the reasons for the change from the *hitpa’el* to the *qal* form of the verb עבר in Judg 19:2. There are two plausible explanations. First, a scribe accidentally omitted the second ת in וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי. Second, as the *hitpa’el* form of the verb עבר is used rarely in MT and not used at all in Aramaic, it is possible that a late Persian/early Hellenistic period scribe intentionally changed וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי to וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי to clarify the meaning of Judg 19:2 for readers no longer familiar with the *hitpa’el* meaning of the verb. Although the change in meaning from the *hitpa’el* to the *qal* is semantically significant, the change can be viewed as lexically conservative from the perspective of a scribal culture because it involves the deletion of only a single consonant from the earlier *Vorlage*. Although speculative, I am inclined to prefer the second hypothesis.

The *qal* verb עבר has multiple meanings that depend on context. B translated the verb in Greek with the meaning of “to move on”; “to travel further.” In contrast, Pseudo-Philo interpreted the verb with the meaning of “to transgress.” In my view, B and Pseudo-Philo can be understood as reflecting two different schools of interpretation of the same *Vorlage*. B, probably working in Alexandria, may have endeavored to translate וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי עָלָיו in a way that created the least conflict with A (from “and she was angry with him” to “and she moved on from him”). In contrast, Pseudo-Philo, probably working in Palestine, understood the same *Vorlage* to mean “and she transgressed against him”, thereby inferring that the concubine had committed adultery.

Second, it can be hypothesised that a later redactor changed וַתִּתְעַבְרֵי עָלָיו (and she transgressed against him) to וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו (And she played the harlot against him), as reflected in MT. Three reasons for this change can be envisaged. First, the change clarifies that the verb עבר should be interpreted to mean “to transgress” rather than “to move on” as interpreted by B. Second, the change clarifies that the woman’s “transgression” was precisely that of adultery. Third,

the change provides a theological explanation for the concubine's gang-rape as a "measure-for-measure" or "talionic" retribution for her earlier sexual sins.

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