




Exegesis of the word *parthenos* in Isaiah 7:14 a theological analysis of the Indonesian bible translation

Dr. Ruben Nesimnasi, M.Th

Telda Anita Toar, S.Pd, M.Th(c) 

Bena Sok Hun, M.Ag(c)

Sekolah Tinggi Teologi IKAT Jakarta, Indonesia

rubennesimnasi@sttikat.ac.id

teldaanitatoar@syriac.id

bena.sokhun99@gmail.com

Abstract: This study analyzes the translation of the word *parthenos* in Isaiah 7:14, focusing on the differences between the Septuagint and the Indonesian Bible Society (LAI) translation. In the Septuagint, *parthenos* is translated as "virgin," which has influenced Christian understanding of the Virgin Birth, while the LAI translation uses the phrase "young woman," which is closer to the original Hebrew meaning of *almah*. These translation differences potentially lead to significant theological implications, particularly in the context of church teachings in Indonesia, where religious pluralism plays a significant role.

This research employs a qualitative approach using exegetical and theological methods to understand the theological impact of these translation differences. The data used includes Isaiah 7:14 in its Hebrew, Septuagint, and LAI versions, as well as relevant theological literature. A comparison of translations was conducted to identify differences in meaning, followed by a critical analysis of the theological and cultural implications.

The results show that the more neutral LAI translation can lead congregations to a more historical-contextual interpretation, although it may weaken the connection to the traditional doctrine of the Virgin Birth. This study opens further discussion on the impact of Bible translations on the development of local theology in Indonesia and encourages churches to be more critical in teaching doctrines based on translated texts.

Article history

Submitted 22 September 2024

Revised 28 September 2024

Accepted 19 October 2022

Keywords

Septuagint, Indonesian Bible, LAI, Hebrew Bible, Exegesis, Isaiah, Parthenos, Virgin, Young Woman, Theological Analysis.

© 2024 by author(s).

Licensee: *Journal of the Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies*.

This article is licensed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International



Scan this QRcode with your mobile devices to read online

CONTACT Telda Anita Toar, Abdon Amtiran, teldaanitatoar@syriac.id, rubennesimnasi@sttikat.ac.id

IKAT Theological Seminary, Jakarta, Indonesia

©2024 The Author(s). Published by Institute for Biblical Aramaic Studies

This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/) (CC-BY), which permits non-commercial re-use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited, and is not altered, transformed, or built upon in any way. The terms on which this article has been published allow the posting of the Accepted Manuscript in a repository by the author(s) or with their consent



Introduction

Isaiah 7:14 uses the word *almah* in Hebrew, translated as *parthenos* (virgin) in the Septuagint. Biblical principles can be translated into the context of various languages to maintain the relationship between man and God¹. New historical knowledge and epistemic perspectives mean that the Bible, as the most central classical and religious text, any translation of the Bible will show the perspective and ideology of the translators to the intended audience². For this reason, the Greek word *παρθένης* was translated by the Jewish elders of the time as *virgin*³. The Hebrew word in the Tanakh, *עַלְמָה*, which can be translated as 'young woman' is a neutral term⁴.

The Septuagint influenced theological understanding, especially regarding the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in the Christian tradition. The last part of the article discusses the theological understanding of young women and the translation and understanding in the context of Indonesian Christianity⁵. A more critical theological understanding of translation is needed to better inform the mission of the Church in Indonesia⁶. At least reinterpret the word in a way that that aligns with Christian theological understanding⁷.

The Indonesian bible translation translated *almah* as "a young woman," which is more in line with the original Hebrew meaning. This paper aims to describe the Old Testament words found in Isaiah 7:14 (in the Indonesian translation of the Bible) and their correct meanings⁸. Because the Indonesian translation loses its actual meaning, which can reflect relatively different interpretations in Indonesia.

This difference in translation affects theological perception, especially in understanding the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14⁹. The translation of *almah* as "young woman" in the LAI is different from the translation of *parthenos* in the Septuagint, which means "virgin"¹⁰. This leads to differences in theological understanding, especially in the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, which is central to the Christian tradition¹¹. These translation differences can give rise to various Christian interpretations, affecting how Isaiah's prophecies are understood historically and eschatologically¹². Further research is necessary to understand the theological impact of these translation differences in Indonesia¹³.

It remains unclear whether the LAI's translation of the word *almah* as "young woman" affects the beliefs of Indonesian Christians regarding the doctrine of the Virgin Birth¹⁴. There is a concern that this more neutral translation might reduce the focus on the concept of Jesus' supernatural birth from a virgin¹⁵. In the global Christian tradition, the use of the word "virgin" is considered a direct prophecy of Jesus' birth from Mary¹⁶. However, in Indonesia, the more literal translation of the LAI may make this doctrine less emphasized in preaching and teaching¹⁷.

To what extent these translation differences impact the interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 in sermons or Bible studies in Indonesian churches is unknown¹⁸. Are these differences accepted as part of a broader understanding, or do they confuse congregations?¹⁹ This needs to be investigated because how this verse is translated and interpreted can affect church teachings²⁰. Sermons using the LAI version may give a different emphasis than those supporting the

¹ Chukwuka, Africa, and Chukwuka, "African Contextual Hermeneutics."

² Selvén and Dalarna, "De Svenska Biblarna Som Aldrig Blev Av: Upplysningsideal i Den Gustavianska Tidens Judiska Och Kristna Bibelöversättningar."

³ Piwowar, "The Origin and Significance of Medicaments According to Ben Sira (Sir 38:4-8)."

⁴ Bosman et al., "Domestic Violence in the Old Testament and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Question of Identity."

⁵ Hagen, "Crux Christi Sit Mecum: Devotion to the Apotropaic Cross."

⁶ Cook, "Mental Health in the Kingdom of God."

⁷ Thornton, "A 'Sloppy Wet Kiss'? Intralingual Translation and Meaning-Making in Contemporary Congregational Songs."

⁸ Libriananda, Darmayanti, and Lukman, "Assertive Speech Acts in the Book of Genesis in Indonesian Translation of the Bible."

⁹ Roskovec and Hušek, *Interactions in Interpretation: The Pilgrimage of Meaning through Biblical Texts and Contexts*.

¹⁰ Durosseau, "Yah: A Name of God."

¹¹ Lemke, "The Near and the Distant God: A Study of Jer 23:23-24 in Its Biblical Theological Context."

¹² Machinist, *First Isaiah*.

¹³ Obiorah and Uroko, "The Theological Impact of a Contextual Interpretation of Sacred Scripture in Nigeria."

¹⁴ Ireland, "Re-Examining the Presumption: Coverture and 'Legal Impossibilities' in Early Modern English Criminal Law."

¹⁵ Vaz da Silva, "Metaphor in Comparative Studies, Or, the Folklore of Anthropology: Frazer, Malinowski, Trobriand, and Us."

¹⁶ Orientations et al., *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality*.

¹⁷ Suparta, "Penggunaan Kata Roh Sang Hyang Pengardi Sebagai Terjemahan Kata Roh Kudus Dalam Alkitab Bahasa Bali."

¹⁸ Yaacob, "Predicament of English Translation Dilemma in Academia: An Analysis on Selected Scriptures and Traditional Books."

¹⁹ Oppenshaw et al., "Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation within Congregations."

²⁰ Radner, "Lectionary and the Figural Meaning of the Scriptures."



Virgin Birth doctrine²¹. Understanding the impact of these various interpretations on local Christian theology is crucial²².

There is a gap in research regarding congregational acceptance of the LAI translation compared to other translations that favor the doctrine of the Virgin Birth²³. Research must provide a clear picture of how congregations in Indonesia accept this difference²⁴. Some congregations may not consider this difference significant, while others may see it as affecting their beliefs²⁵. In Indonesia's pluralistic context, understanding how congregations receive these translations is essential to ensure proper theological teaching²⁶.

The choice of LAI translation has yet to be studied about the development of Christian theology in Indonesia in the context of religious pluralism²⁷. Bible translations in local languages are always influenced by the cultural and spiritual context in which the congregation is located²⁸. Indonesia, as a pluralistic country, presents its challenges in this regard²⁹. More neutral word choices may be more acceptable in heterogeneous societies but may lead to shifts in traditional Christian doctrine³⁰. The influence of pluralism on Christian theology in Indonesia is essential to study, especially in seeing how this translation affects the interaction between the church and the wider community³¹.

Another issue that has not been explored is whether this translation changes the Indonesian Christian perception of messianic prophecy in the Old Testament³². A more neutral translation

might obscure the direct connection between Isaiah's prophecies and the coming of the Messiah³³. Perceptions of messianic prophecies that are usually understood as part of the fulfillment of divine promises through the birth of Christ may shift towards a more historical-contextual interpretation³⁴. Therefore, it is essential to explore whether these translation differences change the congregation's perception of this prophecy in church teaching and Bible study³⁵.

Research should be conducted to understand how the translation of the word *almah* as "young woman" affects the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in Indonesia³⁶. An in-depth analysis of biblical texts and congregational responses will help determine whether this translation change has significantly impacted Christian teaching³⁷. The research will also evaluate whether churches in Indonesia need to adjust their teaching regarding essential doctrines such as the Virgin Birth³⁸. Hopefully, this research will guide teaching more theological and relevant to the Indonesian context³⁹.

Filling this gap is essential to determining the impact of the LAI translation on understanding Isaiah 7:14 prophecy in the local theological and cultural context⁴⁰. This research will shed light on how churches in Indonesia receive this prophecy and how it affects Christian

²¹ Spangenberg, "The Doctrines of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth : Divine Revelation or Human Construct ?"

²² Fiddes, "12Unity and Universality, Locality and Diversity According to Baptist Thinking about the Church."

²³ Saliba, "The Virgin-Birth Debate in Anthropological Literature: A Critical Assessment."

²⁴ Utami, "Raising Religious Inherency: The Role of Interreligious Competence in Achieving Religious Education Equality in Multireligious Public Schools in Indonesia."

²⁵ Minkov and Kaasa, "Do Religions Account for Important Cultural Differences? An Analysis across 100 Religious Groups in 27 African Countries."

²⁶ Suardana, Darmawan, and Info, "PILLARS OF PLURALISTIC EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL INDONESIA."

²⁷ Siregar, "PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN INDONESIA : AN ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL REVIEW BASED ON CHRISTIAN FAITH PERSPECTIVES."

²⁸ Bivin, "Mother-Tongue Translations and Contextualization in Latin America."

²⁹ Tegnán and Isra, "Rule of Law and Human Rights Challenges in South East Asia: A Case Study of Legal Pluralism in Indonesia."

³⁰ Vallier et al., "Neutrality and the Religion Analogy."

³¹ Siregar, "PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN INDONESIA : AN ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL REVIEW BASED ON CHRISTIAN FAITH PERSPECTIVES."

³² Mojola et al., "The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible in Africa : Challenges and Prospects for Interpretation and Translation."

³³ Bosman, "The Naked Truth or Prophecy as Folly ? A Performative Interpretation of Isaiah 20."

³⁴ Bowers, "A Review of 'Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery.'"

³⁵ Bramberger, "Exploring (a) Prophecy, Reading (with) Différance. An Experiment in Negotiating Difference and Sameness through Poetry."

³⁶ Spangenberg, "The Doctrines of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth : Divine Revelation or Human Construct ?"

³⁷ Yaacob, "Predicament of English Translation Dilemma in Academia: An Analysis on Selected Scriptures and Traditional Books."

³⁸ Adi, "Religious Entrepreneurship: Christianity and Social Transformation in Contemporary Indonesia."

³⁹ Sudhiarsa, "Doing Theology and Our Theological Education : An Indonesian Perspective."

⁴⁰ Albanese, "Book Review: The Linguistic Milieu of Septuagint Isaiah: Seulgi L. Byun, The Influence of Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic on the Translator of Septuagint Isaiah."



doctrine⁴¹. This understanding will help formulate relevant teaching for churches in Indonesia⁴². It will also provide valuable insights for developing local theologies that are more appropriate to the Indonesian context⁴³.

Further research will help clarify whether translation differences affect the teaching of Christian doctrine in Indonesian churches⁴⁴. In the context of religious pluralism, proper Bible translation is essential to ensure that Christian doctrine is taught accurately⁴⁵. This research will show how churches respond to these translation differences in their teaching⁴⁶. The results of this study are expected to help churches develop teaching methods relevant to the local context without compromising the theological essence of the core doctrines⁴⁷.

It is important to research because the results can provide insights for future Bible translators and improve the quality of theological translations⁴⁸. Bible translation is not just a linguistic matter but also a theological one, where every word can affect the understanding of doctrine⁴⁹. This research is expected to guide future translators in navigating theological challenges, especially in the context of religious pluralism⁵⁰. This research will make a significant contribution to the development of a more theologically accurate Bible, as well as help churches craft more contextualized and theological teachings⁵¹.

The main objective of this study is to guide the Indonesian Christian community in

understanding and appropriately applying the text of Isaiah 7:14 in their teachings⁵². By understanding how the text is translated and interpreted, congregations can have a deeper understanding of the prophecy⁵³. This study also aims to guide church leaders in teaching the doctrine of the Virgin Birth and messianic prophecy⁵⁴. With this research, it is hoped that churches in Indonesia can have a clearer understanding of the theological implications of this translation and ensure Christianity is taught in a relevant and appropriate way in Indonesia⁵⁵.

Methodology

1. **Research Design:** This study uses a qualitative approach with exegetical and theological methods to analyze the translation of the word Parthenos in Isaiah 7:14. This approach aims to understand the theological meaning of the different translations and their implications for Christian doctrine, especially in Indonesia. The interpretive analysis focuses on the original Hebrew text, the Septuagint translation, and the LAI version of the Bible.
2. **Population and Materials:** This study's population consists of the LAI and Septuagint versions of the Bible, which are used as the primary comparison materials in the analysis. In addition, the study utilized academic literature

⁴¹ "IN SEARCH OF A CHRISTIAN PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT TODAY."

⁴² Wowor, "Communal Religious Education in a Multicultural Indonesian Church."

⁴³ Firmanto, "Local Wisdom as Integration of the Cosmic and the Metacosmic Perspectives in Indonesian Philosophy of Education THE CONTEXT : THE JAVANESE OF THE COSMIC AND THE."

⁴⁴ Prospek, "TEOLOGI PRIBUMI DI INDONESIA: Jurnal Amanat Agung Dalam Karya Profesor Emanuel Gerrit Singgih Terkait Keniscayaan 'Berteologi Dalam Konteks Indonesia', I Buah Karya Yang Terlalu Penting Untuk Dilewatkan Bagi Mereka Yang Serius Dengan Kontekstualisasi Teologi Di Indonesia, Beliau Meluruskan Pemahaman Keliru Yang Sering Dianut. Kontekstualisasi Bukan Indigenisasi (Menerima Konteks Begitu Saja), Melainkan (Re) Interpretasi Arti Teks Sebagaimana Terbentuk Dari Konteks Asal Alkitab, Konteks Arti Teks Sebagaimana Dipahami Dari Tradisi Dogmatik (Sistematis-Teologis), Dan Konteks Arti Teks Sebagaimana Dipahami Dalam Konteks Berbeda-Beda Masa Kini. 2 Senapas Dengan Berteologi Dalam Konteks Indonesia, Teologi Pribumi Adalah Sebuah Tantangan Sekaligus Prospek Kemandirian Berteologi Di Indonesia. Mengapa Dipakai Istilah 'Teologi Pribumi'? Kamus Bahasa Mendefinisikan Pribumi Dalam Tiga Arti: Penghuni Asli, Yang Berasal."

⁴⁵ Bhuiyan and M. Zoethout, *Freedom of Religion and Religious Pluralism*.

⁴⁶ Kassapi and Kaneli, "On the Translatability of Liturgical Texts: A Significant Perspective."

⁴⁷ Barnes, "The Theology of Education and Religious Education in Schools."

⁴⁸ Mathew and Hermjakob, "User Study for Improving Tools for Bible Translation."

⁴⁹ Vollandt, "Translations as Linguistic Commentaries? On the Interpretative Dimension of Early Bible Translations into Judaeo-Arabic."

⁵⁰ Stuerzenhofecker, "Pluralising Practical Theology: International and Multi-Traditional Challenges and Opportunities."

⁵¹ Rhodes, "Theology as Social Activity: Theological Action Research and Teaching the Knowledge of Christian Ethics and Practical Ministry."

⁵² Soesilo, "Membumikan Gagasan Mesianik: Upaya Rekontekstualisasi Mesianisme Dalam Bingkai Kehidupan Bersama."

⁵³ Saner, "Theological Interpretation of Scripture."

⁵⁴ Sperber, "The Messianic in the Law: Rule, Exception, Health and the Emancipatory Potential of the Legal Maxim Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto."

⁵⁵ van der Ham, "A Familiar Book in a (Un)Familiar Context: A Comparative Qualitative Study on Bible Usage of Indonesian Congregations in the Netherlands."



relevant to theology and interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, which helped deepen the theological and historical analysis of the translation differences.

3. **Instruments:** The research instruments include the LAI Bible text, the Septuagint, and the original Hebrew text for translation comparison purposes. Academic references, including scholarly articles, books, and theological studies, were also used to support deeper exegetical and theological analysis.
4. **Procedures:** The research procedure began with the collection of relevant biblical texts, specifically Isaiah 7:14 in Hebrew, Septuagint, and LAI. Afterward, a translation comparison was conducted to identify significant differences in using *almah* and *parthenos*. The next step was to critically analyze the theological implications of the translation differences, focusing on their impact on the doctrine of the Virgin Birth in the context of Christian theology in Indonesia. This procedure also included a review of academic literature related to Bible translation, interpretation of Old Testament prophecy, and the impact of translation on church teaching. The results of this comparison and analysis were then used to draw comprehensive conclusions regarding the theological and cultural implications of the LAI translation⁵⁶.

Results

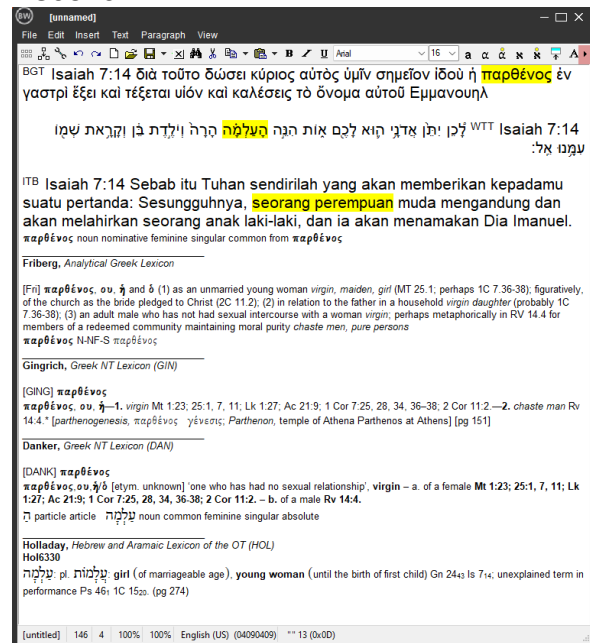


Image taken from BibleWorks 10 software application

An analysis of the word *parthenos* in Isaiah 7:14, by comparing the Septuagint translation and the LAI (Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia) version, reveals an important finding:

1. **Differences in translation:** In the Septuagint, the Hebrew word *almah* (young woman) is translated as *parthenos*, meaning "virgin" in Greek. In the LAI translation, the term "a young woman" is more in line with the original Hebrew meaning than the Greek word *parthenos*.
2. **Theological Implications:** The LAI's choice to use "a young woman" contrasts many Christian traditions that emphasize the doctrine of the Virgin Birth. The use of *parthenos* in the Septuagint has historically influenced Christian interpretation of this verse as a prophecy about the virgin Mary and the birth of Jesus. The more neutral LAI translation potentially reduces the direct theological connection to the Virgin Birth and focuses on a broader interpretation of the prophecy.
3. **Contextual Interpretation:** In the

⁵⁶ Nagodawithana, "Culture in Translation: A Comprehensive Study."



original Hebrew, Isaiah 7:14 was understood as an imminent prophecy during King Ahaz's reign⁵⁷. The word *almah* refers to a young woman of the time, not directly to the future Birth of Jesus. The LAI (Indonesian Bible Society) translation follows this understanding, emphasizing that the prophecy has a specific meaning relevant to the historical and cultural situation in King Ahaz's time, not merely as a prophecy of the distant future.

4. **Impact on Doctrine:** The LAI's decision to translate *almah* as "a young woman" rather than "virgin" shows an attempt to be faithful to the original Hebrew text. However, this choice could lead to different understandings regarding doctrine, especially about views on Christ (Christology) and Mary (Mariology) in Indonesia.
5. **Acceptance and Usage:** The LAI translation has been widely accepted among Indonesian Bible readers in Protestant and Catholic communities. However, some theological discussions have arisen regarding the implications for understanding essential Christological doctrines.

Discussion

It remains unclear whether the LAI's translation of the word *almah* as "young woman" significantly affects the beliefs of Indonesian Christians regarding the doctrine of the Virgin Birth⁵⁸. While more faithful to the original Hebrew text, this translation may give rise to broader interpretations and indirect support for

traditional doctrine⁵⁹. The theological differences that arise from this word choice can potentially create variations in church teaching, especially regarding the doctrine of the Virgin Birth⁶⁰.

There has been no in-depth research on how these translation differences impact the interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 in sermons and Bible studies in Protestant and Catholic churches in Indonesia⁶¹. Even so, these translation differences are very likely to affect the way the verse is used in the context of church teaching and theology⁶². In-depth studies are needed to see how congregations perceive and understand this prophecy in daily church life and how it affects individual beliefs⁶³. Over time, congregations may question the relationship between the LAI translation and traditional doctrine, especially regarding the Virgin Birth, an essential pillar of Christian theology⁶⁴.

There is a gap in understanding how congregations receive the LAI translation compared to other translations that support the doctrine of the Virgin Birth⁶⁵. Congregations referring to the LAI translation may accept a more neutral interpretation, whereas congregations using translations that support the "virgin" concept may be closer to the historical Christian tradition⁶⁶. Further research will provide insight into these differences in reception among different denominations in Indonesia⁶⁷. This disparity demonstrates the importance of understanding congregations' acceptance of various Bible versions and how this affects their views on theological doctrines⁶⁸.

More broadly, the impact of these translations on the development of Christian theology in Indonesia in the context of religious pluralism still needs to be studied⁶⁹. Indonesia's growing religious pluralism may affect how Christian congregations interpret and integrate certain doctrines, including how they understand

⁵⁷ Yakim and Church, "The Sign of Ahaz: A Theological Reading."

⁵⁸ Saliba, "The Virgin-Birth Debate in Anthropological Literature: A Critical Assessment."

⁵⁹ Levinson, "Strategies for the Reinterpretation of Normative Texts within the Hebrew Bible."

⁶⁰ Clark, "The Virgin Birth: A Theological Reappraisal."

⁶¹ Olufemi, "Research in Business & Social Science Divergences and the Sermonic Replications in Interpreters' Oral Interpretation and Communication among Pentecostal Churches."

⁶² Yaacob, "Predicament of English Translation Dilemma in Academia: An Analysis on Selected Scriptures and Traditional Books."

⁶³ Testament, "Embracing a Vision of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21 : 1 – 22 : 5) to Impact on Life and Society."

⁶⁴ van der Ham, "A Familiar Book in a (Un)Familiar Context: A Comparative Qualitative Study on Bible Usage of Indonesian Congregations in the Netherlands."

⁶⁵ Saliba, "The Virgin-Birth Debate in Anthropological Literature: A Critical Assessment."

⁶⁶ Kowalská, "Language as a Means of Transfer of Cultural Values."

⁶⁷ van der Ham, "A Familiar Book in a (Un)Familiar Context: A Comparative Qualitative Study on Bible Usage of Indonesian Congregations in the Netherlands."

⁶⁸ Holdsworth, "Theological Diversity in Rural Churches."

⁶⁹ Asadu and Asogwa, "Religious Pluralism and Its Implications for Church Development."



the prophecy in Isaiah 7:14⁷⁰. Indonesia's religious diversity may trigger adaptations of theology that differ from traditional interpretations in countries with a Christian majority⁷¹. Studies of congregational reception in countries with high religious pluralism are particularly relevant to understanding how Bible translations impact theological teaching and interfaith interaction⁷².

On a more general level, it has not been thoroughly explored whether these translation differences affect Indonesian Christians' perception of messianic prophecies in the Old Testament⁷³. Translation differences may affect how congregations understand prophecies related to the coming of the Messiah, and this potential change in perception is essential to study further⁷⁴. If the LAI translation focuses more on the historical context, the perception of messianic prophecies might shift from a more robust traditional view⁷⁵. This shift could result in a change of teaching in the church, ultimately affecting the congregation's understanding of the doctrines of eschatology and messianism in the Christian tradition.

Conclusion

A theological analysis of the word Parthenos in Isaiah 7:14 shows that the translation differences between the Septuagint and LAI affect the understanding of the virgin birth prophecy. The translation of parthenos as "virgin" in the Septuagint reinforces the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, while the LAI translation as "young woman" is closer to the original Hebrew meaning of *almah*, but also leads to a more neutral and historical interpretation. The theological implications of this difference are significant for churches in Indonesia, especially in the context of teaching and understanding messianic prophecy.

This study reveals that the LAI translation, which reflects a historical-contextual interpretation, may weaken the connection with the traditional doctrine of the Virgin Birth, an essential element in Christian theology. As a result, churches in Indonesia face the challenge of balancing fidelity to the original text with preserving core doctrines of the Christian faith. The study thus encourages a more critical approach to Bible translation in preaching and Bible study.

Furthermore, this study highlights the influence of Bible translation on the development of local theology amid Indonesia's religious pluralism. More neutral translations, like those of the LAI, may better suit Indonesia's diverse social and cultural context, but they also risk diminishing essential doctrines. Therefore, further research is needed to assess how translation choices impact theology in Indonesia and the importance of translations that respect both linguistic accuracy and local theological relevance.

In conclusion, this study guides Indonesian churches toward a more contextualized understanding of Isaiah 7:14 and encourages Bible translators to consider the theological impact of each word choice.

⁷⁰ Asadu and Asogwa.

⁷¹ Rukiyanto, "Inculturation in the Catholic Church in Indonesia."

⁷² Pierson and Bankston, "English for Bible and Theology: Understanding and Communicating Theology Across Cultural and Linguistic Barriers."

⁷³ Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Old Testament."

⁷⁴ Shepherd, "When He Comes, Will He Build It? Temple, Messiah and Targum Jonathan."

⁷⁵ Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Old Testament."



References

- Adi, Suwanto. "Religious Entrepreneurship: Christianity and Social Transformation in Contemporary Indonesia." *Exchange* 46, no. 4 (2017): 328–49. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/1572543X-12341455>.
- Albanese, Matt. "Book Review: The Linguistic Milieu of Septuagint Isaiah: Seulgi L. Byun, The Influence of Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic on the Translator of Septuagint Isaiah." *The Expository Times* 129, no. 1 (October 1, 2017): 47–48. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524617710361>.
- Asadu, George C, and Nicholas Asogwa. "Religious Pluralism and Its Implications for Church Development," 2020, 1–9.
- Barnes, L Philip. "The Theology of Education and Religious Education in Schools." *Theology* 125, no. 6 (November 1, 2022): 429–36. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X221133790>.
- Bhuiyan, Md. Jahid Hossain, and Carla M. Zoethout. *Freedom of Religion and Religious Pluralism*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill | Nijhoff, 2023. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004504967>.
- Bivin, William E. "Mother-Tongue Translations and Contextualization in Latin America." *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* 34, no. 2 (April 1, 2010): 72–76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/239693931003400203>.
- Bosman, Hendrik L. "The Naked Truth or Prophecy as Folly? A Performative Interpretation of Isaiah 20," 2022, 1–7.
- Bosman, Tiana, Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa, and Tiana Bosman. "Domestic Violence in the Old Testament and during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Question of Identity," no. July 2019 (2021): 1–7.
- Bowers, C A. "A Review of 'Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery.'" *Educational Studies* 45, no. 6 (November 30, 2009): 597–600. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131940903315942>.
- Bramberger, Andrea. "Exploring (a) Prophecy, Reading (with) Différance. An Experiment in Negotiating Difference and Sameness through Poetry." *Journal of Poetry Therapy* 35, no. 1 (January 2, 2022): 42–54. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08893675.2021.1951906>.
- Chukwuka, Ebele C, South Africa, and Ebele C Chukwuka. "African Contextual Hermeneutics," 2021, 1–9.
- Clark, Alan C. "The Virgin Birth: A Theological Reappraisal." *Theological Studies* 34, no. 4 (December 1, 1973): 576–93. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056397303400402>.
- Cook, Christopher C.H. "Mental Health in the Kingdom of God." *Theology* 123, no. 3 (2020): 163–71. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0040571X20910700>.
- Daniels, Brandy. "Grace Beyond Nature? Beyond Embodiment as Essentialism: A Christological Critique." *Feminist Theology* 24, no. 3 (April 5, 2016): 245–59. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0966735015627972>.
- Durousseau, Clifford Hubert. "Yah: A Name of God." *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 42, no. 1 (2014).
- East, Brad. "The Hermeneutics of Theological Interpretation: Holy Scripture, Biblical Scholarship and Historical Criticism." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 19, no. 1 (January 1, 2017): 30–52. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/ijst.12186>.
- Era, Common, and Old Greek. "The Septuagint as a Holy Text – The First 'Bible' of the Early Church," 2020, 1–9.
- Fiddes, Paul S. "12Unity and Universality, Locality and Diversity According to Baptist Thinking about the Church." Edited by Paul D Murray, Gregory A Ryan, and Paul Lakeland. *Receptive Ecumenism as Transformative Ecclesial Learning: Walking the Way to a Church Re-Formed*. Oxford University Press, June 23, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192845108.003.0002>.
- Firmanto, Antonius Denny. "Local Wisdom as Integration of the Cosmic and the Metacosmic Perspectives in Indonesian Philosophy of Education THE CONTEXT: THE JAVANESE OF THE COSMIC AND THE" 128, no. 1 (2017): 176–78.
- Goldstein, Miriam. "Early Judeo-Arabic Birth Narratives in the Polemical Story 'Life of Jesus' (Toledot Yeshu)." *Harvard Theological Review* 113, no. 3 (2020): 354–77. <https://doi.org/DOI: 10.1017/S0017816020000140>.
- Gomola, Aleksander. "Aspects of Gender Neutral Language in Selected English and Polish Translations of the New Testament," *Open Theology*, 2, no. 1 (2016). <https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/opth-2016-0049>.
- Hagen, Kaja Merete Haug. "Crux Christi Sit Mecum: Devotion to the Apotropaic Cross." *Religions* 10, no. 11 (2019): 0–32. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10110603>.
- Ham, Kirsten van der. "A Familiar Book in a (Un)Familiar Context: A Comparative Qualitative Study on Bible Usage of Indonesian Congregations in the Netherlands." *Journal of World Christianity* 12, no. 2 (2022): 228–50. <https://doi.org/10.5325/jworldchri.12.2.0228>.
- Historia, Naturalis, On Stones, Naturalis Historia, and On Stones. "The Septuagint Translation as the Key to the Etymology and Identification of Precious Stones in the Bible," 2020, 1–17.



- Holdsworth, John. "Theological Diversity in Rural Churches." *Rural Theology* 19, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 11–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14704994.2020.1818392>.
- "IN SEARCH OF A CHRISTIAN PUBLIC THEOLOGY IN THE INDONESIAN CONTEXT TODAY," n.d., 103–24.
- Ireland, E. "Re-Examining the Presumption: Coverture and 'Legal Impossibilities' in Early Modern English Criminal Law." *Journal of Legal History* 43, no. 2 (2022): 187–209. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01440365.2022.2092945>.
- Kassapi, Eleni, and Olga Kaneli. "On the Translatability of Liturgical Texts: A Significal Perspective," *Semiotica*, 2013, no. 196 (2013): 381–90. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/sem-2013-0066>.
- Kowalská, Eva. "Language as a Means of Transfer of Cultural Values." In *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, edited by Peter Burke and R Po-chia Hsia, 52–64. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1017/CBO9780511497193.004>.
- Kristanto, David, Daniel Runtuwene, Mozes Lawalata, and Herman Poroe. "Natural Theology and Its Relevance to Religious Pluralism in Indonesia" 7868 (2021): 1–9.
- Kunka, Sławomir J. "Is a Theological Synthesis Still Possible? The Paradigm of Objective Mariology." *Religions*, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14070831>.
- Laksana, Albertus Bagus. "Being Theological in a Comparative Manner in Today's Indonesia." *International Journal of Asian Christianity* 3, no. 2 (2020): 197–210. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/25424246-00302007>.
- Lemke, Werner E. "The Near and the Distant God: A Study of Jer 23:23-24 in Its Biblical Theological Context." *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100, no. 4 (1981). <https://doi.org/10.2307/3266118>.
- Levinson, Bernard M. "Strategies for the Reinterpretation of Normative Texts within the Hebrew Bible," *International Journal of Legal Discourse*, 3, no. 1 (2018): 1–31. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/ijld-2018-2001>.
- Libriananda, Renata Margareth, Nani Darmayanti, and Fahmy Lukman. "Assertive Speech Acts in the Book of Genesis in Indonesian Translation of the Bible." *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa* 9 (2023): 211–17.
- Machinist, P. *First Isaiah*. Fortress Press, 2015. <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=2-s2.0-85037063353&partnerID=40&md5=4279896705f35c737db66a3f30e83bbb>.
- Mathew, Joel, and Ulf Hermjakob. "User Study for Improving Tools for Bible Translation," n.d.
- Maurais, Jean. "Die Theologie Der Septuaginta / The Theology of the Septuagint." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 32, no. 1 (2022): 96–98. <https://doi.org/10.5325/bullbibrese.32.1.0096>.
- Meer, Michaël N van der. "Visions From Memphis And Leontopolis. The Phenomenon Of The Vision Reports In The Greek Isaiah In The Light Of Contemporary Accounts From Hellenistic Egypt," 281–316. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004186576.i-468.89>.
- Miller-naudé, Cynthia. "Lexicography and the Translation of ' Cedars of Lebanon ' in the Septuagint," 2018, 1–13.
- Minkov, Michael, and Anneli Kaasa. "Do Religions Account for Important Cultural Differences? An Analysis across 100 Religious Groups in 27 African Countries." *Cross Cultural & Strategic Management* 29, no. 4 (January 1, 2022): 938–62. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCSM-09-2021-0163>.
- Mojola, Aloo O, Testament Studies, South Africa, United Bible Societies, and Aloo Mojola. "The Old Testament or Hebrew Bible in Africa : Challenges and Prospects for Interpretation and Translation," 1991, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v35i3.1307>.
- Nagodawithana, K A. "Culture in Translation : A Comprehensive Study" 5, no. 4 (2020).
- Obiorah, M J, and F C Uroko. "The Theological Impact of a Contextual Interpretation of Sacred Scripture in Nigeria." *Neotestamentica* 54, no. 1 (2020): 129–44. <https://doi.org/10.1353/NEO.2020.0009>.
- Olufemi, Rufus. "Research in Business & Social Science Divergences and the Sermonic Replications in Interpreters ' Oral Interpretation and Communication among Pentecostal Churches" 12, no. 2 (2023): 301–9.
- Oppenshaw, Derek L, Malan Nel, Liebie Louw, South Africa, and Derek Oppenshaw. "Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation within Congregations," 2015, 37–42.
- Orientations, Sexual, Sexual Autonomy, Regulating Sexual Relationships, Pathologizing Sex, Contested Desires, and Commercialized Sex. *The Routledge Handbook of Philosophy of Sex and Sexuality*, n.d.
- Panjaitan, Firman. "Tantangan Berteologi Dan Bergereja Masa Kini." *RERUM: Journal of Biblical Practice* 1, no. 2 SE-Articles (March 15, 2022): 117–30. <https://doi.org/10.55076/rerum.v1i2.3>.
- Pierson, Cheri, and Will Bankston. "English for Bible and Theology: Understanding and Communicating Theology Across Cultural and



- Linguistic Barriers.” *Teaching Theology & Religion* 16, no. 1 (January 1, 2013): 33–49. <https://doi.org/10.1111/teth.12003>.
- Piowar, Andrzej J. “The Origin and Significance of Medicaments According to Ben Sira (Sir 38:4-8)” 1 (2021): 25–62. <https://doi.org/10.31743/biban.3743>.
- Prospek, Tantangan. “TEOLOGI PRIBUMI DI INDONESIA : Jurnal Amanat Agung Dalam Karya Profesor Emanuel Gerrit Singgih Terkait Keniscayaan ‘ Berteologi Dalam Konteks Indonesia ,’ Arti : Penghuni Asli , Yang Berasal,” no. September 2021 (n.d.).
- Punt, Jeremy, South Africa, Jeremy Punt, South Africa, and Creative Commons. “(Con) Figuring Gender in Bible Translation : Cultural , Translational and Gender Critical Intersections,” no. Werner 2012 (2013): 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v70i1.2051>.
- Radner, Ephraim. “Lectionary and the Figural Meaning of the Scriptures.” *Liturgy* 29, no. 4 (October 1, 2014): 56–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0458063X.2014.922333>.
- Renkema, Jan, and Carel Van Wijk. “Converting the Words of God An Experimental Evaluation of Stylistic Choices in the New Dutch Bible Translation *,” 1998.
- Rhodes, Daniel P. “Theology as Social Activity: Theological Action Research and Teaching the Knowledge of Christian Ethics and Practical Ministry.” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 73, no. 4 (2020): 340–57. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0036930620000654>.
- Rose, Wolter. “Messianic Expectations in the Old Testament” 35, no. 2 (n.d.): 275–88.
- Rösel, Martin. “The Reading and Translation of the Divine Name in the Masoretic Tradition and the Greek Pentateuch.” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 31, no. 4 (June 1, 2007): 411–28. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089207080558>.
- Roskovec, Jan, and Vít Hušek. *Interactions in Interpretation: The Pilgrimage of Meaning through Biblical Texts and Contexts*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004439825>.
- Rukiyanto, Agus. “Inculturation in the Catholic Church in Indonesia” 01, no. 01 (2019): 49–80. <https://doi.org/10.24071/jaot.2019.010103>.
- Saliba, John A. “The Virgin-Birth Debate in Anthropological Literature: A Critical Assessment.” *Theological Studies* 36, no. 3 (September 1, 1975): 428–54. <https://doi.org/10.1177/004056397503600302>.
- Saner, Andrea D. “Theological Interpretation of Scripture.” In *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine*, edited by Michael Allen, 194–211. Cambridge Companions to Religion. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108885959.015>.
- Selvén, Sebastian, and Högskolan Dalarna. “De Svenska Biblarna Som Aldrig Blev Av : Upplysningsideal i Den Gustavianska Tidens Judiska Och Kristna Bibelöversättningar” 19 (2022): 50–71.
- Shepherd, David. “When He Comes, Will He Build It? Temple, Messiah and Targum Jonathan.” *Aramaic Studies* 12, no. 1 (2014): 89–107. <https://doi.org/10.1163/17455227-01201005>.
- Siregar, Christian. “PLURALISM AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE IN INDONESIA : AN ETHICAL-THEOLOGICAL REVIEW BASED ON CHRISTIAN FAITH PERSPECTIVES,” n.d., 349–58.
- Soesilo, Yushak. “Membumikan Gagasan Mesianik : Upaya Rekontekstualisasi Mesianisme Dalam Bingkai Kehidupan Bersama” 1, no. 1 (2021): 8–13.
- Spangenberg, I J J. “The Doctrines of Original Sin and the Virgin Birth : Divine Revelation or Human Construct ?” 30, no. 2000 (2009): 221–42.
- Sperber, Elliot. “The Messianic in the Law: Rule, Exception, Health and the Emancipatory Potential of the Legal Maxim *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto*.” *University of Bologna Law Review* 1, no. 2 (2016): 185–218. <https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2531-6133/6361>.
- Steenbrink, Karel. “Five Catholic Theologians of Indonesia in Search for an International or Local Identity.” *Exchange* 29, no. 1 (2000): 2–22. <https://doi.org/10.1163/157254300X00021>.
- Stuerzenhofecker, Katja. “Pluralising Practical Theology: International and Multi-Traditional Challenges and Opportunities.” *Practical Theology* 13, no. 1–2 (March 3, 2020): 123–36. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1756073X.2020.1728960>.
- Suardana, I Made, I Putu Ayub Darmawan, and Article Info. “PILLARS OF PLURALISTIC EDUCATION FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTICULTURAL INDONESIA” 2, no. 1 (2022): 64–74.
- Sudhiarsa, Raymundus I Made. “Doing Theology and Our Theological Education : An Indonesian Perspective” 1, no. 2 (2020): 105–15. <https://doi.org/10.47043/ijipth.v1i2.10>.
- Suparta, I Ketut Gede. “Penggunaan Kata Roh Sang Hyang Pengardi Sebagai Terjemahan Kata Roh Kudus Dalam Alkitab Bahasa Bali” 2, no. 2 (2021): 27–34.



- Swarniti, Ni Wayan. "The Translation Procedures of Bible Translation" 5, no. 2 (2019): 187–96.
- Tegnan, Hilaire, and Saldi Isra. "Rule of Law and Human Rights Challenges in South East Asia: A Case Study of Legal Pluralism in Indonesia," 2001.
- Testament, New. "Embracing a Vision of the New Jerusalem (Rv 21 : 1 – 22 : 5) to Impact on Life and Society," 2012, 1–7. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v49i2.1854>.
- Thate, Michael J. "Messianic Time and Monetary Value I." *Religions*, 2016. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel7090112>.
- Thornton, Daniel. "A 'Sloppy Wet Kiss'? Intralingual Translation and Meaning-Making in Contemporary Congregational Songs." *Religions* 12, no. 10 (2021): 0–10. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12100874>.
- Utami, Pratiwi Tri. "Raising Religious Inherency: The Role of Interreligious Competence in Achieving Religious Education Equality in Multireligious Public Schools in Indonesia." *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 9, no. 1 (2022): 271. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01298-y>.
- Vallier, Kevin, Michael Weber, Kevin Vallier, and Michael Weber, eds. "Neutrality and the Religion Analogy." *Religious Exemptions*. Oxford University Press, February 22, 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190666187.003.0010>.
- Vaz da Silva, F. "Metaphor in Comparative Studies, Or, the Folklore of Anthropology: Frazer, Malinowski, Trobriand, and Us." *Folklore (United Kingdom)* 132, no. 4 (2021): 343–66. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.2021.1923956>.
- Vollandt, Ronny. "Translations as Linguistic Commentaries? On the Interpretative Dimension of Early Bible Translations into Judaeo-Arabic." *Philological Encounters* 3, no. 3 (2018): 253–74. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/24519197-12340048>.
- Wieringen, Archibald L H M van. "Writing and (Not) Reading the Torah (and Contrasting Texts) in the Book of Isaiah." *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 44, no. 1 (July 30, 2019): 43–53. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309089217725260>.
- Winedt, Marlon. "Bible Translation as Incarnation of the Word of God: Transformational Power through Form and Meaning." *The Bible Translator* 72, no. 2 (August 1, 2021): 220–40. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20516770211027624>.
- Wowor, Jeniffer F P. "Communal Religious Education in a Multicultural Indonesian Church." *Indonesian Journal of Theology* 8, no. 2 (2020): 157–71. <https://doi.org/10.46567/ijt.v8i2.201>.
- Yaacob, Solehah. "Predicament of English Translation Dilemma in Academia: An Analysis on Selected Scriptures and Traditional Books." *Journal of Al-Tamaddun* 17, no. 1 SE-Articles (June 30, 2022): 157–66. <https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol17no1.12>.
- Yakim, Vadim, and People Baptist Church. "T He Sign of A Haz : A T Heological R Eading," 2017, 14–16.