

IN A PIG'S NOSE!
ON THE TYRANNY OF TRADITION
(or FROZEN TRANSLATIONS)¹

Introduction

Translation is no slight task, and those who pursue it vocationally deserve our most heartfelt thanks and admiration. Translators are often challenged by verses of Scripture that contain, e.g., textual difficulties, terms with an uncertain lexical value, or ambiguous syntax. Nonetheless, the translator must produce a version of even the most ambiguous and difficult verse; that is his or her responsibility.

Many of the proverbs proper—those following Pr 10.1a—are difficult to translate. Gnomonic compression, syntactic ambiguity², lexemes with uncertain semantic load, opaque metaphors, and cultural distance challenge even the best translators. These difficulties, however, are often invisible due to the translational tradition(s) within which the translator works—the traditional or “received” translation often determines renderings, whether or not the translator realizes this influence.³

The translation tradition is a valuable resource, offering translators and scholars the cumulative wisdom and insight of generations past ... when the translation is valid. On the other hand, dependence on the tradition perpetuates misleading and inaccurate translations (and therefore interpretation and understanding), even when the text is free from such challenges as those listed above.

This tendency to “freeze” a rendering is perhaps especially pronounced when a text has become familiar, either because, e.g., it has become liturgically important (e.g., Ps 23.6 (“... goodness and mercy shall *follow* me, and I shall *dwell* in the house of the LORD for ever”⁴); Mt 6.9 “hallowed be Thy name”⁵); is quoted in a popular hymn or song, is particularly vivid or striking (e.g., Pr 11.22 (below)); or has attained slogan-like status (e.g., Pr 22.6 (“*Train up* a child in the way *he should go ...*”⁶), the translator finds him- or herself bound by what we can call the “burden” or “tyranny” of tradition, a less-than-felicitous rendering that maintains itself against even the very best translational scholarship. Its familiarity guarantees its survival, constraining the translator to produce something very close to its

¹This paper was read before the Bible Translation Group of SBL (2005).

²Pr 11.22 provides a convenient *entré* into the effect of received translations on the translator (the “weight [or ‘burden’] of tradition”).

³We learn Biblical Hebrew from a teacher or book who him/her/itself learned it from someone else, who learned it ... *ad infinitum*. Everyone who reads the Bible in Hebrew read it first in some other language, so that that rendition of the text resonates in his or her soul as the “real” meaning of the text.

⁴MT as represented by BHS reads:

אֲךָ טוֹב וְחָסַד יִרְדְּפוּנִי כָּל-יְמֵי חַיִּי	Surely [they] shall-chase-me all-of the-days-of my-life,
וְשָׁבְתִי בְּבֵית-יְהוָה לְאַרְךָ יָמַיִם:	and-I-shall-return in/to-the-house-of YHWH for length of days.

⁵The Greek text (UBS/Nestle-Aland) contains three syntactically identical and parallel petitions:

ἀγιασθήτω τὸ ὄνομά σου·	May your name be hallowed;
ἐλθέτω ἡ βασιλεία σου·	May your kingdom come;
γενηθήτω τό θέλημα σου	May your will be done;
ὡς ἐν οὐρανῷ καὶ ἐπὶ γῆς.	As in heaven also upon earth (NB: “they are”, not “it is”).

⁶The word rendered “train up” most certainly does not mean “train up”, the “child” is not a child, and the line mentions neither “should” nor going. See, e.g., Hildebrand.

traditional form, despite what has been learned in the centuries since that form was first produced, or despite what the translator knows about the source and receptor languages.⁷

In discussing the translation of Pr 11.22, this paper (1) examines the verse in order to determine what perceived point of difficulty has given rise to the “received” rendering; (2) evaluates the history of its translation; and (3) suggests a more valid rendering. I then suggest that the translational tradition within which translators work tends to “freeze” renderings, *even when there is no linguistic challenge*, so that the knowledge and concerns of even the most conscientious and careful translator are overburdened by the “weight of tradition”, perpetuating a “frozen” translation.⁸

Proverbs 11.22

Table I: PR 11.22

<p>נָזַם זָהָב בְּאַף חֲזִיר אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסָרְתָּ טָעָם:</p> <p>(1) Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout Is a beautiful woman who lacks [without] discretion. (2) A gold ring in a pig’s snout; [is] A beautiful woman who rejects discretion.</p>
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Both renderings are my own. Rendering (1) typifies the Western translation tradition; I suggest that (2) is a more valid rendering of the Hebrew text.

Text & [Main] Versions

The apparatus of *BHS* lists no textual variants for this verse, although there are several differences between MT,⁹ LXX, and the Vulgate (Table II). The LXX begins each line with a comparative particle (ὡςπερ ... οὕτως ...), creating a simile. Neither conjunction corresponds to an element in the Hebrew text.¹⁰ The LXX makes the comparison explicit: the ring (but not a “gold” ring) is beauty, the heedless woman a pig. The Vulgate follows the Hebrew text more closely by maintaining the metaphor (and its referential ambiguity). None of these differences, however, implies or requires a different *Vorlage* than MT;¹¹ the Hebrew text may be read and translated as it stands.¹²

⁷Every biblical scholar to whom I have mentioned the topic of this paper has immediately, and with great enthusiasm asked if I planned to discuss this or that passage (none mentioned Pr 11.22).

⁸This result is not always to be laid at the feet of the individual translator, especially in modern Western translations, where the final renderings often rest largely upon a committee of overall editors (or even a single general editor) who sit atop a multi-layered translational process.

⁹The text is that of the MT as represented in *BHS*; I will use MT to refer to that text.

¹⁰The LXX translator(s) apparently also felt a need that typifies modern versions: to make metaphors into similes.

¹¹This verse illustrates the “exegetical” translation technique of the Greek translators of the book of Proverbs.

¹²A conclusion with which J. Fichtner (who edited Proverbs for *BHS*) obviously agreed, since he lists no variants.

Table II: PARALLEL VERSIONS

MT/BHS		LXX (Rahlfs)	Vulgate (Gryson)
	H-/G+	ὡσπερ	
נֶזֶם	=	ἐνώτιον	<i>circulus</i>
זָהָב	=	[χρυσούν] ¹³	<i>aureus</i>
בְּאַף	=	ἐν + ῥινι	<i>in naribus</i>
חִזְיוֹן	=	ὄσος	<i>suis</i>
	H-/G+	οὕτως	
אִשָּׁה	=	γυναικὶ	<i>mulier</i>
	∫ ¹⁴	κακόφρονι	
יָפֵה	=	κάλλος	<i>pulchra</i>
וְסִרְתָּ	H+/G-	----	<i>et ---</i>
טַעַם:	≠	[κακόφρονι]	<i>fatua</i>

Lexicon

The last two lexemes in the verse require comment: the participle *sārat* (*sūr*), and the noun *ta’am*, its apparent object.¹⁵

To begin at the end, *ta’am* has two referents in Biblical Hebrew: (1) the flavour or taste of food or drink;¹⁶ and (2) some aspect of emotional or mental behavior, usually glossed as “discretion”.

Job says that YHWH “removes the lip of the faithful, and takes [away] the elders’ *discernment*” (Jb 12.20). The psalmist links *ta’am* and knowledge as gifts of God, asking the Lord to teach him “the goodness of *discretion* and knowledge” (Ps 119.66). According to Pr 26.16, “A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven who return *ta’am*”, implying that *ta’am* is an aspect of wisdom (perhaps here, because of its contrast with laziness, diligence (or at least the ability to understand and know what needs to be done)). David’s threefold blessing in response to Abigail’s counsel—“Blessed be YHWH ... and blessed be your *discernment*, and blessed be you” (1 Sa 25.32-33)—suggests that she had given him a divine perspective that had prevented him from avenging himself on Nabal (cf. Ps 119.66).

Less clear is what David changed when he feared death at the hands of Achish or his servants: “he changed *his discretion*(?) in their eyes, and [so that he] acted like a madman in their hands ...” (1 Sa 21.14, paralleled in Ps 34.1). Perhaps he changed from being noticeably wise, insightful, and discerning into a madman, or perhaps he merely changed his behaviour from that of a normal (sane) person with normal tastes. At any rate, Achish

¹³The adjective is lacking in Vaticanus, the original hand of Sinaiticus, and Alexandrinus; Origen included it in his Hexapla under an *asterisk*, indicating that it was lacking from his exemplar of the LXX, but that he had added it “from out of the other editions (i.e., translations) in agreement with the Hebrew” (cited in Rahlfs 1935, XXIX).

¹⁴This symbol means that a corresponding word occurs, but in a different order.

¹⁵A *nezem*, “ring”, was always gold when its material is mentioned (Gn 24.22; Ex 32.2-3; Jg 8.24-26; Jb 42.11). It could refer to either nose rings (Gn 24.22, 30, 47; Is 3.21; Ezk 16.12; Pr 11.22) or earrings (Gn 35.4; Ex 32.2-3; Pr 25.12), or its location was not identified (Ex 35.22; Jg 8.24-26; Ho 2.15; Jb 42.11).

¹⁶*Ta’am* refers to the taste of *manna* (Ex 16.31; Nu 11.8), [apparently] the *juice* of a plant (Jb 6.6), and—in an extended metaphor—to the flavour that *Moab* would have if it were a beverage (Jr 48.11). The verbal root *ti’m* always refers to the act of tasting, eight times literally (1 Sam 14.24, 29, 43; 2 Sam 3.35; 19.36; Jb 12.11 || 34.3; Jon 3.7), twice figuratively (Ps 34.9; Pr 31.18).

responded by identifying him as another of the *meshugîm*, the “madmen”, with whom his court was plagued (1 Sa 21.16), which shows that David was not acting as the eminently sane person that he showed himself both before and after this incident.

These functions of the noun *ta’am*—twelve occurrences in eleven verses—demonstrate that a wisdom-oriented gloss such as “discretion” is not inappropriate.¹⁷

The second lexical question in this verse is the function of the feminine singular *qal* participle *sārat*, from the “hollow” root *sūr*. The participle modifies the noun *’iššā*, “woman”; since each is anarthrous its function is presumably adjectival (attributive). In the versions which I examined it is usually rendered “without”¹⁸, or “lacks”¹⁹ (each of the other renderings occurs once).²⁰

Discussion of the function of *sārat* is infrequent; the focus of most commentary on this v. is on the grotesque comparison of a pig to a woman, the shock value that would have come from comparing a [presumably Israelite] woman with an unclean animal. The other point, occasionally mentioned, is the function of *ta’am*, citing the obvious parallel in 1 Sam 25.33.

In the Bible, the *qal* of the root *sūr*²¹ is usually glossed as “turn aside”, “depart”, &c. It usually occurs with a preposition, either *min* (“from”) or *’el* (“to”), regardless of *binyan*. It occurs a few times without a preposition, as in the directional clause “to turn aside *right or left*”.²²

לֹא אָסַר יְמִינִי וְשִׂמְאוֹרִי: I will not turn [aside] *right or left* (Dt 2.27; cf. 5.32).

Its gloss in Pr 11.22 as “lack”, “be deficient in”, or “without” (or the like) is unique in the thirty versions that I have examined.²³ Moreover, these English predicates usually gloss other roots, e.g., *hār*, “[be] lack[ing]”.

Why use an anomalous gloss for a common, well-known, and well-understood root?

Perhaps because this is the only biblical occurrence of *sūr* in *qal* without a specified point (“object”) toward which or away from which its subject moves. This seems to have prompted R. N. Whybray’s statement that this is “a unique use of this verb” (1994, 185).²⁴

¹⁷In its other biblical occurrence (Jonah 3.7), the word *ta’am* is actually an Akkadian loanword (*tiēmu*), “decree, order”, which shows up in later Aramaic. Cf. also the noun *ti’ēm* in Biblical Aramaic (e.g., Ezr 4.8, 9, 17, 19; Dn 2.14; 3.10, 12).

¹⁸KJV (1611 text), ASV, Amplified, RSV, NEB, NRSV, TEV, ESV (8 versions).

¹⁹NAS, NKJV, NASU (1995), NLT, *World English Bible, God’s Word for the Nations* (6 versions). *The Bible in Basic English* reads “has no”, a rendering doubtless dictated by the lexicon of Basic English. JPS (Jewish Study Bible) has “bereft of”, which implies that she has lost something that she once had (an implication upon which the note does not comment).

²⁰I do not include LXX or the Vulgate, lest my translation skew the picture.

²¹Counts vary in the literature (298 (KBL), 300 (Even-Šošan), “about 300 times” (NIDOTTE)), although its distributional pattern is agreed upon: *qal* (c. 160x), *hifil* (c. 134x), *hofal* (5x), *poel* (once).

²²When Abram told Lot that he would go either right or left once Lot chose a direction (Gn 13.9), he used two rare verbs that always occur in parallel: *ymin*, “go right” and *sm’l*, “go left”. As in Gn 13.9, both refer to turning to one side or the other in 2 Sa 14.19; Is 30.21; Ezk 21.21; in 1 Ch 12.2 they refer to slingers who could use either hand.

²³I have not examined each of its 300 occurrences in all thirty versions.

²⁴He does not discuss what makes it “anomalous” or “unique”.

Furthermore, in Pr 11.22 *sûr* seems to have a direct object, rather than a modifying locative or directional phrase,²⁵ and, to compound the anomaly of this usage, this is one of only two occurrences in the poetic books of Psalms, Job, and Proverbs in which a form of *sûr* occurs without a preposition (Table III).²⁶

מִן + רַע (מִרַע)	11	
some other object + מִן	13	
מֵאַחֲרַי	1	Jb 34.27
מֵעַל	1	Pr 27.22
Total with מִן	26	
הִנָּה	2	Pr 9.4 = 9.16 ²⁸
בִּ-	1	Jb 15.30c
absolute	1	Ps 14.3 (see note)
“object”; no preposition	1	Pr 11.22
Total occurrences	31	

In most of its occurrences in *qal* in these books, *sûr* is collocated with the preposition *min*, either alone or as the first element of a “compound preposition”,²⁹ a pattern which typifies its syntax throughout Biblical Hebrew.³⁰ Perhaps the anomaly of the “mission” preposition led to the common rendering that the beautiful woman lacks discretion or taste, as in the 1611 edition of KJV:

As a jewel of gold in swine’s snout,
so is a fair woman which is without discretion (KJV [text])³¹

In a marginal note, however, the KJV translators glossed *sārat* as “Heb. *departeth from*” (rather than “is without”),³² a suggestion also made by John Gill (but without mentioning the KJV’s marginal reading):³³ “... or, *has departed from taste*”, citing both *recedens* and *recessit* (used by Piscator and Schultens, respectively). He goes on to describe such a woman as one who has “lost all sense modesty [*sic*] and chastity; forsaken her husband, and given up

²⁵*Hifil* of *sûr* (“remove”, “take away”) occurs regularly with a direct object, both with a preposition (Jb 9.34; 12.20; 27.5; 33.17; Pss 18.23; 39.11; 66.20; 81.7; 119.29; Pr 4.24; 4.27; 28.9) and without (only in Jb 12.24; 19.9; 27.2; 34.5; 34.20). I have not examined its occurrences outside these books.

²⁶In Ps 14.3a *sûr* is “absolute”, lacking both object and preposition: הַכֹּל סָר, “each one [the whole (of mankind?)] has turned aside”.

²⁷*Sûr* occurs in *qal* in all three books, most frequently in Proverbs, the shortest of these books (Job (8x), Pss (8x), Pr (14x)).

²⁸This represents a single functional occurrence; the author paralleled the invitations of Wisdom (9.4) & Folly (9.16).

²⁹Its second occurrence in Jb 15.30 governs the preposition *b-*: “He will not depart [*lo’ yāsûr*] from darkness / Fire withers his shoot / And he departs [*w’yāsûr*] with/by [*b-*] the breath of His [his (own)?] mouth”. According to Elphaz, the wicked will most certainly perish, either by divine wind (or fiat), or by his own weakness (“breath”).

³⁰In about one-half of its occurrences in *hifil*, where we might expect not only “that which was removed” to be identified, but also “that from [or to] which” it was moved, *sûr* lacks a preposition; when there is a preposition, it is almost always *min*.

³¹All italics are original, except those in the Vulgate, which are merely to visually separate the original from my translation.

³²The lack of italics for the word “from” in the marginal reading suggests that the translators felt that this was so much a part of the function of *sûr* that they did not consider its use in English to be an addition to the text. [Words were italicized in KJV to show that they did not correspond to a specific element in the original Hebrew or Greek, a tradition continued by, e.g., NASB.]

³³His commentary is based on—or interacts with—the text of KJV.

herself to the embraces of others” (1853, 489). Gill thus sees this attractive woman as one who has abandoned or rejected that which she once knew.³⁴ His understanding seems to be reflected in *Tanakh*: “... a beautiful woman bereft of sense” (JPS 1999), since “bereft” implies a loss of what one had.

The Bible Commentary, which is based on KJV and includes the original marginal note (i.e., “Heb. *departeth from*”), says merely that “without discretion” is “Lit. ‘without taste’” (Cook 1871-1881, 561).

The rendering “lacking” or “without” reflects much more than the past four centuries, as both the LXX and Vulgate show (cf. Table I), although their renderings are more exegetical, each using an adjective to represent the participle+object syntagm of MT:

Table IV: LXX & VULGATE
<p>ὡσπερ ἐνώπιον ἐν ῥίνι ὕός, οὕτως γυναικὶ κακόφρονι κάλλος. As an earring in a nose of a pig thus [is] beauty to/for a heedless woman.³⁵</p>
<p><i>circulus aureus in naribus suis</i> <i>mulier pulchra et fatua</i> A circle of gold in a pig’s nose; a woman beautiful and foolish.²⁹</p>

The book of Proverbs often mentions those who “lack” or are deficient in some quality, using either a form of the root *hšr*, “lack”,³⁶ or the negative quasi-verbal *’ên*, “there is not” or “without”.³⁷ If the intended meaning was “lacking” or “without”, either of these could have been used, without anomaly or confusion.

The usual function of *sûr* has not been completely ignored, however. The KJV marginal gloss says that the Hebrew means “departeth from” (above),³⁸ but the NET Bible and the Soncino commentary on Proverbs are the only versions that I found that actually follow this reading in their main text,³⁹ reading: “turneth aside from” (Soncino) and “rejects” (NET Bible).⁴⁰ The commentary merely translates *sārat* as “that turneth aside” (Cohen 1946, 70),⁴¹ without elaboration or further comment.

Oesterley criticizes the KJV’s rendering of this verse as “[a] paraphrase which does not fully express the original, for the verb used, ‘to turn from’, implies something rather stronger” (1929, 87).⁴² Both Oesterley and Cohen (1946) mention the rabbinic interpretation that “so is the student of the Torah if he *abandon* himself to

³⁴Since he comments on the KJV, his edition must have lacked the original marginal note. The longest part of his comment applies this proverb to the Roman Catholic Church, which Gill condemns as “the scarlet whore”, suggesting that his ecclesiology determined his translation, the pure [beautiful] original Church having perverted herself into Romanism.

³⁵Both translations are my own.

³⁶12 occurrences in Proverbs: fools “lack a heart” (6.32; 7.7; 9.4, 16; 10.13; 11.12; 12.11; 15.21; 17.18; 24.30); a wicked ruler “lacks understanding” (28.16); one who pretends to be rich “lacks bread” (12.9).

³⁷34 occurrences in Proverbs.

³⁸The *NIV Interlinear* glosses *w’sārat* as “turning away from”, but an inter-linear hardly qualifies as a “version” in the usual sense of the term; not even all inter-linears, however, follow this rendering (e.g., Green 1978).

³⁹More distantly, but within the pale of the understanding that I propose (below), the NET Bible reads “rejects”.

⁴⁰NET Bible adds the translation note (tn): “Heb ‘turns away [from]’.” <http://bible.org/netbible/> (ad loc.).

⁴¹In an extremely cryptic comment Jamieson says: “lit., without (lit., *turning aside from* [תָּרַח]) *taste*” (1871, 450).

⁴²The text in his commentary includes the original marginal notes as footnotes.

immorality; ..." (Oesterley 1929, 87; emphasis added), a reading which implies that the woman is leaving, turning aside from or avoiding discretion ["morality"].

In his lay-level commentary, Woodcock says that a beautiful woman "shows no discretion' when she turns away *and deliberately rejects* what is right, appropriate, and involves good taste" (1988, 164-65; emphasis added).

The commentaries tend to focus on the incongruity of an Israelite wisdom saying that refers to a pig in order to make its point, especially citing the "shock value" of comparing a [presumably] Israelite woman to an unclean animal.

Most translations still follow KJV (LXX, Vulgate, &c.). Even the UBS [Translator's] *Handbook on Proverbs* says that

The form of the Hebrew [is] ... literally:
"Ring of gold in snout of pig,
woman of beauty but lacking taste"
(Reyburn & Fry 2000, 254)

Again, we may ask why this version of Pr 11.22 has not only been maintained through centuries of study and analysis, but how it has become enshrined to the extent that it can be considered "literal"?

After briefly considering the syntax and poetic structure of this verse, I will suggest a rendering and interpretation, and make a few comments on the actual question of this paper.

Syntax

Compression is a fundamental aspect of poetry, and proverbs are (by definition) compact bits of poetic wisdom. The very compression that makes proverbial sayings brief and memorable, however, can obscure their syntax, since they normally lack many of the usual syntactical signals that help us read them accurately.

Proverbs 11.22a is consistently rendered as "a gold ring in a pig's nose",⁴³ as though (1) the prepositional phrase was attributive; and (2) the entire line was the subject of the saying, with an implied copula "between" the two lines. In the same way, the adjective *y^efat* (22b) is consistently translated as attributive: "a beautiful woman ..."

Despite the apparently widespread assumption that this v. contains a single predication (i.e., that the swine-enhancing gold ring *is* the beautiful woman ... (cf. LXX, above)), the general syntactical rules of Biblical Hebrew—especially when considered in light of the compression and indeterminacy that characterize proverbial poetry—also allow us to interpret and render both lines as predications:

A gold ring *is* in a pig's nose!⁴⁴
A woman *is* beautiful, ...

⁴³There are no exceptions in the thirty versions that I consulted.

⁴⁴I justify the exclamation point by the cultural shock value of comparing a woman to an unclean animal (cf. the curiously named Levite, Hezir (1 Ch 24.15; Ne 10.21)). The use of the pig suggests, but does not require, the oft-suggested foreign origin of this proverb.

The second syntactical consideration is the function of the conjunction *waw* (22b), which is routinely unrepresented, most versions rendering this line as “... a beautiful woman *who* ...”⁴⁵ The conjunction functions as the hinge of the line—and of the entire v.—by linking the woman’s folly with her appearance.

As the tentative rendering (above) suggests, it is possible to interpret this as a contrasting predicate, and thus to render the *waw* as “but”, which might be even more appropriate if the second line is read as a copulative:

...; A woman is beautiful, but [foolish]

Poetic Structure⁴⁶

Ll.	MT (BHS)	Semantics	Syntax	Parsing
22a	נָזָם זָהָב בְּאַף חֲזִיר	a . b	4: 2.2	S - P/Adv [pp]
22b	אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסָרְתָ טַעַם:	a ¹ . b ¹	4: 2.2	S - w+P/ptc - Adv f s Q Ptc

The proverb is *emblematic*, 22a being the picture (“emblem”) and 22b the “caption”.⁴⁷ Since all emblematic proverbs are *synonymous* (to use Lowth’s terminology), the elements and units of the two lines are roughly parallel. The gold ring parallels the woman’s beauty, which leaves its location in a pig’s nose to parallel *w’sārat Ta’am* (the phrase in question), and further implies that this phrase describes a quality as undesirable as pork in ancient Israel.

Despite its lack of comparative particle or conjunction, Pr 11.22 is rendered as a simile⁴⁸ by all but three versions. The Vulgate, Rheims-Douay, and Young’s *Literal Translation* treat it as a metaphor (see Appendix II).⁴⁹

A Suggested Rendering & Interpretation

This proverb could be rendered in a number of ways, all of which validly represent or interpret the Hebrew text. This is an “inter-linear” version:

חֲזִיר	בְּאַף	זָהָב	נָזָם
pig	in-nose-of	gold	ring-of
טַעַם:	וְסָרְתָ	יָפָה	אִשָּׁה
discretion	& ⁵⁰ who-turns	attractive-one	woman

There are two basic renderings: (1) to link the lines by means of a copula, and thus make them a single predication; or (2) as two juxtaposed (i.e., asyndetic) clauses.

⁴⁵Slightly more than one-half—fifteen of twenty-nine—versions use this construction.

⁴⁶The columns represent, from left to right, the Hebrew text as found in BHS, semantic analysis (*letters* refer to functional semantic units; *numerals* represent the total number of words in the line, followed by the number of words that make up each semantic unit), syntactical analysis, verbal identification. This example is slightly simplified from the form that I have developed for extended poems, due to proverbial brevity.

⁴⁷After noting that this is the first “emblematical proverb in which the first and second lines are related to each other as figure and its import”, Delitzsch says that it portrays “a wife in whom beauty and the want of culture are placed together”, although he ends his comment on the verse by saying that this lack is “not without the accompanying idea of self-guilt” (1872; 1980, 244). Cf. also Woodcock (1988, 164).

⁴⁸This number includes all versions that use “as” or “like”, whether or not they also use “so” (11 versions use “so”).

⁴⁹As does the NIV *Interlinear*.

⁵⁰The ampersand (“&”) indicates the presence of *waw* without suggesting a gloss.

- (1) A gold ring in a pig's snout
Is a lovely woman who avoids discretion.
-
- (2) A gold ring is in a pig's snout!
A woman is⁵¹ lovely, but [and] avoids discretion.

The difference between these renderings is relatively insignificant, the second perhaps requiring more effort on the part of the reader or hearer to determine the relationship between the lines.⁵²

On the other hand, the difference between these renderings and the usual the rendering with “lacking” or “[being] without” is considerable.⁵³

If the verse—an implicit warning to the young men who are the book’s primary addressees about the type of woman that they should marry—describes a woman who merely lacks discretion, as the usual translation suggests, then there is no obvious or inherent barrier to marrying her. A naïve woman could have the ability to learn discretion, just as naïve youths and men are called and encouraged to learn from Wisdom (Pr 1-9; esp. 1.2-6 (above)).

If, however, the reading suggested in this paper—or one like it, such as Cohen (1946) or the NET Bible—is correct, then this verse warns men against marrying a woman whose behavior demonstrates a perverse spirit—one who persistently avoids, rebels against, and rejects opportunities to learn or grow in understanding, discretion, and wisdom—regardless of how beautiful or attractive she may be. For such a woman is merely another type of the contumacious fool described throughout the book of Proverbs, for whom there is no hope until they turn from their stubborn perversity and rebellion.

“Frozenness” in Translation

Why, after centuries of study, and reams of pages discussing every verse in Scripture, and often suggesting better or more accurate understanding of particular verses, do certain renderings remain “frozen”? I suggest several reasons—there are probably more.

First, and most important, is the simple *weight of tradition*—the burden of the familiar. Translators (and publishers) are constrained by the English translational tradition, and that for several reasons. No modern translators begin reading the Bible in Greek, Aramaic, or Hebrew, but usually in one English version, with its particular purposes and goals, as well as its way(s) of wrestling with the burden of tradition. No translator therefore approaches the text *de novo*, with no idea of what it says.⁵⁴

⁵¹This copula could also be contingent (“may be”).

⁵²Difficulty in reading is not entirely undesirable, however, especially in a book that refers to its own contents as “proverbs”⁵² (*māšāl*), “dark sayings” (*melītsā*),⁵² and “riddles” (*w^hiīdôtām*; all 1.6). One of the purposes of the book of Proverbs, according to its opening statement (1.2-6), is to enable the naïve and wise alike to grow in understanding; that which is transparent does not foster learning or growth, neither of which comes without some effort.

⁵³The rendering of this verse may be minor in itself, but it is not a matter of mere “academic” interest, pursued in order to fatten a c.v. with yet another pedantic paper.

⁵⁴Once when teaching New Testament Greek, I used a passage from the LXX for an examination (I do not remember the text). The students were convinced that I had made it up—that it was not biblical Greek at all—and they were relatively unable to make sense of the passage. This suggested that often their ability to “translate” a passage in the New

The issues of learning a language academically (vs. acquiring it “naturally”), and the *reductio ad infinitum* concerning who learned what (i.e., that today’s expert was once a student, encountering Biblical Hebrew or Greek for the first time, and who thus learned grammar, lexical glosses, &c. from some source, whether a person or book, a source that in its turn learned the language from some other source, ...), means that the tools used by exegetes and translators are themselves influenced by the translational tradition. The glosses provided by the lexica, for example, are often taken from “older” English versions, as a quick glance through BDB will demonstrate.

Another effect of the weight of tradition is that translations must *sound “right”* to potential readers. Even though, for example, rendering the Tetragrammaton as “Yahweh” or even “YHWH” (instead of the traditional phrase “the LORD”)⁵⁵ would make many passages meaningful rather than merely tautologous,⁵⁶ to say “Yahweh is my shepherd” (Ps 23.1a) would alienate most readers, who might either suspect that “the scholars” are somehow trying to pull a fast one (if only because they lack a meaningful point of reference for the name “Yahweh”).⁵⁷ Renderings must therefore fall within parameters that readers will accept as valid—not because they understand the linguistic validity of a particular rendering, but due to its relative proximity to the familiar.

According to Willis Barnstone, about “about 80 percent of the Authorized Version is Tyndale’s phraseology” (Barnstone 1993, 208). Comparing nearly any modern version to the AV/KJV will quickly demonstrate that a great deal of Tyndale’s work survives today. Modern “translations” *revise* (i.e., assume and build on) the work of the past far more than they “translate” the Hebrew and Greek texts.

Anyone who has worked under a *deadline* could also surmise that the need to “get it done” also affects translation—there simply isn’t time to look up every occurrence of *sûr* or the adjective-*waw*-participle syntagm; and under pressure it is human to default to the familiar.

I think that a further reason may simply be *humility*. Even when a verse doesn’t seem to mean what the tradition says, the translator may be tempted to say “Everyone else must see something here, or know something about this [Hebrew] word, that I don’t see or know”.

I am sure that these reasons could be multiplied many times over.

We need (1) to recognize that we work within a long tradition of Bible translation; (2) not to allow that tradition to control our renderings, even though we cannot help but be affected by it; and (3) to do whatever is necessary to question that tradition (e.g., looking up occurrences of nouns, verbs, syntagms). This is not necessary for every verse, many of which are perfectly straightforward and have long been translated well. When, however, we

Testament was directly related to its general familiarity, not to their knowledge of Greek. On another occasion, I asked a student who had just flowingly translated a NT passage to explain how he had interpreted a particular syntagm, he said “I don’t really understand the Greek; I just know what it says”.

⁵⁵I realize that the tradition of “lord” for *yhw* goes back to the LXX’s use of *ku,riou* (at least); its antiquity does not mean that it is helpful.

⁵⁶Especially within the monotheistic [Christian] world such a saying is tautologous (who else *would* “God” be but “the LORD?”), as are all statements like “Blessed is the nation whose god is the LORD”, rather than “... Yahweh” (Ps 33.12; the small “g” on “god” signals that it functions here as a generic noun). They miss, that is, the claim that the psalmist (e.g.) lives in a truly polytheistic culture, and is identifying Yahweh—and not some other god—as his god.

⁵⁷The irony in this, of course, is that “Yahweh” is a personal, proper name, whereas “the LORD” is merely a title or function.

run across verses where the usual rendering just doesn't seem to "fit" the original text, we need to be cautious, slow down, do the work, and test the tradition against the actual evidence.

I am not suggesting, incidentally, that the perfect, ultimate, unimprovable translation lies within our reach. Translation by its nature is always open to improvement and development.

I am suggesting that we test our translations against the text itself, as well as against those for whom it is being made. My test is fairly simple. If a student handed in the traditional rendering of this passage on a test, would I accept it as valid?⁵⁸ If no, why not? If the text does not appear to say

Let me end with a caveat and a suggestion.

First, the warning. The "tyranny of tradition" lays a special burden on those providing a first translation of the Bible into a language, since that translation will establish, by its mere existence, the translation tradition for that community. This reflects Kenneth Pike's observation that our first experience of something tends to define it (Pike 1982, 120).⁵⁹ I.e., the version that we first read becomes the standard against which all subsequent encounters are measured. Hence the tyranny of tradition.

The translators themselves—especially those who base their translation largely or primarily on either an English version or a culturally related version—will be wrestling with their own experience with the Bible,⁶⁰ so that the "new" translation will be partially a product of their own translational tradition. They will also be dealing the cultural expectations of the receptor community, many of whom will have their own ideas of what "religious" text "from [a] god" should sound like. Translating for the first time requires a long look at the possibility that generations later, long after the reasons for any given choice have been forgotten (and perhaps even after the need to make a choice has been forgotten), theological argument, social and ecclesiastical controversy may hinge on a verb tense or point of syntax.

Perhaps (and this is *the suggestion*) we would find it more helpful to adopt the viewpoint of Islam toward the *Qur'an*, which cannot be translated, only interpreted. If we presented our translations of the Bible as mere "versions" (*sic*) or "interpretations" of the biblical text, rather than talking about varieties of "equivalence", we might begin to free ourselves and the Bible's readers from the tyranny of tradition, and to "melt" or "unfreeze" our translations.

-fcp
All Saints' MMV

⁵⁸I have composed a pedagogical Hebrew grammar that uses biblical passages as "exercises" (Putnam 2010). At several points I warn students that their translation *should not* sound like the versions that they know.

⁵⁹Thanks to Dr. Bryan Harmelink for helping me relocate this reference.

⁶⁰As well as with their theological, exegetical, and cultural traditions, but that is another topic.

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Appendix A: OTHER “FROZEN” RENDERINGS

Some of these come from my own files, others were mentioned to me in response to the topic of this paper. This is obviously a (very) partial list.

Reference	Tradition	Suggestion	Comment/Source
Gn 34.24		“every battle-ready man from his city”	A. J. Schmutzer; ETS 2005
Dt 6.4	“the LORD”	“Yahweh”/“Yhwh”	[all occurrences of <i>yhwh</i> ; restore its status as a name, rather than a rank, title, or function]
1 Sam 11.14	“renew the kingdom [of Saul]”	“renew [YHWH’s] Kingdom”	J. R. Vannoy, <i>Covenant Renewal at Gilgal</i> (1977)
Ps 1.1c	“sit” “seat”	“settle” “dwelling”	Ps 1.1 is not the progression “walk ... stand ... sit”, as though the point were “growing commitment” or the like, but a metaphor that life is a journey, so that where you set out (the “counsel” that you seek/get) determines where you end up (the “dwelling”)
Ps 1.3a	“planted”	“transplanted”	These renderings clarify the point that the tree has been moved to a place prepared for it, rather than “happening” to grow near a water source.
	“streams”	“irrigation ditches”	
Ps 23.6b	“dwell”	“return”	The difference is one of pointing (LXX apparently read <i>sibtī</i> ; MT/BHS reads <i>šabtī</i>).
Ps 113.9	“barren woman”	“barren wife of the house”	Her barrenness could only be revealed if she were married.
Ps 119	“and I/you /... will”	“so that I/you/...”	[all sequences of an imperative followed by <i>w</i> +imperfect should be rendered consistently telic (or not)]
Ps 126.6a-b			the lines are parallel and separate predications, not subordinated
Mt 6.9 (= Lk 11.2)	“hallowed by Thy name”	“may thy name be hallowed”	&c. (“may thy kingdom come ...”), since grammar & syntax = parallel

Appendix B: RENDERINGS OF PR II.22

VS (Date)	Line A	Line B
MT (BHS)	נָזַם זָהָב בְּאַף הַחִיר	אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסָרְתָ טְעָם:
LXX (Rahlfs)	ὡσπερ ἐνώπιον ἐν ῥίνι ὕός, [As an earring in a nose of a pig	οὕτως γυναικὶ κακόφρονι κάλλος. thus [is] beauty to/for a heedless woman –FCP]
Vulgate (ABS)	<i>circulus aureus in naribus suis</i> [A circle of gold in a pig's nose	<i>mulier pulchra et fatua</i> a woman beautiful and foolish –FCP]
KJV text (1611)	As ⁶¹ a jewel of gold in swine's snout,	so is a fair woman which is without discretion.
ASV (1901)	[As] a ring of gold in a swine's snout,	[So is] a fair woman that is without discretion.
Amplified	As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,	so is a fair woman who is without discretion.
NAS (1972)	As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,	So is a beautiful woman who lacks ¹ discretion. [mg. ¹ Lit., taste]
<i>The Bible in Basic English</i>	Like a ring in the nose of a pig,	is a beautiful woman who has no sense.
NKJV (1982)	As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,	So is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.
NIV (1984); eNIV (2001)	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout	is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.
JPS (Jewish Study Bible; 2004)	Like a gold ring in the snout of a pig	Is a beautiful woman bereft of sense.
NASU (1995)	[As] a ring of gold in a swine's snout	[So is] a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.
New Century (1991)	A beautiful woman without good sense	is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.
<i>World English Bible</i>	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout,	is a beautiful woman who lacks discretion.
<i>God's Word ... Nations</i> (1988)	[Like] a gold ring in a pig's snout,	[so] is a beautiful woman who lacks good taste.
NLT (1996)	A woman who is beautiful but lacks discretion	is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.
RSV	Like a gold ring in a swine's snout	is a beautiful woman without discretion.
NEB (1970)	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout	is a beautiful woman without good sense.
NRSV (1989)	Like a ring of gold in a pig's snout	is a beautiful woman without good sense.
TEV (1976)	Beauty in a woman without good judgment	is like a gold ring in a pig's snout.
ESV (2001)	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout	is a beautiful woman without discretion.
Rheims-Douay	A golden ring in a swine's snout,	a woman fair and foolish.
CEV (1995)	A beautiful woman who acts foolishly	is like a gold ring on the snout of a pig.
<i>The Message</i> (1995)	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout	is a beautiful face on an empty head.
KJV (1611) [margin]	As a jewel of gold in swine's snout,	so is a fair woman which departeth from discretion.
Soncino (1946)	As a ring of gold in a swine's snout,	So is a fair woman that turneth aside from discretion.
<i>NIV Interlinear</i> (1982)	ring-of gold in-snout-of pig	beautiful woman but-turning-away-of discretion
<i>The Interlinear</i> (Jay Green, 1978)	(As) a ring of gold in a swine's snout	(so is) a beautiful woman yet turning aside discretion.
NET Bible	Like a gold ring in a pig's snout,	so is a beautiful woman who rejects discretion.
Young's Literal (1898)	A ring of gold in the nose of a sow—	A fair woman and stubborn of behaviour.
NAB	Like a golden ring in a swine's snout	is a beautiful woman with a rebellious disposition.

⁶¹All italics are original, except those in the Vulgate, which are merely to visually separate the original from my translation.

VARIETIES OF RENDERING (SUMMARY)		
Simile ⁶²	26	
Metaphor	4	Vulgate, Rheims-Douay, NIV Interlinear, Young's Literal
Single clause ⁶³	30	
<i>w</i> (22b)		
"and"	2	Vulgate, Rheims-Douay
"but"	2	NLT, Young's Literal
"who/which"	16	
"without" ⁶⁴	5	RSV, NRSV, NEB (1970), TEV, ESV

⁶²This includes versions that use "as" and "like", whether or not they use "so" (11 versions use "so").

⁶³I.e., the lines are linked by a copula (usually "is").

⁶⁴Unlike the majority rendering of this line, these five versions do not use the relative construction (e.g., "... a beautiful woman without good sense" (NRSV)).

Appendix C: THE HEBREW ROOT *SUR* IN PSALMS, JOB, PROVERBS

Parsing	Gloss	to/from		Obj.		Prep.	Reference
							אל־תְּהִי חָכֶם בְּעֵינֶיךָ Pr 3.7
2ms Q V	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	יִרְא אֶת־יְהוָה וְסוּר מֵרָע: Pr 13.19
Q NC	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	תְּאוֹרָה נִהְיָה תִּעְרַב לְנַפְשׁ וְתוֹעֵבַת כְּסִילִים סוּר מֵרָע: Pr 14.16
ms Q Ptc	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	חָכֶם יִרְא וְסוּר מֵרָע וְכָסִיל מִתְעַבֵּר וּבִטָּח: Pr 16.6
Q NC	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	בַּחֲסֵד וְאַמֶּת יִכְפַּר עֵוֹן וּבִירְאָת יְהוָה סוּר מֵרָע: Pr 16.17
Q NC	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	מִסֵּלֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל סוּר מֵרָע שֹׁמֵר נַפְשׁוֹ נִצֵּר הַרְפוּ: 14.27a
ms Q Ptc	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	וְסוּר מֵרָע: Jb 1.1
ms Q Ptc	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	וְסוּר מֵרָע: Jb 1.8
ms Q Ptc	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	וְסוּר מֵרָע: Jb 2.3
Q NC	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָדָם הֵן יִרְאָת אֲדֹנָי הִיא חָכֶם וְסוּר מֵרָע בִּינָה: Jb 28.28
2ms Q V	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	סוּר מֵרָע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב Ps 34.15
2ms Q V	turn	from	evil	N	רָע	מִן	בְּקִשׁ שְׁלוֹם וְרִדְפָהוּ: סוּר מֵרָע וַעֲשֵׂה־טוֹב Ps 37.27
2mp Q F	turn	from	my words	N	אֲמַר־פִּי	מִן	וְשָׁכֵן לְעוֹלָם: וְעַתָּה בָּנִים שְׂמַעוּ־לִי Pr 5.7
Q NC + 1	turn	from	snare of	N	מִקְשֵׁי מוֹת	מִן	וְאַל־תִּסּוּרוּ מֵאֲמַר־פִּי: Pr 13.14
Q NC + 1	turn	from	snare of	N	מִקְשֵׁי מוֹת	מִן	תּוֹרַת חָכֶם מְקוֹר חַיִּים לְסוּר מִמִּקְשֵׁי מוֹת: = 14.27b Pr 14.27
Q NC + 1	turn	from	snare of	N	מִקְשֵׁי מוֹת	מִן	יִרְאָת יְהוָה מְקוֹר חַיִּים לְסוּר מִמִּקְשֵׁי מוֹת: 13.14a = 13.14b
Q NC	turn	from	sheol	N+Adv	שְׂאוֹל מָטָה	מִן	אַרְח חַיִּים לְמַעַלָּה לְמִשְׁפִּיל Pr 15.24
Q NC	turn	from	sheol	N+Adv	שְׂאוֹל מָטָה	מִן	לְמַעַן סוּר מִשְׂאוֹל מָטָה: לְמַעַן סוּר מִשְׂאוֹל מָטָה:

1cs Q P	turn	from		N	מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ	מִן	מִמִּשְׁפָּטֶיךָ לֹא־סִרְתִּי כִּי־אַתָּה הוֹרַתְנִי:	Ps 119.102
3ms Q F	turn	from	darkness	N	חֹשֶׁךְ	מִנִּי	לֹא־יִסּוֹר מִנִּי־חֹשֶׁךְ יִנְקָתוֹ תִּיבֹשׂ שֶׁל־הֶבֶת וְיִסּוֹר בְּרוּחַ פִּיּוֹ:	Jb 15.30
3ms Q F	turn	by	breath of	N	רוּחַ פִּיּוֹ	בְּ	חֲנֹךְ לְנַעַר עַל־פִּי דַרְכּוֹ גַּם כֹּת־יִזְקִין לֹא־יִסּוֹר מִמְּנָה:	Pr 22.6
3ms Q F	not turn	from	it	3fs pr.		מִן	סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי כָּל־פַּעְלֵי עֵינַי כִּי־שָׁמַע יְהוָה קוֹל בְּכִיִּי:	Ps 6.9
2mp Q V	turn	from	me	1cs pr.		מִן	לִבִּי עִקְשׁ יִסּוֹר מִמֶּנִּי רַע לֹא אֲדַע:	Ps 101.4
3ms Q F	turn	from	me	1cs pr.		מִן	סוּרוּ מִמֶּנִּי מִרְעִים וְאַצְרָה מִצּוֹת אֱלֹהֵי: אִם־תִּקְטַל אֱלֹהֵי רָשָׁע	Ps 119.115
2mp Q V	turn	from	me	1cs pr.		מִן	וְאֲנֹשֵׁי דָמוֹם סוּרוּ מִנִּי: וַיֹּאמְרוּ לָאֵל סוּר מִמֶּנּוּ וְדַעַת דַּרְכֶיךָ לֹא חֲפָצְנוּ:	Ps 139.19
2ms Q V	turn	from	us	1cp pr.		מִן	הָאֲמָרִים לָאֵל סוּר מִמֶּנּוּ וּמִה־יַּפְעַל שְׂדֵי לְמוֹ:	Jb 21.14
2ms Q V	turn	from	us	1cp pr.		מִן	אֲשֶׁר עַל־כֵּן סָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָיו וְכָל־דַּרְכָּיו לֹא הִשְׁכִּילוּ: אִם תִּכְתּוֹשׁ־אֶת־הָאוִיל בַּמִּכְתֵּשׁ בְּתוֹךְ הָרִיפּוֹת בְּעַלְי לֹא־תִסּוֹר מֵעַלְיוֹ אוֹלָתוֹ:	Jb 22.17
3ms Q P	turn	from after	him	3ms pr.		מֵאַחֲרָיו		Jb 34.27
3fs Q F	not turn	from upon	him	3ms pr.		מֵעַל		Pr 27.22
3ms Q J	turn	to	here	Adv		הִנֵּה	מִי־פָתִי יִסֵּר הִנֵּה חִסְר־לֵב אֲמַרְהָ לּוֹ: נָזֵם זָהָב בְּאָף חֲזִיר אֲשֶׁה יָפָה וְסָרַת טָעָם:	Pr 9.4/16 9.16b Pr 11.22
fs Q Ptc	turn	[from]	taste	N	טָעָם		הַכֹּל סָר יַחְדָּו נֶאֱלָחוּ אֵין עֲשֵׂה־טוֹב אֵין גַּם־אֲחָד:	Ps 14.3
3ms Q P	turn aside							

Appendix D: THE NOUN TA'AMIN BIBLICAL HEBREW

Reference	MT (BHS)	Gloss	Referent	Parallel
Pr 11.22	נָחַם וְהָבָה בְּאֵף חֲזִיר אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסִרְתָּ טַעַם:		woman	
Ex 16.31	וְטַעְמוֹ כְּצִפְיַחַת בְּרֹבֶשׁ:	taste, flavour	manna	cakes with honey
Nu 11.8	וְהָיָה טַעְמוֹ כְּטַעַם לֶשֶׁד הַשָּׁמֶן:	taste, flavour	manna	cakes with oil
Jb 6.6	הֵיאֵכֶל תִּפְּל מִבְּלֵי־מֶלַח אִם־יִשְׁטַעַם בְּרִיר חֲלָמוֹת:	taste, flavour	plant juice	
Jr 48.11	שָׁאַנְן מוֹאָב מִנְעוּרָיו וְשָׁקַט הוּא אֶל־שִׁמְרָיו וְלֹא־הוֹרַק מִכְּלֵי אֶל־כְּלֵי וּבְגוּלָה לֹא הֶלֶךְ עַל־כֵּן עֲמַד טַעְמוֹ בּוֹ וְרִיחוֹ לֹא נָמַר:	taste, flavour	wine [Moab as ...]	
1 Sam 25.33	טַעְמָךְ וּבְרוּכָה אַתְּ אֲשֶׁר כָּלַחְנִי הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מִבּוֹא בְּדָמַי וּבְרוּךְ וְהִשַׁע יָדַי לִי:	discernment	Abigail	
1 Sam 21.14	וַיִּשְׁנוּ אֶת־טַעְמוֹ בְּעֵינֵיהֶם וַיַּחְלִל בְּיָדָם וַיִּתּוּ {ו} {וְיִתּוּ} עַל־דְּלָחוֹת הַשָּׁעַר וַיִּוְרְדוּ רִירוֹ אֶל־זִקְנוֹ:	behaviour(?); discernment(?)	David	act madly mark doors spits on beard
Ps 34.1	לְדָוִד בְּשִׁנּוֹתָיו אֶת־טַעְמוֹ לִפְנֵי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ וַיִּגְרָשׁוּ וַיִּלְךְ:	behaviour(?); discernment(?)	David	cf. 1 Sam 21.14
Ps 119.66	טוֹב טַעַם וְדַעַת לְמַדְנִי כִּי בַמִּצּוֹתֶיךָ הָאֲמֵנֹתִי:	discernment		knowledge
Jb 12.20	מִסִּיר שִׁפְהָ לְנֹאמְנִים וְטַעַם זִקְנִים יָקַח:	discernment	elders	lip
Pr 26.16	חָכָם עֲצָל בְּעֵינָיו מִשְׁבַּעַה מְשִׁיבֵי טַעַם:	discernment(?); [wise] behaviour(?)	wise	sluggard
Jon 3.7	וַיִּזְעַק וַיֹּאמֶר בְּנִינְוָה מִטַּעַם הַמֶּלֶךְ וּגְדָלְיוֹ לֵאמֹר הָאֲדָם וְהַבְּהֵמָה הַבָּקָר וְהַצֹּאן אֶל־יִטַּעְמוּ מֵאוֹמֶה אֶל־יָרְעוּ וּמִים אֶל־יִשְׁתּוּ:	proclamation (Ak > Ar > Hb)	king & nobles	[content of proclamation]

Appendix E: THE NOUN *NEZEM* IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

Reference	MT (BHS)	Substance	Location
Gn 24.22	עֲשֶׂרָה זָהָב מִשְׁקָלָם: וַיִּקַּח הָאִישׁ גֶּזֶם זָהָב בְּקַע מִשְׁקָלוֹ וּשְׁנֵי צְמִידִים עַל-יָדָיָהּ	gold	[nose]
Gn 24.30	וַיְהִי כִּרְאֵת אֶת-הַגֶּזֶם וְאֶת-הַצְּמִידִים עַל-יָדָיו אַחֲחוּ	[gold]	[nose]
Gn 24.47	וְאִשָּׁם הַגֶּזֶם עַל-אַפָּה וְהַצְּמִידִים עַל-יָדָיָהּ:	[gold]	nose
Gn 35.4	וַיַּחֲנוּ אֶל-יַעֲקֹב אֶת כָּל-אֱלֹהֵי הַנֹּכַר אֲשֶׁר בְּיָדָם וְאֶת-הַגִּזְמִים אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם		ear
Ex 32.2	פָּרְקוּ גִזְמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵי גִישֵׁיכֶם בְּנֵיכֶם וּבְנֹחֵיכֶם	gold	ear
Ex 32.3	וַיִּחַפְּרוּ כָל-הָעָם אֶת-גִּזְמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר בְּאָזְנֵיהֶם	gold	ear
Ex 35.22	הִבִּיאוּ חַח וְנֹזָם וְטַבַּעַת וְכוּמָז כָּל-כְּלֵי זָהָב	gold	
Jg 8.24	וַחֲנוּ-לִי אִישׁ גֶּזֶם שְׁלָלוּ כִּי-גִזְמֵי זָהָב לָהֶם	gold	
Jg 8.25	וַיִּשְׁלִיכוּ שָׁמָּה אִישׁ גֶּזֶם שְׁלָלוּ:	[gold]	
Jg 8.26	וַיְהִי מִשְׁקַל גִּזְמֵי הַזָּהָב אֲשֶׁר שָׂאֵל אֶלְפָּה וּשְׁבַע-מֵאוֹת זָהָב	gold	
Is 3.21	הַטַּבַּעוֹת וְגִזְמֵי הָאָף:		nose
Ezk 16.12	וְאַתָּן גֶּזֶם עַל-אַפְךָ		nose
Ho 2.15	וַתַּעַד גִּזְמָהּ וַחֲלִיתָהּ		
Jb 42.11	וַיַּחֲנוּ-לוֹ אִישׁ קְשִׁיטָה אַחַת וְאִישׁ גֶּזֶם זָהָב אַחַד:	gold	
Pr 11.22	גֶּזֶם זָהָב בְּאָף חֲזִיר אִשָּׁה יָפָה וְסֶרֶת טָעַם:	gold	nose
Pr 25.12	גֶּזֶם זָהָב וַחֲלִי-כַחֵם מוֹכִיחַ חָכָם עַל-אֲוֵן שִׁמְעַת:	gold	

1. Due to contextual overlap (e.g., Gn 24.22, 30, 47 all refer to the same ring), there are references to eleven different “rings” (sg. *nezem*) in Biblical Hebrew.
2. When a substance is mentioned, it is always gold (Gn 24.22, 30, 47; Ex 32.2, 3; 35.22; Jg 8.24-26; Jb 42.11; Pr 11.22; 25.12).
3. *Nezem* may refer to earrings (Gn 35.4; Ex 32.2-3), nose rings (Gn 24.22, 30, 47; Is 3.21; Ezk 16.12; Pr 11.22), or its location may not be identified (Ex 5.22; Jg 8.24-26; Ho 2.15; Jb 42.11; Pr 25.12).