

Leviticus in Tables: On the Structure of Chapters 5[6], 9, 14, 16, 18, and 25

Notes for ensuring coherence in translation. Peter Schmidt. 2020.

The tables below show some of the relationships between the different verses within certain chapters.

1. Lev. 5:20-26 [English 6:1-7] – Twofold Listing of Crimes

Introduction

What is this passage about? Wenham (108) highlights some of the key ideas:

The sin dealt with here is not merely stealing a neighbor's goods, either by blatant robbery, extortion, or by failing to return property entrusted for safe-keeping (vv. 21–22 [6:2–3]), but when challenged about this swearing falsely (v. 22 [3]) that one is not guilty. Oaths by the gods were a common means of settling legal disputes, where other evidence was lacking. Exod. 22:6ff. (Eng. 7ff.) prescribes an oath by the Lord for a number of such cases. By abusing the oath, a person took God's holy name in vain, and trespassed against his holiness. Therefore a reparation offering was required to make amends.

Levine, Hartley, and Milgrom are in agreement with this.¹

Challenge

A difficulty in this passage is that it has a long protasis (*if-/when-sentence*), stretching over vv. 21–22 [2–3], and a long apodosis (*then-sentence*) vv. 23–24 [4–5]. In addition, the apodosis takes up the cases mentioned in the protasis, but does so in a different order. This makes it difficult for the reader to follow, and the translator is challenged to render this text clearly.

The table below is meant to present the different crimes that are mentioned, and to make transparent in which order they are taken up again. (Here, the focus is not on the precise names and definitions for the various crimes.)

In v. 23 [4], the items are not listed in the same order. The item “security” (תְּשׁוּבָה) is not repeated at all.

Talking about “any” of such things (v. 22 [3]) summarizes the cases, and extends the application to similar ones. This happens again in v. 24 [5].

Translation

One has three options:

- (1) Translate literally.
- (2) Leave out the repetition in v. 23–24 [4–5], like GNTD (cf. *Handbook*).
- (3) Translate the full text, but list the elements in v. 23 [4] in the same order as they appear in vv. 21–22 [2–3], in order to make it easier for the reader to match them up (my preference).

The table should help to organize the translated text in such a way that all necessary elements are present, while ensuring a natural flow of thought in the receptor language.

On the whole passage, compare the parallel text Num. 5:5–7. It does not name any specific crimes though.

¹ Wenham (108), Levine (32–33), Hartley (83–84), Milgrom (335ff.).

Table: The double listing of the crimes in Lev 5:21-25 [6:2-6]

MT	Engl.	Hebrew Discourse	Case	Text (based on NASB, adapted)
5:21	6:2	<p>נָפֵשׁ כִּי תִחָטֵּא וּמַעֲלָה מֵעַל בִּיהוָה וְכָחַשׁ בְּעֵמִיתוֹ בְּפִקְדוֹן אֹרֶב־בְּתִשׁוּמַת יָד אֹרֶב בְּגִזְל אִי עָשָׂק אֶת־עֵמִיתוֹ:</p>	<p>A A.1. A.2. A.3. B</p>	<p>When a person sins and acts unfaithfully against the Lord, and lies to his companion regarding a deposit or regarding a security entrusted to him, or regarding a robbery, or if he has extorted from his companion,</p>
22	3	<p>אִי־מֵצָא אֲבֹדָה וְכָחַשׁ בָּהּ וְנִשְׁבַּע עַל־שִׁקְרָה עַל־אֲחַת מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה הָאָדָם לְחֹטֵא בְּהִנָּה:</p>	<p>C Σ</p>	<p>or has found a lost object and lied about it and sworn falsely,* regarding ANY one of the things [/any such thing] a man may do and sin thereby;**</p>
23	4	<p>וְהָיָה כִּי־יִחָטֵּא וְאָשָׂם וְהָשִׁיב אֶת־הַגִּזְלָה אֲשֶׁר גָּזַל אֹרֶב־הַעֲשָׂק אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂק אֹרֶב־הַפִּקְדוֹן אֲשֶׁר הִפְקִיד אֹתוֹ אִי אֶת־הָאֲבֹדָה אֲשֶׁר מֵצָא:</p>	<p>A.3. B A.1. C</p>	<p>then it shall be, when he sins*** and becomes guilty, and [/that] he shall restore what he took by robbery or what he got by extortion, or the deposit which was entrusted to him or the lost object which he found,</p>
24-25	5-6	<p>אוּ מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר־יִשְׁבַּע עָלָיו לְשִׁקְרָה וְשָׁלַם אֹתוֹ בְּרֵאשִׁיתוֹ וְחִמְשִׁיתוֹ יוֹסֵף עָלָיו לְאֲשֶׁר הוּא לוֹ יִתְּנֶנּוּ בַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר־יָבִיא וְאֶת־אֲשָׁמוֹ יָבִיא לַיהוָה ...</p>	<p>Σ</p>	<p>or ANYthing about which he swore falsely; he shall make restitution for it in full and add to it one-fifth more. He shall give it to the one to whom it belongs on the day he presents his guilt offering. ²⁵ Then he shall bring his guilt offering to the Lord, ...</p>

Remarks

* Milgrom: “This clause does not specify a discrete wrong. Rather, it applies to all of the preceding cases: not only has the offender wronged his fellow but he has denied it under oath.”

** Milgrom: “... a false oath demands not only the prescribed reparation for the crimes specified above but reparation for all other sins accompanied by a false oath.”

*** After the apodosis is begun with the words “then it shall be”, it is interrupted again in that the protasis is resumed with “when he sins and becomes guilty”. Then the apodosis is continued with “and he shall restore”. Most versions combine the two beginnings in one way or another, e.g. “when it happens that he sins and he is found guilty, then he must return ...” (NET08).

2. Leviticus 9 – The Animals in Aaron’s First Sacrifices

The table shows how the procedures in Lev 9:7-21 refer to the animals that were mentioned before in verses 2-4.

Table: Leviticus 9 – Aaron’s first sacrifices (Which animal is talked about where?)				
	Animals required	Kind of offering	Benefactor & beneficiary	Offering procedures
Vv.				Vv.
2	calf*	sin offering	Aaron	7-11
	ram	burnt offering		7 / 12-14
3	male goat	sin offering	the people	15
	calf (one year old)	burnt offering		16
	lamb (one year old)			
4	ox (שׂוֹר <i>śôr</i>)	peace offering		18-21
	ram			
	flour & oil	grain offering		17 [!]

* עֵגֶל *‘ēgel* in 9:2 most likely refers to a *male* calf – not necessarily because it is followed by the phrase בֶּן־בָּקָר *ben-bāqār* ‘son-of-herd’, but because Lev 4:3 specifies that the high priest’s regular sin offering is a bull – as opposed to a female goat for the normal worshipper (4:27).

Translation

Lev 9:12: The “burnt offering” is the ram. The last time that was mentioned was ten verses earlier, in v. 2. I do not understand why most versions do not explicate which animal is in view: neither GNTD, NLT, NET, nor even T4T, make it clear, but for tracking the “participants”, that seems the most natural thing to do. CEV does mention the ram, but does not use a noun for burnt offering.

The best is to follow FC97:

Aaron égorgea le béliér du sacrifice complet.

= Aaron slaughtered the ram of the whole offering (PDV2017 is similar)

... or GCLNR00:

Nun schlachtete Aaron den Schafbock für das Brandopfer.

= Now Aaron slaughtered the ram that served as burnt offering.

Lev 9:16: The “burnt offering” is the calf and the lamb. Wenham (NICOT, 1979) confirms (p. 149):

Four sacrifices were brought on behalf of the people (vv. 15–21): a goat as a purification offering to cleanse the altar, a calf and a lamb as a burnt offering, a cereal offering, and an ox and a ram as peace offerings.

(Seven other commentators do not comment.)

Follow the *Handbook* (Péter-Contesse and Ellington, UBS, 1990):

The burnt offering: this is singular in form but may have a collective meaning referring to the “calf” and the “lamb” mentioned in verse 3. It is thus interpreted by FRCL and rendered “the two animals.” But others use a singular form (as “the animal” in TEV) and therefore seem to take it as referring to the “ram” mentioned

in verse 2. But since verse 12 indicates that Aaron's burnt offering has already been killed, it seems more reasonable to take it as referring to the two animals ("a calf and a lamb" of verse 2) designated as the burnt offering for the people. Following TEV too closely at this point may therefore be misleading for other languages.

Again, the English versions fail to be clear. GCLNR00 also does not follow its practice from v. 12. Clearer is FC97 again:

Il présenta les deux bêtes du sacrifice complet ...

= He presented the two animals of the whole offering ...

Most explicit is PDV2017:

Il présente le veau et l'agneau du sacrifice complet ...

= He presented the calf and the lamb of the whole offering ...

I see no reason why one would not follow this example.

3. Leviticus 14 – Purifying after Healing from Skin Disease

The table further below gives an overview over the procedures that had to be followed when someone was healed from a skin disease. It also shows how the regular offerings and the lesser offerings for the poor relate to each other. One issue deserves special attention:

Cleaned and atoned – how often?

One difficulty in Lev 14 is this: the text repeats two statements twice:

(1) The result of the rituals that are carried out on the 1st, the 7th, and the 8th day is always the same:

וְטָהַר w^otāhēr “and he shall be clean” (NRSV), vv. 8 / 9 / 20.

This might sound strange. If he is clean, then why are further procedures required on the subsequent days?

(2) Likewise, the various rituals that are carried out on the 8th day all serve the same purpose:

וְכִפֶּר w^okipper “the priest shall make atonement” (NASB), vv. 18 / 19 / 20.

Is he atoned three times? Or do all these actions together work toward the one-time-atonement? Let us first address problem (1).

Lev 14:8-9 say (NASB):

⁸The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. ⁹It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his fbody in water and be clean.

Milgrom (AB, Leviticus 1–16, 1991) says (on Lev 14:8, p. 842) on the repeated verb w^otāhēr that it

... always implies a diminuation of impurity and that the person continues to contaminate directly but not indirectly.

He continues to explain (on Lev. 14:20, p. 859):

It [tāhēr] occurs at the end of the three rites that mark the stages through which the scale-diseased person passes in this rehabilitation to society and his reconciliation with his God. The initial tāhēr at the end of the first day admits him to the camp (v 8); the second, to his tent (v 9); and the third, to his God (v 20).²

Translation: On v. 9, the *Handbook* says:

He shall be clean: this is the completion of the second stage in the ritual of purification (compare verse 7). One may translate “he shall be completely clean” or “his ritual cleansing shall be finished.”

To talk of a “second stage” makes good sense, but the recommended translations do not, because they address the problem only half-way. See CEV: It says in v. 9 “and you will be completely clean.” But then they have the same again in v. 20. So he becomes “completely clean” twice!

Again, a translation like v. 8 in NASB (“... and be clean. ...”) might sound as if the person is “over and done” with the cleansing. V. 9 might then come as a surprise.

Actually, in v. 8 it is not difficult to adjust the text slightly and express the facts more naturally. One could say:

The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and he will be clean enough to enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days.

Or:

² Cf. the works of Kiuchi and Gane and Sklar.

The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water. After this first cleansing he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days.

Cf. T4T, which connects v. 9 to what precedes by saying “and then he will be allowed to be with other people again.” [without stating “cleanness” explicitly though].

In v. 9, it is more difficult to express the preliminary character of the cleansing, and to keep the suspense going until v. 20. Possibly, one can experiment with the following ideas:

... He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water. This is the second step in his cleansing (procedure).

Or, by indicating the purpose:

... He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water, in order to get cleansed (further / again).

In v. 20, one can then speak of the final stage:

..., and he will be completely clean / fully cleansed.

NET makes separate section headings for the different days:

The Seven Days of Purification – vv. 8-9

The Eighth Day Atonement Rituals – vv. 10-20

This can also help to see that the cleansing is a quite involved process.

The case (2) is less problematic, because the three mentions of *w^okipper* occur closer to each other. Nevertheless, something could be done to clarify that the putting of oil on the head in v. 18, the offering of the sin offering in v. 19, and the offering of the burnt- and grain offerings in v. 20 all contribute to the atoning.

The *Handbook* recommends (on v. 20):

Shall make atonement for him: this is the third and final mention of the ritual of purification (see verses 18 and 19). In view of this, some translators have felt it necessary to add “once again” or “one last time” in this verse.

I doubt that we should think of repeated atoning; I suspect it is more fitting to think of complementary rites, and one atoning.

Translation: Taking v. 18 as an example, we see, among others, the following renderings:

“Thus the priest shall make expiation for him” (NJPS)

“So the priest is to make atonement for him” (NET08)

If we want to take into consideration that this is only the first of three steps, perhaps, as suggested above, stating the purpose is a possible solution. Instead of the above, one could say, for instance:

This is in order to atone him. / This will serve for atoning him.

GNTD translates as follows:

¹⁸ He shall put the rest of the oil that is in the palm of his hand on your head. In this way he shall perform the ritual of purification.

¹⁹ Then the priest shall offer the sin offering and perform the ritual of purification. After that, he shall kill the animal for the burnt offering ²⁰ and offer it with the grain offering on the altar. In this way the priest shall perform the ritual of purification, and you will be ritually clean.

If one uses this phrasing with “perform the ritual of purification” (which might at first sound as if there was only one, but then two more follow), one might as well adapt it as follows:

¹⁸ He shall put the rest of the oil that is in the palm of his hand on your head. In this way he shall perform the first ritual of purification.

¹⁹ Then the priest shall offer the sin offering and perform the next / second ritual of purification. After that, he shall kill the animal for the burnt offering ²⁰ and offer it with the grain offering on the altar. In this way the priest shall perform the third / final ritual of purification, and you will be ritually clean.

CEV, in its unconventional way, has combined vv. 18-20. The problem is that the verb “atone” is dropped completely. (It just renders the verb “be clean” when it says: “After this you will be completely clean.”) That is going too far. But one could consider using “atone” only once, as the result for the three rites in vv. 18-20.

Table: Lev 14:1-32 – Purification after healing from skin disease (What are the offerings and procedures?)						
Time	Verses	Offering	Requisites	Alternative	Procedures	Result
1 st day	4		two clean birds cedar wood scarlet yarn hyssop			cleansed (1. step)
	5				one bird killed	
	6-7				live bird & other things dipped in mix of water & blood, 7x sprinkle on healed person, release live bird	
	8				wash clothes, shave hair, bathe	
7 th day	9				shave hair, wash clothes, bathe	cleansed (2. step)
8 th day	10 / 21-22		2 male lambs 1 ewe lamb 3/10 ephah of fine flour & oil 1 log of oil	1 male lamb 2 doves 1/10 ephah of fine flour & oil 1 log of oil		atoned (1. step) atoned (2. step) atoned (3. step) cleansed (3. step)
	<i>In v. 10, the items are listed by their value; below, they are mentioned in a different order, as the procedures require.</i>					
	12 / 24	guilt offering	1 st male lamb & 1 log of oil	male lamb & 1 log of oil	wave the lamb & the oil	
	13 / 25				slaughter the lamb	
	14-18 / 25-29				put blood on ear / thumb / toe, sprinkle oil before the Lord, put oil on ear / thumb / toe, pour rest on head	
	19-20 / 30-31	sin offering	the ewe lamb	1 st dove	offer	
burnt offering & grain offering		2 nd male lamb & 3/10 ephah of fine flour & oil	2 nd dove & 1/10 ephah of fine flour & oil	offer		

4. Leviticus 16 – Procedures on the Day of Atonement

On this key chapter, Baker (Cornerstone, 2008) expresses the impression of many when he writes (on 16:1, note):

The actual order of presentation in the Hebrew of this chapter is quite choppy, jumping back and forth between the different offerings and animals. ...

The table (see next page) shows where the text speaks of which animal, and what the procedures are. (Actions other than the offerings – like dressing, washing and incense rituals – are not included. Also, the details of the actions and effects (last column) are not discussed here. For that, see also vv. 29ff.)

Translation

The word **וַיִּקְרֵב** *w^ohiqrīb* in vv. 6/11 means “and he will bring near / present” and should better not be translated as “he shall offer” (as in NASB, NRSV), because that could be misunderstood as offering on the altar – but the slaughtering does not happen before v. 11b, and only the fat is actually burned on the altar (v. 25).

The same is true of v. 9 (GNTD: “Aaron shall sacrifice!”). The slaughtering does not happen until v. 15. NJPS is recommendable; it expresses the future:

⁹ Aaron shall bring forward the goat designated by lot for the LORD, which he is to offer as a sin offering; ¹⁰ while the goat designated by lot for Azazel shall be left standing alive before the LORD, to make expiation with it and to send it off to the wilderness for Azazel.

In v. 24, the verb **עָשָׂה** ‘*sh* “to make [a sacrifice]” could be translated with “to offer”, but it might be clearer expressed by saying “to sacrifice”, because this is where the ritual is actually performed (cf. Milgrom’s translation, and his comments on this verb on p. 266).

Table: Leviticus 16 – The Day of Atonement (What is done with which animal, and when?)						
verses	animals & actions					effect
	bull for Aaron's sin offering	ram for Aaron's burnt offering	two male goats for people's sin offering		ram for people's burnt offering	
<i>Preparations (vv. 3-5)</i>						
3	required					
		required				
5			taken from the people			
					taken from the people	
<i>Selection of goats (vv. 6-10)</i>						
6	brought					
7			placed before the Lord			
8			chosen by lot			
			goat for the Lord	goat for Azazel		
9			presented, to be offered			
10				presented, to be sent away		
<i>Main rituals (vv. 11-25)</i>						
11	brought & slaughtered					to atone A. & his family
14	blood sprinkled at Ark					
15			slaughtered			
15-16			blood sprinkled at Ark			sanctuary atoned
18-19	blood on altar horns + sprinkling		blood on altar horns + sprinkling			altar atoned & cleansed
20-22				hands laid on/sent off		iniquities carried away
24		offered			offered	A. & people atoned
25	fat burned		fat burned			
<i>Final rituals (vv. 26-28)</i>						
27	rest burned		rest burned			

5. Distinguishing Different Kinds of Sisters in Lev. 18:9/11

Taking NIV11R as an example, the above two verses read as follows:

⁹ Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

¹¹ Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

In that form, the text raises some questions:

- How do these two verses differ? Why is the “daughter of your father’s wife” mentioned again in v. 11? This case was already covered by the phrase “your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter” in v. 9.

- Is “born to your father” in v. 11 not redundant, after the identification as “daughter of your father’s wife”?

The essentials on these verses are explained succinctly by Sklar (TOTC2, 2013):

V. 9. This law forbids a man from having sexual relations with his blood *sister*, whether his *father's daughter* or his *mothers daughter*, *whether she was born in the same home* (and therefore obviously closely related) or lived *elsewhere* (such as a half-sister, whom the mother bore in the previous marriage but who stayed with her father's household when her parents divorced; Wenham, 1979: 256). ...

V. 11. This law forbids a man from having *sexual relations with his stepsister* (the daughter of his father's wife). The phrase *born to your father* (NIV) is better translated ‘brought up in your father's family’ (ESV), which helps to distinguish this law from that of verse 9.

The table below divides up the different cases that are addressed, and should help to keep them apart.

V. 9 – Halfsister	“daughter of your father” (from a different mother, i.e. second wife [whether or not the first has died] / concubine)		related by consanguinity (through blood ties)
	“daughter of your mother” (from a different father [previous marriage])	“kindred of the home” (= belonging to the same household)	
		“kindred of outside” (= belonging to another household, i.e. girl growing up with her own mother's clan)	related by affinity (through marriage)
V. 11 – Stepsister	“daughter of the wife of your father” (= stepmother's daughter from previous marriage)	“kindred of your father” (= belonging to the same household)	
(Not mentioned:)		kindred of outside (= a stepsister who is brought up in her mother's clan)	unrelated; therefore eligible for marriage[?]

Comments

There are at least two questions to be answered before one can translate verse 9:

(1) What is the meaning of the word מוֹלֶדֶת *môledet* in verses 9 and 11?

(2) Does the phrase מוֹלֶדֶת בַּיִת אוֹ מוֹלֶדֶת חוּץ מוֹלֶדֶת *môledet bayit ô môledet hûš* refer only to the phrase “your mother’s daughter”, or to the combined phrases “your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter”?

Re: Question (1)

The meaning of the word מוֹלֶדֶת *môledet* in verses 9 and 11 is crucial to the understanding of these verses. *môledet* means ‘kindred / relative’, i.e. being a clan member. The ties are usually established through birth, but the present text can probably only be understood fully if we assume an extended meaning, namely ties established through a second marriage, when children move in to the same household.

Obviously, מוֹלֶדֶת *môledet* derives from the root ילד *yld* ‘bear’ etc. But this does not mean that “born” is the only possible meaning. The dictionaries do not make a strong point on this, but seem to allow for the wider meaning ‘kindred / relative / clan’ that is adopted here. TWOT glosses ‘kindred, relatives’, and remarks: “Sometimes wrongly translated as “nativity” or “birth” [without further special comment in the article]. HALOT, while keeping the gloss ‘born’ for 18:9, does say ‘those who are related to the father’ for 18:11. NIDOTTE (# 3528, vol. 2, p. 459) does not discuss our question explicitly, but when talking about “native land” does mention the possibility of translating “kinfolk” in some places.³

Wenham (NICOT, 1979) translates:

⁹ Do not have intercourse with your sister, your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she belongs to local kindred or distant kindred.

¹¹ Do not have intercourse with your step-sister, if she belongs to your father’s kindred; she is your sister.

He explains:

“Your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter.” A half-sister through a man’s mother presupposes an earlier marriage by his mother. In her first marriage the woman had a daughter. When she remarried her daughter could be brought up in her mother’s new home (“local kindred”) or left behind with her parents or brothers (“distant kindred”). No matter where her first daughter was brought up, any son by her second marriage could not marry her daughter. In other words “whether she belongs to local kindred or distant kindred” refers only to “your mother’s daughter.” “Your father’s daughter” would automatically be classed as local kindred, since she would grow up in her father’s home. ...

[on v. 11:] ... *if she belongs to your father’s kindred.* It is this last clause that leads most commentators and translators to suppose that a man’s half-sister as opposed to his step-sister is meant, for they take *kindred (môledet)* to mean “offspring, family, or birth.” But in Genesis *môledet* clearly defines a wider grouping than the nuclear family, including cousins. Perhaps “patrilineage” or “extended family” might be a suitable translation.

Hartley (WBC, 1992) sticks to the translation “born” and translates:

⁹ You shall not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father’s daughter or your mother’s daughter, whether she was born at home or elsewhere. ... ¹¹ You shall not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father’s wife, born of your father; she is your sister

However, he goes with Wenham on v. 9. He comments:

The sister is further identified as born at home or abroad, either to his father or to his mother. The precise meaning of יָחַו, “abroad, elsewhere,” is debated. Hoffmann (2:14), in accord with Jewish tradition (b. Yebam. 23a), takes this phrase to mean a blood sister born out of wedlock [i.e. of parents not legally married. PS], while Neufeld (*Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws*, 197) understands

³ Gesenius¹⁸ offers “Nachkommen, Nachkommenschaft” (= descendants) for v. 11, and for v. 9 “Nachkommenschaft i. Hause od. Nachkommenschaft v. außerhalb” (= descendants in the house or descendants from outside).

that the law is identifying a stepdaughter who is brought up outside this family as a half sister, i.e., she is raised by her mother's household. The dominant interpretation is that this is a daughter born to one's mother in a previous marriage (cf. Porter, *The Extended Family*, 3). If this is the case, some posit that the father is living with this wife's family, while others hold that the father took his new wife's children into his household, and they became a part of his family unit. Bigger (*JBL* 98 [1979] 190), however, doubts that a family would let any daughters leave with their widowed mother because of their economic value. Though such an occurrence might have been rare, it is conceivable given the complexity of some family situations. Ruth, a Moabitess, accompanied Naomi, her mother-in-law, back to Israel (Ruth 1:16–22). Another position, advocated by Wenham (256) and Porter (*Leviticus*, 146), understands “abroad” to include a half sister who is brought up outside the home. This last position is the most favorable, for it interprets each phrase as having legal application. This law thus applies to both full sisters and half sisters. ...

11 There have been many attempts to discover how this law identifies a different relationship from those included by the law in v 9. Porter (*The Extended Family*, 16) observes that this law is straightforward and specific, while that in v 9 is composed to cover a wide range of circumstances. The dominant interpretation of this law is that a son may not have sexual relations with a girl born to his father by a woman other than his mother, including a concubine or a maid (e.g., Rashi, 82b; Keil and Delitzsch, 414–15; Hoffmann, 2:16; Porter, *Leviticus*, 146; Snaith, 86). The critical issue for interpreting this law is a determination of the precise meaning of the phrase מולדת אביו, “one begotten of your father.” Does it identify only a consanguineous relationship (Bigger, *JBL* 98 [1979] 197), or is it used legally to identify a daughter born to one's father's wife in a former marriage and adopted by one's father (Dillmann, 596; Neufeld, *Ancient Hebrew Marriage Laws*, 199; Kornfeld, 119)? The circuitous phrase בת־אשת אביו “daughter of your father's wife,” in contrast to the direct phrase בת אביו, “your father's daughter,” in the law in v 9, suggests that there is a significant difference in the sisters being identified. This phraseology favors the second alternative of the above question. If this interpretation is correct, the phrase מולדת אביו, “one begotten of your father,” plus the declaratory formula אחותך היא, “she is your sister,” means that a daughter born to a father's wife in a previous marriage who accompanies her mother to one's father's house is both legally and socially one's sister and must be treated as a full or a half sister.

Milgrom (*Leviticus 17–22*, AB, 2000) translates:

⁹ The nakedness of your sister, the daughter of your father or the daughter of your mother – whether of the household clan or of an outside clan – do not uncover her nakedness.

¹¹ The nakedness of your father's wife's daughter who is of your father's clan – she is your sister; do not uncover her nakedness.

On v. 9, he judges:

The emphasis of this prohibition is on *môledet hûs*: even though your half sister belongs to another clan, she is your mother's daughter and, therefore, forbidden. The additional advantage of this interpretation is that it alone will satisfactorily render the expression *môledet 'ābikā* in v. 11. Moreover, it will allow v. 11 to follow logically on this verse: a half sister – whether she is part of your household (bayit) or not (hûs) or is a sister by marriage (not consanguineous) who, however, becomes part of your father's household – is forbidden.

He also points out that אֵשֶׁת אָבִיךָ (v. 11) means ‘stepmother’. Consequently, the following phrase מולדת אָבִיךָ cannot mean “born of your father”.

There is thus a fairly strong agreement about *môledet* having a wider or different meaning than “born” in these verses.

Re: Question (2)

In translation, one can keep the ambiguity and so the answer is not as essential as for question (1). Nevertheless, one view makes more sense than the other.

V. 9 could be read in two ways:

Option 1

- (a) ... either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter,
- (b) whether of at home or of outside

Option 2

- (a) ... either your father's daughter
- (b) or your mother's daughter,
 - (α) whether of at home
 - (β) or of outside

In option 1, (a) would include half-sisters, and (b) stepsisters. But stepsisters are talked about in v. 11. It is unlikely that the same case is dealt with twice. Therefore, option 2 is more likely: v. 9 speaks of half-sisters then. The assumption is that if the father is the same, they live together (although this could be questioned), but if the mother is the same, there could be two scenarios: (α) the mother might have brought her earlier children with herself into the new home, or (β) those children are raised with the mother's clan.

Translation

KJV, NASB, NET, NIV, NJPS, NLT, NRSV all speak of "born". They cannot be recommended. The commentaries argue against them. REB ("whether brought up in the family or in another home") is quite nice, and GNT also has "brought up", but neither REB nor GNT carry that over into v. 11. Furthermore, GNT has stepsister in v. 9, and half sister in v. 11, which is the other way round from the view presented here. (Arguably, it is more logical to deal with half sisters first, then with stepsisters. But this is not the main argument.)

Notably, ESV has it right. I see no other English version like it:

⁹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home.

¹¹ You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, brought up in your father's family, since she is your sister.

FC97 is also a good model:

⁹ Vous ne devez pas avoir de relations avec votre demi-sœur, fille de votre père ou de votre mère, même si elle n'a pas été élevée dans le même foyer que vous.

English: You [plur.] must not have [sexual] relations with your half-sister, daughter of your father or of your mother, even if she was not raised in the same home as you.

¹¹ Vous ne devez pas avoir de relations avec la fille d'une femme de votre père; elle est apparentée à votre père, elle est donc votre sœur.

English: You [plur.] must not have [sexual] relations with the daughter of a wife of your father; she is related [a relative by marriage] to your father, thus she is your sister.

FC97 is superior to ESV in regard to clarity and naturalness.

Note, however, that ESV and FC97 differ in that in v. 11, the questionable phrase מוֹלֶדֶת אֲבִיכָא *mōledet ābikā* is taken as part of the *definition of the case* (the protasis as it were) by ESV, but as part of the *consequence* (the apodosis as it were) by FC97. The latter probably misses the point: **it is the very purpose of this verse to make this distinction, namely to state that if the stepsister is raised in that man's father's home, she belongs to the same family and counts as his sister; if she is not raised together with him, she counts as unrelated; she is not part of the same family** (cf. Milgrom's discussion, p. 1542.).

I suggest this as model:

⁹ You must not have intercourse with your half-sister, neither with a daughter of your father, nor with a daughter of your mother – whether she grew up in the same home as you or not.

¹¹ You must not have intercourse with your stepmother's daughter, if she was raised in your father's home; then she counts as your sister.

These two verses, then, are an example for how the commentators' wisdom has hardly been exploited for creating clear translations. Observing the above insights turns a confused and confusing text into logical and straight instructions.

6. Leviticus 25 – The Sabbath- and the Jubilee Year

Literature: Cf. Milgrom (AB) 2148f., Hieke (HTK) 985, Hartley (WBC) 422.

The table below shows how the various topics in this chapter relate to the superordinate themes.

Table: The Division of the Regulations about the Year of Jubilee					
<i>Simplified (closing formulas etc. not itemized).</i>					
Vv.	Section Headings		Remarks		
1-7	The Sabbath Year (“Year of Rest”)⁴				
8-55	The Jubilee Year (“Year of Restoration”)⁵				
	8-22	Realization of the Jubilee Year			
		8-13	Basic Regulations		
		14-19	Leasing of Land	<i>W^okî ... ‘And if ...’</i>	
		20-22	Addressing Concerns	<i>W^okî ... ‘And if ...’</i>	
	23-55	The Laws of Redemption			
		23-34	Redemption of Land		
			23-24	Basic Rule	
			25-28	Redemption of Land	<i>Kî-yāmûk āhîkā ... ‘If your brother becomes poor ...’</i>
			29-31	Sale of Houses	Exception
			32-34	Property of Levites	Exception
		35-38	Loans without interest		<i>W^okî-yāmûk āhîkā ... ‘And if your brother becomes poor ...’</i>
		39-55	Redemption from Slavery		<i>W^okî-yāmûk āhîkā ... ‘And if your brother becomes poor ...’</i>
			39-43	Israelite Slave of an Israelite	
			44-46	Foreign Slave of an Israelite	Clarification
47-55			Israelite Slave of a Foreigner	<i>W^okî ... ‘And if ...’</i>	

⁴ Handbook (UBS) 376.

⁵ *Ibid.*