


τὸ δικαίωμα ἔμπροσθεν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ (Ruth 4:7): An analysis of the Greek rendering of the Hebrew legal aspects in Ruth 4:7 for characterising the Greek translator's translation technique

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Being a literal and relatively precise translation of the Hebrew text, the Septuagint (LXX) of the book of Ruth attests divergences or variants in relation to the Masoretic text (MT) in the details of the text. These variants, if not inconsistent or linked to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, could be explained as a translator's choice to promote clarity, add a particular nuance or introduce innovation at the narrative level of the text. This is, for instance, the case in the legal process that runs through the fourth chapter of the book. Amongst all of the legal aspects illustrated in Ruth 4, this contribution presents a case study, focusing on the interjection in Ruth 4:7 that explains the legal custom. After analysing the equivalence between the Hebrew text and its Greek rendering, this article offers several new insights aimed to produce a more nuanced characterisation of the translation technique of the Greek translator of the LXX-Ruth and a clearer understanding of the nuances, innovations and specificities of the LXX-Ruth.

Contribution: This article contributes to the 'Focus and Scope' of *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* because it deals with both the textual history of the Bible – more precisely, with its process of translation from Hebrew into Greek – and the exegesis of the LXX. Indeed, it highlights new insights into the translation technique of the Greek translator of the LXX-Ruth and on the nuances, innovations and specificities of the LXX-Ruth.

Keywords: Septuagint; LXX; Ruth; legal aspects; Ruth 4:7; translation technique.

Introduction

Being a literal and relatively precise translation of the Hebrew text (Knobloch 2007:239; Thackeray 1909:13; Quast 2006:125), the Septuagint (LXX) of the book of Ruth attests divergences or variants in relation to the Masoretic text (MT) in the details of the text (Bons 2011:701). These variants, if not inconsistent or linked to a different Hebrew *Vorlage*, could be explained as a translator's choice to promote clarity, to add a particular nuance or to introduce innovation at the narrative level of the text.

This is, for instance, the case in the legal process that runs through the fourth chapter of the book. Amongst all of the legal aspects illustrated in Ruth 4, this contribution will present a case study and it will limit the analysis to the interjection in Ruth 4:7 that explains the legal custom. Therefore, this study will first present this verse as it is attested in the MT and LXX. Consequently, the equivalence between the Hebrew text and its Greek rendering will be examined and evaluated. By doing so, this contribution aims: (1) to offer a more nuanced characterisation of the translation technique of the Greek translator of the LXX-Ruth, by taking into account not only the categories of 'literalness' and 'freedom', but also the 'faithfulness' and eventually the 'creativity' of the translator (Ausloos & Lemmelijn 2014:54–55) and (2) to gain a clearer understanding of the nuances, innovations and specificities of the LXX-Ruth.

The interjection in Ruth 4:7: Explaining the legal custom¹

At the gate of Baithleem, in front of the elders of the city, Boos invites Hidden One (בְּנֵי אֶלְמֵינִי) in the MT and κρύφτε in the LXX) to acquire the field from the hand of Noemin and from Ruth.

1. Biblical names follow a *New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)*. Based on personal preference, only the name of Ruth has been changed: from 'Routh' to 'Ruth'. Moreover, this research has been conducted with the support of Hebrew and Greek lexica. For the Hebrew terms, these are: Brown–Driver–Briggs (BDB), the *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew* (DCH) and the *Hebrew and Aramaic*

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He will also need to acquire Ruth herself in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance (4:5). Hidden One replies by declining Boos' suggestion because he would ruin his inheritance (4:6). In 4:7, the narrative is interrupted to describe the legal custom in Israel in former times. The text of 4:7 is shown in Box 1.²

The legal custom in former times in Israel

By examining the equivalence between the MT and LXX, we immediately notice a first textual variant: whereas the MT only attests **אֵת**, the demonstrative feminine pronoun (this), which certain authors consider as having a neutral sense (Hubbard 1988:247; Sasson 1989:141; Schipper 2016:168), the LXX has the syntagm **τοῦτο τὸ δίκαιωμα**.

The noun **δικαίωμα**, from the root of **δίκη**, indicating both 'rule, custom' and 'justice', means 'ordinance, decree' and also 'custom' and 'rightful due'. According to certain authors (LEH *ad loc*, Joüon 1986:85), the latter two meanings of **δικαίωμα** would be Semitisms, based upon the meaning of the Hebrew **טִבְעָה**. However, several studies have indicated that the meaning 'custom, rule' of **δικαίωμα** can no longer be considered a Semitism. Rather, it should be understood as the result of the development of the Greek language, with **δικαίωμα** initially indicating the 'supporting document' in a legal process, which assumed, as here in the LXX-Ruth, the meaning of a(n) 'ordinance/law' (Cadell 1995:207–221; Montevecchi 1996:71–80; Tov 1999:112).

Having established the semantic value of the textual variant in the LXX, the question arises whether or not the Greek translator had a different *Vorlage*, and, if so, how he rendered it. Amongst the scholars focusing on the Hebrew Bible (HB), only Joüon (1986:85) considers the text of the LXX as the 'most original'. Indeed, by referring to the LXX-Ruth and to Jeremiah 32:7–8, where the acquisition of a camp is related to **הַיְשׁוּבָה** ['right of redemption'], he suggests that, in Ruth 4:7, the masculine noun **טִבְעָה** is lacking and that, therefore, **הַיְשׁוּבָה** would have been the 'primitive reading' (Joüon 1986:85). Contrary to this hypothesis, Campbell (1975:147),

Hubbard (1988:247), Sasson (1989:141), Bush (1996:233), Schipper (2016:168) and De Waard (2004) stress the feminine gender of the pronoun and consider the reading of the MT the original one while that of the LXX a paraphrase of the (proto)-MT. When examining what LXX-scholars have written, Bons (2011:708, 2014:231) and Ziegert (2008:243–244) consider **τὸ δίκαιωμα** as an addition of the LXX for the purpose of clarifying the sentence. Among the LXX-scholars, Assan-Dhôte and Moatti-Fine (2009:106) also seem to consider it an addition. After indicating that this noun does not have an equivalence in the MT, they argue that the choice of this term reflects the desire of the translator to award a juridical value to the ancient practice described in this verse. Quast (2006:125), instead, does not include this *plus* among the additions of the LXX-Ruth.

When we examine the critical edition of the HB, we notice that De Waard (2004) does not refer to Hebrew witnesses through an equivalent for **τὸ δίκαιωμα**. He indicates, however, that Vulgata, Targum and Peshitta agree with the reading of the LXX.

By turning the attention on the critical edition of the LXX, we notice that no textual variants are attested for the reading **τὸ δίκαιωμα**. This reveals that there was no hesitation in the Greek transmission to adopt this syntagm, even among the hexaplaric witnesses, which attempt to offer a more faithful rendering of the Hebrew text. We can, therefore, consider that the presence of a noun indicating a(n) 'ordinance/custom/rule' is geographically broadly attested, but only in the versions. Therefore, it is difficult to discern whether or not the LXX-translator had a different Hebrew *Vorlage* and, consequently, I would suggest leaving this question open. With regard to the aim of this contribution concerning a more nuanced characterisation of the translation technique of the LXX-translator of Ruth, it is clear that, if the LXX-translator makes use of a Hebrew *Vorlage*, attesting a Hebrew equivalent for **τὸ δίκαιωμα**, the reading of the LXX reveals a literal and faithful translator. If, instead, the LXX-translator does not have a *Vorlage* diverging from the Hebrew text attested in the MT, then the attestation of **τὸ δίκαιωμα** exhibits a free translator who resorts to creativity in order to render his text as clear as possible for his target audience. In this case, on the basis of what has been said concerning the meaning of the noun and following Assan-Dhôte and Moatti-Fine's hypothesis, the Greek translator would underline the juridical value of the act described in the second hemistich of this verse.

By proceeding through the description of the verse, the temporal adverb **ἔμπροσθεν** ['formerly'] and the local syntagm **ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ** ['in Israel'] render the Hebrew *Vorlage* (**לְפָנֵי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל**, 'formerly in Israel') literally and faithfully. Afterwards, the topic of the legal custom follows: **הַיְשׁוּבָה**–**עַל-הַתְּמוּנָה** in MT and **ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγχιστεῖαν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα** in the LXX.³

BOX 1: Ruth 4:7.

MT	LXX
וְזֹאת לְפָנֵי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-הַתְּמוּנָה וְעַל-הַתְּמוּנָה לְפָנֵי בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי-דָבַר שְׂגָרָה אִישׁ בְּעֵלְיוֹ וַנִּתֵּן לְרֵעֵהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּמוּנָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:	καὶ τοῦτο τὸ δίκαιωμα ἔμπροσθεν ἐν τῷ Ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὴν ἀγχιστεῖαν καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα, τοῦ στήσαι πάντα λόγον· καὶ ὑπελύετο ὁ ἀνὴρ τὸ ὑπόδημα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐδίδου τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀγχιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγχιστεῖαν αὐτοῦ· καὶ τοῦτο ἦν μαρτύριον ἐν Ἰσραὴλ.

MT, Masoretic text; LXX, Septuagint.

(footnote 1 continues...)

Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT). For the Greek terms, the author uses: the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de la Langue Grecque* (DELG), Liddell–Scott–Jones (LSJ), Lust–Eynikel–Hauspie (LEH), the *Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (GELS) and, when possible, the *Historical and Theological Lexicon of the Septuagint* (HTLS). For the equivalence between the MT and the LXX, Hatch–Redpath, *A Concordance to the Septuagint and the other Greek Versions of the Old Testament (HRCS)* has been used. However, in order to avoid an excessive number of footnotes, no specific references will be offered. These will be given only where the lexis are not unanimous regarding the meaning of a term.

2.The Hebrew text follows the *Biblia Hebraica quinta* (BHQ) (De Waard 2004), while the Greek text follows the critical edition of the *Göttingen Unternehmen* (Quast 2006).

3.According to manuscript 108, Symmachus' reading is: *περὶ κληρονομίας καὶ συναλλαγῆς*, which means 'about (instead of "on") the inheritance (according to LSJ, attested only here) and the interchange'.

The lexeme פְּלֶאָה is derived from the root פֿלֶאָה and indicates '(the right to/price of) redemption'. Constructed with the suffix of the first personal singular, this noun is also attested in 4:6, when Hidden One asks Boos to 'redeem his redemption'. In this regard, the lexica and commentaries register nuances in the meaning (Hubbard 1988:248–249; Joüon 1986:84–85); whereas in 4:6, פְּלֶאָה indicates the 'right of redemption', in 4:7, it refers to the 'act of redemption' (of the field). The LXX-translator renders פְּלֶאָה by the noun ἀγγιστεία in both instances, therefore, without distinguishing between the two nuances of meaning. This noun renders the Hebrew equivalent faithfully only from a grammatical point of view.⁴ Semantically, in fact, the Greek noun, derived from the root ἀγγι ['near'], refers to the semantic domain of a 'close familiar relationship', meaning therefore the 'close kinship', 'rights of kin, rights of inheritance', and 'right/responsibility of the next of kin'. A shift in meaning can therefore be observed; whereas the legal custom in the MT is linked to the 'right/act of redemption', in the LXX, it concerns instead 'the right/responsibility of the next of kin'.⁵

The second topic of the legal custom, הַמְּוָה , means 'exchange, exchanging, recompense'. The LXX-translator renders it by ἀντάλλαγμα . This noun is composed of the adjective ἄλλος ((an)other) with a guttural suffix, employed to convey the idea of exchange; the suffix $-\mu\alpha$, indicating the result of the action; and the adverb and prefix ἀντά , developing a distributive value (cf. Assan-Dhôte & Moatti-Fine 2009: 106–107; Heilmann 1963:§302). This means, according to the lexica, 'that which is given or taken in exchange'. Therefore, on the basis of these meanings, the use of ἀντάλλαγμα as an equivalent for הַמְּוָה can be considered a literal, faithful and unique rendering.⁶

The aim of the legal process is expressed by the following final proposition: בְּלֶאָה לְפָנָי in MT and $\text{τοῦ στήσαι πᾶν λόγον}$ in the LXX. Here, the infinitive pī'el from פָּהַל (פָּהַל), constructed with the preposition לְ and meaning 'to fulfil, to

confirm, to establish, to impose',⁷ is rendered by the genitive article τοῦ and the infinitive aorist active στήσαι (from ἵστημι), meaning 'to set up, to establish'. The direct object בְּלֶאָה , meaning not only 'every speech/saying/word' but also 'every matter/affair', is rendered by the adjective πᾶς (at the accusative singular, meaning 'every') and the noun λόγος , meaning 'computation, relation, exploitation, debate, continuous statement, verbal expression, utterance, saying, subject-matter, expression' (DELG: *ad loc*). Now, in the MT-Ruth, בְּלֶאָה is also attested twice in 3:18, when Noemin invites Ruth to sit until the בְּלֶאָה ["matter" and also "word"] turns out' because Boos will not rest until the moment when the בְּלֶאָה has been accomplished (verb לָקַח).⁸ In both cases in 3:18, the Hebrew noun is rendered in the LXX by ῥῆμα , meaning, in the occurrences outside the LXX, 'spoken word, saying'. As for its meaning in the LXX, scholars have underlined that ῥῆμα expresses the same duality as בְּלֶאָה , by referring to both the word and the object of this word, while λόγος seems to be more suitable in reference to the law (Dogniez & Harl 1992:41–43). On the basis of the given discussion, it appears that whereas the MT attests a lexical link between the words of Noemin and the legal action described in 4:7 through the usage of the noun בְּלֶאָה , the LXX-translator does not maintain this lexical link. In this case, he nuances the meaning of his text⁹: in 3:18, he uses ῥῆμα , which indicates primarily the 'matter' (and lastly 'words')¹⁰ and which assumes the nuance of the meaning of the Hebrew *Vorlage*. In 4:7, instead, the translator renders בְּלֶאָה by λόγος , designating the 'spoken word, the statement' and stressing the juridical context, which appears in these verses.

By considering the whole rendering of the final proposition, it can be asserted that it reveals a literal and faithful translator who, by making specific lexical choices, adapts the meaning of his text to the context and stresses the juridical value of the custom described.

The description of the custom

What follows is a description of the custom in Israel: the first sentence refers to the action of a man in removing his sandal ($\text{שָׁלַח אֶת הַיָּדָאִים עַל הַבְּרִיחַ}$), while the second refers to the action of giving it to a neighbour ($\text{וַתִּתֵּן לְרֵעֶהָ}$). In both sentences in the MT, it is impossible to discern which is the man among those involved in the legal action (Boos, Hidden One, the elders or the whole city) who accomplishes the action of removing his sandal and giving it to a neighbour (Hubbard 1988:250; Sasson 1989:142–143; Zakovitch 1999:161). In Greek, the

4. It should be observed, for example, that the participle *gal* from the same root (פֿלֶאָה), indicating the 'redeemer', has three different equivalents in the LXX: six times ἀγγιστεύς (3:9, 12 [bis]; 4:3, 6, 14); once ἀγγιστευτής (4:1) and twice the substantivate participle from the verb ἀγγιστεύω (2:20; 4:7). From a grammatical standpoint, only the substantivate participle from the verb ἀγγιστεύω renders the Hebrew participle faithfully and literally and refers to a generic relative, when Noemin introduces to Ruth the existence of one of the kinsmen (2:20). This form appears also in the verse, object of this analysis (4:7) but it does not have an equivalent in MT. The two nouns (ἀγγιστεύς and ἀγγιστευτής), on the other hand, refer to a specific person: either Boos, Hidden One or Obey (4:14). In comparison to the participle, the substantive accentuated the identity and role of the person, more than the actions that he accomplishes or will potentially accomplish. Moreover, Assan-Dhôte and Moatti-Fine (2009:43) argued that the participle is used with a direct complement; without any complement, it is a noun to be employed. Concerning the two nouns (ἀγγιστεύς and ἀγγιστευτής), we observe that they can be considered as synonyms. However, the occurrence of ἀγγιστευτής in 4:1 – containing four syllables, compared with the three-syllabled of ἀγγιστεύς and attested only here – may be a stylistic expedient to emphasise the character when he first appears. Dorival (2020:143) underlines also that 'The ἀγγιστευτής is more ἀγγιστεύς than the ἀγγιστεύς '.

5. From a semantic point of view, the root of the verb לִטְרוֹף would have been a better equivalent for the root פֿלֶאָה . (Cf. Dorival 2015:238).

6. The equivalence $\text{הַמְּוָה} - \text{ἀντάλλαγμα}$ is, in fact, attested only here (Cf. Assan-Dhôte & Moatti-Fine 2009:106). Elsewhere, the noun הַמְּוָה tends to be rendered as ἀλλάγμα (in Leviticus 27:10, 33 in reference to the 'substitute' animal and in Job 28:17 in reference to the 'exchange of a gold vessel'). In Job 15:31, instead, the Hebrew noun is rendered in relation to the verb הָיָה and has, as an equivalent, a conjugated form of ἀποβαίνω ; whilst in Job 20:18, the syntagm הֵיל תְּמִירָתוֹ ['profit of their trading'] has στρίφνος ἀμάσητος [something tough, unchangeable] as its equivalent.

7. Several authors consider this verb an Aramaism and some point out that this verb is typical of late Hebrew (See Joüon 1986:85; Sasson 1989:142; Zakovitch 1999:160). Campbell (1975:147) and Hubbard (1988:249) considered the verb an Aramaism, but argued that it is not necessarily related to late Hebrew.

8. Notice the assonance between the adjective (בֵּלֵל) in 4:7 and the verb (בָּלַע) in 3:18. The verb בָּלַע is also attested in MT-Ruth in 1:18; 2:13; 4:1.

9. The Greek translator of Ruth renders frequently the vocabulary of the Hebrew text inconsistently in order to enhance the clarity and introduce new nuances at the narrative level of his text (Cf. Bonanno [forthcoming]; Bons 2014:241–249).

10. In the verses preceding 3:18, Ruth says to Noemin what Boos *did* (verb ποιέω , in 3:16), then what he *gave* (verb δίδωμι) to her and finally what he said (verb εἶπον) to her concerning her return to her mother-in-law.

text reads: *καὶ ὑπελύετο ὁ ἀνὴρ τὸ ὑπόδημα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐδίδου τῷ πλησίον αὐτοῦ τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ.*

It emerges that the conjunction *καὶ* is not attested in the MT. In the Hebrew text, only the Masoretic accentuation (the *zaqep qaton* on the last syllable of *רָצַף*) links the final preposition to what proceeds in the verse, because the following sentence is not introduced by any conjunction. It seems, therefore, that the LXX-translator adds the conjunction to his text in order to clarify the construction of the sentences¹¹ and, by so doing, confirms the structure of the verse, which is later made explicit by the Masoretic accentuation. The imperfect medium indicative third person singular *ὑπελύετο* (from *ὑπολύω*, meaning ‘to loosen beneath or below’) is the equivalent of the *qatal qal* *הִלֵּךְ* and renders faithfully, but not literally (which would be an aorist), the iterative value of the Hebrew verb.

The subject of the verb is *ὁ ἀνὴρ*, the equivalent of the Hebrew *וְאִישׁ*. Here the article, expressed in Greek, has no equivalent in the Hebrew text¹² and plays its role in determining the noun to which it is linked. The article refers, indeed, to *the* person, who will be specified subsequently. In this way, whereas in the MT, it is impossible to understand clearly who accomplishes a certain act, the article seems to clarify the people and their role in the legal actions. As for the direct object that follows (*τὸ ὑπόδημα αὐτοῦ*), it represents a literal and faithful rendering of *לְרַגְלֵהוּ*.

The second action of the legal custom (*καὶ ἐδίδου τῷ πλησίον τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*) partially represents a faithful rendering of the (proto-)MT: here, the conjunction *καὶ* and verb *ἐδίδου* (third person singular of the imperfect from *δίδωμι*, meaning ‘to give’) are adequate equivalents for *וַיִּתֵּן*. The following dative *τῷ πλησίον τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*, the rendering of *לְרַגְלֵהוּ*, deserves a more elaborate description and analysis.

The adverb *πλησίον* [‘near’] is preceded by the article and therefore, assuming a nominal value (‘the one who is near’ and therefore ‘the neighbour’), is the expected equivalent of the noun *רֵעִי*. The following syntagm, that is, *τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*, lacks an equivalent in the MT. It is composed by the present participle singular dative from *ἀγγιστεύω*, in apposition to *πλησίον*, meaning ‘who is the next of kin’ and, in this case, where the noun is followed by the object *ἀγγιστεία*, ‘who exercises the rights and responsibilities of a kinsman’.

In the LXX, therefore, the nearby one who receives the sandal is the next of kin (*τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι*) who now exercises the responsibility/right of his role (*τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*). Here,

11.Indeed, there is no evidence to suggest a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. Several manuscripts, witnesses of the recensional work (18 R^{55c} 628 C⁵ 53 334 489), do not attest the conjunction.

12.No evidence seems to suggest a different *Vorlage*. Notice, however, that 376 (‘a good witness of the hexaplaric recension’, see Quast 2006:25) and R³⁰ 55 58 628 (a recension that offers a mixed text, see Quast 2006:72) do not attest the article.

the translator seems to introduce these textual variants¹³ to clarify the dynamic of the exchange and to solve the incertitude related to the identification of the characters, as attested in the MT. Although the specification of the direct complement, *τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*, may appear redundant, it clarifies the new dynamic of the exchange: *ὁ ἀγγιστεύων*¹⁴ does not refer to Hidden One, as is always the case in Ruth 4, but rather to Boos, who is assuming the role of a kinsman and is now exercising his rights and responsibilities (*τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*), as demanded in 4:6.

The identification of the characters involved in the legal custom is now clear: *ὁ ἀνὴρ*, who takes off his sandal and gives it to his neighbour, is Hidden One; the neighbour, who is also the next of kin (*τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι*) and who is assuming and exercising his rights (*τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*) is, instead, Boos.¹⁵

The description of the legal custom, therefore, reveals a translator who can be considered neither literal nor faithful, by considering the incertitude concerning the role of the characters in the MT and, therefore, the difficulty of discerning whether or not the meaning given by the Greek translator is the meaning of the MT. In this case, he clearly makes an exegetical choice and, by resorting to creativity, attributes the actions to one or other of the characters involved in the legal action.

The final statement

Finally, the last sentence of this verse represents a statement, linked in the MT to the beginning of the verse through the repetition of *כִּי* [proceeded by the conjunction] and of the complement of place *לְרַגְלֵהוּ*. Between these two syntagms, the *הַיְהוּדָה*, connected to the root of *רָצַף* (cf. 4:9, 11) and determined by the article (*הַיְהוּדָה*), refers to ‘attestation, testimony’. The Greek equivalent (*καὶ τοῦτο ἦν μαρτύριον ἐν Ἰσραὴλ*) maintains the link to the beginning of the verse through the repetition of the pronoun *τοῦτο* and the complement of place, *ἐν Ἰσραὴλ*. Between them, the imperfect of the verb *εἶμι* in the third person singular (*ἦν*) makes the nominal sentence of the MT explicit, while the noun *μαρτύριον*, in agreement with MT, refers to the ‘testimony, proof’ of the legal custom.

Conclusion

By analysing the Hebrew text of Ruth 4:7 and its Greek rendering in the LXX, this article aimed to offer a more nuanced characterisation of the translation technique of the Greek translator of the LXX-Ruth and establish a clearer

13.Concerning *τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι*, *BHQ* does not attest to any textual variants here. Concerning the Greek text, it seems that only A does not attest *τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι*. Concerning *τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ*, we should first examine whether or not the LXX-translator had a different Hebrew *Vorlage*. However, under the current state of research, there is no evidence to suggest this. When we turn our attention to the critical edition of the LXX, we notice that only manuscript 407 does not attest the accusative.

14.The participle is attested in the plural form in 2:20.

15.We should also note that the personal pronoun of the third person singular, *αὐτοῦ*, has an equivalent in the MT, with the suffix personal pronoun of the third person singular (*לְרַגְלֵהוּ*). However, in the MT, the suffix is linked to the neighbour and refers to *רַעִי*; in the LXX, it is linked to *τὴν ἀγγιστείαν* and refers to *ὁ πλησίον ὁ ἀγγιστεύων*.

understanding of the nuances, innovations and specificities of the LXX-Ruth.

When focusing on the first aim of this article, the study on the interjection in 4:7 has revealed a faithful and literal translator in the rendering of: (1) the local and temporal syntagms (ἐμπροσθεν, ἐν (τῷ) Ἰσραήλ) at the beginning and end of the verse; (2) the purpose of the legal custom (τοῦ στήσαι πάντα λόγον); (3) the first part of the description of the legal custom (καὶ ὑπελύετο ὁ ἀνὴρ τὸ ὑπόδημα αὐτοῦ); and (4) the exchange (ἀντάλλαγμα) and the ‘testimony’ (μαρτύριον). A free translator can also be identified, when considering the rendering of one of the topics of the legal custom (ἀγγιστεία). He also applies a creative approach to clarify his text. That is, for instance, the case in the addition of: (1) the conjunction καί; (2) the verb (ἦν); (3) the article (ὁ ἀνὴρ); and (4) the syntagm τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ. In one case (the *plus* of τὸ δικάσιωμα), however, the incertitude regarding the *Vorlage* employed by the translator cannot be used in order to characterise the translation technique of the LXX-translator.

When we turn our attention to the second aim of this article (the nuances, innovations and specificities of the LXX-Ruth), it emerges that this text offers a clearer identification of the characters involved in the legal action (ὁ ἀνὴρ, τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ). The juridical value of the custom described here is also stressed by: (1) the *plus* of τὸ δικάσιωμα; (2) the lexical choices of λόγος; and (3) the reference to the neighbour, who is the one who assumes and exercises his rights and responsibilities (τῷ ἀγγιστεύοντι τὴν ἀγγιστείαν αὐτοῦ). The text of the LXX becomes therefore more intelligible for a Greek-speaking, Jewish target audience, who were probably unfamiliar with Jewish law. However, whereas the legal custom in the MT concerns the ‘redemption’ (of a field and a widow), in the LXX, it refers to the dynamics of ‘close kinship’.

Although this article has provided new insights into the translation technique of the LXX-translator of Ruth, the results of this analysis, based only on the interjection in Ruth 4:7, do not offer a complete picture of the translation technique of the LXX-Ruth and the nuances and specificities of this text. It should be underlined that this is not the aim of this article. This contribution would rather pave the way and open up a new path for a deeper, more detailed investigation into the LXX-Ruth. Analysing and evaluating the other legal aspects in Ruth 4 and situating them in the whole depiction of the LXX-Ruth becomes therefore a necessary step in order to obtain a more complete characterisation of the Greek translation of Ruth.

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B.B. is the sole author of this article.

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