

THE AUTHORITY OF
THE SEPTUAGINT

Biblical,
Historical,
and Theological
Approaches

GREGORY R. LANIER *and*
WILLIAM A. ROSS, eds.



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One

INTRODUCTION

Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross

EVEN THE MOST CASUAL READER of a modern edition of the Bible cannot avoid the term *Septuagint*, since it appears in the footnotes as early as Genesis 2:2 (CSB) or Genesis 4:8 (ESV, NIV). Some study Bibles even mention that Matthew or Luke or Paul are citing a scriptural passage “from the Septuagint.” Those same Bibles as a general rule say little about what this Septuagint actually is. Fortunately, several entry-level books have hit the market that orient interested laypeople to the basic background of the Greek translation(s) of the Old Testament, including some by authors in the present volume.¹ Amid the rise of interest about the Septuagint in recent decades—doctoral dissertations, new translations, a Greek reader’s edition, numerous journal articles, and more—a particular question has percolated in both academic and religious circles that is the stimulus for this volume: What *authority* does the Septuagint have today?²

¹E.g., Karen Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015); Edmon L. Gallagher, *Translation of the Seventy: History, Reception, and Contemporary Uses of the Septuagint* (Abilene, TX: Abilene Christian University Press, 2021); Gregory R. Lanier and William A. Ross, *The Septuagint: What It Is and Why It Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021). See also Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Version of the Bible* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

²To avoid encumbering the discussion any more than is necessary, we will simply use the term *Septuagint* throughout this volume to denote the initial stream of translations of the Hebrew books into Greek from roughly 250 BC to AD 100 (sometimes called the Old Greek), thereby stopping short of later recensions by Aquila et al. For more on the terminology, see Lanier and Ross, *Septuagint*, 25-38.

For the Greek Orthodox Church, the answer is simple: the Septuagint (in some form) is the definitive text of the Old Testament Scriptures.³ For the modern Jewish community in its various expressions, the answer is also simple: the Hebrew Tanakh alone is authoritative, not the Septuagint. For Protestants and Roman Catholics, the answer is less clear and has been a matter of debate as far back as Origen, Jerome, and Augustine. At one end of the spectrum is the position that today's church should reduce its reliance on the Hebrew Bible and embrace the Septuagint as its primary Old Testament text, chiefly because New Testament authors and the early church seem to use the Septuagint more often than the Hebrew text.⁴ At the other end of the spectrum is the view—often held by proponents of the exclusivity of the King James Bible—that the Septuagint either did not exist prior to the first century (but was fabricated later) or was never meaningfully used by the apostles.⁵

Recognizing that there must be some option between these two poles, and taking a cue from the helpful work of Karen Jobes (who contributes an afterword here), we attempted to articulate our thoughts on the authority of the Septuagint in the closing chapter of our introductory volume. In a nutshell, we argued (from a Protestant perspective) that the Septuagint has *derivative* or downstream authority for today's church insofar as it generally provides reliable access to the upstream Hebrew Scriptures, particularly for those (in antiquity and even today) who might not be able to access it otherwise; in turn, the Hebrew text alone, as best it can be reconstructed from available

³See Alexandru Mihăilă, "The Septuagint and the Masoretic Text in the Orthodox Church(es)," *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 10 (2018): 30-60.

⁴This position is articulated in various ways in Robert Funk, "The Once and Future New Testament," in *The Canon Debate*, ed. Lee Martin McDonald and James A. Sanders (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), 541-57; Mogens Müller, "The Septuagint as the Bible of the New Testament Church," *Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament* 7 (1993): 194-207; Müller, *The First Bible of the Church: A Plea for the Septuagint*, JSOTSup 206 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996); Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2002).

⁵For example, see Harrison Williams, *The Septuagint: The So-Called LXX* (Dahlongega, GA: Old Paths, 2019); David W. Daniels, *Did Jesus Use the Septuagint?* (Ontario: Chick, 2017); and the various publications, keynotes, and blog posts of the Reformation Bible Society (particularly by Jeffrey T. Riddle).

evidence (often factoring in the Septuagint), bears *normative* authority for faith and practice in the church.⁶

But we recognized that our approach was provisional at best, and we needed help pushing the ball further. What do we mean by *authority*? What are its nature, boundaries, and spheres of application? How does one *know* whether something is authoritative? Does Paul's use of the Septuagint imply that it is inspired and, in turn, sanction its use today? If so, how and when? How has this issue been dealt with over the centuries since the apostolic era? To help answer such questions, we have enlisted scholars from a variety of disciplines—Old Testament, New Testament, patristics, dogmatics, and church history—to provide a cross-disciplinary set of approaches to the topic.

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

The initial chapters establish some of the Old Testament–related groundwork underlying the remainder of the volume. To enable other authors to focus primarily on *textual* authority, Greg Lanier deals with the question of Old Testament canon—that is, which *books* were authoritative—in chapter two. It is commonly suggested that there was a broader Septuagintal or Alexandrian canon that encompassed additional books as authoritative (commonly known as apocrypha). However, Lanier marshals overwhelming evidence that a core threefold Hebrew canon was well-established in the Jewish community by the first century, and the Greek translation efforts had no measurable impact on which books were perceived as bearing canonical authority (until later in the patristic era). In chapter three, Will Ross lays out in detail some of the complexities of how the Jewish Scriptures were passed down and translated prior to the turn of the era: namely, the multilingual environment of the Hellenistic era (that necessitated the Septuagint to begin with), various avenues of textual access among Second Temple Jews, and the convoluted and often intersecting transmission processes of the Hebrew and Greek forms of the Old Testament text.

⁶Lanier and Ross, *Septuagint*, 165-93.

With the Old Testament foundation in place, the subsequent chapters probe the question of the authority of the Septuagint from a variety of disciplinary angles. In chapter four, New Testament scholar Tommy Keene explores whether the apostolic authors were all that concerned about the precise Old Testament text-form being used—concluding that, in the main, they were simply content to use what they had at their disposal that served their rhetorical and authorial purposes. Thus, any attempt to ground the authority of the Septuagint solely on the phenomenon that some New Testament authors make use of it some of the time needs to be reconsidered. In chapter five patristic scholar Ed Gallagher traces the major debates over the status of the Septuagint among, in particular, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine. He discusses various views of the inspiration of the Septuagint itself and the problems therein, particularly related to variations between the Greek and the underlying Hebrew; he concludes that one of the central tenets of patristic theory about the Septuagint is that its chief value lies in giving reliable, though perhaps imperfect, access to the Hebrew.

Probing the historical angle further in chapter six, Reformation scholar Levi Berntson examines the various positions the Protestant Reformers and post-Reformation scholastics took on the Septuagint. He articulates how an older view, which maintained the supremacy of the MT and denied the Septuagint any real place in the conversation, eventually gave way to a newer view that was more open to using the Septuagint as a means of correcting the Hebrew text at points. Rounding out the historical approaches is a brief excursus by John Fesko, discussing how the Septuagint relates to a particular confessional position that the Old Testament Scriptures were “kept pure in all ages” (Westminster Confession of Faith/London Baptist Confession 1.8). Though many divines did privilege the Masoretic form of the Hebrew Bible, others were content with the position that divine preservation might extend to a plurality of textual witnesses, not just one.

In chapter seven, systematic theologians Dan Treier and Josh McQuaid—after noting how systematic theologies rarely engage the Septuagint in any meaningful way—chart a path for how theologians can

bring clarity to understanding the nature and boundaries of textual authority and apply it to the use of the Septuagint in the New Testament. Complementing the chapters on the Reformation and systematic theology is a brief excursus by Mark Ward that engages with the confessional bibliology movement and its generally contrarian position toward the Septuagint; while affirming some helpful points this position raises, Ward raises questions that need addressing by proponents of a confessional text. Given that all the other chapters are written from a Protestant perspective, Jim Prothro provides a helpful Roman Catholic perspective in chapter eight.⁷ He covers a broad swath of historical developments and ecclesiastical statements to reflect on the different ways the Septuagint can be called authoritative in relation to the Hebrew and Latin forms of Scripture; interestingly, there proves to be much common ground between his Catholic perspective and others propounded here. The job is left to Myrto Theocharous in chapter nine to summarize each chapter, provide a synthesis of the various approaches to answering this book's underlying question ("What is the authority of the Septuagint?"), and suggest further avenues of research. In an afterword, Karen Jobes provides some of her reflections after decades of research on the issue of the authority of the Septuagint.

TEST CASES

The New Testament use (or nonuse) of the Septuagint is typically where the rubber hits the road on the question of authority. In dozens if not hundreds of cases, the Greek wording used by the New Testament author is more or less equivalent to *both* the Septuagint wording and

⁷The reader might rightly point out that we do not include chapters from Jewish or Eastern Orthodox scholars. When this book asks the question, "Is the Septuagint 'authoritative?'" the implied complement is "... for *whom*?" Framed this way, the status of the Septuagint is only really debated among Christians; with very few exceptions, the Jewish community left it behind in the late second century (with the revisions of Aquila and Symmachus)—though the Talmud and midrash do sometimes engage with Greek. Moreover, given that the supreme status of the Septuagint is unchallenged in the Orthodox community (which downplays the Hebrew altogether), we assumed that "A Greek Orthodox Approach" would be a fairly short chapter. That said, as Myrto Theocharous points out in chapter nine, inclusion of Eastern voices in future conversations would be fruitful.

the general sense of the Hebrew text as we know it in the Masoretic textual tradition.⁸ For example, the citations of Leviticus 19:18 in Matthew 19:19; Mark 12:31; and Romans 13:9 match each other and equally reflect the wording of the Septuagint and Hebrew.⁹ These instances testify to the broad availability of both Greek and Hebrew texts and their close correspondence in many or most cases. But they shed little light on the question of Septuagintal authority, since there is no way to prove or disprove whether the New Testament author was copying his Scripture citation out of the Septuagint or independently translating it from Hebrew (or some other option). But there are other test cases that more vividly crystallize the issues at play for the reader. These test cases will be engaged to varying degrees by the contributors in their own chapters, thereby serving as a common platform that gives this book its coherent shape. The test cases fall into three categories:

1. New Testament citation agrees with the Septuagint *against the Hebrew*
2. New Testament citation agrees with the Hebrew *against the Septuagint*
3. Citations of the same Old Testament passage by multiple New Testament authors do not match each other

We will provide the details for each of these test cases up front so that they do not have to be repeated in each chapter.¹⁰ For ease of tracking back to this overview, we will mark discussions of such test cases with corresponding labels such as [§1.2] or [§3.1].

⁸In general, when we speak of “the Hebrew” or “the Hebrew text,” we are talking about the MT, which is admittedly anachronistic. As discussed in chapter three, the textual environment in the NT era was complicated. But using “the Hebrew” in this way provides a basic starting point for discussion. Much the same can be said of “the Septuagint,” of course.

⁹In such instances, the Septuagint translation is essentially isomorphic (i.e., word-for-word aligned) with the Hebrew. The difference is merely linguistic.

¹⁰The following sources have been consulted to present the textual evidence for the selected texts. (1) NT: NA²⁸; (2) MT: Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983; Adrian Schenker et al., eds., *Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2004–); (3) Qumran: Eugene Ulrich, *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); (4) Septuagint: RH; John W. Wevers et al., eds., *Septuaginta Vetus Testamentum Graecum*, Auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Göttingensis editum (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939–).

Category one: Alignment with Septuagint (not Hebrew). The first and perhaps most interesting category for the topic at hand includes passages where the text of a New Testament citation of the Old Testament aligns closely with the Septuagint but deviates significantly from the Hebrew wording. The Septuagint wording could itself be a paraphrase of a Hebrew text that agreed with the MT, or it could be an accurate and precise translation of a Hebrew text that differed from the MT.¹¹ However it arose, the different wording of the Septuagint version proves *decisive* to the argument being made by the New Testament, insofar as the Hebrew might not have been sufficient for the point being made. Because the Septuagint appears to be providing the essential semantic content for the New Testament citation, these instances raise the question of whether the Septuagint is functioning as the authority for the New Testament author, not the Hebrew.

[S1.1] *Matthew 12:21b, citing Isaiah 42:4.* Matthew 12:18-21 quotes one of the Isaianic Servant Songs at length to explain why Jesus healed many sick people and, in turn, to anticipate how Jesus' ministry would eventually extend beyond the Jewish community and embrace Gentiles as well (e.g., Mt 28:19-20). The first part of the quotation aligns reasonably well with the MT of Isaiah 42:1a.¹² However, the reverse is true for the end of the Matthean quotation, where the Septuagint wording matches that of the Evangelist almost verbatim and is again distinct from the Hebrew tradition.

MATTHEW 12:21B

In his name the nations will hope.

τῷ¹³ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιούσιν.

¹¹Other possibilities exist too. Again, speaking of the MT in relation to Second Temple Judaism is anachronistic. But, as discussed in chapter three, there is excellent evidence for an ancient form of the MT that is usually called the proto-MT.

¹²Mt 12:18 reads "in whom my soul is pleased" (ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου); MT reads "my soul is pleased" (נַפְשִׁי נִחְמָה נְפִשִּׁי); Septuagint reads "my soul received him" (προσεδέξατο αὐτὸν ἡ ψυχὴ μου). Matthew's text-form, in fact, lies closest to Theodotion here (ὃν εὐδόκησεν ἡ ψυχὴ μου).

¹³Variants: ἐν τῷ 05 I^{at} | ἐπὶ τῷ 032.

ISAIAH 42:4B MT	ISAIAH 42:4B DEAD SEA SCROLLS (4Q55 [4QISA ^a])
The coastlands await his law. לתורתו אים יחילו	The coastlands await his laws. לתורתיו אים ינחילו
ISAIAH 42:4B OLD GREEK	ISAIAH 42:4B HEXAPLA (PER EUSEBIUS)
Upon <i>his name</i> the nations will hope. ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι ¹⁴ αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.	In his law the nations will hope. τῷ νόμῳ αὐτοῦ ἔθνη ἐλπιοῦσιν.

There are three main translational differences between the Hebrew and the Greek: “law(s)” → “name,” “coastlands” → “nations,” and “await” → “hope.” The first is difficult to explain since תורה (“law”) is not easily confused or interchanged with שם (“name”); moreover, the retention of νόμος among Aquila and others in the Hexaplaric evidence implies that “law” was the most common Hebrew reading. The second could be explained as the Isaiah translator’s attempt to provide an interpretive gloss on what might have been considered an obscure “coastlands” metaphor. The third involves the words יחל and ἐλπίζω, which overlap in meaning: the latter is often (though not invariably) used to translate the former, particularly in the Greek Psalter (e.g., Ps 30[29]:25; 32[31]:18; 37[36]:16). Interestingly, the same basic idea in Isaiah 42:4b is also found in Isaiah 51:5b (“the coastlands [אים] hope for me, and they await [ייחלון] my arm”), but in that instance the translator uses νῆσοι as a more one-to-one rendering for “coastlands” while retaining ἐλπιοῦσιν for ייחלון. However one explains the particulars of the Greek Isaiah translation, it more readily enables the Evangelist to make an important point about the expansion of the orbit of Jesus’ work to embrace the ἔθνη (“nations” or “Gentiles”), whereas the Hebrew “coastlands” would be ambiguous, and “law” (*torah*; as opposed to “name”) might seem counterproductively Israel-centric.

¹⁴All extant Greek manuscripts have ὀνόματι, as reflected in RH; however, VTG emends to νόμῳ, presumably on suspicion of secondary assimilation to Matthew (or to reflect the Hexaplaric evidence).

[§1.2] *Hebrews 1:6, citing Deuteronomy 32:43.* The textual tradition of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32 is notoriously complicated, leading some English Bibles to provide hybrid texts at certain points that combine elements of the MT, Septuagint, and/or Dead Sea Scrolls. Hebrews 1:6 makes a vital christological point by drawing on wording from Deuteronomy 32:43 that is supplied only by the Greek tradition and is absent altogether (it seems) from the MT.¹⁵ There are five clauses in question among the various sources, so we will use alphabetical labels in what follows to help the reader trace the variations.

HEBREW 1:6	
And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “[b] <i>And let all angels of God worship him.</i> ”	ὅταν δὲ πάλιν εἰσαγάγῃ τὸν πρωτότοκον εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην, λέγει [b] καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ.

DEUTERONOMY 32:43 MT		DEUTERONOMY 32:43 DEAD SEA SCROLLS (4Q44 [4QDEUT ^g])
[a]	—	Cry out, heavens, over his people,
[b]	—	<i>and let all the gods worship him;</i>
[c]	Cry out, nations, over his people,	—
[d]	—	—
[e]	for he will avenge the blood of his servants.	for he will avenge the blood of his sons.
[a]	—	הַרְנִינוּ שְׁמַיִם עִמוֹ
[b]	—	וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לוֹ כָּל אֱלֹהִים
[c]	הַרְנִינוּ גּוֹיִם עִמוֹ	—
[d]	—	—
[e]	כִּי דָם־עַבְדָּיו יִקּוּם	כִּי דָם בָּנָיו יִקּוּם

¹⁵Rom 15:10 also cites Deut 32:43 (clause c, below) in the Septuagintal form, but it will not be our focus.

DEUTERONOMY 32:43 OLD GREEK		(VARIATIONS IN ODES SOL. 2:43)
[a]	Rejoice, heavens, with him,	
[b]	and let all the sons of God worship him;	(angels of God)
[c]	rejoice, nations, with his people,	
[d]	and let all the <i>angels of God</i> strengthen them; ¹⁶	(sons of God)
[e]	for he will avenge the blood of his sons.	
[a]	εὐφράνθητε, οὐρανοί, ἅμα αὐτῷ,	
[b]	καὶ προσκυνησάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες υἱοὶ θεοῦ·	(οἱ ἄγγελοι θεοῦ)
[c]	εὐφράνθητε, ἔθνη, μετὰ τοῦ λαοῦ αὐτοῦ,	
[d]	καὶ ἐνισχυσάτωσαν αὐτῷ πάντες ἄγγελοι θεοῦ·	(υἱοὶ θεοῦ)
[e]	ὅτι τὸ αἷμα τῶν υἱῶν αὐτοῦ ἐκδικεῖται.	

The MT lacks any clause that could be the apparent source for the citation in Hebrews 1:6; moreover, the Samaritan Pentateuch, Latin Vulgate, and Syriac Peshitta all align with the shorter MT, thereby attesting to its antiquity.¹⁷ However, the Qumran version *does* have something as clause b, which may suggest that an alternative and longer Hebrew form was in circulation. If that text-form is what the Greek Deuteronomy translator had at hand, then the shift from “gods” to “sons of God” is likely a theological softening (seen elsewhere in the Septuagint). The transposition of “angels of God” with “sons of God” in the Odes of Solomon version of Deuteronomy 32 (found in Codex Alexandrinus) illustrates the interchangeability of the terms.¹⁸ Amid the complexity, there is not yet any firm conclusion as to the original form of Deuteronomy 32:43. It is clear enough that Hebrews 1:6 is influenced by the Greek in some way in making this profound christological claim—or, at least, it was *not* influenced by a Hebrew text that agreed with the

¹⁶Several manuscripts of Deuteronomy also, like Odes Sol. 2, read υἱοί (“sons”) instead of ἄγγελοι (“angels”).

¹⁷Because the MT lacks any clause that could be the apparent source for the citation in Heb 1:6, a minority of scholars suggest Ps 97:7 is being cited, but the majority still hold that Deut 32:43 is the source text for Heb 1:6 because the context of Ps 97:7 (idolatry) does not fit the Hebrews argument.

¹⁸Another factor is the possible lateral influence from Deut 32:8 (where, arguably, the personae in view in clause b are first introduced): MT reads “sons of Israel”; 4Q7 (Genesis⁸) reads “sons of God”; and the Greek evidence is divided between “angels of God” (ἀγγέλων θεοῦ) and “sons of God” (υἱῶν θεοῦ).

MT—but it is not so simple as saying that Hebrews 1:6 uses “the Septuagint,” since the Greek tradition itself is somewhat convoluted.

[§1.3] *Other examples.* Other New Testament citations of the Old Testament fit category 1 but will not be covered in full detail here. We will provide a few representatives in English translation to illustrate the point (see table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Other category 1 passages (alignment with Septuagint)

	NT CITATION	HEBREW (MT)	SEPTUAGINT
a	Matthew 1:23 The <i>virgin</i> [παρθένος] will conceive . . .	Isaiah 7:14 The <i>young woman</i> [עַלְמָאָה] will conceive . . .	Isaiah 7:14 The <i>virgin</i> [παρθένος] ¹⁹ will conceive . . .
b	Luke 4:18b To bring good news to the poor, to preach release to the captives and <i>recovery of sight to the blind</i> . . .	Isaiah 61:1 To bring good news to the poor, to bind up the brokenhearted, to preach release to the captives . . .	Isaiah 61:1 To bring good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach release to the captives and <i>recovery of sight to the blind</i> . . .
c	Acts 7:14 Jacob . . . and all his relatives, <i>seventy-five</i> people.	Genesis 46:27 All the people in Jacob’s house . . . were <i>seventy</i> .	Genesis 46:27 All the people in Jacob’s house . . . were <i>seventy-five</i> .
d	Acts 15:16-17 “I will <i>rebuild</i> the fallen tent of David, and its ruins I will <i>rebuild</i> , and I will restore it, so that the <i>remnant of the peoples will seek after</i> the Lord, and all the nations upon whom my name is called,” says the Lord, who does these things.	Amos 9:11-12 “I will raise up the fallen tent of David, and I will repair its broken portions, and its ruins I will raise up, and I will rebuild it just as the days of old, so that they will possess the <i>remnant</i> of Edom, and all the nations upon whom my name is called,” says the Lord, who does this. ²⁰	Amos 9:11-12 “I will raise up the fallen tent of David, and I will <i>rebuild</i> its fallen portions, and its ruins I will raise up, and I will <i>rebuild</i> it just as the days of old, so that the <i>remnant of the peoples will seek after</i> , and all the nations upon whom my name is called,” says the Lord God, who does these things.

¹⁹Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion read νεᾶνις; Vulgate reads *virgo*.

²⁰CD^a XVII, 15–16 and 4Q174 1 I, 12–13 both cite “And I will make arise the fallen tent of David” from Amos 9:11a.

	NT CITATION	HEBREW (MT)	SEPTUAGINT
e	Romans 15:12b There will be a root from Jesse, and <i>one who stands to rule the nations, and upon him the nations will hope.</i>	Isaiah 11:1 There will be on that day a root from Jesse, who will <i>stand</i> as a signal for the peoples, and the <i>nations</i> will seek him.	Isaiah 11:1 There will be on that day a root from Jesse, and <i>one who stands to rule the nations, and upon him the nations will hope.</i>
f	Hebrews 10:5 A <i>body</i> [σῶμα] you have prepared for me.	Psalm 40:7 <i>Ears</i> [אָזְנוֹתַי] you have dug for me.	Psalm 39:7 A <i>body</i> [σῶμα] ²¹ you have prepared for me.
g	Hebrews 11:21 Jacob . . . worshiped upon the head of his <i>staff</i> .	Genesis 47:31 Jacob . . . worshiped upon the head of his <i>bed</i> .	Genesis 47:31 Jacob . . . worshiped upon the head of his <i>staff</i> .

Category two: Alignment with Hebrew (not Septuagint). The next category is essentially the inverse of category one, whereby the cited text in the New Testament (in Greek, of course) aligns more closely with the textual tradition that eventually became the MT, but the citation deviates in important ways from the Septuagint. It is not possible to prove that a given New Testament author has directly translated from Hebrew. It could be the case that the author has used an existing Greek translation that is lost to us but basically agreed with the Hebrew tradition that later became the MT. Regardless, the reading selected is not “the Septuagint” as we know it in modern editions but rather something that aligns with the sense of the Hebrew.

[§2.1] *Matthew 2:15, citing Hosea 11:1.* This famous citation raises numerous questions about the Evangelist’s hermeneutics, but for our purposes the interesting factor is that the quoted wording clearly aligns with the Hebrew (singular “son”) and not the Septuagint (plural “children”).

MATTHEW 2:15

Out of Egypt I called *my son*.
ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου.

²¹Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion read ὠτία (as do RH and VTG, but we have shown the reading found in all extant OG manuscripts); the Old Latin and Gallican Psalter likewise read *aures* (“ears”).

HOSEA 11:1 MT	HOSEA 11:1 OLD GREEK
Out of Egypt I called <i>my son</i> . ממצרים קראתי לבני	Out of Egypt I recalled his children. ἐξ Αἰγύπτου μετεκάλεσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτοῦ. ²²

HOSEA 11:1 OTHER EVIDENCE		
Aquila	. . . I called <i>my son</i>	[ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου].
Symmachus	. . . <i>my son</i> has been called	[κέκληται υἱὸς μου].
Theodotion	. . . I called him <i>my son</i>	[ἐκάλεσα αὐτὸν τὸν υἱόν μου].
Peshitta	. . . I called <i>my son</i>	[ܐܝܢܐ ܡܝܢܐ].
Vulgate	. . . I called <i>my son</i>	[<i>vocavi filium meum</i>].
Targum	. . . I called them sons	[קרייתי להון בנין].

The tradition is split between the plural “children” (or “sons”) and singular “son,” indicating that both are quite ancient and presumably were available to the Evangelist. The singular alone serves the christological argument regarding young Jesus’ escape to and return from Egypt.

[§2.2] *John 19:37, citing Zechariah 12:10.* One of the distinctive Johannine prooftexts regarding the crucifixion of Jesus is a citation of the prophecy of Zechariah regarding a “pierced” one.

JOHN 19:37

They will look at the *one whom they have pierced*.
ὄψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.

ZACHARIAH 12:10 MT	ZACHARIAH 12:10 OLD GREEK
They look on me, <i>whom they have pierced</i> . הבישו אלי את אשר־דקרו	They look upon me, because they have mocked. ἐπιβλέψονται πρὸς με ἀνθ’ ὧν κατωρχήσαντο. ²³

²²Some Hosea manuscripts read ἡγάπηκα or ἐκάλεσα in place of μετεκάλεσα; per VTG, all read τέκνα.

²³Some Zechariah manuscripts read εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν in place of ἀνθ’ ὧν κατωρχήσαντο, thereby aligning closely with the Hebrew reading; however, one cannot entirely rule out secondary assimilation to the Johannine reading.

ZECHARIAH 12:10 OTHER EVIDENCE		
Aquila	. . . with whom <i>they have pierced</i>	[σὺν ᾧ ἐξεκέντησαν].
Symmachus	. . . before they <i>have pierced</i>	[ἔμπροσθεν ἐπεξεκέντησαν].
Theodotion	. . . the one <i>whom they have pierced</i>	[εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν].
Peshitta	. . . upon me, <i>whom they have pierced</i>	[ܐܝܢܝܢ ܥܘܒܕܝܢܐ].
Vulgate	. . . upon me, whom they have fastened	[<i>ad me quem confixerunt</i>].

The Septuagint reading of “mocked” would have easily worked earlier in the passion account, when Jesus suffers verbal abuse from the soldiers, religious leaders, and bystanders; however, by John 19:37 he has already been crucified and died, so the Evangelist adopts the “pierced” reading that aligns with the proto-MT (see also Rev 1:7).²⁴

Category three: Nonalignment among New Testament citations.

The final category involves situations where more than one New Testament author cites the “same” Old Testament passage, but the wording among them differs. The alignment may be with the Septuagint or with the Hebrew or with neither, but the intriguing thing is that the New Testament authors themselves apparently do not always share the same textual basis. The variation may be due to authorial modification, but it may equally be due to the pluriformity in the textual tradition that each had at his disposal.

[§3.1] *Citations of Deuteronomy 6:5.* Jesus famously summarizes the greatest commandment by appealing to Deuteronomy 6:5: “Love the Lord your God with all your _____.” The synoptic Evangelists differ slightly in the prepositional phrasing, with Matthew 22:37 using ἐν ὅλῃ (“in all”), Mark 12:30 using ἐξ ὅλης (“from all”), and Luke 10:27 using the latter once and then the former.²⁵ The more significant difference lies in the specific nouns that fill in the blank—and even the number of them. The Hebrew and Greek Old Testament traditions themselves

²⁴A small number of other NT citations loosely fit category two but are less clear cut. Rom 9:33 at first aligns more with the Hebrew of Is 28:16a and part of Is 8:14, but the end of the conflated citation aligns with the Septuagint of Is 28:16b. Similarly, 1 Cor 15:54 aligns closer to the sense (but not the wording) of the Hebrew of Is 25:8 (whereas the Septuagint carries almost the opposite sense).

²⁵Some Lukan manuscripts use ἐν ὅλῃ across the board, and some use only ἐξ ὅλης.

vary to a degree. The data can be tabulated as follows, with key differences italicized (table 1.2).²⁶

Table 1.2. Citations of Deuteronomy 6:5 in the New Testament

MATTHEW 22:37	heart (καρδία)	soul (ψυχή)	<i>mind</i> (διανοία)	
MARK 12:30	heart (καρδία)	soul (ψυχή)	<i>mind</i> (διανοία)	strength (ἰσχύς)
LUKE 10:27	heart (καρδία)	soul (ψυχή)	strength (ἰσχύς)	<i>mind</i> (διανοία)
DEUTERONOMY 6:5 MT	heart (לֵב)	soul (נֶפֶשׁ)	power (גִּזְרָה)	
DEUTERONOMY 6:5 VTG	<i>mind</i> (διανοία)	soul (ψυχή)	power (δύναμις)	
DEUTERONOMY 6:5 RH	heart (καρδία)	soul (ψυχή)	power (δύναμις)	

All agree on the second element (“soul”). Most agree on the first (“heart”), and the Old Greek (per VTG) may reflect the common tendency among Septuagint translators to alternate between καρδία and διανοία to translate Hebrew לֵב. The variation between δύναμις and ἰσχύς as two synonyms for “strength”/“power” likely stems from ambiguity of the Hebrew גִּזְרָה (see OG 2 Kings [2 Kingdoms] 23:25). The addition of a fourth element in Mark and Luke is difficult to explain but may reflect some kind of growth in the tradition, essentially taking “mind” from part of the Greek stream (= VTG) and adding it to “heart.”

[§3.2] *Citations of Genesis 2:24.* Three times the New Testament appeals to the creation account to articulate the “one flesh” principle of marriage. The wording varies not only among each of these instances but also with respect to the antecedent Hebrew and Greek text-forms.

²⁶Here we provide the primary readings from the critical editions of each book. Unsurprisingly, the manuscript tradition is quite varied for each of the Gospels. For instance, Mk 12:30 features over a dozen different permutations, such as “soul . . . heart . . . mind . . . strength” or “heart . . . mind . . . soul . . . strength.” Moreover, some scribes for both Mk 12:30 and Lk 10:27 shorten to three elements but do not agree on which three. Similar kinds of permutations are seen in the Greek manuscripts of Deuteronomy (beyond the options reflected in VTG and RH).

MATTHEW 19:5

Because of this, a man will leave father and mother and join to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

ἕνεκα τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ κολληθήσεται τῇ γυναικὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

MARK 10:7²⁷

Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

ἕνεκεν τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

EPHESIANS 5:31

For this, a man will leave father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

ἀντὶ τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος [τὸν] πατέρα καὶ [τὴν] μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

GENESIS 2:24 MT

Because of this, a man will leave his father and his mother and cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

עַל־כֵּן יַעֲזֹב־אִישׁ אֶת־אָבִיו וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בְּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר אֶחָד

GENESIS 2:24 OLD GREEK²⁸

Because of this, a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.

ἕνεκεν τούτου καταλείπει ἄνθρωπος τὸν πατέρα αὐτοῦ καὶ τὴν μητέρα καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ ἔσονται οἱ δύο εἰς σάρκα μίαν.

The main differences entail the initial transition, presence/absence of “his” for father/mother, the verb for “cling,” the prepositional phrasing “to his wife,” and the use of “the two” or “they.” These are not necessarily

²⁷Two updates have happened in the recent *Editio Critica Maior* of Mark compared to NA²⁸.

(1) NA²⁸ brackets καὶ προσκολληθήσεται πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, but *Editio Critica Maior* now adopts the longer reading, presumably under the assumption that the omission in GA 01 and 03 resulted from parablepsis via αὐτοῦ καὶ . . . αὐτοῦ καὶ. (2) The accusative πρὸς τὴν γυναῖκα (= OG) and dative πρὸς τῇ γυναικὶ are a ♦ (split) reading, suggesting editorial uncertainty.

²⁸Some manuscripts repeat αὐτοῦ after “mother.” The Hexaplaric readings and other versions are uneventful and thus are excluded here.

significant for interpretation but nevertheless imply some kind of textual diversity available to (and used by) the apostolic writers.

[§3.3] Other examples. There are a handful of other instances where different New Testament authors cite the “same” Old Testament text but with different wording. The most interesting are as follows:

- The sequencing of the sixth/seventh/eighth commandments (MT: “you shall not murder . . . commit adultery . . . steal”) vary in Matthew 19:18; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11.²⁹
- The citations of Psalm 110[109]:1 slightly vary in Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42-43; Acts 2:34-35; Hebrews 1:13, particularly “beneath your feet” (ὕποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν σου) versus “as a footstool for your feet” (ὕποπόδιον τῶν ποδῶν σου).
- The citations of Habakkuk 2:4 vary in the use/nonuse (and placement) of the possessive pronoun “my” (μου) in Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.³⁰

These test cases help highlight key issues for discussion when it comes to the issue of authority. The following two chapters lay important groundwork on the matters of canon and textual history, which in turn help support and inform the subsequent discussion of these case studies from various disciplinary approaches. We make no claim to having resolved every question in this area of study. But we are confident that this volume advances the discussion in new ways.

²⁹See details in Gregory R. Lanier, “Scriptural Inspiration and the Authorial ‘Original’ amid Textual Complexity: The Sequences of the Murder–Adultery–Steal Commands as a Case Study,” *JETS* 61 (2018): 47-81.

³⁰This difference—particularly in light of the different ways the MT and Septuagint present the text—is small but exegetically significant.

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