

**A MARRIAGE CONCEPT ON GENESIS 2:21-24
(AN ANALYSIS OF LATIN VULGATE)**

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Abstract. *There are many discussions, OT exposition and Hebrew exegesis about marriage based on Genesis 2:21-24. It is interesting, however, to analyze how Latin Vulgate interprets and translates Genesis 2:21-24. Latin Vulgate seems to follow the word order of the Hebrew Bible and employ the literal translation of the Hebrew Bible. Although the translator uses the literal translation, he still has the freedom in his translation to accomplish his specific purposes such as the usage of ergo, cumque, replevit, virago and other words that will be discussed in this article. This research will be interpreted from the theme of unity, both man and woman.*

Keywords: Marriage, Latin Vulgate and Translation Technique.

Introduction

The book of Genesis is the book of origin. The first part of this book is all about the basic entities of the universe and life in broader sense. Genesis chapter one and two,

for instance, depict the origin of the universe and life. Chapter three reveals the origin of evil. Genesis four is the origin of civilization. Chapter ten and eleven show the origins of the nations. The second part of Genesis is the origin of the chosen people (Gen. 12-50).

Genesis 2:21-24, the first part of Genesis, is a story of the creation of a woman and family. In this paper, however, I will attempt to interpret these passages from unity, both man and woman, perspective. This unity theme will be the guideline when analyzing and exegeting these passages in

details. My thesis is as follows: the theme of unity is the basis to exegete the creation of woman and family. I will apply this theme to the literary structure, the foundation for exegesis of these verses and analysis of some key words.

**The Text and Translation of Genesis
2:21-24**

Text¹	Translation
21 <i>Immisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in Adam: cumque obdormisset, tulit unam de costis ejus, et replevit carnem pro ea.</i>	21 Therefore, the Lord God has sent a deep sleep to Adam: and when he fell asleep, he took one from his sides, and he filled up flesh for it.
22 <i>Et ædificavit Dominus Deus</i>	22 And the Lord God built the side, which

¹ The bold texts are the texts that shares the idea of unity. The underlined texts, on the other hand,

are the observation of the terms for woman that the Latin translator uses.

<i>costam, quam tulerat de Adam, in <u>mulierem</u>: et adduxit eam ad Adam.</i>	he had taken from Adam, into a woman; and he led her to Adam.
23 <i>Dixitque Adam: Hoc nunc os ex ossibus meis, et caro de carne mea: hæc vocabitur <u>Virago</u>, quoniam de viro sumpta est.</i>	23 And Adam said: this is now a bone out of my bones, and a flesh from my flesh(es); she will be called <i>Virago</i> , because from man she was taken.
24 <i>Quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum, et matrem, et adhærebit <u>uxori suæ</u>: et erunt duo in carne una.</i>	24 Therefore, man will leave his father, and mother, and he will cling to his wife: and two will be in one flesh.

Literary Structure Analysis of Genesis 2:21-24

The Unity of Man and Woman²

1. The Unity is established by God's Creation of Woman (2:21-22).

A) The Reason of God's Creation of Woman (2:21a).

- Adam's Need: "Therefore (2:21a)."

B) The Activities of God's Creation of Woman (2:21b-22)

i. The Origin of Woman: Adam's Side (2:21b-d).

- Made Adam Sleep: The Lord God has sent a deep sleep to Adam, and when he fell asleep (2:21b).
- Took Adam's Side out: He **took one** from his sides (2:21c).

- Replaced Adam's Side: And he filled up flesh for it (2:21d).
ii. The Appearance of Woman (2:22)
- Built Adam's Side: And the Lord God built the side, (2:22a), which he had **taken** from Adam, into a woman (2:22b).
- Gave Adam's Side to Adam: And He led her to Adam (2:22c).

2. The Unity is established by Adam's Recognition (2:23).

A) The Same Bone: And Adam said: this is now **a bone** out of **my bones** (2:23a).

B) The Same Flesh: And **a flesh** from **my flesh(es)** (2:23b).

C) The Identity of Woman: She will be called Virago (2:23c).

D) The Origin of Woman: Because out of man **she was taken** (2:23d).

3. The Unity is established by a New Identity of Man (2:24).

A) The Separation: Therefore, man will leave his father, and mother (2:24a)

B) The Integration: And he will cling to his wife (2:24b). **And they will be two in one flesh** (2:24c).

An Exegesis of Genesis 2:21-24

I. The Unity is established by God's Creation of Woman (21-22).

A) The Reason of God's Creation of Woman (21a).

Ergo: Both Hebrew and Septuagint do not have particle "therefore", although they do have conjunction "and".³

² See footnote 1.

³ Hebrew uses ו (waw) and Septuagint utilizes καί. Both conjunctions can be translated as then or as well.

⁴ Lewis & Short dictionary categorize this adverb as absolute.

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=ergo&la=la#lexicon>

Latin Vulgate could use connective conjunction like both Hebrew and Septuagint. Vulgate, however, employs adverb “therefore”.⁴ The usage of adverb is probably to make clear the connection, problem-solution relationship, between verse 20 and 21. The end of verse 20 leaves the unresolved-problem for Adam, “but for Adam, there was not found a helper suitable for him.” Verse 21, as a result, is a solution for Adam. Thus, this adverb establishes a stronger connection: the reason of the creation of woman.

B) The Activities of God’s Creation of Woman (21b-22).

21b Immisit ergo Dominus Deus soporem in Adam.

Immisit: the basic meaning is to send. Hebrew uses נפל (*napal*) which means fall and it is in *hiphil* (causative) stem. Then, the Hebrew translation will be, “he caused (Adam) to fall.” Since Latin and Greek do not have causative stem like Hebrew, they simply translate “he caused (Adam) to fall” as “he sent”.⁴

Soporem: the natural meaning is sleep.⁵ In Vulgate, this word is used seven times (Gen. 2:21; 15:12; Jdg. 4:21; Pro. 19:15; Job 4:13, 33:15).⁶ Based on the observation of those

⁴ Notice that Septuagint uses ἐπιβάλλω (*epiballo*) or I cast (throw).

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<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=soporem&la=la#lexicon>

⁶ Genesis 15:12 does not explain what sort of sleep that fell upon Abraham. It is also unclear from Jdg. 4:21. The context of Judges 4:21 is Jael, Heber’s wife killed Jabin when he was asleep. It is not clear from this verse either Jabin was in deep sleep or because Jael came quietly or secretly. It is probably both since both are mentioned in the text. We have no information from Proverbs 19:15, except the pattern of *inmittit soporem* is repeated. In the book of Job, there is no clear information either this is a deep sleep or just ordinary sleep. A clearer information might be pulled out from 1 Sam. 26:12 when David has a chance to kill Saul, but he just took the spear and the jug of water from beside Saul’s head. The

verses,⁷ the Bible does reveals that the sleep from God is to assure that Adam will not see, know or awake.

Cumque: both Hebrew and Septuagint employ connective conjunction only.⁸ Vulgate, nevertheless, uses adverb to generalize the event and time.⁹ The sleeping phrase of Adam,¹⁰ after “the Lord God has sent a deep sleep to Adam”, emphasizes the situation and the condition of Adam: sleeping. Sailhamer argues that God evidently did so to assure the recipient that his own works had no part in his receiving it.¹¹ It is totally a gift of *God’s grace*.

21c Tulit unam de costis ejus.

Costa has a few meanings: a rib, a side or a wall. The Hebrew word for *costa* is צֶלַע. It does have the meaning of a rib or side, but not a wall. The side might be the best meaning here. First, Greek Septuagint translates צֶלַע as πλευρά or a side. Second, although a side has more general and ambiguous sense, this translation is an easier answer to explain Adam’s words, “this is now *a bone* out of my *bones*, and *a flesh* from my *flesh(es)*” when he saw the woman. The bible does not specify which part of side that God took to build a woman; it might be both one of his bones and flesh. On the other hand, it would be harder

Bible emphasizes that no one saw or knew, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because sleep (*sopor*) had fallen on them. Both Genesis 2:21 and 1 Samuel 26:12 mention that the sleep (*sopor*) is from God and this sleep assures that no one will see, know, or awake.

⁷ See footnote 7.

⁸ Compare this pattern to footnote 3.

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<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=cumque&la=la#lexicon>

¹⁰ And when he fell asleep or *cumque obdormisset*.

¹¹ John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis.” In *Genesis-Numbers*. Vol. 2 of *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. 12 vols. Edited by Frank E. Gaebelein and Richard P. Polcyn, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 46.

to explain why Adam says his rib as his bone and flesh. Finally, the side interpretation will match the unity theme as well. As Matthew Henry says, “the woman was made of the side of Adam; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of *his side* to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”¹² Although some scholars interpret *costa* or צֶלַע as rib, they do not deny the importance of side in this interpretation.¹³ As Umberto Cassuto states, “Just as the rib is found at the side of the man and is attached to him, even so the good wife, the rib of her husband, stands at his side to be his helper-counterpart, and her soul is bound up with him.”¹⁴ A side, therefore, carries the theme of unity that woman is created to stand at man’s side to be his helper-counterpart.

21d *Et replevit carnem pro ea.*

Replevit: Vulgate does not translate סָגַר or to close with *occludo* in Latin which also has a meaning of close or shut up. Rather, Vulgate translates as refill or *repleo*. It seems that Vulgate, similar with Septuagint, wants to share the idea of replacing: something, (side) that has been taken out, is replaced by another thing (flesh). This is supported by the phrase “*unam de costis ejus* or one of his ribs (sides)”. Both *unam* (one) and *costis* (ribs or sides) are using feminine; *ea* (it) also uses

feminine and it seems *ea* is utilized to replace *unam* (one). It matches the gender, case and number. The notion of taking out and replacing supports the idea of harmony and intimacy unity. The woman was taken out from man; that is a unity. The woman, however, does not owe anything or harm the man because the Lord God replaced the side of man after he took it.

22a *Et aedificavit Dominus Deus costam, quam tulerat de Adam, in mulierem.*

Aedificavit: To build. Latin Vulgate employs different term from the rests of God’s activity in creations. Vulgate uses the word *creo* or he created the heaven and earth (Gen. 1:1), every living creature in the water and sky (1:21), man: both man and woman (1:27), and the whole creation (2:3, 4); *facio* or he made the expanse (1:7), two great lights (1:16), beast on the earth (1:25), man: both man and woman (1:26); the whole creation (2:2, 3), earth and heaven (2:4); *patro* or he performed (2:2); and the term is *formo* or he formed the Adam (2:7, 8); every beast of the field and every bird of the sky (2:19). For woman, Vulgate utilizes *facio* or he made at first (2:18). In 2:22, however, the term *aedifico* or he built is introduced for the first

¹² Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, Revised ed. 6 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1935), 7. An imbalanced view is mentioned by Edersheim, “Similarly, it was observed [by the Rabbis], that God had not formed woman out of the head, lest she should become proud; nor out of the eye, lest she should lust; nor out of the ear, lest she should be curious; nor out of the mouth, lest she should be talkative; nor out of the heart, lest she should be jealous; nor out of the hand, lest she should be covetous; nor out of the foot, lest she be a busybody; but out of the rib, which was always covered. Modesty was, therefore, a prime quality.” Alfred Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life in the Days of Christ* (Reprint ed. Grand Rapids: Wm.

B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 146. The reason why I consider Edersheim’s opinion is weak because the text does not argue for the quality of woman, but rather speaks of the unity of man and woman. For more discussion, see *Virago* discussion.

¹³ They see rib as more specific and the side is more general, but they see rib and side as unity.

¹⁴ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I: From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 134.

¹⁴ Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part I: From Adam to Noah*. Translated by Israel Abrahams. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1961), 134.

time.¹⁵ Thus, this reality, that this term is introduced for the first time and a distinct term for woman only in creation narrative, makes this usage is unique.

The table below reveals there are similarities between man (and the rest creation) and woman; both are created through the verb *creo* and *facio*. The distinctions, on the other hand, also appear that *formo* excludes woman, but *adeficio* is exclusive to woman only. The differences are good things that God “brings to us” (as part of the whole “package”), that He will use as tools to shape us into the people He wants us to be.¹⁶ Thus, woman is created both in similar ways and dissimilar way to ensure the ideal unity from God. “The Lord God built the side, which *he had taken* from Adam, into a woman.” Although they are distinct, the idea of last clause is repeated here to ensure the unity between man and woman. Also, woman is not only God’s grace (2:21b), but also God’s miracle. God used and built the side and it becomes a living being: from *costa* to *mulier*.

The Summary of God’s Activity in the Whole Creation				
	<i>Creo</i>	<i>Facio</i>	<i>Formo</i>	<i>Aedifico</i>
Object of Creation (Non-Human)	The heaven and earth, every living creature in the water and sky, and the whole creation.	the expanse, two great lights, beast on the earth, the whole creation, earth and heaven	Every beast of the field and every bird of the sky	
(Human)	Man: both man and woman .	Man: both man and woman .	Adam.	Woman.

22b *Et adduxit eam ad Adam.*

After God built the woman, he did not ask Adam to take his woman, but the Lord himself who led her to Adam. *Mulier* is God’s gift to Adam.

Woman	God	Man
Woman’s Status is	God’s Grace (2:21b)	To man
Woman’s Status is	God’s Miracle (2:22a)	To man
Woman’s Status is	God’s Gift (2:22b)	To man

2. The Unity is established by Adam’s Recognition (2:23).

The narrator does not inform when Adam woke up, but rather the narrative skips to Adam’s reaction when he saw the woman and said, “this is now a bone out of my bones, and a flesh from my flesh(es).” *Nunc* is an adverb and it probably has a function to form a

¹⁵ I use the lexical form of those verbs to make them easier to observe, but I translate just as in the Latin Vulgate.

¹⁶ [http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genes is.pdf](http://www.soniclight.com/constable/notes/pdf/genesis.pdf)

climax: but now.¹⁷ After Adam could not find a suitable partner for him among the other creatures (2:19), *nunc* (now) this is the climax of God's provision to Adam's life. He has a woman that God created from him and to help him. *Hoc*, in neuter, probably refers to both *os* (bone) and *caro*. Bennet also describes that this demonstrative pronoun usually refers of two objects.¹⁸ The narrator does not tell us how Adam recognizes the woman. He, however, informs that Adam's first words are his recognition that that woman is from him, both from his bone and flesh. This statement declares his recognition of the unity between him and the woman.

23b *hæc vocabitur Virago, quoniam de viro sumpta est.*

She will be called *Virago*. Adam names the woman. Wenham says that though they are equal in nature, that man names woman (3:20) indicates that she is expected to be subordinate to him, an important presupposition of the ensuing narrative (3:17).¹⁹

Virago: Lewis and Short define this term as a man-like, vigorous, heroic maiden, a female warrior, heroine, virago. Oxford Latin Dictionary describes, "a woman having the qualities of a man: a) a physically strong woman, b) a warlike or heroic woman (especially applied to goddesses)."²⁰ Based on Latin dictionaries, the definition of *Virago* or the woman is related to her characteristics: a man-like or having the qualities on a man. My view, on the other hand, sees that the usage of *Virago* has a function to emphasize her origin and relationship to Adam. There are three reasons to support my view: 1) the literary structure emphasizes the unity

between man and woman, not the quality of the woman; 2) Bible says nothing about a man-like as woman's characteristic; 3) Latin Vulgate seems to follow wordplay of Hebrew Bible to stress out the relationship between man and woman; 4) Latin Vulgate do not follow Greek Septuagint which do not use the wordplay (γυνή or woman – ἀνδρὸς or man), but rather employ a term with an ambiguous meaning to fortify the unity between man and woman (see table below).

	Hebrew	Latin	Greek
Man	(ish)אִישׁ	Viro	ἀνδρὸς
Woman	(issah)אִשָּׁה	Virago	γυνή

5) the next clause strengthens this argument, "because out of man she was taken." The Latin translator emphasizes again the idea of unity through this last clause. Here is the repetitive idea of unity in these passages.

Unity through the Verb of Taking			
Translation	2:21	2:22	2:23
Latin	Tulit	Tulerat	Sumpta est ²¹
English	He took	He had taken	She was taken

3. The Unity is established by a New Identity of Man (2:24).

A) The Separation

24a *Quam ob rem relinquet homo patrem suum, et matrem,*

Quam ob rem construction should be translated as an adverb: therefore, or on that account.²² Because the unity between man and woman, the man shall leave both his

¹⁷

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=nunc&la=la#lexicon>

¹⁸

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/bennett.html#sect246>

¹⁹ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1—15 Word Biblical Commentary series* (Waco: Word Books, 1987), 69.

²⁰ P. G. W. Glare, *Oxford Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 2070.

²¹ Although the Latin uses a different term, but the idea of taken is still carried.

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<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=rem&la=la#Perseus:text:1999.04.0059:entry=res-contents>

father and mother. It will bring separation to the parents-children relationship. B) The Integration.

24b *et adhærebit uxori suæ.*

Adhærebit: To cleave or stick to a thing. Lewis and Short give two categories of *adhaereo*: 1) literal meaning: cleave or stick. Cicero 5.13, “And all my weapons shall be directed at you in such a manner, that no one else shall be wounded through your side; my arrows shall stick in your lungs and your entrails.” This text emphasizes that the arrows will stay in his lungs and Lucretius 6.914 says, “that iron can be by that stone drawn which Greek magnet call. The nuance of cleave is emphasized here when the stone can draw iron. The idea of cleaving is also illustrated in Lucretius 3.557, “thus, mind alone can never be, without the body and the man, . . . , since body cleaves to mind by surest bond. Again, the body’s and the mind’s live power only in union prosper and enjoy: for neither can nature of mind, alone of self . . .” This text does not only speak about cleaving (Luc. 6.914), but also the unity or one set (between body and mind). We can distinguish body and mind, but we cannot separate them because they are one set and in unity. 2) Figurative meaning: to be close or near to a person.²³ Based on this word study, *adhaereo* in Genesis 2:24 should not be understood in proximity sense, but rather in essence notion just as unity in Lucretius 3.557 because the idea of unity that has been spread out throughout in these entire passages. The man will cleave to his wife. Both in Hebrew and Greek Old Testament, there is only one word for woman in these passages (Gen. 2:21-24). Greek is *γυνή* and Hebrew is *אִשָּׁה*. Latin Vulgate, on the other

hand, enriches this narrative with various terms. Here is the summary of the term’ woman:

	2:22	2:23	2:24
Latin’ Term	Mulier: a woman or a female whether married or not.	Virago: a man-like, vigorous, heroic maiden, a female warrior.	Uxor: a wife, spouse or consort.

As the table above, each term does not only have a special meaning in its context, but also the term is getting stronger each verse until the climax: the woman is his wife (Gen. 2:24). In practical ways, “leaving” and “cleaving” probably means both psychological and physical separation and union under normal conditions. A newly married couple is wise to establish relative independence from both sets of parents emotionally, physically, financially, and in other ways. For a marriage to exist, there must also be a commitment to “leave” parents and “cleave” to one’s spouse from then on (Matt. 19:5). The couple also needs to establish commitment to one another.” Cleaving” resembles weaving two threads into one new piece of cloth. The word suggests the ideas of passion and permanence. In marriage, a man’s priorities change. Before, they were primarily to his parents, but now, they are primarily to his wife. Moses was probably correcting those cultures that gave parental bonds priority over marital bonds.²⁴

24c *et erunt duo in carne una.*

There are more examples of literal meanings and figurative meanings in

²³ There are more examples of literal meanings and figurative meanings in

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/morph?l=adh%C3%A6rebit+&la=la#lexicon>

²⁴ Bruce K. Waltke, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 90.

Hebrew Old Testament and Targum Onkelos do not have the word “two” in this clause. Vulgate, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Syriac Peshitta and Septuagint, nevertheless, add the word “two”. This adding seems to maintain the distinction between man and woman, yet the last phrase, in one flesh, emphasizes the unity. This narrative begins with Adam’s side: both his bone and flesh (*caro*). The woman was created from his side. As there were man and woman from the same flesh, the story ends with man and woman (two of them) will be one flesh again in marriage. In practical ways, marriage also involves physical consummation that unites two individuals as “one flesh” in a physical union that symbolized their total unity ²⁵ in their “new family.” ²⁶ This is a strong argument for monogamy. “One flesh” is not the same as marriage (1 Cor. 6:16).

Conclusion

Latin Vulgate follows the word order of Hebrew Old Testament for Genesis 2:21-24. The translator also employs literal translation to the Hebrew Bible. The translator, however, shows his freedom when translating these verses to Latin. The substitution of conjunction to adverb, the usage of various terms for woman, and the addition of the word “two” display his intention to argue for the unity between man and woman. God knows the need of the man. He did not create a woman from other things, yet he created her from man to emphasize the unity between them. From one flesh, it became two people and two people will become one flesh. This unity does not mean that they are same. They are different, but they are united in one flesh.

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²⁵ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 2:334.

²⁶ The NET Bible note on 2:24.