

The Lexeme *panîm* and its Greek Rendering in Exodus 33: Between Grammaticalized Idiom and Playfulness

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In the mysterious chapter 33 of Exodus, the reader discovers how Moses speaks face-to-face with God, even though the chapter closes by stating that His face cannot be seen.² The chapter contains many paradoxical statements, such as God not directly answering the questions of Moses, doublets and ambiguity around the messenger God promises to send with Moses. Sommer has argued that these textual tensions are resolved in the Greek translation, which presents a smoother text.³ One crucial point that the Greek text would resolve, is the contradiction between Moses speaking *face-to-face* with God, and the statement that His face cannot be seen. In the Greek, Moses only speaks “*vis-à-vis*”⁴ God: there is no mention of God’s face. Besides, where in the Hebrew text, one finds a manifold of different uses of the lexeme פָּנִים throughout chapter 33, this (quite confusing) wordplay is not present in the Greek rendering, where one only reads of God’s face in the statement that it cannot be seen.

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² This article is a partial reworking of my Masters’ thesis, see: E. DE DONCKER, “*Thus YHWH spoke to Moses face-to-face*”: *A Synchronic and Text-Critical Analysis of Exodus 33* (Prom.: Hans Ausloos), Faculté de théologie, Université catholique de Louvain, 2020.

³ SOMMER 2000, pp. 43-60.

⁴ DHORME 1921, p. 375. Schaper, on the other hand translates as “von Person zu Person”, see SCHAPER 2011, p. 317.

This textual difference has also been interpreted as an avoidance, by the Greek translator, of the anthropomorphism of God's face and God being seen.⁵ This presumed avoidance fits well into the context of the recent renewal of the question concerning the theology of the Septuagint (henceforth LXX), i.e. a theology proper to the Greek translator, diverging ideologically at some instances from the theology present in the Masoretic Text (henceforth MT).⁶ One element of such LXX-theology would be the avoidance of anthropomorphisms,⁷ in favor of a more transcendent conception of God.⁸ The translation by LXX of the lexeme פָּנִים, rendering only by 'face' regarding the impossibility of God's face being seen, would then be influenced by the ideological avoidance of the idea of attributing humanlike forms (such as the face) to God. From a grammatical point of view, the characterization of the Greek translation as anti-anthropomorphic, could be difficult to hold.⁹ In fact, often when lexemes such as פָּנִים are used in combination with a preposition, they contain only vaguely the reference to the body part, and are rather "substantives which have become prepositions only by their union with prefixes, as לְפָנַי before, מִפְּנֵי, לְמַעַן on account of."¹⁰ The translation would then not be the result of an anti-anthropomorphic tendency of the translator, but rather result from a natural rendering of an idiom that had long been grammaticalised¹¹ and served as "compound preposition," "pseudo preposition," "semipreposition," or "Halbpräpositionen."¹²

The present paper hopes to address the fascinating rendering in the LXX of the wordplay using the lexeme פָּנִים. Doing so, it intends to firstly set out how and in what sense the lexeme פָּנִים is used throughout Exodus 33. Next, it strives to offer a detailed analysis of the Greek rendering of the lexeme, that does not seem to safeguard the 'bodily subpart' *face* in most of the renderings. Is this rendering due to an anti-anthropomorphism, avoiding the attribution of a bodily, anthropomorphic 'face' to God - or is it rather due to an idiomatic translation of the

⁵ SCHAPER 2011, p. 265: "Zu den weiteren hervorstechenden Eigenheiten der ExLXX gehört ihre konsequente Vermeidung von Anthropomorphismen."

⁶ See e.g., COOK 2017; RÖSEL 2018; AUSLOOS, LEMMELIJN 2020; MÜLLER 2021.

⁷ By anthropomorphism, I understand: *the broad range of attributions of uniquely humanlike characteristics to God. Anthropomorphism includes the ascription (God is, God has, ...) of humanlike bodily, emotional and practical aspects, and extends to more subtle ascriptions such as spatio-temporal or interactive aspects typically associated with human beings, now attributed to God.*

⁸ See for an example of a researcher regarding anti-anthropomorphism as element of an LXX-theology: RÖSEL 2006, p. 247.

⁹ Sollamo writes explicitly against the attribution as anti-anthropomorphisms of the Greek rendering of semi-prepositions with פָּנִים and regards them as non-literal, idiomatic renderings. See: SOLLAMO 1979, p. 74.

¹⁰ GKC §119c.

¹¹ I understand grammaticalization much in the way D. Rodriguez does: "Grammaticalization is the observation over time that frequently used words or phrases can come to be used in increasingly grammatical ways (such as a noun being used as a conjunction, as with תַּחַת), often while also shrinking in size (both phonologically and orthographically)." RODRIGUEZ 2016, p. 36. Rodriguez refers to the standard definition given by KURYŁOWICZ 1965, p. 69: "Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one."

¹² These different names are listed by E. C. Jones, who studies the complexity of the "semipreposition" לְפָנַי. See: JONES 2018, p. 218. He refers to: "Compound preposition: *IBHS* §11.3; pseudo preposition: Joüon, §133k; semipreposition: Sollamo, "Renderings of the Hebrew Semipreposition," 101–16; *Halbpräpositionen*: C. Brockelmann, *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen* II (Berlin: Reuther & Reichard, 1913) §243, esp. B.b."

grammaticalized idiom as semi-preposition?¹³ In what follows, I want to argue that the Greek translation is situated carefully in between using grammaticalized idioms and a playful interaction with the immediate context of the lexeme פָּנִים, as well as with larger intertextual issues.

1. *Exodus 33: A Brief Outset*

Exodus 33 is situated right in the middle of the unit Exodus 32-34. These chapters have been recognized as a unit by commentators, for their form and content.¹⁴ To put it briefly, these three chapters concern the building of the golden calf, its harsh consequences and the peaceful reconciliation with the theophany of Exodus 34 as climax. The chapters 32–34 seem especially connected through the keyword “face”: “An keiner weiteren Stelle im Alten Testament findet sich nämlich in einem Textzusammenhang so gekäuft und in so vielfältiger Verwendung die Rede vom “Angesicht Gottes” wie in Ex 32–34.”¹⁵ This keyword is also crucial for the cohesion of Ex 33.¹⁶

Dozeman connects chapter 33 to the unity of 32–34, by referring to two “intertwining themes” in Ex 33: the theme of divine guidance in the wilderness, and the theme of divine revelation at the mountain.¹⁷ The first theme, the divine guidance, is what connects Ex 33 (especially vv. 1-3) to Ex 32 (especially 32:30-34). The second theme, the revelation of God, is connecting Ex 33 (especially 33:18-23) to chapter 34. Gowan calls the chapters 32–34 “The distancing of God”, in which a movement is made from a distant, wrathful God (e.g., Ex 32:10) to a merciful God re-establishing the covenant (e.g., Ex 34:6).¹⁸ This complete reversal, together with Israel’s awareness of its own imperfections, creates many tensions. Accordingly, the text of Ex 33 presents often seemingly paradoxical events (e.g., God says that Moses cannot see His face, but beforehand it was said that they speak face-to-face) and the persona of Moses incorporates a whole range of emotions and actions. Gowan suggests that these tensions might be emblematic for the radical reversal: the imperfect and sinful Israel, to figure as God’s chosen people, is aware that there is a substantial tension not only within the people itself (their sin and their regrets), but also within God (His love for the people and His awareness of their sin).¹⁹ One should be careful, however, in drawing such parallel: “We do not know how much of [these tensions] is deliberate, a reflection of Israel’s awareness of the mystery of God, and how much may be simply the result of the effort to combine, as best as they could old traditions that did not fit together very well.”²⁰

¹³ In this paper, I will use the definition of Sollamo for the understanding of the concept of semipreposition: “Semiprepositions may be defined as combinations of a preposition and a noun but whose function is prepositional. The first component of the semipreposition is a [...] preposition. The second component of the semipreposition is usually the name for a part of the body, but it can also be a different kind of noun. [...] The term “semipreposition” clearly indicates that the substantival part of the semipreposition has wholly or partially lost its usual connotation. Often it merely qualifies, restricts or corroborates the sense of the preposition with which it forms a semipreposition.” SOLLAMO 1979, p. 1.

¹⁴ This view is shared by researchers such as: ZENGER 1982, p. 36; DOZEMAN 2009, pp. viii-xiii; GOWAN 1994, pp. 217-219; and especially MOBERLY 1983.

¹⁵ HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 225.

¹⁶ “Im Verlauf des 33. Kapitels des Buches Exodus taucht wie ein Leitwort immer wieder der Begriff “Angesicht” auf.” REINDL 1970, p. 56.

¹⁷ DOZEMAN 2009, p. 171.

¹⁸ GOWAN 1994, pp. 217-219.

¹⁹ *Idem*, p. 219.

²⁰ *Idem*, p. 219.

Ex 33, through these “intertwining themes” connects well with its surroundings. However, chapter 33 also constitutes a unity on itself. Both in Ex 33:1 and 34:1, a new intro (וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה (אֶל- מֹשֶׁה) indicates a new section.²¹ Besides, Zenger points at the connection between 33:1 and 32:35, which is troublesome.²² In fact, the plague and punishment of the people, indicated in 32:35, is nowhere found in 33:1. What is more, the *Abführungsformel* of 33:1 seems to be a repetition of 32:34, making it problematic to connect chapter 33 to the preceding words of God in 32:33-34.²³ As for the closure of the pericope in 33:23, Dozeman underlines the change in divine speech: whereas Ex 33 is emblematic for divine absence, Ex 34 concerns the renewed presence of God, by mentioning the reproduction of the covenant tables, and the theophany scene.²⁴ Besides, also the spatial plan changes: Ex 33 focusses on the Tent of Meeting, while chapter 34 turns its attention to the mountain.²⁵

Generally, Exodus 33 can be divided as follows:²⁶

Subunits Exodus 33	
vv. 1-6	God will not accompany the people
vv. 7-11	The tent of meeting and Moses' meditation
vv. 12-17	Moses asks God to accompany the people
vv. 18-23	Moses asks to see God, and preparations for the theophany (Ex 34)

Table 1: Subunits Exodus 33

This general division of chapter 33 is recognized by most commentators, as it is supported by lexical and formal features. Cornelis Houtman notes the lexical groupings: “‘Tent’ occurs 11x, in 33:7-11, ‘door opening’ 4x. In 33:12-17 ידע is used 6x; the expression ‘to enjoy favour’ 5x (33:12, 13[2x], 16, 17).”²⁷ There is consensus that 33:7-11 forms a distinct unit, because of its particular verbal forms: in 33:7-11 the verbs are imperfects, instead of the preceding perfects.²⁸ A final argument for the structure set out above, is that the name YHWH appears in each of the sections exactly twice.²⁹

2. *The Lexeme Panîm: Wordplay and Confusion*

As appears from the general subdivision, Ex 33 combines many contrasting themes, which creates textual tensions. One of these tensions is created by the manifold ways in which the lexeme פָּנִים is used throughout the chapter. In fact, a remarkable *crescendo* is at play. Throughout the whole chapter 33, keywords are subtly introduced, which gain a more profound

²¹ DOHMEN 2004, p. 328.

²² ZENGER 1971, p. 87.

²³ *Ibidem*.

²⁴ DOZEMAN 2009, p. 734.

²⁵ ZENGER 1971, p. 93.

²⁶ For a similar subdivision, see, e.g., BARBIERO 2000, p. 159.

²⁷ HOUTMAN 1993, p. 682.

²⁸ Cassuto characterizes these verbs as: “in the ‘imperfect’ or in the ‘perfect converted to the imperfect’, instead of the forms customarily found in Biblical narrative style: [...] ‘imperfect converted to perfect’, or the simple ‘perfect’.” CASSUTO 1997, p. 429. Many commentaries have been made on these strange verbal forms, see e.g. ROGLAND 2012.

²⁹ BARBIERO 2000, p. 159.

signification at the end of the chapter.³⁰ Martin Buber speaks of an “unerhörter tektonischer Dichtigkeit”, where the different keywords form bridges that carry the sinful people over the abyss their sin has caused.³¹ The most important and present key-word throughout the chapter, is the lexeme פנים, face.³² The lexeme פנים returns throughout the whole chapter in its many connotations. The detailed study of Reindl remains perhaps the most encompassing overview of the different meanings of the lexeme פנים.³³ He distinguishes four main meanings: a) פנים as body part, i.e., as literal face (*Gesicht als Körperteil*) b) the appearance of someone, reflecting one’s emotions and thoughts, and, the face as *pars pro toto*, representing the person as a whole (*Das Aussehen einer Person. Daher ist das Gesicht Spiegel der Seele*) c) what is seen, also implying direction of movement (*Eigene Wahrnehmung, Richtung einer Bewegung*) d) prepositional use as spatial and temporal priority (*Räumliche und zeitliche Priorität*).³⁴ In Exodus 33, we find no less than three of these meanings present. Firstly, it is used in its significance as preposition (d) “before” (e.g., in v. 2 לְפָנַי “before you”). Secondly, it is used symbolically as *pars pro toto* (b) “presence” or “company” (e.g., in v. 14 פָּנַי יֵלְכוּ “my presence will go”) Thirdly, it is used in its “größeres, wörtliches Verständnis”³⁵ as the literal face (a) of God, which no-one can see while being alive. Remarkably, the keyword פנים is repeated with an ever-increasing pace: we encounter the word in 1-6 once, in 7-11 twice, in 12-17 three times and (as the climax) four times in 18-23. Accordingly, following neatly the division of the chapter set out above, the keyword פנים builds up with a precise rhythm through the different sections. The word “face” is thus not only anticipated, but through a *polyptoton*³⁶ the different significations of “face” are stressed and juxtaposed in a remarkable crescendo.

verses	MT and translation	Use of <i>panim</i>
vv. 1-6 v. 2	וְשָׁלַחְתִּי לְפָנַי מַלְאָךְ I will send an angel before you (NRSV)	Prepositional use ³⁷
vv. 7-11 v. 11 (2x)	וַדַּבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face (NRSV)	Unsure use ³⁸
vv. 12-17		

³⁰ Barbiero views “Mitgehen” and “Angesicht” as “Stichwörter” that bind together the different subunits. See: BARBIERO 2000, p. 159. Reindl views only “Angesicht” as “Leitwort”: REINDL 1970, p. 56.

³¹ BUBER 1936, p. 262.

³² REINDL 1970, p. 56; HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 225, 290.

³³ It should be noted that E. Dhorme was the first one to thoroughly analyse the lexeme in its bodily and derived sense: DHORME 1921.

³⁴ REINDL 1970, p. 15. This has been taken up by Hartenstein, who refers to Reindl in setting out the different meanings of פנים: a) nominalen Gebrauch von פנים: Pentateuch vor allem Ex 33-34, b) präpositionalen Gebrauch, c) feste Wortkoppelungen (schauen, suchen, leuchten, verbergen), d) nur an ganz wenigen Stellen findet sich das “Angesicht JHWHs” als eigenständiges Subjekt, aber mehrfach in Ex 33. HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 5.

³⁵ REINDL 1970, p. 64.

³⁶ “A class of figures that repeat a word or words by varying their word class or by giving different forms of the same root or stem” BROGAN 2016, p. 275.

³⁷ See: REINDL 1970, pp. 15ff; NÖTSCHER 1969, pp. 4-9; SOLLAMO 1979, pp. 13ff. (Ex 33:2: intermediate לפני).

³⁸ Reindl speaks of: “metaphorisch-hyperbolische Ausdruck” REINDL 1970, p. 73; Nötscher calls it “repräsentative Gegenwart Gottes” (NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 45), Dhorme proposes the etymological translation “vis-à-vis” (DHORME 1921, p. 375).

v. 14	פְּנֵי יֵלְכוּ My face will go with you (NRSV)	Symbolical use as presence or company ³⁹
v. 15	אִם-אֵין פְּנֵיךָ הַלֵּכִים If your presence will not go (NRSV)	Symbolical use as presence or company
v. 16	וְנִפְלִינוּ אֲנִי וְעַמִּי מִכָּל-הָעָם אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth. (NRSV)	Prepositional use ⁴⁰
vv. 18-23 v. 19 (x2)	אֲנִי אֶעֱבִיר כָּל-טוֹבִי עַל-פְּנֵיךָ I will make all my goodness pass before you (NRSV) וְקִרְאתִי בְּשֵׁם יְהוָה לְפָנֶיךָ and I will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord' (NRSV)	Prepositional use ⁴¹ Prepositional use ⁴²
v. 20	לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאוֹת אֶת-פְּנֵי you cannot see my face (NRSV)	Literal, corporal use ⁴³
v. 23	וּפְנֵי לֹא יֵרְאוּ but my face shall not be seen (NRSV)	Literal, corporal use

Table 2: The use of the lexeme *panîm* in Ex 33 and its subunits

This *polyptoton* creates textual tensions that did not go unnoticed throughout time. Especially the opposition between God speaking face-to-face to Moses (v. 11), and the subsequent impossibility to see His face (v. 20, 23) seems to have sparked a variety of explanations. Form criticism recognized soon the difficulties, as a major variety of genres seems apparent, resulting into Noth's "desperate" statement: "Es handelt sich hier [Ex 33] anscheinend um ein Konglomerat von sekundären Wucherungen".⁴⁴ Redaction criticism would understand the different conception of the 'face of God' as belonging to different redactions.⁴⁵ Also from a narrative point

³⁹ For both v. 14 and v. 15: "The use of פְּנִים with a suffix as a simple periphrasis for the personal pronoun", (JOHNSON 1947, p. 158); "פְּנֵי is to be understood as surrogate for 'I personally'" (WEVERS 1990, p. 549); "in diesen Versen geht es ganz eindeutig um Jahwe selbst und sein Mitziehen, keineswegs um eine Repräsentation oder Manifestation Gottes [...] Vielmehr ist Jahwes Angesicht gerade nicht von ihm selbst zu trennen, sondern mit ihm identisch" (REINDL 1970, p. 64); "Hier ist "Angesicht" eine selbständiger Begriff, die Gleichung Angesicht Jahwes = Person Jahwes ist auch begrifflich hergestellt. "Mein Angesicht" bedeutet sonach "ich in Person, ich selbst"' (NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 47); "Il est clair que la face de Iahvé représente Iahvé en personne. L'expression « ma face » se substitue à nefeshi « mon âme » pour signifier « moi-même », parce que la face est le miroir de l'âme." (DHORME 1921, p. 391).

⁴⁰ SOLLAMO 1979, pp. 102 ff; "sur-face" (DHORME 1921, p. 381).

⁴¹ Sollamo categorizes this under "special cases" of the semipreposition, SOLLAMO 1979, p. 110; Reindl comments: "V. 19: das על-פְּנֵי kann dabei auch ein "vor jemandem vorbei" oder "vor jemandem her" bedeuten, ähnlich wie "לפני" (REINDL 1970, p. 40).

⁴² See notes for v. 2.

⁴³ For both v. 20 and v. 23: "V. 23 ist die Bezeichnung eines Körperteils an der menschlich vorgestellten Gottheit den Mose nicht sehen darf. Ähnlich ist v. 20 zu nehmen" (NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 47); "grösseres wörtlicheres Verständnis" (REINDL 1970, p. 68).

⁴⁴ NOTH 1948, p. 33.

⁴⁵ The researchers can be, generally speaking, subdivided into three groups. A first group underscores the largest attention to JE/JE-redactor: e.g., Moberly argues strongly against a Deuteronomic redaction and attributes the text to an early Yahwistic redaction (Moberly 1983, pp. 182-186). A second group views more clearly a Priestly

of view, a solution could be offered. Narratively speaking, Ex 33 creates expectations that are to be completely reversed later in the chapter. Indeed, at the outset of Ex 33 and in the horizon of the announcement of a violent destruction of the people in chapter 32, the reader expects a physical conflict to take place between God and the people. This expectation, however, gets a complete reversal as the conflict turns out to be spiritual: God is not visible, and, in his transcendence, people should not fear or build an Ersatz-God, but should trust and believe. Besides, v. 11, where God and Moses speak face-to-face, creates the expectation that Moses will see God. However, v. 20 and 23 contradict this. The reader is more than surprised: how can Moses speak to God face-to-face, but not see his face? This surprise, in turn, creates suspense:⁴⁶ how can Moses trust that God will accompany the people if he is invisible, if there is no physical proof? This whirlwind of surprise and suspense leads the reader from opposite to opposite: whereas Ex 32 presented a wrathful and distant God, an anxious Moses and a sinful people, Ex 34, through the theophany, presents a gracious and present God, a trustful Moses and the people as elected ones. In order to move from one contrast to the other, without denying the serious sin of the people, the narrative of Ex 33 functions as a hinge, in which surprise and suspense guide the reader to the catharsis of Ex 34.

It is precisely in the context of this “narrative solution” that one could view the confusing *polyptoton*. Through the wordplay using the lexeme פָּנִים, the reader is confused, but perhaps also brought to think at once the contrasting themes of chapter 33, which cannot evoke but confusion at first. However, it should be noted that the prepositionally used lexeme פָּנִים loses its “full force”,⁴⁷ i.e., it no longer functions as a substantive, but merely as a preposition.⁴⁸ In their prepositional usage, these uses of פָּנִים “show a frozen union with a preposition. These complex constructions function syntactically as prepositions.”⁴⁹ In this regard, it remains to be seen whether one could still speak of a clear word-play, whether the reader still felt the *polyptoton* at play. A. Johnson remarks sharply: “We must beware of laying too great stress upon what have obviously become mere figures of speech; for, as in the case of the prepositional phrases derived from this source (מִפְּנֵי לִפְנֵי etc.), it is probable that the original significance of the Hebrew was hardly felt.”⁵⁰

It is difficult to evaluate when and what precise semi-preposition using the lexeme פָּנִים became a grammaticalized idiom and only retained its prepositional significance. The often-used לִפְנֵי and מִפְּנֵי, through their recurring use as prepositions, probably soon lost the original

redactor at work: e.g., Johnstone attributes a major role to P due to the similarities between Ex 33 and Deut 9-10. He understands Ex 33:1-6; 7-11; 17-23 from the hand of P, who reworked a D-narrative in these verses. (JOHNSTONE 1998, pp. 262- 280, esp. 276). Konkel argues that the language of these two chapters is a mixture of P- and Dtr-language. He understands the formation of the chapters as formed by one, late, post-P redaction that gave the text an ‘enneateuchal perspective’ (KONKEL 2011, p. 169-184). The third, and largest group, focusses upon the deuteronom(ist)ic outlook of the chapter and recognizes in it the hand of a D-redactor, see e.g.: J. VERMEYLEN 1985; BLUM, 1990, pp. 74-79; ALBERTZ 2011, pp. 13-43.

⁴⁶ “Suspense par contradiction”: BARONI 2007, p. 256. Baroni calls curiosity, surprise and suspense the thymic functions of a narrative. See *Idem*, p. 21.

⁴⁷ RODRIGUEZ 2016, p. 154.

⁴⁸ REINDL 1970, p. 17. “Präpositionale Verwendung von פָּנִים: Vor allem und ganz sicher ist מִפְּנֵי mit einer Reihe von andere Präpositionen eine so enge Verbindung eingegangen, dass es, ursprünglich zu deren Verdeutlichung gebraucht, immer mehr seinen eigenständigen nominalen Charakter verliert und mit ihnen zusammen eine neue Präposition bildet.”

⁴⁹ WALTKE, O’CONNOR 1990, p. 221 (11.3.1 a).

⁵⁰ JOHNSON 1947, p. 157.

connection with the lexeme פנים in its bodily sense as *face*.⁵¹ Through the successive and insisting use of the lexeme פנים throughout Ex 33, I believe that it is – despite the strongly grammaticalized nature of the prepositional idiom, especially in its most common forms – still possible to speak of a wordplay, that could have affected the attentive reader. Besides, even though not all the uses of the lexeme פנים might have been understood as a playful anticipation of the final פנים of God, the blatant contradiction between the central פנים-אל-פנים of Moses and God and the statement (twice!) that God’s face (פנים) remains unseen, is too apparent to go unnoticed.

3. The Rendering in LXX

Even though it remains to be seen whether the *polyptoton*, i.e., the surprising wordplay using different usages of the lexeme פנים was truly felt by the reader, and, subsequently by its translators, the rendering of the lexeme פנים in chapter 33 has sparked debates. Before evaluating the translation of the lexeme פנים with its many significances, it first seems apt to present the different occurrences of the lexeme in the MT and their respective occurrences in other textual witnesses.⁵² Different textual witnesses are included here in order to come to a nuanced evaluation of the Greek rendering: variant readings in LXX could, in fact, be either the result of a different *Vorlage*, translation technique, or ideological/theological interference of the translator. Only after a comparison of these differences can a thorough evaluation be made. The textual witnesses included are MT (Masoretic Text), LXX (Septuagint), SamP (Samaritan Pentateuch) and DSS (Dead Sea Scrolls: 4QPaleoExod^m = 4Q22).

verses	MT	LXX	SamP	DSS (4Q22)
v. 2	וְשַׁלַּחְתִּי לְפָנָיִךָ מִלֵּאךְ	καὶ συναποστελῶ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου !πρότερόν σου!	ושלחתי לפניך מלאך	---
v.11 (2x)	וְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל- מֹשֶׁה פָּנִים אֶל- פָּנִים	καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐνώπιος ἐνώπιω	ודבר יהוה אל משה פנים אל פנים	---
v. 14	פָּנֵי יִלְכוּ	Αὐτὸς προπορεύσομαι σοῦ	פני ילכו	---

⁵¹ I tend to agree that the fact of frequent use caused grammaticalization. The point of frequent use and grammaticalization returns in Rodriguez’ description of grammaticalization: “Grammaticalization is the observation over time that frequently used words or phrases can come to be used in increasingly grammatical ways (such as a noun being used as a conjunction, as with תחת), often while also shrinking in size (both phonologically and orthographically)” On the point of frequency, he adds in a note: “Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca (1994) have described frequency of usage as being a driving force in grammaticalization (more recently in Bybee 2011). However other scholars like Lindquist and Mair (2004: xiii) argue that frequency “emerges as an interesting corollary of grammaticalization rather than as a primary cause, and some processes of grammaticalization do not seem to involve an increase in discourse frequency at all.”” (RODRIGUEZ 2016, p. 36). As a more conceptual critical note concerning panchrony and grammaticalization, see RODRIGUEZ 2016, pp. 56-57: “As Sweetser (1988:401) writes, “...speakers certainly do not carry in their heads the semantic history of lexical morphemes.” More recently, Fisher (2011:33) repeats this stating that a typical a speaker of a languages has “no panchronic sense...” Grammaticalization, in any language, is not a process or event that has happened. Grammaticalization is the recognition of semantic and phonological (reduction) patterns of change across a span of time in utterances that did happen.”

⁵² I will make use of the method developed by B. Lemmelijn. Her method consists in two phases: first, variants are collected through registration and description, and second, the variants are evaluated. See: LEMMELIJN 2009, pp. 13-27. I also make use of her symbols: --- for a minus and ! for a different location of the word (LEMMELIJN 2009, p. 219). I use the following texts: MT: *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*; LXX: the eclectic Göttingen edition edited by John William Wevers; Samaritan Pentateuch (SamP): the edition based on Manuscript 6 (C), from the Samaritan synagogue at Shekhem, and edited by Abraham Tal; Dead Sea Scrolls (DSS) 4QPaleoExod^m = 4Q22 from the *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*-edition of the manuscripts of the fourth cave of Qumran.

v. 15	אם-אין פניך הלכים	Εἰ μὴ αὐτὸς σὺ πορεύῃ	אם אין פניך הלכים	--- אם א ---
V. 16	ונפלנו אני ועמך מכל-העם אשר על-פני האדמה	καὶ ἐνδοξαστήσομαι ἐγὼ τε καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὅσα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν.	ונפלנו אני ועמך מכל העם אשר על פני האדמה	[אנ]י ונפלנו ועמך [מכל העם אשר על פני הא]דמה[.]
v. 19 (2x)	אני אעביר כל- טובי על-פניך וקראתי בשם יהוה לפניך	Ἐγὼ παρελεύσομαι ! πρότερός σου ! τῆ δόξῃ μου καὶ καλέσω ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου Κύριος ἐναντίον σου	אני אעביר כל טובי על פניך וקראתי בשם יהוה לפניך	טובי] על פניך --- [וקראתי בשם יהוה] [לפניך]
v. 20	לא תוכל לראות את-פני: כי לא- יראני האדם, וחי	οὐ δυνήσῃ ἰδεῖν μου τὸ πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται	לא תוכל לראות פני כי לא יראני האדם וחי	---
v. 23	ופני לא יראו	τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ὀφθήσεται σοι.	ופני לא יראו	--- יראו

Table 3: The use of the lexeme panîm in Ex 33 MT and other textual witnesses

Already from a quick glance to this table, it appears that the Greek rendering does not contain the *polyptoton* of the Hebrew, as there is no recurrent word-play using the word ‘face’ πρόσωπον. This textual difference has been interpreted in many ways. Looking at the past evaluation of LXX’s rendering of these verses, there is a clear *polarity* to be observed. On the one hand, researchers such as Sollamo and Fritsch have argued that LXX renders here idiomatically an expression that had been grammaticalized.⁵³ Therefore, the LXX would not render by using the literal πρόσωπον, but rather opt for an equivalent that renders better the lexeme in its use at hand. In the same group, we should place such researchers that attribute LXX’s translation to a different *Vorlage*.⁵⁴ They, too, consider that the Greek translator rendered idiomatically their *Vorlage*, without intentionally altering its meaning. On the other hand, researchers such as Schaper and Sommers regard these differences as ideological translations, where the Greek translator bestowed his own ideological (theological?) views upon the translation.⁵⁵ Both views, however, are too polarised to work with. The first category of researchers denies that in the translation ἐνώπιος ἐνώπιω, there is something more at hand than a mere idiomatic translation. It could indeed be true that the clause פנים-אל-פנים had been understood in a specific way, thereby rendering *ad sensum* by using a construction of two prepositions. However, this explanation fails to inform why the translators chose to render by a translation that does not contain the word face (πρόσωπον), while on other occurrences in the Pentateuch, this clause is always

⁵³ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 74 (against anti-anthropomorphism); FRITSCH 1943, p. 12 n.1: “The phrase לפני and its variants (before, lit. to the face of) are consistently rendered in the LXX [...] The Hebrew term had already taken on prepositional value through semantic development and the LXX correctly rendered the idea which the phrase expressed.”

⁵⁴ E.g., Propp, who either attributes variants to a different *Vorlage*, or either to scribal errors – never, however, to intentional modifications by the translator (PROPP 2006, pp. 586-589).

⁵⁵ J. SCHAPER 2011, pp. 258-324; SOMMER 2000, pp. 43-60.

translated literally.⁵⁶ Also the opposite explanation, i.e., to attribute all differences to idiomatic views (e.g., the wish to eliminate the attribution of an anthropomorphic face to God) on behalf of the translator, seems too extreme. In fact, as Fritsch argued already in the early fifties, the Greek translation, at times, presents an even more anthropomorphic text than the one present in MT.⁵⁷

In order to come to a more nuanced vision of the Greek renderings, I will analyse each rendering at a time, paying attention to translation technique and the possibility of LXX having a different *Vorlage* through a comparison with other textual witnesses. In the table hereunder, I describe the variants occurring in the immediate context of the (rendering of the) lexeme פנים.

Verse	Variant	Description of the variant
Ex 33:2	Ex 33:2 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	LXX translates the root: ושלח/שלח by και συναποστελω which means “to send” by the verb συν-αποστέλλω, which has the slightly different meaning “to send with someone”
	Ex 33:2 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	τὸν ἄγγελόν μου: τὸν μου= LXX+
	Ex 33:2 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	Different order: πρότερόν σου comes after the word angel, whereas the Hebrew places לפניך before the word angel. Various manuscripts attest πρὸ προσώπου σου instead of πρότερόν σου.
Ex 33:11	Ex 33:7-11 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	λαβὼν/ἔλαβεν; ἔπηξεν/ἔπηξε; και ἐκλήθη/ἠκαλεσθη; και κατενοούσαν/ἔβλεπον; και ἴστατο/ἔστη; and προσεκύνησαν LXX translates these verbs by: ודבר/και ἐλάλησεν; ויהשתחו/ἠσέχθη; aorists (participium or indicative), whereas the verbs of the MT/SamP would normally indicate futures (being <i>yiqtol</i> or <i>weqatal</i>) Besides, the ו of the <i>weqatal</i> -forms often misses in LXX.
	Ex 33:11 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	ἐνώπιος ἐνώπιω/ פנים אל פנים: LXX translates by adjectives in a dative construction. Besides, the adjective ἐνώπιος is used here, whereas Ex 33:20 LXX uses τὸ πρόσωπον to translate פנים.
Ex 33:14	Ex 33:14 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	αὐτός/פני: LXX attests αὐτός instead of פני (my face, or my presence) (self), without a designation of the 1 s. that is attested in the suffix of פני.
	Ex 33:14 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	προπορεύσομαι σου/ילכו: σου = LXX+. Besides, LXX has a different <i>Numeruswechsel</i> : προπορεύσομαι is an ind. Fut. Med. 1 s., whereas ילכו (plural פני as subject) is a <i>yiqtol</i> 3 pl. Furthermore, LXX uses the verb προ-πορεύομαι (to go before) whereas MT/SamP has simply הלכו (to go).
Ex 33:15	Ex 33:15 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	αὐτός σὺ/פניך: σύ = LXX+: the σύ helps rendering the 2 pers. s. of פניך. LXX attests instead of פני (my face, or my presence) αὐτός (self).
	Ex 33:15 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	πορεύη/הלכים: LXX has a subj. med. pres. 2 s., while MT/SamP attest a part. act. pl. Due to a difference in the

⁵⁶ Gen 32:31 πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον; Deut 34:10 πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον; Also outside the Pentateuch, we find only literal translations: Judg 6:22 πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον. Ezek. 20:35 πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον.

⁵⁷ FRITSCH 1943, pp. 62-63. Fritsch refers here to LXX-Ex 33:13.18, where LXX seems much more direct (and anthropomorphic) than MT.

		subject of the verb: LXX has ἀντὸς σύ as subject, MT/SamP have the plural פניך as subject.
Ex 33:16	Ex33:16MT/DSS≠ LXX/SamP	καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομεθα and ונפלינו/ונפלאנו: Whereas SamP/LXX read פלא (“to be extraordinary”), MT/DSS read פלה (“to be different, to be distinguished”).
Ex 33:19	Ex 33:19 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	παρελεύσομαι τῇ δόξῃ μου/ אעביר כל טובי כל = MT/SamP+. Besides, LXX has δόξη (f. dat. s.) for טובי. Normally, the word כבוד is translated by δόξα. The word טוב is usually rendered by ἀγαθός, ἀστεῖος or ὀρθῶς. This is the only time in Ex that טוב is rendered by δόξα. Finally, LXX has an intransitive verb, while MT/SamP, through the hifil, has a transitive verb.
	Ex 33:19 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου Κύριος/ בשם יהוה: μου = LXX +
Ex 33:20	Ex 33:20 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου / לא יראני האדם/ τὸ πρόσωπόν μου = LXX+. LXX also uses a double negation.
Ex 33:23	Ex 33:23 LXX ≠ MT/SamP	Σοι = LXX +

Table 4: Description of textual variants

Having briefly described the variants occurring in the immediate context of the lexeme פנים, the variants now need to be evaluated in order to come to a better understanding of the rendering of the lexeme. After all, the question needs to be answered as to whether these variants stem from an ideological influence (avoidance of polyptoton and of the anthropomorphic face of God), from a different *Vorlage* or from the translation technique aiming to render idiomatically a grammaticalized item. In order to do so, the immediate context of the lexeme will be taken into account, to come to a more complete view of how the lexeme is rendered. The evaluation is grouped along the different uses of פנים, identified and set out above (prepositional, symbolically as *pars pro toto*, literal as body part and ‘unsure’ use).⁵⁸

Prepositional use of the lexeme panîm

Regarding the prepositional use of פנים in Ex 33, two kinds of prepositions are prefixed to the lexeme פנים: על and ל. Firstly, both in v. 2 and v. 19, the semipreposition לפני is used. This is the most commonly used semipreposition containing the lexeme פנים.⁵⁹ Generally speaking, the semipreposition לפני has four main meanings: a) “before” as indication of place (*Ortsangabe*), b) “before” as temporal priority (*Zeitliche Priorität*), c) “to go before, to precede” as an “intermediate meaning”⁶⁰ (*übertragene Verwendung*) d) “for” as a fuller form of ל (*vollere Form für* ל).⁶¹ In this preposition, the bodily aspect of the lexeme פנים seems to have receded entirely to the background, Nötscher speaks of the “zur bloßen Präposition gewordenen Verbindung לפני. Der ursprüngliche wörtliche Sinn ‘für das Angesicht’ ist fast ganz vergessen.”⁶² The twice occurring לפני thus seems to be completely prepositional, having lost its

⁵⁸ Cf. REINDL 1970, p. 15; HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 5.

⁵⁹ REINDL 1970, p. 18.

⁶⁰ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 16.

⁶¹ REINDL 1970, pp. 18-24.

⁶² NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 8.

bodily underground. That the prepositional לפני is fully grammaticalized,⁶³ can also be observed in its rendering throughout LXX, where the most frequent translations do not contain the word ‘face’ (πρόσωπον): “The most usual equivalent is ἐνώπιον, while ἐναντίον and ἔναντι share the next highest frequency, followed by ἔμπροσθεν, πρὸ προσώπου and κατὰ πρόσωπον.”⁶⁴ Translations using the word πρόσωπον appear only as the third option. Sollamo, in her careful and exhaustive overview of LXX’s renderings of this semipreposition, lists the corresponding rendering of לפני in Exodus. She shows that in Exodus, the stereotypical rendering⁶⁵ of לפני is ἐναντίον.⁶⁶ The literal rendering πρὸ προσώπου, on the contrary, appears only three times in Exodus and seems quite rare in the Pentateuch as a whole.

The semipreposition לפני first occurs in v. 2, where God says that he “will send (His) angel/messenger *before* Moses”. Two variants are apparent in the immediate context of the semipreposition לפני. Firstly, there is **Ex 33:2 LXX ≠ MT/SamP τὸν ἄγγελόν μου/מלאך**. This variant has a plus in LXX, where LXX has an article and μου, against MT/SamP which is without article and suffix. This, of course, raises the question of who this messenger is, and what is meant by it. Probably, also the LXX-translator stood before this problem and added the article and suffix to make the text read smoother. Ausloos and Propp understand this translation as an intention to harmonize with Ex 23:23 and 32:34, where the MT reads ‘my angel’ (מלאכי).⁶⁷ Understanding the LXX+ as an intention to harmonize with the preceding verses, another reading of the messenger comes to the fore. In speaking of “my angel” (instead of “an angel”), the angel becomes a mere instrument of God: the angel becomes subordinated to God, a mere instrument, instead of an autonomous character.⁶⁸ Also the MT of Ex 33:2 and 23:20.23 are closely related: the same verbs (שלח and גרש) are used, and the vocabulary and syntax seems similar. In MT-Ex 23:20-23, the angel is given a substantial role, and it is even said that God’s name is within the angel. This strong link between God and *His* angel, to Sommer, implies that in Ex 23:20-23 and 33:2 (MT), the angel is a manifestation of the divine.⁶⁹ However, this creates a problem: how can God send an angel, which is a manifestation of the divine, but at the same time withdraw himself from the midst of his people? Sommer consequently understands the translation by “my angel” as part of the LXX-solution to this problem, as it helps understand the angel as a mere, loose substitute for divine presence.⁷⁰ The second variant concerns **Ex 33:2**

⁶³ Grammaticalized in the sense that the body part has lost its bodily meaning and now “merely qualifies, restricts or corroborates the sense of the preposition with which it forms a preposition” (SOLLAMO 1979, p. 1.)

⁶⁴ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 13.

⁶⁵ “Each of the translators has more than one way of translating לפני. The persistent use of the same equivalent on most occasions where the Hebrew has לפני implies a fact of translation technique, namely, a *stereotyping tendency*.” As a criterion for this stereotypical rendering, one book has to prefer a certain equivalent in at least 50% of the cases. SOLLAMO 1979, p. 13.

⁶⁶ See SOLLAMO 1979, table pp. 14-15.

⁶⁷ AUSLOOS 2009, p. 36; PROPP 2006, p. 586. Besides, Propp suggests that instead of a harmonization, this might simply be a graphic error, as the next word (in 33:2) begins with a *waw*, which is similar to the *yod* in Greco-Roman era script.

⁶⁸ Ausloos understands LXX-Ex 33:2 and 23:20 (both translate the rare, indefinite מלאך as τὸν ἄγγελόν μου) as a hint to a harmonisation with the Deuteronom(ist)ic ideology, where the role of the angel is downplayed: AUSLOOS 2009, p. 38. We will come back on this later, addressing the *playful* translation of the lexeme.

⁶⁹ Sommer, as said above, regards the translation of the LXX as resolving textual tensions of Exodus 33. One of these problems, he believes, is that there are two contradicting conceptions of the angel apparent in the chapter. Sommers distinguishes two possible readings of the angel of Ex 33:2. On the one hand, the angel could be seen as a mere messenger, a *substitute* for the divine. On the other hand, the angel could be seen as a *manifestation* of the divine, where God and the angel are more or less the same. See: SOMMER 2000, pp. 47-48.

⁷⁰ SOMMER 2000, p. 49.

LXX ≠ MT/SamP **יהלשי/καὶ συναποστελῶ**. LXX translates the root *לש* (“to send”) by the verb *συν-αποστέλλω*. Le Boulluec and Sandevour as well as Ausloos indicate that the verb *לש* is generally translated by *αποστέλλω* and see the LXX translation by *συν-αποστέλλω* (*συναποστελῶ*: future) as a deliberate choice to conform with the verb of v. 3 *συν-αναβῶ/λήγῃ* (both *future*).⁷¹ This translation could point to a free, yet faithful translation technique: in comparison to the parallel Ex 23:20 which is translated almost slavishly by LXX, we find here a translation that stays close to the Hebrew but freely opts for a verb that accords with the later *συν-αναβῶ*. The translation technique of LXX-Exodus has through previous research been characterized as both faithful and free.⁷² The choice to translate *לש* by the verb *συν-αποστέλλω* seems to fit in this image of a free and faithful translator. In fact, this word-choice could help resolve the tension between v. 2 and v. 3, much in the same line as the plus evaluated just before: by creating a parallel between *συν-αποστέλλω* in v. 2 and (*μὴ*) *συν-αναβῶ* in v. 3, the reader understands that God will send a messenger ‘with’ the people, but he himself will not go ‘with’ the people. Accordingly, the LXX resolves in yet another way the possible tension between God promising to send an angel *with* the people, and His aversion to go *with* the people.

Having briefly addressed the variants occurring in the immediate context of the semipreposition *לפני*, now the semipreposition and its respective occurrence in textual witnesses needs to be analyzed. There is the variant **Ex 33:2 LXX ≠ MT/SamP ! πρότερόν σου**.⁷³ In LXX, this comes after the word angel, whereas the Hebrew places *לפני* before the word angel. The order of the prepositional phrase “before you” could be linked to the free translation that characterizes LXX-Exodus.⁷⁴ The fact that “before you” stands in another place would then just be a matter of a more natural Greek sequence and does not have large implications for the exact rendering of *לפני*. More important, however, is the translation of *לפניך* by *πρότερόν σου*.⁷⁵ Wevers notes that the more literal expression *πρὸ προσώπου σου* is used to translate *לפניך* in Ex 23:20 and 32:34. This raises the question as to why Ex 33:2 has a translation that differs from those two verses, especially since it seems possible that Ex 33:2 was inspired by these verses, as said before.⁷⁶ Firstly, a possibility is that LXX intentionally avoids the prepositional phrase *πρὸ προσώπου σου* (containing the word *πρόσωπον* (face)) in order to prevent the *polyptoton* of the MT that perhaps introduces anthropomorphistic ideas about the face of God.⁷⁷ However, since here the subject of the ‘face’ is here not God, but Moses and the people, this seems to be no satisfying solution. Secondly, it could be possible that this rendering, much like the variants in the immediate context, adds to a smoother text, solidifying the complex structure of Exodus 33

⁷¹ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR (Bible d’Alexandrie) 1989, p. 329 ; AUSLOOS 2009, p. 34.

⁷² “The book of Exodus is a “faithful” translation of its Hebrew basic text, which has exercised freedom with respect to the said *Vorlage* to acknowledge the linguistic characteristics of the Greek language and to provide a final result that represents grammatically correct Greek.” AUSLOOS & LEMMELIJN, 2014, p. 62.

⁷³ The symbol ! is derived from the method of B. Lemmelijn, who uses ! to indicate a different word-order (LEMMELIJN 2009, p. 219).

⁷⁴ See e.g., AEJMELEAUS 1987, p. 73: “The translator of Ex [has] a tendency towards natural Greek usage and freedom with regard to the word-order of the original”. (See also *Ibidem*, p. 65, 76).

⁷⁵ It should be noted that various manuscripts have *πρὸ προσώπου σου* instead of *πρότερόν σου*, but Wevers nevertheless considers *πρότερόν σου* to be the original, and *πρὸ προσώπου σου* being a secondary harmonization with the foregoing verse 32:34. I follow Wever’s preferred reading here.

⁷⁶ We will return to this point beneath.

⁷⁷ Cf. SCHAPER 2011, p. 265: “Zu den weiteren hervorstechenden Eigenheiten der Ex^{LXX} gehört ihre konsequente Vermeidung von Anthropomorphismen.” It is interesting to note that the literal prepositional phrase *πρὸ προσώπου σου* is used to translate *לפניך* almost every time in Deuteronomy. See: Deut 9:3,4; 22:6; 23:15; 28:7 (x2); 30:1,15,19; 31:3.

as a more unified whole. In fact, the clause *πρότερόν σου* occurs as well in v. 19, where it is said (in LXX) that God's glory will go before Moses. Now, this can be integrated in the light of what has been argued before about the confusing role of the angel, and its eventual tension with God's presence: in v. 19, through the clause *πρότερόν σου* bound with v. 2, it becomes clear that God will no longer send an angel, but eventually is convinced to go *Himself*, with *His* glory passing before (*πρότερόν σου*) Moses. If the LXX accounts in this way for a more unified text, it should be noted that the Greek nonetheless says faithful to its *Vorlage*, which was probably quite similar to MT. Indeed, Sollamo, in her survey of renderings of לפני within the LXX also lists πρότερος. This is a rarer rendering, used only in two other occurrences in the whole book of Exodus.⁷⁸ The adjective πρότερος occurs 18 times in LXX to render לפני, 10 times when לפני has intermediate sense and 8 times for temporal sense.⁷⁹ This means that πρότερος is never used to render לפני in a local sense. In Ex 33:2, לפני similarly should be understood rather in an intermediate sense than strictly local. Accordingly, LXX translates with πρότερος, which is both in LXX as well as contemporary Greek outside of LXX never used locally, perhaps in order to underline that the angel will be sent to guide, rather than literally/locally go “before” Moses.⁸⁰ In this framework, we could return to the foregoing variant συν-αποστέλλω. Sollamo notes: “At times a preverb also appears with πρότερος to translate intermediate לפני.” The συν- would then make explicit the intermediate use of לפני. Shortly, the first rendering of לפני shows a free (different word-order, non-literal translation, smooth text) yet faithful (לפני in its intermediate sense is rendered precisely) translator at work.

The second occurrence of לפני appears in the second part of v. 19, where God promises to call out his name “before Moses”. In LXX, this verse is rendered somehow awkwardly: “And I will call by my name “Lord” before you” (NETS). As a variant, there is **Ex 33:19 LXX ≠ MT/SamP** ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου Κύριος/יהוה בשם, with μου as a LXX +. I believe that LXX adds μου, which stresses even more the name of God, perhaps in order to harmonize with the dative + μου (τῇ δόξῃ μου) that precedes. In the rendering of this phrase, especially the word ἐπί (by) seems awkward. LXX translates extremely literally by ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί, but this is quite unnatural Greek. In Ex 34:5, we find almost the same phrase, but here the word ἐπί is left out (καὶ ἐκάλεσεν τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου “And he [God] called out his name “Lord”” (NETS)). Why LXX has in Ex 33:19 the far more literal and ‘wooden’ ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί is not clear, but perhaps it stems from the verb ἐπικαλέω, meaning “to invoke”.⁸¹ Now, in this context of quite literal and awkward translation, it could surprise that LXX-Ex 33:19 has the non-literal ἐναντίον σου for לפני. The expression ἐναντίον σου, even though it does not render literally the word “face” that is present in the Hebrew expression, transfers nonetheless well the meaning of “in front of you” in Greek, as ἐναντίον is never used temporally and implies a minimal distance.⁸² Rather than an avoidance of the word “face”, this translation, then, appears as an idiomatic understanding of the intermediate/local use of לפני. Besides, and perhaps most importantly so, the rendering by ἐναντίον appears to have been the stereotypical rendering of לפני in LXX-Ex,⁸³ and seems to

⁷⁸ SOLLAMO 1979, table pp. 14-15.

It should be noted that Sollamo prefers in Ex 33:2 the reading πρὸ προσώπου σου, and thus does not include it within her survey. She states that there are only two occurrences of πρότερος in LXX-Ex, but with our preference for πρότερος in Ex 33:2, the rendering occurs 3 times in LXX-Ex. The other renderings of לפני by πρότερος in LXX-Ex are Ex 10:14 and Ex 23:28.

⁷⁹ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 36.

⁸⁰ See SOLLAMO 1979, p. 36.

⁸¹ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 335.

⁸² SOLLAMO 1979, pp. 21-24.

⁸³ SOLLAMO 1979, table pp. 14-15.

be the result of a consistent preference of this rendering over more literal but rather un-Greek idioms using *πρόσωπον*.⁸⁴

In Exodus 33, another common semipreposition using the lexeme *פנים* occurs: *על-פני*. Reindl distinguishes three categories for which this semipreposition is used 1) for persons, meaning: a) on, upon b) what one can see c) in the eyes of; 2) for objects, meaning: a) on the other side b) the surface c) local descriptions d) temple; 3) for God: only very rarely.⁸⁵ Sollamo indicates that the meaning of “on the surface of, upon” is the most common, and that “the translators favour the slavish equivalents” (i.e., equivalents using the word *πρόσωπον*).⁸⁶ However, this seems not the case in LXX-Ex, where the semipreposition is rendered only twice by “slavish equivalents”, while the other four occurrences render by prepositions that do not contain the word *πρόσωπον*.⁸⁷ In Exodus 33, the semipreposition *על-פני* occurs twice.

It first occurs in Ex 33:16, where God distinguishes Moses and His people from the other nations “on the face” of the earth. The only variant in this verse is **Ex 33:16 MT/DSS ≠ LXX/SamP** *καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομεθα* and *וּנְפַלְיִנוּ וְנִפְלְאֵנוּ*. Whereas SamP and the presumed *Vorlage* of LXX read *פלא* (“to be extraordinary”), MT/DSS read *פלה* (“to be different, to be distinguished”). This difference does not point at a different translation technique, or a harmonization, but can be explained from the homophony between the two very similar roots.⁸⁸ In this verse, the semipreposition *על פני* is rendered by *ἐπί*. Again, LXX uses a translation that does not show a trace of the ‘face’ that is present in the Hebrew expression. There is a parallel phrase in both Deut 7:6 and 14:2 (*עַם-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה*) “a people chosen out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth”). Strikingly, in LXX-Deuteronomy (both 7:6 and 14:2), the expression *על-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה* (“on the (sur)face of the earth”) is rendered by the “slavish equivalent”⁸⁹ *ἐπὶ προσώπου τῆς γῆς*. LXX-Ex 33:16 contains only the shorter expression *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*. This could be attributed to LXX’s free translation technique. Wevers, in his survey of the different translations of expressions containing the lexeme *פנים*, notes that most of the time one single word is used to render a composed expression (usually *ἀπό*).⁹⁰ Besides, in texts such as Num 12:3, *על-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה* is likewise translated by the simple *ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς*. Rather than intentionally contrasting to LXX-Deut 7:6 and 14:2, by leaving out the word *πρόσωπον*, LXX-Ex seems to render here idiomatically. Indeed, the equivalent *ἐπὶ* has as meaning “on the surface of, upon”, that renders well the semipreposition. Besides, Sollamo notes that the contemporary Koine outside the LXX, does not attest any constructions with *πρόσωπον* to render “on the surface, upon”, neither the substantive *πρόσωπον* having the meaning of “surface”.⁹¹ In that line, it should be noted that LXX-Ex generally prefers to render this semipreposition by idioms that do not contain the word *πρόσωπον*.⁹² Consequently, the rendering by *ἐπὶ* seems to be idiomatic and consistent in conveying carefully the sense of the Hebrew semipreposition at hand.

The second occurrence of the semipreposition *על-פני* appears in v. 19. Both Reindl and Sollamo characterize this occurrence of the semipreposition as a special one. Already the

⁸⁴ Sollamo notes: “*πρὸ προσώπου* does not occur in original Greek texts” (SOLLAMO 1979, p. 17).

⁸⁵ REINDL 1970, p. 42.

⁸⁶ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 102

⁸⁷ SOLLAMO 1979, table p. 103.

⁸⁸ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 334.

⁸⁹ SOLLAMO 1979, table p. 103

⁹⁰ WEVERS 1992, p. 218.

⁹¹ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 102

⁹² See table SOLLAMO 1979, p. 103.

immediate surrounding of the semipreposition is special, for God announces here that he will make pass his glory/goodness “upon” Moses. Some variants of the immediate context should be addressed first. There is **Ex 33:19 LXX** \neq **MT/SamP** παρελεύσομαι τῇ δόξῃ μου אעביר טובי כל/טובי. There are three differences between MT/SamP and LXX at play. Firstly, there is the remarkable translation of δόξῃ (f. dat. s.) for טובי. In the preceding verse v.18, and in Exodus in general, the word כבוד is translated by δόξα.⁹³ Sanderson, in her survey of this translation, notes that the word טוב in LXX-Exodus is usually rendered by ἀγαθός, ἀστέιος or ὀρθῶς. Ex 33:19 is the only time in Ex where טוב is rendered by δόξα.⁹⁴ The variant probably does not result of a different *Vorlage*. The word כבוד translated by δόξα, with God as its subject occurs in Ex 24:16-17 and 40:34-35. In these passages, believes Sanderson, the word δόξα stands for the visible manifestation of God’s deity and character that includes God’s goodness.⁹⁵ She then concludes: “The translator apparently felt that δόξα best captured the meaning here [33:19]: the self-revelation of Yahweh to Moses.”⁹⁶ I concur with Sanderson that this variant can be considered as stemming from the translation-technique that rendered through its translation a more specific idea. In this regard, also Sommer’s view is interesting. He takes the translation by δόξα to be a move to smoothen the text.⁹⁷ In the Hebrew text, it is not clear how God, invoking his goodness, responds to Moses’ question (v.18) that God shows his glory. In LXX, however, the text runs smoothly since God’s reply is immediately linked to Moses’ question through the corresponding vocabulary. Similarly, in the following v. 22, God states that His glory will pass by. Through the use of δόξα in v. 19, LXX binds the verse with what precedes and what follows. As a second difference, LXX has an intransitive verb (παρελεύσομαι), while MT/SamP have a transitive one, especially through the use of the hifil (אעביר). Accordingly, LXX reads “I will pass before you in my glory” (NETS), while MT/SamP read “I will make all my goodness pass before you” (NRSV). I follow Le Boulluec and Sandevour in interpreting this variant as stemming from a rational yet theological issue.⁹⁸ In LXX, the glory of God is not seen as something exterior, but as part of God himself. This corresponds with Sanderson’s interpretation of δόξα as God’s self-revelation: he reveals himself totally, and his glory/goodness is not something apart from himself, it is God. That God’s glory is an integral part of God, will be clear in Ex 34:6-7, where God reveals who he is through his attributes. In this respect, we can address the third difference of this variant, which entails that MT/SamP have כל (all) as a plus. This word seems otiose in LXX, since it is God who will pass with his glory, and this entails that all his glory will pass.

How to interpret then, in this highly theological passage, the rendering of πρότερός σου for על פניך? As said, both Reindl and Sollamo consider this occurrence of the semipreposition as a special one, in that it contains something more than the normal uses of the semipreposition, and both of them regard the semipreposition על פניך here reflecting rather the intermediate use of לפני.⁹⁹ Also the rendering of the semipreposition πρότερός σου is rare.¹⁰⁰ Le Boulluec and

⁹³ SANDERSON 1986, p. 248. Perhaps it should be remarked that LXX^B has ἐμφάνισον μοι σεαυτόν here, instead of the more literal δεῖξον μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν. Both Wevers and Rahlfs prefer the literal reading. Indeed, the literal reading seems most plausible here, while the LXX^B reading seems to be “copy-pasted” from v. 13.

⁹⁴ SANDERSON 1986, p. 249.

⁹⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁶ *Ibidem*.

⁹⁷ SOMMER 2000, p. 55.

⁹⁸ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 335.

⁹⁹ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 110. REINDL 1970, p. 40.

¹⁰⁰ Sollamo situates the rendering within the group of rare translations: “other renderings”: “The special cases again offer several free or divergent renderings”, SOLLAMO 1979, p. 110.

Sandevour observe that this is the only example of על פניך being translated by πρότερός σου.¹⁰¹ Besides, in the highly similar LXX-Ex 34:6, we read: καὶ παρήλθεν κύριος πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ. Here, the literal translation πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ (“before his face”) is chosen to render על פניך. Accordingly, it seems appropriate to question why LXX chose the expression πρότερός σου instead of the literal πρὸ προσώπου αὐτοῦ. It could be the case that LXX tries to avoid the rather confusing *polyptoton* of the Hebrew text. However, as argued above, I believe that the translation πρότερός σου is used to link v. 19 and v. 2. In this v. 2, the clause πρότερός σου was used to render the intermediate use of לפני, expressing that the angel would be sent *before* Moses, rendering לפני. Now, if, as Reindl and Sollamo hold,¹⁰² the meaning of the semipreposition in v. 19 is closely related to the intermediate use of לפני, the translation by πρότερός σου, like in v. 2, seems the result of a translation that aims to render the precise intermediate nuance of the Hebrew semipreposition. What is more, by ‘recycling’ the same expression in v. 19, it becomes clear that it is not the angel, but God himself who will go before Moses.

In sum, from these four renderings of the prepositionally use of the lexeme פנים, we can conclude that the absence of πρόσωπον does not stem from an (anti-anthropomorphic) avoidance of the bodily “face”, but rather results from a quite precise translation technique. In this, I do concur with Fritsch, who states:

In most cases the translators literally rendered the anthropomorphisms of the Hebrew text. In regard to the translation of the Hebrew expressions לפני etc., however, it must be admitted that the translators sought to reproduce the meaning of these terms by their Greek equivalents without trying to express the literal meaning of the Hebrew original. The consistency with which this was done in these cases shows that the translators were governed not only by the desire to produce a faithful rendering of the original, but also to produce a version which reflected their knowledge of the Greek idiom and the style as far as that was possible.¹⁰³

Not only does the Greek render idiomatically the grammaticalized semiprepositions, but, through its lexical choices, translates well and succeeds in differing the different senses of the prepositionally used lexeme פנים. Besides, as was suggested by Sommer,¹⁰⁴ the Greek translation allows for a more smoothly reading text, and this is visible even from the subtle and intertwining translations of the semiprepositions, which concur in their free yet faithful translation technique with LXX-variants in the immediate context.

The lexeme *panîm* as pars pro toto

A second way in which the lexeme פנים is used throughout Exodus 33, is a symbolical one, פנים being a *pars pro toto* for the whole person.¹⁰⁵ In the overview given above, I attributed this use of the lexeme to vv. 14-15. Nötscher comments on Ex 33:14.15: “Hier ist ‘Angesicht’ eine selbständiger Begriff, die Gleichung Angesicht Jahwes = Person Jahwes ist auch begrifflich hergestellt. ‘Mein Angesicht’ bedeutet sonach ‘ich in Person’, ‘ich selbst’.¹⁰⁶ In the LXX, both ‘symbolical’ uses of פנים (vv. 14-25) are translated by αὐτός.

¹⁰¹ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 335.

¹⁰² SOLLAMO 1979, p. 110. REINDL 1970, p. 40.

¹⁰³ SOMMER 2000.

¹⁰⁴ FRITSCH 1943, pp. 15-16.

¹⁰⁵ JOHNSON 1947, p. 158; WEVERS 1990, p. 549; REINDL 1970, p. 64, NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 47 ; DHORME 1921, p. 391.

¹⁰⁶ NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 47.

The first occurrence of this ‘symbolical’ פָּנִים, appears in v. 14. In v. 14, there is the variant **Ex 33:14 LXX ≠ MT/SamP** προπορεύσομαι σου / ילכו. Here, LXX has σου as a plus, chooses a first singular, whereas ילכו is a third plural and LXX uses the verb προ-πορεύομαι (to go before) whereas MT/SamP has simply the root לכה (to go). The *plus* σου could be seen as a simple harmonization with the last part of v. 14 (“I will give *you* rest”). Another possibility is to view this *plus* within the continuity of vv. 12-17, where the variants of v. 15 (μή με ἀναγάγῃς and אֵל תַּעֲלִי/אֵל תַּעֲלִנִי) and v. 17 (+סוּ) also seem to stress Moses. Indeed, in the LXX, through these three variants, Moses’ special role as intimate of God is accentuated. This special insistence on Moses could be related to Deuteronom(ist)ic phraseology: within this phraseology, when the people are rebellious, God distances himself from Israel by calling them *Moses’* instead of *his* people.¹⁰⁷ That LXX both in v. 14 and v. 17 has a *plus* that refers to Moses, could indicate this same distance God takes towards the sinful people in speaking solely to and about Moses.¹⁰⁸ Next, the different number (ילכו third plural versus προπορεύσομαι) can be easily explained: the plural depends on the plural פָּנִים, whereas the singular προπορεύσομαι has αὐτός as subject. Finally, the choice for προπορεύσομαι could be explained from a harmonization with the preceding verses. In v. 2, God says that he will send an angel *before* Moses. Now, in v. 12, Moses asks who it is that God will send. Then, in v. 14, God responds that he himself will go *before* Moses. This way, LXX’s translation provides a continuity through the verses, making the questions and responses consequent.¹⁰⁹ This argument is supported by Ex 32:34 where God says that his angel will go before Moses: MT also has the verb הלך (מלכי ילך) whereas LXX translates by the same verb προ-πορεύομαι (ὁ ἄγγελός μου προπορεύεται). When God thus says that he will go *before* Moses (προπορεύσομαι), God stresses that it is not his angel, but he *himself* who will go before Moses.

Now in the context of this rather harmonizing translation, how should we view the rendering of פָּנִים by αὐτός? Wevers does not see any problem with this translation and comments: “Exod rightly understands פָּנִים as ‘I personally’.”¹¹⁰ However, again in the light of the so-called ‘anti-anthropomorphic tendency’ of LXX, this translation might pose a problem. Sanderson understands LXX’s αὐτός as part of LXX’s struggle to capture the sense of God’s presence and its visible manifestation within vv. 14-23.¹¹¹ Did LXX indeed struggle to translate the perhaps anthropomorphic sense of פָּנִים? Aejmelaeus argues that there is no theological (anti-anthropomorphic) tendency behind this translation. She merely sees LXX’s αὐτός as a free translation: “streng genommen gibt der Übersetzer hier nur das wieder, wozu seine grammatische und lexikalische Analyse des Originals Anlass gibt.”¹¹² I too believe that there is no anti-anthropomorphic tendency behind this translation, for αὐτός is not much more

¹⁰⁷ AUSLOOS 2009, p. 32.

¹⁰⁸ The Deuteronom(ist)ic language that returns here in the LXX, could be explained from the end of v. 14. Indeed, here the idea that God will give rest (נָחָה, hifil) is considered Deuteronom(ist)ic. (See: HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 274; ROTH 1976) The same verb נָחָה, hifil with God as subject, returns in Deut 3:20; 12:9-10 and 25:19. The idea is that the promise of the land, which we encountered in v. 1, is closely associated with the rest that will be given in that land. Strikingly, in all three verses of Deut 3:20; 12:9-10 and 25:19, the verb נָחָה, hifil is translated by the verb καταπαύω, as it is the case in Ex 33:14. Perhaps the LXX-translator noted the strong association with Deuteronomy or Deuteronom(ist)ic ideas, which caused him to add the σου.

¹⁰⁹ This is yet another way in which Ex 33 in LXX seems more coherent than the MT. In the MT, as researchers noted, the questions Moses asks and God’s replies do not seem to match, and the course of the dialogue seems to be rather illogical. See about this: IRWIN 1996.

¹¹⁰ WEVERS 1990, p. 549.

¹¹¹ SANDERSON 1986, p. 249.

¹¹² AEJMELAEUS 2007, p. 234.

transcendent than פני. However, as T. Van der Louw once stated, behind a free translation there is a literal translation that was rejected.¹¹³ It seems that LXX chose to reject the literal translation of “my face” in order to avoid a disparity with vv. 20-23.¹¹⁴ Indeed, if God asserted here that his literal face would accompany Moses, this would be contradicting vv. 20-23, where it is said that no one can see God’s face. The LXX understands פני symbolically as “my presence” and thus eradicates the tension with the literal, invisible ‘face’ of vv. 20-23. The rendering of LXX is a natural one, as “the use of פנים with the suffix [functions] as a simple periphrasis for the personal pronoun”,¹¹⁵ which in turn is rendered well by αὐτός.¹¹⁶ Besides, the expression ‘my face’ is a stereotypical substitute of God.¹¹⁷ Moreover, this corresponds well with v. 15, where ‘your [God’s] face’ is likewise translated by αὐτός. Finally, this translation recurs in Deut 4:37, where ויוצאך בפניו (“and he made you leave by his [God’s] presence”) is translated by καὶ ἐξήγαγέν σε αὐτός (“and he himself made you leave”).¹¹⁸ The translation αὐτός thus seems to be a free one that is faithful, translating well the symbolic use of פנים as a *pars pro toto* for the whole person.

The lexeme פנים is used in this symbolic way in v. 15 as well. The translation of פניך by αὐτός σὺ does not surprise, for in the preceding v. 14, LXX also translates by αὐτός and the σὺ of v. 15 stands for the second singular suffix of פניך. This recurring translation by αὐτός gives the text consistency, and the question of Moses in LXX v. 15 seems more closely related to v. 14 than it does in the Hebrew text.¹¹⁹ Fritsch, in his study of LXX’s rendering of the anthropomorphisms of the Pentateuch, does not see an anti-anthropomorphism at play here, but simply states that the translators “take פנים as a surrogate for God”.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, he notes that the translators here could have rendered the Hebrew in a more anthropomorphic way, as is the case in *codex Alexandrinus* which reads: εἰ μὴ αὐτός σὺ συμπορευεῖ μεθ’ ἡμῶν.¹²¹ LXX A is similar to the Peshitta, which also has the “with us” at the end of the phrase *אֲנִי וְאַתָּה וְעַמְּךָ יוֹצֵא אֱלֹהִים* (אֲנִי). However, LXX A is still more insisting on the fact that God needs to go *with* Moses and the people, in having (next to μεθ’ ἡμῶν) the verb συμ-πορεύομαι, instead of LXX B πορεύομαι. Fritsch regards LXX A as being more anthropomorphic here, probably because of the insistence of God going *together with* Moses and the people, almost implying a physical presence.¹²² That being said, I believe we should nonetheless not regard LXX B’s translation as anti-anthropomorphic, but rather as a natural rendering of the symbolically used פנים, linking v. 14 and v. 15 together.

¹¹³ “Behind each transformation stands a literal rendering that has been rejected”: VAN DER LOUW 2008, p. 110.

¹¹⁴ SOMMER 2000, p. 56.

¹¹⁵ Johnson gives as an example Ex 33:14.15. JOHNSON 1947, p. 158-159.

¹¹⁶ See Muraoka: “αὐτός in lieu of the 1st or 2nd nominative pronoun may be used, often with the value of reflexive pronoun, which are lacking in the nominative case” He refers to Ex 33:14 and translates as “I myself will march ahead of you” MURAOKA 2016, §7bh (p. 40).

¹¹⁷ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 333. Reindl too comments on this that the equivalence of face and persona is usual in the Hebrew Bible. He notes in this context 2Sam 17:11, where MT reads וּפְנֵיךָ הֵלְכִים בְּקֶרֶב, which (“you *yourself* will go to battle”). See REINDL 1970, p. 64-65. However useful this note might be to understand the equivalence of face and persona, the LXX translates this by καὶ τὸ πρόσωπόν σου πορευόμενον ἐν μέσῳ αὐτῶν, opting for the rather literal sense of ‘face’ than ‘in person’ and thus is less relevant regarding the LXX-rendering.

¹¹⁸ LE BOULLUEC, SANDEVOIR 1989, p. 333 ; NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 21 ; HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 226.

¹¹⁹ Here again, one should note the “aesthetic rather than logical structure” (PROPP 2006, p. 605) of the subpart 33:12-17, where in MT question and response do not seem to match.

¹²⁰ FRITSCH 1943, p. 47.

¹²¹ IDEM, p. 67.

¹²² IDEM, p. 68.

Through the examination of the identical rendering of the symbolically used lexeme פנים by αὐτός, it became clear that, once again, the text of LXX-Ex 33 seems less obscure than the one present in MT: through the translation by αὐτός, it becomes clear that what is at stake, for Moses, is God's personal presence with him and the people. The translation by αὐτός renders well this idea, first in v. 14 where God asserts that *He Himself* (αὐτός) will go with them, and then in v. 15 Moses stating that it is absolutely necessary that God *Himself* (αὐτός σὺ) joins them. It is true that the literal "face" is avoided here, but this might have been for the sake of a clearer text, rendering in an exact manner the symbolical use of פנים. The fact that the same translation is used in the similar LXX-Deut 4:37 gives a good recommendation for viewing this as a non-literal, free yet faithful rendering of פנים understood as *pars pro toto*.

The literal panîm as face

The third way in which the lexeme פנים occurs in Exodus 33, is in its "größeres, wörtlicheres Verständnis"¹²³ as the literal, bodily "face". The lexeme used in this way, occurs twice, at the very end of chapter 33. It could be seen as the climax of the chapter, centered around this "theologisches Leitwort".¹²⁴ Nötscher has argued that the use of the lexeme פנים in this literal way, has an anthropomorphic color.¹²⁵ Indeed, the literal and bodily face is used in phrases that contain other anthropomorphic elements, referring to God's hand or God's back.¹²⁶ How is this use of the lexeme rendered in LXX?

The first occurrence of פנים used literally as a body part, appears in v. 20. An interesting variant is to be observed: **Ex 33:20 LXX ≠ MT/SamP** μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου / לֹא יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם. Here, LXX has τὸ πρόσωπόν μου as a plus. It seems as if the plus of the LXX replaces the 1 s. suffix of the MT/SamP of יִרְאֵנִי. This would confirm the symbolic use of פנים in v. 14-15 as a *pars pro toto* for God himself. In these verses, LXX consistently translated God's face by αὐτός, equivalating "God's face" and "God himself". Thus, where MT/SamP read "no man will see me", LXX translates "no man will see my face", which for the LXX translator did perhaps not involve a major change, but just an explication of the suffix probably present in his *Vorlage*. Moreover, this LXX-plus could be seen as a harmonization with the preceding part of v. 20, where God states that Moses cannot see His face. Now, if God says,

¹²³ REINDL 1970, p. 68.

¹²⁴ HARTENSTEIN 2008, p. 225.

¹²⁵ NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 45.

¹²⁶ It is not sure, however, how MT's reading of God's "back" should be interpreted. Many researchers have been intrigued by the meaning of "the back of God". Some interpret "back" as the opposite of "face": instead of viewing the full essence of God, Moses will only see a glimpse. (CASSUTO 1997, p. 437. See also: PROPP 2006, p. 608.) Others propose to see "back" (אָהָרִי which does not only denote 'back' but also 'behind' or 'after') as referring to the future: the word אָהָרִי would then signify "after me". (JACOB 1992, p. 977. See also: LIPTON 2008; SILBERMAN 2000.) Their proposition has been rejected, as they read אָהָרִי as a substantivized preposition, while אָהָרִי in v. 23 is preceded by the direct object marker and thus is a genuine substantive. (SURLS 2015, p. 217.) Furthermore, the close parallel between the words כַּף (hand) and פָּנִים (face), used in their anatomical signification, seems to argue for a similarly anatomical understanding of אָהָרִי. (PROPP 2006, p. 608.) This anatomical reading is implausible as well, states Moberly: "Moses may look after him and see the 'afterglow'. Interestingly, the word for Yahweh's "back" ('ahor) is not the usual term for "back" in the physical or anatomical sense (gaw, gew), but more vaguely means "hinder part", thus conveying the idea of a view from behind, while being less explicit about exactly what is seen. As Yahweh presses on ahead Moses can only see the traces left behind." (MOBERLY 1983, p. 77.) The exact meaning of אָהָרִי stays vague: a figurative reading as the opposite of God's essence or denoting the future does not seem sufficient, but a purely anatomical reading of אָהָרִי does not seem correct either, as the rather vague term אָהָרִי (instead of the anatomical term denoting 'back' גֵּב) is used.

“you cannot see my face”, then the clause explaining why this is not possible, logically also contains the words “God’s face”. In this way, LXX seems to be a more explicit version of MT/SamP. G. Lapesqueux puts it more strongly and states “la G est beaucoup plus radicale que le M et le Smr.”¹²⁷ He refers here to the double negation that is present in LXX, using “οὐ μή” to render the negation of the Hebrew. Indeed, the double negation implies an emphasis: “Emphatic Negation is indicated by οὐ μή plus the aorist subjunctive [...] this is the strongest way to negate something in Greek.”¹²⁸ However, this strong negation might also have been implied by the Hebrew in using אֵל with an imperfect (3rd sing), which “represents a more emphatic form of prohibition”.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, I believe that Lapesqueux rightly states that LXX somehow radicalizes what we read in the Hebrew.¹³⁰ Not only does the Greek use the emphatic negation, also, by the explication of the 1st sing. suff. through τὸ πρόσωπόν μου, does it emphasize more radically the fact that God’s face can absolutely not be seen by man.

The second time פָּנַי is used in its literal, bodily sense, appears at the very end of Exodus 33. In v. 23, where one reads as the last phrase of the chapter that God’s face cannot be seen, there is a small variant: **Ex 33:23 LXX ≠ MT/SamP σοι**. The LXX has here a *plus*: instead of simply stating that God’s face cannot be seen, LXX specifies and states “but my face cannot be seen *by you*”. Here again, the LXX accentuates Moses, against the other textual witnesses. The foregoing analysis already addressed some plusses similar to this one (v. 14, 17, 19). It could now be possible that this plus results from a similar (Deuteronom(ist)ic) emphasis on Moses. Lapesqueux, on the other hand, views v. 20-23 as a corrective for what the reader might have interpreted reading Ex 33:11 (where God speaks to Moses face-to-face). These last verses state clearly that God’s face remains unseen. He writes: “L’homme Moïse a-t-il vu YHWH ? C’est à l’élucidation de cette question qu’est consacré le développement théologique dense d’Ex 33,18-23 [...] C’est que son propos se veut avant tout paradigmatique, cherchant à corriger dans leur forme (v. 20-23) autant que dans leur contenu (v. 19) le passage divin à venir d’Ex 34,6-7 et dans une moindre mesure les théophanies d’Ex 17,6 ; 33,11.”¹³¹ He regards the main question of the last subunit of Exodus 33 as “has Moses seen God?”. In this regard, it would make sense that at the very end of the subunit (which is at the same time the closure of the chapter), LXX underlines that “my (God’s) face will not be seen *by you* (Moses)”. It explicates that no man can see God, not even Moses, who nonetheless has a most special connection to God.

Once again, the LXX renders with precision the exact meaning of the use at hand of the lexeme פָּנַי. When used literally as a body part, and only then, does LXX render by πρόσωπον. What is more, LXX even adds the word πρόσωπον, probably to explicitly render the 1 s. suffix in v. 20. Doing so, in combination with the emphatic οὐ μή and the plus σοι, the Greek text insists perhaps even more on the fact that God cannot be seen, explicitly not by Moses as could have been falsely derived from v. 11. Once more, LXX seems to render faithfully, yet adding a certain direction to the text.

¹²⁷ LEPESQUEUX 2019, p. 308.

¹²⁸ WALLACE 1996, p. 468.

¹²⁹ GCK § 107 o.

¹³⁰ Lapesqueux already understands v. 20 as a radicalization of v. 23b: “Le v. 20 va quant à lui radicaliser la restriction du v. 23b en l’assortissant d’une clause de mort universellement valable ; il confirme en cela la vision théologique traditionnelle d’après laquelle la vision indue de YHWH provoque la mort.” LEPESQUEUX 2019, p. 316.

¹³¹ LEPESQUEUX 2019, p. 316.

The ‘unsure’ use of panîm

In v. 11, the lexeme פָּנִים is used in a way that does not entirely fit into either one of the categories to characterize the uses of the lexeme. The lexeme seems to be used here in a grammatical way, by means of a preposition to bind the two lexemes together: פָּנִים אֶל-פָּנִים. Nonetheless, Sollamo, in her extensive overview of semiprepositions using the lexeme פָּנִים, does not mention at all the occurrence in Ex 33:11. Can we then say that the lexeme is used in the literal, corporal way? This seems not plausible either, writes Nötscher: “In v. 11 handelt es sich sozusagen um die repräsentative Gegenwart Gottes.”¹³² Nötscher speaks of an almost symbolical understanding of פָּנִים here, instead of a literal understanding. Could we then see the lexeme as a *pars pro toto* for God himself, as was the case in vv. 14.15? Reindl objects to this view and specifies that v. 11 does not speak about God’s face, or his symbolical being, but rather the special relationship between Moses and God: “Es ergibt sich, dass “Angesicht” von Gott gebraucht neben der Bezeichnung seines Gesichtes, wenn er anthropomorph vorgestellt wird, und neben der Verwendung zur Kennzeichnung seiner persönlichen Gegenwart auch noch zum Ausdruck seines Verhältnisses zum Menschen benutzt werden kann”¹³³ It seems, then, that v. 11 represents a special category (next to prepositional, literal, symbolical) referring to the relationship between man and God. How was this special category rendered in the LXX?

LXX renders the clause פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים by a dative construction ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω. This translation might surprise, since the same expression in Deut 34:10 is translated literally in LXX by πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον. However, in Deut 34:10, the verb is ידע, whereas Ex 33:11 has דבר, which might cause the different translation. The non-literal translation in LXX-Ex 33:11 nonetheless remains surprising, as it is the only time the clause פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים is rendered non-literally.¹³⁴ In order to explain this non-literal variant, we cannot presume a different *Vorlage*, since the Greek stays too close to the Hebrew to imagine another *Vorlage*. J. Schaper proposes three possibilities to understand the variant.¹³⁵ Firstly, LXX could opt for this translation, in order to avoid contradiction with Ex 33:20, where it is said that no one can see the face (πρόσωπον/פָּנִים) of God.¹³⁶ Secondly, LXX perhaps lines up with the Targumim in choosing a translation that avoids the anthropomorphic “face of God”.¹³⁷ Thirdly, LXX possibly uses a Greek expression that is already existing (“eine stehende Wendung”)¹³⁸ and translates well פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים. I believe that the third explanation is most correct. E. Dafni, in her research on the phrase פָּנִים אֶל פָּנִים, notes that LXX’s ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω is an idiomatic rendering of the Hebrew.¹³⁹ Besides, she remarks that the phrase ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω was a usual syntactic structure in Greek, already apparent in pre-Socratic writings, as well as in writings of Euripides and Plato.¹⁴⁰ Accordingly,

¹³² NÖTSCHER 1969, p. 45.

¹³³ REINDL 1970, p. 75.

¹³⁴ Gen 32:31 πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον; Deut 34:10 πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον; Judg 6:22 πρόσωπον πρὸς πρόσωπον; Ezek. 20:35 πρόσωπον κατὰ πρόσωπον.

¹³⁵ SCHAPER 2011, p. 317.

¹³⁶ This is implied by A. Hanson, who strongly defends the thesis of an anti-anthropomorphism in LXX. See: HANSON 1992, pp. 560-561.

¹³⁷ Lepesqueux comments on the Targumim that they “censurent le contact visual de Moïse avec YHWH, beaucoup trop anthropomorphique à leurs yeux, et proposent à sa place une approche auditive via des expressions comme ממלל עם ממלל (Tg O) ou ממלל לקבל ממלל (Tg N et Tg PsJ). Le Tg PsJ s’épanche même dans une glose : Il entendait la voix de la Parole (דבורא), mais ne voyait pas l’éclat du visage.” LEPESQUEUX 2019, p. 296.

¹³⁸ SCHAPER 2011, p. 317.

¹³⁹ DAFNI 2016, p. 151.

¹⁴⁰ *Idem*, p. 155.

LXX's rendering would be part of the intention to render the Hebrew into idiomatic Greek, rather than an anti-anthropomorphic tendency that searches to avoid each mention of the "face of God". Reindl notes that the Hebrew has here a "metaphorisch-hyperbolischen Ausdruck", which does not intend that God appears to Moses in human form, but rather hints at God's near close relationship with Moses.¹⁴¹ This special relationship of God is rendered well by the phrase ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω. A comparison by L. Perkins to other Pentateuchal passages where the word ἐνώπιος is used (Gen 16:3, Ex 3:6; 25:29, Lev 13:37), shows that the expression ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω expresses God's speaking to Moses as "person to person", in a personal, direct interaction.¹⁴² What is more, LXX uses in the same phrase the unusual word φίλος to translate פָּנֵי, in saying that God and Moses speak "face-to-face", as one would speak to his friend. Perkins notes that LXX-Exodus has usually πλησίον to render פָּנֵי; the translation by φίλος would be unique in Exodus.¹⁴³ He notes that the word φίλος denotes intimacy, it stands for one's most intimate friend.¹⁴⁴ Transposed to Ex 33:11, the choice for φίλος instead of the more usual πλησίον accentuates the close relationship of God with Moses, also implied by ἐνώπιος.

Accordingly, LXX freely translates MT/SamP's פָּנֵי אֵל פָּנֵי by an expression that denotes perhaps even better the close intimacy between God and Moses, through the word ἐνώπιος, elsewhere used for a strong personal connection. That the Hebrew does not intend the literal face of God, is accentuated by the rest of v. 11, where the metaphorical marker *like* (וְכַדְבְּרָהוּ) is used to say that their way of speaking is *like* the way one speaks to one's friend.¹⁴⁵ Besides, still in favor of the view that LXX's ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω partakes in translating into idiomatic Greek, LXX translates also Ex 34:29, that similarly reports on Moses' talking with God, by a similar grammatical structure.¹⁴⁶ Indeed, Ex 34:29 states that Moses had a shining face because of "his speaking to him [God]", where MT has בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֵתוֹ, and LXX has ἐν τῷ λαλεῖν αὐτὸν αὐτῷ. The construction of αὐτὸν αὐτῷ is identical to ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω and the same verb λαλεῖν is used. Accordingly, the LXX opts here for a translation that is natural in Greek and that does right to the intended close relationship between God and Moses. However, the fact that other texts in the LXX do opt for the literal πρόσωπον πρὸς/κατὰ πρόσωπον (Gen 32:3, Deut 5:4 and 34:10) show that LXX's translation was a deliberate choice, a decision not to use the literal rendering. I believe that instead of the ideological issue of anthropomorphism, there was a textual tension that caused this transformation. The particular tension that a literal rendering of פָּנֵי אֵל פָּנֵי might have caused, is v. 20, where it is said that no one can see the face (פָּנֵי/πρόσωπον) of God.¹⁴⁷ By choosing a different word (ἐνώπιος instead of πρόσωπον, which is used in v. 20), the tension disappears. In this way, also the confusing polyptoton is avoided.

It could, in fact, just as well have been the case that the translator felt that the lexeme פָּנֵי was used here in a way in between prepositional, literal, and symbolical, which made him choose for the clause ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω, that combines all three aspects at once. Indeed: ἐνώπιος

¹⁴¹ REINDL 1970, p. 73.

¹⁴² PERKINS 2013, p. 41.

¹⁴³ *Idem*, p. 42.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibidem*. Perkins refers here to Deut 13:6.

¹⁴⁵ REINDL 1970, p. 73.

¹⁴⁶ DAFNI 2016, p. 155.

¹⁴⁷ SOMMER 2000, p. 53. Sommer sees this as LXX's figuring as a commentary to the MT, similar to the Targumim. This, however, seems to attribute a too expansive role to the LXX-translator. It is true that the translator wanted to translate the Hebrew into correct and natural Greek, but this is very different from LXX intending to comment on MT. LXX's ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω does not comment on the MT, since it does not add or eliminate the sense of the Hebrew, but it does succeed in escaping the otherwise difficult tension with v.20.

can function as a preposition, can denote (close) physical presence, and stands for symbolical personal presence.¹⁴⁸ Besides, also from an etymological point of view, the translation ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίῳ could be qualified strong and creative, since it etymologically contains the parts of the Hebrew expression: “it consists of the stem -ωπ- (πρός/ωπ/ον) plus the preposition ἐν prefixed to this stem.”¹⁴⁹ As such, it could be said that the clause ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίῳ creatively combines all three aspects of the lexeme פנים present in Ex 33 and, therefore, renders especially well the unique use of the lexeme פנים in Ex 33:11.

4. *Between grammatical rendering and playfulness*

Throughout the foregoing survey of LXX’s rendering of the different uses of the lexeme פנים throughout Exodus 33, I have tried to show how LXX translated idiomatically and, even though the polyptoton is not safeguarded, shows a faithful rendering of its *Vorlage*, that probably was almost similar to the text preserved in MT. The difficult and contrasting uses of פנים seem smoothed out in the Greek text, and even other textual problems seem to have found a solution. Besides, as I hope to have shown, the LXX renders in fact with precision the exact use of the lexeme פנים through its different renderings. The LXX uses idiomatic Greek in rendering the grammaticalized semiprepositions על-פני and לפני, *ad sensum* translation where פנים is understood symbolically as *pars pro toto*, a literal translation where פנים is understood as body part and a unique translation that combines all foregoing categories where פנים is used in a special way. Throughout the analysis, it was briefly stated that some of the variants seem due to a harmonizing tendency within the chapter 33. As stated in the beginning, chapter 33 seems to be an amalgam of different traditions, without a clear link between them – except for the lexeme פנים. In LXX-Ex 33, the text runs smoother, due to some intratextual harmonizations. For instance, in the Hebrew text, it is not clear how the issue of God sending an angel before Moses and his later promise to go himself with Moses. In LXX, through the recurring use of the same prepositional construct πρότερόν σου in v. 2 and v. 19, the text shows how God’s later statement, in fact, responds to his earlier promise and forms a reversal of the distant stance of God in the beginning.

I now would like to argue that, besides this *intratextual* harmonization smoothing the difficult sequences of Ex 33, there are also *intertextual* issues at play, that might have influenced the translator of Exodus 33. With the recent renewal of interest into the question of a theology of the Septuagint, M. Dhont uncovered a possible trail for investigation of these theological qualities of the Greek translation, referring to intertextual/anaphoric translations within the book of Numbers: “Intertextual references to other Septuagint translations occur regularly in Greek Numbers. Often called “anaphoric translations”, they are an important theological aspect of Septuagint translations, as they tell us about the textual and interpretative framework of the translators.”¹⁵⁰ She adds that this kind of translations “are, in fact, a common aspect of many Septuagint books [...] This phenomenon may be significant from a literary and theological viewpoint and requires further investigation.”¹⁵¹ Is it, then, possible that such anaphoric

¹⁴⁸ See, e.g., PAPE 1880. Pape lists the different meanings of ἐνώπιος as: *im Angesicht, sichtbar* (cf. physical presence) *gegenwärtig, in Gegenwart* (cf. symbolical use, personal presence) *vor, coram* (cf. prepositional use).

¹⁴⁹ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 19.

¹⁵⁰ DHONT, 2021, p. 29. The largest study, however, that has been carried out concerning these “anaphoric translations”, applies to the book of Job, see: H. HEATER, *A Septuagint Translation Technique in the Book of Job* (CBQMS, 11), Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1982.

¹⁵¹ DHONT 2021, p. 29.

translations¹⁵² also influenced LXX's rendering of the lexeme פנים in Exodus 33? I would like to argue that this is the case, by one specific illustration: the translation of the prepositionally used פנים (as in לפני) in v. 2 and its rendering in LXX.

As analyzed and commented upon above, LXX Ex 33:2 renders לפניך by πρότερόν σου. Above, we characterized this translation as idiomatic in rendering well the intermediate use of לפני at hand, and we noted as well the link in LXX between v. 2 and v. 19 through the use of this same prepositional construct πρότερόν σου, making clear that in the end, God and no longer (His) angel will go before Moses. However, another, more literal rendering πρὸ προσώπου σου is used to translate לפניך in Ex 23:20 and 32:34. In the analysis of v. 2, it was briefly remarked that there are parallels with precisely Ex 23:20 and 32:34, since these verses similarly consider God's angel, in a parallel context. This raises the question whether there is an intention/choice behind this translation that differs from the two parallel verses in Ex 23:20 and 32:34. In order to answer this question, we might search another Exodus-verse that similarly translates לפניך by πρότερόν σου. In Exodus, the prepositional לפניך occurs in seven verses (17:6; 23:20,23,27,28; 32:34; 33:2,19). Out of these seven verses, the "slavish rendering"¹⁵³ πρὸ προσώπου σου is used to translate לפניך in Ex 23:20 and 32:34 and the expression πρότερόν σου is used to translate לפניך in Ex 23:28 and 33:2,19. Ex 23:28 shows many parallels with Ex 33:2:

Verse	MT/LXX
Ex 23:28	וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי אֶת-הַצִּרְעָה לְפָנֶיךָ; וְגֵרְשָׁה אֶת-הַחֹי וְאֶת-הַכְּנֻעִי וְאֶת-הַחֹתִי מִלְּפָנֶיךָ καὶ ἀποστελεῶ τὰς σφηκίας πρότερας σου καὶ ἐκβαλεῖ τοὺς Ἀμορραῖους καὶ τοὺς Ευαῖους καὶ τοὺς Χανααναῖους καὶ τοὺς Χετταῖους ἀπὸ σοῦ
Ex 33:2	וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ, מִלֶּאֱדָה וְגֵרְשָׁתִי אֶת-הַכְּנֻעִי הָאֲמֹרִי וְהַחֹתִי וְהַפְּרִזִּי הַחֹי וְהַיְבוּסִי καὶ συναποστελεῶ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρότερόν σου καὶ ἐκβαλεῖ τὸν Ἀμορραῖον καὶ Χετταῖον καὶ Φερεζαῖον καὶ Γεργεσαῖον καὶ Ευαῖον καὶ Ιεβουσαῖον

Table 5: Parallel rendering of "lifne" in LXX Ex 23:28 and 33:2

In both verses same verbs are used (שלח and גרש), both verses have a version of the list of people, and the structure of the sentence seems largely the same: I will send— object + לפניך – and I will drive out – list of people. In the LXX, both times the expression πρότερόν σου (in Ex 23:28 πρότερας σου because it accords with τὰς σφηκίας) is used. Besides Ex 33:19, these are the only two times in Exodus where this expression is used to translate לפניך. Can we then conclude that Ex 33:2 deliberately chose to translate לפניך by πρότερόν σου as an anaphoric allusion to Ex 23:28? In order to do so, it must first be established that Exodus 33 alludes to Exodus 23 in more than one way.

¹⁵² For a more detailed account for what is understood under "anaphoric translations", see P. Pouchelle: "Anaphoric Translations: When a translation in one book clearly borrows from another book, or from other parts of the same book one could speak of anaphoric translation. This phenomenon is not specific to the Septuagint, but in the Septuagint it is notably, although not always, attested when a given book in Hebrew/Aramaic alludes to another Hebrew/Aramaic book - that is, allusion within the Hebrew Bible itself - especially to the Pentateuch. Yet, anaphoric translations may also be created in Greek when there is no explicit allusion in the source text. The book of Job is specifically translated according to this technique (Heather 1982). The earlier text that is borrowed might be the Greek Pentateuch or other books (e.g., Isaiah or the Psalms), so this phenomena - also referred to as "inter-textuality" - could be used to estimate the date of the latter, alluding translation." POUCHELLE 2021, pp. 74-75.

¹⁵³ SOLLAMO 1979, p. 30.

The allusions to Exodus 23 can be found especially in the first three verses of LXX-Exodus 33. In this regard, it is important to note that both LXX-Ex 33:1-6¹⁵⁴ and LXX-Ex 23:20-33¹⁵⁵ have been considered as Deuteronom(ist)ic passages. We will see that the anaphoric allusions of LXX-Ex 33:1-3 to Ex 23:20-33 concern, in fact, Deuteronom(ist)ic ideas that might have influenced the translation of these first three verses. In MT, the first three verses (Ex 33:1-3) flow syntactically difficultly. Ex 33:2 interrupts the continuity of vv. 1 and 3, where v. 1 Moses should “go up” to the “land flowing with milk and honey” only mentioned in v. 3. It is not clear how v. 2 is connected to these two verses. Firstly, God’s helpful decision to send a messenger with the people seems to be contradicting his violent statement in v. 3.¹⁵⁶ Secondly, reading v. 3 in continuity with v. 2 does, syntactically, not make sense: “How can and should God drive the autochthonous inhabitants into their own country?”¹⁵⁷ Indeed, in v. 2, God promises to drive out the people and in v. 3 this is followed by “to a land flowing with milk and honey”, while the beginning of v. 3 seems rather to connect with v. 1 than with v. 2. J. Baden suggests to see v. 2 as an interpolation that seeks to reconcile the content of Ex 23:20-23, where God sent a messenger that will bring the people to the autochthonous people mentioned in v. 2, and Ex 34:11, where God himself will drive out the autochthonous people.¹⁵⁸ This idea is also offered by Van Seters and Blum, who regard v. 2 as a later, (post)Deuteronom(ist)ic interpolation.¹⁵⁹ Now, we will argue that this intertextual interpolation is even more strongly apparent in the Greek Ex 33:2.

First, however, the textual links between LXX-Ex 33:1-3 and LXX-Ex 23:20-33 must become clear. Firstly, as remarked by Baden, the content of Ex 33:1-3 and Ex 23:20-23 is quite similar, as both excerpts speak of God’s angel, that will be sent “before” and that a whole list of people will be driven out. The MT of Ex 33:1-3 and 23:20-23 are closely related: the same verbs (גָּרַשׁ and שָׁלַח) are used, and the vocabulary and syntax are similar. In MT Ex 23:20-23, the angel is given a substantial role, and it is even said that God’s name is within the angel. Secondly, also LXX-Ex 33:1-3 and LXX-Ex 23:20-23 are resembling in specific ways: two LXX-variants of Ex 33:2-3 seem to point at LXX-Ex 23:20-23. The first LXX-variant concerns the rendering by τὸν ἄγγελόν μου for the indefinite מַלְאָךְ in Ex 33:2. As stated above, this variant is an LXX+, where LXX has an article and μου, against MT/SamP which is without article and suffix. Walter Hildebrands, in his analysis of the role of the angel in the Ancient Testament, notes that the indefinite מַלְאָךְ appears in Exodus only in Ex 23:20.¹⁶⁰ In both instances, the indefinite מַלְאָךְ appears as *accusativus*-object with God as subject.¹⁶¹ Strikingly, LXX also translates the indefinite מַלְאָךְ of Ex 23:20 as τὸν ἄγγελόν μου. In our analysis above, we understood, with Ausloos and Propp, this translation as an intention to harmonize with Ex 23:23 and

¹⁵⁴ AUSLOOS 2009.

¹⁵⁵ AUSLOOS 1996.

¹⁵⁶ SOMMER 2000, p. 47.

¹⁵⁷ AUSLOOS 2009, p. 34.

¹⁵⁸ BADEN 2012, p. 332.

¹⁵⁹ See: VAN SETERS 1994, p. 319-327 (on v. 2, esp. p. 319); and BLUM 1990, esp. pp. 58-59. J. Van Seters holds that vv. 33:1-3, 4, 6, 12-17 stem from a single late, post-deuteronomistic source. Blum, on the other hand, understands Ex 32 – 34 as part of his K^D, a large Deuteronom(ist)ic composition that encompasses different parts of the Hebrew Bible. He comments on Ex 33:2. “Die Mal’ak-Thematik von v. 2 ist hinzugewachsen: a) V. 2 schiebt sich zwischen den syntaktischen Zusammenhang von v.1.3a [...] b) Mit v. 2f. wechselt unversehens der Adressat der Gottesrede von Mose zum Volk insgesamt.” (BLUM 1990, p. 58).

¹⁶⁰ HILDEBRANDS 2006, p. 83. Hildebrands lists the other occurrences: “Absolutus, indeterminiert: 10x (Ex 23:20; 33:2; Num 20:16; 1 Kön 13:18; 19:5; Jes 63:9; Hos 12:5; Hi 33:23; 1 Chr 21:15aa; 2 Chr 32:21).”

¹⁶¹ *Idem*, p. 84.

32:34 (which both have מַלְאָכִי, “my angel”).¹⁶² This reading resulted in another interpretation of the angel in LXX. In LXX-Ex 33:2, then, the angel becomes a mere instrument of God: the angel becomes subordinated to God, instead of an independent, autonomous character.¹⁶³ Ausloos sees in the LXX-translation of both Ex 33:2 and 23:20 (both translate מַלְאָכִי as τὸν ἄγγελόν μου) a hint to a harmonization with the Deuteronom(ist)ic ideology, where the role of the angel is downplayed. He writes: “As a matter of fact, the מַלְאָכִי plays no role at all within the book of Deuteronomy. On the contrary, it seems to be part of the Deuteronomic theology to accentuate that it was God in person who led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.”¹⁶⁴ He illustrates this point by referring to Deut 4:37, where it is said that God leads his people out of Egypt ‘with his own presence, by his great power’.¹⁶⁵ Ascribing God’s angel, through the translation of “my angel”, only a subordinate role, could be understood from the Deuterono(mist)ic perspective that tries to downplay the role of the angel in order to harmonize with Deuteronomy, where the angel is not present at all. In a similar fashion, in LXX-Ex 23:20-23, the role of the angel seems to be intentionally weakened (in order to harmonise with Deuteronomy) against the MT who attributes the angel an important role.¹⁶⁶ Accordingly, the much more restricted portrait of “God’s (my) angel” in LXX-Ex 33:2 seems to correspond with LXX-Ex 23:20-23 that equally limits the role of the angel.

The second LXX-variant occurs in Ex 33:3 and equally refers to LXX-Ex 23:20.23. Here, LXX reads καὶ εισάξει σε, a LXX+.¹⁶⁷ The third person of LXX καὶ εισάξει σε (thus with the angel as subject) provides a smoother text, coordinated with the preceding verb ἐκβαλεῖ: the text then states that the angel will drive out the autochthonous peoples and will lead the Israelites into the land of milk and honey. The LXX+ consequently emends the awkward transition of MT-Ex 33:2-3, addressed above. Theoretically, it could also be possible that the LXX+ reflects the original text and that this part is missing in both MT and SamP, but this seems less plausible due to the difficult and awkwardly short transition between the verses.¹⁶⁸ That the LXX chose the verb εισάγω to make the transition to v. 3, should not surprise. Van Seters writes: “Based on parallel texts about the messenger in Ex 23:20.23, one would expect the verb “to bring in” (bw’, hiph.) and this is supported by the Greek.”¹⁶⁹ Indeed, the verb הָבִיל is

¹⁶² PROPP 2006, p. 586; AUSLOOS 2009, p. 36. Propp adds that instead of a harmonisation, this might simply be a graphic error, as the next word (in 33:2) begins with a *waw*, which is similar to the *yod* in Greco-Roman era script (PROPP 2006, p. 586.) Propp’s explanation, however, does not clarify why both Ex 23:20 and 33:2 translate the indefinite מַלְאָכִי as τὸν ἄγγελόν μου.

¹⁶³ AUSLOOS 2009, p. 38.

¹⁶⁴ AUSLOOS 2015, pp. 322-323.

¹⁶⁵ *Idem*, p. 323. Interestingly, both LXX-Deut 4:37 and LXX-Ex 33:14.15 read αὐτός to translate עִיָּבִיל in these verses.

¹⁶⁶ AUSLOOS 1996, pp. 101-102. See also: AUSLOOS 2015, p. 333. Ausloos lists several elements that weaken the role of the angel in LXX Ex 23:20-23. In MT and SamP, the angel protects the people and guides the people to the land. The people, in turn, must listen to the voice of the angel, as the angel would not forgive their sins. Both MT and SamP state that God’s name is ‘in’ the angel. The LXX, on the other hand, seems to have weakened some of the foregoing elements: the angel no longer has the capacity to forgive sins, but “will not draw back”. The name of God is no longer ‘in’, but ‘on’ the angel. Finally, the people no longer have to listen to the voice of the angel, but to God’s voice.

¹⁶⁷ Wevers notes that the Greek manuscripts have two different versions: LXX^B has καὶ εισάξω σε, and LXX^C has καὶ εισάξεις σε, and understands these versions as being in “blatant contradiction with the preceding verse” (WEVERS 1990, p. 541).

¹⁶⁸ PROPP 2006, p. 586.

¹⁶⁹ VAN SETERS 1994, p. 320.

used in the parallel Ex 23:20.23 and this verb is each time translated by a form of εἰσάγω.¹⁷⁰ Perhaps the *Vorlage* of the LXX has already a form of בּוֹא hifil at the beginning of v. 3, or either the LXX had in mind the parallel Ex 23:20.23 when translating. Preferring as Wever does, the third person εἰσάξει σε (over LXX^B reading καὶ εἰσάξω σε, and LXX^C reading καὶ εἰσάξεις σε),¹⁷¹ this variant fits well in its context, since here the angel remains the subject of the verb, which smoothens the transition of v. 2 to v. 3 and the contradiction of a present yet absent God would be eradicated. The LXX could here have been inspired by Ex 23:23, where the subject of the verb בּוֹא hifil in MT is also a third singular (אֱלֹהֵינוּ), identically translated by εἰσάξει σε.

Now that the thematic links and intertextual variants between LXX-Ex 33:1-3 and Ex 23:20-33 (esp. vv. 20 and 23) have been set out, it is time to examine our hypothesis that the translation of the semipreposition in LXX-Ex 33:2 might have been influenced by an anaphoric allusion to LXX-Ex 23:28. The intertextual link regarding the angel seems almost explicitly apparent in the LXX of Ex 33:1-3 and Ex 23:20-33. Both passages, as we saw, are regarded as Deuteronomistic and, in the LXX, this Deuteronomistic ideology comes even more to the fore in downplaying the role of the angel, through small intertextual/anaphoric variants. It is in this light, I believe, that also the rendering of the semipreposition לפניך by πρότερόν σου could be seen as an anaphoric allusion to Ex 23:28. Besides this being an idiomatic Greek rendering of the semipreposition, and creatively linking v. 2 and v. 19 together, we could also think of the rendering as a *playful* reference to LXX-Ex 23:28, where the exact same semiprepositional form לפניך by πρότερόν σου. The strong likeness between the two verses, the context of both passages that clearly show similarly, and the fact that לפניך is translated by πρότερόν σου only in these two verses (and Ex 33:19), gives a favorable taste to our hypothesis. By regarding LXX's rendering of the semipreposition as an anaphoric allusion, in yet another way the problem of the angel seems to be addressed in Deuteronomistic fashion. In fact, by translating the verse parallel to Ex 23:28, we might understand the angel at the same level as the hornets (הַצְּרָעָה/ τὰς σφηκίας) of 23:28. Indeed, in the two phrases (LXX Ex 33:2 and Ex 23:28) that syntactically, thematically and lexically concur, the grammatical function of both angel and hornets is equal: as direct objects of the verb 'to send' with God as subject, they appear as instruments (litt. regarding the hornets!) of God that will serve to drive out the autochthonous people. This fascinating parallel might contribute to understanding the angel, in line with Deuteronomy, as a mere instrument of God.

Through this brief example, I hope to have shown that the rendering of the semipreposition לפניך by πρότερόν σου in LXX-Ex 33:2 can, apart from an ideological and smoothening translation, be seen as an anaphoric translation, alluding to LXX-Ex 23:28. By this illustration, I aimed to show an example of the *playful* way in which translators, through intertextual translations, might subtly introduce an ideological or theological idea, as Dhont already proposed.¹⁷² This anaphoric playfulness forms, I believe, a middle way in between the two polarized views in the research regarding the rendering of the lexeme פּוֹנֵם in Ex 33. On the one side there is the view that focusses mostly on the idiomatic rendering of the lexeme, paying attention to the rendering of grammaticalized forms such as semiprepositions and their rendering in LXX.

¹⁷⁰ Moreover, Ausloos notes that this is the standard translation of the Hebrew verb within the whole Pentateuch. AUSLOOS 2009.

¹⁷¹ Ausloos prioritises the first singular verb and understands the third singular form as a later correction to solve the otherwise problematic tension between a God who will lead the Israelites into the promised land and God who will not go up with the people. See: AUSLOOS 2009, p. 36.

¹⁷² "This phenomenon [anaphoric translation] may be significant from a literary and theological viewpoint." DHONT 2021, p. 29.

They, however, do not pay attention to the fact that the polyptoton gets lost in the LXX, and do not wish to accord an ideological view behind the translation-choices. On the other hand, there is the view that focusses rather on ideological aspects, understanding variants as stemming from and reflecting different ideological/theological views. However, LXX-Ex 33 does not render/avoid consistently enough the lexeme פָּנִים, to truly speak of an (anti-anthropomorphic) avoidance of the word “face” in relation to God. Rather, as we have shown, the different renderings of the lexeme פָּנִים stem from the translator’s profound grasp of the different uses of this lexeme, which he translated accordingly. Now, our analysis of the rendering of the semipreposition לפניך by πρότερόν σου in LXX-Ex 33:2, paying attention to the intertextual playfulness at hand through anaphoric translation, hopes to bridge both views. Viewing this translation as an anaphoric allusion to LXX-Ex 23:28 not only accounts for the recognition of idiomatic rendering that we similarly find in other LXX-Ex passages, but also accounts for a certain degree of ideological influence the translator had upon its text; in the specific case of LXX-Ex 33:2: the insertion of (however subtly it might be) a rather Deuteronomistic perspective on the angel as subordinated to God, through intertextual allusion to LXX-Ex 23:28.

5. Conclusion

With this paper I hoped to re-address the fascinating rendering in the LXX of the wordplay (*polyptoton*) using the lexeme פָּנִים. By doing so, I hope to have shed a new light on the research considering the translation of the lexeme in Ex 33, which has been quite polarized: characterizing either LXX-Ex 33 as a solely idiomatic translation of largely grammaticalized forms, or else viewing LXX-Ex 33 as an ideological translation in which the translational choices reflect different ideological/theological views. The Greek translation does not render literally the *polyptoton* playing with the word ‘face’ in Hebrew. It was my goal to analyze what sparked this non-literal translation.

In a first phase, the different uses of the lexeme within Ex 33 were listed. I suggested that the lexeme is used in four different ways: 1) prepositional as the semipreposition על-פני and על-פני 2) symbolical as *pars pro toto* for God’s presence 3) literal as the body part ‘face’ and 4) the ‘unsure’ use that fits at once all and none of the categories. The second phase consisted in listing the respective occurrence of the lexeme within other textual witnesses, and to describe the variants. After this, in a third phase, the variants were evaluated, the rendering of the lexeme within LXX being part of this larger evaluation. First, the prepositional use of the lexeme was addressed, where it turned out that LXX rendered with precision the exact sense of the semipreposition at hand. The Greek translates the semiprepositions idiomatically and, at the same time, allows for a more smoothly reading text, through subtle and intertwining translations. Secondly, the symbolical use of the lexeme and its rendering was evaluated. The lexeme used in this way is rendered twice by αὐτός, a non-literal, free yet faithful rendering of פָּנִים understood as *pars pro toto*. Once again, through this rendering, the text of LXX-Ex 33 seems less obscure than the one present in MT: through the translation by αὐτός, it becomes clear that what is at stake, for Moses, is God’s personal presence with him and the people. Thirdly, the literal ‘face’ at the end of Ex 33 was evaluated. Here again, the LXX renders with precision the exact meaning of the use at hand of the lexeme פָּנִים. When used literally as a body part, and only then, does LXX render by πρόσωπον. Besides, the Greek text (by the *plus* πρόσωπον and σοι, and the use of the emphatic οὐ μὴ) insists perhaps even more on the fact that God cannot be seen, explicitly not by Moses as could have been falsely derived from v. 11. Finally, the ‘unsure use’ of the lexeme in the expression פָּנִים אל פָּנִים was addressed. We argued that, here as well, the translator rendered with exceptional precision the unique use of the lexeme, all while combining the other ways in which פָּנִים is used throughout Ex 33. In sum, LXX renders in fact with precision the

exact use of the lexeme פָּנִים through its different renderings, all while providing a text that at times reads smoother than the MT and directs the reader more clearly into a fixed direction by intratextual harmonizations throughout the chapter. The fact that LXX does not conserve the *polyptoton* through literal renderings of the lexeme פָּנִים, then, seems not the result of anti-anthropomorphism, but rather of both idiomatic and creative (intratextually coherent) translation-technique.

I next suggested by means of an illustration that, besides these *intratextual* harmonizations, also *intertextual* harmonizations can be uncovered in anaphoric translations. Through the brief example, considering the rendering of the semipreposition לפניך by πρότερόν σου in LXX-Ex 33:2 can, I hoped to show how LXX' rendering of the lexeme פָּנִים, apart from an ideological and smoothening translation, at times functions as an anaphoric translation (e.g., in LXX-Ex 33:2 alluding to LXX-Ex 23:28). Doing so, I intended to demonstrate the *playful* way in which translators, through intertextual/anaphoric translations, might subtly introduce an ideological or theological idea – in this case, Deuteronom(ist)ic ideas concerning the angel of God. Through the consideration of this *inter-* and *intratextual playfulness*, it was my aim to show that the Greek translation of Ex 33 is situated carefully in between using grammaticalized idioms and a playful interaction with the immediate context of the lexeme פָּנִים, as well as with larger intertextual issues. The Greek text, even though it does not contain the surprising *polyptoton*, might still surprise the attentive reader in another way, through textual playfulness which evoke certain expectations on the part of the reader and guide towards a deepened reading of the complex and often contrasting chapter 33 of Exodus. Both in Hebrew and in Greek, the reader finds herself “*vis-à-vis*” a text that evokes at once the immanence and distance of God, which does not cease to entice its public.

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ABSTRACT

This article addresses the fascinating rendering in the Septuagint version of Exodus 33 of the wordplay using the lexeme *panîm*, פָּנִים (face, front). It will firstly set out how and in what sense the lexeme is used throughout Exodus 33. Next, it strives to offer a detailed analysis of the Greek rendering of the lexeme, that does not seem to safeguard the 'bodily subpart' *face* in most of the renderings. Is this rendering due to an anti-anthropomorphism, avoiding the attribution of a bodily, anthropomorphic 'face' to God - or is it rather due to an idiomatic translation of the grammaticalized idiom as semipreposition? The present article argues that the Greek translation is situated carefully in between using grammaticalized idioms and a playful interaction with the immediate context of the lexeme *panîm*, as well as with larger intertextual issues.

KEYWORDS

1. Septuagint
2. Translation-technique
3. Semiprepositions
4. Anthropomorphism
5. Intertextuality