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The Book of Ruth and Song of Songs in the First Hebrew Translation of *The Taming of the Shrew*

Abstract: This article investigates the earliest Hebrew rendition of a Shakespearean comedy, Judah Elkind's מוסר סוררה *musar sorera* 'The Education of the Rebellious Woman' (*The Taming of the Shrew*), which was translated directly from the English source text and published in Berditchev in 1892. Elkind's translation is the only comedy among a small group of pioneering Shakespeare renditions conducted in late nineteenth-century Eastern Europe by adherents of the Jewish Enlightenment movement. It was rooted in a strongly ideological initiative to establish a modern European-style literature in Hebrew and reflecting Jewish cultural values at a time when the language was still primarily a written medium on the cusp of its large-scale revernacularisation in Palestine. The article examines the ways in which Elkind's employment of a Judaising translation technique drawing heavily on romantic imagery from prominent biblical intertexts, particularly the Book of Ruth and the Song of Songs, affects the Petruchio and Katherine plotline in the target text. Elkind's use of carefully selected biblical names for the main characters and his conscious insertion of biblical verses well known in Jewish tradition for their romantic connotations serve to transform Petruchio and Katherine into Peretz and Hoglah, the heroes of a distinctly Jewish love story which offers a unique and intriguing perspective on the translation of Shakespearean comedy.

Keywords: Hebrew, Elkind, The Taming of the Shrew, Haskalah, Jewish Enlightenment, intertextuality, Eastern Europe, Book of Ruth, Song of Songs, Bible, biblical, Shakespeare.

Judah Loeb Elkind's מוסר סוררה *musar sorera* 'The Education of the Rebellious Woman' (Berditchev, 1892) is the first Hebrew version of *The Taming of the Shrew* and indeed the earliest Shakespearean comedy to be translated into that language. Moreover, it is one of the first Shakespeare plays to be rendered into Hebrew at all. Elkind's translation is the product of nearly a century of interest in Shakespeare among Jewish authors dating back to the early decades of the Haskalah, or Jewish Enlightenment, a movement that emerged in Berlin in the

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late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries with the aim of encouraging greater integration of Jews into their European host societies. An important component of the Maskilic (Jewish Enlightenment) project was the move to create a modern European-style literary canon. The Maskilic authors chose Hebrew as the primary vehicle of this new literature due to its prestigious position within Jewish society (Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah* 73-108; Schatz; Eldar), despite the fact that it was primarily an unspoken language at that time: having died out as a mother tongue in approximately 200CE, it regained its spoken status only at the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century with the large-scale revernacularisation project undertaken in Palestine (see Harshav 81-180 and Sáenz-Badillos 267-272). The Maskilim typically regarded the Hebrew Bible as their chief linguistic and literary model, placing greater value on it than on post-biblical forms of Hebrew, which they often believed to be corrupt and impure (Sáenz-Badillos 267). Thus, while post-biblical forms and sources did often appear in their original and translated fiction, the biblical canon was a significant intertext in their work and one which they frequently mined for vocabulary and expressions. In the early decades of the movement Maskilic literature was largely confined to nonfiction, poetry, and some drama, but as the Haskalah spread from Berlin into Galicia and then czarist Russia over the course of the nineteenth century, it spawned a thriving body of original and translated fictional works including novels, novellas, and short stories (see Patterson; Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah*; and Eldar for discussion of this enterprise). The translations were primarily based on German-language sources for most of the Maskilic era (Toury 133), largely because German was typically the only European language with which Maskilic authors and translators were familiar.

It is unsurprising that Shakespeare should feature in the development of this new Hebrew literary canon, given his extremely prominent position in European, and particularly German, culture. His works were viewed as a model for emulation in original Maskilic compositions as well as a natural candidate for rendition into Hebrew (Almagor 721-6). Throughout the beginning and middle of the nineteenth century attempts to translate Shakespeare's plays consisted solely of short fragments of individual speeches (Almagor 736-9), invariably rendered via a German intermediary. The first to translate a complete Shakespeare play into Hebrew was Isaac Edward Salkinson, an Eastern European Jew who had converted to Christianity and trained as a Presbyterian minister in the UK before being posted to Vienna, where he produced translations of *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet,* entitled *Ithiel the Cushite of Venice* (Vienna, 1874) and *Ram and Jael* (Vienna, 1878). Salkinson's translations (which, in contrast to the earlier fragmentary renditions, were based directly on the English original) exhibit a highly domesticating style, in keeping with the broader translation conventions of the Haskalah era (see Kahn,

Schulman for discussion of a similar approach in a Maskilic translation of a historical work). Salkinson's domesticating style manifests itself in a number of common techniques including the deletion or Judaisation of references to Christianity and Classical mythology, the frequent use of *shibbuṣ* (the insertion of biblical fragments into the target text), the addition of Jewish religious and cultural elements, and the Hebraisation of Latin and French linguistic features appearing in the source text. (See Kahn, *First Hebrew Shakespeare Translations* and *Romeo and Juliet* for details of these techniques. See also Golomb, Zoran, and Scolnicov for further discussion of Salkinson's Shakespeare translations.) Salkinson's, and the wider Maskilic tendency in general, towards a domesticating translation style is not an innovation in itself, but rather is a feature of translations into Hebrew and other Jewish languages dating back to the medieval period (see Needler; Singerman; Baumgarten 128-206; Valles; and Armistead and Silverman for examples of this tendency in medieval and early modern Hebrew, Yiddish, and Judeo-Spanish literature).

Salkinson's work was quickly followed by another four Hebrew translations of complete Shakespeare plays produced by other Eastern European Jewish authors, Isak Barb's *Macbeth* (Drohobycz, 1883), which was translated via Friedrich Schiller's German adaptation; Elkind's *Shrew*; Samuel Gordon's *King Lear* (Warsaw, 1899); and Haim Yehiel Bornstein's *Hamlet* (Warsaw, 1900-1). Following the publication of this small group of Eastern European translations, there was a gap of approximately twenty years before further complete Shakespeare plays appeared in Hebrew. In the 1920s and 1930s further Hebrew translations were published in the United States and Palestine, but these are rooted in very different historical, cultural, and linguistic contexts from those produced during the Haskalah in Eastern Europe.

Very little is known regarding the background to Elkind's translation. There is scant information available about Elkind other than that he was a public official from Kiev who died a year after the translation was published (Almagor 750), and that he translated the play directly from the English original (Elkind title page)—though in contrast to Salkinson, there is no evidence that Elkind spent time in an English-speaking country or indeed that he was fluent in English. It is possible that he consulted a German and/or Russian translation of the play in addition to the English original, but this is difficult to establish with any certainty. The play is unique among the early Hebrew Shakespeare translations as it is the only comedy, the other five consisting solely of tragedies. It is unclear why Elkind chose to translate *The Taming of the Shrew* out of all Shakespearean comedies; one possibility is the existence and apparent popularity of the Russian translation Усмирение Своенравной *Usmirenie Svoenravnoj*[1] by the prominent playwright Alexander Ostrovsky, which was published in 1865 in

[1] Literally, 'The taming of the wilful woman'.

Sovremennik, the leading Russian literary journal of the time, as well as in the Russian *Complete Dramatic Works of Shakespeare* edited by Nikolaj Gerbel and Nikolaj Nekrasov (1865-8), with the latter reissued several times during the final decades of the nineteenth century. Another possibility is that the subject matter simply appealed to Elkind more than that of the other comedies, though such a motivation and the reasons for it are difficult to ascertain. Perhaps the relatively straightforward romantic plot seemed to Elkind to lend itself more readily to translation into a Hebrew based heavily on the biblical literary tradition, which had clear models for this type of formula, as opposed to many of the other comedies, which often feature more complex and elaborate plots including themes of mistaken identity, deception, and disguise. It is likewise possible that Elkind felt the cross-dressing theme which is a prominent feature of many Shakespearean comedies to be incompatible with the biblical injunction against this practice appearing in Deut. 22:5 and subsequently incorporated into Jewish law, though this may not have been a factor in his choice.

Elkind's work, like the other Maskilic Hebrew Shakespeare translations, was completed immediately prior to the revernacularisation project in Palestine, and as such was intended primarily for private reading rather than performance. The translation preceded the establishment of the first Hebrew theatres by approximately fifteen years (see Zer-Zion 2010 for discussion of their establishment in St. Petersburg and Białystock in 1909) and there is no evidence that it was ever performed on stage (the first recorded performance of the play in Hebrew was in Israel in 1952 based on a later translation by Raphael Eliaz; see *Shakespeare from Right to Left: The Taming of the Shrew* for a stage history of this play in Hebrew translation). Other details of the translation's reception are unclear: it remained the only published Hebrew version of *The Taming of the Shrew* for nearly sixty years, until Raphael Eliaz' translation came out in Israel in 1954, but the extent of its readership is uncertain, and it does not seem to have been reissued (either in Eastern Europe or Palestine) following its initial publication.

Examination of Elkind's work offers an intriguing and unique perspective on the translation of Shakespearean comedy by illustrating how such a text might be translated into a very different cultural, linguistic, and religious setting. In general, Elkind opts for a relatively close rendering of the original in that he preserves the verse and prose distinctions of the English version, typically maintains the original line divisions, and does not stray very far from the sense of individual lines. In this respect it can be contrasted with many eminent earlier European Shakespeare translations which are much freer, e.g. Pierre-Antoine de La Place and Jean-François Ducis' French adaptations (Schwartz-Gastine 225) and Christoph Martin Wieland's German prose versions (see Williams 51-58, 69).

However, in keeping with the general ethos of Maskilic Hebrew literature as a vehicle of Jewish cultural expression, and of this group of Shakespeare translations in particular, Elkind typically resorts to a highly domesticating approach to his work which results in a target text exhibiting many remarkable differences from the English original (see Kahn, *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* for discussion of this trend in other Maskilic Hebrew Shakespeare translations). Although there are many noteworthy aspects of Elkind's translation style, I shall focus here on the ways in which his Judaising tendencies affect his depiction of the Petruchio and Katherine plotline through employment of intertexts from the biblical Book of Ruth and Song of Songs.

An important element of Maskilic Hebrew writing is a technique called *šibbuṣ*, which consists of the insertion of biblical phrases and verses into original compositions (see Shahevitch; Pelli, *On the Role of Melitzah*; Pelli, *Haskalah and Beyond* 135-160; and Kahn, *Meliṣa* for further details). Elkind employs this technique in a very conscious way by selecting biblical fragments with particular associations in order to highlight the romantic elements of the story and downplay the perhaps less palatable ones, while simultaneously grounding Shakespeare's couple within the tradition of classic Jewish models of love. Among his choices, there is a particularly prominent use of images from the Song of Songs, the Bible's quintessential love poem, and from the Book of Ruth, the story of the Moabite woman who chose to join the Jewish people, married the prominent Israelite Boaz, and became immortalised as the great-grandmother of King David. The repeated use of these references has the effect of situating the Petruchio and Katherine story as a romantic comedy with unmistakably Jewish, and specifically biblical, connotations. (Note that Elkind's translation exhibits certain Talmudic and other postbiblical allusions and influences in addition to biblical ones; however, discussion of such postbiblical elements is beyond the scope of this article.)

The first indication of the romantic focus evoking associations with Ruth and Song of Songs in Elkind's translation appears at the very beginning of the play, in the first Induction; Elkind introduces the scene with a note explaining that it is set in 'Sharon', the northern coastal plain of Israel, as shown below:

חזיון א.
על פתח בית-היין בַּשָּׁרוֹן.

ḥezyon alef.
*al petaḥ bet-hayyayin ba**šaron**.*

Scene 1.
At the entrance to the tavern in **Sharon**. (Elkind 5)

Elkind's choice of Sharon is not simply a coincidental Judaising decision, as the name very clearly evokes the following iconic verse from Song of Songs. Given that Jews would have been very familiar with the Song of Songs, which is recited annually during the spring festival of Passover, and would have known its romantic connotations, this insertion serves to set the romantic tone of the translation by putting the idea of a love story into the reader's mind from its very inception.

אֲנִי֙ חֲבַצֶּ֣לֶת הַשָּׁרֹ֔ון

*ani ḥavaṣṣelet ha**šaron***

I am the rose of **Sharon** (Song of Songs 2:1)

Elkind is consistent in this geographical Judaisation of the Induction: thus, Sly's place of origin, Burton Heath in the original, is simply omitted, as the following comparison of the English and Hebrew versions illustrates:

old Sly's son of **Burton Heath**, by birth a pedlar (Induction 2:17)

בֶּן לְיִדְלָף הַזָּקֵן, שֵׁלָה אָנֹכִי הָרוֹכֵל מִלֵּידָה וּמִבֶּטֶן

ben leyidlof hazzaqen, šela anoḵi haroḵel milleda umibbeṭen

A son of old Yidlof, I am Shela the pedlar from birth and from the womb (Elkind 14)

The reference to Marian Hacket, the ale-wife of Wincot, is transformed in a similar way. The original reads as follows:

Ask Marian Hacket, the fat ale-wife of **Wincot** (Induction 2:19-20)[2]

This can be contrasted with Elkind's version:

שַׁאֲלוּ אֶת הַצְּלָלְפוֹנִית הַפּוּנְדָּקִית הַשְּׁמֵנָה אֲשֶׁר לְבֵית הַיַּיִן בַּ**שָּׁרוֹן**

*ša'alu et haṣṣelelponit happundekit hašemena ašer levet hayyayin ba**šaron***

Ask Hazelelponi, the fat innkeeper of the tavern in **Sharon** (Elkind 14)

[2] All line references to the English source text are from the Arden Third Series edition of *The Taming of the Shrew.*

The romantic and Judaising quality of Elkind's translation is likewise apparent in the names that he selects for his two main characters. In *Musar Sorera* Petruchio is called Peretz. He is the namesake of the biblical Peretz, the son of Tamar and Judah whose story is told in Genesis 38. However, and significantly in this context, he is also mentioned in the Book of Ruth (4:18), where he is listed as an ancestor of the protagonist Boaz, who himself becomes the great-grandfather of King David. This is a crucial point because, as mentioned above, the Book of Ruth is a recurring intertext running through Elkind's translation. Like Song of Songs, Ruth is a very familiar text among Jews: it is recited every year at the festival of Shavuot and is famous for its description of Ruth as the model convert to Judaism, with Ruth and Boaz held up as a romantic ideal. Thus, the choice of the name Peretz instantly evokes one of the most well-known and best-loved romantic stories in the Bible. Elkind was most likely inspired in his choice of names not only by the romantic biblical associations, but also by the fact that Salkinson named the Hebrew equivalent of the character Petruchio appearing in *Romeo and Juliet* Peretz (see Kahn, *First Hebrew Shakespeare Translations*).

Elkind has likewise made a remarkable biblicising translation choice with respect to Katherine's name. In his version she is called Hoglah. The biblical Hoglah is one of the five daughters of Zelophehad, whose story is told in Numbers 27:1-11. Like Peretz, the daughters of Zelophehad have very specific connotations in the Jewish tradition. The Zelophehad narrative is set during the Israelites' forty-year sojourn in the desert following the Exodus from Egypt. According to the recently given divine laws, only male children could inherit the land apportioned among the tribes in anticipation of their settlement of Canaan. Zelophehad had only daughters, and when he died they went to Moses in order to protest the unjustness of the law barring them from inheriting their father's allocated portion of land. Moses took their case to God, who declared the daughters of Zelophehad to be in the right and amended the divine law so that daughters could inherit their fathers' portion of land. The daughters' decision to leave their tents, enter a traditionally male public space, and request an audience with the elite of the Israelite camp in order to demand equal inheritance rights constituted a striking act of independence and confidence. This bravery has been recalled in subsequent Jewish tradition (e.g. in the Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Batra* 119b), where the daughters of Zelophehad are cited as models of wise, forward-thinking women unafraid to fight for their entitlements.

Thus, just as Elkind casts his version of Petruchio in the image of a romantic and devoted biblical protagonist, so through his choice of name he portrays his Katherine as a confident, independent woman who is aware of her rights and is confident enough to stand up for them. Elkind makes these associations completely explicit by naming the Hebrew version of Baptista Zelophehad and by labelling Hoglah and her sister in the character list at the

beginning of the translation as בנות צלפחד *benot ṣelofeḥad* ‘the Daughters of Zelophehad’.

The romantic biblical associations surrounding Peretz are not limited to his name, but rather extend to many elements of his speech. In the English original, in Act 2, Scene 1, just before Petruchio is introduced to Katherine, he makes the following comment about his potential bride:

Now by the world, it is a **lusty wench** (2:1:159)

In the Hebrew version, this line is noticeably different:

זֹאת הַפַּעַם אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל אַבִּירַת־לֵב

zot happa‘am ešet ḥayil *abirat-lev*

This is a **noble-hearted woman of valour** (Elkind 63)

There are two noteworthy aspects to this translation choice. Firstly, the replacement of ‘lusty wench’ with אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל *ešet ḥayil* ‘woman of valour’ is rich in romantic Jewish resonances. The phrase is well known from its appearance in Proverbs 31, a poem praising the virtuous wife, which is traditionally sung every Friday evening in Jewish homes:

אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא וְרָחֹק מִפְּנִינִים מִכְרָהּ׃

ešet ḥayil *mi yimṣa weraḥoq mippeninim miḵrah:*

A **woman of valour** who can find? She is more precious than rubies. (Proverbs 31:10)

Additionally, and very importantly in the present context, it appears in Ruth 3, when Boaz says the following to his bride-to-be:

כִּי יוֹדֵעַ כָּל־שַׁעַר עַמִּי כִּי **אֵשֶׁת חַיִל** אָתְּ

ki yodea‘ kol-ša‘ar ammi ki ***ešet ḥayil*** *at*

‘For everyone in my city knows that you are a **woman of valour**’ (Ruth 3:11)

Thus an אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל *ešet ḥayil* ‘a woman of valour’ is an extremely well-known concept among Jews, bringing to mind thoughts of the ideal woman, who is kind, intelligent, hard-working, and competent, while simultaneously evoking the classic romantic heroine Ruth. Peretz, then, in contrast to Petruchio, situates his admiration for his as yet unknown bride in unmistakably Jewish terms; as

such, Elkind again links the Shakespearean couple to a famous model of biblical love.

Secondly, Peretz introduces the term אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל *ešet ḥayil* 'woman of valour' with a very familiar phrase from the Creation story in Genesis 2:

וַיֹּאמֶר֙ הָאָדָ֔ם **זֹ֛את הַפַּ֖עַם** עֶ֣צֶם מֵֽעֲצָמַ֑י וּבָשָׂ֖ר מִבְּשָׂרִ֑י לְזֹ֣את יִקָּרֵ֔א אִשָּׁ֖ה כִּ֥י מֵאִ֛ישׁ לֻקְחָ֥ה־זֹּֽאת׃

*wayyomer ha'adam **zot happa'am** eṣem me'aṣmi uvasar mibbesari lezot yiqqare iša ki me'iš luqoḥa zot:*

And Adam said, 'This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' (Genesis 2:23)

This has the effect of linking Shakespeare's protagonists to the primordial couple of the biblical Creation story, which has positive romantic connotations in the Jewish tradition (see e.g. Kadari).

Peretz' biblical love imagery continues with his description of Hoglah when he first sets eyes on her, again in Act 2, Scene 1. In the original, Petruchio says,

the prettiest Kate **in Christendom** (2:1:186)

This phrase is an obvious candidate for Judaisation given the overt Christian reference, which would have been regarded as taboo in a Maskilic Hebrew context. Elkind's solution reads as follows:

חָגָא חֲמוּדָה, חָגָא **מֵחַגְוֵי סָלָע**

*ḥaga ḥamuda**, ḥaga meḥaggewe sela***

Charming Haga, Haga **from the clefts of the rock** (Elkind 64)

Again, Peretz expresses his love for Hoglah (Haga is his nickname for her, corresponding to 'Kate' in the original) in explicitly romantic, biblical terms: the phrase 'from the clefts of the rock' derives from the verse of Song of Songs shown below.[3] This recurring use of love imagery from Song of Songs serves to emphasise the romantic theme of the play.

[3] The phrase בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע *behaggewe hassela* 'in the clefts of the rock' also appears in Jeremiah 49:16, but Elkind almost certainly did not have this in mind as the context is not at all romantic and the text in question is much less familiar to Jewish readers than Song of Songs.

יוֹנָתִי **בְּחַגְוֵי הַסֶּלַע**

*yonati **behaggewe hassela***

My dove **in the clefts of the rock** (Song of Songs 2:14)

Another subtle yet important change in this romantic direction is seen in Petruchio's infamous speech in Act 3, Scene 2, immediately following his wedding to Katherine (which will be discussed below). In the original, Petruchio says,

She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household-stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my anything (3:2:231-233)

In Elkind's version, the list is slightly different:

הִיא אֲחֻזָתִי, הִיא טִירָתִי, הִיא בֵּיתִי
כְּלֵי בֵיתִי הִיא לִי, שָׂדִי גָּרְנִי וְיִקְבִי
סוּסִי, שׁוֹרִי אוֹ כָל־כִּי־הוּא־זֶה אֲשֶׁר לִי

hi aḥuzati, hi ṭirati, hi veti,
kele beti hi li, sadi gorni weyiqvi
susi, šori o ḵol-ki-hu-ze ašer li

She is my property, she is my palace, she is my house
She is my household vessels to me, my field, my threshing-floor, and my winepress
My horse, my ox, or anything that I have (Elkind 98)

Although these changes appear to be minor, they have a significant effect on the speech. Firstly, Elkind has chosen to omit two items appearing in the English list with particularly disrespectful overtones, namely 'chattels' and 'ass', and has instead added in the two terms טִירָה *ṭira* 'palace, turret' and יֶקֶב *yeqev* 'winepress', which have much more elevated and complimentary associations. As in the cases discussed above, these alterations serve to heighten the romantic undertones of the speech while downplaying the elements that may be perceived as insulting. (Note that there is no precedent for these changes in Ostrovsky's Russian edition, which Elkind may have consulted; this version contains the terms двор 'courtyard' and осел 'ass' in contrast to the Hebrew 'palace' and 'winepress'.)

Secondly, Elkind's interpretation of these lines is again reinforced by two prominent allusions to the Book of Ruth and Song of Songs. The first of these is גֹּרֶן *goren* 'threshing floor'. The threshing floor is of pivotal importance in Ruth, being the setting of Ruth's marriage proposal to Boaz, and as such has explicitly romantic associations:

וַתֵּרֶד הַ**גֹּרֶן** וַתַּעַשׂ כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוַּתָּה חֲמוֹתָהּ

*wattered hag**goren** wata'as keḵol ašer-ṣivvatta ḥamotah*

So she went down to the **threshing floor** and did everything her mother-in-law had told her to do (Ruth 3:6)

Likewise, the word טִירָה *ṭira* 'palace' appears in Song of Songs 8:9, again in an overtly romantic context:

אִם־חוֹמָה הִיא נִבְנֶה עָלֶיהָ **טִירַת** כָּסֶף

*im-ḥoma hi nivne aleha **ṭirat** kasef*

If she is a wall, we will build upon her a **palace** of silver (Song of Songs 8:9)

There is a third noteworthy aspect to this passage. As discussed in Hodgdon (238), Shakespeare's original lines are themselves partially based on a biblical verse: the phrase 'my ox, my ass' refers to the Tenth Commandment appearing in Exodus 20:17, 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house […] nor his ox, nor his ass'. Given the centrality of the Ten Commandments in the Jewish tradition, Elkind would undoubtedly have recognised this reference, and considering his predilection for *šibbuṣ*, one might have expected him to have returned to the biblical original and inserted that into his translation at the appropriate place. His decision to reject this solution, which is clearly evidenced by his omission of the term חֲמֹר *ḥamor* 'ass', is a further confirmation of his desire to romanticise the source text through the exclusion of derogatory metaphors such as this.

The wedding scene in Act 3 offers Elkind another opportunity to draw a parallel between the Shakespearean couple and the biblical Ruth and Boaz. Compare these two lines from the English and Hebrew versions:

'Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,
If it would please him come and marry her.' (3:2:19-20)

„רְאוּ אֵשֶׁת פֶּרֶץ מְטֹרָף חֲסַר־הַדַּעַת
אִם יוֹאֶל יָבוֹא **פְּרוֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו עָלֶיהָ**“

“re’u ešet pereṣ meṭoraf ḥasar-hadda‘at
*im yo’el yavo **peros kenafaw aleha**”*

‘Look at the wife of mad Peretz,
If he would deign to come **spread his garment over her**’ (Elkind 86)

The phrase פְּרוֹשׂ כְּנָפָיו עָלֶיהָ *peros kenafaw aleha* ‘spread his garment over her’ is a direct reference to Ruth 3:9, in which Ruth asks Boaz to ‘spread his garment over her’, as a formal act of espousal:

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אָתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי רוּת אֲמָתֶךָ **וּפָרַשְׂתָּ כְנָפֶךָ עַל־אֲמָתְךָ**

*wayyomer mi-at wattomer anoḵi rut amatḵa **ufarasta kenafeḵa al-amatḵa***

He said, ‘Who are you?’ She said, ‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Now **spread your garment over your maidservant**.’ (Ruth 3:9)

A final echo of Ruth appears in the play’s closing scene, when Petruchio announces his victory in the wager over the other two husbands. In the original, he says:

We three are married, but you two are **sped**. (5:2:191)

By contrast, Peretz makes the following statement, which at first glance appears to be a peculiar translation error:

שְׁלֹשָׁה אֲנַחְנוּ חֲתָנִים, עַל שְׁנַיִם **הָשְׁלַךְ נַעַל**

*šeloša anaḥnu ḥatanim, al šenayim **hošlaḵ na‘al***

We are three bridegrooms; upon two **a sandal has been thrown** (Elkind 169)

In fact, this translation is a carefully selected intertextual functional equivalent based on the biblical ritual of *ḥaliṣa*. According to the laws related in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, if a married man was to die without heirs, his brother was obligated to marry the widow and raise their firstborn child in the dead man’s name. If the brother was unwilling to perform this duty, there was a prescribed ritual whereby he was required to appear in public with the dead man’s widow, who would take off his sandal, spit in his face, and declare, ‘Thus shall be done

to the man who will not build up his brother's house!', thereby relieving him of the duty but also shaming him in public. One of the best-known biblical references to *ḥaliṣa* appears, unsurprisingly, in the Book of Ruth, as Ruth must perform this ceremony before she can marry Boaz:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבֹעַז קְנֵה־לָךְ וַיִּשְׁלַף **נַעֲלוֹ**׃

*wayyomer haggo'el levo'az kene-leḵa **wayyišlof na'alo**:*

So the redeemer said to Boaz, 'Buy it yourself.' **And he removed his sandal**. (Ruth 4:8)

As in other cases discussed above, this translation thus serves to evoke the marriage of Ruth and Boaz, while simultaneously portraying Lucentio and Hortensio as failed husbands from a quintessentially Jewish perspective.

In conclusion, this article has shown that Elkind's domesticating translation decisions result in a target text that differs markedly from the English source text. In general terms, Elkind's translation is in keeping with more widespread trends in Maskilic Hebrew translation whereby a domesticating approach and frequent recourse to biblical citations was dominant. More specifically, Elkind's style closely follows the precedent of Isaac Salkinson's earlier Hebrew Shakespeare translations, which includes the Hebraisation of characters' names and the omission or adaptation of Christian elements. Significantly, Elkind's translation choices serve not only to create a unique Judaising interpretation of the play steeped in romantic biblical imagery, but also to reimagine the central characters of Petruchio and Katherine along the lines of the biblical Boaz and Ruth as a noble Jewish man with a deep love for his chosen bride and a confident, independent Jewish woman. These changes serve in some measure to neutralise and simplify the complexities of Shakespeare's comedy and remove some of the questions that it poses, by diluting the more problematic undertones of the taming story into a comparatively straightforward romantic love comedy. Similarly, the reinvention of the main characters in the romantic model of Ruth and Boaz, along with the frequent references to the Song of Songs, serve to transform them from the somewhat caricatured objects of ridicule that they are in the original, into much more serious, respectable figures. Thus, while the Hebrew translation maintains the plot of its English source, including the formulaic elements of comedy such as the weddings at the end, the nature of the comedy is altered. As such, Elkind's work offers an unusual and fascinating perspective on the reception of Shakespearean comedy in a very different cultural and religious context.

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