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by
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Abstract

The starting-point of this thesis is a female character found in Proverbs 1-9, who is identified by the terms זרה and נכריה. These terms would normally connote 'foreignness', but the apparent lack of any other emphasis on ethnicity in the work has led most commentators to interpret them in other ways, often with reference to religious allegiance, sexual morality or social status. The thesis demonstrates that this runs counter to the overwhelming lexical evidence, and suggests that the woman's foreignness should be understood as a significant part of her role as a counterpart and antithesis to personified Wisdom. It evokes the 'foreign wives' who were implicated in a major crisis within the Jewish community of the Return. A study of Ezra-Nehemiah suggests that this crisis was precipitated not by simple xenophobia, but by an understanding that intermarriage was a principal cause of national apostasy and destruction. This understanding is explicitly rooted in the Deuteronomistic analysis of the past, and a study of the books of Kings shows a persistent inclination to blame foreign women for leading Israelite men into apostasy. It is argued, therefore, that the foreignness of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is an evocation of the same motif: she is used symbolically, to represent not simply sexual misconduct, but the temptation to apostasy. Ironically, however, it is her superficial features which persist in subsequent literature. A detailed survey of later works and, indeed, of the Greek translation of Proverbs, shows that the woman's foreignness ceases to be a part of her portrayal: against a background of social and religious change, she often becomes no more than an adulteress or loose woman.

DECLARATION

I confirm that no part of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted by me for a degree in the University of Durham or in any other university.

Signed: Nancy Tan Namdoon

Date: 19th July 2004

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By His Grace

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List of Abbreviations
- Periodicals, Reference Works, and Serials -

AB	Anchor Bible
ABD	David Noel Freedman (ed.), *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols. (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1992)
AfO	*Archiv für Orientforschung: Internationale Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft vom Veonderen Orient*
ALGHJ	Arbeiten zur Literatur und Geschichte des hellenistichen Judentums
AnBib	Analecta biblica
ANET	James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950)
Ant.	Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*
AOAT	Alter Orient und Altes Testament
APOT	R.H. Charles (ed.), *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1913)
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
AZGJU	Arbeiten zur Geschichte des antiken Judentums und des Urchristentums
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BBR	*Bible in Biblical Research*
BDB	F. Brown, S.R. Driver, and C.A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1907)
BEAT	Beiträge zur erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovaniensium
BHS	K. Elliger and W. Rudolph (eds.), *Biblia hebraica stuttgartensia*, (Stuttgart, 4th edn. 1990)
Bib	*Biblica*
BIOSCS	*Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies*
BIS	Biblical Interpretation Series
BJ	Brown Judaic Studies
BJPES	*Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society*
BKAT	Biblischer Kommentar. Altes Testament
BS	Biblical Seminar
BT	*The Bible Translator*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZ	*Biblische Zeitschrift*
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

CAD	*The Assyrian Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago* (1956-)
CB	The Cambridge Bible for schools and colleges, New English Bible
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CBQMS	Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Monograph Series
CJAS	Christianity and Judaism in Antiquity Series
CRINT	Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum
DDD	Karel van der Toorn, B. Becking, P.W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons* (Leiden: Brill, 2nd edn, 1999)
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan
EncJud	*Encyclopedia Judaica* (16 vols.; Jerusalem, New York, 1971-2)
ETL	*Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses*
FRLANT	Forshungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
GK	E. Kautsch (ed.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* (rev. and trans. A.E. Cowley; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1910)
HALOT	Ludwig Koehler and Walter B. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. M.E.J. Richardson (5 vols.; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967-1995)
HAR	*Hebrew Annual Review*
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HR	Edwin Hatch and Henry Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint* (2 vols; Oxford, Clarendon: 1897)
HTR	*Harvard Theological Review*
HUCA	*Hebrew Union College Annual*
ICC	International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
Int	*Interpretation*
JANES	*Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
JPS	JPS Torah Commentary: the Traditional Hebrew text with the new JPS translation [and] commentary (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989-1996)
JQR	*Jewish Quarterly Review*
JSJSup	Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
KB	Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (eds.), *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1953)

LS	Henry George Liddell, Robert Scott and H. Stuart Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 9th edn, rev. supplement, 1996)
LUÅ	Lunds universitets årsskrift
MT	Masoretic Text
NASB	New American Standard Bible
NCB	New Century Bible Commentary
NE	Near East
NICOT	New International Commentary of the Old Testament (Michigan: Eerdmans; London: Hodder and Stoughton)
NIDOTE	Willem A. VanGemeren (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (5 vols.; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997)
NIB	New International Version (British)
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OBO	Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OBT	Overtures to Biblical Theology
OLA	Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta
OT	Old Testament
OTG	Old Testament Guides
OTL	Old Testament Library
OTS	*Oudtestamentische Studiën*
RB	*Revue biblique*
RelSRev	*Religious Studies Review*
RevQ	*Revue de Qumran*
RHPR	*Revue d'histoire et de philosophie religieuse*
RTL	*Revue theologique de Louvain*
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SJ	Studia judaica
SJLA	Studies in Judaism in Late Antiquity
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SJT	*Scottish Journal of Theology*
SPAW	*Sitzunsgsberichte der Preussichen Akademie der Wissenschaften*
ST	*Studia Theologica*
STDJ	Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah
TDOT	G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974-)
TLOT	Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann (eds.), *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (3 vols., Peabody, Massachusetts, 1997)
TSAJ	Texte und Studien zum antiken Judentum
TZ	*Theologische Zeitschrift*
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*

VTSup	Vetus Testamentum, Supplements
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
WO	*Welt des Orient*
WUNT	Wissenshaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
ZBAT	Zücher Bibelkommentare. Altes Testament

Chapter One

Interpretations of the 'Foreignness' of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9

Introduction

The subject of this thesis is the woman in Proverbs 1-9, who is famously identified by the adjectives זרה and נכריה. The thesis will attempt to uncover the historical background to her appearance in that text and will trace the development of a 'foreign woman' motif in subsequent literature. Previous scholarship has defined and interpreted this woman in all sorts of ways. The most persistent claims are that she is an adulteress and a 'social outsider', who is promiscuous. So, while it is acknowledged that, in cases like Ruth 2.10 and 1 Kgs 11.1, 8, the feminine form of נכרי must be understood to refer to a 'foreign woman' and 'foreign wives' respectively, the very same word נכריה when used for the woman in Proverbs 1-9, is generally taken to indicate something other than the fact that she is 'foreign'. This raises general lexicographical questions about the semantic range to be attributed to this word, but there are historical questions too: as some recent scholars have pointed out, Proverbs 1-9 is generally taken to be a product of the post-exilic context in which the נשים נכריות were at the centre of the problem of intermarriage, so crucial in Ezra-Nehemiah and elsewhere. One cannot help but wonder how the very same word should have such completely different meanings in the same general period, and whether it is really conceivable that the writer or readers of Proverbs 1-9 could have disassociated the figure in the book from such a significant recent controversy. On the other hand, the seriousness of the intermarriage problem resulting in the exclusion or severe punishment of those who married the נשים נכריות according to Ezra (Ezra 10.2-3, 7-8), and public humiliation and excommunication by Nehemiah (Neh. 13.25, 28), would seem to indicate that the word נכריה, when used in the same general period would have been understood by the audience to have a specific social reference rather than some quite different technical sense of the word, as commonly proposed in previous scholarship of Proverbs 1-9. Inevitably, the situation is also

obscured by the other adjective, זרה, which is used for this woman in the book. The broader meaning of זרה, which does encompass a wider spectrum of 'otherness', has offered scholarship some license to interpret her as other than simply 'foreign'. Both words, therefore, will require close scrutiny from the outset.

We shall, therefore, start by looking in some depth at the meaning of נכרי in the OT, especially when it is used in conjuction with זר. Beyond simple lexicography, this also involves understanding what 'foreignness' means in the OT and especially what it might mean in relation to the behaviour of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. In particular, we will need to address in the course of the study, the identification of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 with adultery, a link which is so central to the assumptions made in much scholarship. Since, in this area, there is a distinction to be made between the Foreign Woman and the imagery of the adulteress found in some prophetic literature, our study will have to focus not only on the subject of the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman, but also on the ways in which the motif of the Foreign Woman differs from other portrayals of 'bad women' in the OT.

The first three chapters of the thesis then, deal with the background to the understanding of נכריה in the early post-exilic period. Chapter One surveys the scholarship, re-examines the definitions and interpretations of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 and argues that the 'foreign' identity of the woman must be re-asserted. Chapter Two studies the problem of intermarriage in the early post-exilic period as the context for both the נשים נכריות of Ezra-Nehemiah and the Foreign Woman of Proverbs, as well as examining the meaning of 'foreignness' in the other texts related to intermarriage. Chapter Three then traces the origin of the post-exilic vilification of the נשים נכריות to the Deuteronomistic portrayals of 'foreign wives' in the books of Kings. Finally, Chapter Four considers the results of the previous chapters as the backdrop of the motif and interprets the Foreign Woman's role in Proverbs 1-9.

The significance of her 'foreign' identity does not end here, however. The motif of the Foreign Woman is found in later works, and this thesis pursues it into the subsequent wisdom literature. Chapter Five deals with those passages in other literature which apparently refer directly to the portrayal of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Hebrew Ben Sira would fall into that category, but for the sake of convenience, has been grouped with the Wisdom of Solomon in Chapter Six. The latter poses an intriguing problem, not through the presence of the motif, but on account of its absence. This thesis

will show how the concept of 'foreignness' in the motif may contribute in some way towards explaining this mystery.

I have included an Appendix at the end of the thesis, which is crucial to the overall perspective of understanding the perception of 'foreign women' and intermarriages in the OT, but which, if included in the chapters, would interrupt the flow of the main argument.

1.1. Survey of the Scholarly Literature

The quest for the historical origin of the motif of the Foreign Woman seems to have been abandoned by recent scholars, despite a continuing interest in the interpretation and theologising of her role. This lack of historical study can be attributed first to the assumption that earlier lexical studies of the adjectives נכרי and זר, and exegetical studies of Proverbs 1-9, have resolved the issue conclusively. Secondly, there has been a surge of recent interest in feminist and post-modern interpretations, which tend to emphasise the diverse and complex nature of the figure as a 'marginalised woman'. Both factors have complicated and discouraged attempts to grasp her firmly and study her against her original background. Indeed, most recent scholarship seems to be content with interpreting the Foreign Woman as one aspect in a multi-faceted biblical representation of 'bad women'. However, the earlier works, on which many recent studies depend, have not been sufficiently evaluated and challenged; as mentioned already, there are certain serious problems about the meanings imputed to the term 'Foreign Woman'. We shall now look at some of these key works which tend to be more representative in scholarship.

The idea that נכריה implies 'foreignness' is not a new one, but has been purported by some scholars who tend to associate the Foreign Woman with the idea that she specifically represents, and belongs to, a foreign, non-Yahwistic cult. The most famous proponent of this idea is Gustav Boström, who interprets her to be a devotee of the Ishtar cult associated with cultic prostitution,[1] while others such as Urs Winter, have presented

[1] G. Boström, *Proverbiastudien: die Weisheit und das fremde Weib in Sprüche 1-9* (LUÅ N.F. Avd.1, 30, 3; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1935). In his survey of scholarship, he acknowledges that it is Heinrich Oort who first associates the Foreign Woman in Prov. 6.24 and 7 with the dismissal of foreign wives in Ezra and Nehemiah, see Boström, pp. 33-36. Therefore, Oort translates זרה and נכריה in Proverbs as 'strange' and 'foreign' respectively; in H. Oort, *Spreuken 1-9*

variations on the same theme, by arguing that she is an archetypal portrayal of the foreign women in the OT, who is the 'demonised cult admirer'.[2]

A slightly different approach which has some superficial similarities, is found in Richard Clifford's commentary.[3] He sees the Foreign Woman not as a worshipper of a foreign cult, but as the reflex of the foreign female deities of the ancient Near East. She is a representation of the dangerous goddesses in ancient mythology. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine how valid is Clifford's assumption that myths lie behind the background of the book of Proverbs, his approach does raise many problems of method and interpretation for the book of Proverbs as a whole.[4]

There are three other scholars to be mentioned here, although they differ radically from Boström in their approach. Ralph Marcus's evaluation of the idea of wisdom as hypostasis mentions, almost in passing, the idea that the Foreign Woman is an allegory of foreign religion.[5] Norman Habel, on the other hand, takes this further and specifies that זר indicates the origin of the Foreign Woman in foreign cults, especially those of the mythic goddesses.[6] He interprets Proverbs 1-9 in a more symbolic and poetic way: it presents life as a matter of choice between two ways, guided by two kinds of heart and accompanied by two types of women. These pairs represent the way of the wise or foolish: Woman Wisdom is the way of Yahwism which leads one to life, while the way

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(Theologish Tijdschrift, 19; Leiden, 1885). (However, I have been unable to access this book). Boström criticises Oort unreservedly for failing to date Prov. 6 and 7 and relate these chapters to Prov. 2 and 5, and to explain why adultery with foreign women could be as detrimental as Proverbs 1-9 describes. See 1.2. for more discussion of Boström's work.

[2] U. Winter, *Frau und Gottin: Exegetische und ikonographische Studien zum weiblichen Gottesbild im alten Israel und in dessen Umwelt* (OBO, 53; Freiburg, Schweiz: Universitätsverlag, 1983), pp. 613-25. However, his only support for this hypothesis is based on the word שית in Prov. 7.10, which he claims is an ornament for cult worshippers. For an evaluation of Winter's thesis, see Hennie Marsman, 'Women in Ancient Israel', in Athalya Brenner and J.W. Van Henten (eds.), *Recycling Biblical Figures: Papers Read at a NOSTER Colloquium in Amsterdam, 12-13 May 1997* (Studies in Theology and Religion Series, 1; Leiden: Deo Publishing, 1999), pp. 28-49.

[3] R.J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (OTL; Norwich, England: SCM Press, 1999), pp. 48, 70-72, 84-90.

[4] See a criticism of this interpretation by Michael Fox, *Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 19; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 2000), p. 136. Also, Stuart D.E. Weeks, 'Review of Richard Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (OTL; 1999)', *JSOT* 89 (2000), p. 71.

[5] R. Marcus, 'On Biblical Hypostases of Wisdom', *HUCA* 23 (1950-51), pp. 157-71. This essay is a critical evaluation of Helmer Ringgren's hypothesis that Woman Wisdom is a hypostatisation of Yahweh. The latter has used his interpretation of the Foreign Woman by Boström as support for his thesis that the backgrounds of the women figures are necessarily foreign and cultic. See H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostatization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund: H. Ohlsson, 1947).

of the Foreign Woman leads to apostasy. Habel's interpretation is along the same lines as R.B.Y. Scott, who sees her as symbolic of the foreign cult of Astarte practised by the women.[7] He does not think that the ethnicity of Foreign Woman is an issue at all in these passages.

Therefore, the earlier studies which acknowledge the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman, have a tendency to make that characteristic secondary to a more significant association, either directly with a foreign cult, or more broadly with religious and mythological motifs.

Over and against this acknowledgement of the Foreign Woman's 'foreignness', there are a number of studies which essentially deny it, and which have been more influential on recent discussion. These studies, most notably those by Paul Humbert,[8] L.A. Snijders[9] and Bernhard Lang[10] have used a lexical analysis of the adjectives נכרי and זר to suggest that the woman is not 'foreign', but an Israelite who is an adulteress and has made herself an 'outsider' through her immoral behaviour. Each of these works will be dealt with at length in the next section below.

Suffice to note, this idea is found as early as C.H. Toy's commentary, where he expresses his puzzlement at the use of נכריה and זרה for the Foreign Woman.[11] He admits that when these two words appear together in all the occurrences of the OT, they should refer to the 'foreigner'. However, he finds the portrayal of the Foreign Woman resembles that of an adulteress rather than a 'foreign woman'. Hence he thinks that זרה takes the meaning of 'strange behaviours' and נכריה, 'wife of another'. The subsequent works follow suit, with the two Hebrew words assumed to be no longer denoting 'foreignness' and the Woman an Israelite. Each scholar maintains differing opinions of whether the notion of promiscuity lies in the word זרה or נכריה. For example, B. Gemser and Norman Whybray think otherwise from Toy's position. Gemser believes that נכריה is intended to be a derogatory term for 'hooker' because only foreigners practice sexual

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[6] N. Habel, 'The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9', *Int* 26 (1972), pp. 131-57.
[7] R.B.Y. Scott, *Proverbs. Ecclesiastes: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 18; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 43.
[8] P. Humbert, 'Les Adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', in *Mélanges Syriens offerts à M. René Dussand I* (Paris: Librairie Orientalise Paul Geuthner, 1939), pp. 259-66.
[9] L.A. Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament: An exegetical Study', *OTS* 10 (1954), pp. 1-154; 'זוּר / זָר', *TDOT* vol. IV, pp. 53-57.
[10] B. Lang, 'נכר', *TDOT* vol. IX, pp. 425-29.
[11] C.H. Toy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Proverbs* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1899), pp. 45-46.

offences.[12] Whybray's commentary which is based on NRSV, where נכריה is translated as 'adventurous woman', takes the word to be associated with the promiscuous inclination of the Foreign Woman to defy the moral standards of the community.[13] Whybray considers the warnings against the Foreign Woman are for the youths in the community to caution them against the immoral woman and adulteress.

We also find other scholars who tend to place the emphasis of the words as denoting her status as another man's wife with the description of her behaviour in the text as that of an adulteress, for example, Michael Fox[14] and Arndt Meinhold.[15] Both think that these warnings are like the warnings against adultery in the Egyptian instructions. Another proposition with a slightly different nuance is that of Karel van der Toorn, who sees the Foreign Woman as one who resorts to occasional prostitution in order to pay her vows.[16] However, there is a lack of evidence that such practices became common at all in Israel.

Alongside these studies, there are others who make a link with the 'foreign wives' of Ezra-Nehemiah, but nevertheless, deny her ethnicity. Joseph Blenkinsopp is influenced by Snijders's lexical work that the נכריה is a 'social outsider' and זר is a term used in the priestly literature in polarity to Yahweh's cult.[17] Therefore, the Foreign Woman is none other than the symbolism of goddess worshippers condemned in Isa. 57.3-13, as well as the נשים נכריות of Ezra-Nehemiah. These women are all Israelite but deemed 'social outsiders' because of their idolatries. Thus, Blenkinsopp's position is no different from that of Boström's. Harold Washington, on the other hand, ties the idea of

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[12] B. Gemser, *Sprüche Salomos* (HAT, 16; Tübingen: Mohr, 2nd edn, 1963), p. 5. This assumption seems to have been first introduced by A. Bertholet, *Die Stellung der Israeliten und der Juden zu den Fremden* (Freiburg i. B., Leipzig: J.C.B. Mohr, 1896), p. 24. It is an assumed fact found in 'נָכְרִי', *BDB* (p. 649), where it suggests that נכריה is a technical term for harlots because they were chiefly foreigners. However, in Bertholet's later work on the subject of prostitution, this assumption was not mentioned. See A. Bertholet, *A History of Hebrew Civilisation* (trans. Dallas, A.K.; London: George G. Harrap, 1926), p. 233. The assumption also finds its way to Johs Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (trans. Mrs. Aslaug Møller; London: Oxford University Press, 1926), vol. I, pp. 28-30, 45.

[13] R.N. Whybray, *Proverbs* (NCB; London: Marshall Pickering, 1994), pp. 53-55. Also, see Kathleen Farmer, 'The Misleading Translations in the New Revised Standard Version of Proverbs', *The Feminist Pilgrim* (1995), pp. 38-41. She chides the NRSV for inconsistency and inaccuracy in its translation of זרה and נכריה.

[14] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 120.

[15] A. Meinhold, *Die Sprüche* (ZBAT, 16; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991), vol. I, p. 69.

[16] K. van der Toorn, *From her Cradle to Her Grave: The Role of Religion in the Life of the Israelite and the Babylonian Woman* (BS, 23; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 93-110.

[17] J. Blenkinsopp, 'The Social-Context of the So-called Outsider-Woman in Proverbs I-IX', *Bib* 72 (1991), pp. 457-73.

'foreign women' more generally to the community of the Jews who continued to live in Palestine after the fall of Judah, and were rejected by the returnees.[18] Arguing from the historical and socio-economical situation of the early post-exilic era, which assumes the economic affluence of those who remained in the land, he believes that Jewish men were tempted to marry the נשים נכריות in order to upgrade their economic status. He argues that the passages against the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 are not unitary nor composed at the same time for the same purpose. On the whole, the warnings are against adultery, concurring with Humbert's proposition that the meanings of זרה and נכריה refer to another man's wife. However, he also takes the meaning of זרה further as used by the author in Prov. 2.16-19 and 5.1-23 to identify the stranger who is the 'outsider' and the 'foreign' enemy of the returned community. The remaining passages concerned with the Foreign Woman in Prov. 6.24-35 and 7.6-27 are pre-exilic compositions patterned after the ancient NE warnings against immoral women. He explains that the introductory warning in Prov. 7.5 is a later addition attempting to put all the warnings against the woman to be avoided together in the figure of the Foreign Woman, as a campaign against exogamous marriage in the post-exilic period.

Both scholars raise issues about the very nature of what is 'foreign' for a Jew in this period, a matter to which we shall have to return later, but both fall generally into the category of scholars who tie the Woman's 'foreignness' to her behaviour, or to perceptions of her morality and social status.

There is another group of studies which embraces all the meanings mentioned above for both זרה and נכריה and interprets the Foreign Woman as a multi-faceted figure representing all the bad women in the community. Probably the first proponent of this view is Claudia Camp. She argues that both Woman Wisdom and the Foreign Woman are analogies of the lives of women in the experiences in Israel's history.[19] She categorises all the good women in the OT as represented by Woman Wisdom and the bad women by the Foreign Woman. In this way, the 'foreign wives' condemned in the early post-exilic period and the Foreign Woman are related. Camp's thesis, however, places the emphasis on Woman Wisdom rather than on the Foreign Woman. In a later essay

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[18] H. Washington, 'The Strange Woman (נכריה / אשה זרה) of Proverbs 1-9 and Post-Exilic Judean Society', in Tamara Eskenazi and K.H. Richards (eds.), *Second Temple Studies 2* (JSOTSup, 175; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1994), pp. 217-42. He claims that his essay was written before he had access to Blenkinsopp's article on the same subject.

[19] C. Camp, *Wisdom and Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Bible and Literature Series, 11; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), pp. 265-71.

where she deals with the Foreign Woman, Camp no longer considers her related to the 'foreign wives' of the early post-exilic period.[20] Based on Snijders's definition of נכרי and זר, she goes on to propose that all women are like the Foreign Woman because they are 'outsiders' in the patriarchal order.[21] She argues that in Prov. 7, the Foreign Woman is the embodiment of evil, seducing men to defy the laws of Torah and symbolic of the force against the patriarchal structures of Yahwism. The Foreign Woman has become a voice in defiance of the patriarchal order of society. Therefore, her antithesis, Woman Wisdom, has to be a metaphorical woman who speaks for the patriarchs. In another work, Camp interprets the two woman-figures from the perspective of the female gender in the role of the trickster common in folklore.[22] She argues that women who could not function within the patriarchal systems, used their female powers as tricksters to achieve their own goals – either for good or bad.

Christl Maier follows the same line of argument, which is also based on Snijders's lexical studies.[23] Her thesis concentrates on understanding the Foreign Woman from a socio-historical point of view and attempts to give more literary evidence that the date for Proverbs 1-9 is in the late post-exilic era, possibly nearer to the popularising of Hellenistic influence. She thinks that the emphasis in some earlier work, on determining whether the Foreign Woman is to be taken as an actual figure or merely a poetic figure, is misplaced, and believes that the woman is intended to represent the different life situations of women and their positions in society. She charts the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 in three of her functions: as adulteress, as opponent to Woman Wisdom, and as parallel to the evil men. In her role as adulteress, Prov. 5 links her to the issue of mixed marriages in Ezra-Nehemiah, and Prov. 6.24-35 to the ethics of Torah. Maier does

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[20] C. Camp, *Wise, Strange and Holy: The Strange Woman and the Making of the Bible* (JSOTSup, 320: Gender, Culture Theory, 9; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), p. 32.

[21] C. Camp, 'The Strange Woman of Proverbs', in *Wise, Strange and Holy*, pp. 40-71. This essay is a revised version of an earlier work, 'What's so Strange about the Strange Woman?' in David Jobling, Peggy Day and Gerald Sheppard (eds.), *The Bible and the Politics of Exegesis: Essays in Honor of Norman K. Gottwald on His Sixty-fifth Birthday* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 1991), pp. 17-32.

[22] C. Camp, 'Wise and Strange: Woman as Trickster in Proverbs', in *Wise, Strange and Holy*, pp. 72-89.

[23] C. Maier, *Die 'fremde Frau' in Proverbien 1-9: eine exegetische und socialgeschichtliche Studie* (OBO, 144; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995). Idem, 'Conflicting Attractions: Parental Wisdom and the "Strange Woman" in Proverbs 1-9', in A. Brenner and C. Fontaine (eds.), *Wisdom and Psalms* (2nd series; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 92-108. Maier opposes those scholars who interpret the Foreign Woman as a tool of gender prejudice because Proverbs 1-9 portrays very stupid young men who would easily succumb to any temptation too.

not think that נכריה is a direct reference to the 'foreign wives' in Ezra-Nehemiah, but the אשה זרה in Prov. 5 is. This is because Prov. 6.20-35 is a case of adultery that could be applied to any woman who is Jewish or an ethnic foreigner. Prov. 7 refers to the cultic backdrop highlighting the aggressive sexuality of foreign women who are destructive. In her role as an opponent to Woman Wisdom, Woman Folly in Prov. 9.13-18, is portrayed as a prostitute reminiscent of the aphroditic goddesses of the ancient NE. Maier says that this passage gives evidence of the cultic contexts inherent in the other parts of the texts concerning the Foreign Woman. The language of death related to the Foreign Woman originates in the cultic background. Then, in her role as a parallel to the evil men, she is shown by the teachers to be another trap to which the young men may succumb. These evil men encourage the young to rebel against the authority of the religious, the familial and the societal structures which teach them to adhere to the Torah, practice filial piety and honour the elders in the Yehud community. Maier also explains how the women in the society are taught to conform to the positive image of the faithful and devoted wife, and the teaching mother mentioned in these chapters. These positive images are intended to restrain women from becoming the undesirable Foreign Woman in the community.

Maier's interpretation of the Foreign Woman actually picks up the various strands of earlier scholarship discussed previously. She does it by allocating each passage of the Foreign Woman to the various possibilities of interpretation. This method resembles that of Washington's, and both agree that Prov. 5 is linked to the 'foreign wives' of Ezra-Nehemiah and Prov. 6.20-35 to the common warnings against adultery. Her interpretation of Prov. 7 and 9.13-18 is an echo of Boström's. In this way, the 'foreignness' of the Woman is not dependent on זרה and נכריה as it has been designated, but on the context of its appearances.

There are four other commentators who interpret the Foreign Woman as the representation of all the bad women in the community. Although William McKane accepts Snijders's definition for נכרי and זר, he thinks that the meaning of 'foreignness' should be retained for נכריה because it depicts the Woman's location outside her community, which allows her to do anything without fear of punishment within that community.[24] He does not think that her ethnic origin or cult is the important issue, therefore he suggests that all foreign women are perceived as promiscuous. When it comes to explaining the Foreign Woman in Prov. 7, he argues that she is a married

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[24] W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (OTL; London: SCM, 1970), p. 285.

woman who is a prostitute.[25] Hence, the passages on the Foreign Woman are like one of the common warnings against promiscuous women, which arise from the 'international' instruction literature of the ancient NE, on which see my discussion in 1.2. on Lang below.

Ronald Murphy, on the other hand, prefers to take a non-committal stance.[26] While he agrees with Snijders and Humbert that נכריה does not mean 'foreign' for Foreign Woman, but refers to 'the wife of another', he proposes that she is a metaphor, and therefore, open to different interpretations. In particular for him, she depicts a danger which results in death and is seemingly more frightening than the consequences of the evil men. On the whole, he interprets the passages of the Foreign Woman as referring to warnings against adultery.

Otto Plöger similarly feels that the debate about ethnic 'foreignness' in the words of נכריה and זרה has been given undue emphasis.[27] He suggests that the Foreign Woman is portrayed ambiguously in Prov. 2.16-19 so as to suggest all the possible images of the women to be avoided in the post-exilic community. Plöger does not exclude the meaning of 'foreignness' for the Foreign Woman, however, and thinks that Prov. 5 is intended to be a specific warning against intermarriage with foreigners. Prov. 6.20-35, on the other hand, warns more generally against the adulteress, while Prov. 7.6-27 simultaneously warns against the adulteress, the foreign goddess and the devotee of the foreign cult. Plöger has simply embraced all the interpretations of the earlier works, at the expense of finding any wholly consistent interpretation for the work.

Another similar view to Plöger, but with a slightly different interpretation in terms of the context of Proverbs 1-9, is found in the commentary of Leo Perdue.[28] Perdue makes the link of the context of Proverbs 1-9 with that of Ezra-Nehemiah and argues that the text are teachings favourable only to the hierocratic party. He interprets the Foreign Woman variously in all the passages: in Prov. 2.16-18 she is a metaphor for the personification of extra-Israelite culture and religion; in Prov. 5.3-20 she is a prostitute,

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[25] McKane, pp. 338-39.

[26] R. Murphy, *Proverbs* (WBC, 22; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1998), pp. 16-17, 278-87. He cites Maier extensively but he is silent about Maier's interpretation for Prov. 2.16-22 and 5.1-20 concerning their relation to the foreign wives in Ezra-Nehemiah.

[27] O. Plöger, *Sprüche Salomos (Proverbia)* (BKAT, 17; Neukirchen: Neukirchen Verlag, 1984), p. 56.

[28] L. Perdue, *Proverbs* (Interpretation; Louisville, Kentucky: John Knox Press, 2000), pp. 91-93, 118-22, 132-36, 148, 153-54. Perdue argues that the political tensions constitute the background

adulteress, fertility priestess, foreign goddess and the abstract notion of folly, and possibly the chapter intends to warn against any association with foreigners or aliens; in Prov. 6.20-35 she is the adulteress and wife of another man and in Prov. 7.6-27, she is the fertility priestess or foreign goddess, the metaphor for foreign religion and culture. Woman Folly in Prov. 9.13-18 is the incarnation of the Foreign Woman, the seduction to foreign religion and culture.

Section Conclusion

From the above discussion, there are some observations to be made. It seems that when נכריה is taken to mean 'foreign woman', she refers to a female deity (Clifford), and depicting goddess worship, whether in reality (Boström, Winter and Blenkinsopp), or as a symbolic representation of it (Habel and Scott). However, more often than not, נכריה is not taken to mean 'foreign woman', because of the passage in Prov. 6.20-35 which depicts adultery. Hence, a link is made not with 'foreignness', but with 'outside-ness' in terms of her social behaviour, or with perceptions of her morality and social status (Camp, McKane, Meinhold, Fox, *etcetera*). This view, as we have seen above is the most popular one and is based on the conclusions made by the lexical studies of Humbert, Snijders and Lang. Concerning זרה, however, most of the recent scholars understand it to mean 'foreign woman' in Prov. 5 and its use of 'foreignness' is equivalent to the נשים נכריות in Ezra-Nehemiah, because of the similar depiction of the consequence of losing one's properties to foreigners in both texts (Washington and Maier). A different way of looking at the word is to understand it as priestly vocabulary associated with the polarity to the cult of Yahweh. Hence, the Foreign Woman is essentially depicting her involvement with the foreign cult (Blenkinsopp and Perdue). Otherwise, the attempt to determine the definite meanings of זרה and נכריה is relinquished, and they are treated ambiguously, thus adopting an open-ended interpretation of the Foreign Woman (Plöger and Murphy).

In general, scholarship seems to give the impression that for נכריה in particular, its meaning is something which is difficult to render into English or other modern languages. That is why there is little consistency in the translation of the word even within single works, never mind within scholarship as a whole. At times, the

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of Proverbs 1-9. He interprets the fools and scoffers as those who reject the Persian colony, whilst the wicked are those militants who attempt to overthrow the Persian rule.

understanding is clearly linked simply to an interpretation of the specific passage in which the term occurs. The table below presents some good examples:

Table 1.1: Examples of How Some Scholars Translate זרה and נכריה

		Toy	Snijders	Scott	Whybray (NRSV)	Murphy
2.16	אשה זרה	lewd woman	loose woman	adulteress	loose woman	stranger
	נכריה	harlot	unknown woman	stranger woman	adventuress	outsider
5.3	זרה	harlot	(not mentioned)	stranger woman	loose woman	stranger
5.20	זרה	stranger	lascivious	stranger woman	loose woman	stranger
	נכריה	another woman	unknown	foreigner	adventuress	outsider
6.24	נכריה	stranger	unknown	stranger woman	adventuress	stranger
7.5	אשה זרה	another's wife	(not mentioned)	adulteress	loose woman	stranger
	נכריה	adulteress	(not mentioned)	stranger woman	adventuress	outsider
22.14	זרות	adulteress	lascivious	harlots	loose women	strangers
23.27	נכריה	adulteress	outsider	strange woman	adventuress	stranger

Despite the variation in the translation, however, it should be obvious that the explanations given by all the scholars quoted, not only in this table, but in what has gone before, agree that the general portrayal of the Foreign Woman is one of an adulteress, whether she is an ethnic 'foreigner' or Israelite. This also probably explains why notions of sexual promiscuity are somehow imputed to זרה and נכריה, as we can see from the table above. Some then take it to explain that the sexual promiscuity of the Woman is linked to foreign cultic worship. In this way, the link with the imagery of the adulteress depicted in the prophetic literature of the whoring wife of Yahweh, Israel, is made. The trait of sexual unfaithfulness in the motif of the Foreign Woman is, therefore, singing to the same tune of apostasy as in the imagery of the adulteress. The crux of the problem is in understanding what 'foreignness' means for the OT, and in particular for the author of Proverbs 1-9, and that brings us to a fundamental question: what are the meanings of זר and נכרי as they are used in the OT?

1.2. Reclaiming 'Foreignness' for the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9

In this section, we shall re-examine the major lexical studies of זר and נכרי, beginning with Boström, and then looking at the works of Humbert and Snijders, which are direct responses to Boström's thesis; Lang will be dealt with last, as his definition and interpretation of the Foreign Woman is in turn, to some extent reliant on the conclusions made by Humbert and Snijders. First, though, we shall run briefly through the usage of the two terms.

The Occurrences of נכר and זר in the OT

Some dictionaries, such as *BDB*, *HALOT* and *TDOT* recognise two roots for נכר;[29] one incorporates ideas of recognition and acknowledgement, the other ideas of foreignness.[30] The primary derivatives are the noun נֵכָר, used exclusively in construct expressions of description, and the adjective נָכְרִי.[31] Most of the occurrences are in the expressions בן/בני נכר and אל/אלהי נכר – broadly, 'foreigner' and 'foreign god' respectively. Four times נכר is used with other nouns: בהבלי נכר as 'foreign idols' (Jer. 8.19), מזבחות הנכר 'foreign altars' (2 Chron. 14.3 [MT 14.2]), נכר אדמת 'foreign land' (Ps. 137.4), and מכל נכר 'all foreign things' (Neh. 13.30). The adjective נכרי is used both to qualify nouns and absolutely, as a substantive. The latter is, in fact, more common, as the overall picture is distorted by the multiple occurrences of נשים נכריות in Ezra-Nehemiah. Either way, the term is usually, though not exclusively, applied to

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[29] *BDB*, pp. 647-49; *HALOT*, pp. 699-700; and *TDOT*, p. 424. (*TDOT* numbers the root in a different order from the other two). *KB* (pp. 617-18) and *TLOT* (pp. 739-41), on the other hand, recognise only one root.

[30] The noun, נֵכֶר, occurring in Job 31.3 and Obad. 12, which probably means 'calamity', is assigned to this root by *BDB*, *HALOT* and *TDOT*. However, it sits uncomfortably beside the other words, which derives from it. As for *KB* and *TLOT*, it is only listed as one of the derivatives of נכר.

[31] There is a group of occurrences which נכר appears to be in the verbal forms, namely in niphal (Prov. 26.24); hithpael (Gen. 42.7; 1 Kgs 14.5); and piel (Jer. 19.4; Deut. 32.27; 1 Sam. 23.7). They have been considered by *BDB*, which is followed by *TDOT* and *TLOT*, as a verbal denominative of the root dealing with ideas of 'foreignness'. *HALOT* classifies them under the other root, which usually appears in the hiphil, thus belonging to a group of derivatives occurring in verbal forms. *KB* also deals with these occurrences in the same way. If we look into each of these occurrences in their contexts, 1 Sam. 23.7 is probably an error (note *BHS*); Jer. 19.4, at least deals with acts of 'making foreign'; the other occurrences seems to deal with ideas of recognition and acknowledgement. Although, of the two occurrences in Gen. 42.7, the latter might be in line with the idea of 'treating as a stranger', hence the root associated with 'foreignness'.

people. The exceptions are Exod. 2.22; 18.3 (a land); Judg. 19.12 (a city); Isa. 28.21 (divine acts of judgement); Jer. 2.21 (a vine); and Zeph. 1.8 (clothing).

We shall examine the nuances of the usage in more detail below, but it should be said straight away that the concept of 'foreignness', if not understood too precisely in modern national terms, is quite appropriate as a translation for almost all contexts in which the noun and adjective appear. This is sometimes explicit, as when the Israelites separate themselves from 'sons of foreignness' (Neh. 9.2), when the king must not be a 'foreigner', 'who is not your brother' (Deut. 17.15), or when the reference is to people from other lands or nations worshipping Yahweh (for example, 1 Kgs 8.41, 43 = 2 Chron. 6.32, 33; Isa. 56.3, 6; cf. differently, Ezek. 44.7, 9). Frequently, the reference is not so much to people from far away as to non-Israelites with whom the Israelites come into frequent contact, for which provision has to be made in the laws (for example, Gen. 17.12, 27; Exod. 21.8; Deut. 14.21; 15.3; 23.20). In the same vein, the term אל/אלהי נכר usually refers to deities worshipped by or among the Israelites, not to the gods of cities or nations elsewhere (for example, Gen. 35.2, 4; Deut. 31.16; Josh. 24.23; Jer. 5.19). The terms do not exclude geographical distance (cf. the famous reference to Babylon as 'foreign land' in Ps. 137.4, or to Egypt in Exod. 2.22; 18.3), but the primary sense is not so much geographical as ethnic, or religious (as in the particular sense of 'non-Yahwistic'). This can also be linked to some places which deals with inheritance – the נכרי is par excellence the person to whom one's property should not pass (cf., at the personal level, Prov. 5.10; Eccl. 6.2; and at the national level, Lam. 5.2; Obad. 11). A person is also treated as נכרי, when excluded from one's household (Gen. 31.15; Job 19.15; cf. Ps. 69.8). Once, in Prov. 27.2, the sense is extended to mean 'someone other than oneself', and in Isa. 28.21, the reference is probably to the 'unfamiliar' character of the divine action. The emphasis is still on differentiation from the immediate subject in these extended meanings, rather than on a sense of exclusion. Also, there is no specific ethical or moral connotation in any of the usage, although Jer. 2.21, which has been taken at times to imply this sense, in fact merely contrasts the vine becoming נכריה with the origins of that vine in a 'pure seed'.[32]

Therefore, נכר is not exclusively a 'nationalistic' term, in that it is not confined to defining terms such as land, country or government, which are themselves modern

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[32] Also noteworthy is Pss. 144. 7, 11, which seem to imply a moral sense in the בני נכר, but the psalm taken as whole, is a prayer for deliverance for the people who worship Yahweh, in contrast to those who do not. Hence, a religious differentiation rather than a moral one.

concepts that arose after World War II.[33] If 'foreignness' is understood only in relation to the concept of 'nationhood', it implies serious problems in OT study, because boundary limits of Israel in Palestine vary considerably in the different historical epochs of Israel in the biblical periods. For example, should the inhabitants of Libnah consider themselves as 'foreigners' to Judah because they rebelled during the time of Jehoram (cf. 2 Kgs 7.22), although they were under the sovereignship of Judah from the time of Joshua (10.29-33; 12.15; 21.13), and their land was recognised as belonging to Judah? The fact is that the claims made regarding the geographical boundaries of Israel during this period are still a debate among archaeologists today.[34]

Perhaps נכר, in its sense of 'foreignness', should thus be understood as an 'ethnic' term. A concise definition for 'ethnicity' is as follows:

> Ethnicity is an aspect of social relationship between agents who consider themselves as culturally distinctive from members of other groups with whom they have a minimum of regular interaction. It can thus also be defined as a social identity (based on a contrast *vis-à-vis* others) characterized by metaphoric or fictive kinship. When cultural differences regularly make a difference in interaction between members of groups, the social relationship has an ethnic element. Ethnicity refers both to aspects of gain and loss in interaction, and to aspects of meaning in the creation of identity. In this way it has a political, organizational aspect as well as a symbolic one.
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> Ethnic groups tend to have myths of common origin and they nearly always have ideologies encouraging endogamy, which may nevertheless be of highly varying practical importance.[35]

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[33] These conditions are key elements in the modern definition agreed by the international bodies. See 'Woodrow Wilson and the Fourteen Points' which states the principles protecting the rights and claims of a nation, in Christie Clive, *Race and Nation: A Reader* (Tauris History Readers; London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), especially pp. 89-90; and 79-97.

[34] See Niels Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (Library of Ancient Israel; London: SPCK, 1998); and William Dever, '"Will the Real Israel Please Stand Up?" Part II: Archaeology and the Religions of Ancient Israel', *BASOR* 298 (1995), pp. 37-58. It may be helpful for us to be reminded that the subject of geographical boundary for a given country is an unresolved problem even for our present time.

[35] Thomas Ericksen, 'Ethnicity, race and nation', in Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (eds.), *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 39. It is unfortunate that ethnicity came to be associated with 'race' during the World War II, but the distinction between the two has been made ever since. See T. Eriksen, 'Ethnicity, Class, Race and Nation', in John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith (eds.), *Ethnicity* (Oxford Readers; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 28; Ashley Montagu, *Man's Most Dangerous Myth: The Fallacy of Race* (London: Altamira Press, 6th edn, 1997); and Clive, pp. 40-48.

In this way, to put it simply, 'foreignness' is expressed in terms of self-consciousness concerning one's sense of belonging, that is, the exercise of defining who is the 'foreigner' is dependent on what one understands oneself to be part of. This definition allows the flexibility we find in the OT, where there are 'shifting boundaries' of 'foreignness'. Throughout the books of the OT, the idea of who the 'foreigner' to Israel is and is not (whoever they claim themselves to be) is not a constant entity. For example, only the fourth generation of the Egyptians and Edomites can qualify to become a member of the 'Israelite' community (Deut. 23.8), but those prior are not eligible. We also have the נשים נכריות in Ezra 9-10 who are the 'peoples of the land' identified with those not exiled and considered as the 'out-group'. These texts will be dealt with later, and in order not to jump ahead of myself in the discussion, it will be pointed out for present purposes that whatever happened in Ezra-Nehemiah concerning these 'foreign wives' and the exclusion of the 'people of the land', is something very strict and it is not found elsewhere in the OT. This event erases the provision mentioned at an earlier period in Deut. 23.8, making all the generations of the Egyptians and Edomites illegitimate to admit the congregation. The examples above demonstrate that to define who constitutes the 'foreigner' in the OT is dependent on who decides they should be, and it also varies in the historical periods. However, this is not the place to engage in a discussion on such a huge topic as 'nationalism' and 'ethnicity' and the material which we are dealing with is not appropriate for handling these subjects.[36] Nonetheless, in trying to understand 'foreignness', it is essential to mention the implications of these terms, and inevitably, the use of נכר in the OT.

Another usage of נכר is the occurrence of נשים נכריות, used in 1 Kgs 11. 1, 8 of Solomon's foreign wives, in Ezra 10.2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44 of the 'foreign wives' of the Jews; and in Neh. 13.26, 27, which links the two sets of wives. In 1 Kings 11, the wives are clearly non-Israelites, and they are associated with the establishment of the non-Israelite cults in Judah; in Ezra-Nehemiah, they are connected to the concept of the 'peoples of the land'.

We shall now consider the usage of זר. Dictionaries identify three roots: Iזור with the meaning 'to press out' in qal (Judg. 6.38; Isa. 1.6; 59.5; Job 39.15); IIזור with the meaning 'to turn aside, go away'; and IIIזור with the meaning 'to stink or hate' – זרה

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[36] See Kenton Sparks, *Ethnicity and Identity in Ancient Israel: Prolegomena to the study of ethnic sentiments and their expression in the Hebrew Bible* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1998).

(only in Job 19.17).[37] Most of the occurrences found in the OT are derived from II זור. The verbal forms appear not many times: in qal (Ps. 78:30; Job 19:13); in niphal (Ps 58.4; Ezek. 14.5; Isa. 1.4); and in hophal (Ps. 69.9). For the majority of the occurrences, seventy-one in total, it usually appears as a noun, and in the participle, from which the adjective is derived. Almost half of these occurrences have direct references to the foreign enemies of Israel, depicted as plunderers (for example, Isa. 1.7; 29.5; Jer. 51.2, 51; and especially Ezek. 7.21; 11.9; 28.7, 10; 30.12; 31.12) and to foreign deities (for example, Deut. 32.16; Isa. 43.12; Jer. 3.13; Pss. 44.21; 81.10). Four times in Proverbs it appears in the context regarding warnings against taking surety (Prov. 6.1; 11.15; 20.16; 27.13). Like נכר, it does not always refer to persons and sometimes, although not frequently, can be used to describe other things, such as plants (Isa. 17.10), the divine works of Yahweh (Isa. 28.21), waters (2 Kgs 19.24; Jer. 18.14), and even things (Prov. 23.33; Hos. 8.12). It appears several times in the priestly texts to warn against offering 'strange incense' (Exod. 30.9) and 'strange fire' (Lev. 10.1; Num. 3.4; 26.61) to Yahweh, which when if done, is punished with instant death.

We shall now examine the nuances of the usage. Where זר depicts foreigners in the sense of non-Israelites, the context always specifies (for example, Joel 4.17, cf. 4.12; Ezek. 7.21, cf. 7.24; Obad. 11). Like נכר, most of these references do not usually refer to foreigners far away, but to those non-Israelites with whom Israel frequently came into contact. However, unlike נכר, זר does not always have non-Israelites in mind. For example, Deut. 25.5 refers to anyone who does not belong to the family of the widow's late husband; Hos. 5.7 refers to the 'illegitimate children' given birth by Hosea's wife, Gomer; and Ps. 109.11 probably refers to godless and wicked people. In a few cases, it is used to denote someone other than oneself, as in Prov. 14.10; 27.2; 1 Kgs 3.18; and once it refers to someone who can be treated as such by their family (Job 19.15). It is noteworthy that a large group of occurrences which do not have the non-Israelite in mind appear in the priestly texts as well. There, the term is used frequently to denote those who cannot participate in some respects of the cult (for example, the זר is banned from eating the holy food of the priests in Lev. 22.13; and even a priest's daughter who marries one is prohibited from eating such food in Lev. 22.12, 13; a person is also a זר if anyone from Israel puts the anointing perfumes reserved only for the priests on him as in Exod. 30.33). Probably, the most common occurrences are found in Numbers, where the

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[37] See *BDB*, pp. 266-67; *HALOT* vol. III, p. 267; *TDOT* vol. VI, p. 52; *KB*, pp. 253-54.

texts continually and solemnly warn against the זר who attempts to encroach on the tabernacle (Num 1.51; 3.10, 38; 16.40; 18.4, 7; 26.61).

Thus, the usage of זר is not as consistent as that of נכר. The immediate context usually supplies the information needed whether the occurrence is intended to refer to the non-Israelite or not. However, sometimes the context itself is not clear and it is best to leave it undetermined (for example, Job 15.19). There is a group of occurrences whereby זר is used in conjunction with נכר: Isa. 28.21; 61.5; Jer. 5.19; Pss. 69.8; 81.10; Job 19.15; Prov. 2.16; 5.10; 20.16; 27.2, 13; Obad. 11; Lam. 5.2. As we have discussed already, while זר is fluid and is dependent on the immediate context to determine who is being referred to, and נכר is undoubtedly the 'foreigner' to Israel, it is therefore right to conclude that in these occurrences, נכר determines the referent of זר as the 'foreigner'.

So we can summarise briefly from our study that the usages of נכר and זר are not similar and they denote ideas which are quite nuanced from each other, although sometimes they meet and seem to refer to the same thing. We conclude that the derivatives of נכר from the root denoting 'foreignness', demonstrate a consistent depiction of that idea. No ethical or moral aspect of the word is implied and its usage always emphasises the sense of differentiation from its immediate subject, as in Israelites versus non-Israelites, or Yahwistic cult versus non-Yahwistic cult. In this respect, it is more an 'ethnic' term, than a 'nationalistic' term, in the modern definitions of the word. As for זר, specifically those occurrences deriving from IIזור, it encompasses a broader sense of 'otherness' – sometimes extending from oneself, to outside one's family, social and religious groups, and country. However, the immediate context always determines the specific reference the text intends to make. It is therefore a fluid term and relies heavily on the text for its meaning. Hence, when it comes to those occurrences when they appear together, we conclude that זר draws its meaning from נכר, which is a determinate term for 'foreigner'. Following such a conclusion, we shall now look at those four influential scholars who have shaped the perception of זר and נכרי and the interpretation of the Foreign Woman of modern scholarship, and see how their works measure up to the study we have made so far.

Boström on the Meanings of זר and נכרי and Interpretation of the Foreign Woman

It seems that Boström's analysis of זר and נכרי comes to the same conclusions we have made about the usage of these words in the OT. He disagrees with earlier scholars who had opted for other meanings for both זר and נכרי, by showing that there is no need

to do so, especially when נכרי in the rest of the OT certainly means 'foreigner'.[38] He also agrees that זר does not always refer to the 'ethnic foreigner', but when it is used in parallel with נכרי, it derives the meaning of 'foreignness' through נכרי.[39] Hence, the Foreign Woman is certainly a 'foreigner'.

Boström then goes on to show what kind of a 'foreigner' the Foreign Woman is, and here his analysis becomes less straightforwardly rooted in the OT usage. He believes that she is a representative of the wives of the foreigners who live in Jerusalem[40] and of the devotees of the Ishtar cult of the Astarte version.[41] He argues that the passages about the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 are concerned not so much with adultery as with her efforts to fulfil her vows to the goddess. According to Boström, Prov. 7 is the key text for understanding who she really is.[42] There, she is the ethnic foreigner, the wife of a foreign merchant, who is seeking a victim in order to fulfil those vows by having a sexual relationship with a man other than her husband. This is not sexually, but religiously and culturally motivated. Key to this interpretation is Herodotus' report of women waiting in the Temple court to be 'deflowered' before their marriage (*Histories*, 1.199), and Boström argues from this and other evidence the existence of temple prostitutes in the Astarte cult.[43]

He also claims that the way in which the author presents the Foreign Woman in antithesis to Woman Wisdom, who is herself presented as a bride (Prov. 7.4, 5), indicates that there are overtones of sacred marriage associated with the figure of the Foreign Woman.[44] He suggests that although the Foreign Woman herself is not primarily seeking to marry the Israelite youth, she is portrayed as a representative of the cult of the love-goddess. Correspondingly, the Israelite can be saved from the Foreign Woman by taking Woman Wisdom as his wife.

Boström's thesis has been much criticised for this interpretation of Prov. 7, and those criticisms need not be repeated here.[45] His emphasis on elements in the chapter

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[38] Boström, pp. 47-52.
[39] Boström, p. 52.
[40] Boström, pp. 134-35.
[41] Boström, pp. 108-33.
[42] Boström, p. 47 and repeatedly elsewhere. He discusses Prov. 7 in his chapter 4, pp. 103-32.
[43] Boström, pp. 111-14.
[44] He deals with the aspect of bridal imagery of Woman Wisdom and the Foreign Woman in his concluding part, see Boström, pp. 156-74.
[45] See example, McKane, pp. 334-41; and for a concise evaluation of cultic prostitution, see Mary Beard and John Henderson, 'With This Body I Thee Worship: Sacred Prostitution in Antiquity', *Gender and History* 9 (1997), pp. 480-503. Also cf. 1.2.

which point to a cultic victim-meal motif, and to the sexual rites of a specific cult seem too far-fetched, at least since the decline of the myth-and-ritual approach in OT scholarship. On the other hand, one should not throw the baby out with the bath water. Boström's arguments for retaining the meanings of זר and נכרי which accord with the rest of their OT occurrences are valid, even if what he then makes of the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman certainly needs to be re-evaluated.

Humbert on the Meanings of זר and נכרי and Interpretation of the Foreign Woman

Humbert has written two essays in response to Boström's thesis, in one of which he formulates a different definition for זר and נכרי, and applies this to the interpretation of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs, contrary to Boström's; in the other, a lexical study of the meanings of זר and נכרי, he attempts straightforwardly to disprove Boström's definition of the words.[46]

In the lexical study, Humbert rejects Boström's understanding of זר and נכרי, as 'strange' and 'foreign' respectively, and also his view that when the terms are used together, זר is given specificity by נכרי. Rather, Humbert argues, both זר and נכרי have a general meaning of 'belonging to another' and do not cause each other to derive some nuance of 'foreignness'.[47] He classifies the occurrences of זר and נכרי in the OT and claims that the terms usually mean 'foreign' only in the prophetic literature;[48] elsewhere, they usually just mean 'other'. He further asserts that this is particularly true for their usage in wisdom literature, and זרה and נכריה in Proverbs 1-9 must therefore mean 'other' because of that text's genre. Furthermore, because he assumes Proverbs to be a pre-exilic composition, he adduces further evidence for supposing that זרה and נכריה cannot mean 'foreign' based on a general argument that this sense appears only in post-exilic literature.[49]

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[46] P. Humbert, 'La femme étrangère du livre des Proverbes', *Revue des etudes sémitiques* (1937), pp. 49-64; and 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Etrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', pp. 259-66, respectively.

[47] Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', pp. 264-65.

[48] Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', pp. 261-63.

[49] Humbert comments that the results of the classification he makes show that the majority of the meanings for זר are not 'foreign' as in the ethnic, political and geographical sense. He says that when זר occurs in the pre-exilic and exilic literature, it must mean 'other'; 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', pp. 261-62, and emphasised again in p. 263.

For Humbert, there are four crucial texts which determine the meaning of אשה זרה as 'the woman of others' and not the 'foreign woman': Ezek. 16.32; Jer. 5.19; Ps. 81.10 and Hos. 5.7.[50]

> Ezek. 16.32 (NRSV)
> Adulterous wife, who receives strangers (את־זרים) instead of her husband!
>
> Jer. 5.19 (NRSV)
> And when your people say, "Why has the LORD our God done all these things to us?" you shall say to them, "As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your land, so you shall serve strangers (זרים) in a land that is not yours."
>
> Ps. 81.10 (NRSV)
> There shall be no strange (זר) god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god.
>
> Hos. 5.7 (NRSV)
> They have dealt faithlessly with the LORD; for they have borne illegitimate children (זרים). Now the new moon shall devour them along with their fields.

It is not easy, however, to accept the logic of Humbert's interpretation of these texts. First and foremost, all these references do actually refer to people or gods that are not Israelite. את־זרים in Ezek. 16.32 presents textual problems[51] which Humbert does not address; it should probably be discounted from the discussion. The contexts of both Ezek. 16.32 and Hos. 5.7, however, describe in metaphorical language Israel's unfaithfulness, displayed in foreign alliances and idolatrous practices. 'Foreignness' is indeed very much the backdrop of these texts. Likewise, Jer. 5.19 and Ps. 81.10 both refer to non-Israelite gods, and Humbert fails to show any good reason for re-interpreting the contexts as Israelite, or to justify his translation of אשה זרה as 'the woman of others'. Furthermore, Humbert proposes that the terms זרה and נכריה are to be differentiated between when applied to the Foreign Woman: נכריה indicates, negatively, that the man cannot recognise the woman as belonging to him; while זרה states, positively, that she is the legitimate wife of someone else[52] – hence, the אשה זרה is 'woman of others' (he

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[50] Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', p. 263.
[51] The MT notes the possibility of אתנים instead of את־זרים as attested by the Septuagint, *μισθώματα*.
[52] Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', p. 265.

believes that the sense is plural rather than singular), and נכריה is an 'other woman'.[53] In this way, both adjectives separately implicate her as an adulteress.

However, taken this way, Humbert's translation seems to suggest a strange understanding of adultery with which the OT is quite unfamiliar, where a man can only commit 'adultery' with a woman married to someone else, not simply because she is an 'other woman' or 'woman of others' whom the man cannot recognise, or who does not belong to him. In addition, it seems that Humbert is putting the cart before the horse by using the perception of the woman as an adulteress to override the strong evidence of other OT usage. Besides, the assertion he makes that an assumption that meanings of words differ when they occur in different genres can be used to justify finding a whole new meaning for a word is questionable.

Snijders on the Meanings of זר *and* נכרי *and Interpretation of the Foreign Woman*

Perhaps the most influential contribution to the discussion has been the detailed lexical study by Snijders, published in 1954, which later became the basis for his shorter article on זור in *TDOT*.[54] Concerning the meaning of נכר, Snijders from the very start avoids the word 'foreign' and opts instead for 'outside' and 'unknown'.[55] One can sense that for Snijders, the word 'foreign' denotes nuances incompatible with his understanding of the OT texts, which he does not clearly specify in his work. For that reason, it seems sensible to begin by trying to elucidate Snijders's understanding of the word 'foreign'. I think the following citation is probably a good start:

> The translation "foreign countries" must in various cases be noted as an anachronism. At any rate one must guard against the view that especially in the time before the kings Israel was a region with more or less fixed boundaries and a uniform form of government. The men lived in the environments, within the circuit of a town, the sphere of a leader, they gathered into a family or tribe.[56]

In other words, Snijders takes 'foreign' to mean 'member of a foreign nation'. Therefore, he believes that for pre-monarchical Israel, terms such as 'foreign countries' and 'foreigners' cannot be used for those periods when Israel is not a 'nation' with its own land, geographical boundary and central government; and correspondingly, the

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[53] Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', p. 264.
[54] L.A. Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 1-154; and 'זָר / זור', pp. 53-57.
[55] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 62.
[56] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 62.

terms are also inappropriate to describe those non-Israelites who do not have their own nation.[57] By his reckoning, two conditions must apply for one to qualify as a 'foreigner' to Israel – Israel must have a defined land, and the 'foreigner' must himself be expressed in relation to words denoting (his) land (for example, אדמת and ארץ). Hence, the occurrences of נכר in Neh. 13.30, and נשים נכריות in Ezra 9-10 prove to him that נכרי does not refer to 'foreigners' because these people are among the Israelites, living in and belonging to the same land.[58] This understanding of 'foreign' is also carried into his usage of other words such as 'country', 'nation', 'non-Israelite', 'Israelite territory', as well as 'non-ethnical sense'.

Snijders' predicament to come to terms with ideas of 'foreignness' takes us back to our discussion on נכר above. We have noted just as Snijders did, that 'foreignness' is not confined to geographical boundaries. However, Snijders has based his definition of 'foreignness' on a narrowly modern 'nationalist' perspective, which is determined by the conditions of land, geographical boundary and central government. The concept of 'foreignness', as we have discussed above, is more an ethnic concept, rather than a 'nationalistic' one. It describes those outside the ethnos, rather than confined to geographical boundaries and government. On the other hand, Snijders fails to pick up the nuances in the meanings and implications of the terms 'nationalism' and 'ethnicity' and does not attempt to show whether they can fit in the OT or not, as we have done above. Snijders actually assumes that they all mean the same thing, although he offers no definition of the terms, and uses them in a superficial way. This forces him to reject ideas of 'foreignness' for נכר and to take the only option left for him which is to look into the semantic range of the word and he decides that the essential meaning is 'otherness'. He then recommends that the only way to define the נכרי more adequately is by what he calls 'the varying degrees of the communal circle', which he defines as the world outside the family, tribe and nation.[59] The context for each occurrence of נכר and נכרי will then determine which communal circle is being referred to. So, in texts such as Gen. 17.12, 27; 31.15; 35.2, 4, נכר refers to someone outside the world of 'family' and 'tribe', rather

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[57] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 62-63, n. 8.
[58] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 63.
[59] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 64. He builds these various worlds on five verses: Deut. 17.15 and 23.20 – the mention of 'not your brother', quantifies his two worlds of family and tribe; and Deut. 29.22; 1 Kgs 8.41; 2 Chron. 6.32 – the mention of 'coming from a distant land', quantifies the world of 'nation'. These categories happen to coincide with the classification *BDB* uses to explain the contexts of the occurrences of נכרי, see *BDB*, p. 648.

than 'nation'. On the other hand, this 'innovative' method which Snijders comes up with fails to take into acount the complex relationships between the terms בית אב, משפחה, שבט and אלף. When and how the Hebrew text understands the distinction between the family and the tribe is an inconclusive debate in itself,[60] and nowhere in Snijders's thesis does he offer an explanation how these terms should be interpreted in order for one to classify the נכרי accordingly. On the whole, this method of defining נכר by 'the varying degrees of the communal circle' just makes his theory meaningless.

We shall now look at how Snijders understands זר. He does not accept Humbert's definition of זר to simply mean 'other', and he rightly criticises Humbert for equating the term with אחר.[61] Snijders also effectively argues for some specific technical understanding of the term, especially in the priestly literature, by drawing out the nuance of 'illicit', 'unqualified' and 'deviating'.[62] However, he seems to go too far in asserting that the priests are to treat the rest of the community as זר, and he simply divides the community into the non-priests who are זר, and the priestly caste who are the non-זר.[63] Also, he extends this idea into his analysis of Ben Sira.[64] On the whole, although

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[60] See especially J.W. Rogerson, *Anthropology and the Old Testament* (Growing Points in Theology; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1978), pp. 86-101. He discusses the various inconclusive attempts in OT study to try to understand these terms in the light of anthropology. Also, see S. Bendor, *The Social Structure of Ancient Israel: The Institution of the Family (Beit 'Ab) from the Settlement to the end of the Monarchy* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 7; Jerusalem: Simor, 1996). His work is based only on the Hebrew text, and does not take into account the socio-anthropological models or the archaeological evidence. The complex situation of coming to terms with the Hebrew understanding of family and tribe is somewhat expressed in: Bendor, pp. 45-118.

[61] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 75-78; 103-104.

[62] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 111-54.

[63] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 124-45, 151. On the contrary, Jacob Milgrom explains that the contexts of the occurrences of זר in priestly texts are all in relation to the worship of Yahweh and his prescriptions, and the זר is the one who 'encroach' on proper worship. The priests have not been recommended to regard the rest of the community as זר. J. Milgrom, *Studies in Levitical Terminology, I: The Encroacher and the Levite. The Term `Aboda* (Near Eastern Studies, 14; Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), p. 5 n. 6. Milgrom's explanation is also repeated in his commentary, *Numbers* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1990), pp. 342-43.

[64] In particular, for Sir. 45.18, Snijders goes so far as to claim that Ben Sira places Korah in the third position, after the use of זרים followed by Dathan and Abiram because the latter two are non-priests. On the other hand, Num. 16.1 clearly specifies that Korah is a Levite. If that was Ben Sira's intention, or his understanding of זרים, he might as well not mention Korah. The other problem is that after Snijders categorises זר as occurring in Sir. 8.18; 14.4; 20.9 (this occurrence is not found in the Hebrew extant, cf. Pancratius Beentjes, *The Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew: A Text Edition of All Extant Hebrew Manuscripts and a Synopsis of All Parallel Hebrew Ben Sira Texts* [VTSup, 68; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997], p. 182) as an outsider in the 'neutral context', and 45.13, 18 as referring to those not of the Aaronite descent or priesthood, followed by Sir. 11.32; 39.24; 49.9 as 'the stranger in a religious-ethical aspect, the apostate', Snijders explains that in

Snijders is right to emphasise that זר does not always have the non-Israelite in mind, he does not unfortunately, seem to have a better way to define its sense of 'otherness' than through 'the varying degrees of the communal circles'. It seems strange that he chooses to ignore the common way in which other dictionaries understand זר, which is a fluid term and is totally dependent on the context for its reference.[65]

We have looked at the way Snijders perceives and treats the usages of נכר and זר separately. Now we will examine how he interprets those occurrences when the terms appear together, as they do for the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Snijders makes the same assumption as Humbert that when it comes to the different genres of the OT, words take on different meanings. He believes that, except for those occurrences in the prophetic literature where both terms do refer to the 'ethnic non-Israelite', elsewhere they do not.[66] The texts which serves him as evidence are: Ps. 69.9; Prov. 20.16; 27.2, 13 and Job 19.15; to which he also adds Gen. 31.15 and Eccl. 6.2 to give further support to his argument. If we look closely at these texts, we can group them into three subject matters, each of which we shall deal with below. Ps. 69.9; Prov. 27.2; and Job 19.15 deal with relationships between self and other people; Prov. 20.16 and 27.13 with matters on giving surety; and Gen. 31.15 and Eccl. 6.2 with matters on inheritance.

Ps. 69.9 (NRSV)
I have become a stranger (מוזר) to my kindred, an alien (נכרי) to my mother's children.

Prov. 27.2 (NRSV)
Let another (זר) praise you, and not your own mouth-- a stranger (נכרי), and not your own lips.

Job 19.15 (NRSV)
the guests in my house have forgotten me; my serving girls count me as a stranger (לזר); I have become an alien (נכרי) in their eyes.

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the communal circles ranging from just an outsider to one who is not religious, the implication of the 'depreciation' is at home with the wisdom literature because the norms of daily living falls back on the 'Tora of Jhwh', the knowledge of God. He therefore concludes that the זר is '"the other", who is outside the community and not one of the circle of the pious'. See Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 104-109. I think this interpretation is problematical, because no sequential order of 'depreciating' value can be discerned with the occurrences of זר in Ben Sira. The occurrences are sporadic and the order is based on Snijders's systematisation of the definitions he imputes to the word זר.

[65] *KB*, p. 265; 'זוּר', *BDB*, pp. 266-67. R. Martin-Archard emphasises the nuance of hostility and threat in the word; cf. R. Martin-Archard, 'זָר *zār* fremd', *TLOT* vol. I, pp. 520-22.

[66] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 64.

Concerning the first group of occurrences, Snijders and Humbert assert that because all the other references placed together with נכר and זר are related intimately to oneself and one's household, נכר and זר must simply mean 'one other than the family'.[67] The two scholars seem to treat these texts in such a way as to suggest that they were intended for the sole purpose of defining the נכר and זר, rather than how the two terms are being used to bring out the meaning of the text. It is clear that rhetoric is at play in these occurrences, and while Ps. 69.9 and Job 19.15 is making the point that the householders no longer view the subjects as belonging to the same household, but are total strangers,[68] Prov. 27.2 is saying that praise is only valuable from someone quite different from the subject.[69] In these occurrences, there is no strong emphasis on the ethnic difference of the subject and נכר and זר, but a disconnection of the subject from the household and self respectively. It seems that Snijders has already determined beforehand to establish a specific context of exclusion, that of the non-household and non-dependent and it has deterred him from appreciating the colourful, poetic rhetoric of the texts when they are exploiting the idea of 'foreignness' in order to give an exaggerated lack of connection.

> Prov. 20.16 (NRSV)
> Take the garment of one who has given surety for a stranger (זר); seize the pledge given as surety for foreigners (נכרים).
>
> Prov. 27.13 (NRSV)
> Take the garment of one who has given surety for a stranger (זר); seize the pledge given as surety for foreigners (נכריה).[70]

As for Prov. 20.16 and 27.13, Snijders devotes eleven pages to explaining why all the persons involved in the transaction do not involve any 'foreigner'.[71] Using Prov. 6.1

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[67] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 64-66, 74-75; and Humbert, 'Les adjectifs "zâr" et "nokrî" et la "Femme Étrangère" des Proverbes Bibliques', p. 262.
[68] For instance, see L.C. Allen, 'The Value of Rhetorical Criticism in Psalm 69', *JBL* 105 (1986), pp. 577-98; and Marvine Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (WBC, 20; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1990), pp. 189-202.
[69] Snijders over emphasises on 'relative' value of praise and making a sliding scale out of the text, asserting that the זר and נכרי must be someone independent of the person in question, like a neighbour and the circle of friends, but not his servants or children. He does not explain why that 'someone', on the contrary, cannot be a total stranger of ethnic difference. Cf. Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 74-75.
[70] However, one manuscript has נכרים.
[71] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 78-88. I do not think that Snijders has given a correct explanation of the meanings of ערב and תקע. It seems that he makes these words give the mere connotation of 'to meddle with' so that they imply dealings and transactions

which is a text warning against giving surety, he argues that since רע and זר are in synonymous parallelism, they must refer to the same person and that the sense is true, therefore, for Prov. 20.16 and 27.13: all the people involved are just associates involved in commerce. This argument from synonymous parallelism is, of course, highly questionable – especially given that the parallelism in Prov. 6.1 may not be strictly synonymous. The verse is probably stating that one should be worried after giving surety, whether it is given for one's close friend or most distant foreigner. In Proverbs, there is a general consensus that giving surety for anyone is a risky business, and we find similar warnings in Prov. 17.18 and 22.26.[72] Consequently, there is nothing in Prov. 20.16 and 27.13 to imply that זר and נכרי or נכריה could not mean 'foreigners'. On the contrary, it is logical that because these people do not belong to the community of Israel, the Israelites should be all the more cautious in their dealings with the נכרי.[73]

> Gen. 31.15 (NRSV)
> Are we not regarded by him as foreigners (נכריות)? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us.
>
> Eccl. 6.2 (NRSV)
> those to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and honor, so that they lack nothing of all that they desire, yet God does not enable them to enjoy these things, but a stranger (נכרי) enjoys them. This is vanity; it is a grievous ill.

Snijders's interpretation of the other two texts, Gen. 31.15 and Eccl. 6.2, draws on the conclusions reached in his treatment of the previous passages.[74] In these two passages, the main theme is inheritance, and the idea that it should pass on to someone who has no link with the subject's heritage is a tragedy. This idea is also strongly established in biblical descriptions of national destruction (Deut. 28.33; Isa. 1.7; Hos. 8.7; Lam. 5.2; Obad. 11). Eccl. 6.2 echoes this idea. However, Snijders takes this text to be the result of a kind of punishment such as the one mentioned in Job 31.8. He takes the נכרי to be anyone who is 'outside the world of the family', and there is no connotation in

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common in daily living involving some risks for the Israelite context only. For a more accurate discussion of the word, see E. Lipiński, 'ערב', in *TDOT* vol. XI, pp. 329-30.

[72] Andreas Scherer's analysis of the texts concerning surety also points to the risks involved in standing surety. He concludes that these warnings are intended to emphasise responsible thought and behaviour in consideration of one's own welfare and that of those in his household. One should not risk his sustenance in careless undertakings. A. Scherer, 'Is the Selfish Man Wise? Considerations of Context in Proverbs 10.1-22.16 with Special Regard to Surety, Bribery and Friendship', *JSOT* 76 (1997), pp. 59-70.

[73] See McKane, pp. 542-43; and Boström, p. 38.

[74] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 64-65.

the 'ethnic' sense.[75] As for Gen. 31.15, Rachel and Leah are stating the fact that their father has treated them as נכריה, having no right to his inheritance. Snijders and Humbert take נכריה to mean here that they are being treated as social outsiders.[76] Snijders's point is that the word in this context also has no reference to a 'non-ethnic sense', and refers to someone who belongs just 'outside the world of the family'. In these two texts, both scholars again miss the rhetorical and poetic force. The same considerations should apply in these texts as in Job 19.15 and Ps. 69.9. The rhetorical force of the word derives from the assertion of distance from the family, with all its emotional overtones,[77] rather than merely from 'not belonging to the family'.

All of these passages reflect the weakness in Snijders's argumentation. Where they use terms implying extreme disconnection, for poetic effect if not actual ethnic difference, Snijders consistently reduces this to a slight disconnection, making the complete stranger into one just outside the household, the friend, or acquaintance from another family, whose social ties with the subject are just a little distance away. A further weakness is introduced in his conclusion to the section:

> The *zār* is the one who deviates from the character of the people and standards outside the primary relationships of life. In the places where both adjectives occur (Isa xxvii, 2; lxi, 5; Obad 11, Ps lxix, 9; Job xix, 15; Prov ii, 16; v, 10, 20; vii, 5; xx, 16 & xxvii, 2, 13), *nōkri* is always placed after *zār* where it states in a negative manner that it is the unknown one, the one with whom one does not associate.[78]

Except in his discussion of the priestly legislation, Snijders has done little to show that the terms imply specific deviance from a norm, or refer to people who are deliberately

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[75] Unfortunately, C.L. Seow, depends on Snijders's thesis for the meaning of נכרי, and suggests that נכרי refers to the 'outsider', rather than the 'foreigner'. But he considers the נכרי to refer to the same group in Ezra-Nehemiah which threaten the rights of inheritance of the land for the returned community; C.L. Seow, *Ecclesiastes: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 18C; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 210. I shall examine the occurrences of נכרי in Ezra-Nehemiah in Chapter Two.

[76] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 65 n. 11. Due to the uncertainty of the meaning scholars give to נכריה (as seen above and in the discussion here), commentators think that what it means in this text is dependent on the claim that 'For he (Laban) has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us.' However, no scholar could come to a definite conclusion concerning the nature and type of marriage contract that Laban and Jacob make. See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 12-36: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1985), p. 492; Gordon Wenham, *Genesis 16-50* (WBC, 2; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1987), pp. 272-73; and Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), vol. II, p. 289.

[77] Westermann, p. 492.

[78] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 78.

avoided. On the other hand, he has made the terms to denote concepts, from one of being outside a particular community or social unit, to one of deliberate exile or exclusion from that unit. It is this shifting concept which he used to describe the Foreign Woman, and has been cited widely in subsequent literature,[79] but it introduces ethical and other concepts with little or no basis in his exegesis of the other materials.

> An *'išša zara* is a woman who leaves the community and the rules in force there (ii 17). She is "strange" in respect to the right marriage viz. with the woman whom one is given in youth (v 18). She acts independently towards the young man and makes him her victim (vii 22 ff.) She is called *nokriyya* like a *zona* (xxiii 27) or an *'ēšet ra'* (vi 24), a bad woman, because she is a heterogeneous woman with whom one does not associate, an unknown woman.[80]
>
> In our opinion, *zara* indicates the aspect of the "deviating", the unfaithfulness with respect to her "house", community and Jhwh. *nokriyyah* says: she represents a strange world, she is an unknown one, whom one must avoid.[81]

Snijders's interpretation of the Foreign Woman is that she has become a social outsider because of her sexual promiscuousness, and that this is implied in the two adjectives that describe her. How does he reach such a conclusion?

If Snijders's work is read carefully, it becomes clear that his interpretation of the Foreign Woman is very much dependent on his interpretation of Prov. 23.27, where נכריה is used in parallelism with זונה.[82] Again as before, Snijders's only understanding of synonymous parallelism is in terms of complete, direct equivalence. From this verse, he tries to find a link in the OT explaining the association of the two words, and argues that the only way to understand the parallelism of נכריה and זונה in Prov. 23.27 is through the account of Rahab in the book of Joshua. While he properly discounts the assumption in much early twentieth-century scholarship that all prostitutes were foreign woman,[83] yet faced with the problem of explaining why the נכריה is here identified with a prostitute through the parallelism, he begins with the word זונה.[84] He says of Rahab, 'even in her

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[79] This list is unending, see 1.1.; and to cite a few: McKane, p. 285; Plöger, p. 56; J.A. Söggin, 'Jezabel, oder die fremde Frau', in A. Caquot (ed.), *Mèlanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (AOAT, 212; Kevelaar: Butzon and Bercker, 1981), pp. 453-59.
[80] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 96.
[81] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 104.
[82] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', pp. 66-68.
[83] There is no basis for such an assumption, as mentioned in cf. n. 12.
[84] S. Erlandsson, 'זנה', *TDOT* vol. IV, pp. 99-104. זונה is the qal participle of זנה, the root occurs one hundred and thirty-nine times in the OT. Approximately two-thirds of these occurrences are

own hometown of Jericho, she lived by herself in a house on the wall of Jericho (Josh. 2.15); and later after the destruction of Jericho she is located outside the camp of Israel (Josh. 6)'.[85] The word 'outside' becomes crucial here. Snijders interprets it as meaning that, although Rahab becomes part of the Israelite community, she is not exactly a participant, since she is located outside the camp. He understands this, furthermore, as a reference to her social location, and argues that certain Israelites are classified similarly in Lev. 21.7 where the priest is forbidden to marry the '*išša zara* [sic] or a dishonoured or repudiated wife', and in Lev. 21.4 where a widow is also forbidden to be wife of the high priest. This list for Snijders, is composed of the 'socially disqualified groups'.[86]

Contrary to Snijders's conclusion, the first mention of Rahab's location on the city wall has nothing to do with her social location, but her professional location.[87] Josh. 6.23, furthermore, refers to the physical location of Rahab and her family after their rescue, and not their social location in Israel. The verse states that Rahab and her family are brought out from the city of Jericho, to the outside of the camp of Israel. The next verse explains the purpose of the move which is so that the Israelites could set the city of Jericho on fire (v. 24) and it goes on to describe what happens to Rahab and her father's household – they went on to live 'in the midst of (בקרב) Israel ever since' (v. 25). Therefore, the placing of Rahab outside the camp is a temporary measure during the actual destruction of Jericho and is linked with the usual practice for all prisoners of war (cf. Num. 31.13, 19). The story concludes not in v. 23 but in v. 25, where she and her family became full community members of Israel.[88]

To imply then that Josh. 6 refers to Rahab's social location in the community is flawed, and anyway Rahab becomes Israel's heroine, hardly a social outsider. Moreover,

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in the prophetic literature and are used metaphorically to denote Israel's incorrigible unfaithfulness to Yahweh. The verb forms do not always denote the act of prostitution, but always refer to illicit sex, and also appear in contexts of adultery. The qal participle, does generally refer to prostitutes. However, there are not many women specifically identified as prostitutes in the OT: Tamar (Gen. 38.15), because she receives payment for the sexual transaction; Rahab (Josh. 2.1; 6.17, 22-23, 25); Jephthah's mother (Judg. 11.1); and Samson's friend (Judg. 16.1). The other three texts in which a prostitute is mentioned involve illegitimate candidates for the marriage of the Levitical priests in Lev. 21.7, the two prostitutes appearing in King Solomon's court in 1 Kgs 3.18, and the comparison of the price one pays for a prostitute and an adulteress in Prov. 6.26.

[85] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 67. He refuses to cite the verse for this last reference. I do not think this omission is one of carelessness as much as he is certain what he is about to say cannot be supported. See below.

[86] Snijders, 'The Meaning of zār in the Old Testament', p. 67.

[87] Elaine A. Goodfriend, 'Prostitution', *ABD* vol. V, pp. 505-13 (507).

[88] For further reference, see 'קָרֵב', *HALOT* vol. IV, p. 1136.

the 'socially disqualified groups' which Snijders identifies are not 'disqualified' by society. A more appropriate term for this group might be 'disqualified as wives for priests', because they are not considered 'disqualified' for the whole community. Nowhere in these texts are the priests told to treat them as 'disqualified' members of society, and the reason for disqualifying them as wives of priests is probably tied to issues of paternity and preservation of the purity of the priestly line.

We shall examine the juxtaposition of 'foreign woman' and prostitute in Prov. 23.27 at a later stage, disconnected from Snijders's interpretation of the Rahab story and his theory about social exclusion. On the other hand, Snijders's theory has proved attractive to many subsequent scholars, especially those who have an interest in the exclusion of women at a rather different level. It is clear from our brief survey that Snijders's 'outsider' has little basis even in his own lexical study. Apart from the technical priestly concept, he has simply used a few texts where ethnic connotations of נכרי are rhetorical or metaphorical, and used them to suggest that the term can be applied to distinctions other than the purely ethnic. That is not impossible, especially in poetic passages, but it is true, if at all, only in a tiny minority of instances. From this, however, he goes on to suggest the idea that the נכריה may belong to a socially excluded class, rather than saying that she does not belong to some particular category. In this way, a moral dimension is introduced, which is based on Prov. 23.27 and his dubious exegesis of Josh. 6 along with some suppositions made of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Suddenly, the נכריה is not simply someone outside the Israelite ethnic or religious group, as the overwhelming majority of uses for נכרי suggest, nor is she even just someone outside a household or family group, but she has become someone excluded from society for her behaviour. One wonders how all those who have followed Snijders appreciate just how tenuous his argument for that conclusion really is?

Lang on the Meanings of נכרי and Interpretation of the Foreign Woman

Like Snijders, Lang has published his views on the problem of the Foreign Woman in the influential *TDOT*, as well as in his more general writings on Proverbs.[89] The approach he takes is very different from that of Snijders. It is the crystallisation of a much older approach to Proverbs which reads it in the context of similar ancient NE

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[89] B. Lang, 'נכר', pp. 425-29; *Die weisheitliche Lehrrede: eine Untersuchung von Sprüche 1-7* (SBS, 54; Stuttgart: KBW Verlag, 1977); and *Wisdom and the Book of Proverbs: An Israelite Goddess Redefined* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1986).

material, and takes that context to be more important than the OT.[90] Correspondingly, Lang rests his case not on a lexical survey of biblical usage, but on a claim that the Foreign Woman belongs to a widespread ancient motif, although, he does support this claim with a short etymological study, which is of dubious value.[91] He goes on to cite four ancient NE texts to support this claim: the Instruction of Ptahhotep 277-288; Counsels of Wisdom, 72-79; Hesiod Works 328f.; and the Instruction of Ani 3, 13-17.[92]

The Instruction of Ptahhotep (277-288)[93]

If you want friendship to endure
In a house you enter
As master, brother, or friend,
In whatever place you enter,
Beware of approaching the women!
Unhappy is the place where it is done,
Unwelcome[94] is he who intrudes on them.
A thousand men are turned away from their good:
A short moment like a dream,
Then death comes for having known them.
Poor advice is "shoot the opponent,"
When one goes to do it, the heart rejects it.
He who fails through lust of them,

[90] For the subject on the 'international' background of the book of Proverbs, see McKane, *Proverbs*, and for an evaluation of this view, S.D.E. Weeks, *Early Israelite Wisdom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[91] Lang makes a list of the possible meanings of נכר, which is based only with a corresponding usage of the word in the other Semitic languages such as Akkadian, Ugaritic or Arabic. For example, נכר in Prov. 5.10, 20; 27.2 and Eccl. 6.2 must mean 'other' because of its usage in the Keret Epic; and נכר must also mean 'foreigner' in texts such as Deut. 15.13, because of its context which deals with debts for it is similar to that of the Edict of Amidsaduqa.

[92] As mentioned earlier, this claim is not new. For example, Johannes Fichtner, who argues from a philosophical perspective that there is a congruent development of 'Chokma' thoughts in the wisdom literatures of the ancient NE and those of Israel, believes that the warnings against the Foreign Woman, are similar to those warnings against illicit relationships with women found throughout the ancient NE. See J. Fichtner, *Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-jüdischen Ausprägung: eine Studie sur Nationalisierung der Weisheit in Israel* (BZAW, 62; Giessen: Alfred Töpelmann, 1933), pp. 2-3, 19-20. Based on Fichtner's study and interpretation of the Instruction of Ani, Gemser (p. 19) concludes that 'foreign women' warned against in these literature indicate that they are usually responsible for sexual offences in the society. These early works are cornerstones for interpreting the warnings against the Foreign Woman in light of the ancient NE instruction literature.

[93] The following lines are taken from the translation by Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California, 1976), vol. I, p. 68.

[94] Lichtheim explains that the phrase *N spd n ḥr* literally means 'the face is not keen,' meaning that the face of the intruder is unwelcome to the master of the house. However, the word *spd* means to 'be sharp, clever or ready', see R. Faulkner, *A Concise Dictionary of Middle Egyptian* (Oxford: Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, 1999), pp. 223-24. Therefore, 'not intelligent' might be a more appropriate translation. See also R.B. Parkinson, *The Tale of Sinuhe and other Ancient Egyptian Poems 1940-1640 BC* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), p. 256.

No affair of his can prosper.

It is clear that this maxim does not deal with adultery *per se*, but is essentially a warning about self-control and one's duty to show respect to the owner of the house one enters by not approaching any of the women. It applies to any form of sexual relations, including rape, fornication or adultery. The women in this maxim remain in the passive. There is no indication that the women are seductive or promiscuous, or are to be treated as 'foreigners'. The passage is dealing with warnings against a man's lust for women. Apart from the warning concerning the consequence of death, this maxim has hardly any resemblance to the warnings we find in Proverbs 1-9, where the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman is emphasised and she seduces to entice and trap her victims.[95]

Counsels of Wisdom (72-79)[96]

Do not marry a prostitute (*ḫarimtu*), whose husbands are legion,
A *ištaritu*[97] who is dedicated to a god,
A *kulmašitu* whose favours are many.
In your trouble she will not support you,
In your dispute she will be a mocker;
There is no reverence or submissiveness with her.
Even if she dominate your house, get her out,
For she has directed her attention elsewhere.
Variant: She will disrupt the house she enters, and her partner will not assert himself.

The warning here deals with the kinds of women one should avoid marrying or keeping as wives. The last line explains the reason for treating these women harshly, which is because they do not support and submit to their husbands. The *ištaritu* and *kulmašitu* are probably placed together with the prostitute as a group because they share something in common – their profession demands the same kind of commitment to many clients. Unlike the common women, the women mentioned here are used to the worldly

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[95] Fox, on the other hand, argues that it describes the intent of the warnings against the Foreign Woman, in Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 141.

[96] The following translation is taken from W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 103.

[97] Lambert has translated *ištaritu* as 'temple prostitute' and *kulmašitu* as 'courtesans'. An important essay on this subject is written by E.M. Yamauchi, 'Cultic Prostitution', in Harry Hoffner (ed.), *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon on the Occasion of His Sixty-fifth Birthday* (AOAT, 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), pp. 213-221. He explains that the historical proof for the existence of temple prostitutes is doubtful. See also, '*ištaritu*' and '*kulmašitu*' in *CAD* vol. VII, pp. 270-71 and vol. VIII, p. 526 respectively. They were women who served in temples, and perhaps priestesses of some sort, but they are not to be associated with the sex trade. For an overview of the debate on this subject, see Beard and Henderson, 'With this Body I Thee Worship', pp. 480-503.

affairs outside the home and their undivided loyalty to their husbands after marriage is doubted. It is also not right to classify all the women in the text as promiscuous, because the *ištaritu* and *kulmašitu* are not. Moreover, nothing in the text suggests that they should be treated as 'foreigners'. Proverbs 1-9 does not warn against marrying the prostitute or going to the prostitutes.[98] Neither does the depiction of the consequences of marrying prostitutes and cultic devotees, can be found in Proverbs 1-9. There is no language of 'foreignness', entrapment, death, and loss of properties in Counsels of Wisdom as in Proverbs 1-9.

Hesiod Works (328f.)[99]

> … who goes up to his brother's bed
> and commits unnatural sin in lying with his wife.

This clause is found among the list of bad things that an evil man does (lines 327-332). They also include the ill treatment of strangers, orphans and aged parents. It is not a warning about any kind of bad woman or 'foreigner'. Again, the 'wife' is the passive subject whereby something bad is done to her. It condemns an act of adultery by one's brother with his wife. Hence, the consequence of poverty and the impending punishment by Zeus depicted in lines 333-335 are not reservedly for the sin of adultery in lines 328-329, but for all the sins listed in the passage. There is nothing in this warning and passage that is similar to the warnings against the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. The case of adultery mentioned in this text is also unique, as it is not with any married women, but the wife of one's brother.

The Instruction of Ani (16, 13-17, 1)[100]

> Beware of a woman who is a stranger,
> One not known in her town[101];

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[98] Although Boström (p. 40) rightly points out that if the Foreign Woman is a prostitute, Prov. 7.10 need not differentiate the Foreign Woman from the prostitute, McKane (p. 329) chides him for ignoring similar warnings in the ancient NE texts against such women, considers the Counsels of Wisdom as addressing the same issue as the Foreign Woman, and interprets her to be a married woman who is a prostitute.

[99] The translation is by Hugh G. Evelyn-White, from perseus@tufts.edu. For a brief commentary on these lines, see T.A. Sinclair, *Hesiod Works and Days* (London: Macmillan, 1932), pp. 36-37; and M.L. West, *Hesiod Works and Days* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 46.

[100] The following translation is taken from M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (1976), vol. II, p. 137. Note that the text numbering follows the order found in the edition of the papyruses used by Egyptologists. It differs from the citations given by Lang according to *ANET*.

Don't stare at her when she goes by[102],
Do not know her carnally.
A deep water whose course is unknown,
Such is a woman away from her husband.
"I am pretty" she tells you daily,
When she has no witnesses;
She is ready to ensnare you,
A great deadly crime when it is heard.
...[103]

The woman who is warned against in this maxim is not a foreigner of Egypt, but a woman who travels to another town.[104] She is an Egyptian. It was not uncommon for a woman to travel in Egypt, for in the twentieth Dynasty, Ramses III issued a decree to ensure the protection and safety of travelling women.[105] There are two points of similarity between this maxim and the warnings against the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9: the fear of strangers[106] and the portrayal of a dangerous, seductive woman.[107] However, there is nothing in this maxim to suggest that this seductive woman should be treated as a 'foreigner' as Lang claims. Furthermore, while this warning depicts a

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[101] It has been suggested, 'who is not respected in the city' is preferred because it is a figure of speech for this phrase in the New Kingdom period. See Joachim Quack, *Die Lehren Des Ani: Ein neuägyptischer Weisheitstext in seinem kulturellen Umfeld* (OBO, 141; Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994), p. 213; and Annette Depla, 'Woman in Ancient Egyptian Wisdom Literature', in Leonie Archer, Susan Fischler, and Maria Wyke (eds.), *Women in Ancient Societies – An Illusion of the Night* (London: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 24-52 (34).

[102] Lichtheim adopts the emendation of *m-ḫt sn-nw st* by A. Volten to *m-ḫt sni=s*. See A. Volten, *Studien zum Weisheitsbuch des Anii* (Danske Videnskabernes Selskab Historisk-filogiske Meddelelser XXIII, 3; Copenhagen, 1937), pp. 119-20. Quack does not think that it is necessary and renders it as 'behind the back of her companions', see Quack, p. 93.

[103] Lichtheim ends her translation here because the lines are obscure. See Quack, p. 93 and below.

[104] See also L.J. Lesko, ed. *A Dictionary of Late Egyptian* (California: B.C. Scribe, 1982), vol. II, pp. 405, 599-600. Also, Hannes Buchberger, 'Zum Ausländer in der altägyptischen Literature – eine Kritik', *WO* 20-21 (1989-90), pp. 5-34 (9). However, Gemser (p. 19) and McKane (pp. 285-86) understand it as referring to the ethnic foreigner.

[105] C.J. Eyre, 'Crime and Adultery in Ancient Egypt', *JEA* 70 (1984), pp. 92-105 (98). This decree can be found in Papyrus Harris I, 78, 8-9.

[106] Depla, pp. 34, 46. She elucidates the xenophobic nature of the Egyptians throughout their history. Particularly during the period of the New Kingdom, when the kingdom is broken down into many independent states, literature of that era not only discourages travel, but strangers in the community are seen as a form of threat and chaos. Also, M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* (1980), vol. III, pp. 207-208.

[107] Depla, p. 49. She explains that this portrayal of a seductive woman in Instruction literature is only found here, and begins to be common by the Graeco-Roman period. See also R. Robins, 'Some images of woman in New Kingdom art and literature', in Barbara Lesko (ed.), *Women's Earliest Record: From Ancient Egypt and Western Asia, Proceedings of Conference on Women in the Ancient Near East, 1987, Brown University* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989), pp. 105-16 (101).

married woman soliciting for an adulterous affair, the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is not an adulteress.

What Lang has failed to prove, by the mention of only these four texts, is that woman is not a common subject in ancient NE literature, notwithstanding warnings against her.[108] In addition, what Lang associates with 'commonplace' has to do with the theme of promiscuous woman and treating her as a 'foreigner'. However, except for the Instruction of Ani, and the mention of prostitutes in the Counsel of Wisdom, not only do none of the other texts portray those women as promiscuous, but none of them deals with the subject of 'foreignness', or of the treatment of anyone as 'foreign', with the link to women's promiscuity aside. Above all, analyses of the four texts show that there are hardly any similarities between them and those warnings found against the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9.

Recently, an Egyptologist, Johann Quack, argues that the origin of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 lies in the maxim of the Instruction of Ani.[109] It is noteworthy that although this idea is not new, and has been mentioned by many biblical scholars,[110] Quack is the first to make an analytical list of the similarities of the two texts, which I have cited below:[111]

Ani : Watch out for (Or: Protect yourself from) the woman from the foreign part,
Who is not respected in the city.
Prov : In order to save you from the strange (זרה)[112] woman (Pr 2,16a),
In order to protect you from the strange (זרה) woman (Pr 7,5a)
The the Foreign Woman (נכירה [sic]) (Pr 2,16b; 7,5 b)
Ani : Do not wink at her behind the back of her companion!
Prov : Do not have yourself overcome by her eyelashes (עפעפ) (Pr 6,25b)
Ani : Do not know her unlawfully!
Prov : And why, my son, do you err with the strange woman,
embraced in the lap of the the Foreign Woman? (Pr 5,20)

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[108] Depla, pp. 24-25.
[109] Quack, pp. 213-14.
[110] For example, Humbert, *Recherches sur les Sources Égyptiennes de la Littérature Sapientiale D'Israel* (Neuchatel University, 7; Neuchatel: Neuchatel University, 1929), reaches the conclusion in his research, when comparing the instruction literature of Egypt with the OT, that the results give evidence of Egypt's continuous and direct influence on Israel's wisdom literature, especially on the book of Proverbs. He believes that the similarities in the warnings against the Foreign Woman and that of the Instruction of Ani are further supporting evidence of this direct influence. Also, see McKane, pp. 284-86.
[111] Quack, pp. 213-14.
[112] Quack consistently uses *fremde* for both זרה and נכריה in his translation. I have used 'strange' for זרה in the above translation for the purpose of clarification.

Ani : A deep water, that one cannot orbit,
Prov : Because a deep pit is the strange woman (זרה)
And a narrow well the the Foreign Woman (נכירה [sic]) (Pr 23,27)

Ani : Such a woman is distant from her husband.
Prov : Because the man is not in his house,
On the day of the full moon, he will return to his house. (Pr 7,19)

Ani : "I am smooth," she says to you everyday,
Prov : Her words are made smooth (Pr 2,16b; 7,5b)
And her palate is smoother than oil (Pr 5,3b)
Before the smooth tongue of the foreigner (Pr 6, 24b)
Through the smoothness of the lips, she tempts him (Pr 7,21)

Ani : while she has no witness.
Prov : In the twilight, as it became evening,
at the time of the night and the dark. (Pr 7,9)

Ani : You will stand there,
caught in a great deadly crime,
if she is married,
although you were ignorant.
A human being is saved from each crime,
except this alone.
Prov : Just like a bird that does not know that it is about its life,
hurries into the net. (Pr 7,23)
One does not despise the thief who steals in order to fill his mouth
because he is hungry.
And when caught, he replaces seven-fold, and gives the whole
fortune of his house.
But the adulterer has no mind, he who does it is a destroyer of his
own life. (Pr 6,30-32)

It is obvious that the similarities listed above are tortuous, and even Quack himself admits twice that the similarities are indirect.[113] The portrayal of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is more complex than this short maxim in Ani, in terms of quantity. The comparison shows that the Proverbs text does not follow the lines of this maxim in sequence. Besides, the similarities are simply based on probably similar words or ideas which occur in both texts. In the first line, Ani warns against the woman who travels and is not known in the city, while Proverbs warns of the ethnic 'foreigner' in the community. In the second line, Ani cautions against making eyes at the woman in secret, but Proverbs warns against being attracted to the eyelashes of the woman. The third line of Ani is a vetitive while Proverbs is a rhetorical question, and the former expresses the

[113] Quack, p. 212.

illegitimacy of the affair, while the latter only questions the value of the relationship with the woman. The fourth line of Ani expresses the secrecy and deep-seated motivation of the woman while the descriptions of depths in Prov. 23.27 are euphemisms for graves. In the fifth line, the woman seduces by referring to her smooth body while the woman in Proverbs makes no such claims, and it is the teacher who warns against her seductive speech. The sixth line of Ani is about the woman making her seductive moves when there is no witness, but the context of Prov. 7.9 has the teacher as the witness to the scene of temptation by the woman. In the last comparison, Ani depicts the possibility of being caught in the deadly consequence of adultery because the offender was ignorant that she was married, while Prov. 7.23 is about the entrapment of death led on by the woman, rather than the fear of being caught, and in Prov. 6.30-32 the adulterer is aware of the marital status of his lover.

Quack's conclusion from the above analysis is that the author of Proverbs knows of a Canaanite version of the Ani text and re-works it.[114] In order to appreciate Quack's proposition, it is incumbent to know his presuppositions in his interpretation of the book of Proverbs. Earlier in his work, he argues for the hermeneutical principle that when a text has been found to be obscure even in its own culture, one should look beyond its cultural context for a similar text to understand it, providing it fulfils the condition permitted by the historical dating in the transmission of these texts.[115] To Quack, since the figure of the Foreign Woman has proven to be obscure because scholars such as R.J. Clifford have resorted to foreign traditions to interpret her,[116] she can only be accurately interpreted by this hermeneutical principle. Incidentally, the Instruction of Ani fulfils the historical dating for transmission and to him there are sufficient similarities in the texts to qualify for this theory to work. Therefore, Clifford's interpretation of the Foreign Woman as the mythological goddess of the ancient NE must be abandoned because in the Instruction of Ani lies the skeleton pointing to the origin of the Foreign Woman.

The problem with Quack's hypothesis is that it fails to evaluate whether or not the Foreign Woman in Proverbs is culturally obscure in the OT before having his hermeneutical principle applied. Quack simply bases his judgement on any biblical scholar whom he chooses to disagree with. He omits a fair debate with the other scholars who insist on an Israelite context for the Foreign Woman, for example, Gemser,

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[114] Quack, p. 213.
[115] Quack, p. 206.
[116] Quack, p. 213; in reference to the commentary by Clifford, *Proverbs*.

Humbert, Snijders and Toy. Therefore, Quack's conclusion is unfounded. The similarities which he has claimed in his own words as 'indirect', are in fact a conglomeration of a messy puzzle from various clauses in Proverbs 1-9 and 23.27 to fit into the lines of the Instruction of Ani. The citations of the lines from Proverbs above do not portray the same meaning as the lines in the maxim. Both texts are meaningful only in their own contexts, purpose and culture. Similarly, while this maxim is meaningful to the overall structure and content of the Instruction of Ani, the warnings against the Foreign Woman are meaningful in the book of Proverbs and the Hebrew scriptures.

The attempts to understand the OT texts and the meaning of Hebrew words through foreign evidence as our discussion has shown, assume that the ancient NE is a single, monotonous entity whereby historically, whether in diachronic or chronologic terms it is constant, and also, in terms of civilisation, culturally static. Consequently, such attempts not only undermine the context of the OT, but also of the ancient NE civilisation. Therefore, these attempts, with their quest of 'international wisdom', and their treatment of the book of Proverbs as some foreign work, essentially alien to the OT, and especially their consequent attempts to define the meaning of Hebrew words on the basis of non-Hebrew texts, without reference to the normal Hebrew meanings, are unnecessary and unfounded.

Section Conclusion

The study we have made in this section confirms that in the OT, the use of נכר is essentially tied up with ideas of 'foreignness', and זר is a flexible term used to denote the sense of 'otherness', which is totally dependent on the context for its specific referent. When both terms are used in conjunction, they essentially refer to the 'foreigner' because נכר provides the determinant for the context. We also conclude that the OT's idea of 'foreignness' is not bound by geographical proximity or notions of the modern definitions of 'nationhood', but it is essentially tied up with ideas of 'ethnicity'.

However, in re-examining the influential works of Humbert, Snijders and Lang, we find that none of them seem to have arrived at the same conclusions as we have. Boström however does. But although he takes the lexical contexts and occurrences in the OT seriously, he finally bases his interpretation of the Foreign Woman on his reading of Prov. 7 in the framework of cultic contexts, instead of the OT contexts. As for Humbert, he simply bases his argument on the insistence that the passages of the Foreign Woman have to do with adultery. His reading of Proverbs 1-9 is made before his lexical studies

of the occurrences of נכר and זר in the OT. Snijders, on his part, simply asserts all the way that ideas of 'nationalism' are not present in the OT, and assumes that the word has the same connotation as 'ethnicity', and therefore that נכר has nothing to do with the meaning of 'foreignness', but rather 'outsideness'. He then links the concept of 'outsideness', with the idea of social exclusion, and finally adds to the idea the reason for the exclusion. Thus, נכריה of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is a 'social outsider' because she is promiscuous. Lang assumes an international context for his study on נכר. He does not consider the OT context as primary, notwithstanding taking the occurrences of נכר with utmost importance. All these scholars, as we have re-examined them, in fact, either do not consider the lexical occurrences of the two terms in the OT seriously, nor the contexts of the OT as crucial to the interpretation of the text.

As we have seen in our lexical study, frequent occurrences of the feminine נכרי are found in Proverbs 1-9, 1 Kgs 11, and Ezra-Nehemiah, of which Nehemiah forms a direct link between the texts of 1 Kgs 11 and Ezra. This phenomenon should be taken seriously, and the occurrences of נכריה in Proverbs 1-9 can and will be studied in the contexts of these OT texts, in the chapters to follow.

Chapter Two

'Foreignness' and the 'Foreign Wives' in Early Post-Exilic Texts

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While scholars find some different meanings and sense for נכריה such as social exclusion or moral status, it is difficult to ignore the strong evidence from other OT usage that it indicates 'foreignness' in some specific way. One of these usages, which occur more frequently than anywhere else, is that of the 'foreign woman' in Ezra-Nehemiah, who plays a key role in the events following the return of the Jews from exile. It seems highly probable that those events would shape the understanding of a 'foreign woman' in any later Jewish literature, and therefore, a closer study of this usage is extremely important.

2.1. The Problem of 'Foreign Wives' in Ezra

Ezra 9-10 is set in the precincts of the Temple, and describes how, after the leaders complained to Ezra concerning the intermarriages which have taken place among the priests and the leaders with the נשים נכריות, who are of the 'peoples of the land', Ezra immediately took on the posture of mourning in repentance and fasting, inducing the leaders to hatch the plan of marshalling the whole community to make a covenant to divorce the 'foreign wives' and banish their children. The episode ends with a long list of the names of the priests who have committed the offense and the presentation of guilt offerings by them in the Temple.

The term נשים נכריות does not occur at all until the second half of the episode, where it is equated with another term, 'peoples of the land' (עמי הארץ, 10.2, 11). The episode started with the accusation that the leaders of Israel have intermarried with the daughters of the 'peoples of the lands' (עמי הארצות), with their abominations of the Canaanite nations and those of the Ammonites, Moabites, and Egyptians.

> Ezra 9.1-2
> **1** After these things had been done, the leaders approached me saying, "The people of Israel, the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the

lands (עמי הארצות) with[117] their abominations from the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, and the Egyptians and the Amorites.[118]
2 For they have taken their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, causing the holy seed to be mixed with the peoples of the lands. The leaders and their subordinates have led in the way in these faithless acts.

Ezra 9.11-14
11 … which you have commanded by your servants, the prophets, saying, "the land which you are entering to possess, it is an unclean land, with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands (עמי הארצות), with their abominations. They have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness.
12 Now, do not give your daughters to their sons, and do not take their daughters for your sons and never seek their peace or good welfare, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever."
13 After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and great guilt, since you, our God, have punished us less than our iniquities deserved, and have given us a remnant as this,
14 shall we again break your commands and and intermarry with the peoples who commit these abominations? Would you not be angry with us to the point of destruction until there is no remnant or survivor?

Ezra 10.2
Shecaniah, son of Jehiel, from the descendant of Elam, responded to Ezra saying, "We have broken faith with our God and have allowed the foreign wives who were from the peoples of the land (עמי הארץ) to live with us, but now there is hope inspite of this…

Ezra 10.11
Now, make confession to YHWH, the God of your fathers, and do his will: separate from the peoples of the land (עמי הארץ) and from the foreign wives.

The 'foreign wives' are expressed in relation to the concept of the 'peoples of the lands' in Ezra 9.1, 2 and 11; and the 'peoples of the land' in Ezra 10.2, 11. There is another term, עם הארץ which is found in Ezra 4.4, and the use of these terms in Ezra-Nehemiah probably deserves some clarification. In the rest of the OT, עמי הארץ always refer to foreigners, and they are used in the context in reference to the knowledge or recognition of God (for example, Deut. 28.10; Josh. 4.24 and Est. 8.17[119]). In Nehemiah, it is found in the statement of the covenant which the people have signed, that they will not intermarry with them, or do trade with them on the Sabbath (cf. Neh. 10.31, 32). עם הארץ, on the other hand, in an overwhelming majority of the occurrences, always refers to the people of Israel (for example, Lev. 20.2, 4; 2 Kgs 11.14; 16.15; *etcetera*), except

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[117] Reading ב instead of כ, see *BHS*.
[118] One copy of the Septuagint, 1 Esd. 8.66 has 'Edomites', see n. 128.
[119] Other references include: 1 Kgs 8.43, 44, 60; Ezek. 31.12; Zeph. 3.20; 1 Chron. 5.25; 2 Chron. 6.33; 32.19.

for a few occasions: Gen. 23.7, 12, 13 to the Hittites; Gen. 42.6 to those foreign to Egypt; Num. 14.9 to the Canaanites; and Ezra 4.4 to those 'foreign' to the returned community.

> Ezra 4.4 (NRSV)
> Then the people of the land (עם הארץ) discouraged the people of Judah, and made them afraid to build.

Apparently, by the Hellenistic period, it seems to have been used derogatively of farmers and the uneducated common people, whose observance of the law was careless.[120] H.G.M. Williamson believes that for the occurrence of Ezra 4.4, it is used with a significant purpose.[121] There, the term is used to contrast the הגולה 'returned exile community', and the עם־יהודה 'people of Judah', and it is identical to or associated with the 'adversaries of Judah and Benjamin' (4.1), brought in to settle the land of the exiled Northern kingdom during the time of the Assyrians (4.2).[122] This indicates that the עם־הארץ may have been perceived to consist both of those Judahites who were not exiled and of the non-native populations in the North, who had professed to be Yahweh worshippers, but were deemed by the prophets to be not 'true' worshippers (2 Kgs 17.24-41; Jer. 41.5; Ezra 4.1-4). It is here, in Ezra 4.4 that עם הארץ is used for the first time to discriminate between groups of Israelites and to associate one group with foreigners (albeit foreign worshippers of Yahweh).[123] Williamson also suspects that the term עמי הארצות ('peoples of the lands') has the same connotation when used in Ezra-Nehemiah.[124]

As for עמי הארצות, it only occurs in the post-exilic texts of Ezra-Nehemiah (Ezra 3.3; 9.1, 2, 11; Neh. 9.30; 10.29) and Chronicles (2 Chron 13.9; 32.13). In Neh. 9.30, it refers to the 'enemies' and 'adversaries' of the post-exilic community in the Persian

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[120] Solomon Zeitlin, 'The "Am Ha-aretz"', *JQR* 23 (1932), pp. 45-61. He also mentions that the usage resulted in class distinction and discrimination.
[121] H.G.M. Williamson, *Ezra, Nehemiah* (WBC, 16; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985), p. 131; cf. p. 46.
[122] In 2 Kgs 17 these people are not regarded as the descendants of Jacob, and although they attempt to worship Yahweh, they are syncretistic and idolatrous as well. The author of Kings is also always critical of the worship of Yahweh in the Northern kingdom after the division. They never seem to worship Yahweh as accurately and completely as they should, cf. 2 Kgs 17.24-41 and Jer. 41.5; see Williamson, p. 49.
[123] Aharon Oppenheimer is of the opinion that the derogatory use of עם־הארץ begins with Ezra 4.4, see A. Oppenheimer, *The 'Am Ha-aretz': A Study in the Social History of the Jewish People in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (trans. I.H. Levine; ALGHJ, 8; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1977), pp. 11-12, 83-84.
[124] Williamson, p. 131.

empire,[125] and it seems likely that the rest of the references, even including those in Chronicles,[126] might have the same reference. It is possible that this term is used as a slur for עמי הארץ and עם הארץ, to denote those 'foreign' to the worship of Yahweh.

> Neh. 9.30 (NRSV)
> Many years you were patient with them, and warned them by your spirit through your prophets; yet they would not listen. Therefore you handed them over to the peoples of the lands.

Hence, in the beginning of the episode, the Israelites are accused of marrying the daughters of the 'peoples of the lands'[127] who are abominable to Yahweh. They are described not only in the same terms as the list of the original inhabitants of the land, like those commonly found in the Pentateuch (for example, Gen. 15.19-21; Exod. 3.8), but also the Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians, which have no connection with the inhabitants of Israel's land. The former group had been famously known in the OT for their abominations which resulted in Yahweh causing them to be replaced by Israel, while the latter group seems to recall the prohibitions on admission to the congregation. Therefore, many commentators claim, more specifically, that this list in Ezra 9.1 is

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[125] J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 2000), p. 306.

[126] Mindful that the Chronicler has a tendency to interpret the historical account in his new context, 2 Chron. 13.39 evokes 1 Kgs 12.31, on the sin of the Northern kingdom, via Jeroboam's erection of the golden calves and installing priests for the cult, and the reference in 2 Chron 32.13 might have been understood to refer to those neighbouring peoples of Judah, this deduction can be reasonably assumed. See Sara Japhet, *I & II Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1993), pp. 23-27, 693.

[127] One of the questions which arises in the episode against intermarriages in Ezra-Nehemiah is why are only the 'foreign women' condemned but not the 'foreign men' who married the daughters of the Jewish community? Shaye Cohen replies this succintly, 'If Israelite men are incited by their foreign wives to abandon the worship of the true God, the result would be catastrophic; if Israelite women are turned astray, who would notice?' See S. Cohen, *The Beginnings of Jewishness: Boundaries, Varieties, Uncertainties* (Hellenistic Culture and Society, 31; Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), p. 266. It simply emphasises that the Yahwistic cult is dependent on the patriarchal system, for which its survival is threatened without its male gender. Blenkinsopp suspects that this episode contributes in some way to the adoption of the matrilineal principle in the second century CE, whereby an offspring of a gentile mother is considered a gentile, and the offspring of a Jewish mother regardless the ethnicity of the father, is a Jew. The first half of this principle is what Ezra tries to legislate and supposedly to have failed. See Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, p. 177. Solomon Zeitlin is of the opinion that the first half of the matrilineal principle was in operation since the time of Ezra. See S. Zeitlin, 'Offspring of Intermarriage', *Studies in the Early History of Judaism* (New York: Ktav; 1974), vol. II, pp. 418-24. However, according to the analyses of the Second temple period literature and after by Cohen, there is more evidence which proves the first half of the matrilineal principle was not in operation. See Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, p. 265.

derived from a combination of Deut. 7.1-6 and 23.4-9, and there seems little reason to doubt that Deuteronomy is the primary source for the text here.[128]

We shall return to discuss these Deuteronomic texts later, but it is noteworthy that the list is anachronistic, and probably refers deliberately as well to the lists elsewhere (for example, Gen. 15.19-21; Exod. 3.8, 17, 33.2, 34.11; Deut. 20.17; Judg. 3.5). Lemche is probably right to suggest that the list is given for its symbolic value.[129] Apparently, according to the priestly texts (especially Lev. 18.24-25), whatever is impure and polluted is beyond cleansing and repentance and must be removed, but if an Israelite is somehow contaminated, and he repents and makes restitution, he can be exempted from the punishment of removal (cf. Lev. 26.40-42). This is what underlies the divorce of the 'foreign wives' and the banishment of their children, because they are identified to be impure and inherently abominable to Yahweh, they are certainly beyond repentance, and they are only capable of imbuing contamination to the 'true Israelites'.[130] That is why in Ezra's prayer, he says that if they should continue to allow these impurities to remain among them, and to contaminate their holiness through the mixed marriages, Yahweh will indeed annihilate Israel completely (cf. Ezra 9.13-14).[131]

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[128] See Jacob M. Myers, *Ezra Nehemiah: Introduction, Translation and Notes* (AB, 14; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), p. 76. Williamson, p. 131. Blenkinsopp thinks that the list in Ezra 9.1 is also dependent on 1 Esd. 8.69 which seems to comply with it. On the other hand, the list in 1 Esdras does not have 'Ammonites' and 'Amorites'. For the first omission, Blenkinsopp thinks that 1 Esdras adopts Edomites instead. As for the second, he argues that 'Amorites' is usually left out in the standard list, and it never occurs lower than the third in order; see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, pp. 458-60.

[129] N. Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Lands: The Tradition of the Canaanites* (JSOTSup, 110; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), p. 84.

[130] David Janzen has recently presented a new theory, based on social-anthropological perspectives, that the divorce of foreign wives is an act of witch-hunting. In his analysis, the social conditions which lead to witch-hunting match those facing the early post-exilic community. They include weak internal integration and strong external boundaries causing a need from within to identify foreigners who are responsible for social ambiguities, so that through ridding itself of these foreigners, the group becomes strong within and more distinct from other groups without. As for the situation in Ezra 9-10, the foreign wives are the most natural targets for a witch-hunt. See D. Janzen, *Witch-hunts, Purity and Social Boundaries: The Expulsion of the Foreign Women in Ezra 9-10* (JSOTSup, 350; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002). Throughout his theory, he emphasises that the texts in Ezra do not blame the נשים נכריות, but the blame rests on those who allow them to remain among them. However, I think it is extremely difficult for anyone to draw a line of distinction between 'blaming' and 'condemning'. The language used of the 'foreign wives' is overtly 'condemning'. It just recalls one of William Shakespeare's sayings, 'Condemn the fault and not the actor of it?' (*Measure for Measure* Act ii, scene 2). It seems that the texts of Ezra do not only blame those who allowed the נשים נכריות to remain, but also pinpointed the fault on the practices of the נשים נכריות.

[131] Williamson, therefore, believes that the context is about religious practice, hence it is religious purity at stake and has nothing to do with 'race'; see Williamson, p. 132.

There are many scholars who suspect that cultic purity is not the only motive for the removal of the foreign wives and their children. The promise of land inheritance for the 'true Israel' (9.12), the penalty of confiscation of 'movable property' (רכוש), and the threat of the disqualification of *golah* membership (10.8) for those who would not attend the meeting to dissolve the mixed marriages, are sufficient hints that economic gain is involved. Apparently, the claim that the land continues to belong legitimately to the *golah* has endured since the exile. Ezek. 13.9 mentions the כתב בית ישראל 'record of the house of Israel', in which the removal of names from this book is equivalent to not having the right to return to the land.

> Ezek 13.9 (NRSV)
> My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations; they shall not be in the council of my people, nor be enrolled in the register of the house of Israel (כתב בית ישראל), nor shall they enter the land of Israel; and you shall know that I am the Lord GOD.

So a record is kept of the names of those who were exiled, and it becomes an important record for validating the property-claims of those exiled. During the exilic period, the debate concerning who constituted the 'true Israel' is on-going. Those who are not exiled and claimed the land as theirs are severely condemned by the prophets (cf. Jer. 23; Ezek. 11.14-21). In Ezra-Nehemiah, the members of the *golah* are also verified by records known as the כתבם המתיחשים 'register of genealogies' (Ezra 2.62; Neh. 7.64) or ראשי אבתיהם והתיחשם 'genealogies' (Ezra 8.1). Whatever the nature of these records, they apparently served to identify several groups: (1) those who are members of the *golah*; (2) the legitimate priesthood; and (3) the people with legitimate rights to claim the land. As it is thus fixed, membership of the *golah* community is non-transferable, making the נשים נכריות and their children illegitimate regardless of whether they are Yahwists or not.

The heavy penalty issued for those who would not attend the meeting and adhere to the prescription is an important clue that the *golah* community demands sovereignty over the people and their possessions. It was customary in the ancient NE that, if a divorce was initiated by the husband when the wife was not at fault, the husband would return the full dowry, as well as compensation.[132] If there were minor children involved,

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[132] See Raymond Westbrook, *Property and the Family in Biblical Law*, (JSOTSup, 113; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), pp. 142-55; and Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Peabody, Massachussets: Hendrickson, 1996), pp. 89-94, 147, for the Israelite

they would remain in the care of the mother until the end of their childhood, when they would return to their father's house. Those children would maintain full rights to the inheritance of their father. In Ezra, however, the consequence of divorce is very different: the children are banished from their fathers, and their rights to paternal inheritance are officially cancelled out. Even though we do not know precisely what laws concerning divorce applied generally in early post-exilic Israel, it is clear that this legislation is extreme and probably untypical. If the husband refuses to divorce his 'foreign' wife, moreover all the movable properties belonging to them, which may include his wife's dowry, become confiscated. On top of that, if his rights as a *golah* member are lost, it would imply that he lose any claim to ownership of his property. The offender is thus left totally bankrupt if he does not comply. On the other hand, if he complies, he retains all rights to his properties, which probably give him the means to compensate his divorced wife and banished children. In this way, both spouses retain some economic gain in the transaction. The penalty issued leaves the offender no better choice but to comply.

Furthermore, the particular attention paid to members of the priesthood who committed this sin, and their sacrifice of guilt-offerings (Ezra 10.18, 19) hints at the anxiety of the *golah* community to ensure that the control of the Temple remains in the hands of 'true Israel' and not 'foreigners'. Blenkinsopp is surely right to believe that what Ezra recommended, and tried to enact as law for the official recognition of endogamous marriages did not succeed.[133] The abrupt ending of this episode, and the continuation of intermarriages at the time of Nehemiah, who does not recall the covenant made in Ezra 9-10, nor enforce divorce for the offenders caught, indicates that Ezra's campaign has been halted.

Summarily, we see in the book of Ezra, the 'foreign wives' as first associated with the 'peoples of the lands' who are the abominable autochthonous Canaanite nations and must be annihilated according to the Law, as well as the Ammonites, Moabites and Egyptians who have been forbidden admission into the congregation, and for whom the intention is to identify them as those who are of the non-*golah* community. Then they are called the נשים נכריות, in association with the term 'peoples of the land', to denote those

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contexts. It may be noteworthy that according to Babylonian law, the husband who divorces his wife without grounds loses the custody of his children and is stripped of his property; in R. Westbrook, *Old Babylonian Marriage Law* (*AfO*, 23; Horn, Austria: F. Berger, 1988), p. 85.

[133] Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, p. 201.

who do not recognise and know Yahweh as God. Since these 'foreign wives' are the cause of the contamination, they and their children must be removed from the *golah* community. Their removal, apparently, also implies economic gain on the part of the *golah* community at large, as well as autonomy of the Temple for the priestly class.

2.2. The Problem of 'Foreign Wives' in Nehemiah

We will now look at the problem of intermarriage in Nehemiah. There, it seems that the problem is only localised at a place probably near to the Philistine borders on the west coast. Intermarriage is not the major problem, but constitutes part of Nehemiah's campaigns to purge everything 'foreign' from the people and the land (cf. Neh. 13). Nehemiah's נשים נכריות also have minor children and he identifies them as women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab:

> Neh. 13.23-29
> **23** Also, in those days, I saw Judahites who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, (and) Moab.
> **24** And their children spoke half-Ashdodite, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but the language of the people.
> **25** And I contended with them and cursed them, and I beat some of the men, and I pulled out their hair, and I made them swear an oath by God, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons or take their daughters for your sons and yourselves.
> **26** Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? Yet among many nations there was no king like him, who was beloved of his God; and God made him king over all Israel. Nevertheless foreign women caused even him to sin.
> **27** Should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by allowing these foreign women to remain?"
> **28** And one of the sons of Jehoiada, the son of Eliashib, the high priest, was the son-in-law of Sanballat the Horonite, and I drove him away from me.
> **29** Remember them, O my God, for they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priest and the Levites.

It seems that the inclusion of Ammon and Moab in this episode is probably secondary, as the MT lacks the conjunction *waw* after Ashdod, and has been added later to recall Neh. 13.1-3, where the people are reminded of Deut. 23.4 so that they would separate themselves from the 'foreigners'.

> Neh. 13.1-3 (NRSV)
> **1** On that day they read from the book of Moses in the hearing of the people; and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God,
> **2** because they did not meet the Israelites with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them-- yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.

> **3** When the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent.

Nehemiah is outraged by the situation of intermarriage because 'half of the children spoke Ashdodite'.[134] If the references to the Ammonites and Moabites are not secondary, Ashdodite is probably singled out because it was at least similar to Hebrew.[135] The point, though, is not really the nature of the language, and many scholars believe that the purpose of the reference is to emphasise that these women are actually 'foreign', and that they are teaching their children a foreign language, culture and way of life.[136] Consequently, the children would not be able to learn the Judean language or participate in its cult.

In that case, of course, the other half of the children from the mixed marriages could speak Judean, which rather undermines Nehemiah's point. In response to this problem, André Lemaire, has argued that the usual translation of v. 24, ובניהם חצי מדבר אשדודית, as 'half the children spoke Ashdodite' is incorrect.[137] He proposes, rather, 'the children spoke half-Ashdodite', and believes that the language spoken was 'Ashdod-Judean'.[138] In that case, the issue becomes not that some of the children were unable to speak the Judean language, but that none of them could speak the language in the way which Nehemiah regarded as normative. Those who had been exiled were, of course, the educated and affluent, for the most part. This group had a strong motive to preserve their language, possibly in a somewhat artificial way. Lemaire argues that, by the end of the Iron Age II period in Palestine itself, it would have been difficult to differentiate between the spoken Philistine, Phoenician and Hebrew languages, such was the extent of the economic and cultural assimilation between the neighbouring groups throughout their histories. Those who were not exiled probably spoke, therefore, a contextualised and localised form of Hebrew different from that of the diaspora, and the distinction between half-Ashdodite and Judean is made to emphasise the purity of a

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[134] According to the Bible translations as well as those by commentators: see Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, p. 361; Williamson, pp. 397-98; and Myers, p. 216.
[135] Williamson, pp. 397-98 and Myers, p. 216.
[136] Also, Blenkinsopp, *Ezra-Nehemiah*, p. 363.
[137] André Lemaire, 'Ashdodien et Judéen à L'èpoque Perse: Ne 13,24', in K. van Lerberghe and A. Schoors (eds.), *Immigration and Emigration within the Ancient Near East* (Festschrift E. Lipiński; OLA, 65; Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters en Departement Oriëntalistiek, 1995), pp. 153-63.
[138] Indeed as Lemaire pointed out, חצי sits uncomfortably as a substantive in this position, and in fact חצים would have been expected, as in Zech. 14.8; Neh. 4.10, 15 (or as one copy of the manuscript has it, cf. *BHS*). And if חצי must be substantive, it would have preceded בניהם. In

language and tradition from one that is 'mixed'. The נשים נכריות may not have been distinctive Ashdodites, but perhaps members of a broader cultural mix in the Palestinian 'hotpot.'

This account in Nehemiah gives us another perspective on the nature of the ethnic origin of נשים נכריות, different from Ezra's account. In the latter text, as we have seen above, the נשים נכריות are associated with the concept of the 'peoples of the lands', who are 'polluted foreigners', and in Nehemiah, they are more specifically, those who could not speak like the *golah* community. In the end, both Ezra and Nehemiah sing to the same tune when it comes to determining the legitimacy of membership. It is the *golah* community versus the non-*golah* community. In Nehemiah, this is further confirmed when he considers Sanballat and the others to be נכר (13.28), who must be banished from the Temple precincts and the community for they have somehow contaminated the priesthood and any association with these people must be cleansed (13.29-30).

The 'Foreign Wives' and the Deuteronomic Prohibitions

Nehemiah's account also gives us some interesting links concerning the 'foreign wives' when he likens them to the 'foreign wives' of King Solomon, by citing 1 Kgs 11.1-4 as an object lesson for the *golah* community.[139] In fact, as we will see, the list in 1 Kgs 11, actually draws on the Deuteronomic prohibitions, like Ezra 9.1, and together they form the pre-text for Ezra-Nehemiah.

> 1 Kgs 11.1-2:
> **1** King Solomon loved many foreign women: the daughter of Pharoah, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian and Hittite women,[140]
> **2** from the nations which Yahweh had said to the sons of Israel, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you, for they will surely incline your heart to follow after their gods," Solomon clung to these in love.

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contrary, if חצי is taken to be an adverb, which is singular and agrees with the singular verb מדבר, although its position seems to be a little awkward, is possible.

[139] It can be reasonably assumed that Deuteronomy and the books of Kings predates the composition of Ezra-Nehemiah. One of the reasons is the dependence on Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic language and themes in Ezra-Nehemiah. See Williamson, pp. xxxix, 399; See also, for the dating of the composition of the books of Kings, John Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 3rd edn, 1977), pp. 6-9; Morderchai Cogan, *I Kings: A New Translation and Commentary* (AB, 10; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 96-97. For a brief and concise summary of the debate on the date of composition, see Steven W. Holloway, 'Kings, Book of 1-2', *ABD* vol. IV, pp. 69-83 (71-73).

[140] *BHS* makes several notations on this list: apart from some corrections of the vowel pointings, 'daughter of Pharaoh' is deemed to be added; note that the Septuagint adds 'Amorite women' at the end of the list.

Although 1 Kgs 11.2 claims that the list is of those people from the nations that Yahweh had commanded Israel not to intermarry, a closer examination of it shows that besides the Sidonians and Hittites, who might be somehow lumped into the same group of the Canaanite nations in some earlier list (cf. Gen. 10.18), there is no law against intermarriage with the 'Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites and the Edomites'. There are only two texts in the Law which ban intermarriage, namely Exod. 34.11-16 and Deut. 7.1-6, yet the lists there are specifically directed only against the Canaanite nations:

> Exod. 34.11
> Take heed what I command you today, see I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.
>
> Deut. 7.1
> When YHWH the Lord your God brings you into the land that you are to enter and possess, and he drives away many nations before you: the Hittites, the Girgashites, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, seven nations more mightier and stronger than you,

Of the other four nations which dominate the list in 1 Kgs 11, three are also found in Ezra's list;[141] the additional two in Nehemiah's list of 'foreign wives' are from another Deuteronomic text, which prohibits admission to the congregation, that is, Deut. 23.4-9:

> Deut. 23.4-9
> **4** No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter into the assembly of YHWH, even to the tenth generation, they shall not enter the into the assembly of YHWH forever.
> **5** For the reason that they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because he hired against you, Balaam, son of Peor, from Pethor of the Aram River to curse you.
> **6** YHWH your God refused to heed Balaam, and YHWH your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because YHWH your God loves you.
> **7** You shall never seek their welfare or their good, for as long as you live.
> **8** You shall not abhor any Edomites for they are your kin. You shall not abhor any of the Egyptians for you were aliens living in their land.
> **9** The children of the third generation born to them may enter the assembly of YHWH.

The way in which the lists are used in these texts are very telling. In the first place, the other lists where the Canaanite nations occur in the Pentateuch (for example, Exod. 23.23-24; Deut. 11.30-12.3; 20.16-18), occur in contexts where Israel is instructed to annihilate these peoples and destroy their cults completely. Shaye Cohen explains that the purpose of these commands has to do with geographical proximity, and that they

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[141] In the list of nations in Ezra 9.1, Egypt, Moab, Ammon is in the reverse order to the list in 1 Kgs 11.1.

were written from the perspective of the settled people in the land of Israel.[142] The Canaanite nations named are assumed to be those original inhabitants of the land, whom Israel is to conquer and claim as their inheritance from Yahweh. More importantly, however, they posed a threat to the religious identity of Israel, which explains the command to not only destroy all their cults, but to annihilate their peoples. As for the Moabites and Ammonites, they are a little further distant from the land of Israel, and the threat they posed through religious influence and mixed marriages is not as high; nonetheless, history has deemed them to harbour evil intentions against Israel, and therefore, while it is not necessary to prohibit mixed marriages with these people specifically, the prohibition comes in the form of admission to the congregation in Deut. 23.4-7. Likewise, for the Egyptians and Edomites, of whom reservations are made for the fourth generation (cf. vv. 8-9).[143]

However, the Deuteronomistic Historian[144] (DtrH hereafter) interprets the Deuteronomic prohibitions differently. He considers all these prohibitions to be equivalent to Yahweh's command against intermarriage to 'foreign wives', in particular. It seems very possible that a further prohibition against intermarriage, found in Exod. 34.11-16, is another source for the way he re-interprets the Deuteronomic prohibitions:

Exod. 34.11-16
11 Take heed what I command you today, see I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites.
12 Take heed not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land which you are entering, or they will be a snare among you.
13 You shall tear down their altars, smash their pillars and cut down their Asherahs.
14 For you will not bow down to another god, because Yahweh whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.
15 You shall not make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, someone will invite you and you will eat of the sacrifice.
16 For you will take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters will prostitute themselves after their gods, and they will cause your sons to prostitute themselves after their gods.[145]

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[142] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, p. 243.
[143] It is also possible that the lists are linked to traditional understandings of the relationships between Israel and certain nations, as reflected in the Genesis accounts of family relationships.
[144] 'Deuteronomistic Historian' in this thesis is used as a convenient terminology to refer to the authors of the books Joshua, Judges, 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings. This labelling is essentially for the sake of convenience; I am aware of the complexities related to this term. See Steven L. McKenzie, 'Deuteronomistic History', *ABD* vol. II, pp. 160-68.
[145] Martin Noth believes that this text is characteristic of the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic writings; see M. Noth, *Numbers: A Commentary* (trans. James D. Martin; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1968), pp. 261-62.

This prohibition draws attention in particular to the daughters of 'foreigners'.[146] For the DtrH of Kings, these provide more than sufficient proof that 'foreigners' in general are dangerous and in particular, that 'foreign women' who seek marriage relationships with Israel have the potential to seduce and corrupt Israel into apostasy.

It is from this Deuteronomistic idea that Ezra and Nehemiah draw their policies. Together, when these authors claim that what they say is 'according to the Law', they have linked intermarriages of their own time with the situation perceived to have existed at the time of the conquest. For the book of Deuteronomy, all foreigners are to be viewed with suspicion, as they pose a threat to the religion of Yahweh, and provoke the sins which Israel will later be punished by exile (cf. Deut. 8.19-20; 12.29-13.18; 16.21-17.7; 18.9-13; 28.36-37, 64-68). Ezra-Nehemiah pick up this motif in a different way, since by their time, the Canaanite nations, (like the Ammonites and the Moabites) no longer existed in the land.[147] These references are, therefore, evocative but anachronistic. In Ezra-Nehemiah, a 'new' Israel is apparently being defined over and against the 'people of the land', who are associated with the 'foreigners' of Deuteronomy and 1 Kgs 11. This confuses the issue of ethnicity and 'foreignness'; although the people, in fact, are closely related, they are being classified as 'foreign' because they do not belong to the group defined as 'Israelite' by the *golah* community.

2.3. The Problem of 'Foreign Wives' in Malachi

The issue of mixed marriages is also addressed in another post-exilic writing – the book of Malachi, although a superficial reading of the text does not seem to elucidate the issues involved in the passage, or how they are related, if at all to Ezra-Nehemiah.

Mal. 2.10-16
10 Have we not all one father? Has not one God created us? Why then do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our fathers?

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[146] The warning against participating in sacrifices to foreign gods as a pretext for intermarriage alludes to the Baal Peor incident in Num. 25, where the Moabite and Midianite women were blamed for the apostasy which resulted in a catastrophic slaying of Israelites involved in the offence, as well as the annihilation of the Midianites (cf. Num. 31). See Noth, p. 196; Milgrom, *Numbers*, p. 477; Baruch Levine, *Numbers: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 4A; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1993), pp. 279-303.
[147] Lemche argues that the list of Canaanite nations was no longer in existence before Israel even came on the scene. These nations are therefore, an imaginary 'opponent' made up to be blamed for the sins of Israel. Lemche, *The Canaanites and Their Lands*, pp. 154-55; 164-69.

11 Judah has been faithless, and an abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of YHWH which he loves, and has married the daughter of a foreign god.
12 May YHWH cut off anyone who does this – the one who incites, and the one who answers from the tents of Jacob, and the one who brings an offering to YHWH of hosts.
13 And this you do also: covering with tears on YHWH's altar, weeping and groaning. There is no longer a turning to the offering and accepting with favour from your hand.
14 And you say, "On what grounds?" Because YHWH witnessed between you and the wife of your youth, whom you have broken faith with, and she is your companion, the wife of your covenant.
15[148] Has he not made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring? So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.
16 "Because you should hate divorce," says YHWH, the God of Israel. "For he covers violence upon his garment", says YHWH of hosts. So guard yourself in your spirit and do not break faith.

The situation envisaged in Malachi by commentators is one in which the people of Judah have divorced their original spouses ('the wife of your youth') in order to re-marry, perhaps for economic advantage, women resident in the land.[149] On that reading, the passage would seem to tie in with the account in Ezra-Nehemiah, and perhaps, as the commentators have assumed, offer at least a partial explanation for the existence of mixed marriages on a large scale. There is one major obstacle to such a reading, however, as it was not necessary for a Jewish man of the time, so far as we are aware, to divorce his first wife in order to marry another.[150] Taking the lead from וזאות שנית תעשו in v. 13, and granting that the prophecy in Malachi is directed to the priests in general,

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[148] I have adapted the NIB for the translation of vv. 15-16, in view of the textual difficulties (see *BHS* and the discussion below).
[149] For commentators, see Myers, pp. 77, 84-85; Beth Glazier-McDonald, *Malachi: The Divine Messenger* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987), pp. 81-120; and Andrew Hill, *Malachi: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 25D; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1998), pp. 241-43. Other scholars who make this assumption for their interpretations of Ezra-Nehemiah are, to name a few: Washington, p. 241; Blenkinsopp, 'The Social-Context of the So-called Outsider-Woman in Proverbs I-IX', p. 471; and *Ezra-Nehemiah*, pp. 175-79. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*, pp. 235-37; Williamson, p. 160. Also, I concur with most scholars that the book is composed sometime between the construction of the temple and the mid-fifth century BCE. See Hill, pp. 51-84; and Glazier-McDonald, pp. 14-18.
[150] Another obstacle, where historical evidence is lacking, is the assumption that the returned community is economically disadvantaged compared to those who were in the land. If the returned community arrive on the land with the Persian authorities who had successfully conquered the Babylonians, one would naturally assume that the returned community had the upper hand to dispossess the subdued, rather than to be submitted to poverty, as most scholars seem to have assumed. Also, it seems difficult to assume that there are many rich women of the land to marry and to bring along with them dowries including land and properties. For some of the debates concerning the social situation of the period, see Philip R. Davies (ed.), *Second Temple Studies*, vol. I: The Persian Period (JSOTSup, 117; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991).

there are two accusations of the priests' misdeeds addressed here rather than one and the same issue. Both issues are related to marriage, and are introduced in 2.10 as misdeeds, described by the term בגד, commonly used in the OT depicting separation of relationships, usually in marriage (for example, Exod. 21.8), and when used between Yahweh and Israel, denoting apostasy (for example, Jer. 3.20; Hos. 5.7; 6.7).[151] Malachi also classifies the two misdeeds as a profanement of the 'covenant of our forefathers'.

In the first accusation in 2.11-12, Malachi chides the priests for allowing Judah to commit the abominable sin of intermarriage, profaning the sanctuary of Yahweh. The term נכר בת־אל is unique in the OT. Beth Glazier-McDonald suggests that the term expresses the consequences of intermarriage.[152] Thus, when Judah marries a 'foreign woman', he is also joined to the foreign deity and cult, and therefore undermines Yahweh's sovereignship over Israel. However, Glazier-McDonald does not explain why נכר בת־אל is preferred to the simpler נשים נכריות. It seems more plausible to assume that Malachi places the emphasis on a 'foreign deity' because the term gives a more forceful polemic specifically against foreign worship, rather than just a 'foreign' origin or lineage. Malachi is not so much concerned with the legitimacy of a lineage to claim any inheritance, but with observing the laws of the covenant and performing the proper worship due to Yahweh. The sin of intermarriage is a breach of the covenant by Israel; she is worshipping foreign deities instead of Yahweh alone. Therefore, Malachi curses not only those who have committed the offence, but also those who have supported the marriages.

In the second accusation in 2.13-16, Malachi is outraged by the divorces of wives by the priests, and he also explains why Yahweh will not accept the priests' services with favour.[153] Malachi expresses marriage as a form of covenant in v. 14 – אשת בריתך. This term gives rise to a big debate among scholars because marriage in the actual practice of

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[151] See *BDB*, p. 93; Hans-Jurgen Zobel, 'בגד' *TDOT* vol. I, pp. 471-73 (471); Glazier-McDonald, pp. 84-86. Graham Ogden, 'The Use of Figurative Language in Malachi 2:10-16' *BT* 39 (1988), pp. 223-30.

[152] Glazier-McDonald, pp. 91-93. She also argues against the interpretation of 'goddess', for which some scholars have contended, a special meaning must have been intended, because Malachi could have simply used נשים נכריות if 'foreign women' were meant. See David L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 and Malachi: A Commentary* (OTL; Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster Press, 1995), 194, 198-200. He emends אשר אהב to read אשרה אהב 'He loves Asherah', arguing for the loss of ה through haplography. Cf. C.C. Torrey, 'The Prophecy of "Malachi"', *JBL* 17 (1898), 1-17 (4).

Israel is not regarded as a 'covenant'.[154] However, Malachi is speaking in prophetic language, where the relationship between Yahweh and Israel is depicted in terms of marriage, and when Israel has been unfaithful, she is depicted as the adulteress or the whoring wife (cf. Hosea, Jer. 2-3; Ezek. 16; 22). Although Malachi is dealing with the actual occasion of divorces among the priests, he employs the metaphorical language of marriage by equating it with a covenantal relationship like that of Israel's relationship with Yahweh so accentuating the gravity of the offence the priests have committed. The priests have not considered the consequences of their actions in preserving the purity of the priestly line nor probably, issues of patrilineality, or the affect on society at large. Malachi perceives the problem at the macro level, and he admonishes the priests to live up to their priestly duties which have been established by a covenant (2.4-5). He then goes on, apparently, to draw on the terms for marriage and procreation in Gen. 2, to explain how Yahweh desires them to produce godly offspring (v. 15).[155] Therefore, the priests must learn to hate divorce, for it is a serious crime against themselves if they do not (v. 16).[156]

What we have seen in Mal. 2.10-16 is therefore essentially two issues which are related to the subject of marriage. The first issue, Mal. 2.11-12, in particular, concerns the subject we are dealing at hand. While we have mentioned earlier that the association with foreign deity is emphasised in the term בת־אל נכר, it is also noteworthy that the 'foreign wives' of Ezra-Nehemiah are associated indirectly with non-Yahwistic cults.

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[153] The Law stipulates that the priests are prohibited from marrying women who had been divorced (Lev. 21.7), and the frequent divorces among the priests, probably resulted in some repercussion to the social life of the community.

[154] See Gordon Paul Hugenberger, *Marriage, as Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed, from the Persepective of Malachi* (VTSup, 52; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994). Although Hugenberger acknowledges the fact, he argues that because marriage is considered in the OT as a form of covenant in this text and in Prov. 2.17, it must therefore be regarded as such by the church.

[155] Taking the emendation שְׁאָר to שְׁאֵר, and understanding the words such as אחד, עשה and רוח as alluding to creation and procreation in Gen. 2, as suggested by W. Rudolph, 'Zu Malachi 2:10-16', *ZAW* 93 (1981), pp. 85-90.

[156] Taking שנא as an imperative, therefore following the Septuagint. See the discussion on this verse in Ralph L. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (WBC, 32; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1984), pp. 323-24. In the occurrences where בגד is followed by the preposition ב (cf. Exod. 21.8; Judg. 9.23; Isa. 33.1; Jer. 3.20; 5.11; 12.6; Lam. 1.2; Hos. 5.7; 6.7; Mal. 2.10), what follows after ב is usually the one upon which faithlessness is acted. Nonetheless, if ב can be understood as instrumental, as in 'with' for Mal. 2.14, then perhaps it is possible to understand the passage as dealing with the charge solely against intermarriage with the בת־אל נכר, who is also the 'wife of your youth', 'your companion' and 'wife of your covenant'. In which case, שנא and כסה in v. 16 would be taken as participles, as argued by Hill (pp. 249-51), and both verbs would be referring to the offender, because he refuses to divorce his wife, which Malachi admonishes him to do.

The references to their abominations in Ezra 9.1, and their pollutants in 9.11 are all terms associated with foreign worship as in the Deuteronomic texts mentioned earlier. Also, the citation of 1 Kgs 11.1-4 by Nehemiah in Neh. 13.26, bear the same contexts whereby the 'foreign wives' are associated with foreign cults. However, it is clear that for Ezra-Nehemiah, these associations are not prominent, rather, it is their link to the autochthonous peoples, and the 'foreigners' who are prohibited from having any relationship with Israel is emphasised.

Chapter Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how Ezra-Nehemiah is keen to present the 'foreign wives' as ethnically foreign, regardless of the actual racial origin of these women. And they do so by employing a new definition of the Jewish ethne – the *golah* community, while the non-*golah* community might have originally been Judahites themselves. Ezra (-Nehemiah) and Malachi deliberately evoke familiar OT language in connection with the issue. The wives in Ezra are identified with the women of the land in Deuteronomy, perhaps playing on a confusion of 'peoples of the land' with 'people of the land' to override any sympathy for them as Judahites or Yahwists. In Malachi, the language is not that of Deuteronomy, so much as that of prophetic literature. It is the theme of infidelity in Hosea and Jeremiah which is tied to the issue. Again, the actual ethnicity of the foreign women is rather passed over, by using the expression, 'daughter of a foreign god', which implies their non-membership of the Yahwistic community, but does not specify their actual origin.

The materials in Ezra-Nehemiah and Malachi indicate the importance of the 'foreign wives' issue, and illustrate the complexities of identifying just what 'foreignness' might mean in the early post-exilic period – but they all indicate that we need to go further back, into previous literature if we are to understand the resonance of the 'foreign woman'. It is the Deuteronomistic material which is principally evoked, and so that is what must be looked at in the next chapter.

Chapter Three

The Motif of 'Foreign Wives' in Deuteronomistic Literature

The issue of intermarriage in Ezra-Nehemiah and in Malachi raises many interesting historical questions about how ethnicity and foreignness were being defined, or re-defined, in the post-exilic community. For our purposes, though, one of the most significant features of the accounts is their reliance for justification upon allusions to earlier biblical material. In particular, we may note the references in Ezra-Nehemiah both to the Deuteronomic prohibitions against marrying into the 'peoples of the land', and to the DtrH's account of Solomon's 'foreign wives'. Although it manipulates it for its own purposes, the post-exilic literature seems to adopt, not create, an idea of the dangerous foreign woman, who leads Israelites into apostasy. In this chapter, we shall first look into the highlight of the DtrH depiction of 'foreign wives', Jezebel, and then trace how the features highlighted in her precipitate in the other depictions of 'foreign wives' throughout the books of Kings.

3.1. Queen Jezebel, the Archetypal 'Foreign Wife'

The OT includes some general accounts of foreign women who attempt, successfully or unsuccessfully, to seduce Israelite heroes, most notably Potiphar's wife and Delilah. It is interesting, with a view to our later examination of Proverbs, to note that their seductions were accomplished principally through speech. However, there is a more specific motif which runs through the books of Kings, in which foreign women-wives or mothers are associated with the apostasy of particular monarchs, and hence with the apostasy of the nation, which leads to its destruction. First and foremost, among the foreign wives in the books of Kings, none has received as much attention as Jezebel. Indeed, her name has entered the language: The Oxford English Dictionary defines Jezebel as 'a wicked scheming woman; (formerly often) a shameless painted woman'. At the same time, its synonym is listed as 'loose woman' and 'libertine'. Some modern scholars have been more sympathetic, suggesting that 'when she peered through her

lattice, she was framed',[157] and that her poor reputation is one of the most lasting literary coups of the DtrH. Furthermore, the MT's interpretation of her name 'Jezebel', as זְבֶל + אִי, meaning 'no excrement',[158] simply reflects a tendency to disparage foreign theophoric names.[159]

Surprisingly, information about Jezebel is limited, despite her notoriety. In 1 Kgs 16.31-33, she is introduced as the bride of Ahab, a marriage considered as superseding the evil committed by Jeroboam son of Nebat. The latter had been accused repetitively by the DtrH for erecting the golden calf, instigating the sin of idolatry in the Northern kingdom (cf. 1 Kgs 12.26-33; 16.3, 7, 26; 2 Kgs 10.29, 31; 2 Kgs 17.21), but here the DtrH compares the marriage of Ahab to Jezebel as a sin gravely greater than that of Jeroboam's. It is so, because the verses following state that Ahab worships Baal, builds a temple for him, and also erects the Asherah (1 Kgs 16.32). This recalls the intermarriages of Solomon – both kings married foreign wives who led them to worship foreign deities. This negative portrayal in the brief introduction of Ahab's marriage to his foreign princess made at the beginning of the account of Ahab's reign, anticipates worse which was to come.

In the next two places where Jezebel is mentioned most briefly, 1 Kgs 18.4, 13, she is portrayed as actively engaging to destroy all of Yahweh's prophets, and the mention of her name brings fear to all who are devoted to Yahweh. Surprisingly, those who fear her includes Elijah, who fled into the wilderness, fearing for his life when he received Jezebel's message that she promised to kill him (1 Kgs 19.1-2), despite the fact that he has successfully convinced the people that Yahweh is their God, and that they

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[157] Tina Pippin, 'Jezebel Re-Vamped', in Athalya Brenner (ed.), *A Feminist Companion to Samuel and Kings* (The Feminist Companion to the Bible, 5; Sheffied: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 196-206 (204).

[158] Her name, איזבל, might originally been derived from *–'ēy + z^{e}būl*, meaning 'Where is the Baal or the prince?' (a cry for the dry season in the Ras Shamra texts), or from *yš + z^{e}būl*, meaning 'Zebul exists'. Cf. Gray, p. 333. For the Ras Shamra texts, *UH* 49, III, 20-21 and IV, 40; and the English translation, see Michael D. Coogan, *Stories from Ancient Canaan* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978), pp. 75-115.

[159] For example, עַשְׁתֹּרֶת is a purposeful misvocalisation to allude to the noun of בֹּשֶׁת meaning 'shame' instead of its form *'aštart*, Astarte. In the other ancient NE literature, she is the Greek Astarte and Akkadian Ishtar. See John Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan* (JSOTSup, 265; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 128-50; and N. Wyatt, 'Astarte עשתרת', *DDD*, pp. 109-14.

have spontaneously responded in support of him by killing all of Jezebel's prophets (cf. 1 Kgs 18.20-40).[160] Perhaps, here is a foretaste of some exaggeration by the DtrH.

The story of Jezebel is undoubtedly shaped by ideological concerns, but is not completely fictional. Jezebel is a real person, a princess from a powerful city-state, and some bits ring true – for example, there was a temple for Baal in Samaria,[161] and therefore, it is not implausible that Jezebel had four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah feasting at her table daily (1 Kgs 18.19); there was also an altar on Carmel, and there may be echoes of other legends like the Menander story on how Ethbaal, a priest, successfully called down rain from a prolonged drought which won him his crown (C. *Ap*. I, 123).[162] Where we really see the DtrH's ideology at work is in its attribution of all the evil to Jezebel (1 Kgs 21.25-26):

> 1 Kgs 21.25-26
> **25** Surely there was no one like Ahab, who sold himself to do what was evil in the sight of YHWH, seduced by his wife, Jezebel.
> **26** He acted most abominably by going after idols, according to all that the Amorites had done, whom YHWH drove out before the sons of Israel.

The word used for 'seduced' in this verse is the hiphil of סות. It means 'entice, seduce, incite'.[163] Although its use occurs in morally neutral contexts at times, and between deity and man, when it is employed between men, 'it refers to suspicions or charges that someone has enticed or incited another'. Also, it is used in Deut. 13.6 to warn against a family or spouse or close friend who tries to seduce one into worshipping

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[160] Scholars have suggested all sorts of reasons to explain why Elijah is so afraid of Jezebel, and why Jezebel could not get Elijah killed but only send him a message of threat. See B.S. Childs, 'On Reading the Elijah Narratives', *Int* 34 (1980), pp. 128-37; and Janet H. Gaines, *Music in the Old Bones: Jezebel Through the Ages* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1999), p. 48.

[161] H. Jacob Katzenstein, *The History of Tyre: From the Beginning of the Second Millenium B.C.E. until the Fall of the Neo-Babylonian Empire in 539 B.C.E.* (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2nd rev. edn, 1997), p. 160. He believes that with the great wealth of Tyre and considering the influence of Tyrian architecture and culture on Samaria at that time, Jezebel must have arrived in Israel with a large entourage. This would not only have consisted of the prophets of Tyrian deities, but also engineers, craftsmen, artisans, builders, royal escorts and traders. The presence of a Baal temple in Samaria was therefore necessary for all these foreigners. Katzenstein also suggests that the arrival of the rich and powerful Tyrian princess must have had a great impact on not only the affluent of Israel, but also the people generally in terms of culture, economics and religion. See also, Yigael Yadin, 'The "House of Baal" of Ahab and Jezebel in Samaria, and that of Athalia in Judah', in Roger Moorey and Peter Parr (eds.), *Archaeology in the Levant: Essays for Kathleen Kenyon* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1978), pp. 127-35.

[162] Katzenstein, p. 152.

[163] 'סות', *HALOT* vol. II, p. 749.

other gods. Interestingly, the mention of Jezebel seducing Ahab in 1 Kgs 21.25 is the concluding word to the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21), where Jezebel for the first time plays a major role, with the very purpose of showing how evil she was, rather than her association with her foreign cults, although the next verse mentions it. It seems that the DtrH has an agenda for this usage – that Jezebel's moral state is also somehow related to her association with her cults. Similarly, Ahab's lure into her cult resulted in his participation of moral sins as in the case of Naboth's vineyard.

Jezebel, is therefore, the mastermind of all the evil committed by Ahab. She is the arch-enemy of Yahweh, while her husband, Ahab, is the weak-willed one who was corrupted by his powerful, foreign wife. The story starts with a sulking Ahab, who could not have the vineyard of Naboth that he coveted for some righteous reasons given by the devout Yahwist,[164] and refuses to eat his meal (1 Kgs 21.1-6). Jezebel, agitated by her husband's withdrawn disposition, takes matters into her own hands by plotting the murder of Naboth so that Ahab could have what he wanted (vv. 7-10), although it seems that Ahab is a willing participant as well (cf. v. 16). While the story of Naboth ends with a repentant Ahab, a remorse which comes too late to redeem its effects on his sons (vv. 27-29), Jezebel bore the brunt of the blame (vv. 25; cf. 2 Kgs 9.10).

Towards the end of Jezebel's life, the DtrH again reminds readers of her persecutions within the Yahwistic cult:

> 2 Kgs 9.7 (NRSV)
> You shall strike down the house of your master Ahab, so that I may avenge on Jezebel the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the LORD.
>
> 2 Kgs 9.22b (NRSV)
> "What peace can there be, so long as the many whoredoms and sorceries of your mother Jezebel continue?"

The DtrH gives the impression that Jezebel continues to dominate Israel with her persecutions of members of the Yahwistic cult as the worship of her foreign deities

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[164] See Alexander Rofé, 'The Vineyard of Naboth: The Origin and Message of the Story', *VT* 38 (1988), pp. 89-104. He argues that the story is fictional because all the details in the story do not add up. The problem with the claim on the land is an especially dubious issue. He believes that the story is late, and is composed in the post-exilic period to support the campaign against marrying foreign women, therefore contemporaneous to Ezra 9-10; Neh. 13 and Proverbs 1-9. With regard to resolving the problem of Naboth's claim that the land could not be sold, yet was claimed by Ahab upon the death of Naboth, see N. Habel, *The Land is Mine: Six Biblical Land Ideologies* (OBT; Augsburg: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 31; Gray, pp. 390-91; Cogan, pp. 477-78.

continues to flourish until the time of her grandchildren.[165] In the books of Kings, from Jezebel's entering Israel until the time of her departure, the DtrH does not fail to blame her for leading Israel into foreign worship, and for persecuting Yahwism and succeeding to seduce the king of Israel to become evil and morally depraved, willing to shed innocent blood. Upon closer scrutiny, the DtrH, in fact, not only blames Jezebel for the sins which Ahab committed, but also holds her culpable for the sins of the Northern kingdom and some of the most notorious Judahite kings, through her husband, Ahab.

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[165] In 2 Kgs 10.13, Jezebel is called a גבירה. The word occurs fifteen times in the OT (Gen. 16.4, 8, 9; 1 Kgs 11.19; 15.13; 2 Kgs 5.3; 10.13; 2 Chron. 15.16; Ps. 123.2; Prov. 30.23; Isa. 24.2; 47.5, 7; Jer. 13.18; 29.2) and its equivalents include 'lady', 'great lady' or 'mistress'; but when it occurs in the context of the royal house, it functions as a title, thus 'queen mother' has been used by most Bible translators. However, not all queen mothers are designated by this title. Specifically, only Maacah (1 Kgs 15.13), the Egyptian Queen Taphenes of Pharoah (1 Kgs 11.19), Jezebel (2 Kgs 10.13, in the words of the Judean king, Ahaziah and his relatives), and Nehushta, in the words of Jeremiah (Jer. 13.18). There are many differing opinions concerning the גבירה. G. Molin thinks that גבירה is an institution originating from the matriarchal system, like those of the Hittites, in 'Die Stellung der Gebira im Staate Juda', *TZ* 10 (1954), pp. 161-75. G.W. Ahlström thinks that the גבירה means more than just the queen mother. He believes that she has the authority equating to that of the king and basing his opinion on 1 Kgs 15.12, he further argues that she also has authority over the cultic affairs in the country. See G.W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion* (trans. E.J. Sharpe; Horae Soedeblomianae, 5; Lund: C.W.K. Gleerup, 1963), pp. 57-88. His latter theory has been much criticised because it is based only on one occurrence in the OT. Another work by N.A. Andreasen, 'The Role of the Queen Mother in Israelite Society', *CBQ* 45 (1983), pp. 179-94, develops Ahlström's earlier theory to propose that the גבירה serves as the counsellor to the king and mediator between the king and the people. A different perspective in examining the גבירה has been attempted by Zafrira Ben-Barak, 'The Status and Right of the Gĕbîrâ', *JBL* 110 (1991), pp. 23-34. Of all the queen mothers mentioned, she identifies those who have been called גבירה and those whom the OT has presented as of significant importance, for example, Bathsheba (1 Kgs 2.13-25); Hamuttal, as the mother of two kings (2 Kgs 23.31; 24.18) and mourned by Ezekiel (Ezek. 19); Nehushta (2 Kgs 24.8), who is mentioned immediately after King Jehoiachin (2 Kgs 24.15; cf. Jer. 13.18); and Athaliah (2 Kgs 8.18, 26; 11.1-16). She observes that they share a common background: they have sons who are not the first-born of the king yet they ascended the throne. With Bathsheba as the first example, they are responsible for their son's succession and the young kings must have honoured their mothers with special reverence. These successions also prove the capabilities of these women. Although I think Ben-Zarak has given a probable explanation and examination of the גבירה, there must still be reservations about her propositions because the OT does not accredit Bathsheba, Hamuttal and Athaliah as the גבירה. See also T. Ishida, *The Royal Dynasties in Ancient Israel* (BZAW, 142; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), pp. 155-61. The most accurate explanation is given by Nancy Bowen, 'The Quest for the Historical Gĕbîrâ', *CBQ* 64 (2001), pp. 597-618. She explains that the consistent use of the title for the queen mothers occurs only in situations where there is a very young king. Hence the title carries with it an equivalent authority to reign, probably on behalf of the minor king until he grows up as in the case of Asa and his grandmother, Maacah.

Table 3.1: The Reasons for the Downfall of Israel, Jehoram, Ahaz and Manasseh

Israel - 2 Kgs 17.8	**Jehoram - 2 Kgs 8.18**	**Ahaz - 2 Kgs 16.3**	**Manasseh - 2 Kgs 21.2, 3**
	וילך בדרך מלכי ישראל	וילך בדרך מלכי ישראל ...	
וילכו בהקות הגוים אשר הוריש יהוה מפנה בני ישראל		כתעבות הגוים אשר הוריש יהוה אתם מפנה בני ישראל :	... כתעבות הגוים אשר הוריש יהוה מפנה בני ישראל :
ומלכי ישראל אשר עשו :	כאשר עשו בית אחאב ...		... כאשר עשה אחאב מלך ישראל ...
	And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel	And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel …	
And they walked in the statutes of the nations which YHWH drove out before the sons of Israel		according to the abominations of the nations which YHWH drove out before the sons of Israel.	… according to the abominations of the nations which YHWH drove out before the sons of Israel.
and (in the ways) the kings of Israel did.	according to what the house of Ahab did …		… according to the deeds of Ahab the king of Israel

The table above shows that the DtrH gives the same reasons for the downfall of Ahaz and Manasseh as those of Israel, the Northern kingdom. The first reason, 'and he walked in the way of the kings of Israel', is found in the judgement of Ahaz and Jehoram, with the latter specified to be 'according to the house of Ahab'.[166] Therefore, a suggestion is made here that the sins of Ahaz are related to those of Jehoram, whose antecedent is Ahab. Ahab's sins not only include those of Jeroboam, but are distinctive to the cult of Baal and Asherah, into which Jezebel led him (1 Kgs 16.30-31). Interestingly, the description 'according to the house of Ahab' is merged with 'the king of Israel' for Manasseh. And indeed, at several points the DtrH makes similar reference to the sins of Ahab and Manasseh: – first, both erected altars for Baal and Asherah (1 Kgs 16.32-33; 2 Kgs 21.3); secondly, their sins of idolatry are compared to those of the Amorites (1 Kgs 21.26; 2 Kgs 21.11); thirdly, just as Ahab shed innocent blood over the

[166] Hence, it could not have referred to the sin of Jeroboam, which is commonly said of the kings of Israel. Also, an almost similar expression is given for Ahaziah, 'and he walked in the way of the house of Ahab' in 2 Kgs 8.27.

cause of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21.19), Manasseh also is accused of shedding innocent blood (2 Kgs 21.16); fourthly, Yahweh's judgement of Manasseh is likened to the judgement of the house of Ahab in 2 Kgs 21.10-15, especially v. 13.[167]

As for the second reason, 'according to the abominations of the nations which Yahweh drove out before the sons of Israel' occurs in 1 Kgs 14.24; 2 Kgs 16.3 (Ahaz); 17.8 (Israel); and 21.2 (Manasseh). This adds Rehoboam to the list, who continues in all the foreign worship of Solomon, and officially sponsors the cult of Asherah (1 Kgs 14.24). The DtrH also notes several similarities between the sins of Manasseh and those of Israel, such as the building of high places (2 Kgs 17.9; 21.3) and altars to the worship of Baal, Asherah and the host of heaven (2 Kgs 17.16; 21.3); making their sons and daughters to pass through fire (2 Kgs 17.17; 21.6); and the practising of divination and sorcery (2 Kgs 17.17; 21.6). Looking at all of these sins, most of them occur randomly in relation to the other kings as well, except the worship of the host of heaven and the practice of divination and sorcery, which are particular only to Manasseh and Israel.[168] To these, the DtrH also adds that it was Israel which influenced Judah towards apostasy (2 Kgs 17.18).

Therefore, the sins of the two bad Judahite kings, Ahaz and Manasseh, are depicted for the most part in the same language as for the fall of the Northern kingdom, which also point to Ahab, as in Jehoram's account. All in all, Ahab is the source of the bad influence upon the Judean kings. However, as mentioned earlier, 1 Kgs 21.25 makes it clear that the real mastermind is essentially Jezebel, his foreign wife. The depiction of the seduction of a foreign wife to her Israelite husband, to corrupt him and cause him to apostatise can in fact be traced, not only in Jezebel's story, but also through the history of the Judean kings, and we shall explore the motif in the next section.

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[167] William M. Schniedewind, 'History and Interpretation: The Religion of Ahab and Manasseh in the Book of Kings', *CBQ* 55 (1993), pp. 649-61. He shows that the DtrH portrays a parallel model of Ahab and Manasseh.

[168] With the suggestion that the cause of the fall of the Northern kingdom is linked to the sins of Manasseh, it is not surprising that among all the evil kings of Judah, Manasseh suffered the most blame for his sins under the pen of the DtrH. Indeed, Manasseh's sins deserve vituperation (2 Kgs 21.10-15; 23.26-27; 24.3-4), but the fervent and unremitting efforts of Josiah (2 Kgs 23.1-25) to eliminate everything which aroused the wrath of Yahweh, albeit to no avail, distorts all expectations and logic. Baruch Halpern suggests that the sin of shedding innocent blood, which is laid upon Ahab, Manasseh and Jehoiakim, deserves as its consequence their removal from civilisation, hence the punishment of exile; see B. Halpern, 'Why Manasseh is Blamed for the Babylonian Exile: The Evolution of a Biblical Tradition', *VT* 48 (1998), pp. 473-514 (490-93).

3.2. 'Foreign Wives' and the Bad Judahite Kings

We have seen how Jezebel stands as the principal example of the 'foreign wives' motif, and this motif is in fact, found on a larger scale in King Solomon's harem in 1 Kgs 11.1-11 (which has been cited by Nehemiah).

1 Kgs 11.1-11 (NRSV)
1 King Solomon loved many foreign women along with the daughter of Pharaoh:
Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Sidonian, and Hittite women,
2 from the nations concerning which the LORD had said to the Israelites, "You shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you; for they will surely incline your heart to follow their gods"; Solomon clung to these in love.
3 Among his wives were seven hundred princesses and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart.
4 For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not true to the LORD his God, as was the heart of his father David.
5 For Solomon followed Astarte the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites.
6 So Solomon did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, and did not completely follow the LORD, as his father David had done.
7 Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites, on the mountain east of Jerusalem.
8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who offered incense and sacrificed to their gods.
9 Then the LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice,
10 and had commanded him concerning this matter, that he should not follow other gods; but he did not observe what the LORD commanded.
11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this has been your mind and you have not kept my covenant and my statutes that I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom from you and give it to your servant.

1 Kgs 11.1 specifies the ethnic origins of King Solomon's נשים נכריות: from the nations of Egypt, Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Sidon, and from the Hittites. The DtrH notes significantly that they are the very peoples whose women Yahweh prohibits Israel from marrying (v. 2).[169] Solomon's apostasy is shown as starting with the problem that he could not help loving the many foreign women, and collecting them in his harem. There are no further details given about the women in Solomon's harem, except some references to his Egyptian wife, a daughter of Pharaoh Neco (1 Kgs 3.1; 9.16, 24) and his son Rehoboam, who was born to him by Naamah an Ammonite (1 Kgs 14.21, 31). There are also no details of the other children he may have had through this large harem,

[169] See 2.2. for the discussion on the laws against intermarriage.

although we are told that he did give two daughters away in marriages to district governors.[170]

The DtrH accuses Solomon's foreign wives of turning his heart away from Yahweh to other gods (1 Kgs 11.4): not only does he build high places for the foreign gods of his wives, but he also participates in worship of them (vv. 5, 8). As if the reputable and chief foreign deities of Ashtoreth of the Sidonians, Milcom of the Ammonites and Chemosh of the Moabites, are not enough (vv. 5, 7), the DtrH adds that Solomon does the same for all his other foreign wives (v. 8). In view of his large harem of one thousand wives altogether (v. 3), the DtrH implies that there are uncountable deities being worshipped and their high places established all over the kingdom.

Although the claim of a large harem and the building of altars to foreign deities is plausible for a rich king like Solomon as DtrH describes, the historical accuracy of the the claim that it was only in his old age that his wives led him into foreign worship (v. 4) is highly questionable. The account of Solomon's apostasy, when followed by the accounts of the political unrest in 1 Kgs 11.14-40, gives the impression that Solomon was judged because he sinned against Yahweh only in his later years. If Solomon did accumulate such a large harem, it may have been inherited in part from David, and is unlikely to have been a feature solely of his old age, as the DtrH is keen to suggest.[171] Mindful both of his role as builder of the Temple, and of his ultimate responsibility for the secession of the Northern kingdom, the writer effectively splits his life into separate parts. The first part is marked by his early years of Temple building when his reign was unblemished and peaceful (1 Kgs 2-10), and the second part by his apostasy. In this way, his foreign wives are made culpable for his sins which resulted in the turbulent periods of Israel, a motif which is also found in Jezebel where the sins of Israel and some of the most notorious kings of Judah are also a consequence of her corrupting of Ahab.

In 11.4, 6, the DtrH makes his first judgement of Israel's king by the yardstick of David. This judgement marker (especially v. 6) is applied subsequently to all the other kings of Israel and Judah, thus the kings are classified simply as good or bad – good indicating fidelity to Yahweh, and bad, apostasy. The DtrH normally, moreover, gives the names of each Judean king's mother. As the following table shows, in most cases, the

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[170] 1 Kgs 4.11 – Tapath to Ben-Abinadab in Naphoth Dor; and 1 Kgs 4.15 – Basemath to Ahimaaz in Naphtali.

[171] Gray suggests that Solomon's large harem is a result of David's political alliances with their neighbours, pp. 251-52, 255.

good kings have mothers who are themselves Judahite, while conversely, the bad kings have mothers who are of foreign descent.

Table 3.2: The Names and Origins of the Kings' Mothers and the DtrH Judgement of the Judahite Kings

Name of King	**References**	**Mother's Name**	**Mother's Origin**	**Name of Mother's Father**	**Good or Bad**
Solomon		Bathsheba		Eliam[172] (2 Sam 23.24)	Later reign presented as negative - 1 Kgs 11
Rehoboam	1 Kgs 14.21-31	Naamah	Ammonite		Bad
Abijam	15.1-8	Maacah		Abishalom[173]	Bad
Asa	15.9-24	Not mentioned[174]			Good
Jehoshaphat	22.41-20	Azubah		Shilhi[175]	Good

[172] Randal C. Bailey, 'Eliam', *ABD* vol. II, pp. 459-60. Although some scholars seem to think that she is also a Hittite, like her ex-husband, the reference made to her and her family in 2 Sam. does not seem to imply so. Also, Adele Berlin, 'Bathsheba', in Carol Meyers, Toni Craven and Ross S. Kraemer (eds.), *Women in Scripture: A Dictionary of Named and Unnamed Women in the Hebrew Bible, The Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books and the New Testament* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2000), pp. 57-58.

[173] Maacah's relation to Abishalom links her ancestry to the Aramean princess, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur (2 Sam. 3.3). She is most likely the daughter or granddaughter of Absalom (as according to Josephus [*Ant.* 8.10.1]), and named after Absalom's mother. The DtrH is not eager to provide the other detail found in 2 Chron. 13.2 that Abijam's mother is Micaiah, daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, which would infer her origin as a Benjamite. Cf. n. 175.

[174] There is evidently a dittography from 1 Kgs 15.2 here. Asa's father is Abijam, whose mother is Maacah, daughter of Abishalom, but the father and son could not have shared the same mother. Otherwise, Maacah could have been a common name shared by Abijam's mother and his wife, but 'daughter of Abishalom' has been carried over. The Septuagint has 'Ana' instead of 'Maacah', but retained 'daughter of Abishalom'. Some have also suggested that Abijam and Asa are brothers, instead of father and son, see Gray, p. 316. It is noteworthy that 2 Chron 13.2, Abijam's mother was Micaiah, daughter of Uriel, and Asa's mother is retained as Maacah, because of what he did to her cults. Mindful of the conclusion we have reached for the meaning of גבירה, and the very short years of Abijam's reign, it seems more likely that Abijam's mother was indeed Maacah, daughter of Abishalom (cf. 2 Chron 11.20), and Asa's mother might have borne the same name and perhaps as S. Yeivin suggested, she was Micaiah, daughter of Uriel from Gibeah; see S. Yeivin, 'Abijam, Asa, and Maacah, Daughter of Abishalom', *BJPES* 10 (1942-44), pp. 116-19. Otherwise, the name of Asa's mother is unknown, and the mistake is made because of the reference to Maacah as the גבירה in 1 Kgs 15.13, as suggested by Cogan, pp. 393, 397. On the other hand, the confusion of names in these texts, might also be deliberate on the part of the DtrH, see below.

[175] In the the OT there is no person by the name of Shilhi whose daughter Azubah is the mother of the good king Jehoshaphat. It has been suggested that a place name Shilhim is intended instead, which is one of the towns in the Judean Negeb located in the extreme south (Josh. 15.21,

Jehoram	2 Kgs 8.16-23	Not mentioned			Bad
Ahaziah	8.25-29	Athaliah	Israel	Ahab	Bad
Joash	12.1-21	Zibia	Beersheba		Good
Amaziah	14.1-22	Jehoiadin	Jerusalem		Good
Azariah	15.1-7	Jecoliah	Jerusalem		Good
Jotham	15.32-38	Jerusha		Zadok[176]	Good
Ahaz	16.1-20	Not mentioned			Bad
Hezekiah	18.1-20.21	Abi		Zechariah[13]	Good
Manasseh	21.1-18	Hepzhibah	Not mentioned		Bad
Amon	21.19-25	Meshulle-meth	Jotbah[177]	Haruz	Bad
Josiah	22.1-23.30	Jedidah	Bozkath	Adaiah	Good
Jehoahaz	23.31-35	Hamuttal	Libnah	Jeremiah	Bad
Jehoiakim	23.36-24.6	Zebidah	Rumah	Pedaiah	Bad
Jehoiachin	24.8-16	Nehushta	Jerusalem	Elnathan	Bad
Zedekiah	24.18-25.7	Hamuttal	Libnah	Jeremiah	Bad

There are three kings whose mothers' names are not mentioned, Asa, Jehoram and Ahab, while the origin of Manasseh's mother is not mentioned. For Jehoram, however, the DtrH mentions his 'significant woman' as his wife rather than his mother, who is Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab and Jezebel. Apart from the last four kings who are all judged sinful due to the impending exile, there seems to be a direct relationship between the origins of the mothers and the DtrH's judgement. Out of the first fifteen kings (excluding Solomon), there are seven bad kings and eight good kings. With regard to the bad kings, five of their mothers' names are mentioned – Naamah, Maacah, Athaliah, Hephzibah and Meshullemeth – and the other two are not, namely Ahaz and Jehoram. Concerning their mothers' origins, four of them are known – Ammon, Geshur, Israel (Omride origin) and Jotbah. Therefore, of the seven bad kings, five have mothers (and in one case, a wife) of foreign, non-Judahite ancestry. It is also noteworthy that in the case of Ahaz and Manasseh, as we have seen earlier, the DtrH has pinpointed their

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32). See Jerome T. Walsh, 'Shilhi (person)'; and Carl S. Ehrlich, 'Shilhim (place)', *ABD* vol. V, p. 1213.

[176] These names tend to be priestly and are usually associated with the Southern kingdom, see George W. Ramsey, 'Zadok (person)', *ABD* vol. VI, pp. 1034-36; and JoAnn F. Watson, 'Zechariah (person)', *ABD* vol. VI, pp. 1057-61.

[177] If the place name Jotbah, Meshullemeth's hometown is intended to be linked with Jotbathbah as mentioned in Num. 33.33, 34 and Deut. 10.7, then it would be in the region of Edom or Arabia. Gray, p. 648. However, it is possible that it was located in Galilee, where six hundred and fifty prisoners were recorded to have been exiled from this place in 732 BCE; Rafael Frankel, 'Jotbah', *ABD* vol. III, p. 1020.

sins as due to the influence of Ahab, subsequently implying Jezebel as the cause of their apostasy.

As for the good kings, the DtrH mentions seven of the mothers' names – Azubah, Zibia, Jecoliah, Jehoaddin, Jerusha, Abi, and Jedidah. Of these seven, five of their places of origin are accounted for and they are all in the vicinity of Judah – Beersheba, Jerusalem (twice), Bozkath, and (possibly) Shilhim, while the other two have fathers with names associated with the priesthood – Zadok and Zechariah. In short, five out of seven of the bad kings are related to mothers and wife of foreign ancestry, and seven out of eight good kings are related to mothers of Judean or priestly origins.

As for the last four kings, all are deemed bad, and it seems that the impending and imminent exile is the reason for the judgement. Nonetheless, when the books of Kings ends (2 Kgs 25.27-30), a ray of hope is given in Jehoiachin,[178] the sole survivor of the Davidic descendant, who was treated gracefully by the Babylonians, and most significantly, whose mother is from Jerusalem. This would seem to be beyond coincidence, but the lack of explicit indications for some kings, in particular, indicates that this is more a strong tendency in the DtrH than a completely consistent practice.

In addition, just as the DtrH exaggerates the religious persecutions waged by Jezebel against the Yahwistic cult, he also exaggerates in blaming and directly associating in particular Maacah and Athaliah with foreign worship, although the historical accuracy of the account is dubious. For the name Maacah, when referenced to Abishalom, gets associated with her Aramean ancestry, and she is then known for being deposed from her position as גבירה (cf. 1 Kgs 15.13).[179] It seems strange that she has to be singled out and blamed for the cult of Asherah here. Historically, it is unlikely that Asherah worship began in Judah with Maacah, since the cult was already popular in the pre-monarchic state (cf. Judg. 6.25).[180] Although the DtrH mentions in 1 Kgs 14.23 that

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[178] Among the last four kings, Jehoiachin is the only one whose sins are not specified by the DtrH (2 Kgs 24.10-16), or Jeremiah (Jer. 22.24-30). Jehoahaz in Kings is merely accused of following the steps of his father (2 Kgs 23.31-35; Jer. 22.11-12). Jehoiakim is accused of relying on foreign allies (2 Kgs 23.31-24.1-2; Jer. 22.18-23), neglecting social justice (Jer. 22.13-19) and refusing to heed the warnings of Jeremiah (Jer. 36.1-32). Jeremiah also accused Jehoiakim for shedding the blood of the prophets (Jer. 26.1-24). Zedekiah is depicted in Kings as committing the same wrongs as Jehoiakim who rebelled against Babylon (2 Kgs 24.19-20). Jeremiah, on the other hand, had many confrontations with Zedekiah, and often accuses him of failing to administer justice in the land (Jer. 21.11-12; 34.8-16) and refusing to submit to Babylon (Jer. 27.12-15; 38.14-23; 52.3).

[179] See n. 166.

[180] Asherah, אשרה occurs forty times in the OT, and in many of them, her cult symbol of a wooden object is referred to. See John Day, 'Asherah (Deity)', *ABD* vol. I, pp. 483-87; and idem,

Judah erected Asherah during the reign of Rehoboam, and Maacah was not named then as the main culprit for initiating the cult, the DtrH will not let this crime fully rest on Judah, and has to mention later that it was Maacah who built the Asherah in 1 Kgs 15.13. Then, as for Athaliah, it is not enough that she is portrayed to be a cruel mother who kills all her children and grandchildren to save the crown for herself, but these behaviours are also somehow related to her cultic worship of Baal.[181] Throughout her reign, no prophetic word is given to her for repentance,[182] but a big plot was being schemed by the high priest of the Temple to dethrone her. And when she and her priest of Baal are finally killed and her cult temple destroyed, the city is described to be 'at rest', an indication that 'all is well'.[183] Consequently, we have the same situation as in Jezebel: it was the cult of Baal versus the cult of Yahweh.

The above study also shows how keen the DtrH is to find links of 'foreignness' for those women he deemed as a bad influence and who were involved in foreign worship. For example, strictly speaking, both Maacah and Athaliah were children of earlier intermarriages between an Israelite and a 'foreign woman'. Nonetheless, the DtrH considers those 'foreign' blood runs deeper in these women, which explains their devotion to the foreign deities. Therefore, we also find in the books of Kings, a different way of perceiving 'foreignness' from what we have seen earlier in Ezra-Nehemiah, Malachi and also Deuteronomy.

Chapter Conclusion

In the previous chapters, we have concluded how נכריה is essentially tied up with ideas of 'foreignness', although these ideas may not constitute a constant entity throughout its occurrences. More importantly, the dominant occurrences in Ezra-Nehemiah leads us to explore how and why the 'foreign wives' have to be condemned

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Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan, pp. 42-67. Asherah in the OT is the Canaanite goddess, Athirat, the consort of El and the mother of the deities. Since the Israelite equates El with Yahweh, it is natural that Asherah is worshipped as his consort, especially according to the texts in Kuntillet `Ajrud and Khirbet el-Qom where Yahweh is mentioned together with his consort, Asherah. It is only when Israel propagandises that Yahweh alone is the deity, that his consort is condemned as idolatrous, and to be treated like Baal worship. This is why the condemnation of Asherah usually occurs with Baal worship.

[181] J.M. Miller and J.H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), p. 304.

[182] Patricia Dutcher-Walls, *Narrative Art, Political Rhetoric: The Case of Athaliah and Joash* (JSOTSup, 209; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), pp. 110-11.

[183] Dutcher-Walls, p. 85.

beyond repentance, and blamed in such a way. Interestingly, we find Ezra-Nehemiah employing ideas which were already prevalent in the Deuteronomic prohibitions and the DtrH Kings, in particular with reference to Solomon's 'foreign wives'. As we look into the books of Kings, we see how the motif of the 'foreign wives' is at work more broadly. While it is King Solomon who is famously identified with the large number of 'foreign wives' who led him into foreign worship and caused him to disobey Yahweh, the principal example of how the potency of the 'foreign wife' can have the disastrous outcome of corrupting Israel and so lead them to their final destruction is quintessentially Jezebel. We see how the DtrH exaggerates her persecutions of the Yahwistic cult and also her success in seducing Ahab to commit evil deeds. Somehow through the latter's corruption, the DtrH manages to tie in the blame of the fall of Ahaz, Manasseh and the Northern kingdom to that of Ahab, therefore implicating Jezebel as the mastermind of the atrocities committed in both Israel and Judah. The DtrH carries the motif further, and by a count of majority, the bad Judahite kings are somehow related to mothers (and in one case, a wife) of foreign ancestry, while the good Judahite kings are related to mothers of Israelite or Judean descent. Thus, there is a strong theological motif underlying the DtrH's account of the kings, in which 'foreign wives' of Israelites are dangerous because they corrupt and cause Israelites to turn away from Yahweh into foreign worship, leaving them to suffer for the punishment of breaching their covenant with Yahweh. It is this theological motif which the post-exilic writers of Ezra-Nehemiah and Malachi pick up when confronted by the problem of 'mixed' marriages. And it is also a motif picked up by the author of Proverbs 1-9. The studies so far show that the motif of the 'foreign wives' is not just against a historical background in which 'foreign wives' are a problem, but within a well-established framework of thought, which blames foreign women for the corruption of the nation. The motif is therefore, not a product of the post-exilic dispute, but it came to be used by Ezra-Nehemiah to pin down problems of ethnicity. Proverbs 1-9 shares the same historical context with Ezra-Nehemiah, and its Jewish context and Deuteronomic influence cannot be neglected and ignored, hence we may reasonably assume that this powerful motif of 'foreign wives' is to be associated in some way with the Foreign Woman there, as we shall examine in the next chapter.

Chapter Four

The Motif of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9

In the preceding chapters, we have seen that the term 'foreign woman' cannot be divorced from some sense of foreign ethnicity (however complicated that concept may be in the post-exilic period), and that the expression itself would have a strong and specific resonance following the debate over intermarriage after the Return. We have also seen, however, that the terms of that debate were set explicitly in reference to an earlier motif in Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic History – the prohibition of marrying foreign wives because they are a source of apostasy. In this chapter, we shall now turn to Proverbs 1-9. Earlier scholarship has argued for a direct relationship between the book of Proverbs and Deuteronomy,[184] which may already provide the foundational link for the depiction of the Foreign Woman with ideas of 'foreignness' in Deuteronomy. However, it seems that the other interpretations of the Foreign Woman which disassociate her from 'foreignness' have clouded this link. In this chapter, I shall argue that the portrayal of the Foreign Woman can be understood more fruitfully in light of the motif of the 'foreign women' from the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic works rather than as a straightforward depiction of a sexual predator or adulteress.

4.1. Introduction to Proverbs 1-9

Proverbs 1-9 is usually identified as a distinct section within the Book of Proverbs, which is characterised by, most obviously, distinctive and repeated

[184] The similar features found in both works seem to indicate this relationship. For example, the pedagogic style adopted in the two books, the familial context in which the instructions are to be taught, the concept of the fear of Yahweh and the fundamental assumption of a Yahwistic covenantal theology. See J. Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (Oxford Bible Series; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); F.-J. Steiert, *Die Weisheit Israels – ein Fremdkörper im Alten Testament?* (Freiburger Theologische Studien, 143; Freiburg: Herder, 1990). Also, A. Robert, 'Les attaches littéraires bibliques des Prov. i-ix', *RB* 43 (1934), pp. 42-68, 172-204, 374-84; 44 (1935), pp. 344-65, 502-25, who has often been criticised for making too much claims of the direct dependence of Proverbs on Deuteronomy, Isaiah and Jeremiah.

exhortations by the father to the son to attain knowledge and wisdom.[185] However, to state simply that it is only about how one can attain happiness and success in life's journey seems inadequate.[186] There is a sense of urgency in the calls to heed instruction and seek wisdom, which are portrayed as a matter of life and death. Furthermore, in the call to attain wisdom in 1.20-23 and 8.1-4, different kinds of people are listed who need to seek wisdom: it is not just for the simple-minded, but it is a call to all humankind. Moreover, Wisdom presented as a woman, perhaps as a potential bride (cf. 4.5-9; 7.4).[187] Whether it was intentional or not, this first section of the book is composed as an introduction to Proverbs as a whole. Some scholars, indeed, have seen the depiction of the 'Good Wife' in 31.10-31 as a way in which the book's focus on relationships with the feminine has been extended to embrace and define the rest of the book.[188]

Meinhold has provided what is, perhaps, the most persuasive description of the thematic structure of the book of Proverbs.[189] By subdividing the book into sections marked by formal characteristics, he identifies separate 'instructions', 'wisdom speeches' and other intermediary material, while at the same time, he connects them together by taking Prov. 2 as a framework and a summary of the book's themes.[190] In Meinhold's model, a superscription in 1.1, followed by a prologue in 1.2-6, and the motto in 1.7. Prov. 1.1-7, combine with the similar material in 9.7-12 to frame the section as a whole. Within this section, there are ten 'instructions', four wisdom-poems and two other intermediary pieces (3.13-20 and 6.1-19). In the introduction of chapter 2, the father first invites his son to seek wisdom, as often at the start of sections in the book, but he then outlines the four main topics of instruction which are to be covered in Prov. 3-7: (1) 2.5-8 addresses the right relationship with God (cf. 3.1-12); (2) 2.9-11 discusses proper behaviour towards humankind (cf. 3.21-35; 4.1-9); (3) 2.12-15 warns against evil men (cf. 4.10-19 and 4.20-27, as well as 1.8-19); (4) 2.16-19 warns against the Foreign Woman (cf. 5.1-23; 6.20-35 and 7.1-27). So, the instructions begin with a seduction by

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[185] M. Fox, 'Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9', *JBL* 116 (1997), pp. 613-33.
[186] Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 25.
[187] As argued by Boström, pp. 156-59.
[188] T.P. McCreesch, 'Wisdom as Wife: Proverbs 31:10-31', *RB* 92 (1985), pp. 25-46; and at the same time, Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs*, pp. 186-208; followed by other commentators: Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 26; Whybray, *Proverbs* p. 426; Murphy, pp. 249-50; Clifford, *Proverbs*, p. 274.
[189] See Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, pp. 43-47.
[190] Scott, p. 42. He explains the function of Prov. 2 as '... a kind of prospectus of the "course" in wisdom which the father offers.' He even believes that it might have originally preceded Prov. 1.8-19. See also Gemser, p. 18.

the evil men in 1.8-19, and end with the seduction by the Foreign Woman in 7.1-27. These two seductions can only be overcome by the attainment of wisdom, which is personified and given its own speeches which counter the two seductions in 1.20-33 and 8.1-36. The father explains that these two seductions constitute the way opposite to wisdom (4.11, 14, 18). The awkward 6.1-19, which is regarded as secondary by many scholars,[191] is then inserted between references to the danger of the Foreign Woman to illustrate the dangers of becoming an evil person. Finally, the overall framework suggests that it is the fear of Yahweh which is the beginning and the goal of wisdom – 1.29; 2.5; 3.7; 8.13; 9.7-12.

As J.N. Aletti has pointed out that there is notable ambiguity in the portrayal of the seductions by the evil men, Foreign Woman and Woman Wisdom, who all use the same methods of persuasion in similar physical locations, and who all offer something desirable.[192] This ambiguity accentuates the need for the skill of discernment to recognise the good from the bad. The juxtaposition of wisdom and the bad characters indicates some element of symbolism, that is, the bad characters clearly symbolise more than just their own specific sins. What they really symbolise requires some effort to decode and discern, just as the introduction to the pericope describes the instructions as proverb, figure and riddles,[193] an exercise for the wise (1.6).

4.2. Passages Concerning the Foreign Woman

We will now examine the four passages in Proverbs 1-9 which describe the woman as זרה (5.1-23), נכריה (6.20-35), or both (2.16-19; 7.1-26). A fifth passage (9.13-18), which uses the same language to portray the woman in which she is described as אשת כסילות, will also be studied.

Prov. 2.16-19[194]

16 to deliver you from the strange woman (אשה זרה),
from the foreign woman (נכריה) who smoothens her words.
17 She forgets the partner of her youth
and she forsakes the covenant of her gods.[195]

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[191] See Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 225-27; McKane, pp. 320-21; Whybray, *Proverbs*, pp. 93-101.
[192] J.N. Aletti, 'Seduction et parole en Proverbes I – IX', *VT* 27 (1977), pp. 129-44. Aletti's article explores the subject of ambiguity of the evil men, the Foreign Woman and Woman Wisdom.
[193] For the meanings of משל, מליצה and חידה, see especially Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 54-55, 63-67; and others: Toy, pp. 3-4; McKane, pp. 22-33; Whybray, *Proverbs*, pp. 25-26.
[194] The following passages cited are my translations.

18 For her house[196] descends to death,
and her paths to the ghosts of the dead.
19 All who go to her do not return,
they do not reach the paths of life.

As previously mentioned, Prov. 2 functions as a sort of agenda for Proverbs 1-9. It is constructed as a single poem, and has the twenty-two lines of a pseudo-acrostic. However, it is not just a single poem, but actually a single long sentence: if (אם) you search (vv. 1-4) … then (אז) Yahweh / Wisdom will (vv. 5-11) … save (להצילך) you from (vv. 12-19) … so that (למען) you may walk (vv. 20-22)…. So, the two clauses with *lamedhs* in vv. 12 and 16 extend the double apodosis (vv. 5-11) of an initial condition (vv. 1-4), and are themselves to be extended further in vv. 20-21. These two clauses identify in parallel matched sections, present the principal enemies against whom wisdom provides a defence – the evil men (vv. 12-15) and the Foreign Woman (vv. 16-19). The first lines of each section specify what is it about the characters that must be avoided: v. 12 – 'evil path' and 'perverted speech', v. 16 – the 'Foreign Woman' and her 'smooth speech'. The second lines then state what they have abandoned (עזב): v. 13 – 'straight paths for darkness', v. 17 – 'partner of her youth' and 'covenant of her gods'. Finally, the last two lines characterise what is wrong with them and where their paths (מעגלות and ארחות) lead: vv. 14-15 – they 'do evil' and their paths are 'crooked' and 'devious'; vv. 18-19 – her paths lead to 'death' and 'do not return to life'.

Prov. 2.12-15 (NRSV)
12 It will save you from the way of evil, from those who speak perversely,
13 who forsake the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness,
14 who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil;
15 those whose paths are crooked, and who are devious in their ways.

With regard to the evil men, Prov. 1.10-19 has already elaborated on the dangers they pose to the community. In reference to this passage, Aletti has given an excellent account of who the men are and what they represent.[197] Personified Wisdom's indirect judgement of their speech in 1.22-23, and their own plan to ambush the innocent, indicate their desire to ignore justice and divine punishment. In doing so, they defy the orders of reward and punishment which God ordains for good and evil.[198] Aletti also

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[195] Note the proposed rendering of אהלה 'her tents' or חפתה 'her covering'.
[196] One manuscript has 'her ways'.
[197] Aletti, pp. 136-40.
[198] There are similarities with the words of the people in Mal. 2.17, after the indictment against divorce with Yahweh's covenant.

points out that seduction onto the way of the evil men is difficult to tell apart from persuasion onto the way of wisdom: both sides speak the same language and use the same vocabulary.[199] So, both invite the student to join them with "Come!" (1.11; 1.22-24a); and both promise to 'fill' מלא – houses with loot (1.13), and endow one with wealth full of treasures (8.21); but one desires only to do evil (2.14) and the other good (8.20).

Prov. 1.11 (NRSV)
If they say, "Come with us, let us lie in wait for blood; let us wantonly ambush the innocent

Prov. 1.22-24a (NRSV)
22 "How long, O simple ones, will you love being simple? How long will scoffers delight in their scoffing and fools hate knowledge?
23 Give heed to my reproof; I will pour out my thoughts to you; I will make my words known to you.
24a Because I have called and you refused, have stretched out my hand and no one heeded

Prov. 1.13 (NRSV)
We shall find all kinds of costly things; we shall fill our houses with booty.

Prov. 8.21 (NRSV)
endowing with wealth those who love me, and filling their treasuries.

Prov. 2.14 (NRSV)
who rejoice in doing evil and delight in the perverseness of evil

Prov. 8.20 (NRSV)
I walk in the way of righteousness, along the paths of justice

Prov. 2.16 then introduces the Foreign Woman and prefigures the passages about her in 5.3; 6.24; and 7.5. She is immediately identified by the epithets זרה and נכריה, and characterised as having 'smooth' words – that is, persuasiveness. This characteristic is described variously in the later passages, but the use of the stem חלק, in relation to her mouth, is to be a constant feature (5.3; 6.24; 7.5, 21). What is also interesting in this depiction of 'smooth words' is that it is a characteristic of some of the portrayal of 'bad' foreign women in the OT (especially the Deuteronomistic literature), for example, Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39), Samson's two Philistine women – his unnamed wife and Delilah (Judg. 14; 16.1-22),[200] as well as Jezebel (1 Kgs 21.25; cf. 3.1.).

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[199] Aletti, pp. 129-30, 132-33.
[200] Interestingly, the DtrH uses the root פתה in the piel to command Samson's women to seduce him into revealing his secrets (cf. Judg. 14.15; 16.5). It occurs twenty-seven times in the OT and is usually found in the Writings: in qal – Deut. 11.16; Job 5.2; 31.27; Prov. 20.19; Hos. 7.11; in

Prov. 2.17 depicts what the Foreign Woman has left. אלוף נעוריה is often taken to mean 'husband'. An example is found in Jer. 3.4, in which Israel, depicted as the wife of Yahweh, calls out to God, "My father, אלוף נערי".[201] The phrase which follows, ברית אלהיה, is taken to refer to her marriage covenant made in the presence of God.[202] This leads to a supposition that the woman's primary sin is adultery.[203] However, the vocabulary used in Prov. 2.17 resembles those of Mal. 2.14-15, as we have seen earlier, the issue is essentially about divorce and not adultery. Incidentally, the occurrence of 'wife of your youth' and 'wife of your covenant' in Malachi is also found in the context of issues concerning marriage, including marriages to the 'daughter of a foreign god'. Whether or not Prov. 2.17 is deliberately evoking Jeremiah or Malachi, the language is that of depicting the dissolution of marriage in connection with apostasy. In this way, it matches what is said of the evil men who departed from 'straight paths' in 2.13, as well as the identification of the foreign women with apostasy that we have identified previously. This interpretation is further supported by the usage of שכח, which is used frequently in Deuteronomic texts to depict Israel when she forgets Yahweh. It always implies that the former has gone into apostasy, whether it be an attitude of ingratitude, committing idolatry and worshipping foreign deities, or not fulfilling the obligations and requirements of the Law.[204] This also explains why the general sins of the wicked men are paralleled to something seemingly so specific.

Following Prov. 2.17, 2.18-19 continues to depict the Foreign Woman's house and her paths in unearthly terms: death and the netherworld. This depiction is also another hallmark which identifies the passages of the Foreign Woman. We find this

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niphal – Job 31.9; Jer. 20.7; in piel – Exod. 22.16 (MT 22.15); 2 Sam. 3.25; 1 Kgs 22.20-22 (thrice); 2 Chron. 18.19-21 (thrice); Ps. 78.36; Prov. 1.10; 16.29; 24.28; Jer. 20.7; Ezek. 14.9; Hos. 2.14; in pual – Prov. 25.15; Jer. 20.10; Ezek. 14.9. The word means 'to entice, persuade, deceive' and in most of the occurrences it denotes one's moral sense being lured astray. At the same time, it also reflects the immoral state of the one doing the deceiving. However, where it occurs in the prophetic literature, it is used of Yahweh enticing the prophet or the people into accomplishing his divine plan. The same word is also used in Deut. 11.16 whereby Israel is warned not to be seduced into worshipping other gods in the promised land. See 'פתה', *HALOT* vol. III, p. 989; Chou-Wee Pan, 'פתה', *NIDOTE* vol. I, pp. 306-309. Cf. Appendix.

[201] Contrary to McKane (p. 286) who prefers to understand אלוף as denoting the role of a father who instructs his children in their youth.

[202] W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Book of Proverbs* (Westminster Commentaries; London: Metheun, 1929), p. 17; especially Toy, p. 47.

[203] Toy, p. 47; Murphy, p. 16; Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 69; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 120.

[204] Leslie Allen, 'שכח', *NIDOTE* vol. IV, pp. 103-105. Of selfish ingratitude: Deut. 4.9; 6.12; 8.14; etc.; of neglecting covenantal commitments: Deut. 4.23; 8.11; Ps. 78.7, 11; Isa. 17.10;

language of death also in 5.5 and 7.22-27 right after the mention of her smooth speech. Commentators concur that this language of death depicts mythological concepts of the netherworld,[205] and some of them interpret it as symbolic of a no-return to Yahweh's order of life[206] or as premature death.[207] Most likely, the author has precisely all these intentions for the portrayals.

In short, Prov. 2.16-19 captures the gist of the main features of the Foreign Woman: she is a foreigner described by the epithets זרה and נכריה; she seduces by her 'smooth' speech; she is a representation of the way of 'foreignness' and apostasy; those who choose her ways therefore abandon the covenant of Yahweh; and her house and her paths leads to death. Where we find these features in the other passages in Proverbs 1-9, we can infer that they are referring to the motif of the Foreign Woman.

Prov. 5

1 My son, be attentive to my wisdom,
incline your ear to my understanding;
2 so that you may observe prudence,
and your lips guard knowledge.[208]
3 For honey drips from the lips of the strange woman (זרה),
and her mouth is smoother than oil.
4 But in the end she is bitter as wormwood,
sharp as a two-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death,
her steps hold fast to Sheol.
6 Lest[209] you do not watch the paths of life,
for her ways wander, and you do not know.
7 And now, my son,[210] listen to me,
do not depart from the words of my mouth.
8 Keep your way far from her,
and do not go near the door of her house.
9 Lest you give your vigour[211] to others,
and your years[212] to the merciless.

51.13; 65.11; Jer. 3.21; Ezek. 22.12; 23.35; Hos. 13.6; etc.; and committing idolatry: Deut. 8.19; 32.18; Jer. 13.25; 18.15; etc..

[205] McKane (p. 287) believes that it is embedded with the Ugaritic myths of Mot. Toy (p. 48) likens it to Grecian mythology. Oesterley (p. 17) thinks it refers to the Babylonian myth of the 'Descent of Ishtar'.

[206] Hence, spiritual death – as McKane, p. 288.

[207] Toy, pp. 48-49.

[208] There are some textual difficulties in the Hebrew text here; the usual translation has been adopted. As noted in *BHS*, it has been proposed, 'so that prudence and knowledge may keep you, and guard you from the lips of the foreign woman.' For other ways of emending the text, see McKane, p. 314; Toy, pp. 101-102; and Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 190-91.

[209] *BHS* proposed בל or אל; see below for discussion.

[210] Taking חוד, as recommended by *BHS*.

[211] The Septuagint has 'your life' (cf. 5.3.), while the Syriac and Targum has 'your strength'.

[212] 'Honour' has been proposed, see *BHS*.

10 Lest strangers take their fill of your strength,
and your labours go to the house of foreigners.
11 And at the end of your life, you will groan,
when your body and flesh are consumed.
12 And you will say, "How I have hated discipline,
and my heart despised reproof!
13 I have not listened to the voice of my teachers,
and did not incline my ears to my instructors.
14 I was almost in utter ruin,
in the midst of the assembly and congregation."
15 Drink water from your own cistern,
and flowing water from your own well.
16 Should your springs be scattered[213] outside,
streams of water in the open squares?
17 Let them be yours alone,
and not[214] for strangers with you.
18 Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth.
19 [215]A lovely doe, a graceful deer,
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you be intoxicated with her love always.
20 Why should you stray, my son, with a strange woman (זרה)
and embrace the bosom of a foreign woman (נכריה)?
21 For the ways of a man are under the eyes of Yahweh
and he watches all his paths.
22 The iniquities of the wicked seize them,
and they are bound by the cords of their own sins.
23 He will die for lack of instruction,
by his great folly he will go astray.

In Prov. 5.3f., where only זרה is used of the woman initially, we find a more elaborate warning against the Foreign Woman's mouth, probably contrasted poetically with the admonition of the father in v. 2 to guard one's lips with knowledge. These verses draw a contrast between the first taste of the Foreign Woman's words and the aftertaste: they 'drip honey' and are 'smooth as oil' (v. 3), 'but in the end they are bitter as wormwood and sharp as a two-edged sword' (v. 4). Thus the father admits that the Foreign Woman does gratify, but only in the initial stages of the encounter; subsequently, she is a source of hurt and regret.

Prov. 5.5-6 warn about her path which leads to death and the netherworld, recalling 2.18-19. The verbs in 5.6 are puzzling, as תפלס and תדע could be read as the second masculine singular referring to the son being warned; or the third feminine

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[213] Perhaps, פן or אל precedes, as according to the Septuagint, see below for discussion, and cf. 5.3.
[214] Taking ואל, as proposed by *BHS*.
[215] *BHS* suggests to insert רעה אותה לבדה 'she is your only companion', which might have been left out.

singular, referring to the Foreign Woman. Those who prefer the latter argue that the passage is about the Foreign Woman, which portrays her as an ignorant victim herself.[216] On the other hand, the passage is primarily a warning to the son. If we follow the MT, Whybray is quite right to warn that פן is always translated as 'lest' rather than 'not'.[217] Likewise, the second verb תדע, also refers to the second masculine singular, and identifies the victim who does not know.[218]

Most commentators interpret the loss of honour and wealth in 5.9-10 with 6.32-35 in view, with the understanding that the losses to depict the legal claims made by the cuckolded husband, or the depredations by associates of the adulteress.[219] However, there is no depiction of adultery taking place in Prov. 5. The plunder by 'foreigners' in 5.10 resembles the depictions found in Lam. 5.2; Obad. 11; and even Isa. 61.15. In all these portrayals of plunder, the foreigners, the זרים and נכרים, not only claimed Israel's lands (Isa. 61.5; Obad. 11) and inheritance (Lam. 5.2), but also Israel's possessions (flocks – Isa. 61.5) and wealth (Obad. 11).[220] There are some commentators who think that הוד also refer to 'wealth',[221] and it may be so. The consequences may include some references to the specific loss of personal property to foreigners, as depicted in Ezra 9, but this is probably dealt with in 5.15-19, as we shall see. Here the language evokes, more generally, consequences that are usually associated with destruction following apostasy.

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[216] Therefore, taking בל or אל as proposed by *BHS*: Oesterley (p. 35), 'so that she findeth not the level path of life: her ways are unstable and she knoweth it not'; Toy (pp. 101, 105-106), 'No well-built highway of life she walks, uncertain her paths and not "firm"'; and McKane (pp. 217, 314-15), 'She has no regard for the path of life, her tracks waver, she is never at rest.' However, McKane and Plöger (p. 55) also admit the possibility for the other option.

[217] Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 86; also Murphy, p. 30. The particle expresses precaution, see *GK*, p. 482. Fox, on the other hand, understands as a 'negative optative' and interprets v. 5b as supplying the ellipsis for v. 6a; in Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 193. What is best understood here is simply that the Foreign Woman should be avoided lest one does not keep one's eyes on the path of life.

[218] The ignorance of the victim is also portrayed in 7.23 and 9.18, in the same use of negative particle and stem, לא ידע. The ignorance of the Foreign Woman is expressed differently, as ובל־ידעה מה. Besides, the portrayal of the victim's ignorance is also always mentioned in the immediate context of the Foreign Woman's way and consequence. This is not found in 9.13, where the immediate context depicts only her character.

[219] Toy, pp. 108-109. Gemser (p. 28) suggests that creditors were foreigners. The suggestion is probably an attempt to link Ps. 109.11 with the depiction of the loss of one's properties. See Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 103.

[220] H. Eising, 'חיל', *TDOT* vol. IV, pp. 348-55.

[221] Toy, p. 108; Gemser, p. 28; Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 88. On the other hand, because Fox argues for the context of adultery, he believes that הוד refers to one's generating power or sexual vigour,

Prov. 5.11-14 apparently depict a scene where the victim of the Foreign Woman is brought in front of a congregation of elders where he cries out in deep remorse for not taking seriously the instructions offered to him. The victim's cry is one of near death, rather than the actual death promised as a consequence of involvement with the Foreign Woman elsewhere, but it may as well be death: he is impoverished and faced with humiliation in his community.[222] The realisation indeed comes too late, when he can no longer contribute actively and positively to the community, except for the opportunity for him to confess the consequence.

Prov. 5.15-20 has generally been understood to be a separate unit from vv. 1-14.[223] The argument for this division is based on a perceived difference in the style of language, and a switch to the obvious use of metaphorical language (cf. the constant use of water imageries in vv. 15-19; and animals as figures of speech in v. 19). Verses 15-20, however, admonish one not to commit the mistake which the earlier unit describes, and surely belongs with it, as McKane has argued.[224] This passage has been unanimously interpreted as an admonition for the husband to stay faithful to his spouse by delighting in sexual pleasure with her, and thus avoid the adultery described beforehand.[225] However, if this thesis is correct, that is, the motif of the Foreign Woman is not primarily about adultery *per se*, is there another way to read this section, and perhaps one which does more justice to its complicated imagery?

The imagery of water dominates the first part of the passage in vv. 15-18. The well and cistern in v. 15 are usually interpreted as representing the wife,[226] but there is

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since it is essentially about wasting one's seed to someone else. For the elaborate argument, see Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 194-95.

[222] Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, p. 197) thinks that it is a depiction of the victim wasting away in disease (cf. Job 33.21) and therefore referring to veneral diseases due to casual intercourse. The phrase is certainly about the flesh 'wasting away', but there is nothing in the Hebrew that indicate it is due to a disease. Most commentators, as McKane (pp. 316-18), thinks that it just describes the extreme physical pain of impoverishment. Cf. Toy, p. 110.

[223] See discussions in McKane, p. 312; Plöger, p. 61; Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 84. For an otherwise treatment, see Scott, p. 55; P.W. Skehan, 'Proverbs 5:15-19 and 6:20-24', *Studies in Israelite Poetry and Wisdom* (CBQMS; Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1971), pp. 1-8; and J.E. Goldingay, 'Proverbs V and IX', *RB* 84 (1977), pp. 80-93, who thinks that it is a later addition.

[224] McKane, p. 312.

[225] See n. 222.

[226] Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 90; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 200-201; Murphy, p. 32; Plöger, p. 57; Scott, p. 58; and Gemser, p. 29. 'Drink water from your own cisterns' of v. 15 is also found in Isa. 36.16 = 2 Kgs 18.31. It is a highly controversial passage in terms of its historicity, where Sennacherib, the King of Assyria through his messenger taunts the people of Judah to surrender to him without a fight and not to trust their king Hezekiah. It was promised to them that if they

considerable debate as to the meaning of the other images in v. 16 – the springs and streams of water. Do they refer to the wife, or the progeny of the husband, or specifically to the semen of the husband? Since Whybray has effectively summarised the debate,[227] the details need not be repeated here. These interpretations depend on an understanding of v. 18 as the key to the metaphorical language of the passage, that is, the 'wife of your youth' in parallelism to the 'fountain' informs v. 15 that the water imageries are metaphorical of the 'wife'. However, v. 16 would not make sense with this interpretation. There seems to be no satisfactory way of resolving the problem of understanding all the water imageries in vv. 15, 16 and 18 as referring to the same thing. Consequently, commentators claim that a different reference is intended for the water imageries in v. 16. Perhaps, relying on v. 18 as the key to interpreting the passage is not tenable afterall.

Paul Kruger, following W.H. Gispen, is right to propose that this passage has nothing to do with marital fidelity but is essentially about 'private' versus 'common property'.[228] Wells and cisterns were private possessions in OT times (cf. 2 Kgs 18.13),[229] and the father thus exhorts the pupil to enjoy his own possessions. Prov. 5.16 depicts something which should not happen, with private sources becoming springs and

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abandoned carrying arms, they could return home to their vines and drink their waters until Assyria would come to deport them. The promise is temporary but nonetheless peaceful and possibly without the threat of seige. T.R. Hobbs cites the occurrences in Prov. 5.15 and SSongs 4.12, 15 and extends the meaning of the message to also imply that the women in the city will be spared from sexual abuse which war often brought. See T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC, 13; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1985). For the historical context of this text, see M. Cogan and Hayim Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation and Commentary* (AB, 11; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 2001), pp. 223-52.

[227] Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 200-201), Gemser (p. 29), Plöger (p. 57), Murphy (p. 32), and Scott (p. 58), think that the water imagery in v. 16 refers to the wife, a continuation of the water imagery in v. 15. Therefore, there is an implication of retribution where the unfaithful husband will lead to his wife being unfaithful to him as well. Snijders believes that it is about the progeny of the husband, while Meinhold agrees that they refer to the children, but the emphasis of the context is on the wife and her love; see Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 105. Whybray (*Proverbs*, p. 90) and McKane (p. 318) think that they refer to the husband's semen.

[228] See Paul Kruger, 'Promiscuity or Marriage Fidelity? A Note on Prov 5:15-18', *JNSL* 13 (1987), pp. 61-68 (66 n. 29); he mentions that Gispen is the only scholar who interprets vv. 15-16 as referring to private versus public property, in W.H. Gispen, *De Spreuken van Salomo* (Korte Verklaring; 1952), p. 93. (However, I have been unable to obtain access to Gispen's book directly.) Kruger's article argues that it is v. 16, the depiction of 'outsideness' in the water-imagery which gives the clue that it is all about the warnings against the Foreign Woman. However, the expressions denoting 'outside' for the Foreign Woman which he uses as his support for his argument are also expressions found for Woman Wisdom. He acknowledges this difficulty but he does not explain how to resolve it. I think the whole argument is weakened for the interpretation he proposes.

[229] Refer to n. 227.

streams of water, which are outside and are shared by everyone. The father poses a rhetorical question about whether one's private property should be opened to the public, and v. 17 follows with an exhortation that one should guard it jealously for oneself, and not for others to share. Therefore, vv. 15-17 continue the theme of vv. 9-14 where the victim of the Foreign Woman loses everything that he owns to the foreigners associated with the Foreign Woman. They remind the pupil to keep his property for his own family and people: they should never under any circumstances be conceded to foreigners.

Verses 18-20 return to the sort of metaphorical language used for the Foreign Woman in vv. 3-8. However, this time, the charms of the Foreign Woman, described in v. 20, are pitted against the depiction of one's own wife in vv. 18-19. Verse 18a, therefore, apparently links the imagery of private property in v. 15 to the wife in v. 18b. Hence, just as the Foreign Woman is metaphorical, the wife depicted in vv. 18b-19 should also be understood as metaphorical. The expression אשת נעורך recalls the אלוף נעוריה of 2.17, while the latter is the one whom the Foreign Woman leaves, the former is the one to whom the addressee should remain faithful. She could be none other than personified wisdom. The אשת נעורך is described in terms of physical affection, yet in the same language used to describe the Foreign Woman. The sense of ambiguity is at play again in these verses. Both are described as having the ability to intoxicate, as wine does, which causes one to stray – שגה (vv. 19, 20). The bosoms of both are mentioned: v. 19 – דד and v. 20 – חק. Admittedly, the form of expression is different – v. 19 is in the jussive, exhorting one to be satisfied in the breasts of the אשת נעורך, while v. 20 is another rhetorical question, but this is a minor difference. The pupil is admonished to be drunk with the instructions and teachings of wisdom, not those of the Foreign Woman.[230] It is here, in vv. 18-20, that the author first explicitly juxtaposes these two women in antithesis.

Verses 21-23 remind the son that Yahweh is not blind, but sees all the ways of men. Therefore, punishment is exacted from the one who wilfully sins, as a consequence of his own folly. The reminder of an all-seeing God recalls the depiction of secrecy in one's intent to sin, a motif which is found in the depiction of the evil men (1.11), and

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[230] In v. 19, the reference is literally to the 'nipple' (cf. *BDB*, p. 186). An allusion to lovemaking is possible (cf. Ezek. 23.21), but while there are surely overtones of this, the accompanying verbs suggest that the image being used is one of breastfeeding. This picks up the preceding motif of drinking, and may have some counterpart in Ben Sira's image of maternal sustenance from Wisdom (Sir. 15.2-3).

more particularly, as a Deuteronomic expression recurring in the contexts of foreign worship: Deut. 13.6; 27.15; as well as 2 Kgs 17.9.[231]

Prov. 6.20-35

20 My son, keep your father's commandment,
and do not forsake the teaching (תורת) of your mother.
21 Bind them on your heart always,
and tie them round your neck.
22 When you walk, she will guide you,
when you lie down, she will watch over you,
and when you are awake,[232] she will talk to you.
23 For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching a light,
and reproofs of discipline the way of life;
24 To preserve you from the wicked woman (אשת רע),
from the smoothness of the tongue of the foreign woman (נכריה).
25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart
and do not let her capture you[233] with her eyelashes.
26 For the prostitute's fee[234] is only a loaf of bread,
but the wife of another man hunts for precious life.
27 Can a man take fire in his bosom and not burn his clothes?
28 Or can a man walk on hot coals and not scorch his feet?
29 So is he who goes to his neighbour's wife,
none who touch her will be innocent.
30 One does not despise a thief if he steals to fill himself because he is hungry.
31 If he is caught, he pays sevenfold,
and he gives all the goods of his house.
32 But the one who commits adultery lacks sense,
he who does it destroys himself.
33 Wounds and dishonour he will find,
and his reproach will never be wiped away.
34 Because jealousy enrages a man,
he will not have mercy on the day of vengeance.
35 He will not accept any compensation,
and he will not be satisfied with any gifts.

In this passage, we find that in reference to the Foreign Woman, only נכריה occurs (compare 5.1-14 where only זרה occurs). The warning in v. 24 is also different from the earlier ones against the Foreign Woman, in that it introduces another synonym, the 'evil woman'. The usual warning of the sting of her smooth speech is retained. However, this warning lacks the usual threat of death of the netherworld. This omission may be a result of the merging of two different texts, as suggested by Whybray on the

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[231] The depiction of sin committed in secrecy not related to idolatry – Deut. 27.24; Job 13.10; 31.7; Pss. 10.9; 64.5; 101.5.
[232] בהתהלכך was perhaps left out, but retained in the MT.
[233] Taking תוקיחך, as proposed by *BHS*.
[234] Taking as בעד, as proposed by *BHS*. Cf. explanation by Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 231-32.

following grounds:[235] (1) the address to the son in the second masculine singular, 'you' in vv. 20-25 switches to the third person masculine singular, 'one' in vv. 27-35, hence a break in continuity; (2) there is also a lack of emphasis on depictions of 'the way' in vv. 26-35, which is an important feature that always occurs in the introductory and conclusion of the passages on the Foreign Woman (cf. 2.16, 19; 5.3-6, 21-23; 7.5, 8, 25-27; 9.15); (3) the expressions used to identify the woman in vv. 26-35 are not used for the Foreign Woman and are not found anywhere else in Proverbs 1-9 – אשת איש and אשת רעהו, and נאף are also spelled out here as the crime; (4) the threats expressed in vv. 32-35 are those of the angered husband, but the threats of the Foreign Woman are only those related to the netherworld and 'foreigners' in 5.9-10. The text as it stands, should therefore remain, and אשת רע should not be emended to אשת רעך, because there seems to be no intention to harmonise both texts as coherently as some commentators want them to be.[236] Nonetheless, the two texts might have been brought together because of the association of apostasy with adultery, the common metaphor found in the other parts of the OT. Therefore, the contents of vv. 26-35 which deal specifically with adultery cannot be used to define the Foreign Woman. The Foreign Woman has a symbolic nature, that is closely tied up with depictions of 'smooth' words and the imagery of the 'way', which leads one not only to physical death, but to a more horrifying kind of death in the netherworld.

Another interesting point in this passage, is how the way of the Foreign Woman is juxtaposed not only with the father's commandments, but with the Torah of the son's mother (vv. 20-23). If the son's mother implies the connotations of Jewishness of the woman, and therefore contrasts the 'foreignness' of the woman to avoid; and Torah with wisdom and the way of Yahweh, the author has made another attempt of an antithetical depiction of two women figures. However, for this, wisdom is not personified but associated with a real woman as the son's mother, and juxtaposed with the Foreign Woman, who is made to be depicted in a more concrete way as an adulteress.

Prov. 7:1-26

1 My son, keep my words and treasure my commandments within you.
2 Keep my commandments and live, keep my teaching as the apple of your eye.[237]
3 Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart.

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[235] Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 102.
[236] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 230. However, Toy (p. 134) and Whybray (*Proverbs*, p. 105) change it to אשה זרה.
[237] Literally, 'as the pupil of your eye'.

4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister", and call insight your intimate friend.
5 To keep you from the strange woman (אשה זרה),
from the foreign woman (נכריה) who smoothens her words.
6 For at the window of my house[238] I looked down through a lattice,
7 I saw among the simple ones,[239] and I observed among the sons,[240]
a young man without sense.
8 Passing along the street near her corner, he takes the way to her house.
9 In the twilight, in the evening, in the middle of the night, and in darkness.
10 Behold! A woman comes to meet him, dressed like a prostitute, crafty of heart.[241]
11 She is loud and rebellious.[242] Her feet do not stay at home.
12 Now she is in the streets, then in the squares, and at every corner she lies in wait.
13 She grabs him and kisses him, and with a brazen face she says to him,
14 "Peace offerings are upon me, today I have fulfilled my vows.
15 Therefore I have come out to meet you, to seek you and I have found you.
16 I have decked my couch with coverings, dark-coloured linens from Egypt.
17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
18 Come, let us take our fill until morning,[243] let us delight ourselves with love.
19 For the man is not in his house, he has gone on a journey far away.
20 He took a bag of money in his hand, at the full moon[244] he will return to his house."
21 She persuades him with much smooth speech,
with her smooth lips, she seduces him.
22 Suddenly, he follows her, he goes like an ox to the slaughter,
Or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.[245]
23 Until an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird hastens to the snare,
He does not know that it is because of his life.
24 Now therefore my son, listen to me,
Be attentive to the words of my mouth.
25 Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways,
Do not stray into her paths.
26 For many are the victims she has cast down, and numerous all her slain.
27 Her house[246] is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.

Prov. 7.1-5 follows the common pattern found in chapters 1-9 of introducing a warning with a general admonition, but there is a specific point of contact with what follows. The son is exhorted to form a relationship with wisdom as if with an intimate female friend or sister.[247] He is to do this in order to protect himself from the foreign woman, who offers an altogether more dangerous relationship. The requirement to

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[238] *BHS* suggests that on account of the meter, to insert 'I looked' here.
[239] *BHS* suggests perhaps it may be 'young man' here, cf. n. 238.
[240] On account of the previous notation, perhaps it is 'the simple ones' here.
[241] One manuscript has 'secret concealed'.
[242] *BHS* proposed וסחרת or וסבבת denoting 'going about', cf. SSongs 3.2.
[243] On account of the metre, it has been suggested to delete 'until morning'.
[244] The meaning is uncertain.
[245] This translation cites the KJV, which follows the *BHS*. One manuscript has: וכעכס אל־מוסר איל (like a stag bounding to bonds), see explanation in Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 239, 249.
[246] *BHS* proposed 'her ways', cf. 2.18.
[247] Whybray (*Proverbs*, p. 112) explains that its parallelism with מדע also indicates an 'intimate confidante'.

choose between these female figures is established, therefore, even before they are each given an opportunity to speak, and the speeches that follow, in this chapter and the next, serve as contrasting invitations. More significantly, however, the depictions in this chapter concretise the imagery of the one who, when given the invitation, chooses the wrong 'way'.

Although the woman's dress and behaviour are brazen and explicitly attractive, her principal means of seduction is still her 'smooth speech'. Therefore, we should expect her speech to be persuasive, but surprisingly, it begins on a religious note, with references to her peace offerings and vows (v. 14). The precise implication of this theme is uncertain. Some commentators have proposed that her vows are yet to be fulfilled. This opens up some interesting possibilities, that is, taking שלמתי with a future reference and hence, the vow constitutes the consummation of the sexual intercourse which is yet to take place.[248] It is, however, grammatically difficult to take the verb as referring to the future, and the majority of the commentators, probably rightly, assume the woman to be declaring that she has already fulfilled her vow.[249] It seems likely that she has also already made the peace-offerings, given her apparent intention to have intercourse, and therefore render herself ritually unclean (cf. Lev. 7.11-21).[250] Thus, it may be understood that she is saying little more than that she has a reason to celebrate. The nature of the sacrifices does not indicate that she is necessarily an Israelite or a Yahwist,[251] but the fact of them does suggest that she is religious. Here we see the sort of ambiguity at work, as Aletti points out: the woman does not present herself as evil or voracious, but as pious

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[248] Boström, pp. 107-108; McKane, pp. 221, 337; Plöger, p. 79; van der Toorn, pp. 93-110; Clifford, *Proverbs*, pp. 86-90. The last suggests that the Foreign Woman also has it in mind to make a sacrificial meal of the youth. Van der Toorn, on the other hand, argues that the woman is in need of money to pay the vow, and is thus prostituting herself.

[249] Toy, pp. 151-52; Whybray, *Proverbs*, pp. 114-15; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 245-46.

[250] Lev. 7.11-21 stipulates that the peace offering is to be consumed on the day offered, or the day after. Any remaining thereafter is to be burned because it is unacceptable to the Lord (vv. 16-18). If the food touches anything unclean, it must be burned while the rest can be eaten by anyone who is ceremonially clean. Anyone unclean who touches the offering will be excommunicated (vv. 19-21). However, Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, p. 246) explains that as long as the meal is taken before the sexual intercourse, it is still valid and no one is condemned.

[251] Contra Whybray (*Proverbs*, p. 115), the 'peace-offering' is not specifically an Israelite term, p. 115. It is in fact a common offering in ancient NE cults, see J.C. de Moor, 'The Peace Offering in Ugarit and Israel', in D. Attema, et. al. (eds.), *Schrift en Uitleg: Studies van oud-leerlingen, collega's en vrienden aangeboden aan Prof. Dr. W.H. Gispen ter gelegenheid van zijn vijfentwintigjarig ambtsjubileum als hoogleraar aan de Vrije Universiteit te Amsterdam en ter gelegenheid van het bereiken van de zeventigjarige leeftijd* (Netherlands, Kampen: J.H. Kok; 1970), pp. 112-17.

and happy, although she is to go on to reveal some more of herself.[252] In the following verses, she makes the youth feel special – he is the one for whom she has been looking, and she has already made preparations for his arrival – the couch is bedecked and perfumed, so that they can make love in luxury until dawn.

What the woman suggests up to this point is attractive, and not obviously illegal – the youth is free to have sex with a free woman. It is only in v. 19 that, if he is alert, the youth may start to recognise the signs of danger. At this point, she explains that they will not be disturbed because the man of his house is away on a long journey with a bag of money, and he will only return when it is full moon.[253] Many commentators translate האיש בביתו as 'my husband', but this is not the only option.[254] The expression האיש בביתו is odd: why does she say האיש, and not אישי, if it is her husband that she wants to mention? On the other hand, why, after all, should she spoil the mood and frighten the youth with the mention of her husband? Contrary to some commentators who think that it is because the term reflects the emotional distance of the couple,[255] it seems more likely that she is trying to avoid admitting whether she has a husband or not, hence, her marital status is not least explicit, and it can hardly be about adultery *per se*.

Again, although the Foreign Woman is depicted as a real human being seducing the youth, this is symbolic of seduction into the way of apostasy. As mentioned earlier, the portrayal of her is ambiguous: she is religious, offers food and love, all of which personified wisdom does as well.[256] The Foreign Woman is portrayed as a rich woman – the mention of the 'peace-offering' (v. 14), something which probably only the wealthy

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[252] Aletti, p. 136; also, cf. Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 127.

[253] For some commentators, the reference to the 'full moon' symbolises a cultic festivity: Toy (p. 154) who argues that the couple are Israelites, proposes that it refers to some festival of the full moon (cf. Ps. 81.3) or the feast of Tabernacles or the Passover; while Boström (pp. 123-27) takes it to have references to some fertility cultic rites. For most commentators, however, it simply signals the time factor, and that the woman and her new lover can spend the night undisturbed; see McKane, pp. 398-99; and Murphy, p. 44. Meinhold (*Sprüche*, vol. I, p. 129), moreover, suggests that because they met at the time when there was no moon (cf. v. 9), and in contrast to the 'full moon', it also implies that the chances of them being caught in adultery is diminished. The idea that it has to do with being caught and its link with v. 9, where night is described in increasing intensity of darkness, perhaps might suggest that the 'full moon' symbolises righteousness, while darkness symbolises sinfulness.

[254] The question is raised by Athalya Brenner, 'Proverbs 1-9: An F Voice?', in Brenner and F. van Dijk-Hemmes (eds.), *On Gendering Texts: Female and Male Voices in the Hebrew Bible* (BIS, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1993), pp. 113-30 (124). She suggests that it could refer to her father, brother or a male guardian, and not necessarily her husband. However, she concludes it must be the husband.

[255] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 248; Toy, p. 154.

could afford for such occasions (cf. 2 Chron. 30.22; 33.16; Ezek. 46.12), and which includes the sponsoring of the meal for relatives and friends; the mention of couch decked with dark-coloured linens from Egypt (v. 16); the mention of perfumes on the bed (v. 17); as well as the bag of money the man took (v. 20). The Foreign Woman is not outwardly inferior to personified wisdom, and, like her, can offer wealth. To be sure, she is brassy, loud and rebellious, and not well domesticated (vv. 10-11), but she makes up for this with a provocative sexuality. On the whole, the Foreign Woman is as attractive as the Woman Wisdom. Therefore, it takes a discerning and instructed man to perceive which one is the right one to choose – the Foreign Woman or the Woman Wisdom.

The victim is depicted by the father in v. 21 as being seduced by her compelling words of flattery. He follows her, and death, like the certain destiny of a hunted animal, awaits him (vv. 22-23). The father interjects a further warning to heed his words (v. 24), and not to allow his heart to stray into her paths (v. 25). It is the one who can restrain his heart from the Foreign Woman who is the wise son, and the one who walks into her trap who is the fool. Verses 26-27 once more use the language of death and the netherworld to describe the end of her victims. Hence, this is how the choice of the wrong 'way' concludes – to death and the netherworld.

Prov. 9.13-18

13 The woman of follies (Woman Folly) is loud, simple, and knows nothing.
14 She sits at the door of her house, she takes her seat at the high places of the city.
15 Calling to those who pass by, who are making their paths straight.
16 "You who are simple, turn in here!" And to him who lacks sense, she says,
17 "Stolen water is sweet! Bread eaten in secret is pleasant!"
18 But he does not know that the dead are there,
that her guests are in the depths of Sheol.

This passage on Woman Folly appears as part of the conclusion to Proverbs 1-9. The last chapter, Prov. 9, is divided into three sections: the first deals with the invitation of Woman Wisdom (vv. 1-6); the second contains a series of sayings about wisdom and advice (vv. 7-12);[257] and the third is about the invitation of Woman Folly (vv. 13-18).

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[256] Although personified wisdom does not explicitly offer intercourse, the depiction of her to be embraced as wife is also an invitation to consummate the relationship.

[257] Many scholars deem this section which stands between the invitations of the two women, is incompatible with the style and content of Prov. 9, and therefore, secondary. Toy (p. 183) thinks the passage is a scribal error; Oesterley (pp. 66-67) blames an unintelligent later scribe. Most scholars seem to agree that v. 13 continues from v. 6 – Toy, p. 188; McKane, p. 359. Hence the tendency to regard the speech of Woman Wisdom in v. 11 as continuing from v. 6 as suggested by Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 141; and Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 306-309. They are probably influenced by Scott's deduction that vv. 10-12 originally constitute the speech of Woman

Most interestingly, the invitations of Woman Wisdom and Woman Folly are in direct anti-thesis to each other.

There should be no doubt that the Woman Folly and the Foreign Woman are one and the same. They share the same vocabulary and descriptions. Both invite (9.13; 7.14-21), are said to be loud (9.13; 7.11), possess houses (9.14; 2.18; 5.8; 7.8), appear in the meeting places of the town (9.14; 7.12), and lead to the same consequence of death and the netherworld (9.18; 2.18-19; 5.5; 7.26-27). However, if they are referring to the same woman, why is her name in 9.13-18 changed to 'Woman Folly'? The Foreign Woman, as we have seen, is herself symbolic, which in the previous passages is probably only detectable through the spiritual depiction of death associated with her. In order to highlight her metaphorical function, the author adds another exaggeration of her by personifying her, this time pitting her directly against her antithesis: Woman Wisdom and therefore, Woman Folly. In a rather significant way, she is called 'Folly' and she is ignorant as in 9.13, while her antithesis is 'Wisdom', full of the knowledge and fear of Yahweh as chapter 8 describes her to be. Thus, the author reiterates that to choose the way of the Foreign Woman is pure foolishness. Here, the two women compete with each other more overtly in similar, corresponding terms: both women have a house (vv. 1, 14); both are located at the high places of the town (vv. 3, 14); both call out in direct speech (vv. 4-6, 15-17); both address the 'simple' and invite them to turn to their ways (vv. 4, 16); inviting those 'without sense' to eat bread and drink with them (vv. 5, 17). At the same time, both women are worlds apart. The opening description of Woman Wisdom shows her actively building her own house (v. 1), while Woman Folly is loud, simple and ignorant (v. 13); Woman Wisdom slaughters meat and mixes wine to prepare a banquet (v. 2), before sending out her invitation, via her servant-girls to the high places of the town (v. 3); the Woman Folly just sits at the door of her house (v. 14), calling out to those who pass by (v. 15); Woman Wisdom invites her guests to partake of her bread and mixed wine (v. 5), but the menu of the Woman Folly is water – not even drawn by herself, but stolen – and bread eaten in secret (v. 17). Woman Wisdom pleads with her

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Wisdom. On the other hand, Scott (pp. 74-76) retains vv. 7-9 to follow the end of the speech of Woman Wisdom, and treats vv. 13-18 as a later addition. The other way of treating the passage as it stands suggests it functions as a warning to incorrigible sinners in contrast to the seemingly hopeful, up-beat tone of Woman Wisdom in vv. 1-6, so as Gemser, p. 41. In terms of understanding the function of this passage, like Gemser, Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, p. 306) thinks that the addition is a provision made for those unworthy to heed Woman Wisdom's call. However, Goldingay thinks that the decision to make vv. 13-18 correspond to vv. 1-6 is probably an indication that it was added later, see Goldingay, pp. 80-93.

guests to leave simplicity and live and walk in understanding (v. 6), and the Woman Folly also calls to those who are making their paths straight (v. 15).

In this concluding chapter, the author makes an emphasis that the two female figures are concerned with the invitations to follow each of their ways. While it is evident that the depictions of Woman Wisdom represent Yahweh (especially in Prov. 8), the depictions of the Foreign Woman often oscillate between the real and the metaphorical. Therefore, the Foreign Woman in Prov. 9.13-18 has been portrayed more symbolically, to parallel those of Woman Wisdom in order to give hint that she is not about a real, common, promiscuous, 'foreign' woman in the street, but rather, she is symbolic of the 'way' of 'foreignness' which will lead to imminent destruction.

General Summary and Conclusion

So far, much have been said about the origin and nature of the motif, and before we go on to observe its development in the subsequent literature, we will summarise the results of the study we have made. In the beginning of the thesis, we have seen that נכריה has nothing to do with social exclusion, or with any moral misconduct, in particular promiscuity as the reason of it, which has been previously assumed by scholarship. On the other hand, our study shows that נכריה cannot be divorced from the sense of 'foreignness' as attested by the other occurrences of נכר in the OT; and we sought out to explain why 'foreignness' should have the resonance that it does in Proverbs.

One of the answers is supplied from the recent historical context, of the issue of mixed marriages, as depicted in Ezra-Nehemiah. We see in Chapter Two, how the concept of 'foreignness' in Ezra-Nehemiah runs deeper than the usual identification of non-Israelite in the earlier Deuteronomic texts. In fact, Ezra and Nehemiah could not identify the נשים נכריות within their midst. They could not differentiate the *golah* community from the 'peoples of the land'. They had to resort to records of ancestral registry and to listen to the speech of their children to tell them apart. However, those whom Ezra-Nehemiah called 'foreign wives', are linked to the Deuteronomic prohibitions of marrying women from the 'peoples of the land'. These women are deemed to be as 'abominations to YHWH' and 'polluted', and the fact of their presence will lead Israel into apostasy, consigning the whole *golah* community into annihilation. Nehemiah, moreover, links the 'foreign wives' to Solomon's marriages, which similarly corrupt him into apostasy.

It is in Chapter Three, where we see the same motif at work more broadly in the books of Kings. There, it is not only Solomon who is led astray, but rather the 'foreign women', most quintessentially Jezebel, are depicted as the root cause of Israel's apostasy from Yahweh. Jezebel, was not just portrayed as a foreign cult worshipper, but she actively persecutes the devotees of Yahweh, and corrupts Ahab, her husband. Through her, not only did he worship foreign deities, but also commit acts of evil (1 Kgs 21.25); and through her husband's apostasy, the Northern kingdom, and in turn, the Judean kings of Ahaz and Manasseh become corrupted. Likewise, all the other 'foreign wives' of the Judean kings, in particular as mothers, corrupt them. Through the 'foreign wives', the kings become corrupted, and in turn lead the whole nation into apostasy, resulting in the exile. It is this perception of 'foreign wives' which underpins Ezra-Nehemiah, in conjunction with new ideas about national identity, and the motif is not simply a product of the post-exilic dispute.

Proverbs 1-9 cannot be cut off altogether from its Jewish context, which its various references to Deuteronomy makes difficult, and therefore, we may reasonably assume that this powerful motif is to be associated in the same way with the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Indeed, as we look into those passages concerning the Foreign Woman in Chapter Four, she depicts and symbolises 'foreignness' through the identification of זרה and נכריה, and is essentially the way of apostasy. Juxtaposed with Woman Wisdom, who is symbolic of the way of Torah and piety leading to Yahweh and his blessings, both women compete against one another to lure Jewish men onto their paths. Both women are portrayed most similarly in their invitations and persuasions, and they present themselves as desirable women to possess – rich, happy and attractive. The Foreign Woman, in particular, is seductive in her speech (Prov. 2.16; 5.3; 7.5, 21), as apostasy is always depicted this way in the OT. Where she actually speaks in Prov. 7.14-20, her speech is ambiguous and her religiosity and her marital status is not explicit. Furthermore, her invitations are also always accompanied by the warnings of the father, who depicts the consequences of taking heed to her in the most horrifying way (Prov. 2.19; 5.9-14, 20-23; 7.22-27; 9.18). In contrast, Woman Wisdom speaks in truth and presents herself as a potential devoted woman companion (cf. Prov. 8.6-9; 7.4), and her invitations are accompanied by promises of prosperity and long life (cf. Prov. 8.15-21, 32-35; 9.11). Moreover, in Prov. 9.13-18, the Foreign Woman is personified as Woman Folly to reiterate her symbolic nature as anti-thesis to Woman Wisdom, and to assert that her way is one of pure foolishness.

More significantly, the analyses of the passages show that adultery does not define the Foreign Woman. Prov. 2.17 speaks of her divorced state from a marriage covenant, which evokes language of apostasy more than that of a real marriage. In addition, her speech in Prov. 7.20 does not disclose that she has a husband; Prov. 5.15-20 is not about admonitions of fidelity to one's spouse as much as it is about fidelity to the 'true' Jewish community and Yahweh; and Prov. 6.26-35 is merged with vv. 20-25 most probably because the Foreign Woman is understood to symbolise apostasy, which is commonly associated with adultery. In the same vein, the origin of the motif of 'foreign wives' of the Judean kings and also Jezebel, are never accused of adultery, not even the 'daughter of the foreign god' in Mal. 2.11, or those 'foreign wives' in Ezra-Nehemiah. In all these texts, they are 'bad', because they corrupt Israel and cause them to leave the ways of Yahweh.

Hence, the Foreign Woman of Proverbs 1-9 is a motif of 'foreignness', employing the language and concepts of the earlier Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic texts to deal with the same problems of perceiving 'foreignness' as inherently the source of apostasy, but in a poetic way. However, as we shall see in the next two chapters, the significance of this powerful motif begins to recede as it leaves the context of mixed marriages and 'foreign wives' of the post-exilic period.

Chapter Five

Direct References to the Motif of the Foreign Woman in Other Wisdom Literature

In the preceding chapters we have seen that the motif of the Foreign Woman probably has its origin in the pre-exilic legal and historical material, where marriage to women of the foreign 'peoples of the land' is identified as a source of Israel's apostasy. This theme is developed further in the DtrH, where there is a particular focus on the 'foreign wives' who lead kings, and thus the nation, astray. That interpretation of history is explicitly linked in Ezra-Nehemiah to an attempt within the golah community of the Return to purge itself of 'foreign wives', but it probably finds its strongest literary expression in Proverbs 1-9. There the Foreign Woman becomes an insidious, destructive force whose seductions lead the unwary to destruction, and she is explicitly the opposite of Wisdom who draws men instead to piety and conformity with the will of Yahweh. After that point, the figure of Wisdom goes on to enjoy further success in Jewish literature, but the Foreign Woman increasingly recedes from sight. In the following chapters we shall explore the reasons for that decline and assess her role, or her absence, in some of the key literature.

Problems of dating make it impractical to proceed in a strict chronological sequence here. Instead, for the sake of convenience, we shall first examine material which seems to have a direct connection with Proverbs 1-9 – two short passages from other parts of Proverbs, a typically obscure reference in Ecclesiastes, and a very interesting but fragmentary text from Qumran. We shall also look at the way in which the Septuagint translation of Proverbs has dealt with the motif. Although this may seem a little miscellaneous, it will soon become clear that there are some important issues common to all these texts. In the next chapter, we shall deal with the more substantial books of Ben Sira and Wisdom of Solomon, which are not ignorant of Proverbs 1-9, but approach its imagery and theme less directly.

5.1. The Motif of the Foreign Woman in the Wisdom Literature of the OT

In this section, we will look at the biblical texts in the OT which seem to include direct references to the motif of the Foreign Woman. They all occur within the genre of the wisdom literature, and two passages are found in the book of Proverbs – 22.14; 23.26-28; and the other in the book of Ecclesiastes – 7.26.

The זרות in Prov. 22.14

> The mouth of strange women (זרות) is a deep pit,
> He with whom Yahweh is angry will fall into it.

Prov. 22.14 is found in a collection with the superscription 'Proverbs of Solomon' (10.1-22.16).[258] As sentence literature, this is very different in form and construction from the material in Proverbs 1-9: it is not 'instruction' in the technical sense, but is made up of individual sayings with no necessary thematic relationship between them, except in short sections such as Prov. 16.10-15. Therefore, each saying is an individual unit by itself and cannot be interpreted by reference to context. It is difficult to determine how and when the collection was compiled, or how the sayings were composed.[259]

This saying uses the term זרות, the feminine plural of זר, which most commentators assume refers to the warnings against the Foreign Woman,[260] although as Meinhold has pointed out, the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is a single figure described with a singular adjective and she is never directly associated with Yahweh.[261] More specifically, the saying warns against the mouth of the זרות, that is, her speech. The description of this as a deep pit evokes traditional images of death, the grave, and the saying is superficially similar to the warnings against the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. On the other hand, the second line changes the meaning of it, for here the 'foreign women' are, in some sense, the punishment for sin, rather than explicitly the

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[258] For an introduction to this collection, see Whybray, *Proverbs*, pp. 149-55.
[259] The tendency in earlier works to regard sentence-literature as inherently earlier than instructional ones is based on discredited form-critical theories; cf. McKane, pp. 10-22; and C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9: Eine form- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung ägyptischen Vergleichsmaterials* (WMANT 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchen Verlag, 1966), pp. 1-75 (74-75).
[260] Most commentators assume that it does refer to the Foreign Woman; cf. Toy, p. 419; Scott, p. 129; McKane, p. 571.
[261] Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. II, p. 371.

cause of it, and hence some kind of pre-determinism is involved.[262] It is very different from Proverbs 1-9, for everyone has a chance to hear Wisdom and to avoid the Foreign Woman.

If this saying was composed later than Proverbs 1-9, then it seems to have changed the motif of the Foreign Woman somewhat: she is now a trap rather than a lure, and functions as a punishment, rather than a cause of sin. On the other hand, if it was earlier, it could conceivably have provided Proverbs 1-9 with a starting-point for its more elaborate imagery. We cannot be certain either way, although it is arguable that the image presupposes knowledge of a foreign woman figure, who tempts with her speech.

The נכריה in Prov. 23.26-28

> **26** Give me your heart, my son, and let your eyes delight in my ways.
> **27** For a prostitute (זונה) is a deep pit and the foreign woman (נכריה) a narrow well.
> **28** She lies in wait like a robber, and increases acts of treachery among men.[263]

This passage is found in the collection of proverbs known as 'The Sayings of the Wise' (Prov. 22.17-24.22).[264] There seem to be direct connections between this collection and the Egyptian work known as The Instruction of Amenemope, although the nature of the relationship remains a matter of debate.[265] It is noteworthy that for this passage, there is nothing similar in content to the Instruction of Amenemope. Scholars agree that this passage is related to the motif of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9;[266] Prov. 23.27 links the prostitute and the Foreign Woman by synonymous parallelism, and both are likened to a deep pit.[267] While 'pit' again usually evokes the grave, the analogy of the 'narrow well' is synonymous with 'pit' here, and is also used elsewhere to depict death.[268] The depth and narrowness of the two underground holes suggest an

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[262] It recalls the same kind of pre-determinism found in the epilogue of Ptahhotep, line 549, 'Someone hated by God does not hear'; see Parkinson, p. 262.
[263] See Whybray, *Proverbs*, p. 340, for the translation of this verse.
[264] For a brief introduction to this collection, see Whybray, *Proverbs*, pp. 323-25.
[265] For a concise summary of the debate on the question of the relationship between the Instruction of Amenenope and Prov. 22.17-24:12, see R.N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs: A Survey of Modern Study* (History of Biblical Interpretation Series, 1; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 6-18. It is noteworthy that Adolf Erman, who first pointed out the similarities between these two texts, also presupposed the Persian period as the date for the influence. See A. Erman, 'Eine ägyptische Quelle der "Sprüche Salomos"', *SPAW* 15 (1924), 86-93, tab. VI f.
[266] Toy, p. 437; Scott, p. 143; McKane, pp. 390-92; Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. II, pp. 371, 395-96.
[267] And as Meinhold observes in 22.14, only the mouth of the strange women is portrayed in this way, see Meinhold, *Sprüche*, vol. II, p. 396.
[268] See Theodore J. Lewis, 'Dead, Abode of the', *ABD* vol. II, pp. 101-105 (101). See Eugene H. Merrill, 'שחת', *NIDOTE* vol. IV, pp. 92-93; and *BDB*, p. 1001. *BDB* (p. 92) also explains that the

impossibility of returning to life, a reminder of Prov. 2.19. The imagery in Prov. 23.28 recalls the ambush laid by the Foreign Woman in Prov. 7.12; and those laid by the evil men in Prov. 1.11. Their intentions, to trap and ultimately destroy their victims, are probably what is envisaged here as well. In view of the similar language and vocabulary in this passage, some scholars have taken the זונה to be equivalent to the נכריה, and used this as evidence that the נכריה is also and equally a sexually promiscuous woman.[269] In Proverbs 1-9, the Foreign Woman is not said to be a prostitute, although she dresses like one (Prov. 7.10) and may be sexually promiscuous. As we have seen earlier, the Foreign Woman and Woman Folly have more significant roles than the common prostitute, and the author makes a distinction between them in Prov. 7.10. More generally, consorting with a prostitute is never elsewhere deemed a grave offence in the OT, which raises questions about the presence of the term here. McKane, in view of the Septuagint reading, therefore suggests quite rightly that זרה should be read instead,[270] and it is noteworthy that one of the manuscripts has זרה instead of זונה.[271] It seems likely therefore, that זונה is an error here, or possibly an interesting secondary interpretation. If we read זרה instead, then the passage is much closer to Proverbs 1-9, and its use of the ambush imagery might suggest that it depends on that work; it does also have a link with the imagery of Prov. 22.14, but does not share the ideas of that saying. Again, it is hard to assign a relative date, but it is either a very interesting precursor, and possible inspiration, or, as seems more probable, a derivative summary.

The difficulties of dating make it hard to judge whether either Prov. 22.14 or 23.26-28 stand in the development of the Foreign Woman imagery, but it is likely that both show a knowledge of Proverbs 1-9, while Prov. 22.14 may show a significant development of ideas: the woman becomes a means of punishing those who are already condemned.

The האשה in Eccl. 7.26

I find more bitter[272] than death, the woman (האשה) who is a trap, whose heart is

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poetic use of בור to depict 'grave' is late. Prov. 1.12; Isa. 38.18; Ezek. 26.20; 31.14, 16; 32.18, 24, 25, 29; Pss. 28.1; 30.4; 88.5; 143.7.

[269] As we have seen in Snijders's interpretation, cf. 1.2. The logic of the argument is questionable. See also Murphy, p. 177.

[270] McKane, p. 390. Although *ἀλλότριος* is used twice in the Septuagint, it has a different content from the Hebrew text, as we shall see later in 5.3.

[271] As mentioned in *BHS*.

[272] See Seow's explanation for the complicated Hebrew grammar construction, in Seow, pp. 261-62.

nets, whose hands are fetters; the one who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner will be captured by her.

This text is found within the context of the author describing his pursuit and quest for wisdom (Eccl. 7.23-29), and the woman mentioned here seems to refer to the motif of the Foreign Woman, which we shall investigate.

Eccl. 7.23-29 (NRSV)
23 All this I have tested by wisdom; I said, "I will be wise," but it was far from me.
24 That which is, is far off, and deep, very deep; who can find it out?
25 I turned my mind to know and to search out and to seek wisdom and the sum of things, and to know that wickedness is folly and that foolishness is madness.
26 I found more bitter than death the woman who is a trap, whose heart is snares and nets, whose hands are fetters; one who pleases God escapes her, but the sinner is taken by her.
27 See, this is what I found, says the Teacher, adding one thing to another to find the sum,
28 which my mind has sought repeatedly, but I have not found. One man among a thousand I found, but a woman among all these I have not found.
29 See, this alone I found, that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes.

The author in Eccl. 7.23-25 seems to express his resignation in his pursuit for wisdom for he laments that although he is determined to find it so as 'to know wickedness is folly, and foolishness is madness' (Eccl. 7.25), it is beyond reach. What he found instead seems to be האשה, who is a trap (Eccl. 7.26). The continuing verses are difficult to comprehend. The author seems to say that although he continues to do his accounting, he still has not found wisdom. Then a strange statement is found in Eccl. 7.28 that he finds 'one man in a thousand', but he does not find 'a woman (אשה) in all these'. Then, he concludes in Eccl. 7.29 that he has found God to make humankind 'straight', but they have devised many inventions.

Most commentators tend to associate האשה in Eccl. 7.26 with the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 because, in light of Eccl. 9.9, the author does not seem to view that all women are destructive; and it must be about a specific kind of woman who has already been deemed bad, such as the Foreign Woman in Prov. 5.4 who is also said to be bitter at the end.[273] Others, like Scott, think that האשה is referring to the generic woman, as in Eccl. 7.28, hence the author is saying that the female population is generally bad

[273] G. Barton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the book Ecclesiastes* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1908), p. 147; J. Crenshaw, *Ecclesiastes: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1988), p. 146.

(Eccl. 7.26), and not one good one can be found (Eccl. 7.28).[274] Eric Christianson speculates that she represents the women of King Solomon's harem, who are condemned in 1 Kgs 11.1 and Neh. 13.25-26.[275] Seow, like George Barton and James Crenshaw, believes that האשה evokes the Foreign Woman, but he argues it in a different way.[276] He explains that the definite article indicates that a specific kind of woman is intended, whom the audience is familiar with, and in view of the context on wisdom and folly, it seems that the author is picking up the motif in Proverbs 1-9. The description of האשה also resembles the Foreign Woman, rather than any ordinary one – they are both depicted in terms of traps, are deadly, and whom one must be delivered from. However, in this depiction, the identity of 'foreignness' has been dropped completely and what is left is 'the woman' symbolising wickedness and folly.

5.2. The Motif of the Foreign Woman in 4Q184

The other materials which are related to, but outside of, Proverbs 1-9 are difficult to date. Consequently, determining the precise relationship between these texts is altogether an uncertain task. Nonetheless, there is a fragment found in Qumran which is almost certainly based on Proverbs 1-9, and directly related to our subject, therefore deserving a close study. The woman found in 4Q184,[277] who is described most provocatively and as embodying evil, has been assumed by most scholars to be a literary

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[274] Scott, pp. 238-39. The problem with assuming אשה as an opposite of אדם in v. 26 is because אדם is used in the rest of the book to mean 'humanity', rather than 'man'. See Seow, p. 264. Barton (p. 147) and Crenshaw (pp. 147-48) also make the same assumption that אשה intends to contrast אדם, but think that אשה alludes to Solomon's harem, which amounts to a thousand. Perhaps, Seow has given a better explanation for the occurrence of אשה in v. 28, that it was secondarily inserted because the grammatical construction of the last clause where it occurs is not coherent with the rest of the text. He suggests that a copyist must have added it because he does not know that v. 26 is referring to the Foreign Woman but thinks that it is about women in general, hence he intends to illustrate the point. See Seow, p. 265.

[275] E. Christianson, *A Time to Tell: Narrative Strategies in Ecclesiastes* (JSOTSup, 280; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), pp. 143-44. He takes much of the book to reflect the life of King Solomon.

[276] Seow, pp. 262-63.

[277] The dating of this fragment and its composition is uncertain. J. Carmignac thinks that the writing is 'rustic semi-formal', of the Herodian period (30 BCE-68 CE) and resembles 4Q171 and 4Q167. See J. Carmignac, 'Poème allégorique sur la secte rivale', *RevQ* 5/19 (1965), pp. 361-74 (361). However, this does not reflect the date of its composition. For dating of the Qumran scrolls, see Emmanuel Tov (ed.), *The Texts from the Judaean Desert: Indices and an Introduction to the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert Series* (DJD, vol. XXXIX; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 371-76.

creation originating for the most part from Woman Folly and the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. We shall evaluate these suppositions here.

The Text of 4Q184

There are six fragments of 4Q184.[278] Fragments 2-6 are fragmentary, while the text 4Q184 is largely preserved in fragment 1. The top left corner of fragment 1 is broken. I have used John Allegro's transcription and translation below.

Line 1
הזנ]ה תוציא הבל ובו[ ]א תועות תשחר תמיד[ל]שנן דברי[ה
The har]*lot*[279] utters vanities,[280] and […] errors; She seeks continually [to] sharpen [her] words,[281] […]

Line 2
וקלס תחל[י]ק ולחליץ יחד בש[וא] עול לבה יכפן פחין וכליותיה מק[
she mockingly flatters and with *emp*[*tiness*] to bring altogether[282] into derision. Her heart's perversion prepares wantonness,[283] and her emotions[284] […].

Line 3
בעול נגעלי הוה תמכו שוח רגליה להרשיע ירדו וללכת באשמות[פשע
In perversion they seized the fouled (organs) of passion,[285] they descended the pit of her legs to act wickedly, and behave[286] with the guilt of [*transgression* …

Line 4
מוסדי חושך רוב פשעים בכנפיה [ ]ה תועפות לילה ומלבשיה[
…] the foundations of darkness, the sins in her skirts are many. Her […] is the depths of the night, and her clothes […].

Line 5
מכסיה אפלות נשף ועדיה נגועי שחת ערשיה יצועי שחת[ ]
Her garments are the shades of twilight, and her adornments are touched with corruption.

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[278] J. Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4: I (4Q158-4Q186)* (DJD, vol. V; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 82-85. And for the photograph of the text, see Plate XXVIII. It was first published in 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman: A Sapiential Word from Qumran's Fourth Cave', *PEQ* 96 (1964), pp. 53-55.

[279] See the discussion below on Allegro's reconstruction.

[280] Better, 'she brings forth futility'.

[281] J. Strugnell's proposal of דבה for דבר is also possible, thus '…whets slander…'; see J. Strugnell, 'Notes sur le no. 184', *RevQ* 7/27 (1971), pp. 262-66 (264). Also, cf. Plate XXVIII, DJD vol. V.

[282] Instead of reading as an adverb 'altogether', some scholars understand יחד to refer to the community Yaḥad. See below for further discussion.

[283] Better, 'traps' for פחין.

[284] Literally, 'kidneys'.

[285] בעול נגעלי הוה תמכו שוח is best read simply as בעול נגעלו י[ד]יה תמכו שוח 'have been defiled with evil, her hands grasped the pit …'. See the criticism of Allegro's translation by Strugnell, p. 266 and compare the text in Plate XXVIII, DJD vol. V.

[286] Better, 'walk'.

Her beds are couches of *corruption*, […]

Line 6
מעמקי בור מלונותיה משכבי חושך ובאישני לילׄ[ה מם]שלותיה ממוסדי אפֿלֿותֿ
depths of the Pit. Her lodgings are beds of darkness, and in the depths of the nigh[t] are her [do]minions. From the foundations of *darkness*

Line 7
תאהל שבת ותשֿכון באהלי דומה בתוך מוקדי עולם ואין נחלתה בתוך בכולֿ
she takes her dwelling, and she resides in the tents of the underworld,[287] in the midst of everlasting fire, and she has no inheritance (in the midst of) among all

Line 8
מאזרי ///נוגה והֿיאה ראשׁית כֹּל דרכֿי עול הוי הוה לכול נוחליה ושדדה לכ[ול]
who gird themselves with light. She is the foremost of all the ways of iniquity; Alas! ruin shall be to all who possess her, and desolation to a[ll]

Line 9
תֿומכי בה כיא דרכיה דרכי מות ואורחותיה שבילי חטאת מעגלותיה משגות
who take hold of her. For her ways are the ways of death, and her path[s] are the roads to sin; her tracks lead astray

Line 10
עול ונתיבו[תי]הֿ אשמות פשע שׁעריה שׁערי מות בפתח ביתה תצעד שאֿו[לה]
to iniquity, and her paths are the guilt of transgression. Her gates are the gates of death, in the opening of her house it stalks. To Sheol[288]

Line 11
[ ]. כֿו[ו]לֿ[ ]ישובון וכול נוחליה ירדו שחת והֿ[י]אֿ במסתרים תארו
a[*l*]*l* […] will return, and all who possess her will go down to the Pit. She lies in wait in secret places, […]

Line 12
[יעה]ברחובות עיר תתעלף ובשערֿי קריות תתיצב ואין להרג[ ]כֿולֿ[
all […]. In the city's broad places she displays[289] herself, and in the town gates she sets herself, and there is none to distur[b her]

Line 13
מה[ ]תֿ תֿ[ ]...]עיניה הנה והֿנה ישכילו ועֿפעפיה בפחז תרים לראו[ת לא]יֿשׁ
from […]. Her eyes glance keenly hither and thither, and she wantonly raises her eyelids to seek out

Line 14
צדיק ותשיגהו ואישׁ[ע]צום ותכשילֿהו ישרים להטות דרך ולבחירי צדקֿ

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[287] Literally, 'silence'; see below.
[288] Better, 'her house steps to Sheol'; Strugnell, p. 265 and also, Florentino García Martínez and Eibert J.C. Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Study Edition* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), vol. I, p. 377.
[289] Better, 'veils'; Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. I, p. 377.

a righteous man and lead him astray, and a perfect man to make him stumble; upright men to divert (their) path, and those chosen for righteousness

Line 15
מנצור מצוה סמוכי ׳[ ]. להביל בפחז והולכי ישר להשנות ח[וק] להפשיע
from keeping the commandment; those sustained with [...] to make fools of them with wantonness, and those who walk uprightly to change the *st*[*atute*]; to make

Line 16
ענוים מאל ולהטות פעמיהם מדרכי צדק להביא זד[ו]ן ׳[ ]במה בל ערוכי[ם
the humble rebel from God,[290] and to turn their steps from the ways of righteousness; to bring *presumptuousness* [...], those not arraign[ed][291]

Line 17
במעגלי יושר להשגות אנוש בדרכי שוחה ולפתות בחלקות בני איש
in the tracks of uprightness; to lead mankind astray in the ways of the Pit, and to seduce by flatteries the sons of men.

The Interpretations of the Woman in 4Q184

Allegro reconstructs the first word of the text as ה[זונ], therefore a 'harlot', and interprets her as symbolic of Rome.[292] This reconstruction has rightly been rejected by J. Strugnell,[293] and it may be best to accept that the first few letters must remain unknown, while recognising that the last letter ה probably indicates a feminine noun of some sort. As for what the woman symbolizes, J. Carmignac believes that she represents a rival Jewish sect, because she is depicted as inimical to the Yaḥad community in line 2.[294] The reading יחד as 'the Yaḥad' has been widely adopted because it is a common self-reference of the Qumran community,[295] however, the reference to the community is usually designated with an article.[296]

A.M. Gazov-Ginzberg, however, is not satisfied with Carmignac's interpretation in terms of a rival Jewish sect, and he points to some other words in the text, which he believes to have double meanings; the second meanings, he suggests, are clues revealing

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[290] Better, 'to make the humble unfaithful'.
[291] For ׳[ ]במה בל ערוכי[ם , Strugnell's reading is to be preferred – במה בל ערוכיו ב[לב]; Strugnell, p. 266. The first *beth* is quite legible, hence: 'into their [hea]rt, so that they do not walk', as in Martínez and Tigchelaar, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, vol. I, p. 377.
[292] Allegro, 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman', p. 53.
[293] Strugnell, p. 264.
[294] Carmignac, pp. 361-74.
[295] Carmignac, p. 369 n. 10; cf. Strugnell, p. 266. Also, see the translation by Theodore Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (Doubleday, New York: Anchor Press, 1976), p. 495. It will be noted here that Gaster seems so carried away by his string of words starting with the letter 'b' denoting mocking speech that he has left out completely the word יחד.
[296] Karl Georg Kuhn, *Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1960), pp. 88-89.

the identity of the enemy.[297] So, for instance, he takes the word דומה in line 7 not only to refer to the netherworld, but also to the name of an actual place, most likely the House of Edom (cf. Isa. 21.11).[298] This interpretation leads to several possible candidates and Hans Burgmann, who otherwise agrees for the most part with Gazov-Ginzberg, has attempted to show that only a single specific enemy is symbolised in the text – Simon the Maccabean.[299] Arguably, the only certain fact to arise from these studies, is that the text is too vague to enable one to pin-point to any particular enemy, and matters are not helped by our ignorance of the historical context of the text.

T.H. Gaster takes a different approach, identifying no specific human enemy, but emphasising that this allegory concerns "Apostasy or the like, in line with the Biblical characterization of it as 'whoredom'."[300] This figure, who persuades with smooth words, must in some way represent a body of foreign or false doctrines, and consequently, apostasy. There are some other interpretations which shift the emphasis from identifying who the enemy might be: for example, Rick D. Moore goes further than Gaster, agreeing that the background to this text lies in a biblical concept of whoredom, but arguing that the woman is merely the personification of evil, rather than a specific enemy.[301]

J.M. Baumgarten develops ideas derived from both these scholars to argue that the woman is none other than the she-demon, Lilith, taking the occurrence of תועפות 'heights' (cf. Num. 23.22; 24.8) in line 4 to refer to her 'horns', and the preceding בכנפיה to refer to her 'wings'.[302] Baumgarten argues that since תועפות is in the plural, it must be about 'horns' rather than 'heights', however, תועפות never occurs in the singular in the OT, and the word commonly used for 'horns' of demons is קרן.[303] Moreover, since lines

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[297] A.M. Gazov-Ginzberg, 'Double-Meaning in a Qumran Work: The Wiles of the Wicked Woman', *RevQ* 6/22 (1967), pp. 279-85.

[298] The word דומה is derived from its root דום meaning 'silence' and in Ps. 94.17, the phrase שכנה דומה refers to the dwellings of the underworld. See especially the discussion by Gazov-Ginzberg, p. 281 n. 7; 'דום', *HALOT* vol. I, p. 216; and A. Baumann, 'דָּמָה II', *TDOT* vol. III, pp. 260-65.

[299] H. Burgmann, 'The Wicked Woman: Der Makkabäer Simon?' *RevQ* 8/31 (1974), pp. 323-59. He (pp. 347-48) also agrees that דומה refers to Edom.

[300] Gaster, p. 495.

[301] R.D. Moore, 'Personification of the Seduction of Evil: "The Wiles of the Wicked Woman"', *RevQ* 10/40 (1981), pp. 505-19.

[302] J.M. Baumgarten, 'On the Nature of the Seductress in 4Q184', *RevQ* 15/57-58 (1991), pp. 133-43.

[303] Baumgarten does acknowledge these difficulties; Baumgarten, p. 140. There are divided opinions among scholars as to the meaning of this word. While some choose to relate it to 'darkness', others prefer 'depths'. Apparently, תועפות has been confused with another word תעופה, which has the root II עוף, with the meaning 'darkness'. According to *HALOT*, תועפות has

4-5 describe the woman's adornments, it is rather easier to translate בכנפיה as 'skirt' than as 'wings'.[304] There are other, more characteristic features of Lilith which are not found in this text, and Baumgartner does not explain why they should have been left out. For example, Lilith's victims are specifically pregnant mothers and single males who sleep alone at night; and she resides with the beasts in the wilderness.[305] Although the interpretation of the woman as some kind of demon might find support in the depiction of her seduction, as this is a feature in other depictions found of demons in the texts from Qumran,[306] the argument that she is Lilith lacks any substantial support.

Given the difficulties in finding any more specific reference, Gaster, Strugnell and Moore are probably right simply to understand the woman as symbolic of evil in general, seducing the community into apostasy. It is especially interesting, therefore, to observe that there are many similarities with the depiction of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Some of these were noted by Allegro and others in early studies, but it was Strugnell who first stated explicitly that lines 7-9 of 4Q184 are dependent on the description in Proverbs.[307] A list comparing the two women might be helpful to ascertain the extent of their similarities:

(1) The root חלק, is used to describe the words of both women (4Q184 lines 2, 17; and Prov. 2.16; 5.3; 6.24; 7.5, 21).

(2) Their ways are said to lead to death in both texts (4Q184 line 9; and Prov. 2.18, 7.27).

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the meaning 'heights'. Thus in the occurrences at Num. 23.22 and 24.8, the word refers to the 'heights' of the ox, the horns; and for Ps. 95.4, the peak of the mountains. As for Job 22.25, while some Bible versions translate the word here as 'choice', 'precious', *HALOT* explains it as 'silver in massive heaps, or ingots'. Cf. 'תְּעוּפָה', *HALOT* vol. IV, p. 1768; and 'תּוֹעֲפוֹת', *HALOT* vol. IV, pp. 1704-706. The citing of Job 11.17 as a cross-reference is an indication of this confusion, as in Gaster, p. 500. Cf. Allegro, 'The Wiles of the Wicked Woman', p. 83; and Gazov-Ginzberg, p. 284.

[304] 'כָּנָף', *HALOT* vol. II, p. 486. The other meaning includes 'edge' or 'extremity'.

[305] For a brief synopsis of the origin and development of Lilith as a she-demon in Mesopotamia, and later contextualised to Judaic beliefs, see M. Hunter, 'Lilith' *DDD*, pp. 973-76. Also, G. Scholem, 'Lilith', *EncJud*, vol. XI, pp. 245-49. Lilith in Mesopotamia is a perpetual seductress, hunting for potential sexual partners. However, because she is still physically immature, she cannot perform normal intercourse, is incapable of producing children, or of nursing them, and can only produce poison instead of milk. All these characteristics are absent in 4Q184.

[306] Philip Alexander, 'Demonology in the Dead Sea Scrolls', in Peter W. Flint and James C. VanderKam (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls after Fifty Years: A Comprehensive Assessment* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1999), vol. II, pp. 331-53 (345). Other texts about demons who seduce are, 1QS 3:20-24; 4Q174 1-3, 7-9; and 4Q510 16. See also G.J. Riley, 'Demon', *DDD*, pp. 449, 452.

[307] Strugnell, pp. 266-67.

(3) The women in both texts possess houses or the like: for the woman in 4Q184, lodgings (מלונותיה) (line 6), dwellings (תאהל שבת) and tents (באהלי) (line 7) and a house (ביתה) (line 10); and for the Foreign Woman in Proverbs, a house (ביתה) (Prov. 7.8; 9.14). These abodes are also said to lead to death and the netherworld: of the woman in 4Q184 line 7, it is said that she 'dwells in the tents of the underworld and in the midst of fire', while line 10 describes her gates as those of death, and associated with Sheol. Prov. 7.27 correspondingly depicts the house of the Foreign Woman as leading to Sheol and death (cf. Prov. 9.18). Within their dwellings, both women have couches: משכבי (4Q184 line 6), and ערש (Prov. 7.16-17).

(4) Both women are depicted to do the same things to men: they lie in ambush תארוב (4Q184 line 11 and Prov. 7.8) and try to trap men with their bodies (4Q184 lines 3, 14-17; cf. Prov. 7.22-23; and Prov. 6.25 – with eyelashes).

(5) Both women are also located in the same place, the squares: ברחבות (4Q184 line 12; Prov. 7.12).

(6) Both women's feet are depicted as 'descending': (4Q184 line 3 – ירדו ... רגליה; and Prov. 5.5 – רגליה ירדות).

(7) Both women are associated with going astray: in 4Q184 line 1, the woman is said to utter errors (תועות), while in Prov. 7.25 a verbal form תעה, from the same stem, is used negatively as a warning not to 'err' or 'go astray' into the path of the Foreign Woman.

This list would seem to indicate quite clearly that the portrait in 4Q184 has been composed in the shadow of the Foreign Woman of Proverbs 1-9. However, it seems that there are some modifications to the earlier creation. In 4Q184, it is not simply a matter of following the woman, but having intercourse with her that forms the basis of the imagery. Whereas for Proverbs 1-9, the depiction of the Foreign Woman is more subtle, and necessarily so, for we find the notion of ambiguity at play in the descriptions of the Foreign Woman, so as to present the choices of right and wrong as difficult to discern, and the son is in need of instructions all the more. Hence, for the most part of it, only the way of the Foreign Woman is described in terms of death, and she is called 'wicked' only once (cf. Prov. 6.25); as for the woman in 4Q184, everything about her and belonging to her is described as deadly and wicked: her words, heart, kidneys, legs, skirts, clothes, garments, adornments, couches, dwellings and house, ways, paths and

gates are all both evil and deadly (lines 1-10).[308] Moreover, while the consequence in Proverbs of being with the Foreign Woman is depicted in chthonic terms, she is never herself doomed to eternal fire as is the woman in 4Q184 (line 7).[309] This may be a matter of date and context: the notion of punishment of the wicked in eternal fire is not found before 1 En. 10.6, 13; 18.15 (cf. 1QS 4.13), and it is not found in Ben Sira or Ecclesiastes. This kind of language has strong overtones of apocalyptic language.[310] Finally, in line 8, the woman in 4Q184 is described as the source of all evil (עול). This phrase is reminscent of Sir. 25.24 (Ms C),[311] which has 'From one woman, iniquity begins (תחלת עון), and on account of her, we all die.' In depicting a female as the beginning of evil, it seems that Ben Sira is drawing upon a tradition of the origin of sin, as found in Gen. 3,[312] although it is not used in a pedagogical or assertive manner, but more mentioned in passing while describing the wicked wife.[313] The difference between the two texts probably lies in the intention of the citation and the way it is cited. In 4Q184, the use of ראשית is to recall the phrase in the wisdom tradition, 'the fear of Yahweh is the beginning (ראשית) of wisdom' in Prov. 1.7; 8.22; 9.10. Therefore, 'she is the foremost (ראשית) of all the ways of iniquities', and this hardly recalls Gen. 3; rather, it reminds one that the woman is a personification of the way contrary to wisdom, she is the way of folly which does not lead to life.[314]

4Q184 is the only text of its kind about a woman who is described in such hellish and chthonic language, and with so many features identical to those of Foreign Woman

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[308] Baumgarten even notes that the reference to the netherworld occurs eleven times; see Baumgarten, p. 139.

[309] John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), p. 115.

[310] See J.J. Collins, 'The Origin of Evil in Apocalyptic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls', in J.A. Emerton (ed.), *Congress Volume: Jerusalem, 1986* (VTSup, 41; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), pp. 25-38 (37-38).

[311] See Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, p. 99. See also 6.1. for the discussion of the motif of Foreign Woman in Ben Sira.

[312] It is difficult to ascertain how much Ben Sira is aware of the account in Gen. 3, or whether he agrees with the theology of the origin of sin as Genesis presents it. Sir. 15.11-20 and 33.10-13 do not seem to indicate that he actually thinks woman is the beginning of evil. See J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (The Literature of the Dead Sea Scrolls; London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 32-35.

[313] Collins probably says aptly that 'it seems to be an *ad hoc* comment', in *Apocalypticism*, p. 32. However, in another of his works, he mentions that Ben Sira is not concerned about the wicked wife but is explaining why all men die, in Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, p. 67. I think this latter statement needs to be modified: the surrounding texts do not deal with the subject of the death of all men.

[314] Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age*, p. 115.

in Proverbs.[315] While the Foreign Woman is juxtaposed with Woman Wisdom in Proverbs, the text of 4Q184 as we have it does not have an anti-thesis. 4Q185, which is about Woman Wisdom,[316] does not appear to be composed in direct contrast to 4Q184. More importantly, the text of 4Q184 borrows heavily from the language of Proverbs 1-9 without being interested in the woman's 'foreignness'. The imagery also makes explicit that following the woman's way is to have intercourse with her, and the outcome of her and her victims are that of the eternal fire.

5.3. The Motif of the Foreign Woman in Septuagint Proverbs

So, while the previous sections deal with Hebrew texts which are outside of Proverbs 1-9, in this section we return to Proverbs, albeit a translated version of it, in Greek. Before analysing the texts in Septuagint Proverbs (and in the next chapter, Wisdom of Solomon and the Greek translation of Ben Sira), it is necessary to lay down some important groundwork. Inasmuch as we are moving from Hebrew texts to Greek, it

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[315] 4Q525 fragment 13 consists of five lines, and it seems to be a negative description of a woman. However, barely more than three words can be deciphered from each line, and such a description therefore, cannot be conclusive. 4Q525 consists of fifty fragments and it is a sapiential text, possibly with references to Woman Wisdom. See Émile Puech, *Qumrân Grotte 4 XVIII: Textes Hébreux (4Q521-4Q528, 4Q576-4Q579)* (DJD vol. XXV; 1998), pp. 115-78. Also especially, Jacqueline C.R. de Roo, 'Is 4Q525 a Qumran Sectarian Document?' in Stanley E. Porter and Craig A. Evans (eds.), *The Scrolls and the Scriptures: Qumran Fifty Years After* (JSPSup, 26; Roehampton Institute London Papers, 3; 1997), pp. 354-56. Her essay is probably the only contribution which deals with 4Q525 in the context of wisdom literature instead of the theme of *makarismus*, but see also: É. Puech, 'The collection of beatitudes in Hebrew and Greek (4Q525 1-4 and Mt 5, 3-12)', in *Early Christianity in Context* (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 38; Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 1993), pp. 353-68; '4Q525 et les péricopes des Béatitudes en Ben Sira et Matthieu', *RB* 98 (1991), pp. 80-106; James Charlesworth, 'The Qumran Beatitudes (4Q525) and the New Testament (Mt 5:3-11)', *RHPR* 80 (2000), pp. 13-35; Josef Heinz Fabry, 'Der Makarismus – mehr als nur eine weisheitliche Lehrform: Gedanken zu dem neu-edierten Text 4Q525', in Jutta Hausmann, and Hans J. Zobel (eds.), *Alttestamentliche Glaube und biblische Theologie: Festschrift für Horst Dieter Preuss zum 65. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart: Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1992), pp. 362-71.

[316] Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4*, p. 87; cf. Pl. XXIX. Also, Strugnell, pp. 269-73; and Hermann Lichtenberger, 'Eine weisheitliche Mahnrede in den Qumranfunden (4Q185)', in Matthias Delcor (ed.), *Qumrân: sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu* (BETL, 46; Paris: Editions Duculot, 1978), pp. 151-62. Thomas Tobin, '4Q185 and Jewish Wisdom Literature', in Harold W. Attridge, John Collins, and Tobin (eds.), *Of Scribes and Scrolls: Studies of the Hebrew Bible, Intertestamental Judaism and the Christian Origins presented to John Strugnell* (College Theology Society resources in religion, 5; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1990), pp. 145-52. Tobin argues convincingly that 4Q185 is a pre-Qumranic text. Although the fragments have been dated to the Hasmonean period, it does not mean that they were composed then. The existing fragments are probably copies of the original. The content, on the other hand, with the

is necessary for us to say something about the relevant Greek vocabulary, although this is less controversial and difficult than the Hebrew.

Preliminaries

There is sometimes an underlying assumption that the Septuagint at least attempts to offer a faithful translation of the OT, as claimed in the Letter of Aristeas and Philo (cf. *De Vita Mosis* ii. 39). However, the many discrepancies between the Masoretic text and the Septuagint include not only minor omissions, additions, or changes caused by scribal error, but also sometimes differences in the content of phrases, clauses, and even chapters. Adding to these complications is the fact that some of the passages do not follow the same order as the Masoretic text. Notwithstanding all these discrepancies and for reasons beyond the scope of our thesis, the Septuagint translations nonetheless differ in the extent to which they attempt to be, or are able to be, literal.[317] With regard to Septuagint Proverbs, which has been generally recognised to be paraphrastic,[318] there are times where it matches the original Hebrew rather loosely, as we shall see. One of the crucial factors is that semantic differences can cause intentional or unintentional changes of sense or emphasis (cf. *παρθένος* in Isa. 7.14). This is a very complicated subject, and a primary problem in translation.[319] Textual critical scholarship has cautioned that even many of the renderings in relatively 'literal' texts do not always represent the meaning of the Hebrew word adequately.[320] In other words, we cannot assume that all the Greek renderings for the occurrences of נכרי represent its complete range of lexical meanings.[321]

When translating the occurrences of נכריה and זרה in Proverbs 1-9, Septuagint uses *ἀλλότρια* most frequently to render both; this is in line with practice elsewhere in the

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occurrence of the tetragrammaton (col. 2 line 3) is important evidence of an early date of composition.

[317] Sidney Jellicoe, *The Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), pp. 38-41.

[318] E. Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies, 3; Jerusalem: Simor, 1981), pp. 47, 63.

[319] E. Tov, 'Did the Septuagint Translators always Understand their Hebrew Text?' in *The Greek and Hebrew Bible* (VTSup, LXXII; Leiden: Brill, 1999), pp. 203-18. Tov explains the various types of conjectural renderings. Also in the same volume, 'The Nature and Study of the Translation Technique of the LXX', pp. 239-46.

[320] Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, p. 56. Also for comparison, see idem, 'Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings', *Greek and Hebrew Bible*, pp. 109-28.

[321] Read Tov's caution about using the Concordances in Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research*, p. 145.

Septuagint.[322] Other translations for נכר are found, however. The most common after *ἀλλότριος* (fifty-seven times),[323] are *ἀλλογενής* (ten times),[324] *ξένος* (five times),[325] *ἀλλοφῦλος* (twice),[326] and *ἑτεροῖος* (once).[327]

ἀλλογενής, a combination of *ἄλλη* and *γένος* simply means 'of another *γένος*'.[328] This term may equate to concepts of race, kind or kin, in different contexts. *ξένος*, on the other hand, has a wider range of meanings, essentially referring to what is strange, unusual or from outside – so that it can be used by extension of guests or employees.[329] *ἀλλοφῦλος* means 'of another tribe',[330] as *φῦλον* means 'tribe', an organised community 'by supposed ties of blood and descent'.[331] In the Septuagint, it almost always refers to the Philistines. The last word, *ἑτεροῖος* means 'one or the other of two'.[332]

These various terms provided a range of options for translators, but it is clear that *ἀλλότριος* was regarded as the most obvious equivalent of נכר and cognate words. On the face of it, this is surprising. As we have seen, נכר refers fairly specifically to 'foreignness', even if that is a concept which requires some interpretation itself. The basic sense of *ἀλλότριος*, on the other hand, is 'belonging to another'. In general Greek usage, this is extended in a variety of ways, to indicate that something is 'alien' or 'other' (which is somewhat like *ξένος*), or that it is unsuitable for a purpose. The sense is essentially dependent on the context, so *ἀλλότριος* can refer to someone who belongs outside the household or family,[333] or to someone who is not of a particular city.[334]

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[322] Cf. 1 Kgs 11.1, 8; Ezra 10; Neh. 13.26,27; and Gen. 31.15. The exception is Ruth 2.10.
[323] The occurrences in MT are: Gen. 17.12; 31.15; 35.2, 4; Exod. 2.22; 18.3; 21.8; Deut. 14.21; 15.3; 17.15; 23.20; 29.22; 31.16; 32.12; Josh. 24.23; Judg. 10.16; 19.12; 1 Sam. 7.3; 2 Sam. 22.45, 46; 1 Kgs 8.41, 43; 11.1, 8; Isa. 28.21; 62.8; Jer. 2.21; 5.19; 8.19; Obad. 11; Zeph. 1.8; Mal. 2.11; Pss. 18.44, 45 [G 17.45, 46]; 81.9 [G 80.9] ; 137.4 [G 136.4]; 144.7, 11 [G 143.7, 11]; Prov. 5.10; 27.2, 13; Dan. 11.39; Ezra 10.2, 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44; Neh. 9.2; 13.26, 27, 30 (in the verbal form in G); 2 Chron. 6.32, 33; 14.3; 33.15.
[324] Gen. 17.27; Exod. 12.43; Lev. 22.25; Isa. 56.3, 6; 60.10; Ezek. 44.7, 9 (twice); Job 19.15.
[325] 2 Sam. 15.19; Ps. 69.8 [G 68.9]; Ruth 2.10; Eccl. 6.2; Lam. 5.2.
[326] Isa. 2.6; 61.5.
[327] Josh. 24.20. Only in B and S: A has *ἀλλοτρίους*.
[328] *LS*, p. 69.
[329] *LS*, p. 1189. As used to refer to 'guests'– 1 Sam. 9.13 (for קרא); Wis. 19.14; 'wanderer' 2 Sam. 12.4 (for ארח) in the Septuagint with *ὁδοιπόρῳ*, and probably denoting exile in 2 Macc. 5.9; 'merceneries' 1 Macc. 11.38 and 2 Macc. 10.24; 'others' as denoting strangers, foreigners and wanderers in 2 Macc. 9.28; and 'strangers' in 3 Macc. 6.3; as 'strange' in terms of taste, Wis. 16.2, 3; of rains, Wis. 16.16, (and 22 – in S^2); of death, Wis. 19.5; of land 3 Macc. 6.3.
[330] *LS*, p. 71.
[331] *LS*, '*φῡλή*', p. 1961.
[332] *LS*, p. 702.
[333] Pl. *Euthphr* 4b.
[334] Lys. 28.6.

Herodotus uses it to distinguish the Assyrian from the Persian (cf. Hdt. 3.155), and in general it can be used to indicate 'foreign' when the context requires. However, it seems that it does not do so frequently; and thus may reflect issues of ethnic identity in the very different Greek context, and a preference for the term *ξένος*.

Septuagint usage is somewhat different at times and may reflect the association of the term with the common expression *θεὸς ἀλλότριος*, referring to a deity other than YHWH: the most common use of the term (thirty-five times) is in this expression, which is used as an alternative for the similar *θεὸς ἕτερος*. Both *ἀλλότριος* and *ἕτερος*, furthermore, are used in Septuagint Pentateuch to designate things prohibited in the Temple.[335] There is no one-to-one equivalence with נכר – both Greek words can be used for נכר, זר and אחר – and it would be unwise to speak of them being technical vocabulary,[336] but there is a strong link with ideas of 'foreignness' in some contexts.

However, it is also clear that context remains vitally important. Where it is used to indicate foreign ethnicity, *ἀλλότριος* does not generally appear without some sort of qualification – someone is 'other' than Israelite, or suchlike, not simply 'other' (for example, Deut. 15.3; 1 Kgs 8.41; 2 Chron. 6.32; Jer. 37.8 [MT 30.8]). In many places, the term simply means 'alien' in a sense quite removed from ethnicity, with reference to ownership, origin or unsuitability (for example, Ps. 48.10 [MT 49.10]; Sir. 21.8). It can be used to refer to alienation from God, or to behaviour which is unwanted or inappropriate (for example, Est. 4.17; Job 17.2; Prov. 26.17; Sir. 11.34). In other words, although it is often used in contexts where foreignness is indicated, the Septuagint usage does not transform it into a simple synonym for *ἀλλογενής*, but by and large it retains the sense and reference found elsewhere in Greek. Without clear indication from the context, we cannot translate it as 'foreign', or take that to have been the intended nuance. In choosing *ἀλλότριος* to describe the foreign woman, then, it is quite clear already that the Septuagint translator of Proverbs is not assigning to her any explicit ethnic identity; just what he does mean by the term, however, will have to be deduced from broader aspects of his presentation.

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[335] For the occurrences of *ἀλλότριος* used in this context: Lev. 10.1; 16.1; Num. 3.4; 16.37 [MT 17.2]; 26.61. Also used for modifying idols in Jer. 8.19. As for *ἕτερος*, there is only one occurrence in Exod. 30.9.

[336] See E. Tov, 'Theologically Motivated Exegesis Embedded in the Septuagint', in *Greek and Hebrew Bible*, pp. 257-69.

Presentation of the Foreign Woman in Septuagint Proverbs

It is necessary to point out here that the Septuagint translation of Proverbs is paraphrastic and it is far from literal, diverging from the MT in many places. A few scholars have suggested a *Vorlage* different from that of MT, but most see the differences as a consequence of translation, and of the translator's broad understanding of its task.[337] With its many additions and adaptations, we can, to some extent, treat this as a Hellenistic work in its own right, and one which make some effort to re-interpret Proverbs for its own context – probably in the early second century BCE.[338] As we shall see, there is a significant development from the original Hebrew in the Foreign Woman passages.

Septuagint Prov. 2.12-22

The structural significance of Prov. 2 for Proverbs 1-9 as a whole has been dealt with in an earlier chapter. In the Septuagint, it no longer retains many of the same peculiarities which mark the chapter out in the MT. In compositional terms it lacks the twenty-two lines with a bicolon on each line, and, in all, six lines are added. In terms of contents and structure, while the protasis of vv. 1-5 is retained, the following apodases have been changed. The added exclamatory particle ὦ in v. 13, now seems to mark the division of the chapter into two parts, with vv. 1-12 on what is 'good', and vv. 13-20 on the 'bad'. This clean division gives some internal parallelism and balance – while vv. 1-5 exhort one to search and obtain wisdom, and vv. 6-12 deal with the promises of wisdom, the contrasting vv. 13-16 condemn the ways of those who are evil, and vv. 17-20 show the consequences of evil. To the conclusion, which contrasts the outcomes of the good (v. 21) and the evil (v. 22), the Septuagint adds a bicolon (in v. 21), but the general message is retained. There is some reflection of the original syntax, which turned the Hebrew into a single, long sentence.

In v. 16, the first word is an infinitive, making it a continuation of v. 15, which in turn is a part of the sentence that actually starts in v. 13.

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[337] See E. Tov, 'Recensional Differences between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint of Proverbs', in *Greek and Hebrew Bible*, pp. 419-32 (431); and compare Johann Cook, 'Hellenistic Influence in the Book of Proverbs (LXX)?', *BIOSCS* 20 (1987), pp. 30-43; and 'אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1-9 Septuagint): A Metaphor for Foreign Wisdom?', *ZAW* 106 (1994), pp. 458-76 (460).

[338] See G. Gerleman, 'The Septuagint Proverbs as a Hellenistic Document', *OTS* 8 (1950), pp. 15-27; J. Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs: Jewish and / or Hellenistic Proverbs? Concerning the Hellenistic Colouring of LXX Proverbs* (VTSup, 69; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), pp. 1-2. Also

LXX Prov. 2.13-19

13 *ὧ οἱ ἐγκαταλείποντες ὁδοὺς εὐθείας τοῦ πορεύεσθαι ἐν ὁδοῖς σκότους,*
14 *οἱ εὐφραινόμενοι ἐπὶ κακοῖς καὶ χαίροντες ἐπὶ διαστροφῇ κακῇ,*
15 *ὧν αἱ τρίβοι σκολιαὶ καὶ καμπύλαι αἱ τροχιαὶ αὐτῶν*
16 *τοῦ μακράν σε ποιῆσαι ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ εὐθείας καὶ ἀλλότριον τῆς δικαίας γνώμης.*
17 *υἱέ, μή σε καταλάβῃ κακὴ βουλὴ ἡ ἀπολείπουσα διδασκαλίαν νεότητος καὶ διαθήκην θείαν ἐπιλελησμένη·*
18 *ἔθετο γὰρ παρὰ τῷ θανάτῳ τὸν οἶκον αὐτῆς καὶ παρὰ τῷ ᾅδῃ μετὰ τῶν γηγενῶν τοὺς ἄξονας αὐτῆς·*
19 *πάντες οἱ πορευόμενοι ἐν αὐτῇ οὐκ ἀναστρέψουσιν οὐδὲ μὴ καταλάβωσιν τρίβους εὐθείας· οὐ γὰρ καταλάβάνονται ὑπὸ ἐνιαυτῶν ζωῆς.*

In this way, vv. 13-16 defines the evil way and identifies those who belong to that way, which v. 12 warns against. Verse 16 warns that these people will remove one from the straight way (*ὁδου εὐθείας*) – that is, they can cause one to walk in the evil way, and thus estranges one from 'righteous judgement' (*τῆς δικαίας γνώμης*). Verse 17 then continues the warning by interjecting the vocative 'son', and further elaborates the warning not to be overcome by evil counsel (*κακὴ βουλη*). This evil counsel is personified in the next line by the feminine singular participle, as the one who abandons the teaching of her youth (*διδασκαλίαν νεότητος*) and neglects the godly covenant (*διαθήκην θείαν*). The next verse describes her fixing her house beside death, and her courses (*τοὺς ἄξονας*) by Hades with the 'giants' (*τῶν γηγενῶν*; cf. Gen. 14.5; Josh. 12.4; 13.12).[339] Then it goes on to warn that none of those who go to her return or obtain straight paths (*τρίβους εὐθείας*), and that they do not attain years of life. If those people had gone on the good paths (*τρίβους εὐθείας*), on the other hand, they would have found the smooth progress of righteousness.

In this passage, the motif of the Foreign Woman, as such, is nowhere to be found. While the MT presents her as an equivalent to the evil men, both of whom only Wisdom will deliver one from, she is no longer an independent subject in LXX Prov. 2. There the subject is instead 'evil counsel', which is related to the evil men.[340] LXX 1.10 also mentions that these evil men seduce and lead one astray, and a similar description is given here in vv. 16-17. In vv. 17-19, what was previously said of the Foreign Woman is now attributed to personified 'evil counsel'. LXX 2.20 also has a different meaning from the MT. While MT exhorts one (second masculine singular) to choose the right path, the Septuagint continues in the language of the warning and threat about those (third masculine plural) who choose the evil path.

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see the Introduction of David-Marc Hamonville, *Les Proverbes* (La Bible d'Alexandrie; Paris: Cerf, 2000), pp. 21-155; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 361-64.

[339] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 375.

Cook argues that 'evil counsel' here refers to foreign wisdom (whatever that may be),[341] but as Fox has protested, the Septuagint translation here does not retain any sense of 'foreignness' from the original motif of the Foreign Woman in 2.16.[342] If the translator did understand the original symbolism, he has not retained it, and instead personifies 'evil counsel' as the source of the evil men, and as a counterpart for wisdom. This might, of course, represent a sort of translation. Recognising the role of the Foreign Woman, he has merely replaced her with a different, more abstract figure. The key point, however, is that he has either failed to realise the significance of her 'foreignness', or more probably, deemed it irrelevant or inappropriate for his readership. This marks the beginning of a process whereby, throughout the translation, the Foreign Woman is displaced or transformed.

Prov. 5.3-20

3 *μὴ πρόσεχε φαύλῃ γυναικί· μελι γὰρ ἀποστάζει ἀπὸ χειλέων γυναικὸς πόρνης,*
ᾗ πρὸς καιρὸν λιπαίνει σὸν φάρυγγα,
4 *ὕστερον μέντοι πικρότερον χολῆς εὑρήσεις καὶ ἠκονημένον μᾶλλον μαχαίρας διστόμου.*
5 *τῆς γὰρ ἀφροσύνης οἱ πόδες κατάγουσιν τοὺς χρωμένους αὐτῇ μετὰ θανάτου εἰς τὸν ᾅδην, τὰ δὲ ἴχνη αὐτῆς οὐκ ἐρείδεται·*
6 *ὁδοὺς γὰρ ζωῆς οὐκ ἐπέρχεται, σφαλεραὶ δὲ αἱ τροχιαὶ αὐτῆς καὶ οὐκ εὔγνωστοι.*
7 *νῦν οὖν, υἱέ, ἄκουέ μου καὶ μὴ ἀκύρους ποιήσῃς ἐμοὺς λόγους ·*
8 *μακρὰν ποιήσον ἀπ᾽ αὐτῆς σὴν ὁδόν, μὴ ἐγγίσῃς πρὸς θύραις οἴκων αὐτῆς,*
9 *ἵνα μὴ πρόῃ ἄλλοις ζωήν σου καὶ σὸν βίον ἀνελεήμοσιν,*
10 *ἵνα μὴ πλησθῶσιν ἀλλότριοι σῆς ἰσχύος, οἱ δὲ σοὶ πόνοι εἰς οἴκους ἀλλοτρίων εἰσελθωσιν,*
11 *καὶ μεταμεληθήσῃ ἐπ᾽ ἐσχάτων, ἡνίκα ἂν κατατριβῶσιν σάρκες σώματός σου,*
12 *καὶ ἐρεῖς Πῶς ἐμίσησα παιδείαν, καὶ ἐλέγχους ἐξέκλινεν ἡ καρδία μου·*
13 *οὐκ ἤκουον φωνὴν παιδεύοντός με καὶ διδάσκοντός με οὐδὲ παρέβαλλον τὸ οὖς μου·*
14 *παρ᾽ ὀλίγον ἐγενόμην ἐν παντὶ κακῷ ἐν μέσῳ ἐκκλησίας καὶ συναγωγῆς.*
15 *πῖνε ὕδατα ἀπὸ σῶν ἀγγείων καὶ ἀπὸ σῶν γρεάτων πηγῆς.*
16 *μὴ ὑπερεκχείσθω σοι τὰ ὕδατα ἐκ τῆς σῆς πηγῆς, εἰς δὲ σὰς πλατείας διαπορευέσθω τὰ σὰ ὕδατα·*
17 *ἔστω σοι μόνῳ ὑπάρχοντα, καὶ μηδεὶς ἀλλότριος μετασχέτω σοι ·*
18 *ἡ πηγή σου τοῦ ὕδατος ἔστω σοι ἰδία, καὶ συνευφραίνου μετὰ γυναικὸς τῆς ἐκ νεότητός σου.*
19 *ἔλαφος φιλίας καὶ πῶλος σῶν χαρίτων ὁμιλείτω σοι, ἡ δὲ ἰδία ἡγείσθω σου καὶ σονέστω σοι ἐν παντὶ καιρῷ ἐν γὰρ τῇ ταύτης φιλίᾳ συμπεριφερόμενος πολλοστὸς ἔσῃ.*
20 *μὴ πολὺς ἴσθι πρὸς ἀλλοτρίαν μηδὲ συνέχου ἀγκάλαις τῆς μὴ ἰδίας·*

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[340] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 376.
[341] Cook, 'אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1-9 Septuagint)', p. 464; *The Septuagint of Proverbs*, p. 153; and idem, 'The Dating of Septuagint and Proverbs', *ETL* 69/3 (1993), pp. 383-99 (391).
[342] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 376.

Unlike that of chapter 2, the structure of this chapter follows that of the MT almost completely.[343] In 5.3, the woman is called *φαύλη γυναικί* and *γυναικὸς πόρνης*. The former has the meaning 'a woman who is base, cheap, and worthless'[344] and the latter 'a woman who prostitutes herself'. The latter does not necessarily indicate that her profession is that of a prostitute, but is a term which also refers to 'fornication' more generally.[345] The translator, therefore, is referring to a woman who is promiscuous. The warning starts with 'do not pay attention to' her, which is different from the MT, although the subsequent descriptions of her lips dripping honey, and of the transience which her pleasure affords, are similar to the MT, as is v. 4 which warns of the after-effects. Verse 5 is much more elaborate in the Septuagint than in MT. The translator emphasises that those who deal with her are brought down to death, into Hades, by the 'feet of folly' (*τῆς γὰρ ἀφροσύνης οἱ πόδες*), and says that her steps are 'not established'. The next verse describes her ways – she does not go on the paths of life, and her own paths are slippery and not easily known.

It is in v. 20 that we find the first clear expression by the translator of the woman's identity. There, he says that one should not spend time with an *ἀλλοτρίαν*, or to be trapped in the arms[346] of *τῆς μὴ ἰδίας*. She is thus identified simply as a woman who is not one's wife, and who is promiscuous. *ἀλλοτρίαν* does not mean 'foreigner' here, and the corresponding *τῆς μὴ ἰδίας* may indicate rather that it means she 'belongs to another'. If so, the translator may be taking this to indicate the context for the warnings in vv. 14-20, but we should be wary of identifying any emphasis on adultery *per se* in this passage. Rather, the translator warns more generally against the seductions of an immoral woman and their consequences. Although *ἀλλοτρίαν* forges some semantic link to נכריה, it is clear once again that the woman's foreignness has effectively disappeared from sight.

Prov. 6.24-35

24 *τοῦ διαφυλάσσειν σε ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ὑπάνδρου καὶ ἀπὸ διαβολῆς γλώσσης ἀλλοτρίας.*
25 *μὴ σε νικήσῃ κάλλους ἐπιθυμία, μηδὲ ἀγρευθῇς σοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μηδὲ σοναρπασθῇς ἀπὸ*

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[343] See Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 388-94.
[344] '*φαύλος*', *LS*, p. 1919.
[345] '*πόρνη*', *LS*, p. 1450. It is a used by the Septuagint translators for the Hebrew זנה, *HR*, p. 1195.
[346] It is interesting to note that the MT's presentation of a choice between breasts has almost disappeared in vv. 19-20 of the Septuagint (Hamonville, p. 114), to be replaced by a choice between becoming '*πολλοστὸς*', through constant interaction with conjugal love, and becoming 'trapped in the arms' of a woman who is not one's own. It remains only as an echo, implicit in the second part, where the verb is used passively, probably with its common connotation of constraint: the man is to avoid being held in the woman's (dangerous) embrace. Cf. '*συνέχου*', *LS*. p. 1714; and '*ἀγκάλη*', *LS*, p. 9.

τῶν αὐτῆς βλεφάρων·
26 τιμὴ γὰρ πόρνης ὅση καὶ ἑνός ἄρτου, γυνὴ δὲ ἀνδρῶν τιμίας ψυχὰς ἀγρεύει.
27 ἀποδήσει τις πῦρ ἐν κόλπῳ, τὰ δὲ ἱμάτια οὐ κατακαύσει;
28 ἢ περιπατήσει τις ἐπ᾽ ἀνθράκων πυρός, τοὺς δὲ πόδας οὐ κατακαύσει;
29 οὕτως ὁ εἰσελθὼν πρὸς γυναῖκα ὕπανδρον, οὐκ ἀθῳωθήσεται οὐδὲ πᾶς ὁ ἁπτόμενος αὐτῆς.
30 οὐ θαυμαστὸν ἐὰν ἁλῷ τις κλέπτων, κλέπτει γὰρ ἵνα ἐμπλήσῃ τὴν ψυχὴν πεινῶν·
31 ἐὰν δὲ ἁλῷ, ἀποτείσει ἑπταπλάσια καὶ πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα αὐτοῦ δοὺς ῥύσεται ἑαυτόν.
32 ὁ δὲ μοιχὸς δι᾽ ἔνδειαν φρενῶν ἀπωλειαν τῇ ψυχῇ αὐτοῦ περιτοιεῖται,
33 ὀδύνας τε καὶ ἀτιμίας ὑποφέρει, τὸ δὲ ὄνειδος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξαλειφθήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.
34 μεστὸς γὰρ ζήλου θυμὸς ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς· οὐ φείσεται ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως,
35 οὐκ ἀνταλλάξεται οὐδενὸς λύτρου τὴν ἔχθραν οὐδὲ μὴ διαλυθῇ πολλῶν δώρων.

In this passage, unlike the MT, the translator begins in v. 24 by identifying the woman whom he warns against explicitly as an adulteress. Hence, the whole unit becomes a warning against adultery, with the woman explicitly identified as the wife and possession of another. Cook argues that the translator did not confuse אשת רע with רעהו אשת, but rather interpreted the text on the basis of v. 29, and he may be right to a certain extent. Considering the occurrence of *πονηρᾶς* in 7.5, however, it is more probable that אשת רע is not omitted but postponed. Furthermore, the translator describes the woman's words as slanderous (*διαβολῆς*) rather than as the flatteries (חלקת) of MT. The Septuagint passage seems to suggest that the plight of the lover seems to originate from the slander of the adulteress. Possibly, like Potiphar's wife who cries "Rape!" the adulteress shifts the crime to her lover alone. In any case, it is clear that the translator could not or would not distinguish the role of the 'foreign woman' in the set of warnings in vv. 20-25, and its relation to the warnings against adultery in vv. 26-35. Therefore, from the outset he clears the confusion and introduces the adulteress in v. 24, merging the two units into a coherent warning against adultery.

So far, the translator has identified the Foreign Woman in different ways. In 2.16, she is personified as 'bad counsel', the source of the evil men; and in chapter 5, she is described to be simply promiscuous and one who 'belongs to another', with no explicit reference to adultery; and then here in 6.20-35, she becomes the adulteress. We shall see in the next important passage, where the Foreign Woman is given speech in the MT, how the translator continues to offer various ways to describe the woman while displacing her 'foreignness'.

Prov. 7.4-23

4 εἶπον τὴν σοφίαν σὴν ἀδελφὴν εἶναι, τὴν δὲ φρόνησιν γνώριμον περιποίησαι σεαυτῷ,
5 ἵνα σε τηρήσῃ ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἀλλοτρίας καὶ πονηρᾶς, ἐάν σε λόγοις τοῖς πρὸς χάριν ἐμβάληται.

6 *ἀπὸ γὰρ θυρίδος ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου αὐτῆς εἰς τὰς πλατείας παρακύπτουσα,*
7 *ὃν ἂν ἴδῃ τῶν ἀφρόνων τέκνων νεανίαν ἐνδεῆ φρενῶν*
8 *παραπορευόμενον παρὰ γωνίαν ἐν διόδοις οἴκων αὐτῆς*
9 *καὶ λαλοῦντα ἐν σκότει ἑσπερινῷ, ἡνίκα ἂν ἡσυχία νυκτερινὴ ᾖ καὶ γνοφώδης*
10 *ἡ δὲ γυνὴ συναντᾷ αὐτῷ, εἶδος ἔχουσα πορνικόν, ἢ ποιεῖ νέων ἐξίπτασθαι καρδίας.*
11 *ἀνεπτερωμένη δέ ἐστιν καὶ ἄσωτος, ἐν οἴκῳ δὲ οὐχ ἡσυχάζουσιν οἱ πόδες αὐτῆς·*
12 *χρόνον γάρ τινα ἔξω ῥέμβεται, χρόνον δὲ ἐν πλατείας παρὰ πᾶσαν γωνίαν ἐνεδρεύει.*
13 *εἶτα ἐπιλαβομένη ἐφίλησεν αὐτόν, ἀναιδεῖ δὲ προσώπῳ προσεῖπεν αὐτῷ*
14 *Θυσίσ εἰρηνική μοί ἐστιν, σήμερον ἀποδίδωμι τὰς εὐχάς μου·*
15 *ἕνεκα τούτου ἐξῆλθον εἰς συνάντησίν σοι, ποθοῦσα τὸ σὸν πρόσωπον εὗρηκά σε·*
16 *κειρίαις τέτακα τὴν κλίνην μου, ἀμφιτάποις δὲ ἔστρωκα τοῖς ἀπ' Αἰγύπτου·*
17 *διέρραγκα τὴν κοίτην μου κρόκῳ, τὸν δὲ οἶκόν μου κινναμώμῳ·*
18 *ἐλθὲ καὶ ἀπολαύσωμεν φιλίας ἕως ὄρθρου, δεῦρο καὶ ἐγκυλισθῶμεν ἔρωτι·*
19 *οὐ γὰρ πάρεστιν ὁ ἀνήρ μου ἐν οἴκῳ, πεπόρευται δὲ ὁδὸν μακρὰν*
20 *ἔνδεσμον ἀργυρίου λαβὼν ἐν χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, δι' ἡμερῶν πολλῶν ἐπανήξει εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ.*
21 *ἀπεπλάνησεν δὲ αὐτὸν πολλῇ ὁμιλίᾳ βρόχοις τε τοῖς ἀπὸ χειλέων ἐξώκειλεν αὐτόν.*
22 *ὁ δὲ ἐπηκολούθησεν αὐτῇ κεπφωθείς, ὥσπερ δὲ βοῦς ἐπὶ σφαγὴν ἄγεται καὶ ὥσπερ κύων ἐπὶ δεσμοὺς*
23 *ἢ ὡς ἔλαφος τοξεύματι πεπληγὼς εἰς τὸ ἧπαρ, σπεύδει δὲ ὥσπερ ὄρνεον εἰς παγίδα οὐκ εἰδὼς ὅτι περὶ ψυχῆς τρέχει.*

In this key passage, the woman is identified as the woman who is 'alien' (*ἀλλοτρίας*) in some sense, and evil (*πονηρᾶς*). Her evilness is probably commented upon here because she is depicted as actively seducing the young man. The translator retains the depiction of flatteries (*χάριν* for החליקה) as in the MT, but he describes these flatteries in an aggressive manner (*ἐμβάληται*), which is not in the MT. The following verses portray her spontaneity, where she looks out her window seeking for a potential victim (vv. 6-7),[347] then goes down to the street to grab him (vv. 10, 13). She appears like a prostitute, that is, she is dressed provocatively, causing the young man's heart to flutter (*ἐξίπτασθαι*, v. 10).[348] Verse 11a describes the state of her excitement (*ἀνεπτερωμένη*),[349] and the following lines pass judgement on her behaviour, as wasteful and ruined (*ἄσωτος*),[350] for she wanders about in public instead of remaining at home (v. 11c-12).

There are various differences between MT and Septuagint in what follows, few of which need concern us here. It is interesting to note that the youth is a more active participant (cf. v. 9), and that the obscure reference to the full moon is removed (v. 20). The most important point, though, is that any ambiguity about the woman's marital

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[347] This action does not have cultic significance, see Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 404.
[348] Hamonville, pp. 107, 201. He thinks that the depiction of the agitation of the woman in v. 11 is reminscent with Plato's commentary in the *Phrede* on the subject of love.
[349] '*ἀναπτερόω*', *LS*, p. 118.

status is resolved (vv. 19-20), and the portrayal is, again, simply of an aggressive, dangerous adulteress. Although, in v. 5 *ἀλλοτρίας* seems to be simply a vague curtsy toward the Hebrew, without being specific and indicating only that the woman belongs to another man. Again, the translator makes no mention of the Foreign Woman. This time, he even ignores the notion of ambiguity in this passage and clarifies at all points that the subject, like 6.20-35 is explicitly about adultery here.

Prov. 9.13-18d

13 *Γυνὴ ἄφρων καὶ θρασεῖα ἐνδεὴς ψωμοῦ γίνεται, ἣ οὐκ ἐπίσταται αἰσχύνην·*
14 *ἐκάθισεν ἐπὶ θύραις τοῦ ἑαυτῆς οἴκου ἐπὶ δίφρου ἐμφανῶς ἐν πλατείαις*
15 *προσκαλουμένη τοὺς παριόντας καὶ κατευθύνοντας ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν*
16 *Ὃς ἐστιν ὑμῶν ἀφρονέστατος, ἐκκλινάτω πρός με · ἐνδεέσι δέ φρονήσεως παρακελεύομαι λέγουσα*
17 *Ἄρτων κρυφίων ἡδέως ἅψασθε καὶ ὕδατος κλοπῆς γλυκεροῦ.*
18 *ὁ δὲ οὐκ οἶδεν ὅτι γηγενεῖς παρ᾽ αὐτῇ ὄλλυνται, καὶ ἐπὶ πέτευρον ᾅδου συναντᾷ.*
18a *ἀλλὰ ἀποπήδησον, μὴ ἐγχρονίσῃ ἐν τῷ τόπῳ μηδὲ ἐπιστήσῃς τὸ σὸν ὄμμα πρὸς αὐτὴν·*
18b *οὕτως γὰρ διαβήσῃ ὕδωρ ἀλλότριον καὶ ὑπερβήσῃ ποταμὸν ἀλλότριον·*
18c *ἀπὸ δὲ ὕδατος ἀλλοτρίου ἀπόσχου καὶ ἀπὸ πηγῆς ἀλλοτρίας μὴ πίῃς,*
18d *ἵνα πολὺν ζήσῃς χρόνον, προστεθῇ δέ σοι ἔτη ζωῆς.*

While MT 9.13 labels the woman as foolish, and describes her as loud, LXX 9.13 calls her the 'foolish and bold woman'. *θρασεῖα*, for 'bold', is used more frequently in the negative sense denoting 'rash', 'audacious', 'arrogant' and 'insolent'.[351] Septuagint also adds two other descriptions for this woman: she is hungry, and she knows no shame (*αἰσχύνην*). Ben Sira's grandson uses the same description for the daughter who acts shamefully, causing grief to her father, and despised by both her father and husband (Sir. 22.4, 5).[352] The translator follows the MT in the extent of picking up all that is said about the woman in the preceding passages to present a personified woman to compete against Woman Wisdom in 9.1-6. However, since the woman in Septuagint Proverbs is portrayed only as a promiscuous woman, who is described to be an adulteress in the last two passages, chapter 9 therefore considers her immodesty as foolishness.

The interesting additions of LXX 9.18 are attested in nearly all the textual witnesses, indicating an original and early acceptance.[353] They continue to warn against

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[350] '*ἄσωτος*', *LS*, p. 267.
[351] '*θρᾰσύς*', *LS*, pp. 804-805.
[352] The Hebrew version of this chapter is not available, cf. Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, p. 182.
[353] Cook, *The Septuagint of Proverbs*, p. 279. Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, p. 423.

the 'foolish and bold woman', and v. 18a seems to allude to the Hebrew text of Sir. 41.20 where Ben Sira warns about gazing at the זרה.[354]

In v. 18b, the language of water is used with the adjective *ἀλλότριος*. Cook is probably right to say that it refers back to 5.15-17, alluding to the admonitions about keeping one's property for oneself. Probably it also picks up the subject of 'water' from 9.17, where the woman offers it. The subject is keeping to one's boundaries, so one may cross over another's water, and go beyond another's river, but must avoid another's woman, and not stay to look at her. The next line further commands that one should abstain from another's water and not drink from a strange fountain.[355] So, there is a warning against any involvement with the woman, and the last line concludes that thereby one can live long, and have years of life added. Hence, the third line counters the offer by the woman in v. 17, and the last line addresses the outcomes for one who accepts the woman's offer in v. 18. It is essentially a warning against adultery, against getting involved with someone else's wife.

Again, we find in this last passage on the Foreign Woman, the translator keeps to the portrayal of the woman as a promiscuous woman and an adulteress as in the earlier passages. The woman portrayed in 9.13-18d does not bear any symbolism as we find in MT 9.13-18. We shall now look into the other two passages in the Septuagint outside Proverbs 1-9 where the MT refers to the Foreign Woman, but the Septuagint completely removes any reference to the woman in Proverbs 1-9.

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[354] Cook believes that the scribe uses ancient materials for these additions, so that v. 18a recalls the foolishness of Lot's wife (Gen. 19.26), and that the depiction of the crossing of foreign water in v. 18b is borrowed from the Greek myth of the river Styx, judaised in the form of Hades. Cook, 'אִשָּׁה זָרָה (Proverbs 1-9 Septuagint)', pp. 473-74; *The Septuagint of Proverbs*, pp. 284-85. Hamonville agrees with Cook's interpretation but he does not cite Cook; cf. Hamonville, pp. 50, 127, 216-17. Arguably, Cook has taken the meaning of the text too far. Concerning v. 18a, there is no indication in the MT or the Septuagint of Gen. 19, that Lot's wife was a memorial of folly, neither is there a warning against looking at the pillar of salt, representative of Lot's wife. There is also no word in v. 18a about 'salt' or 'pillar', and there is no allusion to the event of Sodom and Gomorrah in the surrounding texts. Therefore, there is no hint at all that references to Lot's wife in v. 18a is intended. The imperative found in v. 18a continues to warn one to remove himself from the proximity of the metaphorical woman mentioned earlier. Furthermore, there is nothing in the text which indicates that the context concerns 'foreignness'.

[355] Fox thinks that the additions are about 'foreignness', and in particular that this line refers to 'foreign culture'. He argues that since the audience is the Jewish Diaspora, the context is one of alien societies. These additions warn against the temptation to participate and be involved in foreign cultures, see Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, pp. 422-23. On the other hand, he does not explain why suddenly he considers *ἀλλότριος* to mean 'foreign' here but not in the earlier passages.

Prov. 22.14

14 *βόθρος βαθὺς στόμα παρανόμου, ὁ δὲ μισηθεὶς ὑπὸ κυρίου ἐμπεσεῖται εἰς αὐτόν.*
14a *εἰσὶν ὁδοὶ κακαὶ ἐνώπιον ἀνδρός, καὶ οὐκ ἀγαπᾷ τοῦ ἀποστρέψαι ἀπ' αὐτῶν·*
14b *ἀποστρέφειν δὲ δεῖ ἀπὸ ὁδοῦ σκολιᾶς καὶ κακῆς.*

The feminine forms of the MT are not retained in v. 14, while the rest of the contents remains the same. The זרות is replaced by the lawless man (*παρανόμου*), and Hamonville thinks that this echoes the translations in 14.12 and 16.25. The addition in v. 14b explains that it is the evil ways which are before such a man and he refuses to turn from them. However, the verse reiterates the need to turn from these evil ways. The depiction of the motif of the Foreign Woman is lost in this translation, but the mention of the evil ways seems to make this text recall the warnings against evil men.

Prov. 23.27-28

27 *πίθος γὰρ τετρημένος ἐστὶν ἀλλότριος οἶκος, καὶ φρέαρ στενὸν ἀλλότριον·*
28 *οὗτος γὰρ συντόμως ἀπολεῖται, καὶ πᾶς παράνομος ἀναλωθήσεται.*

In this passage, the feminine forms in the MT are again removed, so that it is no longer about the Foreign Woman and the prostitute as in the MT. Besides, all the contents are completely different, except the reference to a narrow well. It becomes a warning about the house and well of another which are described as full of holes and very narrow, respectively. Verse 28 asserts that such a person is lawless, will perish suddenly, and will be cut off.

A *πίθος τετρημένος* is a common phrase, used of 'labouring in vain' or 'insatiable appetites'.[356] It seems that the translator has used this familiar image of the 'narrow well' to give a new meaning. He identifies the *ἀλλότριος* as a lawless one (*παράνομος*), and depicts the futility and the perishability of the lawless. Verse 28 seems to recall LXX 2.22, which it also depicts the end of the lawless. In any case, there is no specific reference to a foreign woman, although the vestigial *ἀλλότριος* raises many questions about the identity of the wrongdoers.

Section Conclusion

When we considered in the beginning of this section, the lexicography of *ἀλλότριος* which has been commonly rendered by the Septuagint translators for נכר, זר, and אחר, the occurrences show that where 'foreignness' is intended, the contexts are specific. As for the Septuagint passages on the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9, the

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[356] '*πίθος*', *LS*, p. 1403.

translator has removed the reference to 'foreignness' and the use of *ἀλλότριος* in these passages only depicts a woman who does not belong to one, and her ethnicity is never emphasised nor specified. In the lengthy descriptions of the woman, the translator turns her into a promiscuous woman who does not belong in 5.1-20; and in 6.20-35, 7.5-27, 9.13-18d, he turns her into an adulteress. This, however, would be inappropriate in Prov. 2, and she is replaced there by 'bad counsel', a more explicit counterpart to Wisdom. Elsewhere, outside of Proverbs 1-9, she vanishes. What happens here in the Septuagint is like the text in Qumran, where the woman remains, but is no longer linked to a motif of the Foreign Woman.

Chapter Conclusion

We set out in this chapter to pursue how the motif of the Foreign Woman develops after her appearance in Proverbs 1-9, and hopefully to find the reasons to her decline in the later literature. The dating of some of the materials make it difficult to present them in a chronological order, and the matter of language, and general contents takes some priority in the arrangement here. First, we looked at the two short passages in Proverbs, 22.14 and 23.26-28, which seem to allude to the Foreign Woman briefly, and then the obscure occurrence in Eccl. 7.26, which is altogether more uncertain. As we leave the biblical texts, we find direct and obvious allusions to the Foreign Woman in 4Q184, and Septuagint Proverbs. She is portrayed in the same terms as attractive and seductive, trapping her victims to lead them into destruction. However, in both of these texts, the 'foreignness' of the motif has been removed and displaced. This phenomenon, as we shall see in the next chapter, is also found in the work of Ben Sira, and it seems that the chronology of the composition of the texts is a contributing factor.

Chapter Six

The Motif of the Foreign Woman in Apocryphal Wisdom Literature

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We have seen in the previous chapter, that as the motif of the Foreign Woman leaves Proverbs 1-9, apart from the two passages in Proverbs and one obscure verse in Ecclesiastes which may or may not allude to her, 4Q184 and Septuagint Proverbs, which have clear depictions of her, chooses to remove the essence of her 'foreignness'. This phenomenon, as we shall see in this chapter, continues to persist in the parent text of Ben Sira, though somewhat retrieved in the translated version of it, but the motif itself is totally ignored in the Wisdom of Solomon, which seems to be concerned with issues of 'foreignness'. By observing the way these authors change, develop and ignore the motif, hopefully a rationale for the transformation of the motif can be reached.

6.1. The Motif of the Foreign Woman in Ben Sira

In the book of Ben Sira, the feminine form of נכרי does not occur at all. However, זרה occurs twice, in 9.3 and 41.20. This section investigates whether these two occurrences refer to the motif of the Foreign Woman, and whether, more generally, the motif of the Foreign Woman survives in the work of Ben Sira in other forms.

Introduction to Ben Sira

The book of Ben Sira comprises fifty-one chapters. Most of its contents are rather similar to those of Proverbs: the first forty-three chapters and the last chapter give advice concerning right ethics and behaviour, but most of all it exhorts to pious living and discipline in meditating upon and studying the Torah. Ben Sira devotes four passages of praise and exhortation to personified Wisdom (6.18-37; 14.20-15:10; 24; 51.13-30); two passages of praise to God's creation (39.12-35; 42.15-43:33); and chapters 44-50 to praise of the ancestors of Israel.

The prologue tells us that the book was originally written by, Jesus, the son of Sira, but it has been better known, until recently, in the Greek translation made by his

grandson. That translation is dated to the thirty-eighth year of the reign of Euergetes, probably in 132 BCE.[357] Scholars believe that the original composition probably dates to the beginning of the second century BCE, because the book does not portray the turbulent times in Palestine ushered in by the new reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes.

In the following analysis of the texts of Ben Sira, I have treated the Hebrew manuscripts and the Greek texts separately. The textual witnesses of both the Hebrew and Greek texts are most complicated in nature in comparison to all the other books of the OT:[358] the Hebrew witnesses are incomplete, and the Greek recensions are also plagued by corruptions.[359] Fortunately, these problems have no real impact on what I am going to say, and the reason why the Hebrew manuscripts and Greek texts are dealt with separately here is not tied to text-critical concerns but to the ways in which Ben Sira and his grandson, sometimes handle the same subject differently, in a way which reflects the particular historical era and ethos in which each worked.

It is notoriously difficult to determine the events and developments in the centuries immediately after the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.[360] What is certain is that, by the period of Ben Sira, the community had already consolidated, and a new Jewish identity had begun to form. This community had a stong awareness of the need for undivided allegiance to the Yahweh cult and the Temple, although there is silence about

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[357] Patrick Skehan and Alexander Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: A New Translation with Notes by Patrick W. Skehan; Introduction and Commentary by Alexander A. Di Lella* (AB, 39; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1987), pp. 8-16.

[358] Skehan and Di Lella, p. 59. Concerning the nature of the manuscripts, their origin, scope, and relationship, see Skehan and Di Lella, pp. 51-62; Benjamin Wright, *No Small Difference: Sirach's Relationship to its Hebrew Parent Text* (SBL Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series, 26; Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989); Maurice Gilbert, 'The Book of Ben Sira: Implications for Jewish and Christian traditions', in Shemayahu Talmon (ed.), *Jewish Civilization in the Hellenistic-Roman Period* (JSPSup, 10; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), pp. 81-91; Stefan Reif, 'The Discovery of the Cambridge Genizah Fragments of Ben Sira: Scholars and Texts', in Beentjes (ed.), *The Book of Ben Sira in Modern Research* (BZAW, 255; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1997), pp. 1-22; and in the same book, Johannes Marböck, 'Structure and Redaction History in the Book of Ben Sira: Review and Prospects', pp. 61-80. Also, Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*. This latter work has published all the available Hebrew texts, which will be used here as the primary source for my analyses. In the following discussions, all citations are taken from his compilation.

[359] Scholars have noticed a general tendency for the Hebrew manuscripts to be aligned to the Greek text, which further complicates the issue.

[360] Isaiah Gafni, 'The Historical Background', in Michael E. Stone (ed.), *The Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period: The Literature of the Jewish People in the Period of the Second Temple and the Talmud* (CRINT Section 2, 2 vols.; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1984), vol. II, pp. 1-31 (2-7). See Lester Grabbe, *Judaic Religion in the Second Temple Period: Belief and Practice from the Exile to Yavneh* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 33-35; and Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period* (JSOTSup, 285; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000), pp. 215-21.

the other issue which had convulsed the original community of Return – that of intermarriage.[361] Other historical echoes are sometimes detected in the book: Ben Sira was writing during the period of the Syrian Wars and there may be some anxieties about this reflected in the later part of the work, but they are far from obvious.[362]

Ben Sira's grandson, on the other hand, lived in a period better known to us. He would have experienced in his lifetime the after-effects of the corruption of the High Priests; the persecutions by the new Seleucid rulers, and others;[363] the disputes over apostasy (1 Macc. 14);[364] and the victories of the Hasmoneans.[365] It was during these times that Hellenism became the predominant culture, at least among certain strata of the community.[366] The pro-Hasmonean books of Maccabees seem to perceive this culture in polarity to the Jewish faith, but there were others who seem to have been able to separate their Jewish identity and faith from Hellenistic culture without entirely rejecting the

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[361] Cohen, *Beginnings of Jewishness*, p. 245 n. 12. Louis H. Feldman estimates that the incidence of intermarriage was low, in *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World: Attitudes and Interactions from Alexander to Justinian* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 79. The literature of that time seems to be more concerned with the Judaising of groups who are in some way related by Jewish ancestry, than with intermarriage *per se*. One of the best examples is probably the story of Joseph and Aseneth, written before the period of 115 CE, defending the notion that Joseph's Egyptian wife, Aseneth was converted into Judaism before she was married. She forsook her former way of life and adopted Judaism. See Randall D. Chesnutt, 'Joseph and Aseneth', *ABD* vol. III, pp. 969-71. Also, see Doron Mendels, *The Land of Israel as a Political Concept in Hasmonean Literature: Recourse to History in Second Century B.C. Claims to the Holy Land* (TSAJ, 15; Tübingen: Mohr, 1987), p. 56; where he deals with the story of Judith and the Judaising of Anchior, the Ammonite. Concerning the subject of intermarriage, we only find Tob. 4.12 encouraging endogamy; and the other literature of that period does not mention the subject. Sir. 26.19 will be discussed below.

[362] James K. Aitken, 'Biblical Interpretation as Political Manifesto: Ben Sira in his Seleucid Setting', *JJS* 51 (2000), pp. 191-208.

[363] Uriel Rappaport, 'Maccabean Revolt', *ABD* vol. IV, pp. 433-39.

[364] John M. Barclay, 'Who was considered an apostate in the Jewish Diaspora?' in Graham Stanton and G.S. Stroumsa (eds.), *Tolerance and Intolerance in Early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 80-97. He cautions that the term 'apostasy' is a relative one. Also in the same volume, Daniel Schwartz, 'The Other in 1 and 2 Maccabees', pp. 30-37. See also J.M. Barclay, *Jews in the Mediterranean Diaspora: from Alexander to Trajan (323 BCE - 117 CE)* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996), pp. 37-53.

[365] Tessa Rajak, 'Hasmonean Dynasty', *ABD* vol. III, pp. 67-76; and Jonathan Goldstein, 'The Hasmonean revolt and the Hasmonean dynasty', in *Cambridge History of Judaism* (3 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), vol. II, pp. 292-351.

[366] Concerning the subject of Hellenisation, Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism* (trans. J. Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975); and review by Collins, in *RelSRev* 15 (1989), pp. 226-28. For a brief synopsis, Hans Dieter Betz, 'Hellenism', *ABD* vol. III, pp. 127-35; and, Grabbe, *Judaism from Cyrus to Hadrian* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1992), vol. II, pp. 147-70. Also, J.J. Collins, 'Cult and Culture: The Limits of Hellenisation in Judea', in Collins and Gregory E. Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel* (CJAS, 13; Indiana, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 2001), pp. 38-61; and in the same book, Shaye Cohen, 'Hellenism in Unexpected Places', pp. 218-45.

latter. Inevitably, the issues which were of utmost concern for the grandson were different from those which Ben Sira himself faced, and the different times and locations in which the Hebrew and Greek versions were created mean that each was addressed to a very different audience.[367] We shall now proceed to examine first the Hebrew texts where the Foreign Woman seems to appear, and then the Greek below.

The Hebrew texts of 41.20-21 and 9.3

As mentioned earlier, there is no direct reference to 'foreign woman' in the texts of Ben Sira. However, there are two occurrences of זרה in 9.3 and 41.20-21. The principal textual witnesses to 41.20-21 may be translated as follows:[368]

Table 6.1: Mss B and M of 41.20-21

Ms B (XI *r.*)	M
מחש[.....]ל[...] מנה	מ{ח}שות מחל{ק}ת מנה
[.. ..]ל שלום מ{ה}חריש:	ומשאל שלום החריש
[...°...] מהביט אשה	מהביט [.....]
ומה[.]ק[...]ל [... .°.] רה[.]	ומהתבונן אל זרה

The continuing lines are in M:

מה תעשק [...]ה לך
ומה תקומם על יצעיה

Defrauding the share which is not yours
And silence when greeted
From gazing … woman
And looking at the זרה
Why do you do violence […] yours?
Why do you rise against her bed?

Di Lella takes the reference of זרה to be to 'another woman', rendering it as equivalent to the other occurrence in 9.3 (see below) and understanding them as referring

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[367] The grandson says that he has migrated to Alexandria and for whatever reasons which are unknown to us, his new context must also have an impact on how he perceives his new world. The grandson wrote the prologue during the time of the Hasmonean dynasty, when John Hyrcanus was the ruler (135-104 BCE). Under his reign, Samaria was totally destroyed and her people enslaved (*Ant.* 13.275-83; *JW* 1.66), and the Idumeans judaised on account that they and the Jews were brothers (*Ant.* 13.9.1 §257; *JW* 1.63). G.E. Sterling, 'Judaism between Jerusalem and Alexandria' in J.J. Collins and Sterling (eds.), *Hellenism in the Land of Israel*, pp. 265-303.

[368] This reading is attested by combining the reading of Ms B (dated twelfth century CE) and Ms M (dated first century BCE). Ms B is fragmentary for this passage and the last two lines are missing; see Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, pp. 72, 165. However, in the recto, it retains אשה of the third line, which Ms M loses. Di Lella's reconstructs the third and the last line as '*mēhabî[t.] 'e[l 'ēšet 'îš]*' from G; see Skehan and Di Lella, p. 479. However, as the reading shows, this emendation can be misleading.

to the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9.[369] The context of 41.14-42.8 contrasts what is false (41.16-42:1) with true shame (42.2-8). The fragmentary condition of the third line in v. 21 makes it difficult to ascertain the meaning, but we are certain of the content in the lines which follow. They all concern things which should not be done to a woman. Specifically for the last line of v. 21, one should not look at the זרה.

As for the unit 9.3, another bicolon is added, which is omitted in the Greek text.[370]

אל תקרב אל אשה זרה / פן תפול במצודתיה :
ם זונה אל־תסתייד פן תלכד בלקותיה :[.].

Do not go near the אשה זרה, lest you fall into her snares.
… do not flirt with the prostitute, lest you be seized into her punishment.[371]

Sir. 9.1 begins with a warning against finding fault with one's wife when she has been sensible. Then Ben Sira continues with another warning not to let one's wife or women rule one's life, followed by the list of women to avoid in 9.1-9.

Sir. 9.1-9[372]

1 Be not jealous of the wife of your bosom,
lest you teach her to do evil against you.
2 Give no woman power over you
to trample upon your dignity.
3 Do not go near a strange woman,
lest you fall into her snares.
4 Do not dally with a singing girl,
lest you be captivated by her charms.
5 Entertain no thoughts about a virgin,
lest you be enmeshed in damages for her.
6 Give not yourself to prostitutes,
lest you surrender your inheritance.

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[369] Skehan and Di Lella, pp. 479, 481.
[370] 9.1-9 is only extant in Ms A (dated eleventh century CE); see Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, p. 33. I have omitted the pointing in this citation. There are some verses in the Cairo Mss which have vowel-points and accents, see A. Di Lella, *The Hebrew Text of Sirach: A Text-Critical and Historical Study* (Studies in Classical Literature, 1; London, Paris: Mouton, 1966), p. 97.
[371] The word לקותיה is interesting as it is not a Hebrew word, but an Aramaic word. Its root form is לקותא, which means, '1. Punishment; 2. Disease or defect.' See Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (2 vols.; New York: Pardes Publishing House, 1950), vol. II, p. 717.
[372] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 215.

7 Gaze not about the lanes of the city
and wander not through its squares;
8 Avert your eyes from a comely woman;
gaze not upon beauty that is not for you –
Through woman's beauty many have perished,
and love for it burns like fire.
9 With a married woman recline not at table
nor drink intoxicants with her,
Lest your heart incline toward her
and you decline in blood to the grave.

The אשה זרה appears in 9.3, as one of these. While some have split vv. 1-2 from vv. 3-9, Di Lella may be right to understand the whole section as a single unit.[373] The concern of the unit, however, is male passion, rather than female. The opening verse is about the jealous state of a husband which may arouse wickedness. This is followed by a warning that the man should not let himself be ruled by a woman through his passions. The list of possible women who could 'rule' him through his passions or lust embraces all kinds: the אשה זרה (v. 3); prostitutes (זונה, vv. 3, 6); the singing girl (מנגינת, v. 4); the virgin (בתולה , v. 5); the graceful woman (מאשת חן , v. 8); and the beautiful woman who does not belong to the subject (יפי לא אך , v. 8). Thus the list ranges from the innocent to the immodest, starting from one's own wife (v. 2) and concluding with one who is explicitly not (v. 8). The main point of the teaching then, is the control of one's passion.[374] All these women have the inherent ability to steal a man's heart and mind, if he allows them to. The man should not, therefore, be over-jealous of his sensible wife, and at the same time, he should avoid these other women. The unit teaches self-control, modesty and discipline in one's dealings with women.

Having grasped the intention of this unit, the question arises as to why the אשה זרה is included in the list, indeed, included at the very start of it. Does the ordering imply an intention to classify all these women as types of the אשה זרה, or has Ben Sira in mind specifically the motif of the Foreign Woman from Proverbs 1-9? From 41.21, we can only conclude that the זרה is someone who must be avoided, and that association with her brings shame. In 9.3, Ben Sira only warns of her trap. The choice of the word for trap, מצודתיה is very interesting. This noun is not used for the Foreign Woman in

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[373] Skehan and Di Lella, pp. 218-19.

[374] This interpretation concurs with Maurice Gilbert, 'Ben Sira et la femme', *RTL* 7 (1976), pp. 426-42 (431-32). Gilbert argues against Warren C. Trenchard's amplifying of the misogyny of Ben Sira with this list of women here, saying that Ben Sira was addressing the weakness of men and not condemning these women. See also W. Trenchard, *Ben Sira's View of Women: A Literary Analysis* (BJ, 38; Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1982).

Proverbs,[375] but we do find it in Eccl. 7.26, and the other similarity between the depiction of the אשה זרה in Sir. 9.3 and that verse is that both texts do not portray the 'foreignness' of the motif. However, unlike the obscure text of Eccl. 7.26 which might be exploiting the symbolic intent of the motif as 'foolishness' and 'wickedness', Sir. 9.3 and 41.21 do not indicate any such symbolic or metaphorical intent. They are each practical advice for everyday living.

I think Sir. 9.6-9 gives further evidence that Ben Sira interprets the motif of the Foreign Woman as representing a bad seductive woman, like a prostitute. Although she is not mentioned explicitly, the language used of these women resembles that used elsewhere for the Foreign Woman. I have only cited 9.6-7 in the following as they differ from the Greek text, and the rest of the Hebrew passage is almost consonant with the Greek.

Sir. 9.6-7
אל תתן לזונה נפשך פן תסוב / את נחלתך :
להתנבל במראה עיניך ולשומם אחר ביתה :

Do not give to the prostitute your life, lest you spend away[376] your inheritance,
To be disgraced[377] in the sight of your eyes and to be deserted[378] behind her house.

Here is a warning against going to a prostitute; the danger that one may lose one's life and inheritance is expressed in 9.6. There are difficulties in interpreting 9.7, as most commentators agree,[379] but the emphasis of the verse is clearly on the consequence of being disgraced. In Proverbs, the prostitute is not portrayed as costing much, in comparison with the adulteress (Prov. 6.27). Ben Sira, however, warns of the potential danger of losing one's inheritance to her. In addition, he also portrays the prostitute as despising her client, probably after he has spent all his fortune on her. The language in 9.6-7 resembles the warnings in Prov. 5 against the Foreign Woman: the danger of approaching her house (Prov. 5.8), losing one's inheritance (Prov. 5.9-10) and a wasted

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[375] The qal imperfect of the related verb is used in Prov. 6.26 of the adulteress.
[376] I doubt תסוב should be emended to תסב as recommended by Skehan and Di Lella (p. 218), but we should understand it as Aramaic, meaning 'to blow away'; Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, vol. II, p. 938. Also see *APOT*, vol. I, p. 346.
[377] התנבל is the Hithpael of נבל, meaning 'to be defaced, degraded, disgraced': Jastrow, vol. II, p. 869.
[378] שומם has the meaning of 'destroyed, deserted, ruined'; Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, vol. II, p. 1597.
[379] See *APOT* vol. I, p. 346. Apparently, only the Vulgate has retained the essence of the text and Charles has translated from the Vulgate as, 'to be treated with contumely in the sight of thine eyes and to be amazed behind her house'. Note the differences in the translations.

life (Prov. 5.11). Interestingly, the warning against regarding the beauty of a woman who does not belong to one in Sir. 9.8 reminds one of Prov. 6.25; and the warning of the consequence that one's blood will descend to the pit in Sir. 9.9, recalls the consequences of the Foreign Woman. Furthermore, the word for pit, שוחה is the same as Prov. 22.14 and 23.27.[380]

The above points indicate that Ben Sira re-interprets the motif of the Foreign Woman as a real figure. The use of זרה in 9.3 is intended to recall the motif, but he re-applies it to the kinds of women one meets in everyday life (9.1-11). To him, the end results of being involved with these women are the same as with the Foreign Woman – loss of inheritance as well as one's life.

Ben Sira is also not concerned with the symbolic meaning of 'foreignness' in the motif of the Foreign Woman. In fact, he is not overly concerned at all about 'foreigners' in his work. This is evident in that he only uses נכרי three times (Sir. 10.22 [Mss A, B]; 36.3 [Ms B]; 49.5 [Ms B]).[381]

> Sir. 10.22
> Sojourner and stranger, alien (נכרי) and poor man –
> their glory is the fear of God.
>
> Sir. 36.3
> Shake Thy hand against the strange people (נכר)
> And let them see Thy power
>
> Sir. 49.5
> And their might was given unto others,
> And their glory to a strange nation (נכרי)

We find in the chapters on the praise of the fathers, when he has the opportunity to blame the foreign women for apostasy in the incident in Baal Peor (45.23-24) and for Solomon's sins (47.19-20; see below), he does not. The foreigner in 49.5 is simply an instrument of God's punishment. In fact, the only occurrence of 'foreigner' in a negative light is in 36.3 where he laments and intercedes for God's intervention to save Israel from foreign domination and to restore the land (36.1-22). There, he uses נכרי to refer to the non-Israelite who does not acknowledge God (36.5) and prays for his destruction, for the sake of Israel.[382] This sentiment is in keeping with the prophetic books, when they

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[380] Cf. 5.1.
[381] For the following citations, they are taken from *APOT* vol. I, pp. 351, 440, 504, respectively.
[382] This prayer has found its way into the twelfth benediction of the Eighteen Benedictions or the *Shemoneh Esreh*. See Joseph Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns* (Berlin,

look toward the judgement of the nations. In addition, Ben Sira actually feels that the foreigner can be honoured like an esteemed Jew as long as he fears God in 10.22 (cf. 10.19-24). In this occurrence, גר, זר, נכרי, and רש appear together. These four categories of people apparently share something in common: they are without rights in some way or another with regards to the land. The resident alien, the stranger, the foreigner (זר and נכרי occurring together referring to foreigner) and the impoverished – they are all considered to be disadvantaged socially, economically, and politically.[383] This all suggests that Ben Sira does not have in mind connotations of 'foreignness' when he uses זרה in 9.3 and 41.21. He does not use זרה in contrast with wisdom, as in Eccl. 7.26, which might infer the symbolism of foolishness, and for Ben Sira, the זרה in his work is representative of the real women who are seductive in the community, whether they each be prostitute, virgin, single or married. The reason for his generous disposition towards foreigners in general is difficult to pin-point. Whilst most scholars assume that the relative peace during Ben Sira's lifetime might offer a good reason for the absence of xenophobia, this position might need modification according to James Aitken's hypothesis.[384] In any case, Ben Sira's application of the Foreign Woman imagery solely

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New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1977), pp. 50-51; Kohler Kaufmann, 'The Origin and Composition of the 18 Benedictions', *HUCA* 1 (1924), pp. 387-425; Carmine Di Sante, *Jewish Prayer: The Origins of the Christian Liturgy*, (trans. Matthew J. O'Connell; New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1991), pp. 109-110. Also, Stephan Reif, 'Prayer in Ben Sira, Qumran and Second Temple Judaism: A Comparative Overview', in Renate Egger-Wenzel (ed.), *Ben Sira's God: Proceedings of the International Ben Sira Conference, Durham, Ushaw College, 2001* (BZAW, 321; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2001), p. 333, n. 36. However, Solomon Zeitlin does not think that Sir. 36 has anything to do with the prayer; S. Zeitlin, 'Shemoneh Esreh', *JQR* 54 (1964), pp. 208-49 (249). Concerning the historical context of this lament, commentators agree that v. 10 refers to a specific hostile enemy, but cannot decide whether he is Antiochus the Great, Seleucus IV, or an Egyptian ruler. *APOT* vol. I, p. 441; and W.O.E. Oesterley, *The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach or Ecclesiasticus* (CB; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1912), p. 230. Only Di Lella vouches for Antiochus the Great, whom he believes is arrogant enough to declare himself invincible (36.12), see Skehan and Di Lella, p. 422.

[383] A. Di Lella, 'Sirach 10:19-11:6: Textual Criticism, Poetic Analysis, and Exegesis', in C.L. Meyers and M. Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman in Celebration of His Sixtieth Birthday* (ASOR, 1; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1982), pp. 157-64 (159). In a way, these four groups of people are contrasted with the people mentioned in v. 20. The subject is a leader being honoured among his own kinsmen and community. The second stichs in vv. 20 and 22 emphasise that it is the one who fears God who is so honoured. He continues to explain in v. 23 that it is wrong to despise a wise but poor man and to honour a violent man, and, as a summary, he concludes in v. 24 that while the prince, judge and ruler are honoured, the one who fears God is the greatest.

[384] Aitken, 'Biblical Interpretation as Political Manifesto', pp. 191-208. He argues that in Sir. 44-50, Ben Sira is concerned with the political situation of his nation. He elucidates that all is not peaceful in Palestine with the Syrian wars when many of their soldiers were deported to Egypt to

to the context of normal male-female relations is noteworthy, and reminiscent of the ways in which we have already seen the imagery applied in later texts.

The Greek Texts of 9.3 and 41.20-21

We have seen how the Hebrew texts of Ben Sira will not evoke the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman motif, although he borrows the language of it, and in particular, chooses the more flexible and ambiguous term, זרה for her. We shall now study how Ben Sira's grandson translates the occurrences of זרה in 41.20-21 and 9.3.

41.20
καὶ ἀπὸ ἀσπαζομένων περὶ σιωπῆς,
ἀπὸ ὁράσεως γυναικὸς ἑταίρας
41.21
καὶ ἀπὸ ἀποστροφῆς προσώπου συγγενοῦς ,
ἀπὸ ἀφαιρέσεως μερίδος καὶ δόσεως
καὶ ἀπὸ κατανοήσεως γυναικὸς ὑπάνδρου,

41.20
And for greeting with silence
And for gazing at the *γυναικὸς ἑταίρας*
41.21
And for turning your face from kinsmen
For taking away the appointed share and gift
And for looking at a married woman.[385]

There is a different ordering of the contents in the Greek text compared with the Hebrew manuscripts. However, the contents of the two lines about the אשה and the זרה seem to be much the same. For the grandson, the זרה is equivalent to the *γυναικὸς ἑταίρας*, the courtesan. This is confirmed in his translation of 9.3:

9.3
μὴ ὑπάντα γυναικὶ ἑταιριζομένῃ,
μήποτε ἐμπέσῃς εἰς τὰς ταγίδας αὐτῆς.

Do not go near the courtesan (*γυναικὶ ἑταιριζομένῃ*),
Lest you fall into her traps.

In this occurrence, the grandson renders the אשה זרה as *γυναικὶ ἑταιριζομένῃ*, and omits the second colon of the Hebrew – perhaps because the prostitute is also mentioned

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serve the foreign powers. Nonetheless, he admits that the book may have been composed through a long period of time and not all the parts of the book reflect the same situation in Palestine.
[385] See the emendations recommended by *APOT* vol. I, p. 468; and Skehan and Di Lella, p. 476.

in v. 6 and he is avoiding repetition.[386] Although at one level they merely interpret the original, the renderings of זרה and אשה זרה as *γυναικὸς ἑταίρας* and *γυναικὶ ἑταιριζομένῃ* respectively, introduce a different nuance to that of Ben Sira's original. These words are only used here in the grandson's translation and in 2 Macc. 6.4, where *ἑταίρα* is mentioned together with the Hellenistic Gentiles.

> 2 Macc. 6.4 (NRSV)
> For the temple was filled with debauchery and reveling by the Gentiles, who dallied with prostitutes (*ἑταιρῶν*) and had intercourse with women within the sacred precincts, and besides brought in things for sacrifice that were unfit.

The *ἑταίραι* are not to be equated with common prostitutes,[387] but were high-class and educated,[388] perhaps somewhat close to the Japanese geisha. They originated in Athens and became popular in the sixth century BCE. When Alexandria was founded, the profession of *ἑταίραι* flourished there and even became a prominent feature of the *polis*.[389] These courtesans were known for their intelligence, and accompanied men in their social functions at parties and festivities. Courtesans reserved the right to choose their clients with care. Some of them had their own houses, and entertained their guests there. There are poems about them, as well as sculptures and paintings.[390]

The grandson's location in Alexandria, where courtesans were the commonplace, makes this translation significant. Although the courtesans were known for their education and intelligence, they were also necessarily associated with promiscuity and

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[386] It is difficult to tell whether the grandson has 9.7 as in Ms A, and could not make sense of it and changes the contents thereof, or whether he has a different text.
[387] John Malowe, *The Golden Age of Alexandria: from its foundation by Alexander the Great in 331 BC to its Capture by the Arabs in 642 AD* (London: Victor Gaollancz, 1971), pp. 126-29. He mentions the three classes of prostitutes in the Hellenic period.
[388] Richard Hawley, 'The Problem of Women Philosophers in Ancient Greece', in Archer, Fischer and Wyke (eds.), *Women in Ancient Societies*, pp. 70-87. Also, Marilyn A. Katz, 'Ideology and "the status of women" in ancient Greece', in Richard Hawley and Barbara Levick (eds.), *Women in Antiquity: New Assessments* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp. 21-43. In part of her essay, she explores the status of the wives at home versus the *hetairas*, who seemed to be more popular than the 'proper' women in the household.
[389] Prostitution is prevalent in Alexandria. In the later period, rabbis were taught by R. Nathan that, '...of the ten parts of prostitution in the world, nine are in Alexandria and the other in the rest of the world' (*Esther R.* 1.17); see Tal Ilan, *Jewish Women in Greco-Roman Palestine* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson, 1996), p. 217.
[390] Williams Dyfri, 'Women in Athenian Vases: Problems of Interpretation', in Cameron and Kuhrt (eds.), *Images of Women in Antiquity*, pp. 97-105. The *floruit* of the *hetaira* was from the beginning of the sixth century. They are often portrayed on expensive vases, affordable only to the rich.

extra-marital sex.[391] Through his rendering of זרה, Ben Sira's grandson makes the woman representative of an institution prevalent in foreign, Hellenistic culture. In this way, it seems that he brings the associations of זרה back closer to the motif of the Foreign Woman found in Proverbs 1-9.[392] However, the courtesan does not bear the full significance of that motif. She is only a 'foreign' prostitute, not a potential wife who can lead Israelites into apostasy, and the text does not describe the זרה in terms of her seductive speech.

The grandson, unlike Ben Sira, perceives foreigners with some suspicion. There are two texts to consider: 10.22 and 47.19-20. While Ben Sira in 10.22 is generous with all foreigners who might be willing to embrace the fear of God, the grandson changes the words of the text so that it does not refer to foreigners.

10.22
πλούσιος καὶ ἔνδοξος καὶ πτωχός,
τὸ καύχημα αὐτῶν φόβος κυρίου.

The rich, the honoured and the poor,
Their glory is in the fear of the Lord.

Instead of the four types of person found in the Hebrew, the Greek text has only three, and only the last of these is the same. The first three in the Hebrew the גר, זר, נכרי, have been replaced with the *πλούσιος καὶ ἔνδοξος*. In part this may be a textual issue: Di Lella believes that זד was read instead of זר, and that the grandson had a faulty *Vorlage* or misread his text. However, Di Lella's proposition does not explain what happened with גר and נכרי. While we are able to find similar characteristics among the גר, זר, נכרי, and רש, the *πλούσιος καὶ ἔνδοξος* and *πτωχός* are contrasting groups in society. It is also evident that the grandson actually understands 'foreigner' to have been meant when זר and נכרי occur together, rendering both with a single Greek word. His choice of *ἔνδοξος*,

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[391] There is a well-known speech, *Against Neaira*, made by the fourth century BCE Athenian orator which is quoted by Demosthenes (59.122), 'we have courtesans for pleasure, and concubines for the daily service of our bodies, but wives for the production of legitimate offspring and to have reliable guardians of our household property.' Also, see *LS*, p. 700. In Aeschylus, *ἑταίρησις* denotes 'unchastity'. Plutarch used *ἑταιρεύομαι* with the connotation of 'prostituting oneself'. The fourth century BCE historian Clearchus used *ἑταίρισμα* to mean 'harlotry'.

[392] R. Egger-Wenzel, 'Denn harte Knechtschaft und Schande ist es, wenn eine Frau ihren Mann ernährt', in I. Krammer (ed.) *Einzelne und seine Gemeinschaft bein Ben Sira* (BZAW, 270; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1998), pp. 23-49 (34). He proposes a Hellenistic context for Ben Sira's portrayal of these women, and believes that the motif of the Foreign Woman is behind it. He does not differentiate the Hebrew and the Greek texts in his analysis.

in a way, attempts to align the section with the theme of *δοξάζω* which recurs in 10.23-31. *πλούσιος* is probably chosen to make it synonymous with the *ἔνδοξος*. In this way, the grandson's translation changes the meaning of the text and removes any implications of accepting foreigners as recipients of Yahweh's Laws.

The rationale for this re-interpretation may be understood in the light of Hasmonean rule, under which the resident alien (גר תושב) was not granted the same status as an Israelite, and was not given rights to reside in Jerusalem (T Nega'im VI 2).[393] The Pharisees later did not agree with the forced conversion of the Gentiles by the Hasmoneans, and differentiated between the 'righteous proselytes' and others. The Hebrew text gives the impression that the resident alien and the foreigner can gain the same esteem and status as the honoured Jew, as long as each embraces Yahweh's Law.[394] By the time of the grandson, the implications of that statement do not correspond with the realities of the Hasmonean law.

The next text to consider is 47.19-20, where there are further differences between the Hebrew (Ms B) and Greek text:

Table 6.2: The Hebrew (Ms B) and Greek text of 47.19-20

Hebrew (Ms B)		Greek
19a	ותתן לנשים כסליך	*παρανέκλινας τὰς λαγόνας σου γυναιξὶν*
b	ותמשלים בגויתך :	*καὶ ἐνεξουσιάσθης ἐν τῷ σώματί σου*
20a	ו[.]תן מום בכבודך	*ἔδωκας μῶμον ἐν τῇ δόξῃ σου*
b	ותחלל את יצועיך :	*καὶ ἐβεβηλωσας τὸ σπέρμα σου*
c	[...] אף על צאצאיך	*ἐπαγαγεῖν ὀργὴν ἐπὶ τὰ τέκνα σου*
d	ואנחה על משכבך :	*καὶ κατανυγῆναι ἐπὶ τῇ ἀφρουσύνῃ σου*
19a But you give to the women your folly		But you brought women to lie by your side
b and you let them rule over your body		and through your body you were brought to subjection
20a and [you brought?] a blemish to your glory		You brought blemish to your glory
b and you defile your bed		and you desecrated your offspring
c [...] wrath upon your descendants		bringing wrath upon your children
d and sighing upon your bed		and grieving because of your folly.

[393] Ze'ev Falk, *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth* (AZGJU, 11; Leiden: Brill, 1972-78), vol. II, pp. 274-75.

[394] See J.K. Aitken, 'The Semantics of "Glory" in Ben Sira – Traces of a development of Post-biblical Hebrew?', in T. Maraoka and J. F. Elwolde (eds.), *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages: Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, and the Mishnah, held at Leiden University, 15-17 December 1997* (STDJ, 33; Leiden: Brill, 1999), 1-24. Aitken believes that the lexemes used for 'glory' and 'honour' in Hebrew are associated with Torah and are related to the divine presence, in relation to the temple and the priesthood.

In the Hebrew text, Ben Sira blames Solomon's folly for allowing women to rule over him (v. 19). He chastises Solomon for defiling his bed which resulted in God's wrath on his descendants and much grief on his deathbed (v. 20). Verses 21, 23a recount the division of the kingdom and the enemies Solomon made, referring to his folly and the consequent punishment. In the Greek text, the grandson reserves the mention of folly to the end of v. 20, but vv. 19b, 20a, 20c retain much the same meaning as the Hebrew text. The key point is in v. 20b, where 'bed' has been replaced by 'offspring' (literally, 'seed'). The Greek seems to understand that Solomon's women have led to defilement of his children and his line, something which is hardly to be associated with simple promiscuity, but probably recalls the consequences of intermarriage (cf. Ezra 9.2; 10.2). There is something more here, then, than simple punishment, and the grandson seems to make an implicit reference to the foreignness of the women. Further, he may have understood 'defiling of one's bed' as equivalent to having intercourse with a Gentile, according to Hasmonean understandings (Sanhedrin IX 6; TB Aboda Zara 36b).[395] The one caught in such an act would be killed. In this way, the grandson is fully conscious of the stigma of idolatry associated with such consummation.

It would be a mistake to assume that Ben Sira's grandson has set out to impose a quite new theme on the material, but his translation here and elsewhere seems to imply a concern with foreigners, and perhaps specifically foreign women, that is absent in the Hebrew original. Where Ben Sira himself strips the Foreign Woman motif of its original implications, and makes it refer simply to sexual matters – something which we have already seen in other texts – the grandson applies it to the circumstances of his own time and place. In doing so, consciously or unconsciously he re-introduces the element of 'foreignness'. This is especially visible in the way he links the woman with the courtesans of Hellenistic culture, but it may also be reflected in his treatment of Solomon's sins.

The Other Portrayals of Bad Women in Ben Sira

From 9.3-11, it is clear that Ben Sira was aware of the language associated with the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9. Given his famously negative portrayal of women

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[395] Falk, *Introduction to Jewish Law of the Second Commonwealth*, vol. II, pp. 271-72. The sin is equivalent to having intercourse with a menstruant, slave, or one betrothed.

more generally,[396] we may finish by exploring the extent to which he makes use of that imagery elsewhere in his depictions of female seduction and entrapment.

The most obvious place to begin is within the section 25.13-26.27,[397] with its contrasting portraits of the good and bad wife, but here we find little that is directly reminscent of the figure in Proverbs 1-9. The only time Ben Sira portrays a woman actively seducing men is in 26.9-12, where in v. 9 the wife is said to seduce with her eyes. In vv. 10-12, Ben Sira shifts the warning against one's wife to warnings about one's daughter. One should watch out for the way a daughter uses her eyes to seduce: men are easily attracted to her, and she may become promiscuous.

Sir. 26.9-12[398]
9 By her eyelids and her haughty stare
an unchaste wife can be recognized.
10 Keep strict watch over an unruly wife,
lest, finding an opportunity, she make[sic] use of it
11 Follow close if her eyes are bold,
and be not surprised if she betrays you:
12 As a thirsty traveler with eager mouth
drinks from any water that he finds,
So she sits down before every tent peg
And opens her quiver for every arrow.

Elsewhere in the section, 25.20 compares the struggle of a wicked wife to restrain her tongue with an aged man struggling to climb steps. 25.16-20 describes a wicked wife and the harm done to her oppressed husband.

Sir. 25.16-20[399]
16 With a dragon or a lion I would rather dwell
than live with an evil woman.
17 Wickedness changes a woman's looks,
and makes her sullen as a female bear.
18 When her husband sits among his neighbors,
a bitter sigh escapes him unawares.
19 There is a scarce any evil like that in a woman;
may she fall to the lot of the sinner!
20 Like a sandy hill to aged feet
is a railing wife to a quiet man.

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[396] Both scholars, Trenchard and Gilbert agree that in terms of quantity Ben Sira portrays more negative aspects of woman, but Gilbert disagrees that Ben Sira is a misogynist; see Gilbert, 'Ben Sira et la femme', p. 442.
[397] For this text, the only Hebrew text extant is in 25.13, 17-24; 26.1-3, 13-17 of Ms C; for the rest of the text, we are dependent on the Greek version.
[398] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 344.
[399] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 343.

There is no specific depiction of what kind of evil deeds she commits, although, besides the mention of her tongue, Ben Sira makes a reference to the gathering of her friends (v. 18). Possibly, the contents of her speech are wickedness, and vv. 16, 18 may be alluding to the nagging wife as in Prov. 21.9, 19; 25.24; 27.15. Another mention of speech is found in 26.5-6.

Sir. 26.5-6[400]
5 There are three things at which my heart quakes,
a fourth before which I quail:
Through false charges in public, trial before all the people,
And lying testimony are each harder to bear than death,
6 A wife jealous of another wife is heartache and mourning
and a scourging tongue like the other three.

The first verse here concerns slander, while the second deals with a quarrel between jealous rival wives. The last mention of female speech is found in 26.27, where a loud-mouthed woman (*γυνὴ μεγάλόφωνος*) and a woman full of words (*γλωσσώδης*) are compared with a trumpet used for war, and living with such women with living a life of warfare.[401]

Sir. 26.27[402]
But a loud-mouthed, scolding wife can be recognized
as a battle trumpet signaling attack.
Any human being who matches that challenge
will spend his life amid the turbulence of war

25.20 and 26.27 fit closely with the portrayal of repeated speech which is a common trait of the nagging wife, but none of the above portrayals describe women's speeches as seductive. Thus, they hardly resemble the motif of the Foreign Woman. The description of consequences are little closer; 26.22 does use death as a threat, to deter one from involvement, but the warning is specifically against adultery, and the woman is described as a 'tower of death'.

Sir. 26.22[403]
A hired woman is as spittle,
But a married woman is reckoned as a tower of death to them that use her.

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[400] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 344.
[401] Skehan and Di Lella, p. 352.
[402] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 345.
[403] Cited from *APOT* vol. I, p. 404.

The depiction of death as a consequence of adultery is too common to be meaningful, and the particular expression used here is not found among those used of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs.

Nonetheless, there are three verses which seem to borrow from the passages concerning the Foreign Woman in Proverbs – 26.19-21.

Sir. 26.19-21[404]
19 My son, keep intact the prime of your life
by not surrendering your strength to strangers;
20 Single out from all the land a goodly field
and there with confidence sow the seed of your increase -
21 So shall you have your offspring around you
growing up confident in their breeding.

In v. 19, the son is admonished to keep himself healthy and not to give his strength to strangers (*ἀλλοτρίοις*). Verses 20-21 describe in metaphorical terms an exhortation to find a good wife and produce offspring of one's own (*ἴδια σπέρματα*). Verse 22 then continues with the depiction of the prostitute as spittle and the married woman as a tower of death. The whole context admonishes the son and urges him to find a good wife to marry and produce offspring.[405] He should preserve his virility for his own and not for underserving women, like the prostitute and the adulteress. Verse 19 resembles the language in Prov. 5.10-20 about preserving one's properties within the community and not sharing them with foreigners through the Foreign Woman. As we have seen, Ben Sira is not concerned about foreigners here, and what is retained in the language is to do with reserving one's own for oneself by ensuring that one's wife is faithful and her offspring one's own. This appears to reflect the language of Septuagint Proverbs, rather than MT.[406]

There is another passage in Ben Sira where a woman and her nets are mentioned – Sir. 6.23-31, which describes Woman Wisdom.[407]

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[404] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, p. 345.
[405] Skehan and Di Lella, p. 351.
[406] See 5.3.
[407] This passage is extant in Ms A and 2Q18, and with v. 28 in Ms C; cf. Beentjes, *Book of Ben Sira in Hebrew*, pp. 133-34. 2Q18, dated to the first century BCE or first half of the first century CE, is very fragmentary and only some of the last letters and words of the lines visible. The contents of Mss A and C and that of the Greek are quite similar.

Sir. 6.23-31[408]

23 Listen, my son, and take my advice;
refuse not my counsel.
24 Put your feet into her net
and your neck into her noose.
25 Stoop your shoulders and carry her
and be not irked at her bonds.
26 With all your soul draw close to her;
with all your strength keep her ways.
27 Search her out, discover her; seek her and you will find her.
Then when you have her, do not let her go;
28 Thus you will afterward find rest in her -
she will be transformed into your delight.
29 Her net will become your throne of majesty;
her noose, your apparel of spun gold.
30 Her yoke will be your gold adornment;
her bonds, your purple cord.
31 You will wear her as your glorious apparel,
bear her as your splendid crown.

In an interesting reversal, Ben Sira uses the imagery of hunting to exhort one to be caught in the nets of Woman Wisdom, to be yoked by her (vv. 24-25), but also to seek her like a hunter (vv. 26-28). Ben Sira acknowledges that seeking wisdom is hard work and requires perserverance, self-discipline and commitment: it is not for the faint-hearted or foolhardy. Ben Sira further elaborates how the nets will turn into protection, purple cord and splendid crown and the yoke into a perfect garment, golden ornament and glorious robe (vv. 29-31). The purple cord mentioned in v. 30 is that which Israelites are required to put on (as in Num. 15.38-39) to remind them to keep all the commandments and not to follow the desires of their hearts and what they see.[409] So, Woman Wisdom is portrayed as keeping them on the right path to fulfill the commandments of Yahweh.

While Proverbs speaks of the urgent need to seek Woman Wisdom, it does not portray Wisdom herself as a huntress; that imagery is reserved for the traps of the Foreign Woman and the evil men. Ben Sira's transfer of it recalls the sort of ambiguity in the portrayals of the two personified women and evil men, which we find in Proverbs 1-9. Is this deliberate? Sir. 9.3 certainly depicts the זרה in terms of traps. However, it is important to note that Ben Sira uses different words for traps, and does not himself depict the זרה as a hunter. These points seem to indicate that Ben Sira does not intend to evoke ambiguity, but has simply transferred the imagery of hunting, in a positive manner, to Woman Wisdom.

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[408] Cited from the translation by Skehan and Di Lella, pp. 190-91.
[409] Skehan and Di Lella, p. 194.

From all this we may conclude that Ben Sira's use of the Foreign Woman imagery is rather limited. In general, he prefers to use his own imagery. While he clearly knew Proverbs 1-9, and was probably aware of its allusions, he develops some of its themes quite differently. In particular, there is nothing to suggest that he was concerned with the foreign woman in relation to issues of intermarriage or apostasy; insofar as he uses the figure at all, he simply links her to issues of sexual morality. To a limited extent, this shift is reversed in the Greek translation, which was prepared against a background of new tensions between Jews and foreigners, but this hardly represents a direct continuation of the motif in Proverbs 1-9. As was the case with the texts which we reviewed in the last chapter, Ben Sira's work seems to reflect a re-use of the Foreign Woman motif, stripping it of its original connotations.

6.2. The Motif of the Foreign Woman in the Wisdom of Solomon

So far, we have seen from various texts that the Foreign Woman of Proverbs 1-9 is not forgotten in later literature, but that the imagery associated with her is applied to new themes. The original connotations of the figure are removed or lost. Finally, we may say a little about a work in which we might expect her to appear, given its interest in foreignness, but in which she does not. The Wisdom of Solomon was probably composed still later, towards the middle of the first century CE and the author remains unknown.[410] The book has a tripartite division into distinct themes: (1) 1.1-6.21[411] emphasises the promise of immortality for the righteous, as a deterrent for evil men; (2) 6.12-9.18 is about Solomon's quest and praise for wisdom; (3) 10.1-19.22 is about Wisdom's salvific act in the Exodus. There are two sections which seem to interrupt the narration of the latter section of the book: the expositions on God's mercy (11.15-12.27)

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[410] David Winston argues for the time period 30-50 CE for the date of composition; see D. Winston, *Wisdom of Solomon: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB, 43; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1979), pp. 20-23, n. 34. He explains that scholars differ in their opinions concerning the date of composition, which range from 220 BCE – 50 CE. See also *APOT* vol. I, pp. 520-21. The basic criterion for identifying the date of composition is the identification of a historical period when the Jews in Egypt were persecuted by the locals. However, a specific time period is difficult to pinpoint because there were several such events during the period from 220 BCE until the first century CE. In addition, see C. Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse ou la Sagesse de Salomon* (O.P. commentary, Études Bibliques; Paris: J. Gabalda, 1983), vol. I, pp. 146-61; for a concise evaluation of past scholarship concerning the influence of Hellenistic philosophies in the book.

and on the origin of idolatry (13.1-15.19).[412] It seems likely that the author uses the two main themes in Proverbs 1-9 for the first two parts of his work.[413]

I do not think that it is necessary to give too much space to drawing out the dependence of the themes in 6.12-9.18 on Proverbs. The portrayal of personified wisdom as the sought-after wife of Solomon is beyond doubt based primarily on the exhortation in Proverbs 1-9 to seek her.[414] The distinctive contribution of the Wisdom of Solomon is its specific portrayal of the seeker as the king of Israel, Solomon. This portrayal is not without purpose: the addresses to the rulers of the earth in 1.1, and to the oppressors of Israel, Egypt in 10.15, make the author's portrayal of an Israelite king seeking for wisdom as wife an exemplary model of wisdom and righteousness. Consequently, 6.19-9.18 function as a central focus of the 'good' and are pitted against two antitheses, either side of it.

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[411] There are differences of opinion concerning the transitional chapters 6 and 10. Personified wisdom is the subject in these chapters and could also be considered as belonging to the second division. See Winston, pp. 9-12.

[412] There are many studies on the function of 10.1-19.22 in relation to the whole book, and how one should interpret these two sections in light of the structure within itself. For a survey of such works, see Moyna McGlynn, *Divine Judgement and Divine Benevolence in the Book of Wisdom* (WUNT, 139; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 4-9. He proposes a circular argument in the structure, following the structure of Callimachus's *Aetia*. Also, Samuel Cheon, *The Exodus Story in the Wisdom of Solomon: A Study in Biblical Interpretation* (JSPSup, 23; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997); and M. Gilbert, *La Critique des dieux dans le Livre de la Sagesse (Sg 13-15)* (AnBib, 53; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1973).

[413] See P. Skehan, 'The Literary Relationship of the Book of Wisdom to Earlier Wisdom Writings', in *Israelite Poetry and Wisdom*, pp. 173-91. Also, R.J. Clifford, 'Proverbs as a Source for Wisdom', in N. Calduch-Benages and J. Vermeylen (eds.), *Treasures of Wisdom* (Festschrift M. Gilbert; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 255-63. He argues that not only is the figure Woman Wisdom borrowed from Proverbs, but there are five other themes as well: 1. the righteous person as the locus where divine action becomes visible; 2. God as father who teaches his son by a process involving correction and even punishment (*παιδεία* = מוּסָר); 3. the wise king; 4. life and death as more than biological realities; 5. the world (*κόσμος*) protecting the righteous and punishing the wicked.

[414] Other developments of this theme can also be found in the wisdom of Ben Sira 6.18-37; 14.20-27; 24; 51.13-30; and 11QPs[a] Sir 51. They depict the act of seeking and finding wisdom in terms of courtship and sex. For commentary on Wis. 7-9, see Winston, pp. 163-209; *APOT* vol. I, pp. 545-50; Ernest G. Clarke, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (CB; London: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 48-65. The features of personified wisdom as the first of God's creation, moving across the earth, seeking for righteous beings, taking her residence in Israel, and the exhortation to submit to her disciplines are rooted in Prov. 8, and especially the passages on Woman Wisdom in Ben Sira.

The Theme of 1.1-6.11

Although the book is addressed to the rulers of the earth, 1.1-6.11 focusses on those who are evil or godless (*ἀσεβεῖς*).[415] The author presents his doctrine of immortality in the framework of the philosophy of life held by the godless. The first speech of the godless in 2.1-20 seems to be an elaboration of the speech of the evil men in Prov. 1.11-14. The following table highlights the similar vocabularies and ideas found especially in Wis. 2.7-12 and LXX Prov. 1.11-14.

Table 6.3: A Comparison of the Similar Vocabularies in Wis. 2.7-12 and LXX Prov. 1.11-14

Wis. 2.7-12	**LXX Prov. 1.11-14**
(v. 7) *Costly* (*πολυτελοῦς*) wine Let us *fill* (*πλησθῶμεν*)	(v. 13) seize *expensive* (*πολυτελῆ*) possessions let us *fill* (*πλήσωμεν*) our houses
(v. 9) our *lot* (*κλῆρος*) The idea of sharing the evil men's plot.	(v. 14) throw in your *lot* (*κλῆρον*) The idea of sharing the evil men's plot.
(vv. 10, 12) The evil men's target is the righteous (*δίκαιον*).	(v. 11) The evil men's target is the righteous (*δίκαιον*).
(v. 12) The idea of setting an ambush (*ἐνδρεύσωμεν*) for their targets.	(vv. 11, 12) The idea of setting an ambush (*ἐνδρεύω*) for their targets.
(v. 20) The intention to terminate the life of their targets.	(vv. 11, 12) The intention to terminate the life of their targets.

In comparing these two speeches, some interesting results surface. First, the table above shows that the main contents of both speeches share the same vocabulary and ideas: the desire of these men to gratify themselves with material goods (Wis. 2.7; Prov. 1.13); and the persuasion to participate in their 'lot' (Wis. 2.9; Prov. 1.14). Secondly, their main plot is one and the same: their target is the righteous (Wis. 2.10, 12; Prov. 1.11); their plan is to lay an ambush, with the connotation of acting in secret (Wis. 2.12; Prov. 1.11, 12); and their ultimate aim is to murder the righteous (Wis. 2.20; Prov. 1.11, 12). Thirdly, the comparison of the two passages also shows that the author of Wisdom of Solomon makes a deliberate attempt to elaborate on the rationale for the evil men's actions as found in a more abbreviated form in Prov 1.11-14.

The speeches of the evil men in Wis. 2 are based on ideas which the author goes on to contradict, but which were, interestingly, rooted in conventional ideas, sometimes

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[415] In this context, it resembles Pss. 9 and 10 (or LXX Ps. 9) where the godless and evil are the rulers of the foreign nations.

manifested in Proverbs or other wisdom literature.[416] So, the godless men's claims that Hades is insubstantial (vv. 1-3), that they have the power to shorten and overcome the promised secure life of the righteous (vv. 19-20), and that the memory of a person will be erased at the point of death (vv. 4-5), are all in disagreement with the claims made in Proverbs and Ben Sira. In Proverbs, the underworld is used as a form of threat to deter wicked behaviour, and premature death functions as retribution to evil men (cf. Prov. 1.26-27, 31-22; 2.21b-22; 11.19; Sir. 21.10; 28.21; 33.14; *etcetera*), while in Ben Sira, the righteous benefits only through being held in everlasting remembrance (Sir. 39.9). Elsewhere, the author seeks to prove the godless wrong on the basis of the promise of immortality for the righteous.[417] His affirmation that life continues after death, and therefore that Hades, the underworld, is real, implies that a long life on earth is no longer important, but a righteous one is. Thus, he admits that the righteous may live short lives, and may suffer premature death (which is generally considered a curse in the OT; Ps. 55.23), but most importantly, the Lord remembers them (Wis. 3). The memorial of the just is no longer dependent on humans as in Ben Sira, but God. The author in Wis. 5 picks up the godless men's speech again, on their day of judgement in the afterlife, and portrays their remorse for their foolishness. Consequently, he shows that the righteous are indeed delivered and saved from the evil men by God.

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[416] It is also important to note that the author's composition of the godless speech here reflects the latter's rejection of the teachings in the OT. J.P. Weisengoff has given quite an exhaustive list:

> "Thus, breath in the nostrils is smoke (Wis. 2:2c), but in the Bible it is the breath of God and makes one a living being (Gen. 2:7; Job 27:3); oblivion is the fate of all after death (Wis. 2:4a-b), but in the Bible oblivion is the fate of the wicked (Pss. 9:6; 34:16; Prov. 10:7), while the just enjoy remembrance with posterity (Prov. 10:7; Ps. 112:6; cf. Wis. 4:1; 8:13; 10:14); the "impious" propose to oppress widows, the old, and the poor (Wis. 2:10), groups which, according to O.T. prescriptions, are to be treated with kindness and generosity (Deut. 16:14; 24:17-19; 28:50; Ps. 72:2-3; Is. 1:17; 10:2; 47:6). The combination *ἡ μερὶς ἡμῶν καὶ ὁ κλῆρος* seems to have been borrowed from the Greek of Is. 57-6. *Νόμος* and *παιδεία* (Wis. 2:12) refer, although perhaps not exclusively, to the Mosaic Law and to the traditions in which young Jews were initiated. In Wis. 2:12a *ὅτι δύσχρηστος ἡμῖν ἐστιν* is identical with the Greek of Is. 3:10. Finally, the author himself describes the "impious" as *τοῦ κυρίου ἀποστάντες* (Wis. 3:10), which can scarcely mean anything but "those who revolted from Yahweh."

In J.P. Weisengoff, 'The Impious of Wisdom 2', *CBQ* 11 (1949), pp. 40-65 (61-62). Weisengoff, by means of elimination, debates with previous scholarship in identifying the godless in Wis. 2 as those schools representing Sadduccess, Pharisees and Ecclesiastes.

[417] See J.P. Weisengoff, 'Death and Immortality in the Book of Wisdom', *CBQ* 3 (1941), pp. 104-33; J.J. Collins, 'The Root of Immortality – Death in the Context of Jewish Wisdom', *HTR* (1978), pp. 177-92.

At the same time, there is also an echo of the idea that the reward of evil men is one of futility and emptiness, as in LXX Prov. 9.12 (additions). In Wis. 5.6-14, the author depicts how the evil at the end of their lives realise that their path is lacking in light, and he describes it in terms of aimless wandering in the desert: their lives are meaningless and futile.

Wis. 5.6-14 (NRSV)

6 So it was we who strayed from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not shine on us, and the sun did not rise upon us.
7 We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we have not known.
8 What has our arrogance profited us? And what good has our boasted wealth brought us?
9 "All those things have vanished like a shadow, and like a rumor that passes by;
10 like a ship that sails through the billowy water, and when it has passed no trace can be found, no track of its keel in the waves;
11 or as, when a bird flies through the air, no evidence of its passage is found; the light air, lashed by the beat of its pinions and pierced by the force of its rushing flight, is traversed by the movement of its wings, and afterward no sign of its coming is found there;
12 or as, when an arrow is shot at a target, the air, thus divided, comes together at once, so that no one knows its pathway.
13 So we also, as soon as we were born, ceased to be, and we had no sign of virtue to show, but were consumed in our wickedness."
14 Because the hope of the ungodly is like thistledown carried by the wind, and like a light frost driven away by a storm; it is dispersed like smoke before the wind, and it passes like the remembrance of a guest who stays but a day.

This analogy of desert wandering is also picked up again in the later chapters of the book. In Wis. 16-19, the author depicts Israel's desert experience as not aimless but guided by the divine light, which is in contrast to her enemies, the Egyptians, wandering in the desert, and without light.

The above short analysis shows that the main content of the godless men's speech echoes the vocabulary of the evil men in Septuagint Proverbs 1-9. Concerning their philosophy of life, it is not one based on Greek philosophy,[418] but intrinsically on OT traditions.

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[418] As suggested by Larcher, *Le Livre de la Sagesse*, vol. I, p. 211. Of course, Larcher also interprets the book as resonating with the philosophy, life and customs of the Greeks and the Romans. Also, this contrasts with David Seeley's proposition for tracing the source to various Greek philosophies based on his analysis that the godless have two separate aims: materialism and removing the righteous. He cannot find an origin for the latter in the OT. See D. Seeley, 'Narrative, the Righteous Man and the Philosopher: An Analysis of the Story of the *Dikaios* in Wisdom 1-5', *JSP* 7 (1990), pp. 55-78. On the other hand, 1 Kgs 21 narrates the death of Naboth, plotted by the pagan queen, as not only due to coveting of his land, but also because he was righteous, see Chapter Three. The kings and leaders of Judah are also accused of the blood of the

The Theme of 10.1-19.22

The first antithesis to wisdom, then, is not the Foreign Woman of Proverbs 1-9, but the evil men associated with her by their role in that work. The second might seem also to offer an opportunity to present the figure of the Foreign Woman: 10.1-19.22 speaks of the foreign oppressors of Israel, and has a more general interest in the threat of foreignness (especially Egyptian). The threat depicted here is one of foreignness, and specifically, those from the Egyptians.

The author begins by first making a clear differentiation between different ethnic groups: the nation of Israel, the foreigners in the land which they are to possess (Wis. 12.3-4), and the foreigners in the land from which Israel is to be delivered (Wis. 11.15-19; 16-19). Having made this distinction, he emphasises that the problem with the foreigners is their idolatry, which he argues is the root of their oppressive and evil nature. The author treats this subject in the first part of Wis. 11-15. He contrasts Israel's relationship with God and the foreigners' dependence on idolatry. Where the historical events actually have the context of Israel's seduction into idolatry, they are ignored (cf. 18.20-23). The author describes idolatry as hateful to God (Wis. 12.23; 14.11 as '*βδελυγμα*' abomination to God). Than he makes idolatry the source of all evils and moral ills because it is inherently a rejection of God (Wis. 11.14), to whom everything good and moral belongs (Wis 14.22-27).

> Wis. 18.20-23 (NRSV)
> **20** The experience of death touched also the righteous, and a plague came upon the multitude in the desert, but the wrath did not long continue.
> **21** For a blameless man was quick to act as their champion; he brought forward the shield of his ministry, prayer and propitiation by incense; he withstood the anger and put an end to the disaster, showing that he was your servant.
> **22** He conquered the wrath not by strength of body, not by force of arms, but by his word he subdued the avenger, appealing to the oaths and covenants given to our ancestors.
> **23** For when the dead had already fallen on one another in heaps, he intervened and held back the wrath, and cut off its way to the living.

> Wis. 12.23 (NRSV)
> Therefore those who lived unrighteously, in a life of folly, you tormented through their own abominations (*βδελυγμα*).

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innocent and the prophets, for speaking righteousness (2 Kgs 21.16; 24.4; Jer. 7.6; Ezek. 22.16). In addition, Deut. 19.11-13 depicts the one who kills not because of materialism, but of hatred. Ps. 10 also depicts the ambush of the helpless (חלכה ; LXX 9.29 - *πένητα*). Therefore, this idea is not absent in the OT.

Wis. 14.11 (NRSV)
Therefore there will be a visitation also upon the heathen idols, because, though part of what God created, they became an abomination, snares for human souls and a trap for the feet of the foolish (*βδελυγμα*).

Finally, the author expounds, at great length, on the origin of idolatry and attempts to prove its futility, in Wis. 13-15. He seems to follow Isaiah's prophecy in Isa. 44.9-20 for his presentation.[419] In fact, in the portrayal of Israel's thirst in the wilderness and desert, and the proclamation of Yahweh as *the* God, together with his affirmation of God as Israel's rock in Isa. 44.1-8, just prior to the exposition on idolatry, is also found in Wis. 11. Likewise, the tone of a forgiving and merciful God speaking to allure his people to repent before him is found in Isa. 44.1-6, 8, 21-28; it is also found in the portrayal of a patient and merciful God in Wis. 11.9, 20-12.27.

The above points indicate a couple of features which are similar to the symbolism of the Foreign Woman: foreigners and foreign worship. However, the author does not employ a female figure for his thesis, but goes directly into the subject of idolatry itself. There is one obvious reason for this abandonment and it is because the author is not aware of the motif of the Foreign Woman.[420] As we have seen, the author knew Septuagint Proverbs and Ben Sira, using them for the first two sections of his book. But there is no evidence that he knew the Hebrew Proverbs. Since Septuagint Proverbs no longer employs the motif of the Foreign Woman, and merely portrays her as a seductive adulteress in the community, the author of Wisdom of Solomon would have no access to this character in her original form. Further, there are nuances in the symbolism of the 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman which are different from what the author says about 'foreignness' in his work. Wisdom of Solomon does not depict 'foreign' elements as leading Israel astray into apostasy. The 'foreigners' in his work are those oppressing and persecuting Israel. They are simply hostile enemies who are idolatrous, and there are no issues about defining the bounds of the Jewish community, since the 'foreigners' are clearly identifiable as Egyptians. All in all, Wisdom of Solomon does not deal with Israel committing apostasy, but with the oppressive situation which the Egyptians have created for Israel, and their idolatry is to be blamed for their cruel attitudes.

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[419] Gilbert shows that the forms of idolatries listed in this chapter are already identified in the OT, and they are not particular only at the time of composition; see Gilbert, *La critique des dieux*, pp. 78-94, 205-10.

[420] Winston is certain that the author does not know Hebrew, and even if he does, it is through secondary sources; see Winston, p. 63.

On the face of it, the absence of the Foreign Woman in Wisdom of Solomon may seem surprising, given its interest in foreignness and its use of Proverbs. It seems likely, however, that the author was unaware of her existence in the original Proverbs, and anyway, his concerns about foreigners are very different. When we reach the period in which this book was composed, the concerns of the fifth century are far in the past, and the imagery of Proverbs is being filtered through new texts and contexts.

Chapter Summary and Conclusion

In the last chapter, we saw how the motif of the Foreign Woman developed in wisdom texts which have direct references to her. We noted that the connotation of 'foreignness' was much weakened already in Ecclesiastes, and had essentially disappeared in Septuagint Proverbs and the Qumran text. In this chapter I began the search for the Foreign Woman in Ben Sira through the occurrences of זרה in the Hebrew texts 9.3 and 41.21. The latter verse only mentions that one should not look at the זרה, and the surrounding texts give no clue as to who she might be. A careful analysis of the passage in 9.1-11 showed that Ben Sira's זרה is described in the same language as the Foreign Woman. However, she has become merely a representative of the bad seductive women, and no longer symbolises foreignness or the lure of apostasy as in Proverbs. The Greek equivalents of these two occurrences render זרה as 'courtesan', and the translation further emphasises the concreteness of this woman figure, while associating her with new concerns about 'foreignness'. However, the Greek rendering still lacks the full significance of the motif as the 'foreign wife', with her potential to lead Israel into idolatry and apostasy.

From the other texts, such as 10.22; 45.23-24; 47.19-20 and 49.5, it is clear that Ben Sira is not xenophobic and has no overt resentment toward the foreigners. In 36.3, he does pray for the destruction of foreigners, but in an eschatological context, which is a sentiment derived from the OT prophets. The grandson, on the other hand, displays some anxiety about foreigners typical of his time. He changes the contents of 10:22 (Ms A) so that an honour no longer applies to foreigners or resident aliens, but to a different Jewish social class. In 47.19-20, the grandson may also imply that Solomon's intermarriages resulted in 'defiled' offspring, the cause of God's wrath; the Hebrew of 47.19-20 (Ms B) had merely condemned Solomon's folly for allowing women to rule over him. Both changes by the grandson probably reflect Hasmonean regulations: in the first case, non-

Israelites were granted no rights to reside in Jerusalem, implying a difference of status, and in the second, the sin of intermarriage or sex with a Gentile was punishable by the death penalty.

We also examined the passage 25.13-26.17, where the good wife is compared to the bad wife, finding no trace of the motif of the Foreign Woman. The subsequent 26.19-21 did seem to reflect the language of Prov. 5.10-12. However, the text in Ben Sira makes no reference to the foreigners with whom the MT is concerned. Overall, it became clear that, although Ben Sira is aware of the motif of the Foreign Woman, he re-interprets her to be simply a seductive immoral woman.

In Wisdom of Solomon, we saw how the author uses the overall structure of Proverbs 1-9 in his work, and two major characters from it, the evil men and Woman Wisdom. The depiction of the evil men in Wisdom of Solomon is dependent on Septuagint Proverbs, although the former also introduces new perspectives to the problem of evil in comparison to the earlier work. It is evident that the author does not know MT Proverbs but relies on Septuagint Proverbs. The study of the theme in the third part of his work shows that he is attacking idolatry and accusing it of being the source of corruption for the foreign oppressors. However, as he is only aware of Septuagint Proverbs, which depicts the Foreign Woman simply as an adulteress, he finds it irrelevant for that with which he wants to deal.

This chapter, continuing from the previous one, charts how the motif of the Foreign Woman develops in the wisdom apocryphal literature. The 'foreignness' of the Foreign Woman, is maybe resuscitated a little in the work of Ben Sira's grandson. However, the Greek text is confined by its parent text and the full essence of the symbolism of the Foreign Woman is hardly grasped. The disappearance of the motif of the Foreign Woman in the later wisdom literature of the OT is a gradual process. First it peters out in Eccl. 7.26, and through Ben Sira and his grandson, but when it comes to Septuagint Proverbs, it is completely lost. The translator of Septuagint Proverbs draws the motif of the Foreign Woman further away from its symbolism of 'foreignness' and apostasy. He makes no reference to 'foreignness' in his translation, and he changes the theme of all the passages to adultery. By the time it reaches the hands of the author of Wisdom of Solomon, the original motif of the Foreign Woman no longer exists. As time draws on, the problem of intermarriage with 'foreign women' no longer bears the same urgency and meaning as it did in the early post-exilic period in Jerusalem, and with the fading of that problem comes a fading of the Foreign Woman's earlier resonance.

Conclusions and Implications

This thesis has had two main purposes. The first is to show that the woman identified by זרה and נכריה in Proverbs 1-9 should really be understood as 'foreign': her nature is an allusion to the 'foreign wives' in the intermarriage crisis of the post-exilic period, and beyond that, to a motif in earlier literature. However, this allusion is not so much concerned with strict ethnic definition, rather, a well-established idea that 'foreign women' lead Israelites into apostasy, and so into destruction. Our second purpose was to track the history of the motif itself. Proverbs 1-9 draws on that motif of 'foreign wives' and apostasy, established in the Deuteronomistic History and some legal material, but its symbolic presentation of *the* Foreign Woman seems to mark both a high point and a conclusion to the theme. Subsequent works, although keen to draw on the imagery associated with the figure in Proverbs 1-9, generally play down her foreignness, and often present her simply as a symbol of dangerous female sexuality or the archetypal adulteress. This may result from misunderstanding a character whose nature is so closely tied to the ideologies and concerns of a particular period, soon after the Return, but it also indicates a more fundamental shift of interests and understandings in Jewish culture. It is important to recognise the original nature of the Foreign Woman, if we are to understand the central concerns of Proverbs 1-9; it is also important to recognise, however, that those concerns gave way to others in later literature, and that the usage of the Foreign Woman motif changed accordingly.

In approaching this topic, we began with a lexicographical study in Chapter One, which showed that נכר is essentially associated with ideas of 'foreignness', although not necessarily in terms of our modern nationalistic understanding. We saw that זר is a more general term, which denotes some type of 'otherness', although at times it can mean 'foreign'. However, when the two terms appear together, they must have the narrower sense 'foreign'. Therefore, the woman we find in Proverbs 1-9 is quintessentially a 'foreign woman'.

The majority of the occurrences of 'foreign women' appear in the accounts of Ezra-Nehemiah, in the context of the problem of mixed marriages. If Proverbs 1-9 was written close to that period, as is often asserted, that context cannot be ignored, nor can

the fact that the very term 'foreign woman' would have had a powerful resonance for so long as memories persisted of the upheavals over intermarriage. When we looked into Ezra-Nehemiah, in Chapter Two, we found that the issue of 'foreign wives' was tied up with broader problems of ethnicity and self-definition, and with the familiar problem of the 'people of the land.' Indeed, there may have been a deliberate attempt to forge a connection between that group and the 'peoples of the land' to whom the Deuteronomic prohibitions refer. The evoking of the Deuterononomic and Deuteronomistic prohibitions against intermarriage with those peoples, the original inhabitants of the land, makes it clear that the efforts in Ezra-Nehemiah are rooted in an earlier tradition.

Following the lead of Neh. 13.26, in Chapter Three, we reviewed the manifestation of that tradition in the books of Kings. There we examined not only the 'foreign wives' of King Solomon, to whom explicit reference is made in the later debate, but also what is an almost archetypal portrait of a 'foreign wife', who corrupts and leads her husband into apostasy and finally destruction – Queen Jezebel. We also found some evidence to suggest that similar ideas run through the presentation of Judahite kings as good or bad, with many of the bad ones explicitly associated with a 'foreign' mother or woman. Thus, there seems to be a persistent motif running through the books of Kings, in which 'foreign women' corrupt and lead the kings astray. It is the kings themselves, in turn, who lead the nation into apostasy, and destruction. This motif is inherently a Deuteronomistic product, which is developed from the Deuteronomic prohibitions, and which contributes to the Deuteronomistic analysis of the reasons for Israel's decline and fall.

It seems likely that the figure of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is itself rooted in the same tradition, and is not simply, therefore, a product of the intermarriage crisis in the early post-exilic period. Like the opponents of mixed marriages in Ezra-Nehemiah, it draws on the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic association of foreign women with apostasy. Those roots are shown, not least, by the fact that it uses the motif in a rather different way. In Chapter Four we examined the ways in which Proverbs 1-9 portray the Foreign Woman. There she is a poetic creation, and not just simply depicting the dangers of intermarriage with 'foreigners', but rather presupposes a knowledge of those dangers. She is a 'foreign' woman not because the author is trying to make some point about ethnicity directly, but because contemporary readers, who were familiar with the motif in other literature and/or with the reasons for the dissolution of mixed marriages after the Return, would know what it is that 'foreign women' do: they lead

unwary Jews astray, into apostasy and destruction. The background motif, and the recent crisis, meant that the 'foreignness' of a woman could be used as a sort of poetic shorthand.

Proverbs 1-9 puts much of its message across through the use of symbolic characters and their speeches. The Foreign Woman is not the only 'bad' character, and her role is clearly equivalent to that of the villains in chapter 1. Both tempt the innocent into evil, onto the wrong paths, and both act as antitheses to personified Wisdom, another poetic creation, who stands for guidance along the right path, the way of pious living according to the will of Yahweh. While the bad characters surely and certainly lead to destruction and death, wisdom leads one to blessings and abundant life. Both the Foreign Woman and personified Wisdom present themselves as desirable and attractive, and they compete with each other to lure Jews on to their paths. Both offer superficially similar things, and both speak persuasively, so that the choice is difficult without help, but the nature of each is revealed to the reader by their names — and we saw that, in chapter 9, the Foreign Woman is actually re-named, to make explicit the fact that she is the foolish choice (presumably in case anyone had failed to take the point previously). Much of this symbolism has already been established in other studies of Proverbs 1-9; in combination with an understanding of the 'foreign women/wives' motif elsewhere, this offers an explanation for the otherwise puzzling 'foreignness' of the woman, and discounts any need to re-interpret the adjectives against normal Hebrew usage.

Going a little beyond what was discussed above, we may note here that all this goes to emphasise that Proverbs 1-9 cannot usefully be read as though it belongs to some corpus of literature quite distinct and separate from other biblical material or the community which created and transmitted it: this is very much a Jewish work, written in a Jewish context, and addressing the post-exilic Jewish community. That the work draws on Deuteronomic writing elsewhere seems beyond dispute,[421] and it is hardly surprising that it should be aware of a motif from that literature which had provoked such serious problems in the community of the Return. There are two other interesting points raised for the interpretation of Proverbs 1-9 by its use of the Foreign Woman motif. Firstly, the existence of the Foreign Woman motif prior to the composition of the work may give good grounds for supposing that personified Wisdom was actually created as a

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[421] Cf. 2.2. and Chapter Three.

counterpart to the Foreign Woman, rather than, as is usually assumed, *vice versa*.[422] Secondly, it is tempting to speculate that the attribution to Solomon, if it is original to Proverbs 1-9, may be loaded with more significance than such attributions have elsewhere in wisdom literature: it is Solomon's wives, after all, who are the most famously corrupting 'foreign women'.[423] Neither of these points, alas, can really be pursued much further on the available evidence.

Once created, the poetic figures of both the Foreign Woman and her counterpart, Woman Wisdom, were available to later Jewish writers, and both were used. We find reminiscences of the Foreign Woman, although not explicit ones, in two other passages in Proverbs which seem to know Proverbs 1-9, and also an obscure reference to her in Eccl. 7.26. However, the more obvious references to her are found outside the Hebrew Bible, in a late text from Qumran (4Q184) and in Ben Sira. We considered these texts in chapters 5 and 6, alongside the Greek Septuagint translation of Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon. In all these later material we detected a fairly consistent tendency either to exclude the Foreign Woman in contexts where we might expect to find her, or to strip away her 'foreignness'. In 4Q184, she is depicted as actively seducing and trapping the righteous, in a way which is even more sexually provocative than the portrayal in Proverbs 1-9. There can hardly be any doubt that the woman in this text is modelled on the woman in Proverbs, and her symbolic function may be similar — but she is no longer said to be 'foreign'. The Septuagint version of Proverbs, which is far from being a simple translation of the Hebrew, also no longer explicitly depicts her 'foreignness', and it describes her using a term which can, but usually does not have ethnic implications. In the Greek Prov. 2.16, she is replaced by a new personification, 'bad counsel', and in other passages she becomes simply a common adulteress. If the translator recognised the original connotations of the character, which is questionable, he presumably did not consider that his readership would. The treatment in the Hebrew Ben Sira is comparable: he portrays the זרה as generally embodying the various 'bad women' in the community.

Relative dating of these texts is difficult, but arguably unimportant: they show something which was apparently consistent across a long period. The only re-introduction of any emphasis on 'foreignness' after Proverbs 1-9 comes in the Greek

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[422] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 'The Social Context of the So-Called Outsider-Woman in Proverbs I-IX', p. 466.
[423] Cf. Blenkinsopp, 'The Social Context of the So-Called Outsider-Woman in Proverbs I-IX', pp. 457-58.

version of Ben Sira, which translates the woman to a Hellenistic context, and makes her a 'courtesan'. Although this seems to restore some essence of 'foreignness' and of the corruption of Jews in a certain way, the motif no longer symbolises apostasy in its complete sense, and the figure remains the tangible, promiscuous woman of the Hebrew. So, judging from what we have of the literature produced in the centuries after Proverbs 1-9, it seems that, where the woman does appear, she is disassociated from the earlier, evocative figure of the 'foreign woman', with its connotations of 'apostasy', and she becomes another literary construction symbolising bad women or sexual misconduct in general. This draws on her most obvious characteristics, of being independent, insidious, seductive and provocative, but misses the main point of the original. By the time of the author of Wisdom of Solomon, whose knowledge of Proverbs was, in any case, probably filtered through the Septuagint version, the original significance of the motif has been lost altogether, and the figure disappears. These two linked chapters of our study show that the motif did not just vanish into thin air through neglect by this time: the figure of the woman persisted across several centuries, but her significance did not. It is easier to observe the phenomenon than to explain it, given our ignorance of much that was happening during that period, but it seems likely that, as the concern with 'foreign wives' receded, and new understandings of Jewish identity established themselves, the whole concept of the 'foreign woman' ceased to be evocative. Once again, we may note, in passing, that this has some consequences for understanding Proverbs 1-9: at the risk of circular argument, it does tend to affirm that the work was composed quite early in the post-exilic period.

There are some broader implications of the conclusions reached in this thesis. First and foremost, the motif of the Foreign Woman is distinct from the depictions of adulterous women in the prophetic literature, who constitute a separate set of 'bad woman' images in the Bible. The Foreign Woman is a 'foreigner' and it does not matter to the authors if she worships a deity other than Yahweh: her own fidelity is not the issue, but her effect on the fidelity of others. More importantly, adultery does not itself define the Foreign Woman – as we see in the example of Jezebel, who is never portrayed as unfaithful to her husband, whatever her other faults. What the Deuteronomic and Deuteronomistic authors fear most, is that she will become the wife of an Israelite and lure him into becoming unfaithful to Yahweh. The adulterous woman in the prophetic literature (especially Hosea, Jeremiah and Ezekiel), on the other hand, typifies Israel as Yahweh's covenanted but unfaithful wife. It is wrong for her not to remain faithful to her

deity, Yahweh, and when she does break faith with him, the apostasy is depicted as adultery. As the end result of both imageries is apostasy, there is a tendency for them to be linked;[424] this is hardly surprising, given passages like Prov. 6.20-35, where Proverbs 1-9 muddies the waters by discussing adultery itself, and given also the later literary conversion of foreign woman to simple adulteress. Our study shows, however, that we are actually dealing with two completely different traditions, which originate from different sources.

Since that is the case, it is not our task here to track the development of the prophetic motif. It is interesting, however, to observe that the two motifs were later sometimes to coalesce. It seems that some such merger happens in the later part of the first century CE, in the book of Revelation (see especially 2.18-29; 17.1-6; and 18.1-20).[425] The tendency after Proverbs 1-9 to depict the Foreign Woman as a real adulteress created a fertile context for the two imageries to bond in a more intricate way. Concepts of the proper worship of deities changed during this period, of course, and the book of Revelation understands that the whole world is in a state of apostasy if it does not worship Jesus. This provides a way for the two 'bad woman' imageries, one the Foreign Woman, and the other Israel as adulteress, to bear the same significance for the state of apostasy.

In relation to the above point, the motif of the Foreign Woman in the NT literature more generally deserves separate and further study. Not only the Book of Revelation – John 4.1-26, where the Samaritan woman in some way is portrayed as a particular type of 'foreigner' to the Jews, and as seductive in a different sense, seems to resonate with some of the features associated with the Foreign Woman, at the very end of the biblical period.[426] It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider the many other complex factors at work in the literary history, the change in the theology of both Jewish

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[424] See the most recent publication by Gale A. Yee, *Poor Banished Children of Eve: Woman as Evil in the Biblical Text* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003). Yee has kindly sent me a copy of her draft on Chapter 7, 'The Other Woman in Proverbs: My Man's Not Home – He Took His Moneybag with Him' before the publication of the book, for which I am most grateful.

[425] David Aune, *Revelation 1-5* (WBC, 52; Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1997), pp. lvii-lxx, 205: *Revelation 17-22*, pp. 920-22 ; J. Massyngbaerde Ford, *Revelation: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (AB, 38; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 56, 277-307, 403; Charles, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Revelation of St John* (ICC; 2 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark; 1920), vol. I, pp. xxiv-lv, 71; vol. II, p. 62; John Sweet, *Revelation* (SCM Pelican Commentaries; London: SCM Press, 1979), p. 95, 254.

[426] See in particular Raymond Brown's commentary, where he argues that Jesus in the Gospel of John is portrayed in the light of the figure of personified Wisdom; R. Brown, *The Gospel According to John* (AB; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), p. lxxvii.

and Christian faiths, and their perceptions of 'foreignness'. It is also worth noting that the concepts of 'foreignness' and 'ethnicity' have kept cropping up in our discussion. This thesis has emphasised the complexities of these concepts, the detailed study of which lies outside our purview. Nonetheless, this study appreciates the shifting boundaries of these concepts and underlines the extent to which judgement of 'ethnicity' as 'foreign' or not is dependent on specific historical and ideological context. As noted elsewhere, concepts of 'foreignness' in Ezra-Nehemiah differ starkly from those of other works, even of the same general period, such as Isa. 56-66, let alone the books of Ruth and Chronicles. The limited discussion of this subject in this thesis will, I hope, contribute to any further study of this subject.

Last but not least, it is necessary to say a little about the theological significance of our conclusions. In the earlier chapters, we have shown how the motif of the Foreign Woman in Proverbs 1-9 is essentially derived from the Deuteronomistic tradition, and this affiliation has broader theological implications. Proverbs 1-9 apparently interprets the Deuteronomistic motif in such a way that the apostasy of the Israelites is not so much a matter of inherent unfaithfulness to Yahweh, as the result of encountering strong and subtle temptation: if it is difficult for the uninstructed to resist the Foreign Woman, then, by implication, it was difficult for the Israelites, even Solomon, to resist the foreign women they encountered. At a literal level, perhaps there is a message for its own time: because Israel lives in the midst of foreigners, the tendency to apostatise lurks at every corner, for these foreigners have the power to lure the Israelites astray and then lead them to destruction. Although the 'historical' dimension here is important, and deserves more study than it has traditionally received, ultimately, however, Proverbs 1-9 is about equipping oneself to make choices and be faithful: it is easy to be led astray without realising it, and protection requires a personal commitment to heeding instruction. There is much more that could be said about all of this, but that discussion lies beyond the scope of this thesis. It is enough to show, I hope, that Proverbs 1-9's Foreign Woman imagery is about so much more than sexual misdemeanours or Canaanite cults.

The symbolic association of the Foreign Woman's 'foreignness' with apostasy, and the consequent condemnation of her is not congenial to a modern worldview. Although historically it reflects specific xenophobic attitudes in the exilic and early post-exilic period, it can be interpreted to imply that everything 'foreign' is destructive and beyond redemption. Despite its wholesale re-interpretation of the motif, the adaptation and change of the Foreign Woman figure in later literature, to symbolise only badness or

'(morally) bad women' in general, does remedy that problem. However, it introduces another, with misogyny essentially taking the place of xenophobia, especially in Ben Sira. It is difficult to accuse Proverbs 1-9 of outright misogyny, not least because the author offers a balancing, positive portrayal of Woman Wisdom, who offers the way of faithfulness to Yahweh.[427] More importantly, whatever one might think of his using female attractiveness as a fundamental part of his imagery, that author is not really interested in gender as such. When the motif loses its symbolic value, however, most notably in 4Q184[428] and Ben Sira, issues of gender come to the forefront: it is not *foreign* women who are dangerous, but women more generally. If we want to retain this powerful imagery, are we then left with a choice between fearing foreignness and fearing female sexuality? Our study has done much to illuminate the purpose of Proverbs 1-9, and to highlight a significant biblical theme, but, as so often, it may have replaced an exegetical problem with a more serious theological one.

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[427] This is acknowledged by other feminist biblical scholars such as: C. Camp, 'Woman Wisdom as Root Metaphor: A Theological Consideration', in Kenneth Hoglund, *et al.* (eds.), *The Listening Heart* (JSOTSup, 58; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1987), pp. 45-76 (51). Maier, 'Conflicting Attractions', p. 108 (cf. 1.1. n. 23); G. Baumann, 'A Figure of Many Facets: The Literary and Theological Functions of Personified Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9', *Wisdom and Psalms*, pp. 44-78.

[428] Aubin, Melissa, '"She is the beginning of all the ways of perversity": Femininity and Metaphor in 4Q184', *Women in Judaism: A Multidisciplinary Journal* 2.2 (2001), pp. 1-23; Sidnie White Crawford, 'Lady Wisdom and Dame Folly at Qumran', *Wisdom and Psalms*, pp. 205-17 (217).

Appendix: Other Foreign Women and Intermarriages in the OT

In the main text, we have focussed principally upon portraits of foreign women who are 'bad'. It is important to clear, however, that not all foreign women are condemned in the literature which we have been discussing – and also important to understand the reasons, why they are not condemned. We shall examine that subject briefly in this appendix, starting with the two instances from the books of Kings.

Elijah meets the widow of Zarephath while he is fleeing from Jezebel's campaigns against Yahweh's prophets (1 Kgs 17.8-24). At Elijah's command, the widow provides food for him although she and her child are in need themselves, due to a drought. Elijah miraculously supplies food, and subsequently resurrects her dead son. The latter incident causes her to be overcome with awe and she proclaims her belief that she has been visited by the true prophet of a powerful deity. This unnamed Sidonian widow stands in stark contrast to Queen Jezebel, the Sidonian princess. In drought, the widow suffers a commoner's dearth of food with expectations of imminent death, while the queen feasts daily with her prophets and priests. Nonetheless, the widow experiences divine daily provisions of food, while the queen has to send her king and the steward of the palace to hunt for water and provisions; and while the widow's son is resurrected from death on account of her hospitality to Elijah, the queen's family and her descendants suffer divine wrath and are cut off from the history of Israel and Judah. Furthermore, while the widow comes to acknowledge Elijah as a prophet of the true deity, the queen continues to seek the blood of Yahweh's prophets.

The other important instance is the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10.1-13),[429] who comes to visit King Solomon, apparently to verify all that she has heard of his reputed wisdom and fortune (v. 1). This, perhaps, recalls Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the Temple (1 Kgs 8.41-43) – it is an example of what a foreigner being drawn to Israel might do. The DtrH reports that she is impressed and convinced by what she has seen and heard, and that she praises the name of Yahweh, acknowledging his power and blessing on the people in Solomon's kingdom (vv. 6-9). Although the purpose of this

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[429] The place Sheba has not been definitiely located, cf. Cogan, p. 315; also see the conjecture of Kenneth Kitchen concerning the location of Sheba in, K. Kitchen, 'Sheba and Arabia', *The Age of Solomon*, pp. 127-39.

episode might be deemed political,[430] the DtrH's portrayal of this foreign woman is consistent with his theme.

Both the widow of Zarephath and the Queen of Sheba share some common characteristics: (1) they are not seeking marriage with any Israelite men; (2) they are not portrayed as involved with any foreign religion; (3) they make confessions of the greatness and sovereignty of Yahweh. These two foreign women are certainly different from the נשים נכריות we have met earlier in each of these respects. The contrasting characteristics show what the DtrH considers acceptable and unacceptable 'foreignness', and the DtrH does not consider all foreign women to be bad and to be unwelcomed. As long as they do not cross certain boundaries. As with the books of Kings, the other DtrH books such as Joshua and Judges also seem to portray some foreign women in a positive light, for example, Rahab (Josh. 2; 6.17-25)[431] and Jael, the Kenite (Judges 4.17-22; 5.24-31)[432]. Again, neither of these women seek marriages with Israelites, nor are they explicitly connected with foreign cults, and both act on behalf of Yahweh and of Israel.[433] In short, the 'good' foreign women in the DtrH abandon their foreignness to join Israel and the Israelite religon, rather than persuading Israelites to travel in the opposite direction.

Then, there are two other women whom the DtrH portrayed to be 'bad' and 'foreign' but are not directly associated with their foreign deities; rather, they pledged

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[430] Due to the uncertainty about the historicity of Sheba, scholars have differing opinions concerning the motivation of this episode. Cogan thinks that it is a legend among wisdom circles, acclaiming the wisdom and wealth of Solomon, in Cogan, p. 315. Gray argues against the genre of wisdom saga, interpreting the episode as an echo of Solomon's extensive trade missions, and therefore historical; see Gray, pp. 238-42 and Kitchen, pp. 127-39.

[431] Cf. 1.2.

[432] Baruch Halpern, 'Kenites', *ABD* vol. IV, pp. 17-20; A. Malamat, 'Mari and the Bible', *JAOS* 82 (1962), pp. 144-46. In Judges, the Kenites are one of the Midianite tribes to which Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, belonged (Judg. 1.16; 4.11).

[433] For Rahab, see K.M. Campbell, 'Rahab's Covenant: A short note on Joshua ii 9-21', *VT* 22 (1972), pp. 243-44. Campbell has demonstrated the underlying structure of a covenant in the contents of this passage. Also, J.A. Soggin, *Joshua: A Commentary* (trans. R.A. Wilson; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1972), pp. 41-43. He notes that Rahab's speech in Josh. 2.8-14 is composed of those elements, would proclaim to indicate a belief in Yahweh. For Jael, it seems that Judg. 1.16 provides the background information which explains the friendly terms between the Israelites and the Kenites. Also, this friendly relationship probably continued from the time of Moses. See A. Cody, 'Exodus 18, 12: Jethro Accepts a Covenant with the Israelites', *Bib* 49 (1968), pp. 153-66; George Mendenhall, 'Midian', *ABD* vol. IV, pp. 815-18 (816). Mendenhall explains that the sacrifice of Jethro's offering and his participation in the common meal was an act of Jethro and Israel entering into a covenant of peace. Although he thinks that Israel was oblivious to Jethro's intention. Jael's act should be understood in the light of this background, and that she acted in loyalty to the long, friendly and binding relationship with the Israelites.

their allegiance to their nation than towards their husband, and lover – Samson's two Philistine women, a woman from Timnah, and Delilah (Judg 14; 16:1-22).[434] There are many similar themes shared in the narratives of these two women, and they have been sometimes considered as doublets.[435] In both cases, the DtrH brings us to the bedroom scenes of Samson and his women. There, his women persuade and coax him to reveal secrets.[436] And in both cases, the women's motivation were initiated by the Philistine men (cf. 14.15; 16.5). Also, in the case with Delilah, she did not seek marriage with him. The main features of these women are that they are seductive, seeking sexual relations with Samson, and they are powerful with their persuasion and coaxing. More importantly, what distinguishes these two bad women from the other bad 'foreign women' in DtrH as mentioned in Chapter Three, is probably their location outside of the boundaries of Israel, and, while Samson's first 'foreign' wife died tragically, Delilah was not his wife, but a lover. Another similar portrait of the 'bad' women who seduces through speech, which falls outside of the Deuteronomistic literature is Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39).[437] As mentioned earlier, like Samson's women, she is not seeking marital relationship with Joseph, and she is located in Egypt.

Apart from the Deuteronomistic literature, which seems to follow a more consistent pattern in its portrayal of 'bad' and 'good' non-Israelite wives and women,[438] there is little consistency in the OT. Most notably, there are 'foreign wives' whom eminent men marry without condemnation – Hagar, wife of Abraham and Zipporah, wife of Moses. These two women are portrayed by the authors more as 'insiders' than 'outsiders'. Although Hagar is sent away by Sarah and Abraham, the author deals with her sympathetically and includes her in the eyes and under the care of Yahweh (Gen. 16.7-16; 21.15-21). More importantly, Hagar is sent away not because of 'intermarriage',

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[434] It is not stated whether Delilah is a Philistine although Jewish traditions claim so. Aaron Rothkoff, 'Samson', *EncJud* vol. XIV, p. 773. On the other hand, others think that Delilah is a Canaanite, for example, J.A. Soggin, *Judges: A Commentary* (trans. John Bowden; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1981), pp. 228-30.

[435] So demonstrated by Jichan Kim, *The Structure of the Samson Cycle* (Kampen, Netherlands: Kok Pharos Publishing House, 1993). His thesis attempts to prove that Judg 13-16 is a literary unit. He demonstrates an internal literary structure, through the use of numbers and some repetitive words and themes, which displayed a cyclical motif and linear thrust in the story.

[436] Cf. 4.2.

[437] This story is considered as JE, Gerhard von Rad, *Genesis: A Commentary* (trans. John H. Marks; OTL; London: SCM Press, 1961), p. 359.

[438] It is best to clarify here that there are, of course, plenty of other foreign women who appear briefly but their presence is incidental. In other words, they are just 'there', for example, Sisera's mother and her maids in Judg. 5.28-29; and the mention of Queen Tahpenes in 1 Kgs 11.20.

but because the promise of Yahweh regarding Isaac is not to be contested (Gen. 21.11-13). In a similar vein, Zipporah is portrayed as wise and keen to obey Yahweh's call, saving the lives of both Moses and their son (Exod. 4.24-26).[439] Yahweh does not seem to be discontent with her marriage to Moses and instead punishes those who complain against it (Num. 11).[440]

Generally, though, in the early part of the Pentateuch, it seems that marriage within the family is the most desirable,[441] and marriage with Canaanites most undesirable (cf. Gen. 24.3-4). Concerning the latter, it seems that to terminate such relationships was not only a righteous deed, but could avert some punishments, whereas the continuation of such relationships brought punishment and condemnation. Sarah, Rebekah and Rachel are all kin of Abraham, and therefore, they make desirable wives. On the contrary, Esau's wives are not desirable, because they are Hittites. On account of these wives, Isaac and Rebekah plead with Jacob not to marry Canaanite women, or they will die (Gen. 26.34-35; 27.46-28.2; 28.6-9). Interestingly, sandwiched between Isaac's disgust and Rebekah's disdain over Esau's wives is the tale of the loss of the latter's birth-right to his brother, which ends with Esau taking wives from the Ishmaelites in an attempt to appease his father.[442] Then, in the story of how Dinah's brothers avenged the rape of their sister, the extermination of the Shechemites is presented as quite justified (Gen.

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[439] Scholars have recognised the difficulties of this account. See H. Kosmala, 'The Bloody Husband', *VT* 12 (1962), pp. 14-28; J. Morgenstern, '"The Bloody Husband" (?) (Exod. 4:24-26) Once Again', *HUCA* 34 (1963), pp. 35-70. I think the most appropriate interpretation to the text is probably given by Bernhard Robinson, 'Zipporah to the Rescue: A Contextual Study of Exodus iv 24-6', *VT* 36 (1986), pp. 447-61.

[440] It is sometimes suggested that another wife is referred to here in this complaint. The Septuagint translates Cush in two ways: as referring to the descendants of Ham (Gen. 10.6-8; 1 Chron. 1.8-10) and in all the other occurrences as referring to Αιθιοπια, that is, Ethiopia. Hence, the reference to another wife whom Moses took during his journey. However, John van Seters suggests that the term 'Cush' should be understood as not only denoting people groups, but also the colour 'black'. It makes the context meaningful, as Miriam was punished for her complaint with leprosy 'as white as snow'. See J. van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus and Numbers* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), pp. 238-39.

[441] I think it is probable that the content of the complaint by Miriam is also derived from this general perception, and we find a similar comment in Judg. 14.3 as well.

[442] See Nahum M. Sarna, *Genesis* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: JPS, 1989), p. 189. He suggests that this passage reiterates the reasons for Esau's ineligibility and that he did not deserve the rights to the heirship of Isaac. Von Rad understands this final text as a conglomeration of two traditions, explaining why Jacob left his family to look for Laban; namely – (1) he has deceived Esau and (2) his parents forbade him to marry Canaanite women by sending him off to look for a wife among Rebekah's relatives, in von Rad, see von Rad, p. 281.

34).[443] Finally, Judah's Canaanite wife and children seem to be responsible for the disasters and chaos in the family until he rectifies his relationship with his daughter-in-law, Tamar, whose origin is not specified (Gen. 38).[444]

In the patriarchal narratives, what constitutes a 'foreign' wife is different from what is understood in the later literature, and kinship ties cross geographical boundaries to Ur, Abraham's hometown, and across the desert to the Ishmaelites. In later understandings of the nation, Israel would not have dreamt of considering the descendants of the people living in those areas as being their kin, and the descendants of Esau are considered 'foreigners' like the Egyptians by Deut. 23.7. However, there are also non-Israelite wives who are 'good' and regarded favourably by Yahweh, even though it is clear that they are foreign by 'patriarchal' standards.

Another good example of how one kind of intermarriage is deemed punishable by death while another is acceptable, is shown in the obscure incident at Baal-Peor (Num. 25; 31).[445] As mentioned earlier in the main text, while Num. 25 and 31 condemns the 'foreign women' as deserving death, later, Moses allows the Midianite virgins to be taken as wives by the Israelites, because they are not guilty of the crime of seduction. Interestingly, when this incident is recalled in other parts of the OT, no 'foreign women' are mentioned: Deut. 4.3; 23.4-6; Josh. 22.17-18; 24.9-10; Hos. 9.10; Mic. 6.3-5; Neh. 13.2; Ps. 106.28. The reason might be twofold, that the tradition of the Baal-Peor is remembered only for its apostasy plotted by Balaam, and / or because the conclusion to the story in Num. 31 resulted in some form of intermarriage which fits uncomfortably with the rest of the story. In any case, this story punishes those 'foreign women' who plotted the apostasy of the Israelites, and accepts those who were not involved in it.

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[443] Wenham argues that Jacob's criticism of Simeon and Levi does not in any way imply that it is alright to enter into marriage covenants with the Shechemites, but that he is simply afraid of the consequences of breaching the pre-conditions to the covenant so violently. The Canaanites proved they were quite dishonourable in the whole affair (v. 23). Wenham thinks that one of the purposes of this episode is to show why the blessing of the first-born to reign over his brothers went to Judah (49.3-8) instead of Simeon and Levi, and Reuben who had committed incest (Gen. 46.10). See his commentary, Wenham, *Genesis*, vol. II, pp. 473-74.

[444] In the Aggadah, she is the daughter of Shem which identifies her as of Israelite descent and a non-Canaanite (Gen. 9.26-27). Bustanay Oded, 'Tamar', *EncJud* vol. XV, pp. 782-83. However, many commentators think that she is a Canaanite because the context is set in that region. Wenham, p. 366; von Rad, p. 358 and Westermann, *Genesis 37-50*, p. 50. Also, it seems that Shelah, the surviving offspring through the Canaanite wife, is spared because Judah righted his wrongs with Tamar.

[445] Cf. 2.2.

Perhaps the more exciting accounts of intermarriages are those written in the post-exilic period, near to the era of Ezra-Nehemiah – Chronicles[446] and the book of Ruth. The genealogies in Chronicles show that the author does not treat foreigners who intermarried with Israelites with aversion. According to Sara Japhet, Chronicles defines the Israelites as those who are descended from Jacob's sons and especially those who sought Yahweh at the Temple in Jerusalem.[447] The Chronicler, however, includes 'foreigners' of two sorts: those who intermarried with Israelites;[448] and the גר who

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[446] On the issues of dating, see H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles* (NCB; London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1982), p. 16.

[447] Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and Its Place in Biblical Thought* (BEAT, 9; Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York, Paris: Peter Lang, 1989), pp. 267-351. Also, see Williamson, *Israel in the Books of Chronicles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Jonathan E. Dyck, *The Theocratic Ideology of the Chronicler* (BIS, 33; Leiden: Brill, 1998); and idem, 'The Ideology of Identity in Chronicles', in Mark G. Brett (ed.), *Ethnicity and the Bible* (BIS, 19; Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 89-116. In the latter essay, Dyck contends with Williamson that the Chronicler is an 'inclusivist' and 'assimilist'. He argues that the main purpose of the Chronicler is to justify the superiority of the southern tribes and Jerusalem against the rest of the people of Israel. Nonetheless, Dyck admits that the Chronicler does not exclude membership to the larger group the way Ezra-Nehemiah does.

[448] The Chronicler does not limit this group to foreign women, but also accepts foreign men who married Israelite women: for example, Jether, the Ishmaelite (1 Chron. 2.17) and Jarha, the Egyptian (1 Chron. 2.34). As for the foreign women, the Chronicler includes Judah's Canaanite unnamed wife, daughter of Shua and Tamar, whose origin is also not mentioned, as in Gen. 38 (1 Chron. 2.3-4). The descendants of Shelah from the Canaanite wife appear in an appendix in 4.21-23 where they are regarded as craftsmen who ruled in Moab for a time, but later returned to Bethlehem, while the descendants of Judah enjoy the privilege of an elaborate account in 2.5 to 4.20. In particular, the Chronicler mentions in 1 Chron. 4.17-18 that one of the members of the clans of Judah marries the daughter of Pharoah. Her name, Bithiah, is probably hebraised in this text. Doubts have been cast on the historicity of this. See S. Japhet, *First and Second Chronicles: A Commentary* (OTL; London: SCM Press, 1993), pp. 114-15. Japhet suggests that it is unfathomable that a commoner could marry a Pharoah's daughter. The conjecture that Mered is actually Caleb, who marries the Egyptian princess in Exod. 2.7 is an attractive alternative. The other piece of evidence is the mention of Aramean names for the Manassite stock: Maacah and Hammolecheth and Manasseh's Aramean concubine (1 Chron. 7.14). However, vv. 14-19 are badly corrupted. For a possible explanation see Japhet, *First and Second Chronicles*, pp. 174-79; and Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, p. 79. Another detail which shows the inclusiveness of the Chronicler is to deem the children of the intermarriage with Ammonite and Moabite women as Israelite (2 Chron. 24.25-26). Here, the mothers of Joash's conspirators are named as Shimeath, the Ammonitess, and Shimrith, the Moabitess. In contrast to 2 Kgs 12.22, the names of the fathers are Shimeath and Shomer. The Chronicler identifies them as mothers by the feminine forms of Ammonite and Moabite. This latter ethnic detail is also absent in the books of Kings. Joash's conspirators are understood to be Israelites from the northern kingdom. Japhet suggests that while most persons are identified by their father's names, such occurrences are not unknown. However, she values the authenticity of Kings over the Chronicler. See Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, pp. 350-51; and *First and Second Chronicles*, pp. 852-54, on the other changes the Chronicler made to the text in 2 Kgs 12.21-22. While the reason for this may be difficult to discern, a possible explanation may be the consistent attempts of the Chronicler to acknowledge intermarriage with foreigners and the continual claims that they and their children are Israelite.

became part of the community of Israel through participation in the worship of Yahweh (1 Chron. 2.55).

Another interesting point is the way the Chronicler deals with the accounts of the Judean kings in contrast to the DtrH presentation, which we examined earlier: no relationship is established between the judgement and the mention of the kings' mothers. The Chronicler has a different agenda here. First, although he generally follows the DtrH's judgement of the good and evil kings, he withholds comment on the reigns of Abijah and Jehoahaz. While the omission for the latter has been deemed a scribal error,[449] the former is portrayed in a positive light through his speech and his campaign to restrain Jeroboam of Israel from further apostasy. In addition, for Rehoboam and Manasseh, whom the DtrH judged to be evil, the Chronicler presents a period in their reign where they did right. Correspondingly, for the good kings of the DtrH, namely Asa, Jehoshaphat, Joash, Amaziah and Uzziah, the Chronicler records periods of disobedience to the Law. Thus, the Chronicler presents an alternate pattern in the accounts – between good reigns and evil reigns. The exceptions are Jehoram and Ahaziah, and Athaliah – they are all deemed evil.

Thirdly, the Chronicler ceases to report the names and origins of the mothers from the reign of Manasseh onward. Japhet suggests that the omission is consistent with the general way the Chronicler uses his sources from that point, since he also abandons the periods of good and evil reigns.[450] The reign of Manasseh is unique because he is the only king depicted as having begun his reign in wickedness and later as having repented and sought Yahweh. Manasseh is portrayed positively later in his reign, because the Chronicler is making a theological point that his lengthy reign is a 'blessing'.[451]

All the above points indicate that the Chronicler has his own theological theme to expound: every king is individually punished for his evil deeds or rewarded for his good deeds.[452] Therefore, Japhet believes that the Chronicler's expanded version of the reign of Zedekiah, which adds the accounts of the sins of the leaders, priests, and people is, in fact, offering the reason why the exile occurred at that time. Thus, every generation is responsible for its own sins, and the sins committed during Zedekiah's reign have nothing to do with the previous generations of kings. This perspective differs starkly

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[449] Japhet, *First and Second Chronicles*, p. 1063.
[450] Japhet, *First and Second Chronicles*, p. 1004.
[451] Japhet, *First and Second Chronicles*, pp. 1002-1004.

from the DtrH which repeatedly blames the sins of Manasseh for the exile hints that the נשים נכריות and Jezebel are the real culprits. In this light, the theology of the Chronicler cancels the DtrH's portrayal of 'foreign' mothers as related to the king's evil behavior.

The book of Ruth, like Chronicles does not view intermarriage with 'foreigners' negatively. Most commentators believe that the book of Ruth was written to counter the restrictive claims of Ezra-Nehemiah concerning intermarriage, and there is no good reason to doubt this explanation,[453] or to deny that the narrator is opposed to the prohibition in Deut. 23.[454] As Goulder, among many others has pointed out, the author seems to inject irony into the story by adding the genealogy of 4.18-22, which includes David as a fourth generation descendant of Boaz through Ruth.[455] This again recalls the further prohibition in Deut. 23.7-8 on acceptance of descendants from the Egyptians and Edomites until the fourth generation. As we saw earlier, the text of Deut. 23 is used as the major proof-text for the DtrH and Ezra-Nehemiah bans on intermarriage. The significance of this Deuteronomic law against intermarriage in the early post-exilic period, and the focus of the story upon it, indicate a concern about the issue of intermarriage which is probably related to that period. It is interesting to note that the book of Ruth presented the most difficulties for rabbinic attempts to substantiate rulings against intermarriage.[456] To overcome the problem, they argued that the interdiction in Deut. 23.3-7 refers only to the male population and not the female, and they later interpreted Ruth 1.16 as referring to the proselytisation of Ruth.

The book of Ruth is exceptional because it is suggesting that intermarriage can be a good thing. Elsewhere, intermarriage and foreign women evoke mixed reactions. The DtrH accepts such women if they are not adherents of a foreign religion but, preferably,

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[452] Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles*, pp. 162-63; Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, pp. 31-33.

[453] Two scholars who assume a pre-exilic date for Ruth are: J.M. Sasson, *Ruth: A New Translation with a Philogical Commentary and a Formalist-Folklorist Interpretation* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1979); and Edward F. Campbell, *Ruth: A New Translation* (AB, 7; Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1975).

[454] Michael Goulder, 'Ruth: a homily on Deuteronomy 22-25?' in David Clines and H. McKay, (eds.), *Of Prophets' Visions and the Wisdom of Sages: Essays in Honour of R. Norman Whybray on His 70th Birthday* (JSOTSup, 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993), pp. 307-319. Goulder demonstrates how the author uses the same important catchwords as the laws found in Deut. 22-25 but contradicts them. Also, see T and D. Thompson, 'Some Legal Problems in the Book of Ruth', *VT* 18 (1968), pp. 79-99; D.R.G. Beattie, 'The Book of Ruth as Evidence of Israelite Legal Practice', *VT* 24 (1974), pp. 252-67.

[455] Goulder, pp. 314-16.

[456] D.R.G. Beattie, *The Targum of Ruth* (The Aramaic Bible; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), pp. 20-21.

pious Yahwists; the Chronicler, perhaps surprisingly, given his links to Ezra-Nehemiah, essentially strips out of his retelling the motif of foreign women leading to apostasy. The narratives of Genesis operate with different concepts of ethnicity and no pre-conception of a covenant relationship, which makes direct comparison with DtrH difficult. The motif possibly appears there in a more restricted and qualified form.

With regard to the principal theme of this thesis, we might say that the materials here serve to show that the DtrH motif is neither as absolute nor as wholly 'racial' in its approach as one might assume. More generally, the variety in the literature helps to emphasise that the problem of the 'foreign wives', and its underlying ideology, relates to a rather specific time and space.

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