

Metaphors and Similes

A Textual and Grammatical Study of Sirach 24:30–31

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ABSTRACT • The variant translations and non-extant renditions of the book of Jesus, Son of Sirach found in the Septuagint and the Vulgate presents a quagmire of interpretations. This article attempts to provide some clarity to these competing translations through a philological and grammatical analysis of Sirach 24: 30–31. The article concludes that the Vulgate better represents Ben Sira’s intended message than does the Septuagint.

KEYWORDS • Ben Sira, Dorix/Doryx, *dioryx* (διωρυξ), Homeric simile, homoioarchon, Jerome, *nahar*, ποταμός, *trames/tramis*

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG • Übersetzungsvarianten und nicht erhaltenen Wiedergaben im Sirachbuch der Septuaginta und der Vulgata bilden einen Sumpf von Interpretationen. Dieser Artikel versucht, durch eine philologische und grammatikalische Analyse von Sirach 24,30–31 etwas Klarheit in diese konkurrierenden Übersetzungen zu bringen. Der Artikel kommt zu dem Schluss, dass die Vulgata die von Ben Sira intendierte Botschaft besser wiedergibt als die Septuaginta.

SCHLAGWORTE • Dorix/Doryx, *dioryx* (διωρυξ), Hieronymus, homerisches Gleichnis, homoioarchon, Jesus Sirach, *nahar*, ποταμός, *trames/tramis*

In this article I argue that the Old Latin/Vulgate (= OL/Vg) rendition of Sirach 24:30–31 better represents Ben Sira’s intended meaning than does the Septuagint as represented by the Sinaiticus and Vaticanus Codices. The OL/Vg recording of the proper noun *Doryx*,¹ juxtaposed against the LXX text’s common noun διωρυξ, transliterated into Latin as *dioryx*, and the grammatical errors, misunderstood and polysemous interpretations of the noun *trames/tramis*, introduced alternative Latin, and more recently, English translations of the Sirach 24:23–31 similes.²

¹ For the purpose of this article, Dorix and Doryx are interchangeable.

² Alexander A. Di Lella, “Sirach 51:1–12: Poetic Structure and Analysis of Ben Sira’s Psalm,” *CBQ* 48. 3 (1986), 395–407, at p. 407. Ben Sira was well versed in the “techniques ... structures, and conventions of biblical poetry and employed

Verse Vg/LXX 24:35 initiates a significant message of the Sirach Wisdom narrative by employing river similes through a series of anaphoras, starting with the river Phison, proceeding to the river Tygris, then the river Euphrates, the river Jordan, and the river Geon. The simile progression, which I propose Ben Sira adopted from Homer, ends with the epistrophe of Vg Sirach 24:31.

Opposed to the Vg, instead of maintaining the Homeric simile progression, the LXX degrades the final epistrophe from an important river to the diminutive δλωρυξ, frequently translated as a channel, a canal, a stream, or a ditch that irrigates the land.³ Notably, others, such as Benjamin Wright, assert that δλωρυξ is a diminution that Ben Sira employs to personify himself as the vehicle, the canal, through which Wisdom is transported to the Jewish faithful.⁴ As centuries of translators struggled to justify their use of δλωρυξ, and their attempts to re-interpret *trames/tramis*, they induced misapprehensions of Ben Sira's river metaphors and river similes – Sirach 24: 23–31.

As an introductory overview, and to elucidate the transcription and translation problems of LXX Sirach 24:30–31, compared to the Vg Sirach 24:40–43 texts, I present a variety of translations.⁵ Then I commence with the grammatical analyses. Recent renditions clearly indicate that English translations are taken solely from the LXX. With the Codex Sinaiticus as the source witness, the Douay-Rheims 1610 records *Dioryx* as a proper noun, although it is written as the common, which is emended to *brook* with the Douay-Rheims 1855; the NRSV-CE translates δλωρυξ as *canal*. Then translators induced technical idiosyncrasies demonstrating their struggle to make translation sense of the LXX's changes.

Technically, the NRSV-CE's translation of δλωρυξ as *canal*, and υδραγωγος as *water channel*, do not agree with the overall concept of Sir 24:30.⁶ A canal is a human-fabricated-water-passage in which the canal's water does not flow. Rather, it rises and falls – notice εξηλθον – *I flow out*.⁷ The boundaries of the channel are diffuse and difficult to determine. A river channel is bounded by a double containment. The term, *de fluvio*, the ablative inflective of *fluvius*, is understood as the ablative of separation. It is difficult to think of a doubly-contained channel moving away from a

these creatively and imaginatively." He also "freely borrowed ideas and expressions." <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43717231>

³ *Channel*: Douay-Rheims 1855; *canal*: NRSV-CE; *stream*: Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, and PHEME PERKINS (eds.), *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha*. 3rd ed. (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), Apocrypha, n. 21; *a ditch that irrigates the land*: Cardinal Robert Bellarmine S.J., *De Verbo Dei* Lib II, Cap. XI, at p. 96E – "Sic Eccles.24.illud: *Ego quasi fluvius Dorix debet corrigi; Ego quasi fluvii Dioryx, ut est in Graeco ... autem est fossa a flumine deducta ad irrigandam terram.*" https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_CYhfGhPyoSwC/page/n127/mode/2up

⁴ Benjamin Wright, *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 2007), p. 739. <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/30-sirach-nets.pdf>

⁵ Centuries of modifications have made it impossible for direct correlations. Unless otherwise noted, LXX Sirach 24:30–31 and Vg Sirach (Eccclus.) 24:40–43 are presented.

⁶ The NRSV-CE "followed the Greek text (including verse numbers) published by Joseph Ziegler in the Göttingen Septuagint (1965)." <https://www.bible-researcher.com/nrsvpreface.html>

⁷ Unpleasantly, the non-flowing water of canals becomes stagnant which is antithetical to the notion of Wisdom flowing out of Paradise, and, the concept of Ben Sira as Wisdom's conduit.

river. The channel is the swiftest, deepest part of the river – not ideal for watering gardens, all of which is antithetical to Sira’s use of the Homeric similes. Nevertheless, by translating *trames* as *brook* and *dioryx* as *channel*, the Douay-Rheims 1855 eliminates the problem of the Dorix River flowing out of paradise. The table below demonstrates the migration renditions from the LXX, through the Latin texts to the English literal translations, ending with the NRSV-CE and Douay-Rheims 1855 texts.

Codex Sinaiticus	Vulgatae Sixti Quinti	Vulgate
καγω ως <u>διωρυξ</u> απο ποταμου και ως υδραγωγος εξηλθον εις παραδεισον	ego quasi trames aquae immensae de fluvio: ego quasi fluvii <i>dyorix</i> , et sicut aquaeductus exivi de paradiso.	ego quasi <u>tramis</u> aquae immensae de fluvio. ego quasi fluvius Doryx et sicut aquaeductus exivi a paradiso. ⁸
Literal Translation ⁹	Literal Translation	Literal Translation
I flowed out like a brook/canal from a river, and as a channel into a garden.	I like a brook from a river of a mighty water, I like the river <i>dyorix</i> and as an aqueduct, I came out of paradise.	I like a brook from a river of a mighty water, I like the river Doryx and as an aqueduct, I came out of paradise.
NRSV-CE	Douay-Rheims 1855 ¹⁰	Modern English Editions unavailable
διωρυξ as canal; υδραγωγος as water channel As for me, I was like a canal from a river, like a water channel into a garden.	trames as brook; Doryx/dioryx as channel I like a brook of a river of a mighty water, I like a channel of a river, and like an aqueduct came out of paradise.	

⁸ Bonifatius Fischer, Robert Weber, and Roger Gryson (eds.), *Biblia Sacra Iuxta Vulgatam Versionem* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2003), at p.1060.

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, the translations are my own.

¹⁰ *The Holy Bible translated from the Latin Vulgate* (R. Challoner, Trans.) Douay Rheims Bible (New York: Edward Duni-gan & Brother, 1855), pp. 9–10. The authors of the Preface assert that the Douay-Rheims Bible is a faithful edition of St. Jerome’s Vulgate, and, through their diligent examination of other ancient texts assured its accuracy. While the authors strictly caution against correcting the authoritative Vulgate “by any Greek copy”, they respect the authority of the Septuagint. (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433017068051&view=1up&seq=34>)

In order to better evaluate the extent of corruptions, I invite the reader to compare the Codex Amiatinus with the Vulgatae Sixti Quinti and the Biblia Sacra (2003).¹¹ Evident are the minor transmission corruptions, *partus/pratus/patris/patri*, and, *fructus/factus/facta*; possibly misinterpretations of scribal abbreviations, although *partus* may have been confused with the LXX's εγενετο.¹²

Supporting the Vg text over the LXX, Alexander Di Lella, Robert Kraft, Frank Ueberschaer and others, assert that the OL was translated from the pre-archetype Greek text, or a rendition of the original Hebrew in North Africa circa 200 CE.¹³ Thus, I propose that there are sufficient reasons to accept that prior to the writing of the fourth century LXX codices, the Doryx noun was rejected and replaced by the common noun διῶρυξ, leaving us with two competing renditions of Sirach 24: 30–31; the OL Sirach edition extant from North Africa circa 200 CE;¹⁴ and the fourth century Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus. To emphasize, the Vg originated from a non-extant second BCE century pre-archetype Greek text, translated into the OL Sirach edition in North Africa circa 200 CE;¹⁵ then surfaced, relatively untouched, in the late seventh century, as the Codex Amiatinus. However, the evolving diaspora Jewish identity of 2nd/3rd century CE Alexandria warranted hermeneutical adjustments to the pre-archetype Greek Sirach 24 verses as responses to external, and internal, political, cultural and religious forces of not a few events. Ueberschaer concludes that Alexandrian Jewish scholars emended Sirach, somewhat freely, to promote the hermeneutical purposes of their times; the original religious tradition transmitted by Ben Sira was decoupled from his words and re-deployed somewhat willy-nilly. Ueberschaer also argues that sections of Sirach were cut and pasted by Hebrew scholars into varying recensions to satisfy the interests of the day.¹⁶ Seemingly, the Jewish Rabbis of 2nd/3rd CE Alexandria were under duress to provide a hermeneutical response to the flourishing Alexandrian Christian community; visualize the Christocentric message of Isaiah in LXX Sirach 24:30–31, and, St. Paul's message of 1 Cor 12, describing the Triune God, the gifts of the Spirit and, importantly, the individual as *collectively* inherent in the Body of Christ, any one of which may have signalled the hermeneutical need for an individualized message of Sir 24:31. These forces, imposed on the Alexandrian diaspora, degraded the luxury of time and soured the translation techniques needed to render grammatically

¹¹ Codex Amiatinus: images 951 and 952. <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021668243/>; Biblia Sacra Vulgatae editionis Sixti Quinti (1592). https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_3C2L2PRq5JIC/page/n7/mode/2up, 616; Fischer et al., *Biblia Sacra* (2003), at p. 1060.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Alexander A. Di Lella, "Authenticity of the Geniza Fragments of Sirach," *Biblica* 44.2 (1963), 171–200, at pp. 174 and 175, https://www.jstor.org/stable/42637059#metadata_info_tab_contents Robert Kraft, *Gnomon* 37. 8 (1965), 777–781, at pp. 777, 778; Frank Ueberschaer, "Sirach ms C Revisited" in *Sirach and Its Contexts: The Pursuit of Wisdom and Human Flourishing* (eds. Samuel L. Adams, Greg Schmidt Goering, Matthew Goff; Leiden: Brill, 2021), 91–103, at p.92. <https://dokumen.pub/sirach-and-its-contexts-the-pursuit-of-wisdom-and-human-flourishing-9789004447332-9004447334.html>

¹⁴ Robert Kraft, *Gnomon* 37.8 (1965), 777–781 at p.780. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27683795>

¹⁵ Ibid. 780.

¹⁶ Frank Ueberschaer, "Sirach ms C Revisited" 91–103, at p.95. <https://dokumen.pub/sirach-and-its-contexts-the-pursuit-of-wisdom-and-human-flourishing-9789004447332-9004447334.html>

and technically correct renditions. As such, a pristine Ben Sira type-Wisdom-conduit grammatically correct Hebrew nor a LXX rendition of Sirach is extant. Instead, the diverse views, the freely engaged renditions applied to msC, and, the totality of Sirach manuscripts, and, the non-extant verses, induced numerous, difficult to follow translation and transcription texts which left, due to their under-duress responses, textual and grammatical witnesses in the rendered documents as translation and transliteration corruptions.

Even though the LXX introduction of *διωρυξ* as a *canal* was antithetical to the overall structure of Sira's use of his adopted Homeric device, it quite possibly soothed the Alexandrian Jewish community's duress. As soothing as this adaptation may have been, the LXX structure of *διωρυξ* as a canal, reaching forward into Sir 38:1–15, specifically Sir 38:6–8, further voided Ben Sira's use of the Homeric device. Sir 38:6–8 symbolized, and structured, Sira's message to modernize the health needs of Ptolemy Alexandria's Jewish community.¹⁷ It is therefore reasonable to assert that Ben Sira intentionally adopted the Homeric similes to symbolize the healing powers of nature flowing into creation through the rivers of paradise, including a yet-to-be-extant important river, a *nahar* river. Be that as it may, the LXX alternative laid the foundation for centuries of corrupted renditions and lost verses within Sirach 24 that have produced a quagmire of poorly transcribed and translated renditions; translation and grammatical blunders to which I now address.

The identification and naming of important ancient rivers was often a confusing occurrence.¹⁸ Nathalie LaCoste suggests that Ben Sira employed, not "ye'or [יְאוֹר] – the Nile], but *nahal* or *nahar* instead" signifying a prominent river, such as the Euphrates.¹⁹ Living in Hellenist Alexandria, most likely Ben Sira was knowledgeable of the Araxes river legend associated with Alexander the Great (ca. 331 BCE); understood the Araxes River as a prominent river; most likely was aware of Dorian history and geography; and that the Doryx River as part of the Araxes River system.²⁰ *The Etymologies* (ca. 636 CE), a compilation of ancient history and geography, provides a description of the Araxes River arising from the same mountain as the Euphrates, which makes it difficult to

¹⁷ Elaine M. Wainwright, "Gendering Healing Both Human and Divine: The Case of Sirach 38:1–15," in *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and His World* (ed. Paul McKechnie, Philippe Guillaume; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 299–316, at p.307 n. 31; P. McKechnie, "The Career of Joshua Ben Sira," *JTS* 51.1 (2000), 3–26, at pp. 309, 310.

¹⁸ Ernst Friedrich Carl Rosenmueller, *Biblical Geography of Central Asia* (The Biblical Cabinet 11; Edinburgh: Thomas Clark, 1836), 54–55. Rosenmueller asserts that the naming and recording of ancient rivers was prone to errors. The Araxes River, known in pre-Christian times as an important river, changed in *importance and language*, depending on the author; was also known as *Iaxartes* from the Greek Ἰάξαρτης, and as the Phasis/Phison. http://classicchristian-library.com/library/rosenmuller_efc/Rosenmuller-Sacred_Geography-v1.pdf

¹⁹ Nathalie LaCoste, "Waters of the Exodus: Jewish Experiences with Water in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2016), p. 153, n. 72 refers to the verses Sirach 24.27; 39.22; 47.14. LaCoste may have confused verse 24.27 with verse 24.30. https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/76429/1/LaCoste_Nathalie_201611_PhD_thesis.pdf An anonymous author in the online Abarim Publications explains: "The masculine noun נַהַר (*nahar*) means river or stream (Genesis 2:10, Numbers 24:6, Isaiah 48:18). This word is applied to rivers like the Euphrates and the rivers of Eden, but curiously, never to the Jordan, or the Nile." <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Dictionary/n/n-w-r.html>

²⁰ The Dorians, mentioned in the *Odyssey* (Homer, *Odyssey* 19. 177), were one of the branches of the ancient Greeks. Hall suggests that the Dorians were considered the "people of the gift," which could indicate the importance of the Dorians and the Dorix river to Ben Sira; see Jonathan Hall, *Hellenicity: between ethnicity and culture*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2002), pp. 85–89, specifically at p. 88.

imagine that Ben Sira would have substituted a river, already aligned with the Euphrates, with a canal.²¹ It is therefore conceivable that the Araxes or Doryx rivers were a plausible understanding of Jewish Sir 24:30–31 history.

The following arguments concentrate my response to the grammar and technical problems concerning the *Doryx* – *dioryx* conflict and their association with the noun ποταμου, translated by others as *trames/tramis*. St. Jerome lends support to my hypotheses. I propose that the noun ποταμου (Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus) was not translated as *trames* nor *tramis* prior to the OL version, and then into the Vg. Jerome’s familiarity with Sirach argues that it is more likely that the noun *trames/tramis* was already present in his OL copy. Critical to my argument is Jerome’s source for the translation to *trames/tramis*, that is, his now lost copies of the Hebrew and Greek Sirach.²² As such, I hypothesize that the actual Greek word for *trames/tramis*, was not ποταμός but rather μονοπάτιον, already recorded in the Greek text available to Jerome, and confirmed by Jerome’s Hebrew text. This scenario provides a plausible reasoning as to why Jerome let the otherwise corrupted *trames/tramis* translation stand. Then, at a later date, but prior to the rendering of the fourth century Codices, ποταμου was, for hermeneutical purposes, retrojected into the text of Sirach 24:30–31, replacing the original μονοπάτιον term. Nevertheless, if ποταμός was present, it would have been translated in the OL as *fluvius*, or possibly *flumena*, but not *trames/tramis*.²³

Jerome asserts that he compared a Hebrew recension of Sirach with the OL but refrained from correcting it.²⁴ Whether or not Jerome witnessed in the Hebrew text a *nahar*-type river, possibly *Doryx*, it remained in his rendition of the OL text. As is developed later, the importance of a *nahar* or the Doryx River, crafted into the original Sirach 24:30–31 was not a happenstance occurrence. I therefore argue that during the translation process of either the daughter Hebrew, the Mishnaic Hebrew, or the pre-archetype Greek text, or an unavailable LXX text, διωρυξ was retrojected, for hermeneutical purposes, into Sirach 24:30–31, replacing the *nahar* river, possibly Δωρυξ Ποταμός – the Doryx River, into what is now recorded in the Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus.

The following analyses are complex since the textual and grammatical studies of *Doryx/dioryx* and *trames/tramis* are frequently intertwined. However, the following develops my analyzes through which I formulate conclusions. The advent of English as a dominant language, and the

²¹ St. Isidore, *The Etymologies of Isidore of Seville* (eds. and trans. Stephen A. Barney, W. J. Lewis, J. A. Beach, Oliver Berghof; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 281. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/etymologies-of-isidore-of-seville/F2336BA779D4ED95E6D25AAE2CCBAD25>

²² Di Lella, “Authenticity,” 171–200 at p. 174: Citing H. B. Swete, Di Lella asserts that the “Old Latin ... was made from a pre-archetype Greek text.” In other words, the OL was made from a copy of the LXX text extant prior to the fourth century Codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus.

²³ E. Power, “Corrections from the Hebrew in the Theodulfian Mss. of the Vulgate,” *Biblica* 5.3–4 (1924), 233–258, at p. 242. Discussing the translation of the Psalter, Power asserts that the Greek noun ποταμού, is translated as *fluminis* and not *trames*. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42618690>

²⁴ Jerome, Preface to the books of Solomon (after the Septuagint): Porro in eo libro, qui a plerisque Sapientia Salomonis inscribitur, et in Ecclesiastico, quem esse Jesu filii Sirach nullus ignorat, calamo temperavi. <https://epistolae.columbia.edu/letter/291.html>

mechanical printing of the once scribed manuscripts, introduced additional, and questionable grammatical and interpretive adjustments. Doryx, as a proper noun was diminished by Robert Cardinal Bellarmine S.J. (1542–1621) with the 1590 Vulgata Sixtina’s recording of *Doryx* (sic) to the 1592 Vulgatae Sixti Quinti’s *dioryx*. Bellarmine relied solely on the LXX texts, and ordained that the Greek term Διώρυξ/διώρυξ, must be transliterated to *Dioryx/dioryx*; Doryx is now degraded to *dioryx*, a *ditch* that irrigates the land.²⁵ The change from Doryx to dioryx eventually had a profound effect on the translation interpretations of Sirach 24. By allowing ad hoc marginal notes, Bellarmine provided the freedom for some editions to translate the *dioryx* common noun as they wished, and others to remain with the Doryx terms. Bellarmine’s retrojection of Διώρυξ into the OL/Vg’s 24:41–43 verses: *ego quasi trames [ποταμου ρην (nahar)] aquae immensae de fluvio: aquae immensae de fluvio. Ego sapientia effudi flumina: ego quasi trames aquae inmensae de fluvio ego quasi fluvius dorix et sicut aquaeductus exivi a paradiso. et ecce factus est mihi trames (mihi tramis is an alternative_Vg recension) abundans et fluvius meus propinquavit ad mare*, from LXX Sir 24:30–31 καγω ως διωρυξ απο ποταμου και ως υδραγωγος εξηλθον εις παραδεισον; και ιδου ἐγένετό μοι ἡ διώρυξ εἰς ποταμόν (genitive) και ὁ ποταμός (nominative) μου ἐγένετο εἰς θάλασσαν establishes the foundation for the lexical and grammatical corruptions. The following two literal English translations reinforces the differences. From the Vg:

I like a brook from a river of a mighty water, I like the river Doryx and as an aqueduct, I came out of paradise.
And behold there is made an abounding path for me, and a river to the sea.

And the LXX:

I flowed out like a canal from a river, and as a channel into a garden. “Behold, my irrigating stream became a great river, and my river became near a sea.”

Translating *dioryx* as *channel* obfuscates Sira’s symbol, that the Doryx River, or a nahar river, is a medicinal river (Sir 38: 6–8). With the advent of the twentieth century, variant translations of Διώρυξ/*dioryx*, *trames/tramis*, and Διώρυξ were lexically, or otherwise confused with *trames/tramis* which became the norm in biblical and theological writing.²⁶ These mistranslations partially result from a misunderstanding of the definition of *trames/tramis*. St. Isidore of Seville’s *The Etymologies*, define *trames* as *footpath*: “Thus ... you ask whether *trames* (“footpath”) is ...” Continuing with *The Etymologies* text, *tramis*,²⁷ the f. s., dative of *trama*, is defined as the *weft*: “The weft (*trama*) ... (cf. *trames*)”²⁸ Moreover, the modern translation of *trames* as *stream* is incompatible with the medieval practice of footpaths, formed by pedestrians, horses and cattle, walking

²⁵ Cardinal Robert Bellarmine S.J., *De Verbo Dei Lib II, Cap. XI*, at p. 96E. Sic Eccles.24.illud: Ego quasi fluvius Dorix debet corrigi; Ego quasi fluvii Dioryx, ut est in Graeco ... autem est fossa a flumine deducta ad irrigandam terram. https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_CYhfGhPyoSWC/page/n127/mode/2up.

²⁶ Represented by Randall Smith, Ralph McInerney, Joseph Kenny OP, Br. Evagrius Hayden OSB, Katherine Gardner, the DRA (1899), the NRSV–CE (1989). These translate *dioryx* as channel, brook, canal, stream, irrigation ditch.

²⁷ Fischer et al., *Biblia Sacra* (2003), p. 1060 records *tramis* instead of *trames*. The first recording of *tramis* in extant texts is the Codex Amiatinus from ca. 688.

²⁸ St. Isidore, *Etymologies*, p. 390.

alongside a river. As such, *trames* is defined as, and should be employed as *footpath*; that is, footpaths are derived from the river not streams nor otherwise.

As described above, *tramis* is *lexically incorrect*. It is the dative of *trama*, *tramae*, not *trames*. The indirect object of OL/Vg 24:43 is the dative *mihi*, as in the LXX, *μοι*. The direct object of the LXX verse is ποταμόν, correctly inflected in the accusative. The participle *abundans*, the accusative, singular, describing an attribute of the absent *tramitem*, remains as is.

Additional translation problems arise from *trames* being incorrectly derived from ποταμόν, or ποταμός: *ego quasi trames* [ποταμός] *aquae immensae de fluvio; in quo notatur et ordo creationis et modus*.

The retrojected English translation of *trames* [ποταμός] as stream, or brook, is the source of the problem. The Greek noun ποταμός is defined as *fluvius*, that is, river.²⁹ Translating *trames* from the Latin into Greek, yields μονοπάτιον, not ποταμός. Translating μονοπάτιον (𐤎𐤓𐤏, *nathib*) into English yields “path, pathway” etc., the definition found in *The Etymologies*. A search of the Septuagint with μονοπάτιον does not produce any results. A search with ποταμός produces numerous entries all of which are returned as *river*. Thus, the more plausible conclusion signals that ποταμός was corrupted into *trames* instead of *fluvius*, and/or, *flumen* in order to abdicate the important river term *nahar*.

The evidence against this abdication accumulates with ποταμός possibly recorded (e.g., in the pre-archetype Greek text) as μονοπάτιον, and then corrupted to ποταμός; then ποταμου could have been emended, by a homoiograph-type regrouping of ποταμου into μονοπατα, rendering another corruption of the *Doryx* noun into διώρυξ. Notably, Mark Edwards unveils Homer’s hidden intentions behind his similes. Firstly, Edwards concludes that Homer, generally, intends a “general illustrative picture”, indicative of Sira’s Wisdom narrative, Sir 24: 23–31, rather than an individualistic emphasis.³⁰ Secondly, Homer’s similes are crafted to evoke “uniqueness,” enhancing not only the image, but also the memory.³¹ Further, Edwards states that “a smooth line with alternating vowel sounds [such as ποταμοῦ] describes a flowing river ...” both of which are antithetical to the διώρυξ-canal corruption.³² Additionally, the unravelling of the translations of *trames/tramis* are exposed through James Aitken’s study of the Greek rhetorical use of π. The frequency of π in Sirach 34 indicates “a popular rhetorical technique of the Sirach translator, and are not accidental suggest[ing] that the words [commencing with π] have been subtly chosen

²⁹ E. Power, “Corrections from the Hebrew in the Theodulfian Mss. of the Vulgate.” *Biblica* 5.3–4 (1924), 233–258, at p.242: Although Power did not comment on Sirach, he asserted, in his discussion concerning the translation of the Psalter, that the Greek noun ποταμοῦ is translated as *fluminis* and not *trames*.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/42618690>.

³⁰ Homer, “Simile” in *The Iliad: A Commentary: Volume V, Books 17–20* (ed. G.S. Kirk, comm. Mark W. Edwards; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 31.

³¹ Ibid. 34. Ben Sira’s river similes (Sir 24:23–31) are harmonized and integrated into a single image of the rivers, flowing from Paradise, bringing forth the heavenly gifts.

³² Ibid. 58.

by the translator rather than selected as default renderings of the Hebrew."³³ An analysis of the intensity of words starting with π in LXX Sirach 24:30–31, similarly concentrated, leans towards translation corruptions. Concluding, Aitken asserts that the “verb πλανάομαι ... found in Sirach serve as an allusion to Odysseus.”³⁴ Thus, we can favorably conclude that the concentration of Homeric similes in Sirach 24, specifically, and throughout Sirach generally, demonstrates Ben Sira’s adoption of Homer’s most employed literary device, his similes. As support, I propose the following.

In his discussion of Jerome’s employment of “allegorical interpretation” as a device in his methodology of translation, Thomas Scheck notes that it “was ... possible for Jerome to shift from literal to spiritual exegesis.”³⁵ Given Scheck’s argument concerning Jerome translation philosophy, I argue that an additional rationale for Jerome not correcting the Sirach text corresponds to his view that Ben Sira’s coherent employment of similes was already aligned with his own translating philosophy.³⁶ As such, Jerome’s familiarity with the original Sirach 24:30–31 Hebrew and OL texts, and his competence in Greek makes it incredulous that he would let stand a translation error of διῶρυξ /*dioryx* over *Doryx*.³⁷ It is even more implausible that ποταμοῦ should have been translated as *trames/tramis*.

I approach the concluding discourse by analyzing the use of, and the translation of, three nouns (διῶρυξ, ποταμός/ποταμόν, *trames*). The Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus record διῶρυξ, which is transliterated into Latin as *dioryx*. The OL/Vg records *Doryx*. Since the Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus record ποταμο and ποταμου, it is probable that the pre-archetype Greek text records them as well. Then, at a later date both were translated, either directly from a faithful rendition of Ben Sira’s text, or, from the pedigreed pre-archetype Greek text, into a rendition of the OL as *trames/tramis*. Thus, two transmission schemata arise from the pre-archetype Greek text of which many have argued that the OL/Vg is a more faithful witness than the Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus with their rendering of διῶρυξ. Thus, since Jerome was not enamored with his copy of the Greek text, we can take the position it was not the superior pre-archetype Greek text.³⁸ Moreover, we know that he was well acquainted with Sirach 24. Thus, it is doubtful that Jerome found serious

³³ Ibid. 526.

³⁴ Ibid. 532. “The wanderings of Odysseus become the model for true investigation both for ancient philosophers and for historians.” One could quite easily add to Professor Aitken’s words; *and for teachers*.

³⁵ Thomas P. Scheck in Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* (trans. Thomas P. Scheck; The Fathers of the Church 117; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), p. 28.

³⁶ Fischer et al., *Biblia Sacra* (2003), at p. 713 : “... nunc verba, nunc sensus, nunc simul utrumque resonabit. ... Interdum quoque rhythmus ipse dulcis et tinnulus fertur numeris lege metri solutis: quod metrici magis, quam simplex lector intelligunt.”

³⁷ Edmon L. Gallagher “Why Did Jerome Translate Tobit and Judith?,” HTR 108.3 (2015), 356–375 at p. 357, n. 5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43948527>.

³⁸ Jerome, Preface to the translation of Isaiah: “Wherefore I contend that obviously the Septuagint translators did not want at that time to put forth the sacraments of their faith to pagans, lest they give what was holy to dogs, pearls to swine. When you read this version, you will notice what was hidden by them.” Translated by Joan Ferrante, et al. <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/292.html>

corruptions between the Hebrew and his OL text. Louis Hartmann notes that prior to the grandson's translation ca 132 BCE, the original Hebrew Sirach was translated into Greek, a pre-archetype Greek text, and then back again into a more modern Hebrew, a Mishnaic Hebrew.³⁹ The grandson translated his grandfather's text from a suspect or misinterpreted Hebrew recension, which was translated from the superior pre-archetype Greek text, as was the OL.⁴⁰ John Lee is of the same accord; the OL is the most faithful rendition of Sirach.⁴¹ Di Lella, in referencing Swete, has demonstrated that the "Old Latin was made from a pre-archetype Greek text," which has perished, but existed in-between the original Hebrew and the first daughter Hebrew rendition, from which the grandson's Greek translation was written.⁴² We now have a separation of accuracies; the grandson chose a suspect or misinterpreted Hebrew recension for his Greek translation which is opposed to a faithful OL text arising from the original Hebrew text.

The 2nd/3rd CE century under-duress corruptions now require analysis of the noun διώρυξ, which is inflected in the nominative case, and found in verse LXX Sir 24:30: κάγω ὡς διώρυξ ἀπὸ ποταμοῦ (genitive) καὶ ὡς ὑδραγωγὸς ἐξήλθον εἰς παράδεισον. This verse is present in the OL/Vg as: *ego quasi trames aquae immensae de fluvio: ego quasi fluvius dioryx*, with διώρυξ transliterated as *dioryx*. However, Sir 24:31: καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγένετό μοι ἡ διώρυξ εἰς ποταμόν (accusative) καὶ ὁ ποταμός (nominative) μου ἐγένετο εἰς θάλασσαν is translated as: "Behold, my stream became a great river, and my river became near a sea."⁴³ And, *et ecce factus est mihi trames abundans et fluvius meus propinquavit ad mare* as: "And lo, my canal became a river, and my river a sea."⁴⁴ The confusion arises from διώρυξ being translated into Latin as *trames*, not *dioryx*, which is inflected in the nominative case. Since the LXX's ποταμόν is correctly inflected as the accusative singular, one could assert, in this instance, the LXX (Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus) are the Vg's source for *trames/tramis*. Please recall the above discussion concerning the homoioarchon-type corruption which I argue negates the notion of the LXX (Codices Sinaiticus/Vaticanus) primacy.

Assessing *Ego sapientia effudi flumina: ego quasi trames aquae immensae de fluvio [defluo – Codex Amiatinus] ego quasi fluvius dorix et sicut aquaeductus exivi a paradiso, dorix* must be understood as the proper noun since both *fluvius* and *dorix* are inflected in the nominative case, which cannot be correct unless the translator agrees that *dorix* is a proper noun – *the river Dorix*. By comparing

³⁹ Louis F. Hartman, "Sirach in Hebrew and in Greek," *CBQ* 23, 4 (1961), 443–451, at p. 445. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43711062>

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ John A.L. Lee, "The Complutensian Polyglot, the Text of Sirach, and a Lost Greek Word," *Bulletin of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 42 (2009), 95–108, at p. 102. <https://www.academia.edu/3705329/>

⁴² Di Lella, "Authenticity," pp. 174, 190. Referring to Sir 32:20, Di Lella asserts that the "corruption of the Greek tradition must have antedated the Old Latin". He then concludes that "a Hebrew text like that recovered from the Geniza was the *Vorlage* of the grandson." Di Lella does not contradict the notion that the Geniza Hebrew text could be the product of a faithful pre-archetype Greek text, which is based on the original Hebrew text.

⁴³ Sir 24:31 in Codex Sinaiticus. <https://codexsinaiticus.org/en/manuscript.aspx>

⁴⁴ *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha* (eds. Michael D. Coogan, Marc Z. Brettler, Carol A. Newsom, and Pheme Perkins; 3rd ed.; New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2001), Apocrypha section, p. 135.

the LXX Sirach 24:30 with the Vg translation, a final grammatical corruption is made visible: καγω ως διωρυξ απο ποταμου και ως υδραγωγος εξηλθον εις παραδεισον, that is, *ego quasi fluvius dioryx; fluvius dioryx* is often translated as *channel of a river*. Although *dioryx* [διώρυξ] is correctly inflected in the nominative case, the problem arises from *fluvius* similarly inflected. In this instance *dioryx* is not indicated as a proper noun. Thus, *fluvius* must be inflected either in the ablative, *fluvio*, or the genitive, *fluvii*. Quod erat demonstrandum!