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## The Translation and Interpretation of *Genesis* 47, 31. The LXX Vocalization of the Hebrew Text and Patristic Exegesis

**Abstract:** On the one hand, current biblical research focuses to identify the primary meaning of the sacred text and, on the other, to understand how religious traditions have consolidated, starting from its multiple interpretations. A great deal of the interpretation differences originates from Antiquity, going way back to the first Greek and Latin translations of the text. The reading of the *Genesis* 47, 31 in the translation and interpretation tradition of *Septuagint* (LXX) was considered a vocalisation error of the source text, which the *Vulgate* and the *Masoretic Text* (MT) do not retain it. However, the text of *Septuagint* is cited in *Hebrews* 11, 21 and the manuscript versions of the *Septuagint* do not present any significant differences compared to the choice of the Alexandrian translator. The present study focuses on the analysis of ancient translations and interpretations targeting the text of the Old Testament, as well as assessing new hypotheses concerning the contextual understanding of the text.

**Keywords:** biblical translations, ancient exegesis, LXX, MT, biblical context, vocalisation of the Hebrew text

The study of biblical texts today implies an effort of understanding the contexts in which the first translations of the sacred text into ancient Greek and Latin were made. The research in this direction has its own difficulties, as most of the biblical books have an extremely varied history of interpretation, starting from the vocalisation of the source text. Given the fact that there was not until the medieval period that a marking system of the double consonants and vocals in the initial biblical text existed and that ancient translations were made starting from a consonantal text, problems that arise due to different readings are often insurmountable.

Such a case is registered in the book of *Genesis* 47, 31, where most of modern researchers consider that Greek-speaking translator of LXX have erroneously vocalised the Hebrew text in the case of the consonantal root *mtb*, a noun that can be vocalised either *matteb* (“staff”) or *mittab* (“bed”). If the LXX translator chooses the first alternative, in the Tiberian vocalisation we find the second option. The difference in reading between the translation and its much later vocalised source is not easy to clarify because *Hebrews* 11, 21 cites the *Genesis* text as it was translated in LXX and the

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manuscripts of the Alexandrian translation does not present substantial variations from its initial form. Some modern translations, who considered it a vocalisation error and amended it according to the MT, still keep different versions of the same text in the Old and in the New Testament.

## 1. Ancient Translations

Before analysing the ancient translations, a short summary of the biblical context of the text needs to be provided. It is about a short narrative episode, from chapter 47 of *Genesis*, lines 28-31, whose narrative function seems to be that of a prologue for the events that describe the death and burial of the patriarch Jacob (Gen 47, 29 – 48, 22). If up to this point the biblical history of patriarchs has been interrupted by the events that mark Joseph's ascension in Egypt<sup>1</sup> with this introduction Jacob becomes again and for a short moment the central character of the account. These lines state the old age of the patriarch and consist of a short dialogue between Jacob and Joseph where the father asks his son to bury him in Canaan, next to his ancestors, as well as asking him to make an oath. After Joseph vows that he will fulfil Jacob's wish, the consonantal Hebrew text describes a gesture made by Jacob, short enough as to leave space for interpretations: "And Israel bowed himself on head of the bed" (MT-Gen 47, 31b: *wayyistabu yisra'el 'al- ros hammittal*)<sup>2</sup>. The verb "to worship" is used in biblical texts in order to express both deity veneration, as well as a bow through which people from antiquity used to show their respect to a king or people with a higher rank; the Hebraic word *rosb* has an extremely varied semantic range, its meaning being unveiled only by the context in which it is used. Yet, the most important problem is raised by the noun that was translated using a genitive; spelled *mittāb* (מִטָּב) it has the meaning of "bed", "sofa", "divan", "resting bed" or "sickness bed" (BDB 2000, *s.v.* מִטָּב), but spelled *matteh* (מַטֵּה) it has a denotative meaning of "staff", "rod", "sceptre" and a connotative meaning of "line", "descent", "tribe", "family" (BDB 2000, *s.v.* מַטֵּה). We are not certain whether in the third century BC bilingual translators from the diaspora of Alexandria consulted another Hebrew text or they have attributed to the same consonantal text a first interpretation when they translated it through *καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ*<sup>3</sup> ("And Israel did obeisance upon the top of his staff"). From a strictly formal text analysis it appears that translators added, compared to the preserved Hebrew text, the possessive *αὐτοῦ*. If we start from the hypothesis that the Hebrew text was identical to the one of the MT, the translation of LXX does not only preserves the ambiguity of the source concerning the interpretation of other terms, but also raises a new problem, that of the staff's owner, which can change the entire meaning of the text. If

the staff belonged to Jacob, the old patriarch thanked God, leaning on his staff; if the staff belonged to Joseph, the patriarch showed his respect in front of his son's royal authority, in an Eastern manner. Modern grammars of ancient Greek are very clear concerning the third person singular possessive pronoun: with a non-reflexive meaning, when the possession does not belong to the subject of the sentence, Attic Greek uses the pronoun αὐτός, αὐτή, αὐτόν; with a reflexive meaning, when the object belongs to the subject of the sentence, Classical Greek uses the pronoun ἑαυτοῦ, ἑαυτῆς (or its elided forms), most frequently placed in an attributive position, between the article and the noun (Smyth 1920, 301). Seen through the paradigm of the Greek language from the dialectal period, the staff could not belong to Jacob, because it should have been marked reflexively through the phrase τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ῥάβδου or τῆς αὐτοῦ ῥάβδου. And yet, in the translation of the biblical text, there are numerous cases where these rules are not respected, either because of the linguistic changes made in the *koinē* Greek, either because of the translators' literalism, who kept the syntax of the original. The same ambiguity is kept in the case of the expression προσκυνεῖν ἐπί, that, formed with the accusative, was initially used to indicate the place of the action, but that in the Hellenistic period and later could also express the object of the action (Bortone 2010, 182-189). The other Greek versions of the Antiquity, kept in manuscripts that pick-up on Origen's *Hexapla*, are not of much help in decoding the LXX translation, as Aquila and Symmachus vocalised the text according to the MT, and Theodotion gives textually the LXX version (Field 1875, I, 67).

In the fourth century A.D., when Jerome revised the Latin texts of the New Testament, using the Greek manuscripts, he kept the Old Testament quote from the *Hebrews* 11, 21 as it was translated in the Old Latin versions: *Fide Iacob moriens singulis filiorum Ioseph benedixit et adoravit fastigium virgae eius* ("By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and he worshipped the top of his staff"). The old Latin translation keeps word for word the Greek text from the LXX, and Jerome's *Vulgate* keeps it unchanged<sup>4</sup>. Later, after he started the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew, Jerome noted the difference between the Greek text and the Hebrew one and, considering that Alexandrian translators made a vocalisation error, he translated the text from Gen 47, 31 according to the meaning of the original text: *adoravit Isabel Deum conversus ad lectuli caput* ("Israel worshipped God, turning at the head of the bed"). Through the words he added in the translation, *Deum* and the participle *conversus*, Jerome took the decision to restrict once and for all the interpretation possibilities of both Hebrew and Greek texts. In his view, Jacob is worshipping God after he turned towards the head of the bed. Jerome's thought was preserved in two texts from *Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesim*. In the first one, Jerome

rejects the interpretation of some ancient commentators that he does not mention, which claimed that Jacob is worshipping Joseph's staff. His arguments were based on the Hebrew text and on the logical understanding of the way in which an elder man from his period would act in this situation (*Qu. Hebr. Gen.* XLVII, 31; PL 23, 1002 C-1003 A). What is more interesting is that in the second text, Jerome reads the verse Gen 48, 2b ("And being strengthened, he sat on his bed") and wonders why the LXX translators translated through κλίνη the same term that with two verses above was rendered through ῥάβδος (*Qu. Hebr. Gen.* XLVIII, 2; PL 23, 1003 B). For this reason, Jerome assumed that LXX translators made a vocalisation error, without taking into account the possibility of a deliberately different vocalisation or its subsequent interpretations.

## 2. Patristic Exegesis

In Greek Patristics most of the interpretations of Gen 47, 31 are hesitant when it comes to name the staff's owner, but most of them give the verb προσκυνεῖν the meaning of "make a bow", "bend down" in sign of respect for a human being. For instance, Origen, while talking about the mentioned verse (*Hom. in Gen.* XV, 4; PG 12, 243 C), says, in the translation of Rufinus of Aquileia, that Jacob bows over Joseph's staff: *Et qui adoravit super fastigium virgae Ioseph, non erat Iacob, sed Isabel.* ("And who worshipped over the top of Joseph's staff was not Jacob, but Israel"). St. John Chrysostom gives the text a similar interpretation when he says that the patriarch "shows respect for Joseph by the bow" (διὰ τῆς προσκυνήσεως τὴν εἰς τὸν Ἰωσήφ τιμὴν ἐπιδεικνύμενον) (*Hom. in Gen.* LXVI, 2; PG 54, 567-568). The Christian author motivates his choice by bringing into discussion two texts. First, according to him, through Jacob's bow before his son the second prophetic dream of Joseph was fulfilled (Gen 37, 9: "the sun and the moon and eleven stars were doing obeisance to me"); the dream was explained in biblical context as symbolising the entire family of the son who arrived in Egypt. The second argument was the typological reading, made on the fundament of the interpretation of *Hebrews* 11, 21, according to which Jacob makes a bow before Joseph because he is a prophet and foreseen that it is from Joseph's offspring that Messiah will be born (ὁρᾷς ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο αὐτὸ πίστει ἐποίηι, προσορῶν ὅτι βασιλικοῦ γένους γενήσεται ὁ ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ τεχθείς). St. John Chrysostom does not say who is the owner of the staff, but by mentioning the age of the patriarch we suppose that he assigns it to Jacob. Theodoret of Cyrus is very clear in this direction in *Quaestiones in Genesim* XLVII (*Quaestio* 109), where he interprets the verse in the context of the following chapter, where we are informed that Jacob was ill (Gen 48, 1) and had lost his strength (Gen 48, 2). In

Theodore's view too, the bow is made before Joseph, in order to justify the prophetic dream (τὸ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ ἐνύπνιον τὸ πέρας ἐδέξατο), however, not to Joseph's object, but on the top of his own staff (PG 80, 213 A-B). An interesting comment of this verse can be found at Diodorus of Tarsus (*fr. in Gen.* XLVII, 31; PG 33, 1578 A), that deserves to be mentioned especially for the summary of all the possible interpretations of the Greek text, but also for mentioning the original text:

“Jacob had a staff, such as any old man. Whether Jacob himself being an old man and immobile he grasped the top of Joseph's staff and kissed the part of the staff that he had grasped, or Joseph, after having worshipped his father, grasped the top of the staff, because he bowed down to the ground, he did not say clear. Or, when Jacob had worshipped God, he grasped the top of the staff because of the old age, just as David, when Solomon became king, gave thanks on the bed, on which he was lying, and worshipped God.”

Diodorus brings into discussion the possibility that the subject of this verse is not Jacob, because in the LXX translation Hebrew proper names are often not declined, and leaving thus the possibility that Joseph may had bowed to his father. Also, Diodorus mentions the Hebrew text that might justify the vocalisation based on a similar text from 3 Kings 1, 47: καὶ προσεκύνησεν ὁ βασιλεὺς ἐπὶ τὴν κοίτην αὐτοῦ (“And the king did obeisance on his bed”).

If in the middle period of the Greek patristic the interpretations given to verse Gen 47, 31 admit broadly Jacob's worship to Joseph, leaning on his own staff, we notice that in late patristic the interpretation changes given to the historical context. During the iconoclastic disputes, St. John of Damascus and Pseudo-Athanasius understand that Jacob worships Joseph's staff. Thus, pleading in favour of icon honouring, Pseudo-Athanasius says that “just as Jacob, when he was dying, worshipped Joseph «at the top of his staff», he did not honour the staff, but the one who had it, so we who are faithful greet the icons for no other reason than the love for those to whom we show it” (*Qu. Ant.* 39; PG 28, 621B). And, more explicitly, in an allegorical reading that sees in Joseph's staff a prefiguration of the Cross, St. John of Damascus says in *De fide orthodoxa*: “When Jacob worshipped the top of Joseph's staff, was the first to image the Cross, and when he blessed his sons with crossed hands he made most clearly the sign of the cross” (*f.o.* IV, 11; PG 94, 1132 C). The interpretation that initially was avoided by ecclesiastic writers, in order to avoid the understanding that Jacob practiced idolatry, became in Late Patristic a strong argument in favour of honouring the icons.

In Latin patristic, besides Jerome, the text was also interpreted by Augustine (*Qu. Hept.* I, 162). He is the only author who explicitly raises the problem of the possessive pronoun from LXX translation, inherited also in

the numerous Latin versions from Antiquity<sup>5</sup> under the forms of *virgae eius* and *virgae suae*. Augustin's explanation is correct from the view of the Greek grammatical rules and plausible, if we refer to the alterations made by the copyists over time:

“For the Greek word deludes them, which is written with the same letters whether it has ‘his’ or ‘his own’, but the accents are different, and by those who know them in the manuscripts they are not disregarded. For they make great difference. Yet it could also have had one more letter, if it had been ‘his own’, so that it had not been ἀὐτοῦ, but ἑαυτοῦ.” (PL 34, 592).

Augustine does not intend to narrow the possibilities of the text interpretation. After he presents these hypotheses, among which that of the staff as a symbol of the Cross, he mentions the Hebrew text, noting that the LXX translation, even though it conveys another text, is as important as the original in what concerns the meaning (PL 34, 593). It is the only ancient text where there is the suggestion that Alexandrian translators might have deliberately given other meanings to the biblical text (*nec ideo tamen quod Septuaginta interpretati sunt, nullum vel levem sensum habere putandum est*), even though, most certainly, Augustine refers to the multiple meanings of the allegorical interpretation.

### **3. Hypothesis concerning the vocalisation according to biblical context**

Obviously, patristic interpretations are influenced by the Old Testament's text quotation in *Hebrews* 11, 21<sup>6</sup>, where the text is used to convey another meaning, specifically that of the new faith, confessed by the ancestors. We are not sure how the author of *Hebrews* interpreted the text, but the narrative analepsis, that determines him to mention first the blessing of Joseph's sons from the next chapter and only after that Jacob's worship, leads us to interpret that he made the connection between the two events and that there is the possibility that he may not have literally read the passage from *Genesis* 47, 31.

The meaning of the Old Testament's text should rather be found in the principles that guided the Alexandrine translators in the third century in vocalising the source text. Although there were issued many theories on this subject, the problem remains unsolved even to this day. There was a hypothesis according to which the vocalisation was made according to the public reading of the biblical text (Barr 1990, 23; Tov 2015, 118), another one according to which it was determined by the erudite study of the Scripture (van der Kooij 1998, 121) and last but not least one that claimed the vocalisation was made under the influence of the uncanonical biblical literature (Schorch 2006, 46). In situations similar to *Genesis* 47, 31, where

the consonantal text allows for a double vocalisation, the choice of one variant over the other was made depending on a series of considerations. Given that the translation of the biblical books included in *Septuaginta* present numerous modifications made on purpose, ranging from rewritings of the source text and syntax modifications up to the point of noticeable exegetical insertions even in the most literal translations, it is hard to believe that translators made a vocalisation error, which was then doubled by a possessive pronoun. In my opinion, we are rather dealing with the specific character of Alexandrian translation, which assumes following the narrative logic, of the theology flowing from the interpretation of the narration, but, most of all, of the source text used in translation (*Vorlage*).

In *Genesis* 47, 31, the closest context that needs to be taken into consideration is not the age or the health condition of the patriarch, but Joseph's oath, for Jacob's prostration can be seen as a consequence of the promise that his body will be buried in Canaan. If we are to consider the fact that the narrative function of this text is that of resuming the history of the patriarchs, interrupted by Joseph's story, then the context is placed before the events that happened in Egypt. Most probably, our verse is connected to the texts from *Genesis* 28, 11-22, which are not just thematically related but also, textually. Following, we cite three verses from the LXX translation:

“And he came upon a place and lay down there, for the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of the place and put it at his head (πρὸς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ) and lay down in that place. ... And Iakob rose in the morning, and he took the stone that he had put down there at his head (πρὸς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ), and set it up for a stele (στήλην) and poured oil on the top of it (ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον αὐτῆς). ... And Iakob made a vow (εὐχὴν), saying: «If the Lord God should be with me and should carefully guard me in this way that I go and should give me bread to eat and clothing to put on and should bring me back to my father's house in safety (ἀποστρέψῃ με μετὰ σωτηρίας εἰς τὸν οἶκον τοῦ πατρὸς μου), then the Lord shall become god to me, and this stone, which I have set up for a stele, shall be a divine house to me (ὁ λίθος οὗτος, ὃν ἔστησα στήλην, ἔσται μοι οἶκος θεοῦ)...»”.

Jacob did not raise a prayer, as the term εὐχὴν might tempt us to translate it according to its dominant meaning in the LXX translation, but it is used in this context as an equivalent for the Hebrew *neder* (“vow”, “votive offering”). The last request made by Jacob in his vow, that of returning to Canaan (without mentioning in what conditions), is fulfilled with Joseph's oath from *Genesis* 47, 31. Besides, the other conditions of the vow were also fulfilled by Joseph, seen probably by the biblical author as an instrument of divine will. Consequently, the patriarch respects his promise and worships God. The Hebrew expression *al-rosh hammittah* (“on head of the bed”) must

not be understood as ‘a headboard’, as the beds of ancient Israelites did not have a head, but it rather makes reference to the stone that Jacob put under his head in Gen 28, 11 and that later became an worshiping altar in Gen 28, 22. This interpretation seems to be sustained by a Jewish translation into Greek, made in the fifth century A.D., found on the edge of a manuscript (S.P. 51) discovered in the Ambrosian Library of Milan.<sup>7</sup> The translation included by Field in his edition of the hexaplaric fragments (even if it was made much later), noted with the generic name τὸ Ἰουδαϊκόν, gave for *Genesis* 47, 31 the translation καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραηλ ἐπὶ προσκεφάλαιον τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ (“and Israel bowed on the cushion of his bed”), suggesting that the place where Jacob worshipped was actually the stone he put under his head and which later became God’s shrine.

Probably, the LXX translator of *Genesis* knew this interpretation and it is also possible that in the text of *Genesis* 47, 31 he might have met another Hebrew term that mentioned the fact that Jacob worshiped on the top of the stone raised as a commemorative monument<sup>8</sup>, as he already translated it in chapter 28, 18 (καὶ ἔστησεν αὐτὸν στήλην καὶ ἐπέχευεν ἔλαιον ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον αὐτῆς). This interpretation is known by the first Latin translators as well, who translated the term ἄκρον through *fastigium*, frequently used in Latin texts in order to make reference at the pediment of a temple or of a commemorative monument.<sup>9</sup> Although ancient Greek translations prove that in the first centuries the Hebrew text assumed the vocalisation of the consonantal root *mṯb*, we are not certain whether the Alexandrine translator uses the term *matteb* as an equivalent for ῥάβδος. In *Pentateuch* there are no less than four Hebrew terms translated through ῥάβδος (Hatch-Redpath 1897, II, 1247). The Hebrew equivalent of στήλη is *maṣṣebab* (מַצֵּבָה), a derivative whose verbal root is the same as that of the term *sebet* (שֵׁבַע), which in Hebrew has the same meaning as *matteb* (מַטֵּב) and is translated through ῥάβδος in Ex 21, 20 and Lv 27, 32. If we consider the recent studies that argued the fact that Alexandrian translators vocalised sometimes the terms starting from their verbal root or even from a part of this root (Tov 2006, 461-463), the possibility of an etymological translation (a common method to all ancient translators) in *Genesis* 47, 31 starting from the verbal root of *maṣṣebab* is not excluded. The presence of the possessive pronoun αὐτοῦ would be justified here by the idea of possession expressed in Gen 28, 22: ὁ λίθος οὗτος, ὃν ἔστησα στήλην, ἔσται μοι οἶκος θεοῦ (“this stone, which I have set up for a stele, shall be a divine house to me”).

A second possibility would be that of the intentional change the values of the source text in translation, in order to avoid an act considered at that time an act of idolatry. Anyway, even in this interpretation, the translation speaks most probably about a worship to God and not a prostration before Joseph. It is hard to believe that translators would replace an act perceived



as idolatry with another one that, if at the time of the translation was not yet perceived this way<sup>10</sup>, is still far from the significations it has in its correspondent context.

#### 4. Conclusions

Considering that biblical manuscripts do not indicate important textual variations and the consonantal term was indeed *mtb*, it is difficult to point with precision whether the different vocalisation of *Septuagint* is based on an analogy according to the exegesis, a text corruption or it is determined by a symbolism of the staff which existed in ancient traditions of Judaism<sup>11</sup>. However, in my opinion, regarding the translation and interpretation of *Genesis* 47, 31 there is no such thing as ignorance of the translator or a reverential act towards Joseph. Moreover, seen from a contextual perspective, both the source text and the translation refer to the same thing: the patriarch Jacob is worshipping on the top of a stone, which became a shrine, according to a belief common to many ancient peoples.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> For more details concerning this narrative structure and its motivation, see Westermann 1992, 244-245.

<sup>2</sup> Texts cited from Hebrew are transliterated according to *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, ed. by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, German Bible Society, Stuttgart, 1967/1977. The English translations are read from NRSV (David M. Carr, trans., "Genesis", in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible. New Revised Standard Version Bible with the Apocrypha*, ed. by Michael Coogan et al., 4<sup>th</sup> edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> Biblical texts in the Greek translation of *Septuagint* follow the Rahlfs' edition (*Septuaginta. Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes*, ed. by Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart, Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, Stuttgart, 1979). The English translations were cited from NETS (Robert J.V. Hiebert, trans., "Genesis", in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under That Title*, ed. by Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007).

<sup>4</sup> Latin biblical texts are quoted from *Biblia Sacra Vulgata. Editio Quinta*, ed. by R. Weber and Roger Gryson, 5<sup>th</sup> edition, German Bible Society, Stuttgart, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Before the *Vulgate* translation, Latin biblical texts already knew a multitude of versions, which circulated in parallel in different geographical areas of the Western world. Generically put under the name of *Veteres Latinae*, these texts do not represent anything else than some constant revisions, made over time by anonymous authors, of the first Latin biblical translations. The emendation reasons were either to make them conform with the Greek biblical texts, either to stylistically adapt them to a sufficiently evolved Latin that allows the replacement of the outdated terms and grammatical constructions. See E. Würthwein 1995, 92; J.T. Barrera 1998, 349-350; B.M. Metzger 2001, 23.

<sup>6</sup> For Christian authors the LXX translation is inspired and constitutes the text of the Old Testament. The Hebrew text is seldom consulted, and often it is done through the Greek literal translations (e.g. Aquila's version). The conception according to which the Old Testament has the role of talking about Christ and His mysteries determines them to read it

allegorically and interpret it through the reading key of the New Testament writings (Harl 1994, 294; 298).

<sup>7</sup> Some information regarding the Greek revision can be found in N.F. Marcos 2000, 175-176.

<sup>8</sup> For details concerning the Canaanite custom and its mention in biblical texts, see the article signed by Jennie R. Ebeling in *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. by David Noel Freedman et al., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Michigan, 2000, s.v. 'pillar'.

<sup>9</sup> Ch. Daremberg *et alii*, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, tome deuxième, deuxième partie (F-G), Paris, Librairie Hachette et Cie, 1877, s.v. *fastigium*.

<sup>10</sup> The oriental custom of prostration before other persons considered superior appears frequently in *Genesis* (33, 3; 42, 6; 43, 26). Later, this practice would be considered humiliating (see *Esther* 3, 1-6) and even an act of idolatry.

<sup>11</sup> The modern researchers have already talked about these possibilities (M. Silva 1992, 147-165; G.A. Walser 2013, 262-341) and their well-argued hypotheses are valid as long as we do not know for certain the manner in which LXX translators understood the text.

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