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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Verbs of sexual intercourse in the Greek Pentateuch: a lexical analysis

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Abstract

This article examines the neglected evidence of the Greek Pentateuch for verbs of sexual intercourse. I aim to demonstrate the translators' skilful application of their mimetic translation method and the native-speaker competence suggested by their vocabulary choices in the relevant sphere. With one exception manifesting Hebrew interference through semantic extension, all the verbs deployed to describe sexual intercourse represent natural Greek usage and are found in classical literature going back in some cases to early epic. This provides yet another indication that the evidence of the Septuagint should no longer be dismissed when considering the post-classical development of the Greek language.

Keywords: Greek; Koine; Septuagint; Pentateuch; sexual vocabulary

In memoriam: J.N. Adams (1943–2021)

I. Introduction

There is a massive corpus of early Koine Greek that has long been neglected by the majority of scholars as a witness to the history of the language. This is the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. The key reason for neglect lies in its very obvious peculiarities. Most books of the Septuagint were translated from the original Hebrew (and in some cases Aramaic) texts. These translations were produced gradually over a period of up to four hundred years (from the early third century BCE to as late as the second century CE), in various styles, and probably in a variety of speech communities.[1] The resulting Greek seems on first encounter to manifest a high level of bilingual interference. Isolating that interference has seemed to many authorities an intractable problem.[2]

Impetus is now building, however, towards a revolution in the study of Septuagint language. Research that draws on all available evidence, especially that of contemporary documents, and closely analyses the mimetic style of the translations is allowing us to establish the nature and degree of the bilingual interference. Recent studies have

[1] For further detail see Aitken (2015); Lee (2018) 2–4; Evans (2021).

[2] See, for example, Dickey (2004) 524: 'Since the Septuagint was literally translated from Hebrew and Aramaic sources, its vocative use can tell us little about native Greek practice'. *Cf.* Lee (2018) 59 n.38.

demonstrated that this is mostly a matter of lexical and syntactic extension arising from translation techniques.[3] As a result it is becoming possible to discern the essentially natural character of the Greek.[4] This in turn unlocks its rich potential to address the larger challenge of developing our general knowledge of the post-classical language.[5]

The present study aims to contribute to this process and to communicate a sense of the exciting developments to Hellenists in general. I take as my subject the inherently fascinating sphere of sexual vocabulary.[6] Sexual terms tend to bear a heavy weight of cultural significance. They are strongly affected by social taboos and sensitivities and display a marked tendency towards multiplication and replacement, often through the proliferation of euphemistic expressions.[7] To give an English example, Shakespeare uses 45 different expressions for 'penis', 68 for 'vagina' and 275 for 'copulation'.[8] Ancient Greek is also rich in such terminology. Pollux assembles a list of over 40 expressions for sexual intercourse in his *Onomasticon* of the second century CE (at 5.92–93), but as David Bain observes, he 'only skims the surface'.[9] From Jeffrey Henderson's *The Maculate Muse* I have counted over 170 expressions for the same idea that occur in Attic Comedy.[10] Old Comedy is exactly the genre where one would expect to find a profusion of this material, including 'coarse' terms normally avoided in both literary and documentary sources, but much of the euphemistic terminology used by Aristophanes and the other comedians is freely employed in other genres as well,[11] and some of it occurs in the Greek translation of the Septuagint.

My specific purpose here is to show how the Septuagint material relates to general Greek usage. Since this is a large and complex topic, far too large for a single paper if we want to get to grips with details, I will focus on the usage of the Greek Pentateuch (the translations of the five books of the Hebrew Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), which most scholars consider the earliest part of the Septuagint corpus and date to the third century BCE.[12] I will also focus specifically on verbs conveying the general sense 'have sexual intercourse (with)'. I aim to demonstrate that, with one Hebraistic exception, the terms deployed by the translators of the Pentateuch belong to

[3] *Cf.* Janse (2002) 388.

[4] Lee (2018) represents the decisive advance. See also Aitken (2005); (2011); (2013); Dhont (2018); Evans (2001); Lee (1983); Lee (2014); Lee (2020). A comprehensive bibliography is not intended. Muraoka (2009) is an important lexical tool. On the other hand, Muraoka (2016), though in many respects a remarkable achievement, does not represent an advance in linguistic interpretation of the corpus.

[5] This article is intended for Hellenists. To engage with the argument, familiarity with classical Hebrew should be unnecessary. Some Hebrew words and passages are included, however, for thoroughness of documentation and as a service to readers equipped to assess them independently. The technical terminology of Hebrew grammar is kept to a minimum and consists of references to the stems of Hebrew verbs cited in the tables (*qal*, *niph*(*al*)) or text (*piel*, *hithpael*). For these Hebrew verbal stems and their forms and functions, see Waltke and O'Connor (1990) 351–452, especially 351–61; for a comparative Semitic perspective also Moscati et al. (1980) 122–30.

[6] This is not to assert that the choice of this particular semantic sphere necessarily has advantages over various others; it is simply one interesting and revealing topic. Compare the important word studies collected in Lee (1983) and (2018).

[7] *Cf.* Linfoot-Ham (2005) 229.

[8] Linfoot-Ham (2005) 229, basing her figures on Partridge (1968). On the unreliability of some of Partridge's analyses and its impact on later interpreters, see Williams (1997) 10–12.

[9] Bain (1991) 51.

[10] Henderson (1991).

[11] On the usually 'circumspect' language of sex in Greek literature *cf.* Dover (1980) 3.

[12] This dating of the Greek Pentateuch has traditionally depended in large part on the unreliable content of the *Letter of Aristeas*; *cf.* Scarlata (2015) 15. For more secure evidence from the linguistic sphere suggesting the probability of a third century date, see Lee (1983) 129–44, 148; Evans (2001) 263; Evans (2010) 5, 6; *cf.* Aitken (2015) 3.

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the well-established sexual vocabulary found already in classical Greek. Their use is consistent with a growing body of evidence revealing the impressive educational background and formidable linguistic and stylistic capacities of these translators.[13] I will inevitably also be addressing, from a broadly lexicographical perspective, some modern responses to the group of words in question.

II. Key terms

The key verbal expressions for 'have sexual intercourse (with)' in the Greek Pentateuch are:

γινώσκω + accusative
εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι + πρός + accusative
κοιμῶμαι + μετά + genitive
συγγίνομαι + dative[14]

Taking them together, I count 68 instances in the five books. The distribution is shown in Table 1. More than half the examples occur in the largely narrative content of Genesis, the only one of the five books in which all four verbs occur. There are also clusters in legal contexts in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. This distribution is inevitably conditioned by the source text. The fact that the translators employed a largely literal method in rendering the text components of the Hebrew means that almost every instance of each verb in the group translates a Hebrew verb of sexual intercourse. I work here with the usual assumption that our received Hebrew text, the Masoretic text (MT), is very close to the one on which the Greek translation was actually based.[15]

For the present purpose I set aside certain expressions that convey related ideas (and that would need to be addressed in any comprehensive study of sexual vocabulary in the Pentateuch), but do not function as practical synonyms for my key terms. Examples are μοιχεύω 'commit adultery', βιβάζω 'climb onto (a person or animal) for the purpose of sexual intercourse' and the deliberately oblique language of most of the sexual prohibitions in Leviticus 18 (notably ἀποκαλύπτω ἀσχημοσύνην 'uncover that which is shameful').[16] I will, however, discuss (in section VII below) another group of verbs that may seem to approach the meaning in question more closely.

By comparing the figures for each of my four key verbs in tables 1 and 2, we can observe that three of them, γινώσκω, εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι and κοιμῶμαι, are also used in the Pentateuch in non-sexual senses, two of these much more often than in their sexual senses.

And, if we look beyond the limits of the Septuagint we will find that the apparent anomaly, συγγίνομαι, is also well attested in non-sexual senses. This situation is typical for verbs of sexual intercourse considered 'respectable' in many societies. Their sexual meanings are euphemisms developed by metonymy from other senses. For verbs meaning 'know', 'be with', 'sleep with' and 'come' and 'go', the development is common to a range of languages. This will become clear in the following discussion, but as a preliminary observation note that our key Greek verbs all map onto similarly euphemistic expressions in the source language.

The issue of multiple meanings creates a trap for the unwary, and it is a trap, as we will see, into which experts can plunge headlong. Since γινώσκω, εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι and

[13] Lee (2018) 259–68.
[14] *Cf.* Harl (1986) 70 for a similar list (but omitting κοιμῶμαι and focusing on Genesis alone).
[15] *Cf.* Evans (2001) 79.
[16] For a recent treatment of the Leviticus 18 material, see Büchner (2020) 179–84.

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Table 1. Frequencies of verbal expressions for sexual intercourse in the Greek Pentateuch[17]

	Gen.	Exod.	Lev.	Num.	Deut.	Total
γινώσκω	6	0	0	2	0	8
εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι	17	0	1	0	2	20
κοιμῶμαι (-άομαι)	15	2	10	2	9	38
συγγίνομαι	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	40	2	11	4	11	68

Table 2. All occurrences of verbs from Table 1 in the Greek Pentateuch

	Gen.	Exod.	Lev.	Num.	Deut.	Total
γινώσκω	38	19	6	11	11	85
εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι	61	45	22	37	58	223
κοιμῶμαι (-άομαι)	27	5	16	3	13	64
συγγίνομαι	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	128	69	44	51	82	374

κοιμῶμαι turn up often in non-sexual senses in the Pentateuch, we will need to be careful in identifying examples relevant to the present enquiry. When scholars go looking for verbal expressions with a sexual reference, there is a danger that they will start to see them everywhere.[18] On the other hand, if they are not looking for them, they tend not to see them anywhere. Meanwhile, the question of Hebraisms will arise as we proceed. When Septuagint scholars go looking for Hebrew interference in translation Greek, there is always the danger that they will start seeing that everywhere, too. Caution will be necessary on both fronts.

III. Γινώσκω

Let us now survey the four key expressions, starting with γινώσκω 'know'. As we saw in Table 1, this is used in a sexual sense six times in Genesis and twice in Numbers. Examples are:

> Gen. 4:1 Ἀδὰμ δὲ **ἔγνω** Εὔαν τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλαβοῦσα ἔτεκεν τὸν Κάιν.
> And Adam knew his wife Heua, and she conceived and bore Kain.[19]
> והאדם ידע את־חוה אשׁתו ותהר ותלד את־קין

> Gen. 19:8 εἰσὶν δέ μοι δύο θυγατέρες, αἳ οὐκ **ἔγνωσαν** ἄνδρα· ἐξάξω αὐτὰς πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ χρήσασθε αὐταῖς, καθὰ ἂν ἀρέσκῃ ὑμῖν.
> And I have two daughters, who have not known a man. I will bring them out to you, and use them however you like.
> הנה־נא לי שׁתי בנות אשׁר לא־ידעו אישׁ אוציאה־נא אתהן אליכם ועשׂו להן כטוב בעיניכם

[17] The figures provided in this and the following tables were generated by the search program of the Accordance Bible Software platform and checked manually against the standard Göttingen editions of William Wevers.

[18] *Cf.* Williams (1997) 10, on Eric Partridge.

[19] There are another two examples in this chapter, at Gen. 4:17 and 25.

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Gen. 24:16 ἡ δὲ παρθένος ἦν καλὴ τῇ ὄψει σφόδρα· παρθένος ἦν, ἀνὴρ οὐκ **ἔγνω** αὐτήν.
And the young woman was very beautiful in appearance; she was a virgin, no man had known her.
והנער טבת מראה מאד בתולה ואישׁ לא ידעה

Gen. 38:26 ἐπέγνω δὲ Ἰούδας καὶ εἶπεν Δεδικαίωται Θαμὰρ ἢ ἐγώ, οὗ εἵνεκεν οὐκ ἔδωκα αὐτὴν Σηλὼμ τῷ υἱῷ μου. καὶ οὐ προσέθετο ἔτι τοῦ **γνῶναι** αὐτήν.
And Ioudas recognized (them, i.e. tokens) and said, 'Thamar has been justified rather than I, since I did not give her to my son Selom'. And he did not add to know her any more.[20]
ויכר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני כי־על־כן לא־נתתיה לשׁלה בני ולא־יסף עוד לדעתה

From Gen. 19:8 it can be seen that the subject may be either male or female. In this sense the verb is always transitive. As can be deduced from tables 1 and 2, however, the vast majority of Pentateuchal instances of γινώσκω, another 79 of them, are used in non-sexual senses. Examples are:

Gen. 4:9 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Κάιν Ποῦ ἐστιν Ἄβελ ὁ ἀδελφός σου; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Οὐ **γινώσκω**· μὴ φύλαξ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ μού εἰμι ἐγώ;
And God said to Kain, 'Where is your brother Habel?' And he said, 'I don't know; surely I'm not my brother's keeper?'
ויאמר יהוה אל־קין אי הבל אחיך ויאמר לא ידעתי השׁמר אחי אנכי

Gen. 29:5 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτοῖς **Γινώσκετε** Λαβὰν τὸν υἱὸν Ναχώρ;
And he said to them, 'Do you know Laban the son of Nakhor?'
ויאמר להם הידעתם את־לבן בן־נחור

Table 3 presents the Hebrew matches for γινώσκω in the MT. We can see here that in 75 of the 85 instances, and always in the sexual sense, γινώσκω is matched by ידע. This Hebrew verb has a semantic range covering various kinds of 'knowing', including 'know sexually', the ultimate source of expressions like English 'know in the biblical sense'.[21]

One might well wonder whether the Genesis and Numbers translators' choice of γινώσκω to render the sexual sense is a case of semantic extension, influenced by their frequent employment of this verb to translate the non-sexual sense of ידע. It seems, however, to be natural Greek. LSJ cites evidence for the sense from a fragment of Menander and from the second-century BCE Ptolemaic statesman and historian Heraclides Lembus:[22]

Menander *fr.* 382.3–5 ὁ δέ μ' ἠκολούθησεν μέχρι τοῦ πρὸς τὴν θύραν | ἔπειτα φοιτῶν καὶ κολακεύων <ἐμέ τε καὶ> | τὴν μητέρ' **ἔγνω** μ'.
He followed me right up to the door, then through repeated visits and flattery of [me and] my mother, he got to know me sexually(?).

He followed me right to the door, and then | With always dropping in and flattering | <Me and my mother> [*sic*] he knew me too well. (Tr. Arnott 2000)

[20] For the Hebraism 'add (to do)', see Lee (2018) 212–15.

[21] On knowing 'in the biblical sense' and the extended application of 'in the biblical sense' with other verbs, see *OED s.v.* 'biblical'.

[22] LSJ *s.v.* γιγνώσκω III.

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Table 3. Hebrew matches of γινώσκω in the Greek Pentateuch

	Gen.		Exod.		Lev.		Num.		Deut.		Total
	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	
γινώσκω	**6**	**32**	**0**	**19**	**0**	**6**	**2**	**9**	**0**	**11**	**85**
= ידע (*qal*)	6	30	–	13	–	6	2	7	–	11	75
= ידע (*niph*)	–	–	–	4	–	–	–	1	–	–	5
= ראה (*qal*)	–	1	–	2	–	–	–	1	–	–	4
= no match	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1

Notes:
a) s = sexual, n-s = non-sexual.
b) For the terms *qal* and *niph*(*al*), see n.5 above.

> Heraclides Lembus, *Constitutions* 64 (2nd c. BCE) ἐν Κεφαλληνίᾳ Προμνήσου υἱὸς ἐκράτησε, καὶ χαλεπὸς ἦν, … τάς τε κόρας πρὸ τοῦ γαμίσκεσθαι αὐτὸς **ἐγίνωσκεν**. Ἀντήνωρ δὲ λαβὼν ξιφίδιον καὶ γυναικείαν ἐσθῆτα, ἐνδυσάμενος εἰς τὴν κοίτην ἀπέκτεινε.
> In Kephallenia a son of Promnesos ruled, and was harsh, … and he used to know the young women sexually before they were given in marriage. Antenor took a sword and women's clothing, and entered into his bed and killed (him).

The Menander instance is hardly an incontrovertible example and may mean no more than 'got to know me'. William Arnott's interpretation is speculative.[23] On the other hand, the instance from Heraclides is clear. Influence from the Septuagint seems unlikely, despite the shared Egyptian milieu. The deployment does not seem to be innovative in either case (if we accept the Menander example) and it may have been well established before these first appearances in the literature. So the use of γινώσκω as a translation equivalent by the authors of the Greek Genesis and Numbers appears to be a deft choice. This is an example of the phenomenon of using a natural Greek equivalent that happens to fit the Hebrew exactly. It works effectively as a rendering for both non-sexual and sexual senses of the Hebrew word. Such choices can lead to stylistic interference, where a word or a specific sense of a word is used much more often than in original Greek compositions, and to a limited extent one might see that here. The fact that we are dealing with such small scraps of evidence, however, means it is impossible to be sure.

As it happens, we find a parallel development in Latin. In the Vulgate translation of Gen. 4:1 (and also at 4:17 and 25) the verbal form rendering the sexual sense of ידע is *cognouit*. But the sexual sense of 'know' verbs and related expressions is an established development in Latin long before it appeared in Bible translations.[24] James Adams presents the examples below from Catullus and Caesar, among others:

> Vulgate Gen. 4.1 Adam uero **cognouit** Hauam uxorem suam quae concepit et peperit Cain.

[23] Arnott (2000) 345 (also 346–47, for the Plautine adaptation of the relevant lines, which has nothing corresponding to ἔγνω).

[24] Adams (1982) 190. Incidentally, the development in English seems to be different. There 'know' in the sexual sense, first cited by the *OED* (*s.v.* 'know' II.8) from the *Ormulum*, a 12th-century exegetical work, does appear to arise from bilingual interference, presumably in the first instance from the Latin of the Vulgate.

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Catullus 72.1 Dicebas quondam solum te **nosse** Catullum, | Lesbia,
You once used to say that you knew Catullus alone, Lesbia.

Caesar, *BGall.* 6.21.5 Intra annum uero uicesimum feminae **notitiam habuisse** in turpissimis habent rebus.
And to have had carnal knowledge of a woman before the twentieth year they consider among the most disgraceful acts.

IV. Συγγίνομαι

Γινώσκω is not the only verb used to render the sexual sense of ידע in the Greek Pentateuch. In Gen. 19:5 we see συγγίνομαι deployed as equivalent. John Lee argues that, used instead of γινώσκω, this is a deliberately equivocal rendering,[25] which would explain the motivation for the departure from the Genesis translator's usual practice. The normal non-sexual semantic range of the word συγγίνομαι involves such meanings (plus dative) as 'associate with', 'meet' and 'converse with'.[26] The euphemistic sexual sense is also quite common in literature, as illustrated by the example from Xenophon below.[27] Lee suggests a sense of delicacy may account for the use of a translation which can obscure the meaning of the Hebrew, though the sexual sense is there 'for anyone who can recognize it'.[28]

Gen. 19:5 καὶ ἐξεκαλοῦντο τὸν Λώτ, καὶ ἔλεγον πρὸς αὐτόν Ποῦ εἰσιν οἱ ἄνδρες οἱ εἰσελθόντες πρὸς σὲ τὴν νύκτα; ἐξάγαγε αὐτοὺς πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἵνα **συγγενώμεθα** αὐτοῖς.
And they called Lot out and said to him, 'Where are the men who came in to you tonight? Bring them out to us in order that we may have intercourse with them'.
ויקראו אל־לוט ויאמרו לו איה האנשים אשר־באו אליך הלילה הוציאם אלינו ונדעה אתם

Xen. *An.* 1.2.12 ἐνταῦθα ἀφικνεῖται Ἐπύαξα ἡ Συεννέσιος γυνὴ τοῦ Κιλίκων βασιλέως παρὰ Κῦρον· καὶ ἐλέγετο Κύρῳ δοῦναι χρήματα πολλά … ἐλέγετο δὲ καὶ **συγγενέσθαι** Κῦρον τῇ Κιλίσσῃ.
At that point Epyaxa, the wife of Syennesis, king of the Cilicians, came to visit Cyrus; and she was said to have given Cyrus a large sum of money … and it was also said that Cyrus had intimate relations with the Cilician queen.

As we saw in tables 1 and 2, there is one other instance of συγγίνομαι in the Greek Pentateuch, also in Genesis, and it too is used euphemistically of sexual intercourse:

Gen. 39.10 ἡνίκα δὲ ἐλάλει τῷ Ἰωσὴφ ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας, καὶ οὐχ ὑπήκουεν αὐτῇ καθεύδειν μετ' αὐτῆς τοῦ **συγγενέσθαι** αὐτῇ.
And when she spoke to Ioseph day by day, and [*sic*] he would not listen to her to lie down with her in order to have intercourse with her.
ויהי כדברה אל־יוסף יום יום ולא־שמע אליה לשכב אצלה להיות עמה

Here the Hebrew offers a more suggestive structural environment for the choice. It employs the verb היה 'be' plus the preposition עם 'with', though εἰμί rather than συγγίνομαι

[25] Lee (1980) 109–10.
[26] Lee (1980) 105–06; LSJ *s.v.*
[27] *Cf.* LSJ *s.v.* συγγίγνομαι II.3. For parallel semantic developments note σύνειμι, συνουσία, ὁμιλῶ, ὁμιλία, Latin *esse cum* and English *intercourse* (Lee (1980) 105 n.4; Adams (1982) 177).
[28] Lee (1980) 109–10.

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would offer the most literal rendering.[29] Here, too, Lee suggests equivocation may be a factor in the choice of rendering. In this case the apparent ambiguity resides in the Hebrew expression, which the translator is perhaps attempting to replicate. But, as Lee acknowledges, the use as sexual euphemism is unmistakable in the Greek.[30]

Takamitsu Muraoka asserts that this verb always refers to *illicit* sexual intercourse in the Septuagint.[31] The implications of that remark may seem noteworthy, since they might imply a new restriction on the sense of the verb that is certainly not found in earlier literature. His 'Alw[ays]', however, applies to five examples in the entire Septuagint and is not really a comment on the meaning of the verb, but on the contexts in which it is used.[32] When dealing with the Old Testament we need to remember that most sexual contexts described are likely to involve illicit activity and that the Greek use is conditioned by that of the underlying Hebrew. This is true of all the material under consideration in the present study. There is nothing marked about the use of the verb συγγίνομαι itself in the two Pentateuchal examples. It refers by a euphemism simply to sexual intercourse.

V. Κοιμῶμαι (-άομαι)

Let us now consider the contract verb κοιμῶμαι. The development of sexual senses from expressions meaning 'sleep with' or 'lie with' is well known in many languages. Adams speculates that this euphemism may be universal.[33] In Greek the verb κοιμῶ, which has the primary sense 'make' (someone or something) 'go to sleep' in the active and 'lie down (to sleep)', 'go to sleep' or by extension simply 'sleep' in the middle and passive, exhibits this transfer in its middle and passive forms already in early epic and both the non-sexual and sexual senses are well represented in classical Greek as well.[34]

This is the most common euphemism for sexual intercourse in the Greek Pentateuch. The person (or animal) with whom the sleeping is done is represented consistently by μετά plus genitive. Tables 1 and 2 show that of its 64 instances in these books 38 convey the sexual sense. Examples of both senses are presented below, including one (Gen. 19:33) exhibiting both sexual and non-sexual senses in a single verse.

> Gen. 26:10 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ Ἀβιμέλεχ Τί τοῦτο ἐποίησας ἡμῖν; μικροῦ **ἐκοιμήθη** τις τοῦ γένους μου **μετὰ** τῆς γυναικός σου.
> And Abimelekh said to him, 'What is this you have done to us? Very nearly did a member of my family sleep with your wife'.
> ויאמר אבימלך מה־זאת עשית לנו כמעט שכב אחד העם את־אשתך

> Gen. 39:7 καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα καὶ ἐπέβαλεν ἡ γυνὴ τοῦ κυρίου αὐτοῦ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῆς ἐπὶ Ἰωσήφ, καὶ εἶπεν **Κοιμήθητι μετ'** ἐμοῦ.
> And it happened after these matters, and his master's wife cast her eyes upon Ioseph and said, 'Sleep with me'.
> ויהי אחר הדברים האלה ותשא אשת־אדניו את־עיניה אל־יוסף ותאמר שכבה עמי

[29] Lee (1980) 105–06.
[30] Lee (1980) 105–06.
[31] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* συγγίνομαι.
[32] See Bain (1999) 124 (*s.v.* βάλλω), rightly calling this general practice 'bad … lexicography'. We will see another example in Muraoka's work in section VI below.
[33] Adams (1982) 177.
[34] *Cf.* LSJ *s.v.* κοιμάω II.

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Gen. 19:3–4 καὶ ἀζύμους ἔπεψεν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἔφαγον πρὸ τοῦ **κοιμηθῆναι**. καὶ οἱ ἄνδρες τῆς πόλεως οἱ Σοδομῖται περιεκύκλωσαν τὴν οἰκίαν.
And [he] baked them unleavened loaves, and they ate before they went to sleep. And the men of the city, the Sodomites, encircled the house.
ומצות אפה ויאכלו׃ טרם ישכבו ואנשי העיר אנשי סדם נסבו על־הבית

Gen. 47:30 ἀλλὰ **κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ** τῶν πατέρων μου, καὶ ἀρεῖς με ἐξ Αἰγύπτου καὶ θάψεις με ἐν τῷ τάφῳ αὐτῶν.
But I will sleep with my fathers, and you will carry me out of Egypt and bury me in their burial place.
ושכבתי עם־אבתי ונשאתני ממצרים וקברתני בקברתם

Gen. 19:33 ἐπότισαν δὲ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν οἶνον ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ταύτῃ, καὶ εἰσελθοῦσα ἡ πρεσβυτέρα **ἐκοιμήθη μετὰ** τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς τὴν νύκτα ἐκείνην, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ἐν τῷ **κοιμηθῆναι** αὐτὴν καὶ ἀναστῆναι.
And they gave their father wine to drink on this night, and the elder went in and slept with her father that night, and he did not know when she lay down and got up.
ותשקין את־אביהן יין בלילה הוא ותבא הבכירה ותשכב את־אביה ולא־ידע בשכבה ובקומה

In this last case it would be wrong to interpret the second instance, where κοιμηθῆναι balances ἀναστῆναι within an articular infinitive construction, as sexual. The contrast, as Robert Hiebert also interprets it in Albert Pietersma and Benjamin Wright's *New English Translation*,[35] is simply between the female participant's lying down in the bed and getting up from it. One has to be particularly careful to distinguish such examples of non-sexual senses in sexual contexts, a point to which we will return in relation to εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι.

Table 4 shows the regularity of the matches with the Hebrew verb שׁכב, which undergoes a similar semantic development. Thus, it matches 37 of the 38 examples of κοιμῶμαι in the sexual sense (in the other instance there is no match at all) and 15 of the non-sexual instances. The 'with' idea rendered by μετά plus genitive is expressed in the Hebrew by two different prepositions, 20 times by עם and 17 times by את. This is not especially noteworthy as the Hebrew words are practical synonyms in these constructions.[36] So in this Greek expression we have another effective choice of translation equivalent, closely imitating the Hebrew, but eminently suitable from a Greek perspective.

VI. Εἰσέρχομαι / εἰσπορεύομαι

Of the four key verbs of sexual intercourse identified in section II above, the 'go into' compound which in classical Greek we know as εἰσέρχομαι is in several respects the most interesting. In the early Koine this form is in the process of replacement by εἰσπορεύομαι, in a way similar to other ἔρχομαι compounds.[37] There are 223 examples of the verb in the Pentateuch and most are used in the familiar general senses, as we see below in Gen. 6:18

[35] Hiebert (2007) 17.

[36] For broader issues involved in the rendering of these two Hebrew prepositions, see Lee (2018) 242–47.

[37] Lee (1983) 85–92. The process is already so well advanced by the third century that the solitary instance of a form from εἰσέρχομαι in the Greek Pentateuch, Gen. 38:9 εἰσήρχετο, seems open to doubt. Wevers accepts it without comment in the Göttingen edition, however, and there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to read an εἰσπορεύομαι form instead (*cf.* Lee (1983) 87 and n.6). The Koine future is normally εἰσελεύσομαι, the aorist still the classical εἰσῆλθον.

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Table 4. Hebrew matches of κοιμῶμαι (-άομαι) in the Greek Pentateuch

	Gen.		Exod.		Lev.		Num.		Deut.		Total
	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	
κοιμῶμαι (-άομαι)	**15**	**12**	**2**	**3**	**10**	**6**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**4**	**64**
= שׁכב (*qal*)	14	5	2	1	10	5	2	1	9	3	52
= לין (*qal*)	–	5	–	2	–	1	–	–	–	1	9
= רבץ (*qal*)	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
= no match	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	2

Notes:
a) s = sexual, n-s = non-sexual.
b) For the term *qal* see n.5 above.

and Exod. 5:1. But 20 are used with reference to sexual intercourse, a sense that does not seem to occur in the earlier language,[38] as in my following examples:

Gen. 6:18 **εἰσελεύσῃ** δὲ **εἰς** τὴν κιβωτόν, σὺ καὶ οἱ υἱοί σου καὶ ἡ γυνή σου καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες τῶν υἱῶν σου μετὰ σοῦ.
And you will come into the ark, you and your sons and your wife and your sons' wives with you.
ובאת אל־התבה אתה ובניך ואשׁתך ונשׁי־בניך עתך

Exod. 5:1 καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα **εἰσῆλθεν** Μωυσῆς καὶ Ἀαρὼν **πρὸς** Φαραὼ καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ.
And after these things Moüses and Aaron went in to Pharao and they said to him.
ואחר באו משׁה ואהרן ויאמרו אל־פרעה

Gen. 6:4 καὶ μετ' ἐκεῖνο, ὡς ἂν **εἰσεπορεύοντο** οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ **πρὸς** τὰς θυγατέρας τῶν ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἐγεννῶσαν ἑαυτοῖς.
And after that, whenever the sons of God went in to the daughters of humans, and [*sic*] they produced offspring for themselves.
וגם אחרי־כן אשׁר יבאו בני האלהים אל־בנות האדם וילדו להם

Gen. 38:9 ἐγίνετο ὅταν **εἰσήρχετο πρὸς** τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ, ἐξέχεεν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν.
It used to happen when he went in to his brother's wife, he would pour out (his semen) upon the ground.
והיה אם־בא אל־אשׁת אחיו ושׁחת ארצה

Gen. 38:16 καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῇ Ἔασόν με **εἰσελθεῖν πρὸς** σέ· οὐ γὰρ ἔγνω ὅτι ἡ νύμφη αὐτοῦ ἐστιν. ἡ δὲ εἶπεν Τί μοι δώσεις, ἐὰν **εἰσέλθῃς πρός** με;
And [he] said to her, 'Let me come in to you', for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, 'What will you give me, if you come in to me?'
ויאמר הבה־נא אבוא אליך כי לא ידע כי כלתו הוא ותאמר מה־תתן־לי כי תבוא אלי

[38] See, for example, LSJ *s.v.*; Harl (1986) 70. That the simplex ἔρχομαι develops the sense 'go (with)' referring to 'have sexual intercourse (with)' (+ παρά + acc.) in the Classical period (LSJ *s.v.* B.7) does not necessarily have any bearing on the semantic development of the compound. Note, incidentally, the confusion of Henderson (1991) 155, who compares the sexual sense of the simplex ἔρχομαι with English 'go with' or 'go (in) unto'. As we will see, the latter expression is derived from Old Testament language (cf. *OED s.v.* 'go' III.31.c) translated in the Greek Pentateuch by εἰσέρχομαι and described below; it is not related to the simplex ἔρχομαι.

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Lev. 18:14 καὶ **πρὸς** τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ οὐκ **εἰσελεύσῃ**.
And you will not go in to his wife.
אל־אשׁתו לא תקרב

Table 5 sets out the Hebrew matches. This Greek verb normally translates בוא 'come in', and almost always does so when used in the sexual sense. The exceptions are at Gen. 30:10, where the Greek expression has no match in the MT and appears to be an addition, and Lev. 18:14, where the Hebrew match is קרב 'approach'. All certain examples of the sexual sense take as complement the preposition πρός and this matches Hebrew אל in all but two of these instances, where πρός equals על (Gen. 19:31; Deut. 25:5).

Marguerite Harl calls the sexual sense of εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι a calque,[39] but this is inaccurate.[40] We certainly seem to be dealing with a Hebraism not found outside the Septuagint and derivative works. But it takes the form of semantic extension, imitating the sexual sense of Hebrew בוא, for which in the non-sexual sense of εἰσέρχομαι / εἰσπορεύομαι is an obvious equivalent.

It is important to understand the euphemistic quality of the Septuagintal expression. The meaning 'have sexual intercourse (with)' is obviously implied and at first sight seems explicit in some examples, especially that involving Onan and Tamar in Gen. 38:9. But there is a deliberate obliqueness to the Pentateuchal use in every instance. Highly suggestive to that end is the consistent use of πρός as the prepositional complement rather than εἰς,[41] which we saw at Gen. 6:18 in one of my illustrations of a non-sexual sense. Note also Adams' comments on the development of similar expressions in Latin: 'Sometimes verbs meaning "go in" are used elliptically in the sense "go in (to a room, *coeundi causa*)" … These idioms are not always distinguished in the dictionaries from the use of the same group of verbs of physical penetration'.[42] He suggests that at Gen. 6:4 the Vulgate's *ingressi sunt* and the Septuagint's εἰσεπορεύοντο both have this oblique sense:

Vulgate Gen. 6:4 postquam enim **ingressi sunt** filii Dei ad filias hominum illaeque genuerunt.

The examples in Gen. 29:21 and 23, where the consummation of a marriage is concerned, seem to me also to support the point:

Gen. 29:21 εἶπεν δὲ Ἰακὼβ πρὸς Λαβάν Ἀπόδος τὴν γυναῖκά μου, πεπλήρωνται γὰρ αἱ ἡμέραι μου, ὅπως **εἰσέλθω πρὸς** αὐτήν.
Iakob said to Laban, 'Give up my wife, for my days have been completed, that I may go in to her'.
ויאמר יעקב אל־לבן הבה את־אשׁתי כי מלאו ימי ואבואה אליה

Gen. 29:23 καὶ ἐγένετο ἑσπέρα, καὶ λαβὼν Λαβὰν Λείαν τὴν θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ εἰσήγαγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς Ἰακώβ, καὶ **εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς** αὐτὴν Ἰακώβ.
And evening came, and Laban took his daughter Leia and brought her in to Iakob, and Iakob went in to her.
ויהי בערב ויקח את־לאה בתו ויבא אתה אליו ויבא אליה

[39] Harl (1986) 70.

[40] For a linguistic definition of calquing, essentially novel compounding in the target language that reflects a lexical compound in the source language, see Hock and Joseph (2009) 252; *cf.* Adams (2003) 459; also Coleman (1975) 106. Harl's non-technical application seems to be quite common in Septuagint studies (see, for example, Pietersma and Wright (2007) xvii), but should be avoided (*cf.* Lee (2010) 126 and n.36).

[41] I thank John Lee for drawing my attention to the significance of this prepositional choice (private communication).

[42] Adams (1982) 176.

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Table 5. Hebrew matches of εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι in the Greek Pentateuch

	Gen.		Exod.		Lev.		Num.		Deut.		Total
	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	s	n-s	
εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι	**17**	**44**	**0**	**45**	**1**	**21**	**0**	**37**	**2**	**56**	**223**
= בוא (*qal*)	16	43	–	40	–	21	–	36	2	51	209
= עבר (*qal*)	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	4	4
= אסף (*niph*)	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	1	–	–	2
= יצא (*qal*)	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	2
= נגשׁ (*niph*)	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
= קום (*qal*)	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	1
= קרב (*qal*)	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
= no match	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	3

Notes:
a) s = sexual, n-s = non-sexual.
b) For the terms *qal* and *niph*(*al*) see n.5 above.
c) In Deut. 28:19 and 31:21 I have counted matches with בוא where the Septuagint reverses the MT order of coordinated verbs meaning 'come in' and 'go out'; in these two instances one might prefer to identify the match as יצא and change the figures for matches with these verbs to 49 and 2, respectively, in that book and 207 and 4 overall.

It is difficult to capture the tone in English. Apart from 'come in (to)', our own awkwardly literal solution to the same translation problem, we lack a neat alternative to the specific meaning in question here. Compare 'sleep with' and 'be with', which make the tone of κοιμῶμαι μετά and συγγίνομαι easier to approximate. The various translators of the *New English Translation* have done about as well as one can without being more explicit than the Greek, even though an approach like Dirk Büchner's to Lev. 18:14 introduces a new element of ambiguity.[43]

To complete the treatment of εἰσέρχομαι / εἰσπορεύομαι, let us now return to the issue of examples of our verbs used in a non-sexual sense in sexual contexts. Such instances of εἰσέρχομαι / εἰσπορεύομαι deserve particular attention because they have sometimes been confused with examples of the sexual senses. In his lexicon Muraoka assigns the examples of εἰσελθοῦσα at Gen. 19:33 (quoted in section V above), 34 and 35, from the story of Lot and his daughters, to the sexual sense, offering them as evidence that in this meaning the verb can have a female subject:[44]

> Gen. 19:34 ἐγένετο δὲ τῇ ἐπαύριον καὶ εἶπεν ἡ πρεσβυτέρα πρὸς τὴν νεωτέραν Ἰδοὺ ἐκοιμήθην ἐχθὲς μετὰ τοῦ πατρός· ποτίσωμεν αὐτὸν οἶνον καὶ τὴν νύκτα ταύτην, καὶ **εἰσελθοῦσα** κοιμήθητι μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξαναστήσωμεν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν σπέρμα. And it happened on the next day and the elder said to the younger, 'Look, I lay yesterday with our father; let us give him wine to drink this night also, and you go in and lie with him, and let us raise up offspring from our father'.
>
> ויהי ממחרת ותאמר הבכירה אל־הצעירה הן־שכבתי אמש את־אבי נשקנו יין גם־הלילה
> ובאי שכבי עמו ונחיה מאבינו זרע

[43] Büchner (2007) 98: 'and you shall not approach his wife'.
[44] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* εἰσέρχομαι 3.

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Gen. 19:35 ἐπότισαν δὲ καὶ ἐν τῇ νυκτὶ ἐκείνῃ τὸν πατέρα αὐτῶν οἶνον, καὶ **εἰσελθοῦσα** ἡ νεωτέρα ἐκοιμήθη μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ᾔδει ἐν τῷ κοιμηθῆναι αὐτὴν καὶ ἀναστῆναι.
And they gave their father wine to drink on that night also, and the younger one went in and lay with her father, and he did not know when she lay down and got up.
ותשקין גם בלילה ההוא את־אביהן יין ותקם הצעירה ותשכב עמו ולא־ידע בשכבה ובקמה

Once again, however, Muraoka is paying too much attention to the context and not enough to the actual meaning of the forms in question, presumably influenced by occurrences of κοιμῶμαι in its sexual sense in close proximity. A close reading should reveal at once that none of these instances of the feminine participle εἰσελθοῦσα refers to sexual activity. Moreover, they all lack the crucial complement, πρός plus accusative.[45] This can be used with the non-sexual sense, as in Exod. 5:1, but it is always used when the meaning of εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι has a sexual connotation. A less clear-cut but certainly suggestive piece of supporting evidence is provided by the Hebrew match for εἰσελθοῦσα at Gen. 19:35. It is a form of the verb קום 'get up, arise', not of בוא, as in Gen. 19:33 and 34. These are all simply instances of the general sense expressing movement into a space. The daughters 'go in' to the place where Lot is. Then they κοιμῶμαι with him. Compare with these examples Gen. 30:16 and 39:17, two more non-sexual instances of εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι in sexual contexts. In Gen. 30:16 the expression that actually does have a sexual sense, Πρός με εἰσελεύσῃ, is from the same verb:

Gen. 30:16 **εἰσῆλθεν** δὲ Ἰακὼβ ἐξ ἀγροῦ ἑσπέρας, καὶ ἐξῆλθεν Λεία εἰς συνάντησιν αὐτῷ καὶ εἶπεν **Πρός** με **εἰσελεύσῃ** σήμερον.
And Iakob came in from the fields in the evening,[46] and Leia went out to meet him and said, 'You will come in to me today'.
ויבא יעקב מן־השדה בערב ותצא לאה לקראתו ותאמר אלי תבוא

Gen. 39:17 καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα λέγουσα **Εἰσῆλθεν πρός** με ὁ παῖς ὁ Ἑβραῖος, ὃν εἰσήγαγες πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ἐμπαῖξαί μοι καὶ εἶπέν μοι **Κοιμηθήσομαι** μετὰ σοῦ.
And she spoke with him according to these words, saying, 'He came in to me, the Hebrew servant whom you brought in to us, to make me his plaything and said to me, "I will lie with you"'.
ותדבר אליו כדברים האלה לאמר בא־אלי העבד העברי אשר־הבאת לנו לצחק בי
(no MT match for καὶ εἶπέν μοι Κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ σοῦ)

VII. Four additional vocabulary items

These, then, are our four key vocabulary items that in the Greek Pentateuch are used as euphemisms for the sexual sense in question. I will now address four additional verbs alluded to above (section II) that can convey the same or related senses, and indeed appear in passages already discussed. The relevant material all occurs in Genesis.

[45] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* εἰσέρχομαι 3 does note that πρός is missing in these examples, but overlooks the significance of its absence.

[46] Note incidentally the set expression ἐξ ἀγροῦ, which does not require an article and means 'from the fields' (for a classical example see Lysias 1.13, cited in section VII.i), not 'from a field' (*pace* Hiebert (2007) 26; *cf.* Lee (2018) 252–53 on omission of the article with πᾶς).

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i. Καθεύδω

The verse Gen. 39:10 has already entered the discussion in section IV above in relation to συγγίνομαι, but I will now focus on the verb καθεύδω. This is another verb for 'sleep (with)' that develops into a sexual euphemism, like κοιμῶμαι. The primary sense is identified by LSJ (somewhat clumsily) as 'lie down to sleep, sleep',[47] by Muraoka, as 'be lying asleep'.[48] The classical example in Lysias 1.13 illustrates the meaning 'go to sleep, sleep', as does Gen. 28:13:

> Lysias 1.13 κἀγὼ μὲν ἐγέλων, ἐκείνη δὲ ἀναστᾶσα καὶ ἀπιοῦσα προστίθησι τὴν θύραν, προσποιουμένη παίζειν, καὶ τὴν κλεῖν ἐφέλκεται. κἀγὼ τούτων οὐδὲν ἐνθυμούμενος οὐδ' ὑπονοῶν **ἐκάθευδον** ἄσμενος, ἥκων ἐξ ἀγροῦ.
> And I laughed, but she got up and went off and shut the door, pretending to act playfully, and drew the bar across. And I thought nothing of these things, nor suspected anything, and went to sleep content, having come home from the fields.

> Gen. 28:13 ἡ γῆ, ἐφ' ἧς σὺ **καθεύδεις ἐπ'** αὐτῆς, σοὶ δώσω αὐτήν.
> The land on which you are sleeping on it, to you I will give it.
> הארץ אשר אתה שכב עליה לך אתננה

The development into a euphemism for 'have sexual intercourse (with)' is already found in early epic (Hom. *Od*. 8.313). In Gen. 39:10, however, that idea is conveyed by συγγίνομαι in the explanatory articular infinitive construction (section IV above). The sense of καθεύδειν is different, but is not captured by Muraoka's 'be lying asleep'. It is hard to believe Petephres' wife is inviting Ioseph to have a nap. The word means, plus μετά, 'lie down (with)' here,[49] and in this context not for the purpose of sleeping:

> Gen. 39:10 ἡνίκα δὲ ἐλάλει τῷ Ἰωσὴφ ἡμέραν ἐξ ἡμέρας, καὶ οὐχ ὑπήκουεν αὐτῇ **καθεύδειν** μετ' αὐτῆς τοῦ συγγενέσθαι αὐτῇ.
> And when she spoke to Ioseph day by day, and [*sic*] he would not listen to her to lie down with her in order to have sex with her.
> ויהי כדברה אל־יוסף יום יום ולא־שמע אליה לשכב אצלה להיות עמה

ii. Παίζω

The reason for King Abimelekh's reproach at Gen. 26:10 (section V above) was the sight he had spied through a window two verses earlier:

> Gen. 26:8 παρακύψας δὲ Ἀβιμέλεχ ὁ βασιλεὺς Γεράρων διὰ τῆς θυρίδος εἶδεν τὸν Ἰσαὰκ **παίζοντα μετὰ** Ῥεβέκκας τῆς γυναικὸς αὐτοῦ.
> (for translation see below)
> וישקף אבימלך מלך פלשתים בעד החלון וירא והנה יצחק מצחק את רבקה אשתו

He had seen Isaak παίζοντα with his wife Rebekka; 'with' is again expressed by μετά plus genitive. So what does the verb παίζω mean here? And if it means what the reader may well be suspecting, why have I not included it in the list of verbs given in section II above? This verb is well attested as a euphemism for activities that can certainly include the idea of sexual intercourse. Harl hedges somewhat in her commentary, suggesting 'Peut-être' an

[47] LSJ *s.v.*; Lust et al. (2003) *s.v.* follows precisely the wording of LSJ, as often.
[48] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.*
[49] *Cf.* Lee (1980) 105: 'go to bed with'.

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erotic connotation,[50] and παίζω, originally 'behave like a child, play' (from παῖς, παιδός),[51] does have a broad semantic range. Note for instance the sense conveyed by παίζειν in Lysias 1.13 (above), 'behave in a playful manner'.

A sexual connotation can hardly be doubted at Gen. 26:8. The point of Abimelekh's subsequent reproach is that the behaviour he has observed indicates that Rebekka is Isaak's wife. But what is going on is quite deliberately left unclear. Muraoka defines the relevant sense of παίζω as 'engage in relaxed and lively activities' and adds the glosses 'play, have fun' for this instance, along with the further note 'of a dallying married couple'.[52] This seems to capture the general idea.[53] I would suggest 'engage (someone, dat.) in sexual play', since English expressions like John Wevers's 'play around (with)', followed by Hiebert,[54] or 'make out (with)' are inappropriate in terms of register.[55] It would be forcing the evidence to take the meaning as 'have sexual intercourse (with)' here. I translate the verse: 'Abimelekh the king of Gerara glanced through the window and saw Isaak at amorous play with his wife Rebekka'.

iii. Ἐμπαίζω

Two instances of the compound ἐμπαίζω in Gen. 39 are relevant to the present discussion as well. They occur in close proximity to one another in sexual contexts in the story of Petephres' wife. In both of these ἐμπαίζω matches the same Hebrew verb, the *piel* (for the term see n.5 above) of צחק, as does παίζω in Gen. 26:8.[56]

> Gen. 39:14 καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τοὺς ὄντας ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς λέγουσα Ἴδετε, εἰσήγαγεν ἡμῖν παῖδα Ἑβραῖον **ἐμπαίζειν** ἡμῖν· εἰσῆλθεν πρός με λέγων Κοιμήθητι μετ' ἐμοῦ, καὶ ἐβόησα φωνῇ μεγάλῃ.
> (for translation see below)
> ותקרא לאנשי ביתה ותאמר להם לאמר ראו הביא לנו איש עברי לצחק בנו בא אלי לשכב עמי ואקרא בקול גדול
>
> Gen. 39:17 καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ κατὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα λέγουσα Εἰσῆλθεν πρός με ὁ παῖς ὁ Ἑβραῖος, ὃν εἰσήγαγες πρὸς ἡμᾶς, **ἐμπαῖξαί** μοι καὶ εἶπέν μοι Κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ σοῦ.
> (for translation see below)
> ותדבר אליו כדברים האלה לאמר בא־אלי העבד העברי אשר־הבאת לנו לצחק בי
> (no MT match for καὶ εἶπέν μοι Κοιμηθήσομαι μετὰ σοῦ)

Whether ἐμπαίζω in fact has a sexual sense in both these examples is open to doubt (the verb that certainly refers to sexual intercourse in both contexts is κοιμῶμαι). Our standard lexica provide limited help and a degree of misdirection. LSJ, for instance, gives a primary sense 'mock at, mock' and a second sense 'sport in, on'.[57] For the latter idea Muraoka offers

[50] Harl (1986) 211.
[51] Beekes (2010) *s.v.* παῖς, παιδός.
[52] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.*
[53] It is important, however, to note that *double meaning* is an element of the way euphemisms function and ought to be indicated in lexicographic treatment. I thank John Lee for making this point (private communication).
[54] Wevers (1993) 402; Hiebert (2007) 22: 'Now Abimelech … saw Isaak playing around with his wife Rebekka'.
[55] For an example of the compound ἐμπαίζω in a work involving a register suitable for such a rendering *cf.* n.63 and my translation there.
[56] For the Hebrew wordplay in that instance, see Wevers (1993) 402: 'Isaak was Isaaking'.
[57] LSJ *s.v.*

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'sport jestfully', which he rightly makes sense 1, while presenting 'mock' as sense 2.[58] These traditional English glosses are imprecise; what do 'mock' and 'sport' really mean here? Meanwhile, 'sport' is becoming archaic and 'jestfully' hardly exists in natural English usage. We need to do our own lexicography (a thorough study, beyond the scope of this treatment, is a desideratum).

The verb occurs altogether four times in the Greek Pentateuch (always with dative complement) and there are two definitely non-sexual examples, at Exod. 10:2 and Num. 22:29. These match a different Hebrew verbal form, the *hithpael* of עלל, plus the preposition ב, and have the sense 'treat with contempt'.

> Exod. 10:2 ὅπως διηγήσησθε εἰς τὰ ὦτα τῶν τέκνων ὑμῶν καὶ τοῖς τέκνοις τῶν τέκνων ὑμῶν ὅσα **ἐμπέπαιχα** τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις, καὶ τὰ σημεῖά μου, ἃ ἐποίησα ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ γνώσεσθε ὅτι ἐγὼ κύριος.
> [I]n order that you may relate into the ears of your children and to the children of your children how I treated the Egyptians with contempt, and my signs, which I made among them, and you will know that I am the Lord.
> ולמען תספר באזני בנך ובן־בנך את אשׁר התעללתי במצרים ואת־אתתי אשׁר־שׂמתי בם וידעתם כי־אני יהוה
>
> Num. 22:29 καὶ λέγει τῷ Βαλααμ Τί ἐποίησά σοι ὅτι πέπαικάς με τοῦτο τρίτον; καὶ εἶπεν Βαλααμ τῇ ὄνῳ Ὅτι **ἐμπέπαιχάς** μοι· καὶ εἰ εἶχον μάχαιραν ἐν τῇ χειρί μου, ἤδη ἂν ἐξεκέντησά σε.
> And she (i.e. the ass) said to Balaam, 'What have I done to you that you have struck me this third time?' And Balaam said to the ass, 'Because you have treated me with contempt; and if I had a sword in my hand, I would already have run you through'.
> ותאמר לבלעם מה־עשׂיתי לך כי הכיתני זה שׁלשׁ רגלים: ויאמר בלעם לאתון כי התעללת בי
> לו ישׁ־חרב בידי כי עתה הרגתיך

It is possible that 'treat with contempt' is the sense also at Gen. 39:14, given that Petephres' wife asserts that *her husband* has brought the Hebrew slave in ἐμπαίζειν 'us' (ἡμῖν). If the sense is sexual, it must mean something along the lines of 'make (someone, dat.) one's sexual plaything'. The idea that she alleges Petephres intends (the infinitive must express purpose here) the slave to use his wife for sex seems unlikely.[59] The plural ἡμῖν (by contrast with μοι in Gen. 39:17) may also seem to fit a non-sexual sense better than a sexual one, though this is not a clinching indicator. It follows the Hebrew and also represents an easy rhetorical shift of number found frequently in roughly contemporary Greek documents and apparently lacking literal force in many contexts.[60] I translate: 'And she called those who were in the house and said to them saying, "See, he brought in for us a Hebrew servant to treat us with contempt(?); he came in to me saying 'Lie with me', and I cried out in a loud voice"'.

[58] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* Muraoka is certainly right to reorder the senses. That found in Eur. *Bacch.* 866 ὡς νεβρὸς χλοεραῖς **ἐμπαί|ζουσα** λείμακος ἡδοναῖς (like a fawn frolicking in the green pleasures of a meadow) is surely primary, and practically identical with the original 'play' sense of the simplex. The 'mock' idea is a development from that of 'sport' (i.e. 'behave in a playful manner').

[59] For what it is worth, Petephres is described as a eunuch (Gen. 37:36 σπάδων, 39:1 εὐνοῦχος); *cf.* Wevers (1993) 630, 649.

[60] See, for instance, *PCairZen* I 59038 (letter, docketed 29 February 257 BCE). 23–28 καὶ τὰ λοιπὰ δὲ πο|λυωρῶν αὐτοῦ χαριεῖ **μοι** | ὡς ἐνδέχεται μάλιστα, ἕως | ἂν Ἀπολλώνιον **ἡμεῖς ἀξι|ώσωμεν** περὶ αὐτοῦ **λαβόν|τες** εὐκαίρως (As for the rest also you will do me a favour if you treat him with as much consideration as is possible, until we ask Apollonios about him, catching him [i.e. Apollonios] at an opportune moment); this is an example of standard administrative Greek of its period.

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In Gen. 39:17, on the other hand, sexual euphemism makes the best sense.[61] Here Petephres' wife is making an assertion about the slave's intention and the personal pronoun, as noted above, is μοι (again following the Hebrew). I translate: 'And she spoke with him [*sc.* Petephres] according to these words, saying, "He came in to me, the Hebrew servant whom you brought in to us, to make me his plaything and he said to me, 'I will lie with you'"'.

The sexual idea is clear, incidentally, in the extra-Pentateuchal example Jud. A 19:25,[62] where I take ἐνέπαιξαν (matching the *hithpael* of עלל) to amplify the meaning of its verbal pair ἔγνωσαν:[63]

> Jud. A 19:25 καὶ ἐπελάβετο ὁ ἀνὴρ τῆς παλλακῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐξήγαγεν αὐτὴν πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἔξω, καὶ ἔγνωσαν αὐτὴν καὶ **ἐνέπαιξαν** (B ἐνέπαιζον) αὐτῇ (B ἐν αὐτῇ) ὅλην τὴν νύκτα ἕως τὸ πρωί.
> And the man took hold of his concubine and brought her to them outside, and they knew her and made her their plaything the whole night until the morning.
> ויחזק האישׁ בפילגשׁו ויצא אליהם החוץ וידעו אותה ויתעללו־בה כל־הלילה עד־הבקר

Note, however, that this euphemism in Gen. 39:17 (and possibly in 39:14) is not a practical synonym of those described in sections III–VI above, all conveying the sense 'have sexual intercourse (with)'. The idea of exploitation is implicit in 'make (someone, dat.) one's sexual plaything'.[64]

iv. Χρῶμαι

The idea of exploitation is also present in two examples of χρῶμαι, traditionally glossed as 'use' (plus dative), that occur in sexual contexts in Genesis. One occurs in the Gen. 19:8 passage quoted in section III above, χρήσασθε αὐταῖς. The other appears below:

> Gen. 34:31 οἱ δὲ εἶπαν Ἀλλ' ὡσεὶ πόρνῃ **χρήσωνται** τῇ ἀδελφῇ ἡμων;
> And they said, 'But will they treat our sister as if she were a whore?'
> ויאמרו הכזונה יעשׂה את־אחותנו

This verb had already developed a sexual sense in the Classical period, 'use (someone, dat.) sexually':[65]

> Hdt. 2.181.2 τῇ ἐπείτε συγκλίνοιτο ὁ Ἄμασις, μίσγεσθαι οὐκ οἷός τε ἐγίνετο, τῇσι δὲ ἄλλῃσι γυναιξὶ **ἐχρᾶτο**.
> Whenever Amasis lay with her, he was unable to have intercourse, though he could have sex with other women.

> [Dem.] 59.67 καὶ ὡμολόγει μὲν **χρῆσθαι** τῇ ἀνθρώπῳ, οὐ μέντοι μοιχός γε εἶναι.
> And he admitted having sex with the woman, but not that he was an adulterer.

[61] I thank John Lee for persuasive comments on this instance (private communication).

[62] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* strangely places this example under sense 1, 'sport jestfully', adding a note 'of sexual maltreatment'.

[63] *Cf.* the combination συγγενόμενος **ἐνέπαιζεν** (plus acc.) in the extra-biblical first-century CE example *Vita Aesopi W* 129 ταῦτα λέγων ἔπεισε τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ συγγενόμενος **ἐνέπαιζεν** αὐτήν (By saying these things he persuaded the woman and he had intercourse with her and played around with her).

[64] Muraoka (2009) *s.v.* ἐμπαίζω, incidentally, assigns both the Gen. 39 instances to sense 2, 'mock'.

[65] See also LSJ *s.v.* χράω C.IV.2.

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If this sense were identified in the two Genesis examples above, χρῶμαι would belong in my list at section II. In both cases, however, the sexual reference is an implication of the context and the verb bears its well-attested meaning 'use, treat (someone, dat.) (in a certain manner)'.[66] The 'certain manner' in question is indicated by καθὰ ἂν ἀρέσκῃ ὑμῖν in 19:8 and by ὡσεὶ πόρνη in Gen. 34:31. The same sense appears in non-sexual contexts in the following examples. The certain manner is expressed by εὖ in Gen. 12:16, and by ὡς ἄν σοι ἀρεστὸν ᾖ in Gen. 16:6.

Gen. 12:16 καὶ εἶδον αὐτὴν οἱ ἄρχοντες Φαραὼ καὶ ἐπήνεσαν αὐτὴν πρὸς Φαραὼ καὶ εἰσήγαγον αὐτὴν εἰς τὸν οἶκον Φαραώ· καὶ τῷ Ἀβρὰμ εὖ **ἐχρήσαντο** δι' αὐτήν.
And the captains of Pharao saw her and praised her to Pharao and brought her into Pharao's house. And they treated Abram well because of her.
וירא֤ו אתה֙ שׂרי֙ פרעה ויהלל֥ו אתה֖ אל־פרעה ותקח֥ האשׁ֛ה בית פרעֹ֑ה ולאברם֙ היטי֣ב בעבורה׃

Gen. 16:6 εἶπεν δὲ Ἀβρὰμ πρὸς Σάραν Ἰδοὺ ἡ παιδίσκη σου ἐν ταῖς χερσίν σου· **χρῶ** αὐτῇ, ὡς ἄν σοι ἀρεστὸν ᾖ. καὶ ἐκάκωσεν αὐτὴν Σάρα, καὶ ἀπέδρα ἀπὸ προσώπου αὐτῆς.
And Abram said to Sara, 'Look, your slave girl is in your hands; use her as it pleases you'. And Sara treated her badly, and she absconded from her presence.
ויאמר אברם אל־שׂרי הנה שִׁפחתך בידך עשׂי־לה הטוב בעיניך ותענה שׂרי ותברח מפניה׃

VIII. Conclusion

The sexual vocabulary examined here, with one remarkable exception, is ordinary Greek. The words employed are normal euphemisms suitable for most written genres. Most of them, ἐμπαίζω, καθεύδω, κοιμῶμαι, παίζω, συγγίνομαι and χρῶμαι, had already developed their sexual senses in classical Greek, and some of these senses go back to early epic. The case of γινώσκω is especially interesting in that the translators provide important evidence for a meaning that barely surfaces in other sources, but which those sources suggest is best taken as a natural Greek development, probably dating at least from the fourth century BCE. The Pentateuchal usage tends to confirm this development rather than suggesting a new one.

On the other hand, εἰσέρχομαι/εἰσπορεύομαι, my remarkable exception, exhibits semantic extension under the influence of בוא and is thus a Hebraism. This is our one genuine instance of expansion of the range of a Greek vocabulary item among the terms in question. It does not, however, leave an imprint on the language outside the Septuagint and derivative works.

None of this, neither the fact of predominantly normal Greek usage nor the generation of a Hebraism, should cause surprise. The mimetic character of the translation of the Greek Pentateuch produces some striking oddities. Vocabulary is one of two spheres in which they usually manifest themselves (syntax being the other). The translators, however, probably one for each of the five books,[67] all write essentially natural Greek, displaying the sensitivity to nuance of native speakers.[68] This is clearly indicated in their general handling of the verbs of sexual intercourse.

The broader implications of these findings are significant. They fit with a growing body of evidence demonstrating that the usage of the Septuagint should no longer be set aside

[66] So Muraoka *s.v.* χράω II, though Muraoka does cite Hdt. 2.181.2 as if it expressed the same sense.

[67] See Lee (2018) 174–75. The idea is as old as Frankel (1851); *cf.* Wevers (1985) 20, 24–25.

[68] For findings pointing irresistibly to this conclusion *cf.* Lee (2018), especially the summary of his arguments at 259–75.

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by those interested in developing our understanding of post-classical Greek. This is a huge slab of highly relevant data with which classicists and linguists need to engage. It is hard to overstate the potential rewards for those willing to undertake the task.

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