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# The Technique and Theology of the Psalm 132/131 Translation in the Septuagint

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## **Abstract**

The growth of interest in the Septuagint in recent decades primarily occurred due to attention to the textual criticism of the Bible. The Greek manuscripts of the Septuagint Psalter and its revisions (Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) show how, through various approaches, first translators sought ways to accurately convey the thought of the Hebrew source. The Masoretic text of psalm 132/131, according to researchers, expresses the royal ideology of Israel, the idea of the Lord's covenant with David and the well-being of Zion. Unfortunately, the Greek text of this psalm often remains outside the eyesight of scholars. Psalm 132/131 in the Septuagint is very reminiscent of the interlinear translation of a Jewish source. The Greek translation reflects comprehension of this psalm in the era of the Second Temple. However, precisely those places where there is a discrepancy with the Masoretic text and the Dead Sea Scrolls, one can trace the features of LXX' theology, which influenced subsequent exegetical writings of the Church Fathers. So, our task is to show which exactly theological features of the Psalm 132/131 could have arisen in its translation from Hebrew into Greek.

## **Keywords**

Septuagint, Psalter, Psalm 132/131, Biblical Theology

The growth of interest in the Septuagint in recent decades primarily occurred due to attention to the textual criticism of the Bible<sup>1</sup>. The Greek manuscripts of the Septuagint Psalter and its revisions (Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion) show how, through various approaches, first translators sought ways to accurately convey the thought of the Hebrew source.

As is known, the Septuagint became the basis for the Christian Bible for many nations and was the subject of the exegetical writings. Features of Jewish and Christian exegesis show a great difference in the interpretation of the events of the Old Testament. Quite often, different conclusions are rooted in the fact that interpreters use the text of the Bible in different languages.

The task of my research concerns, first of all, the problem of the correlation between the technique and theology of the translation of the Septuagint. This task raises a rather difficult question: is it possible to identify in the text of the Psalter the worldview of the creators of the Septuagint in order to adequately reconstruct their theology? In order to come to conclusions, the discrepancies must be examined, firstly, for deviations from the supposed Vorlage, and secondly, for the interpretation of the text by the Greek translators themselves<sup>2</sup>. I use Psalm 132/131 as an example to trace exactly which words and expressions in the Septuagint differ significantly from the Masoretic Text and, accordingly, provide the basis for a specifically Christian approach to interpreting the Bible.

### **General information about Psalm 132/131**

The main theme of Psalm 132/131 is the covenant between the Lord and David, which connected the reign of the king's descendants with the sanctuary in Jerusalem. The psalm recalls not only the descendants of David, but also the priests, the ark of the covenant, and Zion. These themes echo in the Psalms with the royal psalms (see Ps 2, 21, 22, 29) and the

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Tov, *The text-critical use of the Septuagint in biblical research*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, Indiana, 2015, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel O. McCLELLAN, *Anti-Anthropomorphism and the Vorlage of LXX Exodus*, Master's thesis, Oxford, 2010, p. 6.

psalms of Zion (see Ps 47, 49, 77, 88)<sup>3</sup>. The content of the psalm echoes the stories from the Second Book of Samuel about the capture of the fortress of the Jebusites by David, the construction of the royal house (II Sam 5, 6-12) and the story of the transfer of the ark from the house of Abeddar to Zion, which from the day of the conquest was called the “City of David” (II Sam 6, 10-19)<sup>4</sup>.

The reference to David’s oath to build a house for “strong Jacob” and to Zion as the “dwelling place” chosen by the Lord (v. 5, 13), at first glance, hints at the closest descendant of David - King Solomon<sup>5</sup>. However, most likely, the “anointed one” mentioned in the psalm was one of the descendants of David more distant than Solomon (vv. 10, 17)<sup>6</sup>.

It is hardly possible to establish the exact dating of the psalm now. As Thijs Booij claims, it is quite possible that original version of Psalm 132 was compiled in “the later pre-exilic time” and afterwards have used at the festivals in the post-captivity era<sup>7</sup>. The words of the psalm “Let us go to his dwelling place, let us bow down at his footstool” (v. 7) were most likely sung by pilgrims when they came to the temple for the annual feasts. This was especially appropriate in the era after the Babylonian captivity, when there was religious enthusiasm in Israel to “appear before the Lord” three times a year.

After the Babylonian captivity, the rule of the Davidic dynasty was not restored, so the fulfillment of the Lord’s promise to put the “anointed one” on the throne “forever” became part of the messianic expectations (see Ps 89)<sup>8</sup>. Some scholars believe, that “there was hope that the ark would come back to Zion some day” (cf. II Macc 2, 4-8)<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Thijs BOOIJ, “Psalm 132: Zion’s Well-Being”, in: *Biblica*, 90 (2009) 1, pp. 75-83.

<sup>4</sup> Mitchell DAHOOD, *Psalms III: 101-150: Introduction, Translation, and Notes with an Appendix: The Grammar of the Psalter*, Yale University Press, New Haven, London, 2008, p. 241.

<sup>5</sup> R. G. BRATCHER, W. D. REYBURN, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series, United Bible Societies, New York, 1991, p. 1088.

<sup>6</sup> Antti LAATO, “Psalm 132: A case study in methodology”, in: *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 61 (1999) 1, pp. 24-33.

<sup>7</sup> T. BOOIJ, “Psalm 132: Zion’s Well-Being”, p. 83.

<sup>8</sup> J. P. Lange, P. Schaff, et al., *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Psalms*, Logos Bible Software, Bellingham, WA, 2008, p. 630.

<sup>9</sup> T. BOOIJ, “Psalm 132: Zion’s Well-Being”, p. 82.

## Sources for the Hebrew Psalm 132

We have two of the most authoritative sources for the Psalm 132. Firstly, it is the Masoretic Text (MT) presented in the Codex Leningradensis, which formed the basis of the Biblia Hebraica stuttgartensia (BHS). Secondly, this is a manuscript from the 11<sup>th</sup> cave of Qumran 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, in which 10 verses from Psalm 132 have been preserved (vv. 8-18).

In these two sources, which are a thousand years apart, the text of the psalm differs by about 5-7%. Eugene Ulrich identified only 7 differences between the Dead Sea MS 11QPs<sup>a</sup> and the Masoretic Text<sup>10</sup>. Most often they are associated with the addition of *mater lectionis* - letters used in consonantal writing to indicate long vowels. We see this in verses 10-11 (11 [11 QPs<sup>a</sup>] דויד MT) and also in verse 12 (11 [11 QPs<sup>a</sup>] עדי MT). In some verses, the Masoretic Text is more concise than the Qumran manuscript. For example, in verse 11 of the Qumran manuscript, before the expression בִּטְנֵךְ מִפְרֵי “from the fruit of the womb” is added the conjunction כִּי, which is not among the Masoretes. This conjunction is not found in the Septuagint either. The Masoretic expression לְכִסֵּא “on the throne” also seems to be more concise than the phrase with the same meaning עַל כִּסֵּא in the manuscript 11QPs<sup>a</sup>.

In three cases, there is a convergence of the Masoretic Text with the Septuagint against the 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. For example, verse 11 MT says that “their sons will also sit (יִשְׁבוּ) on your throne forever”. According to 11QPs<sup>a</sup>, their sons will not יִשְׁבוּ “sit down” (καθισθύνεται LXX), but יַעֲלוּ “ascend” to the throne.

These and other observations show that despite the late origin of the Masoretic Text, it exhibits some more archaic forms of the Hebrew Bible than the Dead Sea Scroll 11QPs<sup>a</sup>. The convergence of the Septuagint with the Masoretic Text may indicate that the Vorlage of these sources is equally related to the era of the Second Temple.

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<sup>10</sup> Eugene ULRICH, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2010, p. 704.

## Sources for the Greek Psalm 131

When we talk about the Septuagint, we most often refer to the critical edition of the Septuagint by Rahlfs-Hanhart (2006). The text of Psalm 131 in this edition was compiled on the basis of the different Greek-Latin manuscripts, commentaries on the psalms of Hesychius of Jerusalem and St. Augustine, translations of St. Jerome, as well as Syriac and other translations.

There are more than 40 discrepancies in the manuscripts of Psalm 131 LXX. It is very difficult to say which of the manuscripts is closest to the alleged Vorlage. Moreover, it cannot be said that if the majority of copies of the Septuagint, especially of its Lucianic Version (IV AD), support some kind of authentical reading. Therefore, of greatest interest for our study are the revisions of the Septuagint made by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion (II AD), which were created with an eye on Jewish sources that have not come down to us.

The order of words in sentences, the presence or absence of articles, the use of verb tenses - these and other grammatical features of the Septuagint and its revisions demonstrate the translators' desire to bring Greek text closer to the Jewish source, even if this comes at the expense of the beauty of the poetic style.

For example, in verse 7 of the two manuscripts (R, A) before the word τόπος "place" is missing the definite article τὸν. The absence of the article can be explained by the fact that in the original source before the word ἦμα "foot" there was also no definite article. The same we can see in verse 17. There is no article among the Masoretes before the word קֶרֶן "horn". The direct object κέρασ "horn" is used also without an article after the verb ἐξανατελῶ "I will raise up" in the Septuagint (v. 17). In the Verona Psalter (VI AD) the noun κέρασ is preceded by the article το, which indicates the desire of later scribes to fill in the missed article.

## Theological connotations in the Psalm 131 LXX

In order to trace the technique of the Greek translators, we select some examples from Psalm 132/131 where, in our opinion, one can notice the theological difference between the Masoretic Text and the Septuagint.

## Psalm inscription

The heading of the Masoretic psalm  $\text{שִׁיר הַיְצִיאוֹת}$  “a song of ascents” is the same for the whole group of 15 “songs of ascents” (see Ps. 120-134). It can equally reflect both of the pilgrims’ songs singing on their way to Jerusalem, and the tradition of the Levites singing on the steps of the temple. In the Göttingen Septuagint, Psalm 131 is inscribed:  $\text{ὠδὴ τῶν ἀναβαθμῶν}$  “song of steps”. Aquila and Symmachus head the psalm  $\text{ὅσμα τῶν ἀναβάσεων}$  “the song of ascents”. As Frederic Field points out, in the Syro-Hexapla is indicated  $\text{τῷ Δαυίδ συνετῶ}$  “to the mind of David”<sup>11</sup>. The Syriac manuscript Sy (616 AD) reflects the translation from the Greek, where a dedicatory inscription is added:  $\text{τῷ Δαυίδ συνέσεως}$  “of the mind of David”. This addition of the David’s name to the title of the psalm shows the development of the interpretative desire to sanctify the biblical texts with the name of the great king and the prototype of the Messiah.

**Verse 1.** According to the Masoretic Text, the Lord is called to remember  $\text{עֲנוּתוֹ}$  “his [David’s] humiliation”. The Septuagint points to  $\text{τῆς πραύτητος αὐτοῦ}$  “his [David’s] humility”. The Masoretes put into the word  $\text{עֲנוּתוֹ}$  the vowels  $\text{עֲנוּתוֹ}$  (pual inf. from  $\text{עָנָה}$  “to become humiliated, contrite”), while the authors of the Greek translation read the word  $\text{עֲנוּתוֹ}$  with the vowels  $\text{עֲנִיָּתוֹ}$  (piel inf. from  $\text{עָנָה}$  “to oppress, humiliate, humble”). A more accurate equivalent for  $\text{עָנָה}$  here could be  $\text{ταπεινώω}$  “to humiliate, humble, weaken” (see Gen 15, 13; 16, 9). But in Psalm 131 LXX appears the noun  $\text{πραύτης}$  “meekness, gentleness”. As a result, the Masoretic Text calls on God to remember all the hardships David endured, the LXX translation in opposite - the meekness of David.

In Origen’s Hexapla, there are alternative ways of describing David’s situation: Aquila speaks of his  $\text{κακουχίας}$  “disaster state”, Symmachus of  $\text{κακώσεως}$  “bad treatment”, Quinta of  $\text{ταπεινώσεως}$  “humiliation”. The word used by Aquila  $\text{κακουχία}$  “bad condition, misfortune, calamity” comes from the verb  $\text{κακουχέω}$  “treat someone badly, torment someone;

<sup>11</sup> Frederick FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum quae supersunt: sive veterum interpretum Graecorum in totum vetus testamentum fragmenta. Post Flaminium nobilium, Drusium, et Montefalconium, adhibita etiam versione Syro-Hexaplari*, vol. 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1875, p. 287.

to be afflicted, to endure” (see I Kgs 2, 26). The noun used by Symmachus is κάκωσις “bad treatment, insult, resentment; causing harm or damage” comes from the verb κακῶω “to do evil, offend, harm”. Both expressions, provided by Aquila and Symmachus, are best understood as David’s suffering from the evil that other people inflict on him. The vocabulary of these revisions does not give reason to exalt David for some of his personal qualities. He suffers evil from his enemies, and this evil humbles him.

David seems completely different if you read the Septuagint in separation from the Jewish source. The word *πραύτης* hints here at “humility, meekness” as a moral quality of the Jewish king. Although the author of the Septuagint may not have emphasized the virtue of David, however, for subsequent interpretations in the Greek Church, the image of the meek king became the subject of moral and theological teachings.

**Verse 2.** In the Masoretic Text God is called אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב “Mighty Jacob” (Gen 49, 24; Is 49, 26; 60, 16). This epithet in the Hebrew Bible characterizes the power of the Lord. The adjective אֱבִיר “strong, powerful, influential” in the Greek Old Testament is rendered as: *ισχυρός* “strong” (in the sense of “chief, leader” Lam 1, 15, I Chr 21, 8, Is 10, 13), *ταῦρος* “bull, ox” (Is 34, 7, Jer 50, 11, Ps 22, 13), *ἵππος* “horse” (Jer 8, 16), *ἄγγελος* “angel” (Ps 79, 25), *ἀσύνετος* “stupid, foolish” (Ps 76, 6).

The phrases אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב “strong of Jacob” and אֱבִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל “strong of Israel” occur several times in the Bible: *δυνάστης Ἰακωβ* (Gen 49, 24); *ισχύς Ἰακωβ* (Is 49, 26); *οἱ ισχύοντες Ἰσραηλ* (Is 1, 24). Only once in the book of Isaiah instead of אֱבִיר יַעֲקֹב “strong Jacob” do we find a translation *θεὸς Ἰακωβ* “God of Jacob” (in some manuscripts *θεὸς Ἰσραηλ*; Is 60, 16).

Consequently, what is said twice in Greek Psalm 131 *θεὸς Ἰακωβ* “God of Jacob” (v. 2, 5) is not a translation familiar to the Septuagint. Here we see the translator’s thoughtful work so that the reader does not have any associations of God with the creature. The transition from “strong Jacob” to “God of Jacob” was apparently due to the translator’s desire to avoid any anthropomorphisms of God and false associations of Him with a man or a bull, leading to idolatry.

Revisions of the Septuagint bring us back to the letter of the Hebrew text. Aquila writes that David makes a vow to τῷ δυνάστη *“Mighty”* Jacob (*δυνάστης* – “a mighty man, lord, king”; cf. I Tim 6, 15). Symmachus

says that David makes a vow to τῷ ὀραίῳ “Blossoming / Beautiful” Jacob (ὀραῖος – “ripe, in the prime of life, well-timed”). As can be seen, Aquila brings the translation closer to the Masoretic tradition (God is the strong of Jacob), while Symmachus poetically connects the ideas of God with the source of strength and the renewal of life. In these revisions, there is no fear of the possible perception of God in the form of a man. Does this mean that the readers of the revisions were strict monotheists and had already stepped over anthropomorphic ideas about God? This we do not know.

**Verse 4.** The Masoretic Text in verse 4 is concise: וְלֹא יָנֹם עֵינַי וְלֹא יִשְׁנֶה עֵינַי וְלֹא יִשְׁנֶה עֵינַי וְלֹא יִשְׁנֶה עֵינַי “I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids”. The LXX translation is longer: εἰ δώσω ὕπνον τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς μου καὶ τοῖς βλεφάροις μου νυσταγμὸν καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν τοῖς κροτάφοις μου “if I will give sleep to my eyes and slumber to my eyelids and rest to my temples”.

There is an obel symbol (÷) in Hexapla after the words καὶ τοῖς βλεφάροις μου νυσταγμὸν “and slumber to my eyelids”. This symbol was placed in some ancient Greek writings (Homer, Origen’s Hexapla) before doubtful expressions that were not found in the sources. This sign (÷) is followed in Hexapla with the text καὶ ἀνάπαυσιν τοῖς κροτάφοις μου “and rest to my temples”, which is missing from the Hebrew manuscripts and the St. Jerome’s iuxta Hebraicum translation. In F. Field’s Hexaple edition we read the comment: “This verse is not in the Tetraple. In one Theodotion instead of τοῖς βλεφάροις μου ‘to my eyelids’ there is τοῖς κροτάφοις μου νυσταγμὸν ‘drowsiness to my temples’. In Octapla only Seventy have the obel sign”<sup>12</sup>.

This expression “and rest to my temples” appears in the Codex Sinaiticus, in Washington codex, in the Roman Psalter, and in the other Greek and Latin manuscripts. In Jerome’s translation from the Septuagint this phrase is present, but in his translation from the Hebrew this phrase is absent. It is most likely that the Greek translation duplicated the same thought, causing the bicolon in verse 4 to be expanded to a tricolon. Since the phrase “and rest my temples” is first attested in Theodotion, it is this translation that could have influenced subsequent editions of the Septuagint.

<sup>12</sup> F. FIELD, *Origenis Hexaplorum...*, p. 288.



**Verse 6.** In verse 6 we find echoes of the story of the ark being transferred from Kiriath-jearim to Jerusalem (see I Sam 7, 1-2; II Sam 6, 2-15; 1 Chr 13, 5-8). The first meaning of the Hebrew word יַעַר is “forest, undergrowth”, the second meaning points to the toponym Jaar. If we consider that the word יַעַר means “forest” (see Deut 19, 5), so the expression בְּשַׁדְיֵי יַעַר can mean “among the forest groves” (see Eccl 2, 6) or even “among the forest hills” (see I Sam 7, 1). “The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew” (2011) says that the phrase קִרְיַת יַעֲרִים Kiriath-jearim refers to a city in Judea that was located 14 kilometers from Jerusalem (see Neh 7, 29). So, the expressions שַׁדְיֵי יַעַר and אֶפְרַתָּה (Ps 131, 6) are understood in this lexicon as toponyms<sup>13</sup>. Most translations of the Bible made from the Masoretic Text accordingly perceive שַׁדְיֵי יַעַר as fields belonging to a certain Jaar.

The translation of verse 6 LXX according to Albert Pietersma is as follows: εὑρομεν αὐτὴν ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις τοῦ δρυμοῦ “we found it in the plains of the forest”<sup>14</sup>. The expression ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις “on the plains” here corresponds to the Masoretic בְּשַׁדְיֵי. In the Codex Sinaiticus and in the Codex Alexandrinus is presented the expression ἐν ταῖς δάσασι τοῦ δρυμοῦ “in thickets of oak”. In revisions there was a desire to find a suitable synonym for ἐν τοῖς πεδίοις: ἐν χώρᾳ “in the ground, on the spot” (Aquila and Symmachus), ἐν ἀγρῷ “in the field” (Quinta).

As can be seen, the Greek manuscript tradition relies on the first meaning of the word יַעַר, suggesting that שַׁדְיֵי יַעַר is a wooded plot of land on a plain. Obviously, the Greek translators are not interested in a specific owner of the field, but the acquisition of the Lord by his people. Thus, the toponym Kiriath-jearim, important for Jewish society, loses its significance in the Greek translations.

**Verse 7.** In verse 7 MT it says: נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לְהַדָּם רַגְלָיו “Let us worship before his footstool”. The word הַדָּם “footstool” is always used with the noun רַגְלָיִם “feet” and refers to the king’s footstool (Ps 110, 1) or God’s footstool (Is 66, 1).

<sup>13</sup> David J. A. CLINES, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, vol. 8, Sheffield Academic Press, Sheffield, 2011, p. 250.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Albert PIETERSMA, Benjamin WRIGHT (eds.), *Psalms, A New English Translation of the Septuagint*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 2007.

It's written in Septuagint: προσκυνήσομεν εἰς τὸν τόπον, οὗ ἔστησαν οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ “we shall do obeisance at the place where His feet stood”. The Greek translator of the psalm says nothing about footstool (see Ps 99, 5; 132, 7; I Chr 28, 2). He understands the expression עֲלֵה עֲלֵה abstractly, as the place of Theophany. He is interested in the very fact of meeting with the Lord, and not in the specific place or object with which this meeting was connected. So, the Masoretic Text can be understood as a call to worship the ark of the covenant or Zion (see Lam 2, 1). The Septuagint encourages worship “to the place where His feet stood”. The replacement of “footstool” with “place” is connected with an attempt to distance oneself from the naive perception that God has a bench under his feet. This theological peculiarity of the Greek translation is perhaps connected with the desire to get away from the anthropomorphisms of God<sup>15</sup>.

An example translation of verse 7 of Psalm 131 LXX demonstrates the theological focus of the translation. It does not matter in what geographical point of the earth the meeting with the Almighty took place, it is important that this meeting really took place. The revisions of Aquila and Symmachus bring us back to the Masoretic tradition, pointing to τῷ ὑποποδίῳ τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ “his footstool”. There is no reason in these hebraizing revisions for high understanding of the fact of Theophany, which can be deduced from the Septuagint.

**Verse 8.** The beginning of verse 8 MT is: קוּמָה יְהוָה לְמנוּחָתְךָ “ascend, O Lord, to your resting place”. Here is used the noun מנוחה, which mainly means “a place of rest” (see Gen 49, 15; Num 10, 33; Ps 23, 2), “a safe place” (see Is 32, 18). The beginning of verse 8 LXX is: ἀνάστηθι, κύριε, εἰς τὴν ἀνάπαυσίν σου “rise up, O Lord, into your rest”. The word ἀνάπαυσις in the Septuagint means “rest, break, pause” (see Is 34, 14; Lam 1, 3). In the New Testament, this word speaks of “cessation of activity” (Rev 4, 8), “peace of mind” (see Matt 11, 29), less often – about “a place of rest” (see Matt 12, 43; Lk 11, 24).

<sup>15</sup> In this psalm, apparently, there is a reference to the Greek translation of Ex 24, 10, where instead of the direct vision of God (וַיַּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - MT) the Israelites observe the place where He stood (καὶ εἶδον τὸν τόπον, οὗ εἰστήκει ἐκεῖ ὁ θεὸς τοῦ Ἰσραηλ - LXX).

The context of the use of the word *הַמְנוּחָה* in this psalm refers to the “place of rest” of the ark, which is identified with the “place of dwelling” of God Himself (see vv. 8, 14). If you read the translation of the Seventy apart from the Hebrew text, the word *ἀνάπαυσις* puts the emphasis not on a specific place, but on the resting state of God.

In **verse 14** the Hebrew word *הַמְנוּחָה* is translated into Greek as *κατάπαυσις*, which speaks of both “the cessation of work” (see Is 66, 1) and “a place of rest” (see Ps 95, 11)<sup>16</sup>. Old Testament passages in which the words *ἀνάπαυσις* and *κατάπαυσις* are used could be interpreted in the New Testament typologically. For example, in Ps 95, 11 the expression *אֲנִי וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא נִשְׁמַח בְּהַמְנוּחָה* “they shall not enter my rest” (MT) is close to the Greek phrase *εἰ εἰσελελεύσονται εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσίν μου* “if they shall enter into my rest” (LXX), which indicates the location of God’s ark and His dwelling place (see I Chr 28, 2). The word *κατάπαυσις* is used in Hebrews as a metaphor (see Heb 3, 11. 18; 4, 1.3.5). In the expression “whoever has entered into His rest (*εἰς τὴν κατάπαυσιν αὐτοῦ*), he himself has rested (*κατέπαυσεν*) from his works, just as God from His” (see Heb 4, 10) there is no indication of the God’s “place of dwelling”. “Rest” in Hebrews is understood as the one’s psychological state.

As can be seen, the author of the New Testament text used the terminology of the Septuagint not in the direct sense that the author of the Old Testament intended. But it was precisely this approach that became the main one in early Christian literature for expressing abstract theological concepts.

The second part of **verse 8** MT is: *אָתָּה וְאַרְוֹן עִזֶּיךָ* “you and the ark of your strength”. The text of the Septuagint is as follows: *σὺ καὶ ἡ κιβωτὸς τοῦ ἁγιάσματος σου* “you and the ark of your sanctity”. The word *ἁγίασμα* means “sanctuary, holy place, temple” (see Ex 15, 17; Lev 12, 4; Am 7, 13 LXX), “holiness, consecration” (see Ps 92, 5 LXX; Clem. Al., *Paed.* 3.12.98.1), “sanctity” (see Ezk 20, 40; Dorotheus Scr. Eccl., *Doct.* 6.77.8). The term *ἁγίασμα* is used mostly in biblical and early Christian literature (see I Macc 1, 21.36; 5, 1; Sirach 36, 12; 49, 6; 50, 11; TestDan 5, 9;

<sup>16</sup> The authors of the 8th century Septuagint manuscript 2017, apparently, wanted to unify the translation and therefore used in Ps 132, 8 *κατάπαυσίν μου* instead of *ἀνάπαυσίν σου* (cf. vs. 14; Ps 95, 11).

GJs 6, 1)<sup>17</sup>. In the Greek Old Testament word ἁγίασμα is equivalent to the Hebrew words שְׁתֵּי אֲבָנִים and שְׁתֵּי אֲבָנִים and refers to the sanctuary and sacred objects associated with it (see Ex 15, 17; 25, 7; 28, 32; 29, 6.34). In early Christian literature, the term ἁγίασμα takes on an additional meaning and is used as a metaphor for a person.

The literal understanding of ἁγίασμα as a “sanctuary” we found in Pseudo-Clement writings, Eudemius of Argos and in the Protoevangelium of James. One of the homilies attributed to Pseudo-Clement speaks of the future fate of Jerusalem, and that “there will be no stone left on stone, everything will be destroyed” (Matt 24, 2). The temple is denoted here by the word ἁγίασμα “shrine” (Clementina, *Homiliae* [Sp.] 3.15.2.2)<sup>18</sup>. Eudemius of Argos (II AD) in his writing “Περὶ λέξεων ῥητορικῶν” defines ὁ θεῖος ναός “God’s temple” as ἁγίασμα “shrine” (Eudemus, *Περὶ λέξεων ῥητορικῶν* (excerpta) 3b.9)<sup>19</sup>.

In the early Christian apocrypha “The Gospel of James” (II AD) the Temple of Jerusalem is called ὁ ναός Κυρίου “the temple of the Lord” (GJs. 15.2-3). The place in the bedroom that Anna prepared for her daughter Mary is called ἁγίασμα “holy” (GJs. 13.16). It was forbidden to bring anything unclean into this place, but pure Jewish virgins had to look after little Mary (GJs. 12.6)<sup>20</sup>. According to these apocrypha, when Mary was twelve years old, “a council of priests took place, saying: ‘Behold, Mary was twelve years old in the temple of the Lord (ἐν τῷ ναῷ Κυρίου). What shall we do to her so that she does not defile the sanctuary of the Lord our God (τὸ ἁγίασμα Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν)?’ And the priests said

<sup>17</sup> W. F. ARNDT, F. W. DANKER, et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2000, p. 10.

<sup>18</sup> B. REHM, G. STRECKER, *Die Pseudoklementinen: Band I: Homilien*, De Gruyter, Berlin, New York, 2011, p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> B. NIESE, “Excerpta ex Eudemi codice Parisino n. 2635” in: *Philologus. Supplemente*, vol. 15.1, Dieterich, Leipzig, 1922, pp. 145-160.

<sup>20</sup> Γενομένης δὲ <αὐτῆς> ἰβ’ ετοῦς, συμβούλιον ἐγένετο τῶν ἱερέων λεγόντων· «Ἴδού Μαρία γέγονεν ἰβ’ ετῆς ἐν τῷ ναῷ Κυρίου. Τί οὖν αὐτήν ποιήσωμεν, μήπως μιάνη τὸ ἁγίασμα Κυρίου τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν;» Καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ οἱ ἱερεῖς· «Σὺ ἔστηκας ἐπὶ τὸ θυσιαστήριον Κυρίου. [καὶ] Εἴσελθε καὶ πρόσευξαι περὶ αὐτῆς· καὶ ὃ ἐὰν φανερώσῃ σοι Κύριος ὁ Θεός, τοῦτο ποιήσωμεν». Καὶ εἰσηλθὼν ὁ ἱερεὺς λαβὼν τὸν ἰβ’ κῶδωνα εἰς τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων καὶ ἠῤῥατο περὶ αὐτῆς. Cf. É. de STRYCKER, H. QUECKE, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques*, Subsidia hagiographica, vol. 33, Société des Bollandistes, Brussels, 1961, pp. 90-97.

to him [the high priest]: ‘You are standing at the altar of the Lord (τὸ θυσιαστήριον Κυρίου). Come in and pray for her. And whatever the Lord God shows you, that we will do.’ And putting on twelve bells, the priest entered the Holy of Holies (τὰ ἅγια τῶν ἁγίων) and prayed for her” (GJs. 17.6-18.3)<sup>21</sup>. According to “The Gospel of James”, after the murder of Zechariah by King Herod, one of the priests “dared to enter the sanctuary (εἰς τὸ ἁγίασμα) and saw clotted blood at the altar of the Lord (παρὰ τὸ θυσιαστήριον Κυρίου)” (GJs. 47.2-4). As can be seen, the author of the apocrypha mentions the holy of holies of the temple, the altar and elements of priestly vestments. Since the temple is “the sanctuary of the Lord”, a necessary condition for entering it is the purity of the person. At the same time, the bedroom of little Mary, which included only immaculate virgins, is also called “shrine” here. This means that for the author of the apocrypha, the word ἁγίασμα means a holy place in general, and not just the shrine of the Lord.

The first to use the word ἁγίασμα in a figurative sense was Philo of Alexandria. In the interpretation of Ex 15, 17 Philo shows that for him αἰσθητὸν οἶκον θεοῦ “the palpable house of God” is ἁγίασμα “holy”, because it reflects ἁγίων ἀπαύγασμα “the radiance of the saints” and μίμημα ἀρχετύπου “likeness of archetype”, a sense of beauty, embodied in the creation of the world by the forces of God (Philo, *Plant.* 50.4)<sup>22</sup>.

Describing the high priest’s vestment, Philo mentions a plate of pure gold, having a ἐκτύπωμα σφραγίδος “seal impression” with the words ἁγίασμα κυρίῳ “Holy to the Lord” (see Ex 28, 3), as well as bright decorations on the hem of the garment (see Ex 28, 32.34; 39, 24)<sup>23</sup>. The “seal” (ἡ σφραγίς) mentioned in the Exodus for Philo is

“the idea of those ideas according to which God depicted (ἐτύπωσε) the world, ideas that are incorporeal and comprehended only by the mind, the motley color (ἄνθινα) and bells (κώδωνες) - symbols of sensory properties (αἰσθητῶν ποιότητων σύμβολα),

<sup>21</sup> É. de STRYCKER, H. QUECKE, *La forme la plus ancienne du Protévangile de Jacques*, pp. 100-102.

<sup>22</sup> PHILO JUDAEUS, “De plantation”, in: P. WENDLAND (ed.), *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 2, Reimer Berlin, 1897, pp. 143-144.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Ex 28, 36 LXX: οὐκοῦν ἐπὶ μὲν τῆς κεφαλῆς ἔστι “πέταλον χρυσοῦν καθαρὸν, ἔχον ἐκτύπωμα σφραγίδος, ἁγίασμα κυρίῳ”.

the signs of which are sight and hearing” (Philo, *De migr. Abrahami* 103.4-4)<sup>24</sup>.

As one can see, the plate with the inscription “Holy to the Lord” on the high priest’s head for Philo is, first of all, a visible reflection of God’s plans, comprehended only by the mind.

Clement of Alexandria calls Jesus Christ the *ἀγίασμα γνώσεως* “holy knowledge” and *σοφία γνήσιος* “natural wisdom”, He is the only teacher, the good Father’s good will (Clem. Al., *Paed.* 3.12.98.1-2)<sup>25</sup>. Clement calls the Lord the Great High Priest, who places on the altar not sacrificial incense, but the due offering of love, *τὴν πνευματικὴν εὐωδίαν* “spiritual fragrance” (Clem. Al., *Paed.* 2.8.67.1-4). The martyrs, who imitated Christ in good deeds, Clement calls those who *ἐκ δεξιῶν ἴστανται τοῦ ἀγιάσματος* “stand on the right side of the shrine” (Clem. Al., *stromata* 4.6.30.1)<sup>26</sup>. Thus, according to Clement, the sanctuary is Christ, to whom Christians offer prayers as offerings of their mouths.

In the Hermas’ “Shepherd” it is said that the place on the right side of the Lord belongs to those who pleased Him by suffering for His name. To all those who endured fierce beasts, scourging, imprisonment and the cross for the sake of His name belongs to *τὰ δεξιὰ μέρη τοῦ ἀγιάσματος* “the right side of the shrine” (Hermas, *Pastor* 10.1.3-4)<sup>27</sup>. So, for Hermas, Jesus Christ is likened to a temple, and those standing on the right side of Him are likened to those who stand at the right hand of the shrine.

In the Apocalypse of Enoch, the height of the sky is perceived as *τὸ ἀγίασμα τῆς στάσεως τοῦ αἰῶνος* “the shrine of the standing of eternity” (*Apoc. Enochi* 12.4.4)<sup>28</sup>. Enoch’s sanctuary is not connected with the

<sup>24</sup> ἀλλ’ ἐκεῖνη μὲν ἡ σφραγὶς ἰδέα ἐστὶν ἰδεῶν, καθ’ ἣν ὁ θεὸς ἐτύπωσε τὸν κόσμον, ἀσώματος δῆπου καὶ νοητῆ, τὰ δ’ ἄνθηνα καὶ οἱ κώδωνες αἰσθητῶν ποιότητων σύμβολα, ὧν ὄρασις καὶ ἀκοή τὰ κριτήρια. Cf. PHILO JUDAEUS, “De migratione Abrahami”, in: P. WENDLAND, *Philonis Alexandrini opera quae supersunt*, vol. 2, p. 288.

<sup>25</sup> C. MONDÉSERT, H.-I. MARROU, C. MATRAY (eds), *Clément d’Alexandrie. Le pédagogue*, vol. 3, Sources Chrétiennes, vol. 158, Éditions du Cerf, Paris, 1970, pp. 150-190.

<sup>26</sup> O. STÄHLIN (ed.) (1906) *Clemens Alexandrinus. stromata*, vol. 2, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, vol. 15, J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig, p. 261.

<sup>27</sup> M. WHITTAKER, *Die apostolischen Väter I. Der Hirt des Hermas*. Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, vol. 48, 2nd ed., Akademie-Verlag, Berlin, 1967, pp. 70-90.

<sup>28</sup> M. BLACK, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece*, Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece, vol. 3, Brill, Leiden, 1970, pp. 21-23.

temple, but the sky itself as a place of eternal residence of the righteous becomes a sanctuary.

As can be seen, the use of the word *ἁγίασμα* in the Septuagint gave impetus to the allegorical interpretation of Psalm 131. The translator of the psalm himself, most likely, did not intend to add anything to the text. But his translation by subsequent generations of interpreters was perceived as a prerequisite for allegory.

The “ark of Thy Might” (אֲרוֹן עֲזָתְךָ) mentioned in the Masoretic Text is translated in the Septuagint as “the ark of Thy holiness” (ἡ κιβωτὸς τοῦ ἁγιάσματος σου). Since the word *ἁγίασμα* in early Christian literature begins to be applied to the Mother of God, this gave rise to the prerequisite for transferring the image of the ark to the Virgin Mary herself, who carries in her womb the greatest shrine - the Lord Jesus.

In revisions of Psalm 131 Aquila and Symmachus translate the word אֲרוֹן “Thy might” as τοῦ κράτους σου “Thy power” or τῆς ἰσχύος σου “Thy strength”. These translations, unlike the Septuagint, do not provide a basis for theological reflection on the heavenly tabernacle or on the human body as a living shrine. It is obvious that the early Christian writers took the Septuagint as the basis for their interpretations precisely because it provides more opportunities for the transition from understanding the Holy Scripture in the literal sense to the figurative one.

**Verse 18.** The Masoretic Text of the psalm ends with words וְעֲלִיוֹ נִרְאָה כִּכְרוֹן וְצִיָּץ נִרְאָה “and his crown shall shine upon him”. The noun נִרְאָה refers to the “sanctification, separation” of a priest (see Lev 21, 12), the hair of the “consecration” of a Nazirite (see Num 6, 7.19.21; Jer 7, 19), or “crown, diadem” as a sign of the royal person consecration (see II Sam 1, 10; II Sam 11, 12). The word נִרְאָה “crown” in Ex 28, 36 is equivalent to the צִיָּץ “flower”, which refers to the headband with an ornament, which serves as a symbol of the high priest’s consecration (see Ex 29, 6; 39, 30).

The Septuagint psalm ends with the words ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξανθήσει τὸ ἁγίασμά μου “and on him my sanctity will blossom”. The word *ἁγίασμα* “sanctity” in this verse is equivalent to נִרְאָה “dedication, diadem, headband” (cf. Ps 89, 40). Here *ἁγίασμα* is not a temple, but a metaphor of dedication. Perhaps the author of the translation wanted to say that the diadem on the head of the anointed one will shine like flower.

The noun ἀφόρισμα, which Aquila uses in the expression ἀφόρισμα αὐτοῦ “initiation of him”, in the Septuagint is mainly used in cult contexts. First of all, it serves as an equivalent for תְּנוּפָה “shaking offering”, which the priest took in his hands and shook before the Lord (see Ex 29, 24-27; Lev 10, 14-15), or for a sacrificial gift תְּרוּמָה to the altar (see Ex 29, 28; Num 15, 19). Only once the word ἀφόρισμα serves in the LXX as an equivalent for the Hebrew קִרְיָת “crown, diadem, sign of consecration” (see Ex 36, 38). By using the word ἀφόρισμα, Aquila apparently meant that the “anointed one” is separated from other people through a special ritual of initiation.

The noun ἀγιασμός “consecration, sanctification” in the expression of Symmachus ὁ ἀγιασμός αὐτοῦ “his consecration” goes back to the same verb ἀγιάζω “to consecrate, to make sacred” (cf. Gen 2, 3 LXX) as used in Psalm 131 LXX (v. 18; see Am 7, 13). The word ἀγιασμός is used only three times in the Septuagint: as an indication of שֶׁקֶדֶת “consecrated” silver (see Jdg 17, 3), שְׁקֵדָה “sanctuary” (see Ezk 45, 4) and נְזָרִים “Nazarenes” (see Am 2, 11). Symmachus apparently relied on the latter meaning. In this case, the text of the verse in the revision of Symmachus can be understood as follows: ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξανθήσει ὁ ἀγιασμός αὐτοῦ “on him his initiation will blossom”.

St. John Chrysostom gives also translations of unknown persons: τὸ κέρασ “horn” and τὸ ἀφορισμένον αὐτοῦ symbol of “his separation” (Joannes Chrys., *Expositiones in Psalmos* 384.13)<sup>29</sup>. The Archbishop of Constantinople refers the expression ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτὸν “on him” not to the king, but to the people - ἐπὶ τὸν λαόν. Talking about the meaning of ἀγιασμα in psalm, the Greek exegete remarks τὴν εὐπραγίαν, τὴν ἀσφάλειαν, τὴν ἰσχὺν, τὴν βασιλείαν “welfare, security, strength, kingdom” (Joannes Chrys., *Expositiones in Psalmos* 384.17)<sup>30</sup>. The Chrysostom’s interpretation of the psalm takes us far from the idea of a diadem shining on the king’s head or a special consecration of God’s anointed one, which makes him akin to the Nazirites. St. John invites us to think about the benefits that will be received by all who strive to fulfill the commandments of God. The terms θήραν “catching” (v. 15) and λύχνον “lamp” (v. 17) he relates not to one person, but to the whole nation of believers and interprets them as an abundance

<sup>29</sup> JOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, “Expositiones in Psalmos”, PG 55, 384.

<sup>30</sup> JOANNES CHRYSOSTOMUS, “Expositiones in Psalmos”, PG 55, 384.



of life supplies and the patronage of God, leading to well-being<sup>31</sup>. In order to acquire the promised well-being, Chrysostom proposes not to indulge in carelessness because of promises and not to despair because of threats, but to constantly improve, imitating the meekness of David<sup>32</sup>.

The interpretation of Eusebius of Caesarea goes even further from the letter of the Old Testament than the interpretation of John Chrysostom. In his commentary on the Psalms, Eusebius constantly cites revisions of Origen's Hexapla. As a starting point for his theological reflections on Christ as a mediator between God and man serve the Septuagint that is presented in the Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus<sup>33</sup>. Eusebius interprets the expression ἡτοιμάσα λύχνον τῷ χριστῷ μου "I prepared a lamp for my anointed one" (v. 17) as reference to Jesus Christ. David himself, according to Eusebius, is preparing to be a lamp for the coming Christ, taking for a time the place of the sun and light from the perfect lamp (Eusebius, *Dem. Evangelica* 4.16.25-26)<sup>34</sup>. Christ is called by Eusebius "the horn of David" (see v. 17), born from the seed of David. Ephrathah (v. 6) serves Eusebius as an indication of Bethlehem, in which Christ perceives the body, and through the body, as through an earthen vessel, the Divine power ὡς διὰ λύχνου "as through a lamp" radiates to all people τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ λογικοῦ φωτὸς μαρμαρυγᾶς "radiance of divine and intelligent light" (Eusebius, *Dem. Evangelica* 4.16.29)<sup>35</sup>.

The reason why Eusebius interprets psalm in a messianic way based not only the correlation between the word χριστός "anointed one" and Jesus ὁ λεγόμενος Χριστός "called Christ" (cf. Matt 1, 16), but also the very reading of the Septuagint through the prism of the New Testament.

<sup>31</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Interpretation of Holy Scripture. Vol. 2. Conversations on the Psalms* [Tolkovaniye Svyashchennogo Pisaniya, vol. 2. Besedy na psalmy], Kovcheg, Moscow, 2006, p. 563.

<sup>32</sup> JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, *Interpretation of Holy Scripture...*, p. 564.

<sup>33</sup> Theodor Skeet suggests that Eusebius, having started with the large Codex Sinaiticus, interrupted work on this manuscript in order to create the Vatican Codex in a format that took half the size of parchment. Cf. T. C. SKEAT, "The Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and Constantine", in: *Journal of Theological studies*, 50 (1999) 2, pp. 607-609.

<sup>34</sup> EUSEBIUS, "Demonstratio evangelica" in: I. A. HEIKEL, *Eusebius Werke. Vol. 6. Die Demonstratio evangelica*, Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller, vol. 23, J. C. Hinrichs, Leipzig. 1902, pp. 188-189.

<sup>35</sup> EUSEBIUS, "Demonstratio evangelica", pp. 188-189.

So, in the commentary on the words ἐπὶ δὲ αὐτὸν ἐξανθήσει τὸ ἁγίασμα μου “my sanctity will blossom on him” (v. 18) Eusebius first gives a quote from the Gospel of John that the Lord ἐκεῖνος ἦν ὁ λύχνος ὁ καιόμενος καὶ φαίνων “was a lamp, burning and luminous” (Jn 5, 35), and then indicates that ἁγιάζει γὰρ καθ’ ὅλης τῆς οἰκουμένης τὸ τοῦ Σωτῆρος ἡμῶν ἐν τῇ Ἐκκλησίᾳ ἁγίασμα “the sanctity of our Savior in the Church sanctifies throughout the whole world” (Eusebius, *Com. in Psalmos* 24.28.22-23)<sup>36</sup>. The key word ἁγίασμα “shrine, holy”, linking the Greek Psalm and the interpretation of Eusebius, has here an exclusively New Testament understanding. It is not a temple nor a holy place within the borders of Israel. “Holy”, according to Eusebius, is the “anointed one” Jesus, who sanctifies all people on earth.

## Conclusions

The Psalms in the Septuagint is very reminiscent of the interlinear translation of a Jewish source. This book reflects comprehension of the biblical psalms in the era of the Second Temple. In those places where there is a discrepancy with the Masoretic Text, one can trace the features of LXX’ theology, which influenced subsequent exegetical writings of the Church Fathers.

The study of Psalm 132/131 demonstrates that intense search by translators and editors of the Greek Bible for those semantic equivalents that would most accurately reflect the theology of the Hebrew Bible. It is unlikely that the creators of the Septuagint imagined how far the reasoning of its subsequent interpreters could go from the letter of the text. However, the terminology formed by them contributed to the preference of Church exegetes specifically of the Septuagint as a prophetic source about the Messiah who came into the world in the person of the “anointed one” Jesus, called Christ.

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<sup>36</sup> EUSEBIUS, “Commentaria in Psalmos”, *PG* 24, 28.