TEXTUAL AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE OLD TESTAMENT QUOTATIONS IN HEBREWS

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by

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To Anna and Anton
Abstract

Textual and Contextual Background of the Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews

This thesis aims at investigating the use of the Old Testament in the New, and in Hebrews specifically, focusing on two aspects which appear to have been somewhat neglected in previous scholarship, namely the text and context of specific quotations. The aspect of text takes the complicated textual history of the Old Testament into account, especially concentrating on the findings of recent Septuagint research and particularly the possibility that different Hebrew texts may underlie the Greek translation. The aspect of context draws on the assumption that Hebrews was composed in a Jewish context, where the Old Testament text had been interpreted for a long time. It is also presupposed that this exegesis was handed down along with the Hebrew Scriptures not only in the post Second Temple Jewish community, but also in the early Church. Hence primary sources, such as Talmud, Midrash and early Church Fathers, are consulted with the intention of better understanding the interpretation of the Old Testament quotations in Hebrews. To do this three Old Testament texts, which exist in distinctly different versions and have been quoted in Hebrews, have been examined, namely Gen. 47:31b (in Heb. 11:21), Ps. 40:7b (in Heb. 10:5), and Jer. 31:33 (in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16).

The outcome of this study shows that several versions of Old Testament texts were interpreted at the time of the New Testament and that the peculiarities of the different versions had a decisive impact on the exegesis of the texts. Further, it shows that some versions of the texts were favoured in the Jewish context while others were preferred in the early Church. Hence different understandings of Old Testament passages in different contexts are sometimes not the result of different interpretations of the same texts, but of the exegesis of different versions of the same text.
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Finally, as always, I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my family for constantly standing by my side and especially to my parents to whom this work is dedicated.
# Table of Contents

Abstract

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

1. Setting the Scene

1.1 Rationale and Background

1.1.2 Basic Assumptions of this Study

1.2 Aims

1.2.1 Research Questions

1.2.2 The “Parting of the Ways” Debate

1.3 Textual and Contextual Background

1.3.1 Introduction

1.3.2 Textual Background

1.3.2.1 Hebrews and Septuagint Research

1.3.3 Contextual Background

1.3.3.1 Hebrews and Second Temple Judaism

1.3.3.2 Hebrews and the Early Church

1.4 Evaluation of Earlier Investigations

1.5 Methodology

1.5.1 Overview

1.5.2 Selection of Texts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.3.6.1</td>
<td>Midrash Tanhuma B</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.6.2</td>
<td>Midrash Rabbah</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7</td>
<td>Jer. 31:33 in the Early Greek Church</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.1</td>
<td>Valentinus (c. 100–c. 160)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.2</td>
<td>Justin Martyr (c. 100–165)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.3</td>
<td>Irenaeus (c. 135–202)</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.4</td>
<td>Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.5</td>
<td>Origen (185–254)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.6</td>
<td>Eusebius (c. 260–339)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.7</td>
<td>Athanasius (c. 293–373)</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.8</td>
<td>Pseudo-Macarius (c. 300–c. 390)</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.9</td>
<td>Didymus (c. 313–c. 398)</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.10</td>
<td>John Chrysostom (344–407)</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.11</td>
<td>Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375–444)</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.12</td>
<td>Theodoret (393–457)</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.7.13</td>
<td>Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church</td>
<td>127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8</td>
<td>Jer. 31:33 in the Early Latin Church</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.1</td>
<td>Tertullian (c. 160–c. 220)</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.2</td>
<td>Cyprian (–258)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.3</td>
<td>Lactantius (c. 240–c. 320)</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.4</td>
<td>Ambrose (340–397)</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.5</td>
<td>Optatus Milevitanus (ca. 370)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3.8.6</td>
<td>Jerome (350–420)</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.3.8.7 Augustine of Hippo (354–430) 142

2.3.8.8 Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390–c. 455) 152

2.3.8.9 Leo I (c. 400–461) 154

2.3.8.10 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church 155

2.3.9 Jer. 31:33: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context 155

2.4 Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16 157

2.4.1 Introduction 157

2.4.2 The Interpretation of Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16 158

2.5 Conclusions 164

3. Psalm 40:7b (LXX 39:7b) in Hebrews 10:5 166

3.1 Introduction 166

3.2 The Text of Ps 40:7b 168

3.2.1 Ps. 40:7b and the Differences between the Versions 168

3.2.1.1 MT Version of Ps. 40:7b 172

3.2.1.2 LXX Version of Ps. 40:7b 172

3.2.2 The Origin of the Versions 172

3.2.3 The Biblical Contexts of Psalm 40:7b 178

3.2.3.1 In MT and LXX 178

3.2.3.2 In Hebrews 184

3.2.4 Ps. 40:7b: Summary and Evidence from the Text 187

3.3 The Interpretative Context of the Two Versions of Ps. 40:7b 190

3.3.1 Introduction 190
3.3.2 Ps. 40:7b in the Targum 190
3.3.3 Ps. 40:7 in the New Testament 192
3.3.4 Ps. 40:7 in Midrash 193
  3.3.4.1 Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai 193
  3.3.4.2 Midrash Tehillim 195
  3.3.4.3 Summary and Evidence from Midrash 198
3.3.5 Ps. 40:7b in the Early Greek Church 199
  3.3.5.1 Irenaeus (c. 135–202) 199
  3.3.5.2 Origen (185–254) 201
  3.3.5.3 Eusebius (c. 260–339) 203
  3.3.5.4 Athanasius (c. 293–373) 209
  3.3.5.5 Didymus (c. 313–c. 398) 212
  3.3.5.6 Asterius Amasenus (c. 330–410) 222
  3.3.5.7 John Chrysostom (344–407) 223
  3.3.5.8 Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428) 227
  3.3.5.9 Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375–444) 231
  3.3.5.10 Theodoret (393–457) 233
  3.3.5.11 Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church 239
3.3.6 Ps. 40:7b in the Early Latin Church 240
  3.3.6.1 Hilarius Pictaviensis (315–367) 240
  3.3.6.2 Niceta of Remesiana (c. 335–c. 414) 241
  3.3.6.3 Ambrose (340–397) 242
  3.3.6.4 Jerome (350–420) 244
3.3.6.5 Augustine of Hippo (354–430) 246
3.3.6.6 Julius of Eclanum (c. 386–c. 455) 248
3.3.6.7 Petrus Chrysologus (406–450) 248
3.3.6.8 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church 251
3.3.7 Ps. 40:7b: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context 251
3.4 Ps. 40:7b in Heb. 10:5 253
  3.4.1 Introduction 253
  3.4.2 The Interpretation of Ps. 40:7b in Heb. 10:5 255
  3.5 Conclusions 260

4. Genesis 47:31b in Hebrews 11:21 262
  4.1 Introduction 262
  4.2 The Text of Gen. 47:31b 264
    4.2.1 Gen. 47:31b and the Differences between the Versions 264
      4.2.1.1 MT Version of Gen. 47:31b 269
      4.2.1.2 LXX Version of Gen. 47:31b 269
    4.2.3 The Origin of the Versions 271
    4.2.4 The Biblical Contexts of Gen. 47:31b 272
      4.2.4.1 In MT and LXX 272
      4.2.4.2 In Hebrews 276
    4.2.5 Gen. 47:31b: Summary and Evidence from the Text 284
  4.3 The Interpretative Context of the Two Versions of Gen. 47:31b 285
    4.3.1 Introduction 285
4.3.2 Gen. 47:31b in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 286
  4.3.2.1 The Testament of Job 286

4.3.3 Gen. 47:31b in the Targums 287
  4.3.3.1 Introduction 287
  4.3.3.2 Targum Onkelos 287
  4.3.3.3 Targum Pseudo-Jonathan 288
  4.3.3.4 Targum Neofiti 1 289
  4.3.3.5 Summary and Evidence from the Targums 291

4.3.4 Gen. 47:31b in Talmud and Midrash 291
  4.3.4.1 Introduction 291
  4.3.4.2 Babylonian Talmud 292
  4.3.4.3 Genesis Rabbah 295
  4.3.4.4 Sifre Deuteronomy 299
  4.3.4.5 Tanḥuma 304
  4.3.4.6 Summary and Evidence from Talmud and Midrash 305

4.3.5 Gen. 47:31b in the Early Greek Church 307
  4.3.5.1 Origen (185–254) 307
  4.3.5.2 Athanasius (c. 293–373) 307
  4.3.5.3 Eusebius of Emesa (c. 300–c. 360) 309
  4.3.5.4 Diodorus of Tarsus (330–391) 310
  4.3.5.5 John Chrysostom (344–407) 312
  4.3.5.6 Theodoret (393–457) 315
  4.3.5.7 Gennadius (–c. 496) 317
4.3.5.8 Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church 319

4.3.6 Gen. 47:31b in the Early Latin Church 321

4.3.6.1 Rufinus (344–410) 321

4.3.6.2 Jerome (350–420) 322

4.3.6.3 Augustine of Hippo (354–430) 323

4.3.6.4 Cyprianus Gallus (c. 400) 326

4.3.6.5 Eucherius of Lyon (410–c. 449) 327

4.3.6.6 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church 328

4.3.7 Gen. 47:31b: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context 329

4.4 Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21 331

4.4.1 Introduction 331

4.4.2 The Interpretation of Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21 332

4.4.2.1 Gen. 47:31b Indicating the Place of Worship in Heb. 11:21 334

4.4.2.2 Gen. 47:31b Indicating the Object of Worship in Heb. 11:21 335

4.4.2.3 Gen. 47:31b Emphasizing Jacob’s Faith in Heb. 11:21 337

4.4.2.4 Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21 in the Context of𝔓46 337

4.5 Conclusions 338

5. General Conclusions 342

5.1 Overview of the Conclusions of Chapters 2–4 342

5.1.1 Introduction 342

5.1.2 Text 343

5.1.3 Context 345
  5.2.1 Text 348
  5.2.2 Context 349
5.3 Remarks on the “Parting of the Ways” Debate 350
5.4 Further Research 353

6. Bibliography 356
  6.1 Primary Sources 356
  6.2 Secondary Sources 372
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANF</td>
<td>The Ante-Nicene Fathers</td>
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<td>c.</td>
<td>column</td>
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<td>CBR</td>
<td>Currents in Biblical Research</td>
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<td>CCL</td>
<td>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</td>
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<td>CSEL</td>
<td>Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>The Fathers of the Church</td>
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<td>FOC</td>
<td>Fontes Christiani</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>The Septuagint</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPG</td>
<td>Migne Patrologia Graeca</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>The Masoretic text</td>
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<tr>
<td>NETS</td>
<td>New English Translation of the Septuagint</td>
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<td>no.</td>
<td>number</td>
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<tr>
<td>NPNF</td>
<td>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NRSV</td>
<td>New Revised Standard Version of the Bible</td>
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<td>p.</td>
<td>page</td>
</tr>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>Patrologia Latina</td>
</tr>
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<td>RB</td>
<td>Revue Biblique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Sources Chrétiennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ser.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>vol.</td>
<td>volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VT</td>
<td>Vetus Testamentum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Setting the Scene

1.1 Rationale and Background

The New Testament already in its name presupposes an Old Testament. Moreover, the new covenant\(^1\) is not introduced before the end of the Gospels (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:20). Hence it could be argued that the bulk of the Gospels actually took place during the time of the Old Testament, as Guillet argued: “He [Jesus] never moves outside of Scripture [the Old Testament]. All that he does and is aims only at giving the Scriptures their true dimension …”.\(^2\) Further, throughout the New Testament the Old Testament is referred to in quotations and allusions, and it is presupposed in most of the theological argumentation. Hence the importance of the relationship between the two testaments for the understanding of the New Testament cannot be overestimated. This is especially manifest in the Letter to the Hebrews, and any investigation on Hebrews has to deal with the fact that the text abounds in quotations from and allusions to the Old Testament, not to mention that the issues discussed in Hebrews are totally Old Testament centred. Hence understanding the exegesis of the Old Testament in the

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\(^{1}\) Covenant and testament are, of course, translations of one and the same Greek word διαθήκη, which in turn is a rendering of the Hebrew term נהרין.

New is of critical importance to any analysis of the epistle, as pointed out by Guthrie: “Simply stated, the uses to which Hebrews has put the Old Testament are the book’s bone and marrow.”\(^3\) This issue can be addressed in various ways, but it is the intention of this particular investigation to focus on certain aspects of the question which up to now seem to have been somewhat neglected. Thus, the main emphasis here will be on seeking to establish the textual basis for Old Testament quotations and on the context(s) in which they were interpreted both before and after they were used in the New Testament. Given the great and obvious importance of the Old Testament for the Letter to the Hebrews, the epistle will be used for the present investigation, and serve as a test case for further investigations on the New Testament.\(^4\)


\(^4\) Cf. Natalio Fernández Marcos, \textit{The Septuagint in context: introduction to the Greek version of the Bible} (Leiden, 2001), p.327, where he states that: “The letter to the Hebrews is an important document for checking the biblical text used since it includes very long quotations and it is likely that these seeped in from memory.”
What aroused my interest for this particular study was a short monograph by Adrian Schenker *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten: Jer 31 in der hebräischen und griechischen Bibel* published in 2006. Here Schenker states that: “The promise of a new covenant in the prophet Jeremiah in the version of the Greek Bible of the Septuagint has never been systematically compared with the Hebrew version …”.⁵ The fact that the differences between the two versions of Jeremiah 31 only occasionally have been discussed before in the scholarly literature, and that these divergences rarely have been taken into account in the interpretation of the quotation in Hebrews, is surprising.⁶ This issue is made even more complex by the fact that there are substantial differences between the text of the Septuagint and the text of the Hebrew version. Furthermore, these differences appear to be caused not by the process of translation, but rather because the text of the Septuagint is a translation of a different Vorlage, which appears to be older and more original than the version preserved in the Masoretic Hebrew text. Moreover, both versions are found in most modern translations of the Bible, since Jeremiah is usually translated from the Hebrew text, while the quotation in Hebrews is a quotation from the Greek text. Naturally one asks which text did the

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⁵ Adrian Schenker, *Das Neue am neuen Bund und das Alte am alten: Jer 31 in der hebräischen und griechischen Bibel, von der Textgeschichte zu Theologie, Synagoge und Kirche* (Göttingen, 2006), p.11. For a longer quotation and the German text, see below.

⁶ It is for instance not discussed in Radu Gheorghita, *The role of the Septuagint in Hebrews: an investigation of its influence with special consideration to the use of Hab 2:3-4 in Heb 10:37-38* (Tübingen, 2003).
author of Hebrews use and why, and further, how did the particular version of the
text used interact with his argumentation. Hence these questions will be dealt
with in the present study, which will focus not only on Jeremiah 31 in Hebrews,
but on two additional Old Testament texts quoted in Hebrews, for which there
existed various versions of the source text. Moreover, the text of Hebrews was not
composed in a vacuum, but rather in a continuum, in which Hebrews is neither the
beginning nor the end, but only a point on a line of interpretations. Hence this
interpretative line of the Old Testament will be followed and explored as far back
as possible and until the first centuries of the present era to see how these texts
were interpreted in a historical perspective. The findings of this part of the
investigation will be used when examining the quotations in Hebrews to find out
if and how they relate to the interpretations found in other sources. In short, this
study aims to investigate two aspects of Old Testament quotations in Hebrews,
namely the text and the wider interpretative context. The importance of these two
aspects has, of course, been widely recognized before, but nonetheless this
knowledge does not seem to have been carried into effect to any extent.

As far as the first of these aspects is concerned, most investigations of
Hebrews point out that the majority of the quotations are taken from the Greek
translation of the Old Testament, usually known under the name Septuagint
(LXX). Unfortunately, these investigations, with very few exceptions, do not take

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the discussion about the text any further. Thus it is implicitly taken for granted that there actually existed one Greek translation (usually practically identical with Rahlfs’ 1935 edition)\(^8\) of one Hebrew text (usually practically identical with Biblica Hebraica being a diplomatic text based on the medieval manuscript Codex Leningradensis dated to AD 1008 or possibly 1009)\(^9\), as Tov notes:

> Interest in the original shape of the biblical text is a relatively new development in the history of research. Before that interest developed, the biblical text was considered to have once existed in exactly or approximately the same form as that known from the medieval manuscripts and printed editions of \(\mathfrak{M} [\text{MT}]\).\(^{10}\)

Such an attitude towards the source text of the quotations utterly neglects the results of the very flourishing Septuagint research of the last hundred years or so.\(^{11}\) Here, it is especially important to take account of the investigations into the Vorlage of the Septuagint, which are based on the findings from the Judean desert, and Qumran in particular, since they show that the Greek text sometimes translates a different Hebrew text from the one today preserved in the Masoretic

\(^{8}\) Alfred Rahlfs (ed.), Septuaginta: \(\text{Id est Vetus Testamentum graece iuxta LXX interpretes}\) (Stuttgart, 1979).

\(^{9}\) Hans Rüger et al. (eds.), \textit{Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia} (Stuttgart, 1990).


text (see further below). In short, at the time when Hebrews was composed, the Old Testament in Hebrew was not as uniform as is usually taken for granted, and thus the Greek rendering, or rather renderings, of the Hebrew texts were equally differentiated. This aspect of the present investigation mainly deals with textual matters, which usually are discussed in investigations focusing on the use of the Old Testament in the New, or more specifically the use of the Old Testament in Hebrews. However, although some of these earlier investigations touch upon the textual aspect in focus in the present investigation, they only rarely go into any details. Hence it appears that more attention has to be given to this particular aspect to fully understand the textual background of the quotations. Moreover, since the author of Hebrews is generally quoting the Greek text of the Old Testament rather than the Hebrew, Septuagint research provides an important basis for this study.

The second aspect deals with the context in which Hebrews was composed. It has been a trend for some time among scholars in the field of New Testament exegesis to point out that the context in which the early Christian texts were composed was a Jewish context. If this is correct (and it is the assumption of the present investigation that this is the case), it has far-reaching consequences for the exegesis of the New Testament, and especially for a text such as Hebrews, which is soaked in Old Testament quotations and allusions. If the Letter to the Hebrews

12 For an evaluation of earlier investigations, see below.

was written in a Jewish context, this means that the author was familiar with Jewish Old Testament exegesis as well. Consequently, it is likely that there are affinities between the Jewish interpretations of Old Testament passages and those found in Hebrews, and that knowledge about Jewish exegesis could help shed some light on how the author understood the texts he quoted.

Both of these aspects, text and context, are crucial for the understanding of Hebrews and especially of its Old Testament quotations. However, there is also one methodological aspect which is of great importance to the present investigation, namely that most studies of Old Testament quotations in Hebrews tend to end at the time when Hebrews was composed. It is the aim of the present investigation to go one step further, taking the reception of the Old Testament texts in the post Second Temple Jewish community and in the Early Church into consideration. This methodological approach is based on the assumption that the Old Testament texts were not handed down in isolation, but that they were accompanied by interpretations. Hence, when the texts were read in the post Second Temple Jewish community as well as in the early Church, they were not interpreted anew from scratch, but the understanding of the text was based on earlier interpretations, which were handed down together with the texts themselves.14

It should be noted here how these two aspects, text and context, interact with each other. Since there existed different versions of Old Testament texts, it is likely that not only one of the texts was interpreted within Judaism, but several. It is also likely that at least some of these interpretations were known to the author of Hebrews. Hence at the time when Hebrews was composed, the author did not only have access to several versions of the text, but most certainly also to a number of different interpretations. Whilst the first aspect tries to contribute to the field of New Testament exegesis by investigating the textual basis, the second aspect does so by studying the interpretational background of the texts. Hence this part of the present investigation provides important information for the reception history of the Old Testament, of which Hebrews is but one example.

1.1.2 Basic assumptions of this study:
1. There existed several versions of the OT text at the time when Hebrews was composed.
2. There existed several interpretations related to these versions.
3. Hebrews was written in a Jewish context where these interpretations were known and used.
4. These interpretations continued to be used in the early Church and in post Second Temple Judaism
5. An investigation of these interpretations in the early Church and within Judaism can help shed some light on how the texts were understood by the author of Hebrews.
1.2 Aims

1.2.1 Research Questions

The aim of the present investigation is to answer a number of questions. The answers to these questions are expected to increase the understanding of the use of the Old Testament in the Letter to the Hebrews, as well as in the New Testament as a whole. The basis for these questions are the assumptions mentioned above, that there existed several versions of the Old Testament text at the time when Hebrews was composed, and that these versions were interpreted in the context where Hebrews was composed. Given the fact that there existed more than one version of the Old Testament text when Hebrews was composed, it is only natural that the first question to ask is which versions actually existed of the Old Testament texts quoted in Hebrews. Closely connected to this question is another one, namely which version of the Old Testament was used by the author of Hebrews in the quotations discussed in the present investigation. It is important to note here that the question about the versions is not limited to the consideration of whether the author of Hebrews quoted the Septuagint or not, but the origin and prehistory of the quoted text is taken into consideration as well. This means that the most recent research into the complex textual history of the Septuagint will be consulted, and, in particular, due attention will be paid to the possibility that the text of the Greek translation is based on a different Hebrew text from the MT. It is expected that the outcome of this study of the source text for the quotations in Hebrews will give a more detailed, but also a more balanced, perception of the
author’s use of the Old Testament. The answers to these two questions will also provide the solid foundation for the following investigation of the interpretation of the text. The two questions in focus here are also closely related, but whereas the previous ones deal with the text the following two deal with the context; how did the different versions of the text influence the interpretations of the text before and after the time of Hebrews, and how did the version of the Old Testament text quoted in Hebrews interact with the argumentation of the author? For these questions to be relevant it has to be assumed that the text actually was interpreted at the time before Hebrews, which is not always possible to show by references to extant texts. Hence the earliest sources available discussing the Old Testament passages quoted in Hebrews will be examined in an attempt to find traces of earlier interpretations that could shed some light on how the texts were interpreted at the time of Hebrews. The intended outcome of this part of the investigation is to find out if there could have been any interpretations prior to Hebrews that were the basis for the author’s interpretation in Hebrews.

1.2.2 The “Parting of the Ways” Debate

In addition to the main questions that form the bulk of the present investigation there is one question that will be touched upon, namely the role of Scripture in the process of forming two separate communities, the Jewish and the Christian, out of the one community that existed before the rise of Christianity. Scripture was very central in Second Temple Judaism, and this was also the case in the post Second Temple Jewish community as well as in the early Church. Therefore, one
important factor in the process of forming these communities is the interpretation of Scripture. In the light of the present investigation there is one question that arises, namely if the use of different versions of texts was one factor in the forming of these separate communities. In other words: did the two communities interpret the same texts differently or did they in fact interpret different versions of the texts differently? In the first case the differences are based on different interpretations in the second on different versions of the texts.

### 1.3 Textual and Contextual Background

#### 1.3.1 Introduction

The approach for this study has already been touched upon, and it will focus on two aspects that have attracted less attention than could have been expected, given their significance for the exegesis of the New Testament; namely text and context. Regarding the text it is especially the findings of the flourishing Septuagint research of the last decades that will be taken into account more fully than has hitherto been the case.\(^{15}\) This aspect will be discussed in some detail in the following section regarding the text. For the context it is the interpretative context

of the Old Testament texts before they were used in the New Testament that will be taken into account. However, since the extant material predating the composition of Hebrews is often very scarce, later material is employed with the assumption that it draws on earlier sources, and hence can shed some light upon earlier but no longer extant material. This aspect will be dealt with in the two sections below on Hebrews and Second Temple Judaism, and Hebrews and the early Church, respectively.

1.3.2 Textual Background

1.3.2.1 Hebrews and Septuagint Research

The importance of the Septuagint for New Testament research cannot be overestimated, and that goes without saying for the study of Old Testament quotations in Hebrews also.\textsuperscript{16} In the following section the focus will be the relation between Hebrews and the Septuagint, and the place of the present investigation in that context will be discussed. Septuagint research has been a

vibrant field of investigation for at least the last hundred years, but it has been especially active for the last few decades, having received new impetus from the important manuscript finds in the Judean desert. This increasing interest in the Septuagint can be seen in the numerous introductions, dictionaries, translations, commentaries, and handbooks to the whole Septuagint or to its individual parts that are currently being produced. One of the most important factors for this

activity is the new critical edition, which is currently being produced by the Septuaginta-Unternehmen in Göttingen, with the aim of taking all available material into account. Hence it is surprising to see that the Septuagint does not attract more interest among New Testament scholars, as is noted by McLay: “Our contention is that the LXX has not received the attention that it should in NT studies.” Though the importance of the Septuagint is widely accepted among New Testament scholars, this is rarely reflected in New Testament research. Fortunately, this is not a rule without exceptions, and there are both general discussions about the role of the Septuagint, such as McLay’s *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research*, and more specific studies focusing on the Septuagint and Hebrews, for example, Gheorghita *The Role of the Septuagint*

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*Septuagint and modern study* (Winona Lake, 1993), and Jobes and Silva, *Invitation*, pp.311–318.


21 McLay, *Septuagint*. 
in Hebrews,$^{22}$ Docherty *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews*,$^{23}$ and Steyn *A Quest for the Assumed LXX Vorlage of the Explicit Quotations in Hebrews*.$^{24}$

Although there are many aspects of Septuagint research that are relevant to New Testament research$^{25}$ the present investigation will focus on only one, but nevertheless important, detail, namely the fact that the Septuagint sometimes represents a different version of the Old Testament text from the MT. Before the discoveries of the manuscripts of the Old Testament in the Judean desert it was generally assumed (although contested by several LXX scholars)$^{26}$ that the differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic text were a product of the translators, or as Marcos states:

> Until the middle of this century, the differences between the LXX and the Hebrew text were usually explained by resorting to the idiosyncrasy and translation technique of the translators, to editorial reworking of the text in favour of an actual theology or to other tendentious purposes.$^{27}$

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$^{22}$ Gheorghita, *The role of the Septuagint*.

$^{23}$ Docherty, *Old Testament in Hebrews*.

$^{24}$ Gert Steyn, *A quest for the assumed LXX Vorlage of the explicit quotations in Hebrews* (Göttingen, 2011).

$^{25}$ For a recent and more general discussion about the role of the Septuagint, see Docherty, *Old Testament in Hebrews*, pp.122–130.


$^{27}$ Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint*, p.69.
Today it is generally recognized that the Vorlage of the Septuagint was not identical to the MT (or even to a proto MT), but that it represents a different (and sometimes older and hence more original) version of the Hebrew Old Testament text. Marcos concludes:

It is difficult to overestimate the impact made by the finds from the Desert of Judah on the understanding of the history of the biblical text and more particularly on the early history of the LXX and its relationship to the Hebrew text. … important is the discovery of readings that are different from the [Hebrew] textus receptus but that agree with LXX readings; before Qumran these were usually explained as the result of a different exegetical tradition and not as belonging to a different textual tradition. … today the coexistence of different textual types is accepted as fact at least during the two centuries before a standardisation of the consonantal text. … Its disagreements with the textus receptus may in theory go back to a Hebrew Vorlage which is earlier than the standardisation of the consonantal text. Furthermore, in some books the Greek translation was made before the final redaction of the book had been completed in the form it has today in the Masoretic text.  

It has to be pointed out here that the differences between the versions of the Hebrew Old Testament text should not be exaggerated. One important result of the findings of old Hebrew manuscripts is also that they demonstrate a relative conformity of the Hebrew text, and that the text found in mediaeval manuscripts

does not diverge very much from what is found in the much older manuscripts. However, although the Hebrew text has been relatively uniform from the time of Second Temple Judaism, the differences that do exist between the versions of the text will be an important issue of the present investigation. Consequently, one basic assumption for the present investigation is that the Old Testament, i.e., the Hebrew text, at some point existed in various versions, one of which was translated into Greek and preserved as the Septuagint (LXX) version. Another one was preserved as the Masoretic (MT) version, but ultimately both the LXX version and the MT version are two different versions of some original Hebrew text, as noted by Jobes and Silva:

Many other finds from Qumran confirm the antiquity of the text preserved in the MT. But the discoveries in the Judean Desert also show that the Hebrew text that has come down to us in the MT was not the only Hebrew edition of at least some of the books. The extant Greek version of such books may have been based on a Hebrew text edition significantly different from the MT. ²⁹

Emanuel Tov makes a similar claim:

²⁹ Jobes and Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, p.177.
… even though the number of Qumran texts closely related to the LXX is very small, it stands to reason that at one time all books of the Bible existed in a Hebrew form which is now represented in Greek.  

Since the number of Qumran texts closely related to the LXX is very small, it is of great importance to note that in the material from Qumran there is evidence not only of Hebrew texts similar to the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint, but also of the existence of a large number of different versions of the text:

It appears that during the last three pre-Christian centuries many texts were current in Palestine; in other words, this period was characterized by textual plurality. … The Qumran discoveries bear evidence of the various texts that were current during this period. … it would appear that for every biblical book one could find an almost unlimited number of texts, differing from each other, sometimes in major details.


Consequently, the plurality of the Hebrew text at the time when Hebrews was composed has to be considered when discussing the quotations of the Old Testament in Hebrews.

Given the evidence of textual plurality it is essential to note also that it cannot \textit{a priori} be taken for granted that either one of the versions is more original than the other, as is pointed out by Marcos:

From the moment that priority of one tradition over the other cannot be proved, one of them cannot be used to correct the other, because it is not always easy to distinguish between textual evolution and the literary evolution of the various traditions.\textsuperscript{32}

As far as the MT is concerned Tov remarks:

It has become clear from the preceding paragraphs that one of the postulates of biblical research is that the text preserved in the various representatives (manuscripts, editions) of what is commonly called the Masoretic Text, does not reflect the “original text” of the biblical books in many details. … it should not be postulated in advance that that $\text{𝔫}$ [MT] reflects the original text of the biblical books better than other texts.\textsuperscript{33}

Likewise, Tov has the following note about the LXX:

\textsuperscript{32} Fernández Marcos, \textit{The Septuagint}, p.77.

\textsuperscript{33} Tov, \textit{Textual criticism}, p.11.
The reliability of the ancient translations, especially \( \mathfrak{G} \) [LXX], is strengthened by the Qumran texts. \( \mathfrak{G} \) is one of the important texts for biblical research, but since it is written in Greek, its Hebrew source has to be reconstructed from that language. The reconstruction of many such details is now supported by the discovery of identical Hebrew readings in Qumran scrolls. … The importance of \( \mathfrak{G} \) is based on the fact that it reflects a greater variety of important variants than all the other translations put together.\(^{34}\)

It is, of course, true that a different Vorlage is by no means the only reason for the divergences between LXX and MT. Rather, there are a number of reasons for these differences such as textual corruption, textual transmission, misinterpretation, and exegetical translation.\(^{35}\) Anyhow, as also pointed out by Marcos: “… we should respect the autonomy and special nature of the translation as a witness of a different literary tradition from the textus receptus”.\(^{36}\) Hence, in the present investigation, Old Testament texts, for which various versions of the Hebrew text could at least be taken into consideration, are the primary object of study, and other possibilities are only taken into account when a divergent Hebrew text can be ruled out.

Moreover, it has been argued, for example, by Jobes and Silva:

\(^{34}\) Tov, Textual criticism, pp.117, 142.


\(^{36}\) Fernández Marcos, The Septuagint, p.79.
… that only one “original” Greek translation was made of each book [of the Hebrew Scriptures] prior to the Christian era, and whatever differences are found between surviving texts of the same book reflect a revision of the Greek.\textsuperscript{37}

It should be noted, however, that this argument that there only existed one “original” translation of each book is about whole books, while what gives cause for a revision of these “original” translations is exactly the wish to translate certain details in them differently. Hence it is also likely that, even if there only existed one “original” translation, there existed several translations of many details.\textsuperscript{38} The assumption by Jobes and Silva is also built on the presupposition that there existed one and only one version of the Hebrew text, and that that version was only translated once. Here it is argued that there existed several Hebrew versions of at least portions of the Scriptures and that there seems to be no good reason \textit{not} to translate more than one of them into Greek. That this actually was the case can be seen from the later Greek versions, in which usually a Hebrew version close to MT was rendered into Greek and not the \textit{Vorlage} of the Septuagint:

… there was also another philological tendency within Judaism that was apparent in a series of early revisions intended to correct the text of the LXX in order to adapt it to the Hebrew text in current use. This trend, which is already

\textsuperscript{37} Jobes and Silva, \textit{Invitation to the Septuagint}, pp.45–46.

evident in the Hebraising corrections of some pre-Christian papyri, would become more obvious in the καίγε revision and culminated in the new Jewish translations by Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion …

This is also confirmed by the quotations in the New Testament, which are not always in accordance with the Septuagint, but some are either closer to the MT or follow another textual tradition. Hence, at the time of the New Testament there is evidence of several Greek renderings of the Hebrew Scriptures, and it is more than unlikely that the Jews composing the New Testament were the first Jews to make or use other Greek translations (or versions/revisions) of the Old Testament texts. Consequently, in the Jewish context there were not only several versions of the Hebrew text, but also various translations/revisions of several Hebrew versions into Greek, as well as revisions of the Greek versions. This does not mean that an author such as the composer of Hebrews necessarily had in front of him a number of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts with different versions of the Old Testament from which he chose whatever version he found suitable. It could well have been that he only had one manuscript at his disposal, and that leads to the delicate question whether the author of Hebrews was aware of the different versions or not. In other words did he make a conscious choice of the version that best fitted his argument, or did he take the version he knew or had at hand? The present investigation does not aim to be able to provide a full and comprehensive answer to this complex question, but will focus instead on how the version

actually quoted in Hebrews interacts with the interpretation which the text receives in Hebrews. This methodological approach will not therefore answer whether the interpretation was a result of the particular version of the text quoted or if the specific version of the text was chosen to fit the argument.

1.3.3 Contextual Background

1.3.3.1 Hebrews and Second Temple Judaism

After focusing in the previous section on the Old Testament text, and emphasizing its plurality, and the implications that may have for the interpretation of Hebrews, this section will turn to the context in which Hebrews was composed. The context of the author of Hebrews is, of course, dependent on where and when the Letter was composed, and at first sight it might appear to be a problem that we simply do not know who wrote it or where and when he did so. However, for the present investigation it is not a matter of the more immediate context, but the wider context, i.e., irrespective of in which decade the Letter was composed or in what part of the Roman Empire, it was written in a Jewish context, as pointed out by Ellis:

> In its interpretation of scripture the community of Jesus is rooted in and remains in continuity with the larger community of religious Judaism. It follows exegetical methods very similar to other groups and is distinguished primarily
in the emphasis given to some procedures and in the boldness with which they are applied.\textsuperscript{40}

This follows from the fact that the Jewish community had not yet become the two separate entities Judaism and Christianity. One important assumption of the present study is that this parting between what ultimately became Judaism and Christianity was not a quick process. On the contrary, it is assumed here that the process was gradual and partly quite late, as pointed out by Yoshiko Reed and Becker:

Even after the second century, the boundaries between “Jewish” and “Christian” identities often remained less than clear, consistent with the ambiguities in the definition of both “Jew” and “Christian”. … one can thus propose that the “ways” never parted inasmuch as developments in Judaism and Christianity still remained meaningfully intertwined long after the second century, parting and joining and parting and joining again for many centuries thereafter.\textsuperscript{41}


\textsuperscript{41} Anette Yoshiko Reed and Adam Becker ‘Introduction: Traditional Models and New Directions’ in Adam Becker and Anette Yoshiko Reed (eds.) \textit{The ways that never Parted: Jews and Christians in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages} (Tübingen, 2003), pp.2, 23.
However, the vexed question about the “Parting of the Ways” is not in focus here, but only one detail, namely the use of the Old Testament. Important for that question is the fact that the exegetical methods hardly appear to have been affected by the Jesus movement. Hence it is important that the present investigation not only covers texts concerned with the person of Jesus, but also a text such as Gen. 47:31, which deals with Jacob and Joseph without any reference to Jesus.

Further, there appears to be great unanimity among both Jewish and Christian scholars that Hebrews was written in a Jewish context. This is stated, for example, at the beginning of Docherty’s dissertation on Hebrews:

… at the time when the letter was written, Christianity was historically still a form of Judaism: the so-called ‘parting of the ways’ had not yet occurred, and Hebrews is therefore a Jewish text, which belongs just as much to Jewish as to Christian history.42

The Jewish context of early Christianity is also pointed out by Kugel at the outset of his study of early biblical interpretation:

… Christianity at its origin was a Jewish sect, and from the beginning it had adopted a number of Jewish assumptions about how to go about interpreting the Bible, as well as a substantial body of Jewish traditions about the meaning of specific biblical passages. This common store of biblical interpretations and the assumptions that underlie them are a subject of no small importance; perhaps

even more than the words of the Bible itself, they have helped to shape the very character of Judaism and Christianity.\textsuperscript{43}

Hence there is no need here for a lengthy argumentation that Hebrews was in fact composed in a Jewish context, but rather to turn to the implications that this may have for the understanding of Hebrews, and especially on the Old Testament quotations found in it.

Given the fact that there existed several versions of the Hebrew Scriptures at the time when Hebrews was composed, and that at least some of them most certainly were translated into Greek, it is not a very bold assumption that some of them were also interpreted within the Jewish context. If this is correct, it is also possible that the author of Hebrews knew some of these interpretations, and that he made use of them. To find out if this is the case the present investigation will follow three Old Testament texts quoted in Hebrews to find out how they were interpreted both before and after they were quoted by the author of Hebrews. The interpretations found in Jewish as well as early Christian sources will be compared to the exegesis found in Hebrews, to find out how they relate to each other. The reason for following the texts not only before but also after the time of Hebrews is twofold. First, it is a fact that the material at our disposal is very scarce, and hence every piece of relevant material should be taken into consideration. It is very important to point out here that the lack of interpretation of any text does not mean that it did not exist at all. On the contrary, it is safe to

\textsuperscript{43} Kugel, \textit{In Potiphar's house}, p.1.
assume that what has been preserved until today is only a very small selection of all interpretations that flourished in the Second Temple Jewish community. Hence the absence of any particular interpretation indicates only that it has not survived until today. Second, it is a basic assumption of this study that the texts have been interpreted as long as they have been handed down, either orally or written down, and that this exegesis in one way or the other accompanied the text. Fishbane concludes in the Epilogue to his work *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*:

> Indeed, the broad range of stylistic patterns from many periods, together with their corresponding technical terms, strategies or procedures, suggest that exegetical techniques and traditions developed locally and cumulatively in ancient Israel from monarchic times and continued into the Graeco-Roman period, where they served as a major reservoir for Jewish schools and techniques of exegesis then developing.  

It should be noted, though, as pointed out by Fishbane, that the material is too meagre to be conclusive: “… these materials only suggest trajectories of exegetical tradition over the course of centuries; the evidence is insufficient to prove historical dependence.” Still, Fishbane underlines the connection between earlier and later exegesis in Israel:

> Nevertheless, that an identifiable trajectory of exegetical elements can indeed be traced from the received corpus of the Hebrew Bible to the recorded texts of

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early Jewish exegesis is, in my judgement, a valid minimal conclusion. Put differently, there is no incontrovertible reason to doubt that the evidence of inner-biblical exegesis as reconstructed and analysed in this book reflects one part of a culturally integrated, 1,000-year-long spectrum of exegetical proliferation and development. During this long period, to be sure, new exegetical influences were felt as other exegetical traditions were lost or obscured. But, all told, it is hard to conceive that the exegetical practices of the early Jewish bookmen (מדרש), and ancestral traditions referred to by the Pharisees and others, were not in some ways heir to exegetical techniques and traditions with roots in the ancient Israelite past. And if this is so, then our minimal conclusions have maximal implications as well; for they suggest in an unexpected way the validity of early Pharisaic claims that their exegetical tradition derives from biblical antiquity. But the claim aside, it is enough for us to have established the antecedents of this tradition in the diverse and sophisticated body of textual exegesis found in ancient Israel.46

Given the conclusions by Fishbane, there appears to be no reason to believe that the interpretations ceased to be transmitted at the time of Hebrews, and hence it is likely that the interpretations found in later sources were already known much earlier. This has also been argued by James Kugel in his book *In Potiphar’s House*:

… some traditions about the meaning of individual verses or sections of the Hebrew Bible, as well as general ideas about how to interpret Scripture, are

very, very old. … If such texts have come down to us, it is not because they were written down once and then painstakingly preserved in vacuum cases for hundreds of years, only to be reopened in the second century in the time of the earliest of our surviving commentaries to be written about them. If they have come down to us, it is because they were, *almost from the time of their composition*, copied and recopied in every century—and, in all likelihood, not by mindless scribes bent only on preserving them, but by people who had some use for these texts, sages and priests, court officials and teachers. Such figures doubtless did more than preserve the texts: they read and referred to them, explained them to others, sought to apply them to new situations or to extend their meaning—in short, they interpreted them.⁴⁷

In his commentary on Sifre Ha’azinu (Deuteronomy 32) Herbert Basser has a similar discussion, where he argues for the antiquity of Midrash:

… midrashim have sometimes come down to us in several forms. Consideration of these forms leads one to see that the form which is more difficult belongs to a compilation which is earlier than the compilation containing the easier form. One might simply think that as time went on the midrash became simplified in retelling so that the phenomenon can be explained as if a process of simplification was at work. Yet, the very opposite may be the case. The simpler forms may represent the earlier forms of their tradition, which were formulated to be transmitted orally while the written forms represent a later form which was set down in writing while the oral form was still current. Since the oral

⁴⁷ Kugel, *In Potiphar's house*, p.4; emphasis original.
form was current one would know the midrash and appreciate the complications of the written form. Hence the obscure forms were written before the simple oral forms were set down in writing in late compilations. This would explain why later writings still contain very early material. They are independent of the earlier writings and reflect the clearer, oral forms which were current when the first written forms were taking shape. It is therefore possible that early traditions may appear in the very late sources.  

Hence Basser concludes that the late Jewish material is of use for the investigation of earlier interpretations:

The antiquity of many midrashic forms and traditions cannot be dismissed and it is not unreasonable to search midrash for traditions to explain Second Temple period writings.  

Since it has been argued above that Hebrews was composed in a Second Temple Jewish context, it seems that Basser’s argument holds true for the use of Midrash in the investigation of Hebrews as well.

It should be noted that the argument that later sources contain traces of earlier traditions is purely genetic, but this does not mean that the motive for using these texts to better understand Hebrews necessarily falls to the ground should it be that there is no relation between the later interpretations and the ones from the time

48 Herbert Basser, *In the margins of the Midrash: Sifre Ha'azinu texts, commentaries, and reflections* (Atlanta, Ga., 1990), pp.20–21.

49 Basser, *In the margins*, p.21.
before Hebrews. On the contrary, a heuristic argument could also be applied to the use of these texts, since any interpretation, old or new, could be relevant for illuminating the use of these texts in Hebrews. Hence it has been the ambition to cover as much of the material as possible. However, the assumption in the present investigation is that interpretations found only in later sources are still likely to have at least their roots in earlier times. One argument for this is also the fact that the same texts were interpreted similarly in different sources, and that, as Kugel points out:

… such resemblances [cannot] … be merely coincidental, the result of ancient exegetes independently arriving at precisely the same solution to the same biblical crux. On the contrary, such resemblances can only indicate a common store of biblical exegesis inherited by diverse, and in some cases clearly antagonistic, Jewish groups and circles that flourished in Palestine and elsewhere in the centuries just before and after the start of the common era.\(^{50}\)

Of course, one of these “clearly antagonistic Jewish groups” was the early Church. Therefore, if Kugel is right, there is reason to believe that there could be resemblances between the interpretation in Hebrews and the interpretations in the early Jewish post Second Temple community as well as in the early Church. For the Christian literature it is possible, of course, to argue that it could have been influenced by Hebrews. Though that is correct, it appears to be a smaller problem than it might seem at first sight, since most early Christian literature focused more

\(^{50}\) Kugel, *In Potiphar's house*, p.226.
on the Old Testament text than on the New Testament, and hence the Church Fathers commonly refer directly to the Old Testament text rather than to the quotation in the New Testament.\textsuperscript{51}

One important factor that will be taken into consideration is the observation that interpretations are not always based on the version of the text that is actually quoted in the context of the interpretation.\textsuperscript{52} This means that the interpreter could quote one version of the text, and then present an interpretation based on a different version. This also means that even if only one “standard” version of the holy text was used and transmitted, perhaps out of reverence for the sacred text, interpretations based on different versions could have been transmitted and preserved. Ultimately, of course, this means that the author’s interpretation could have been based upon a version of the text no longer available to us, and added to some kind of standard version of the text.

Finally, there is one interesting circumstance that will be touched upon, namely the fact that after the emergence of Christianity the Septuagint tended to be the Old Testament used by the Christians, as pointed out by Tov: “By the end of the first century CE, $\text{\textcopyright LXX}$ had been more or less accepted by Christianity and rejected by Judaism.”\textsuperscript{53} The Jews, on the other hand, preferred a text close to MT, and Tov comments: “It is not that $\text{\textcopyright MT}$ triumphed over the other texts,


\textsuperscript{53} Tov, \textit{Textual criticism}, p.194.
but rather, that those who fostered it probably constituted the only organized group which survived the destruction of the Second Temple.\textsuperscript{54} This means that the LXX version is likely to have been used almost exclusively in the Christian context, while the MT version was used in the Jewish context and after Jerome’s Old Testament translation also in the Christian Old Testament interpretations. Ultimately then it could have been that the Jewish and Christian interpreters actually did not interpret the same texts differently, but the diverging interpretations are based on different versions of the texts.

\textit{1.3.3.2 Hebrews and the Early Church}

As was noticed in the previous section, most Biblical interpretation in Second Temple Judaism had a prehistory, and did not start from scratch in the Second Temple community. The same holds true for biblical interpretation in the early Christian community; it had a prehistory, and that prehistory it shared with Second Temple Judaism. This also means that what was noticed about Hebrews and Second Temple Judaism is true for Hebrews and the early Church too, and hence does not have to be repeated here. But, of course, there are differences as well, and the main reason for that is the interpretation of Jesus as Christ, or as it was put by Ellis:

\begin{quote}
Biblical interpretation in the NT church shows in a remarkable way the Jewishness of earliest Christianity. It followed exegetical methods common to
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{54} Tov, \textit{Textual criticism}, p.195.
Judaism and drew its perspective and presuppositions from Jewish backgrounds. However, in one fundamental respect it differed from other religious parties and theologies in Judaism, that is, in the christological exposition of the OT totally focused upon Jesus as the Messiah.  

Therefore, by necessity, earlier Christological interpretations of Old Testament passages are applied to Jesus. This also means that texts and interpretations that were applied to Jesus, and hence were attractive in the early Church, might not have been as attractive in the Jewish community, in any case not with the same Christological interpretation. Therefore, it is also likely that such interpretations were not readily handed down, and even got lost in the early post Second Temple Jewish community, as pointed out by Simon:

Most likely the messianic interpretation of certain texts, accepted at first, was abandoned for a time in Israel precisely in order to respond to Christian utilization of those texts.  

Consequently, the absence of an interpretation in the Jewish community does not prove that it originated in the Christian Church. This is also true for two of the texts discussed in the present investigation, namely Jer. 31:33 and Ps. 40:7, for


which the Christological interpretation is totally decisive for their use in Hebrews. For the last one, Gen. 47:31, on the other hand, the situation is the opposite, and it is only rarely interpreted Christologically. Hence it is a very suitable text to test the hypothesis that the interpretations in the early Church had a prehistory in the Second Temple Jewish community, and most likely were taken over from that context.

One interesting aspect that should be noted here is the fact that in the early Church both the MT and the LXX versions of the text were available and sometimes both versions were commented upon as well. This is particularly true in the Latin Church, where both versions were used side by side, especially after the Vulgate translation by Jerome, since the Old Testament was generally translated from a Hebrew source, while the New Testament was, of course translated from the Greek. In rare occasions there is even a discussion about the relation between the versions. It should be noted, however, that these discussions are mostly based on the assumption that the preserved Hebrew text is identical with the original, and hence variation between the versions is regularly attributed to the translators of the Greek text. That this assumption has been proven to be wrong has been underlined by Marcos:


Thanks to the documents from Qumran, today we are aware of something that neither Origen nor Jerome could have suspected, in spite of realising that there were differences between the LXX and the Hebrew text of their time: the Greek Bible contains genuine, textual and literary variants from the Hebrew to the extent that we have to respect both traditions, without trying to reduce or adjust one to the other.\textsuperscript{59}

To this can only be added that the same holds true for most exegetes from Jerome until the discoveries in the Judean desert, since they too were unaware of different Hebrew traditions. Unfortunately, the conception of a \textit{Hebraica Veritas} does not seem to have been modified, although contested by the recent textual findings, which perhaps could have been expected of an idea so deeply rooted for more than two thousand years.

\textbf{1.4 Evaluation of Earlier Investigations}

It is not the aim here to evaluate all the extremely vast literature on the use of the Old Testament in the New,\textsuperscript{60} nor even that focusing solely on Hebrews, since it is


\textsuperscript{60} See, e.g., Steve Moyise, \textit{The Old Testament in the New} (London, 2001) and idem, \textit{Evoking Scripture: Seeing the Old Testament in the New} (London, 2008); Gregory Beale
far beyond the scope of the present investigation; useful critical reviews of the latter have been undertaken recently by others. Instead earlier investigations will be evaluated here only in respect of their contribution to the two particular interests of the present study, namely the text and the context of Old Testament quotations in Hebrews as outlined above. Since a detailed discussion of the most relevant literature pertaining to each particular quotation will be included in the corresponding chapter below, only a brief overview of the issues will be given here. The first point to note is that very few earlier investigations do treat seriously the aspects of text and context as they are addressed in the present study. Given the importance of the discoveries in the Judean desert for the evaluation of the Septuagint material, research predating the findings at Qumran will not be taken into consideration in this review.


This overview starts with Ploeg’s article from 1947, in which he discusses the text of all the quotations of the Old Testament in Hebrews, taking both the Hebrew and the Greek text into consideration, as well as the exegetical techniques of the author and their relationship to contemporary Jewish hermeneutical practices. Although Ploeg was not able to take the Qumran material into consideration, his approach is still typical for many later scholars in that he does not take the possibility of different Hebrew texts underlying the Greek quotation into account. This is also true of his utilisation of the Jewish material, where, although he does refer to Strack-Billerbeck’s monumental commentary *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, he unfortunately makes little use of it. More importantly, he does not combine the findings of the textual evidence with the testimony from Jewish sources such as the Talmud and Midrash, so that the latter can be used to illuminate the former as is proposed for the present investigation. Consequently, the textual matters discussed in the present study are not mentioned in Ploeg’s article. In one of the earliest surveys that do take the textual pluriformity into account, Thomas concludes that: “The textual origin of the O.T. citations in Hebrews has long been an enigma.” In his article Thomas seeks to explore the relation between the citations in Hebrews and

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the text of the Septuagint especially taking the two important manuscripts LXX\textsuperscript{A} and LXX\textsuperscript{B} into account. Although Thomas goes one step further than Ploeg he does not consider the possibility of different underlying Hebrew texts, and neither does he discuss the Jewish material, or any of the difficulties of the particular quotations which will be the focus of the present investigation. One of very few studies that does mention the possibility of a different Vorlage for the varying Old Testament texts is an article by Howard,\textsuperscript{66} but this is only a brief study, which fails to mention any of the details evaluated in the present study. A more detailed investigation is presented by Schröger, who, like Thomas, focuses on two of the major LXX manuscripts, but does not take the possibility of different Vorlagen into account.\textsuperscript{67} Schröger also situates Hebrews in a Jewish context, but is more interested in comparing the exegetical techniques employed by the author of Hebrews with methods generally used in the contemporary Jewish community, rather than in actually taking the Jewish interpretations of the particular texts into consideration.\textsuperscript{68} Therefore, Schröger’s approach differs considerably from that employed in the present investigation, and hence he does not discuss the different versions of the texts either. In another article about Old Testament quotations in


\textsuperscript{67} Friedrich Schröger, \textit{Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger} (Regensburg, 1968).

\textsuperscript{68} The only exception for the texts discussed in the present investigation is a reference to Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, for which see below on Gen. 47:31.
Hebrews McCullough states that: “this article seeks to investigate the modifications which he [the author of Hebrews] makes to the text of his quotations from the Old Testament.”69 He concludes that earlier investigations, such as those by Spicq, Thomas, Barth, Bruce, Michel, and Schröger,70 usually take only very few manuscripts into account, and thus make the wrong assumption that many of the divergences from these manuscripts can be attributed to the author of Hebrews himself. McCullough then goes on: “Insights gained from recent Septuagintal research, however, have compelled us to re-examine this conclusion.”71 In doing so he does not, however, take the varying Hebrew Vorlage into account, and hence his results are limited to the Greek text, without going into the discussion about its relation to the Hebrew text. Thus, none of the different versions examined in the present investigation are treated by McCullough. The same is true of Cadwallader,72 who in his detailed study of the correction of the text of Hebrews towards the LXX only very rarely takes the Hebrew Vorlage into consideration.73 Unfortunately, this is also true in some of


73 See, however, Cadwallader, ‘The Correction’, p.282, where ὅρα of Heb. 10:5 is considered to be “a correction to the Hebrew”.
the most recent works on Hebrews, such as those by Gheorghita, Guthrie, and Steyn, which are discussed in more detail in each particular chapter below. In addition to the works discussed above there are a number of significant articles that focus on matters other than text and context as they are outlined in the present investigation and hence are not discussed here.  

Summing up earlier investigations it is clear that very few surveys of the Old Testament quotations in Hebrews go into any detail about the possibility of different underlying Hebrew texts, and hence they do not discuss the features focused on in the present investigation. The reason for this could perhaps be the old assumption about a Hebraica Veritas, and the fact that the evidence of different Hebrew versions is quite recent and hence still not common knowledge. Even more disappointing is the situation regarding the later Jewish material, and one reason for that is perhaps illustrated by a comment by Hanson:

“I have not included a consideration of rabbinic exegesis of Scripture, since the nature of the materials for this hardly allows one to regard the rabbis as contemporary with the author of Hebrews.”  


75 Hanson, ‘Hebrews’, p.292.
Unfortunately, this opinion is not unique to Hanson, and it is, of course, based on the fact that the sources for the rabbinic material are indeed later than Hebrews. However, it has been argued above that the content of the later sources is often of a much earlier date than the sources themselves, and hence should be taken into consideration, and it is one aim of the present investigation to show that argumentation to be valid.

**1.5 Methodology**

**1.5.1 Overview**

The first chapter of the present investigation contains a general introduction, and a discussion of the approach, which forms the background and basis for the present investigation. The approach focuses especially on Septuagint research and the relation between Second Temple Judaism and the early Church as far as exegesis is concerned. Further, the first chapter contains brief sections on earlier investigation, methodology and the structure of Hebrews. The following three chapters, which form the bulk of this study, are investigating three Old Testament texts quoted in Hebrews, which all have one characteristic feature in common, namely that they existed in various versions at the time when Hebrews was composed. The texts are: Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16, Ps. 40:7 in Heb. 10:5, and Gen. 47:31 in Heb. 11:21. All three chapters are structured in the same way, starting with some introductory notes on the quoted text followed by a textual/philological analysis, a historical/exegetical investigation of the reception
of the texts, and conclusions. The textual/philological analysis discusses the texts, the differences between the versions and the context of the texts in their Old Testament settings as well as in Hebrews. Special attention is given to the findings of the very flourishing Septuagint research of the last few decades. The historical/exegetical investigation aims to cover all available material from the Jewish, and Christian Greek and Latin communities from the composition of the texts until ca. 500 CE. The thesis is completed by one chapter with general conclusions, also including suggestions for further research.

1.5.2 Selection of Texts

As has already been pointed out, the Letter to the Hebrews has been chosen as the basis for the present investigation, since it has one of the highest frequencies of Old Testament references in the New Testament. Further, one basic assumption for the present investigation is that there existed several versions of the Old Testament text at the time when the New Testament was composed, and hence texts were chosen for which there actually existed more than one version. Another basic assumption of this study is that Scripture has been interpreted as long as it has been handed down, and that later interpretations are based on earlier ones. Hence quotations were chosen which could be expected to have been affected differently both by the wider context and by the fact that they have been quoted in Hebrews. The first text, from Jer. 31:33, is found in a more Christological part of the Letter (for which, see below), but it is not explicitly interpreted by the author.

\[76\] For the sources, see below.
of Hebrews. Hence later interpretations in the Church could be expected to have been influenced by the Christological context, but not by any explicit interpretation in Hebrews. Further, it is likely that the fact that the text has been quoted in a Christologically central part of Hebrews has affected the way it was interpreted in the post Second Temple Jewish community. The second text, Ps. 40:7, is quoted in the same Christologically central part as the first one (in fact it is situated between the two quotations of Jer. 31:33), but this time the quoted text is explicitly interpreted by the author. Therefore, it is not unlikely to find such a Christological interpretation in later texts in the early Church, while it is less likely in the Jewish community. The third quotation, Gen. 47:31, is not found in a Christological central part, and it is not explicitly interpreted either. Thus Gen. 47:31 could be expected to be interpreted similarly in both the Jewish and the Christian communities both before and after Hebrews. Hence, it can be used as a kind of reference text for how a text, unaffected by the Jesus movement, was interpreted in Second Temple Judaism.

More texts could have been added, and preliminary studies into Heb. 1:6 and 2:7 are very promising. However, given the limited space of the present investigation, and, since the material included here hardly has been taken into account before, it was decided to aim for a detailed investigation of few texts rather than a less thorough survey of more quotations. On the other hand, the methodology used in the present preliminary investigation appears to be a suitable tool for other quotations as well.
1.5.3 Terminology

Not much has to be said about the terminology in the present investigation, since it is the intention to use standard terms as far as possible. However, since the terminology used to describe the Old Testament texts found in the New Testament has been much debated a few remarks will be added. There will be no attempt to make any distinction between quotations preceded (or followed) by some kind of introductory phrase, and hence sometimes called citations, and other quotations. Instead all quotations will be termed either quotations or references. The latter term will also be used to designate allusions. That it is notoriously difficult to distinguish between quotations and allusions has often been noticed,\(^77\) and given one of the basic assumptions for this study, namely that the Old Testament text is far from uniform, the distinction is almost impossible. Hence most references will be called quotations, and the term allusion will only occasionally be used and only in cases where the reference is very vague.\(^78\)

Two terms that will be used throughout this investigation are MT version and LXX version. The names MT version and LXX version have been adopted in the present investigation to denote the different versions of the Old Testament text, since they are principally preserved in the Masoretic text and the Septuagint.

\(^77\) Cf. e.g., McLay, *Septuagint*, p.30.

respectively. It is important to point out that this does not indicate anything about the origin of the versions, since this, it seems, is mostly beyond recovery, and the diversion into different versions predates both the MT and the LXX.

1.5.4 Sources

It has been the aim of the present investigation to use all available sources predating Hebrews, where the Old Testament texts discussed in this study have been interpreted, as well as the early post Second Temple Jewish material, and the Greek and Latin Church Fathers till ca. 500 CE. These sources include the material from the Judean desert such as the texts from Qumran, the Pseudepigrapha, the Targums, Philo, Josephus, the New Testament, the

79 For the complicated dating of the Jewish sources, see Günter Stemberger, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash: translated and edited by Markus Bockmuehl (Edinburgh, 1996).


81 Albert-Marie Denis, Concordance Greque des Pseudepigraphes d’Ancien Testament (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1987), and Steve Delamarter, Scripture Index to Charlesworth’s The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha (London, 2003).
New Testament Apocrypha, the Talmud, Mishnah, and Midrash, the early Greek and Latin Church Fathers. The identification of the sources has been accomplished by the aid of commentaries on the Old and New Testament text discussed in each section as well as by reference tools and linguistic databases,

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83 Steve Mason (ed.), *Flavius Josephus, translation and commentary* (Leiden, 2000–).


87 The TLG#E database.

88 Patrologia Latina Database. The Patrologia Latina Database is published and owned by ProQuest LLC (http://pld.chadwyck.co.uk).

both printed and electronic. The reference tools are given in the notes above. The TLG#E database has been used extensively for all Greek material.\textsuperscript{90}

It should be noted that a significant number of these sources have never been referred to in the exegetical literature before, and some are even presented in English translation for the first time. Hence the texts are quoted extensively, and are given both in original language and translation. Further, it is has been the aim to use the best and most recent text critical editions available. Unfortunately, this sometimes means that texts are taken from quite old und not always totally reliable editions, such as the Patrologia Graeca by Migne. Translations of the original sources are as far as possible adopted from modern translation into English, but where the source of the translation is not explicitly stated it is by the present author,\textsuperscript{91} except translations of the Bible, which are generally taken from the NRSV or the NETS.

### 1.6 Structure of Hebrews

This section will not go into any details about the structure of Hebrews, but only give some brief remarks about where in the context of Hebrews the three

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\textsuperscript{90} TLG (Thesaurus Linguae Graecae). TLG is a research center at the University of California, Irvine (http://www.tlg.uci.edu). TLG® is a registrated trademark of the University of California.

\textsuperscript{91} For a number of helpful suggestions on the Latin texts I am indepted to prof. Gunhild Vidén at the University of Gothenborg.
quotations of the present investigation are to be situated. Unfortunately, there seems to be very little consensus among scholars about how the Letter is structured. Nevertheless, it is usually acknowledged that the Epistle is divided into expositional and hortatory sections, although it is much debated exactly where these sections start and end, and precisely into which category each small unit should be attributed. What is important, however, for the present investigation is that, despite the great disagreement about the exact beginning and end of each part, there seems to be general agreement that the first two quotations, Jer. 31:33 and Ps. 40:7, can be found in an expositional section, while the last one, Gen. 47:31, is found in a hortatory part of the Letter. In the conclusion of his chapter on the structure of Hebrews Joslin concludes:

The lengthy central section [7:1–10:18] of Hebrews is exposition with no exhortation. … This section of Hebrews stands as the great doctrinal centre section of the epistle in which the author describes how the priesthood, covenant, and sacrifice have changed in light of the person and work of Christ. These eighty-seven verses serve as the theological basis for the lengthy exhortative material that follows …

92 This can be seen, e.g., in Joslin’s survey of some of the most influential scholars in the discussion about the structure of Hebrews: Barry Joslin, Hebrews, Christ, and the law: the theology of the Mosaic Law in Hebrews 7:1-10:18 (Colorado Springs, 2008), pp.91–131.

93 Joslin, Hebrews, p.125.
Given the importance of the person of Christ in the section where the first two texts are quoted, it is likely that later interpretations of these texts, both Jewish and Christian, are affected by the fact that the texts have been used Christologically in a context where Jesus is taken to be the Christ. The opposite is true about the last quotation from Gen. 47:31, since it is used in a context discussing the faith of the Patriarchs, with no explicit reference to Jesus, and hence later interpretations should not have been affected by any Christological considerations. One of the basic assumptions for the present investigation is that later interpretations are based on earlier ones. Therefore, it is especially important to include texts, from both parts of the Letter, and for which the interpretations can be assumed to have been affected differently by the conception of Jesus as Christ.

1.7 Summary

In short this study aims at investigating the use of the Old Testament in the New particular focusing on the two aspects text and context as outlined above. The aspect of text takes the complicated textual history of the Old Testament into account, especially concentrating on the findings of recent Septuagint research and particularly the possibility of different Hebrew texts underlying the Greek translation. The aspect of context draws on the assumption that Hebrews was composed in a Jewish context, where the Old Testament text had been interpreted for a long time. It is also presupposed that this exegesis was handed down along with the Hebrew Scriptures both in the post Second Temple Jewish community,
and in the early Church. Hence, in the following three chapters, post Second Temple primary sources are consulted with the intention of better understanding the interpretation of three Old Testament quotations in Hebrews.
2. Jeremiah 31:33 (LXX 38:33) in Hebrews

8:10 and 10:16

2.1 Introduction

Jeremiah 31 is the only text in the Old Testament mentioning a new testament/covenant. The quotation from Jeremiah 31 in Hebrews 8 and 10 is also the longest quotation from the Old Testament in the New, and, according to Karrer, perhaps the most important as well. However, only one detail will be the focus of the present chapter and that is the difference between the versions regarding the number of law (or laws) in Jer. 31:33. At the time when Hebrews was composed, there existed (at least) two distinctly different versions of Jer. 31:33, one Hebrew with “the law” in the singular (presumably referring to the Torah), and one Greek with “the laws” in the plural. Apparently, the author of Hebrews used a version with the plural, and one of the aims of the present investigation is to find out what the reason was for his choice. Further, at the time after the destruction of the Second Temple the Hebrew version with the singular appears to have been favoured in the Jewish community, while the Greek version with the plural appears to have been used in the Christian community. This study is concerned to investigate how this affected the interpretation of the text.

94 Martin Karrer, *Der Brief an die Hebräer: Kapitel 5,11-13,25* (Gütersloh, 2008), p.113: “… vielleicht bedeutendsten Zitats des Neuen Testaments überhaupt …”.

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Moreover, according to Joslin, for modern interpreters, who comment on the quotation in Hebrews, “… the range of meaning for νόμος in this text could hardly be broader: from a generic or spiritualized idea of ‘God’s will’ without correspondence to the Mosaic laws, to the whole of the written law, and even to the Decalogue specifically.”

Hence it is surprising that the difference between the two versions of the text has hardly ever been taken into consideration when discussing the interpretation of the text. This is especially true of investigations on Jeremiah. For instance in the two-volume commentary by McKane, who usually takes the Septuagint into consideration, there is no mention of the two versions, although he devotes more than ten pages to Jer. 31:31–34.

This fact is also pointed out in the detailed monograph by Schenker on Jer. 31:31–34. According to Schenker:

The promise of a new covenant in the prophet Jeremiah in the version of the Greek Bible of the Septuagint has never been systematically compared with the Hebrew version, except in the excellent but short study by Pierre-Maurice


Bogaert, Louvain-La-Neuve, and the contradictory investigation by Bernard Renaud.97

Strangely enough, it seems as if Schenker is right, that the differences between the two versions have only occasionally been discussed by scholars before. This is even more surprising since there are substantial differences between the text of the Septuagint and the text of the Hebrew version, and these differences appear to have been caused not by the process of translation, but rather by the fact that the text of the Septuagint is a translation of a different Vorlage, which appears to be older and more original than the version preserved in the Masoretic Hebrew text. Schenker notes also that both versions are found in most modern translations of the Bible (as well as in the Vulgate), since Jeremiah is usually translated from the Hebrew text, while the quotation in Hebrews follows the LXX. Further, the


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possibility that there actually existed a different Vorlage for the Septuagint (with Torah in the plural) has almost never been mentioned. The very rare interest shown in the different versions of this text has also been confirmed by the recent study by Joslin, in which he states: “Scholars do not frequently mention the LXX rendering of the singular הָרֶם with the plural νόμους in Jeremiah 31:33, and of the few that do, even fewer offer suggestions as to the purpose behind the unusual alteration." Given the fact that the difference between the versions is rarely

discussed in the investigations on Jeremiah and Hebrews, it comes as no surprise that the same holds true for investigations on the covenant. More surprising, perhaps, is the fact that the differences are sometimes not even mentioned in studies devoted to the quotations of the OT in the NT. Finally, it should also be noticed that the use of the versions in the early Jewish community and the early Church rarely appears to have been discussed before.

After giving the background to the interpretation of Jer. 31:33, it is the aim of the present chapter to investigate the interpretations of the text in the early Jewish community as well as in the early Church, and try to shed some light on the

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100 E.g., Thomas, ‘The Old Testament’, pp.310–313;
question about why the author of Hebrews used the LXX version, and how that affected his interpretation.

2.2 The Text of Jer. 31:33

2.2.1 Jer. 31:33 and the Difference between the Versions

The focus of this chapter is the section of Jer. 31:33 in which the main difference between the two versions can be found, and in MT it reads: יִתְנַחַם אָרְפָּה הַעֲרֵבָה. In LXX the text reads: διδοὺς δῶσω νόμους μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω αὐτούς. The main difference between the versions discussed in this chapter is the difference between the law (singular) in MT, יִתְנַחַם, and the laws (plural) in LXX, νόμους μου. There are only twelve examples in MT of the occurrence of the plural of יִתְנַחַם, none of which is found in Jeremiah: Gen. 26:5 (rendered in the LXX by τὰ νόμιμα); Ex. 16:28 (LXX τὸν νόμον); 18:16 (LXX τὸν νόμον); 18:20 (LXX τὸν νόμον); Lev. 26:46 (LXX ὁ νόμος); Is. 24:5 (LXX τὸν νόμον); Ezek. 43:11 (LXX τὰ νόμιμα); 44:5 (LXX τὰ νόμιμα); 44:24 (LXX τὰ νόμιμα); Psa. 105:45 (LXX 104:45 τὸν νόμον); Dan. 9:10 (LXX τῷ νόμῳ); Neh. 9:13 (LXX νόμους).\(^{101}\) As can be seen, only in the last example is the plural of יִתְנַחַם rendered by the plural of νόμος. In more than half of the examples the plural of the MT corresponds to a singular in

the LXX, which indicates either a different Vorlage or a change in the process of translation or transmission. However, there is one example of a plural of ḥrwt in Jer. 32:23, ṭrefῃ זו, but this is found in the Ketiv, while the Qere has the singular, and thus the singular was apparently preferred by the Masoretes. The Septuagint has καὶ ἐν τοῖς προστάγμασίν σου here. In the texts of the Septuagint for which there is a Hebrew Vorlage extant there are only two examples of νόμος in the plural which refer to the Torah: 2 Kings 14:6 (MT תָּרְוֹת); Neh. 9:13 (MT תָּרְוֹת). In one example, Esth. 3:8, Haman refers to the νόμοι of the Jews, but this is a rendering of נְרוֹ_. The example in Jer. 38:37 (MT 38:36), οἱ νόμοι, is a rendering of νομῶν, and clearly does not refer to the Torah. The singular form of νόμος, on the other hand, occurs more than 200 times in the MT, 11 of which are found in Jeremiah (2:8; 6:19; 8:8; 9:12; 16:11; 18:18; 26:4 (LXX τοῖς νομίμοις); 31:33 (LXX 38:33 νόμους); 32:23 (LXX 39:23 τοῖς προστάγμασίν, cf. above); 44:10 (not in LXX); 44:23 (LXX 51:23).102 The examples in Jeremiah appear to refer to the Torah and are mostly rendered by νόμος in the singular, the exceptions being 26:4, 31:33, and 32:23. It should be pointed out, of course, that the consonantal text יָרְהָר could be interpreted either as singular or plural depending on what vowels are added to the consonantal text, a fact that most likely facilitated the origin of the two versions, irrespective of whether the change was from the plural to the singular or the other way around. On the other hand, the

following singular pronoun נָה (in הָנָה), referring back to the law would not look the same in the plural in a consonantal text, which means that there actually has to be a change in the consonantal text, if a different Vorlage is supposed.\footnote{\textsuperscript{103}}

\textit{2.2.1.1 MT version of Jer. 31:33}

The MT version, which reads יִתְנָהוֹת תֵּאָר, and the renderings of the singular form, are found in all Hebrew manuscripts, but only in one manuscript of the Septuagint, viz. in Sinaiticus, which reads νόμον μου. It is also found in all three later Greek versions, Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotian, who have τὸν νόμον μου. In the Latin tradition the MT version is found in Jeremiah after the translation by Jerome, and it is rendered by legem meam.

\textit{2.2.1.2 LXX version of Jer. 38:33}

The LXX version, which reads νόμους μου, and the renderings of the plural form, are found in all LXX manuscripts except Sinaiticus, and also in all NT manuscripts as well as the old Latin translations of Jeremiah, where the Latin rendering of the Greek text reads leges meas.

\footnote{\textsuperscript{103} Cf. Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, pp.83–84; Bernard Renaud, ‘L’oracle de la nouvelle alliance’ in André Wénin et al. (eds.) \textit{Lectures et relectures de la Bible: Festschrift P.-M. Bogaert} (Leuven, 1999), p.95; Schenker, \textit{Das Neue}, p.33.}
2.2.2 The Origin of the Versions

Given the general lack of interest in the different versions, it is only to be expected that there is very little discussion among scholars as to the reason for the different versions. In short, either the LXX version is a product of the translator of Jeremiah into Greek, or there actually existed a different Vorlage with Torah in the plural. Schenker has a short but detailed discussion about this difference and comes to the conclusion that νόμος μου is a rendering of a הָעִבְרִי, i.e., νόμους is a rendering of the plural of הָעִבְרִי. The reason for this conclusion is that it is very unlikely that someone would change a text with the very common singular of הָעִבְרִי into the extremely rare plural form, while it is equally likely that someone would change the extremely rare plural into the common singular. Thus he also draws the conclusion that the Vorlage of the Septuagint read the plural, and that it is more original than the version found in the Masoretic Hebrew text. Bogaert too assumes that the longer MT version is a reworking of the shorter LXX version, made in the third century CE, and he stresses the relation between the plural of the LXX version and the long addition of Jer. 33:14–26 in MT. Renaud, on the other hand, suggests that the translator actually changed an original singular into the plural, and he gives two reasons for his opinion. First, the plural of νόμος was not exceptionally rare at the time when Jeremiah was

104 This is also the opinion of Vanhoye, ‘La loi’, p.287.


106 Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, pp.82, 88–90. For the addition in Jer. 33:14–26, see below.
translated. This can be seen for instance in the second book of the Maccabees, which is originally composed in Greek and which systematically uses the plural of νόμος. Second, Renaud suggests that the translator of Jeremiah adjusted the singular of Jer. 31:33 to the plural of 31:37 (ῥήμα), a conclusion which, however, fits poorly with the translation technique usually attributed to the translators of the Septuagint, and most probably also was put into practice by the translator of Jeremiah. The translators, it appears, focused on very small units at a time and rarely updated their translations in light of later sections. Hence it is unlikely that a later passage should influence the translation of a previous one.

Although very little can be known about the origin of the two versions, it is still possible, on the basis of the common text critical principle lectio difficilior


potior,\textsuperscript{109} to argue whether the change was from the singular to the plural or from the plural to the singular. Hence, it is also possible to say something about the relative age of the two versions. According to Bogaert and Schenker the Hebrew version fits the overall context of the Old Testament very well, while the Greek version is quite odd in the same context. Hence it is very likely that the Hebrew version is a later adaptation to the Old Testament context. This means, of course, that the LXX version is the lectio difficilior, and hence also the original version.\textsuperscript{110} According to Renaud, the plural of the Greek version is the lectio difficilior, and should be retained, but it is still a rendering of a Hebrew Vorlage with the בֵּית in the singular. Hence, according to Renaud, the singular is original.\textsuperscript{111}

2.2.3 The Biblical Contexts of Jer. 31:33

2.2.3.1 In MT and LXX

The wider context of Jer. 31:33, within the whole book of Jeremiah, is the section Jer. 30–33, usually known as the “Book of Consolation”, a text with hope for the future, culminating in promise of the new covenant.\textsuperscript{112} The more immediate context is, of course, the passage quoted in Hebrews. In the following survey the


\textsuperscript{110} Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, p.86; Schenker, \textit{Das Neue}, p.34.

\textsuperscript{111} Renaud, ‘L’oracle, pp.95–96.

differences between MT and LXX in the immediate context will be discussed. First, in Jer. 31:32 there is a noticeable difference between MT “they broke my covenant” and LXX οὗτοι οὐκ ἐνέμειναν ἐν τῇ διαθήκῃ μου “they did not abide by my covenant”. Though the difference might seem rather insignificant, it is clear that the covenant, according to MT, was broken by the Israelites, a statement that is at least not equally clear in LXX.\footnote{Cf. Renaud, ‘L’oracle, pp.89–93, and Karrer, Der Brief, pp.116–117.} The next difference is perhaps more striking than the previous one, and it is also found in v. 32. While MT has though I was their husband”, LXX has καὶ ἐγὼ ἠέλησα αὐτῶν “and I neglected them”. According to Bogaert the LXX reading suggests “only a sort of separation based on mutual agreement”.\footnote{Bogaert, ‘Loi(s), p.91, “mais seulement une sorte de séparation par consentement mutuel”. Cf. p.85.} It is hard to see, however, how a separation based on mutual agreement could fit in the Old Testament context, nor is it clear why there is need for a new covenant, if it is only a temporary separation.\footnote{Cf. Renaud, ‘L’oracle, pp.93–95.} According to Schenker, on the other hand, God not only neglected the covenant, but it was even broken by him. Schenker argues that ἁμελέω is a rendering of a verb of rejection “ein Verb der Verwerfung”, for
example, חָלַם or שָׁן. However, it is not clear how he comes to that conclusion, since the only way to know anything about this “Verb der Verwerfung” is by its rendering, which is ἀμελέω. The only example in the Septuagint where the Vorlage of ἀμελέω is known is Jer. 4:17, and that Vorlage, נְרָה, would not fit in the context of Jer. 31:32. Thus the Vorlage of ἀμελέω can only be retrieved by its rendering, namely ἀμελέω. The meaning given by the dictionaries of ἀμελέω is “have no care for, be neglectful of”\textsuperscript{117} “to neglect, to be neglectful”\textsuperscript{118} “to have no care for, to neglect, be unconcerned”\textsuperscript{119} “to be unconcerned and indifferent to”\textsuperscript{120} As can be seen, the meaning of ἀμελέω does not seem to be “break”. But how did the translator of Jeremiah understand the meaning of ἀμελέω? One possible clue to that is the Vorlage of ἀμελέω in Jer. 4:17, viz. נְרָה. Though נְרָה is not possible in the context of Jer. 31:32, it was still possible for the translator of Jeremiah to render it by ἀμελέω, thus the meaning of נְרָה can indicate something about how the translator of Jeremiah understood


Hence Karrer is close to Schenker, but “inactivity” is still not the same as to break.


\textsuperscript{118} Erik Eunikel et al. \textit{Greek-English}, p.23.


\textsuperscript{120} T. Muraoka, \textit{A Greek-English}, p.23.
ἀμελέω. According to the dictionaries the meaning of ἀμελέω is “be contentious, refractory, rebellious”,121 “to be recalcitrant, rebellious”.122 The meaning given by the dictionaries appears to be closer to “break” than the meaning given for ἀμελέω, but is still not the same as “break”.123 Hence, there appears to be good reason to call Schenker’s conclusion into some doubt, since there seems to be nothing that suggests that the unknown Vorlage of ἀμελέω should have a meaning different from ἀμελέω itself. Consequently, Schenker is right that the meaning of the Masoretic text differs substantially from the meaning of the Septuagint, but he pushes the evidence too far by assuming a Vorlage of ἀμελέω with a meaning quite different from ἀμελέω itself. Thus the conclusions drawn by Schenker about how the two versions differ substantially from each other from a theological perspective is doubtful. According to Schenker the Masoretic perspective presupposes that the covenant still exists between God and Israel due to the faithfulness of God, even though the covenant is broken by Israel. From the


123 The verb πρῆα in the qal is rendered by various Greek words in the LXX: ἀνθίστημι, ἀμελέω, ἀπειθέω (2), ἀπειθής (2), ἀσεβέω, ἐρεθίζω (2), ἐρεθιστής, μὴ εἰσακούω, παραβαίνω, παραπικραίνω (8), παροξύνω, πικρός.
Septuagint perspective the covenant does no longer exist, since it is broken both by Israel and by God. Schenker rightly points out that such a perspective, with God breaking the covenant, has very few counterparts in the Old Testament. Instead God is usually presented as faithful to his covenant. The conclusion to Schenker’s interpretation is that, since it is very unlikely that someone has changed the Hebrew text to fit the Greek text, the Greek text is more original. In other words: the original text which is preserved in the Septuagint has a theology which is directly contrary to the theology of the rest of the Old Testament, and was thus changed in accordance with the common theology of the Old Testament, and is today preserved in the Masoretic text. However, if the verb ἀμελέω does not have the meaning of “breaking”, the conclusion of Schenker falls to the ground, and the covenant continues to exist in the Septuagint version as well as in the Masoretic version. It should be noted, however, that there still are differences between the two versions: in the Masoretic version the Israelites are actually breaking the covenant, while God is faithful to it, in the Septuagint version the Israelites are not able to keep the covenant, while God is neglecting it.

The next significant difference is particularly interesting since it is often overlooked by commentators. Especially Schenker has noted that the perfect form of the Masoretic text יָרֵם, found in v. 33, almost without exception is rendered by future forms in modern translations and commentaries (“I will put”, for

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example, NRSV, NIV, ESV, NASB). According to Schenker, there are three reasons for this rendering: first, it is an adjustment to the following parallel clause, which has the verb in the imperfect, בִּטְקַי; second, the whole context suggests that a future event is in view; third, Hebrew perfect forms do sometimes refer to future events. However, Schenker doubts, rightly it seems, if this interpretation is right. According to Schenker, it is not possible that יִתַּן refers to a future action, since first, there is no semantic or syntactic indicator of future, which indicates that the perfect form should refer to a future event; second, it is reasonable to assume that two different verb forms express different meanings; third, the perfect form makes good sense in the context; fourth, several MSS have added a consecutive י before יִתַּן, thus changing the meaning of the verb form from past to future. If this consecutive י is secondary, it confirms that the readers had some

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126 Schenker, Das Neue, pp.26–34.
problem in interpreting the perfect form as referring to the future without the
consecutive . Interestingly enough, the Septuagint has δώσω for יְתוֹנָה, and the
future form δώσω looks like just another example of a rendering of יְתוֹנָה on a par
with modern renderings of the perfect form, i.e., adjusting tense to the context.
However, according to Schenker, δώσω is rather a rendering of an imperfect form
of יְתֹנָה, and, as is also pointed out by Schenker, there seem to be several reasons
for assuming a Vorlage of the Septuagint different from the Masoretic Hebrew
text, rather than assuming that the translator adjusted tense to the context. First,
Greek future forms are regularly renderings of Hebrew imperfect forms. This is
true not only in these verses, but in the whole chapter, and in the whole book of
Jeremiah. If δώσω were a rendering of a perfect form, this would be an
improbable exception. Second, and this is Schenker’s main argument, this is not
the only difference between the two versions here. In MT it is the law (singular),
ָתֶה לֵשׁ, which is the object of the verb, while in LXX it is the laws (plural),
νόμους μου, which are the object of the verb. Again, although decisive
conclusions are not possible, it is at least plausible that Schenker is right.

Moreover, Schenker’s interpretation of יְתֹנָה as referring to a past event also
has consequences for his interpretation of the following context, viz. the meaning
of בְּרֵךְ. According to Schenker בְּרֵךְ can be interpreted in two ways, either it
means “midst, among”, i.e., it is a sociological term referring to a place within a
group of people, or it can mean “middle, within”, i.e., it is an anthropological term
referring to a place within a person. The latter interpretation forms a good parallel
to מִיָּדִֿי in the following clause, but it requires that יֹתֶהְנוּ refers to the future, i.e.,

God says “I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts”. A
meaning referring to the past is not possible, because if God has put the law
within them, it makes little sense to put it into their hearts. The first interpretation
of מִיָּדִֿי as “midst, among”, on the other hand, only makes sense if יֹתֶהְנוּ refers to
the past. Consequently, it should be noted that it is only possible to denote
different meanings to the two versions if Schenker’s assumption is taken into
account, namely that the perfect form יֹתֶהְנוּ should be taken in its common sense,
denoting a past action. If this is right, which is assumed here, the meaning of the
Hebrew text is approximately: “in the past, at Mount Sinai, God gave the Torah to
be in the midst of (or among) the people, but in the future he will write the (same)
Torah on their hearts”.\textsuperscript{127} In the Septuagint εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν apparently is a
rendering of מִיָּדִֿי, and since the verb δώσω is in the future form, it makes good
sense and forms a nice parallel with the following ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν. The
meaning of the Greek text is approximately: “giving I will give my laws into their
mind, and on their heart I will write them”.\textsuperscript{128}

Consequently, in the context preceding Jer. 31:31–34 it is clear that according
to the MT the covenant is broken only by the people and not by God. Hence there
is no place for a substitutio, but only a restitutio of the covenant, which would not
call for a replacement of the Torah. A change of place for the Torah, on the other

\textsuperscript{127} Schenker, Das Neue, p.27. Cf. Karrer, Der Brief, p.115.

\textsuperscript{128} Cf. Karrer, Der Brief, p.118.
hand, from tablets of stone to the heart of the people, would fit the context very well, especially if the interpretation by Schenker, taking מַתָּן as referring to the past, is followed. In the LXX, on the other hand, it is not clear whether the covenant is broken or not either by God or the people, although the interpretation given by the author of Hebrews in Heb. 8:13 seems to be that it at least is obsolete, and hence should be replaced by a new (other) covenant.\textsuperscript{129}

The context in Jeremiah following immediately after the text quoted in Hebrews has been discussed by Bogaert,\textsuperscript{130} who concludes that the verses 35–37 in the MT and LXX are in a different order (MT v. 35 = LXX v. 36, MT v. 36 = LXX v. 37, and MT v. 37 = LXX v. 35) and also differ in content, and that the MT version of these verses appears to be a preparation for the long addition in MT, Jer. 33:14–26. Bogaert makes a number of observations, which should be taken into consideration, since they underline the difference between the MT version and the LXX version: first, in v. 35 according to the LXX, the divine initiative is renewed, and God does not reject Israel despite its sins. MT adds רָפָה in v. 35, a term that is elaborated in the long addition in chapter 33, where רָפָה is found in 33:25. Second, there is a logical connection between vv. 31–34 and 35–37 in the LXX, and the existence of Israel is founded on the observance of the laws. Hence, to avoid further setbacks God puts the laws into the heart of the people. Third, according to MT, which adds רָפָה in v. 35, the continuity of the

\textsuperscript{129} Cf. Grässer, Hebr 7,1-10,18, p.101.

\textsuperscript{130} Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, pp.88–90.
covenant is based on the organisation of cosmos and not, as in LXX, on fidelity towards the laws. Fourth, Bogaert notices the parallelism in LXX between v. 34 οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ ἐτι and v. 35 ἐγὼ οὐκ ἀποδοκιμῶ, which is underlined by the use of the expressions φησίν κύριος (=אמר אלוהים) and οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος (=אמר יהוה), both missing in LXX vv. 35 and 37.131

Finally, there is one factor that has to be taken into account, but which is pertinent to the whole of the Old Testament, namely, the fact that several Hebrew expressions, not only הָיָה, are translated by νόμος, for example, הַיָּה (Esth. 3:8); נָעַלְתָּה (Prov. 6:20); הַיָּה (Jer. 31:36). This means that for the reader of the Greek text there were more examples of law in the plural (for example, Jer. 38:37 (MT Jer. 31:36)) than for the reader of the Hebrew text.132 Hence the plural of νόμος might not have been regarded as unusual in a Greek speaking context as the plural of הָיָה would have been in a Hebrew context.133

2.2.3.2 In Hebrews

In 2008 Barry Joslin published his monograph Hebrews, Christ, and the Law,134 in which he is especially focusing on the law. Given Joslin’s detailed evaluation of earlier investigations, and the fact that very few studies do discuss the different


133 Cf. Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, p.83.

versions of the text, there is no need to evaluate all the material anew here. Instead the following discussion will be based on Joslin’s investigation, but will focus on the recent investigations taking the difference between the two versions into account, but not included by Joslin, such as Becking, Bogaert, Karrer, Renaud, Schenker, Vanhoye. Joslin starts by classifying previous scholarship into two categories according to the opinion of the scholars about the law. For the first group of scholars the law has no ongoing validity in the new covenant era. In this group Joslin places Delitzsch, Spicq, Montefiore, Attridge, Koester, Lehne, and Thielman. In the second group, for which the law has an ongoing validity in the new covenant era, Joslin places Hughes, Bruce, Ellingworth, Lane, Grässer, and Levin. To the second group he also attaches himself. It should be noted that none of these scholars referred to by Joslin take the different versions into account.

Joslin has also devoted one chapter to the structure of Hebrews in which he comes to the conclusion that:

The lengthy central section [7:1–10:18] of Hebrews is exposition with no exhortation. … This section of Hebrews stands as the great doctrinal centre section of the epistle in which the author describes how the priesthood, covenant, and sacrifice have changed in light of the person and work of Christ.

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135 Joslin, Hebrews, pp.6–20.
136 Joslin, Hebrews, p.125.
Further, Vanhoye notes that all occurrences of νόμος in Hebrews are found in chapters 7–10, which indicates that this is the context of νόμος in Hebrews. Vanhoye thus confirms Joslin’s conclusion that the section of Hebrews where almost all the discussion of the law is found forms a well-defined unit.\textsuperscript{137} Consequently, it is also in this section where it is likely to find the author’s view about the law or laws. Moreover, Vanhoye points to the fact that the previous sections, Heb. 3:1–6 and 5:1–10, concentrating on the comparison between Moses, Aaron (the high priest) and Jesus do not mention the law. According to Vanhoye the reason is that the author is focusing on the continuity between Moses, Aaron and Jesus in Heb. 3:1–6 and 5:1–10, while in Heb. 7:1–10:18 he is more concerned about the differences.\textsuperscript{138}

The three remaining chapters in Joslin’s thesis cover the whole section from 7:1 to 10:18, and are summarized by Joslin as follows:

> In short, the thesis argued for in the following chapters is this: the law has been transformed in Christ, and this transformation involves both its internalization and its fulfilment in the New Covenant.\textsuperscript{139}

The first of these three chapters is called “Hebrews 7:1-28 – Change in the Law”, and focuses on Heb. 7:12 and the νόμον μετάθεσις, the understanding of which is crucial for the rest of Joslin’s investigation. However, the first section of the

\textsuperscript{137} Vanhoye, ‘La loi’, p.273.


\textsuperscript{139} Joslin, Hebrews, p.134.
chapter discusses the relation between Jesus and Melchizedek (Heb. 7:1–10). Here Joslin comes to the conclusion that Melchizedek is mentioned to support the main argument, namely that “there is a new priesthood that is superior to the old.”\textsuperscript{140} The new Melchizedekian priesthood is better than the Levitical just as Melchizedek is superior to Abraham (from whom the Levites come), since first, he is eternal, second, Abraham paid a tithe to Melchizedek, and third, Melchizedek blesses Abraham. It is also noted by Joslin that besides the eternal nature of the Melchizedekian priesthood the major difference between the two priesthoods is that the new one can bring about $\tau\varepsilon\lambda\varepsilon\iota\sigma\varsigma$ (Heb. 7:11 and 10:14) through the perfect offering of Christ. Without this perfect offering, the giving of $\tau\varepsilon\lambda\varepsilon\iota\sigma\varsigma$ was impossible for the old priesthood. Further, just as Melchizedek could be a priest without being a Levite, so could Jesus. Hence, being a priest like Melchizedek, Jesus is also a priest based on the oath of Ps. 110:4, and thus superior to the Levites.\textsuperscript{141} An objection to Joslin’s conclusions, however, is that there are no descriptions whatsoever of the priesthood of Melchizedek, neither in the Old Testament nor in the New, nor is there any discussion about its relation to the Levitical nor to the heavenly priesthood. Hence it is hard to see how it could be argued that the priesthood of Jesus is Melchizedekian in any other way than that it is eternal (Heb. 7:3). Further, the relation between the priesthood of Jesus and the heavenly sanctuary (Heb. 8:5) does not seem to be totally clear, and hence

\textsuperscript{140} Joslin, Hebrews, p.136.

\textsuperscript{141} Cf. Dunnill, Covenant, pp.256–260, who discusses Melchizedek, but does not go into any details about the law.
it is equally unclear in what sense the priesthood of Jesus is new, and not rather heavenly and thus original.

After the introductory remarks focusing on Melchizedek, Joslin turns to the discussion about νόμου μετάθεσις in 7:12, where he first asserts that “law” and “covenant” are not identical terms, but instead the law contains the stipulations of the covenant, which is an arrangement between any two parties. νόμου μετάθεσις, according to Joslin, is not a full abrogation, but still a transformation of the law. Joslin suggests: “… that there is indeed νόμος in the NC [new covenant], and that it is not an entirely new law in terms of its content, but rather is the law of Moses that has undergone μετάθεσις in light of the Christ event.”

Joslin, Hebrews, p.170.

However, as pointed out by Joslin, there is also a strong element of cessation especially of the Levitical priesthood and its sacrifices in Hebrews. According to Frey νόμου μετάθεσις is an “Austausch”, which means that the cultic part of the law is nullified, while the ethical part of the law remains.

According to Vanhoye, on the other hand, this interpretation by Frey is “une erruer d’interprétation”. Especially referring to the importance of the cult in Heb. 7:11, Vanhoye asserts that there is a change of law in Heb. 7:12, and of the whole law: “toute la loi qu’il vise.” He also points out that the distinction between cultic and ethic laws is anachronistic: “La distinction entre

142 Joslin, Hebrews, p.170.

lois cérémonielles et lois morales est anachronique; on n’y songeait pas au 1er siècle.”

Further, Heb. 7:12 and 18 are frequently interpreted together, but, as is pointed out by Joslin, v. 18 is not concerned with the whole law, but only with one ἐντολή, namely, “the requirement of bodily descent.” Vanhoye hesitates when he contests that ἐντολή only refers to one requirement in the law, but since, according to Vanhoye, the whole law was changed in v. 12 a change in one requirement also points to a change of the whole law. Moreover, in v. 19 it is said that the “the law made nothing perfect”, something that, according to Vanhoye, refers to the whole law, while Joslin understands it as referring only to the “lineage requirements.”

Before turning to the next chapter of Joslin’s book, a few comments are required. It should be noted that Joslin’s interpretation of νόμος is totally based on his understanding of νόμου μετάθεσις. However, a number of observations call his interpretation into doubt. First, the common meaning of μετάθεσις is not ‘transformation’, but ‘transposition’. And although the derived meaning ‘transformation’ could in rare occasions be applied to μετάθεσις, it still has to be convincingly argued why the author of Hebrews did not use a word with the common meaning ‘transformation’, when this was what he had in mind. Moreover, in Heb. 7:11, as well as in the verses following the phrase νόμον μετάθεσις, there is no discussion of a change in priesthood, but of a


new priest, which is not a ‘transformation’, but ‘transposition’ of the priesthood from the Levites to Jesus.\textsuperscript{148} Hence there seems to be no reason to apply a different meaning to μετάθεσις than to μετατηθεμένης at the beginning of the verse, especially since the ‘transposition’ of the law is such a central part of the Jeremiah-quotation in chapters eight and ten.\textsuperscript{149} It should be noted, of course, that this does not exclude a change in the law, only it does not seem to be the meaning of Heb. 7:12. Further, the opinion of Vanhoye and others that the whole law, i.e., the whole of the Torah is changed and replaced by something else in the hearts of the people appears to be too theoretical and simplified. Beside the arguments mentioned by Joslin (see below) against the change or replacement of the whole law it could be added that it is hard to see with what, for example, Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18 or the general and universal laws of the Decalogue should be replaced, or why they should not be put into the heart of the people.\textsuperscript{150}

The next chapter in Joslin’s monograph is called “Hebrews 8:1-13 – A New Covenant Blessing: the Law Written on the Heart”, and focuses on how the imperfect law can be a blessing. Joslin’s answer to that question is that the internalized “Christologized law” is a blessing to the new covenant people. He


\textsuperscript{149} Cf. Schenker’s interpretation of Jer. 31:33(MT), that is, the change from a giving of the law among the people (a sociological term), to a putting of the law within the mind and heart of the people (an anthropological term), Schenker, Das Neue, pp.27–28.

also notes that there appears to be a purposed insufficiency in the old covenant, which presupposes a new covenant. According to Joslin, most scholars agree that what is meant by Heb. 8:10 applies to each individual covenant member, and it produces a heart that is inclined to God in a new way that also produces obedience. Most important for the present investigation, however, appears to be what he states in note 52, namely that there is very little discussion about the meaning of this verse and of νόμος. Joslin also notes that this has been pointed out by several scholars (for example, Attridge and Lehne).¹⁵¹ It should also be noticed that although Joslin has an excursus on Jer. 31:31–34, and although he discusses the plural νόμους as a rendering of the singular in MT, he mentions no other differences between the two versions (such as those discussed in the section above). Hence it is not surprising that the meaning of the plural νόμους is not very significant in Joslin’s interpretation either. Joslin, following Davies and Malone, argues that “the plural form likely refers to the specific laws of the covenant.”¹⁵² Without much of a discussion Joslin concludes that this is his opinion too. It comes as no surprise, then, that the book by Schenker and the articles by Vanhoye, Bogaert, and Renaud are not found in the bibliography of Joslin. Interesting again is the observation by Joslin that a huge number of Old Testament scholars agree that the singular Torah in Jer. 31:33 refers to the written law of Moses.¹⁵³ Hence there appears to be consensus among Old Testament scholars

¹⁵² Joslin, Hebrews, p.199.
that in its Old Testament setting the MT version, with the law in the singular, refers to the Torah. Finally, Joslin summarizes the interpretations made by previous scholars about the meaning of νόμος, beginning with the comment: “Given that there is precious little discussion of the matter, such a task can be challenging.”\textsuperscript{154} He classifies the different opinions into three groups: 1. “The non-view”, scholars who give little or no information about their opinion; 2. “The No-Correspondence View”, scholars who interpret νόμος in Hebrews as something other than the Mosaic law; and 3. “The Direct-Correspondence-View”, scholars who interpret νόμος in Hebrews as being the same as the Mosaic law. Not much can be said about the first group, but the second position is criticized by Joslin, since: a. they fail to take the meaning of νόμος in the Jeremiah-context into account, b. their inconsistency in the interpretation of νόμος between 8:10 and other instances of νόμος in Hebrews, c. its lack of interpretation of the plural of νόμος (sic).\textsuperscript{155} The third group is preferred by Joslin to the second, but criticized, since a direct correspondence logically means that all the laws of the Torah are put into the heart of the people. Joslin admits that none of the advocates of this view would agree with this logical conclusion, and that they all in one way or the other exclude some of the laws from being put into the heart of the new covenant people.\textsuperscript{156} Still Joslin proposes a solution, which he calls “The Transformed View”, in which the Christologically transformed Mosaic law is internalized into

\textsuperscript{154} Joslin, Hebrews, p.208.

\textsuperscript{155} Joslin, Hebrews, p.213.

\textsuperscript{156} Joslin, Hebrews, p.220.
the new covenant people. The important questions, however, that is which of the Mosaic laws that actually are internalized and how they have been affected by the Christologization are left unanswered, since:

Exactly what this would look like in every instance cannot be ascertained from Hebrews, though it is put forward here that this is, in seminal form, the way the writer of Hebrews views how the NC believers relates to the law in light of Christ.  

Hence, since Joslin is only giving a very broad outline, it is difficult to see how he actually differs from the third group. It should also be noticed that in the presentation of his own view there is no discussion of how the plural of νόμος should be interpreted. Summing up this important chapter by Joslin it is disappointing to find that there is very little discussion about the meaning of νόμος in Heb. 8:10 and practically no discussion of the plural νόμους, not only in the literature investigated by Joslin, but also in Joslin’s study. Actually, in his conclusion Joslin does not even mention the plural of νόμος. Other interpreters who do comment upon the plural νόμους are, for example, Westcott who notes: “The rendering of μην τὰς ἀνθρώπινας νόμους by the plural νόμους is remarkable. It may have been chosen to dissociate the general idea of the divine ‘instruction’ from the special Mosaic code with which it had been identified.”  

Joslin, Hebrews, p.222, cf. 259 n.156.

(Jer. 31:33) “offers clarification” about the nature of the law in Jer. 31:33, since “The only use of this verb [בֹּקִים], when God is subject, is in connection with the Ten Words”. Hence Malone comes to the conclusion that what is put into the heart of the people according to Jer. 31:33 is “the Decalogue in particular”. 159 It should be noted, though, that Malone does not mention the different versions in his discussion of the law of Jer. 31:33. Moreover, Vanhoye concludes that, after having declared the change of law, the author of Hebrews does not say anything about what constitutes the new law, but instead he turns to the new covenant, a necessary covenant, since the old was imperfect (Heb. 8:7). He also notes that Christ as high priest, is incompatible with the law (Heb. 8:4). Hence the Mosaic law is replaced by the new covenant, which is characterized not by regulations, but by promises. In the new covenant it is not the well-known law of Moses that is put into the heart of the people, but “laws of mine” (i.e., laws in the plural but without the article, hence referring to some indefinite collection of laws other than the Torah). According to Vanhoye the law in singular in Hebrews always represents the law of Moses. 160 The plural νόμους of Heb. 8:10, on the other hand, is interpreted in the light of the present participle διδούς immediately preceding the laws and the omission of δώσω found in the LXX rendering of Jer. 31:33.

159 Malone, A critical, pp.78–80. Cf. 184–187 and 213–17. It should be noted that this unpublished dissertation is more of a religious treatise than a scholarly discussion, but it is still included, since it appears to be the earliest monograph discussing the passage, and it covers the material in a valuable way.


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Hence Vanhoye stresses the ongoing nature of the present tense of διδούς, and the ongoing of the giving of laws, as also in John 6:45; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:10, 17; 1 Thess. 4:9; 1 John 2:27.\(^{161}\) According to Vanhoye Heb. 8:10 should be translated by “For this is the covenant that I will covenant with the people of Israel, after those days, says the Lord: Giving of the laws of mine, [it is] in their mind and in their heart [that] I will write them.”\(^{162}\) Bogaert concludes only that since the laws are written by God himself, they have to refer to the Decalogue.\(^{163}\) Renaud, who is mostly concerned with the question about which version was original, argues that both the singular of the Hebrew and the plural of the Greek refer to the Torah, which was made a lie by the scribes (Jer. 8:8) and hence is put into the heart by

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\(^{161}\) Vanhoye, ‘La loi’, pp.287–289. Vanhoye also points out that it is significant that the author of Hebrews, who does not hesitate to make minor alterations in the LXX text, does retain the plural νόμους.

\(^{162}\) Vanhoye, ‘La loi’, p.287: “Car voici la disposition que je disposerai pour la maison d’Israël, après ces jours-là, dit le Seigneur: Donnant des lois de moi, [c’est] dans leur pensée et sur leurs cœurs [que] je les écrirai” (Bracked words original). The translation by Vanhoye is interesting, since it is actually based on the text found in Hebrews (with its omission of δώσω, and taking διδούς with ἐπιγράψω). Cf. Karrer, *Der Brief*, p.118, where he translates: “*Indem* ich meine Gesetze in ihren Verstand *gebe* (didous Partizip), werde ich sie auch auf ihre Herzen *auf*schreiben.”; emphasis original. Cf. Thomas, ‘The Old Testament’, p.320, who argues that the missing finite verb from the LXX “originated in the transmission of the LXX rather than in Hebrews.”

\(^{163}\) Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, p.86.
YHWH.\textsuperscript{164} Schenker, finally, does not comment upon the law in any detail, but he has different interpretations for the different versions. The Torah of the MT version is the same Torah as the one given at Mount Sinai, but it follows from his argument about Jer. 31:31–33 that the laws of the LXX version are something other than the Torah:

… der neue, von Gott versprochene Bund [bedeutet] neue Gesetze (im Plural),
die sich von der alten Tora unterscheiden, insbesondere hinsichtlich der neuen
Liturgie im Himmel, des neuen Priestertums nach der Ordnung Melchisedechs,
Hebr 7, und des wahren, von Gott errichteten Heiligtums im Himmel, Hebr
8,2.\textsuperscript{165}

To these comments should be added that just as odd as excluding the whole of the Mosaic law from being put into the heart of the people, as noted above, would it be to put nothing else than the law, even in a changed or Christologized form, into the heart of the new covenant people. Knowing God according to the new covenant (Jer. 31:34) without the Christ-event, as well as the “basics” of the new covenant (cf. Heb. 5:11–6:3) is hardly possible in the mind of the author of Hebrews. This is also underlined by the fact that the Church actually added a New Testament to the Old. If it had been the understanding of the Church (or of the author of Hebrews) that God thought it to be sufficient to put a Christologized Torah into the heart of the people, than adding texts to the canon would seem

\textsuperscript{164} Renaud, ‘L’oracle, p.95.

\textsuperscript{165} Schenker, \textit{Das Neue}, p.73, cf. pp.85–86.
superfluous. Hence the author of Hebrews perhaps rather thought of the plural of laws as including both the Torah as well as teachings of Jesus in one way or the other, as pointed out by Karrer commenting on the plural of the LXX version:

Die Künftig von Gott gewährten Gesetze mögen die Tora von Sinai mit umfassen, sogar von ihr aus gedacht sein … . Die Neuheit von Gottes Handeln eröffnet indes gleichermaßen einen Raum für andere Gesetze.\textsuperscript{166}

The final chapter in Joslin’s monograph is called “Hebrews 9:1-10:18 – The Law Possesses a Shadow of the Good Things to Come”. Here Joslin addresses the question about the relationship between the new covenant and the old sacrificial system. In short, he understands that for the author of Hebrews, tabernacle, priesthood and sacrifices were all shadows of what was to be fulfilled by Christ. Before giving an exegetical overview of the whole section, Joslin notes that the Jeremiah-quotations in Heb. 8 and 10 form a kind of \textit{inclusio} of the whole section. Heb. 9:1–10 is a short description of the old tabernacle with its sacrifices, but also of its inability to cleanse the conscience of the worshipper. The importance of blood in chapter nine is stressed. In 9:11–28 the subject is the superiority of the offering of Christ, the heavenly high priest, and its perfect and everlasting nature. In 10:1–18 the author returns to the law, which has a shadow, and cannot take away sins and perfect the worshipper. Hence the offering of Christ accompanied by his perfect obedience, which should be an example of obedience for all worshippers, who have the Christologized law internalized. This section of

\textsuperscript{166} Karrer, \textit{Der Brief}, p.118.
Hebrews is concluded with the second part of the *inclusio*, namely the repetition of Jer. 31:31–34. After his exegetical exposé of 9:1–10:18 Joslin comes back to 10:1 and the shadow of the law, and he underlines that the law *has* a shadow (it *is* not a shadow), which he interprets as the tabernacle, priests and sacrifices. He also stresses that the shadow should not be interpreted as resulting from the author’s Platonism, but as eschatology, hence not *higher* and *lower*, but *old* and *new*. Before concluding the chapter Joslin addresses the question about the repetition of Jer. 31:31–34 in Heb. 10, and comes to the conclusion that the importance of the Jeremiah-text is underlined not only by the repetition but also by the deliberate alterations to the text in chapter 10. Hence the Jeremiah-quotations not only form an *inclusio*, but are the basis for the whole section 9:1–10:18, which is ultimately an exegesis of the Jeremiah-text:

> Therefore, any mention of a covenant between God and people implies the notion of sacrifice and thus priestly mediation. This is exactly what is discovered in Hebrews’ explanation of Jeremiah 31 and thus it is central to the discussion of 9:1-10:18.¹⁶⁷

Joslin also notes that, if the law had not been important to the author of Hebrews, he could easily have left it out in the second quotation. Summing up the chapter Joslin states that the “… emphasis in Heb. 9:1-10:18 is on Christ’s *fulfilment* of the Mosaic law.”¹⁶⁸ He also concludes that Hebrews’ author has both a negative

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(due to its inability to remove sin) and a positive view of the law (due to its pointing towards Christ, and the obedience accomplished by it when Christologized and internalized). The positive tone in Heb. 9:22 is noted also by Vanhoye, but according to his understanding of the text it is only positive in a prefigurative sense, pointing at the necessity of Christ’s sacrifice for the new covenant.\(^{169}\) When it comes to Heb. 10:1–18, Vanhoye asserts that the author of Hebrews is not only concerned with the cultic parts of the law, but his negative judgement about the law applies to the whole Mosaic law: “Si la part la plus sacrée de la loi est dépourvue d’efficacité, à plus forte raison les autres parts seront impuissantes.”\(^{170}\) He sees the utmost opposition between the laws of the new covenant and the Mosaic law of the old covenant, exemplified by the inadequacies of the old cult and the effectiveness of Christ. This is also underlined by the repeated quotation of the plural νόμους (10:16), after discussing the perfect offering of Christ (10:10–14). Vanhoye even sees a contrast between the Mosaic law and the will of God, since the offerings according to the law are rejected by God (Heb. 10:8). This is also emphasized by the author’s omission of Ps 40:9b (“your law is within my heart”) in his quotation of the Psalm in 10:5–7.

### 2.2.4 Jer. 31:33: Summary and Evidence from the Text

Despite a number of recent studies on Jer. 31:31–34, there appears to be no consensus whatsoever about how to interpret the text. On the other hand, there is

\(^{169}\) Vanhoye, ‘La loi’, p.290.

total unanimity about the fact that this text has attracted very little attention in the past. This is particularly surprising given the fact that it is not only the longest quotation in the New Testament, but it is also the only text in the Old Testament mentioning a new covenant/testament. The question about the law or laws seems (if possible) to be even more neglected, which is equally surprising given the fact that this point is intimately connected with the important wider issue of the significance of the Old Testament for the New. Needless to say, then, the existence of two versions of the text and the differences between them rarely have been commented upon at all. The few interpretations that actually take the two versions into consideration seem to be based on weak, and sometimes doubtful linguistic, considerations. Malone, for example, asserts that it is the Decalogue that is put into the heart of the people, since “The only thing God personally writes in the Old Testament is the Decalogue” (see, however 1 Chr. 28:19).¹⁷¹ Bogaert puts forward a similar argument,¹⁷² but neither he nor Malone make any mention of Hebrews in their discussion. Vanhoye’s interpretation is based on his own translation of the quotation, but his suggestion that the whole law is abrogated is problematic. Renaud has an opposing view, and argues that both the singular Torah and the plural νόμος refer to the Mosaic law, but since he is only discussing Jeremiah 31 in its Old Testament context, he has no view about the context in Hebrews. Schenker’s interpretation is totally based on his

¹⁷² Bogaert, ‘Loi(s)’, p.86.
understanding of ἡμέλησα, while Joslin’s is equally dependent on his understanding of νόμου μετάθεσις. Both interpretations, however, appear to push their interpretations of the texts too far. Hence, the present state of interpretation appears to be quite disappointing, and there are a number of questions that have to be addressed before it is possible to understand this text more fully.

First, there are quite a number of linguistic problems, both in the MT version and in the LXX version, not to mention the question about how these two versions relate to each other. Here only the problems in v. 33 will be mentioned (not suggesting, of course, that the context does not have a decisive importance for the understanding of v. 33): How should the perfect ἤμελησα be understood? Where does the present participle διδοὺς in the LXX come from? What happened to δώσω when the text was quoted in the NT? And, of course, the plural νόμους, which is the focus of the present investigation.

Then there is the problem whether the author of Hebrews saw the law or parts of it as having been abrogated. There can hardly be any doubt that the author of Hebrews did not think that the cult of the Pentateuch should continue in the new covenant (Heb. 7:11–10:18). However, that fact does not in any way seem to suggest that the law should be abrogated or changed. First, the Pentateuch is full of laws that do not have any direct significance any more due to new circumstances, such as the regulation of how to gather manna (Ex. 16), how to

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build the tabernacle etc. (Ex. 25–30), how the Israelites should encamp in the wilderness (Num. 2). Second, the Pentateuch is much more than laws and regulations. It is hard to see why these parts should be excluded from what is put into the hearts, especially in the mind of the author of Hebrews, who so clearly is interested in the narrative parts of the Pentateuch (cf. Heb. 11). Moreover, as noted above, the author clearly accepted the ongoing validity of texts such as Deut. 6:4 and Lev. 19:18.

As also pointed out above, it is equally problematic to put only the Pentateuch in one form or the other into the hearts of the new covenant people (anyway as seen from a New Testament perspective), excluding the Christ-event, as well as the “basics” of the new covenant (cf. Heb. 5:11–6:3) from what is put into the hearts. Moreover, if the Mosaic law in one way or the other is put into the hearts of the new covenant people for the sake of obedience, one would expect to see more of that in the new covenant people. But, as rightly pointed out by Joslin, \(^{174}\) that does not seem to be the case. Finally, the whole context of Hebrews does never seem to have been taken into consideration when discussing the plural νόμους. \(^{175}\)

These are some of the questions that remain unanswered, when the present investigation turns to the reception and interpretation of this text in the early

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\(^{175}\) For some remarks on the plural and the wider context in Hebrews, see below on 2.4.2 The Interpretation of Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16.
Jewish and Christian communities, to see if they can give any further clues as to how the Jeremiah text may have been understood by the author of Hebrews.

2.3 The Interpretative Context of the Two Versions of Jer. 31:33

2.3.1 Introduction
As was noted above, although Jeremiah 31 contains the only reference in the Old Testament to a new covenant and although Jer. 31:31–34 is the longest quotation from the Old Testament in the New, the quotation in Hebrews has attracted surprisingly little interest among modern exegetes. Strangely enough, given the significance of this text, this appears to be true among early Jewish and Christian commentators as well. The aim of the following survey of the references that do exist is to answer the questions outlined in the introduction: which version was used by whom; was any particular version used in either context, Jewish or Christian; how did the version used affect the interpretation of the text; do these interpretations have any affinity with the interpretation in Hebrews that could shed some light on how the author of Hebrews understood the text?

2.3.2 Jer. 31:33 in Qumran

There are no direct quotations of Jer. 31:33 in the texts from Qumran, but a number of references to a new covenant are found in the Community Rule and Damascus Document. Since there are no direct quotations it is not possible to properly answer the questions posed above, but it is still possible to make some general observations based on earlier investigations. First, there can hardly be any doubt that generally Torah in Qumran refers to the Pentateuch. Second, the attitude taken in the texts towards the Torah is positive, and there seems to be no need to add anything nor take anything away from it, instead the interpretations are there to help the community better understand the Torah. Third, the ultimate goal of the community is obedience towards the Torah, and hence, there is no need to put anything apart from the Torah into the heart of the people. Consequently, there seems to be little affinity between the understanding of the law in the Qumran community and the understanding of the author of Hebrews.

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179 Cf. Adeyemi, The New Covenant, pp. 79–80, who argues that “this group’s [the Qumran community’s] understanding of the New Covenant Torah included new laws” (p.80), but concludes that this New Covenant is not in accordance with the one described in Jer. 31:31–34 (p.80 n.51).
2.3.3 Jer. 31:33 in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

There appear to be no direct quotations from the Jeremiah-text in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, but Guthrie notes two “possible allusions”.\textsuperscript{180} The first one is from the \textit{Life of Adam and Eve} 13,\textsuperscript{181} and the second from the \textit{Testament of Judah} 20:3–4,\textsuperscript{182} but they do not refer to the law or laws. There is also one reference in the \textit{Preaching of Peter}, but neither in this example is there any reference to the law or laws.\textsuperscript{183}

\textsuperscript{180} Guthrie, ‘Hebrews’, p.971.

\textsuperscript{181} Text from Constantin Tischendorf, \textit{Apocalypses apocryphae Mosis, Esdrae, Pauli, Johannis, item Mariae dormito: additis evangeliorum et actuum apocryphorum supplementis. Maiximam partem nunc primum} (Leipzig, 1866), p.7: καὶ οὐκ ἔσονται ἐτὶ έξαμαρτάνοντες ἐνόπιον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι ἀρθήσεται ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ἡ καρδία ἡ πονηρά, καὶ δοθῆσεται αὐτοῖς καρδία συνετιζομένη τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ λατρεύειν θεῷ μόνῳ.

\textsuperscript{182} Text from Marinus de Jonge et al., \textit{The Testaments of the twelve patriarchs: a critical edition of the Greek text} (Leiden, 1970), p.73: Καίγε τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὰ τῆς πλάνης γέγραπται ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου· καὶ ἐν ἐκαστὸν αὐτῶν γνωρίζει Κύριος. Καὶ οὐκ ἔστι καρός, ἐν ὃ δυνήσεται λαθεῖν ἀνθρώπων ἐργα· ὅτι ἐν στήθει ὅστε αὐτὸς ἐγγέγραπται ἐνώπιον Κυρίου.

\textsuperscript{183} Text from Michel Cambe, \textit{Kerygma Petri} (Turnholt, 2003), p.157: ὅστε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὅσιος καὶ δικαίως μανθάνοντες ἢ παραδίδομεν ὡς θεός, καὶ καρδίας τοῦ θεοῦ διὰ τοῦ Χριστοῦ σεβόντων, ἐντεύχομεν γὰρ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς καθὼς ὁ κύριος λέγει: "ἰδοῦ διατίθεμαι ὑμῖν καρδίαν διαθήκην, ὡς γὰρ διεθέμην τοὺς πατράσσιν ὑμῶν ἐν ὀρεί Χωρῆβ." νέαν ἤμεν διάθετο· τὰ γὰρ Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ἰουδαίων παλαιά, ὑμεῖς δὲ οἱ καρδίας αὐτῶν τρίτω
2.3.4 Jer. 31:33 in the Targum

There is only one Targum on Jer. 31:33, namely Targum Jonathan:

But this is the covenant which I shall make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my Law in their inward parts, and upon their heart I will write it; and I shall be their God, and they shall become a people before me.\(^{185}\)

As can be seen אַּלְּאֵיהּ is in the singular, and hence, as far as the law is concerned the text follows the MT version. It should be noted that this also means that the consonantal text could be vocalized into the plural, but as in MT the following pronoun referring back to אַּלְּאֵיהּ is in the singular. Hence, it is clear that the Targum follows the MT version both in respect of a consonantal text, which can be interpreted either as singular or plural, and in respect of the following pronoun,


which is clearly in the singular. Consequently, there are no traces of the LXX version either.

2.3.5 Jer. 31:33 in the New Testament

According to the appendix in NA27 there is one reference to Jer. 31:33 in the New Testament, namely Rom. 2:15:186

οἵτινες ἐνδείκνυνται τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου γραπτόν ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν, συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως καὶ μεταξὺ ἄλλων τῶν λογισμῶν κατηγορούντων ἢ καὶ ἀπολογουμένων, … 187

They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them …188

First of all, it should be pointed out that it is disputed by several commentators that Paul refers to Jeremiah 31 here,189 and that in any case it is not the law that is written on the heart as in Jeremiah, but “what the law requires” τὸ ἔργον τοῦ νόμου. Hence, if at all a reference to Jer. 31:33, it is not as straightforward as it

187 Text from NA27.
188 Translation from NRSV.
might seem. Anyhow, although it is clear that Paul in fact uses the singular here, it is equally clear that his argument does not depend upon his reading νόμος in the singular rather than the plural νόμους in his source, neither do any of the commentators who suppose that Paul refers to Jer. 31:33 discuss the different versions of the text. 190

2.3.6 Jer. 31:33 in Midrash

2.3.6.1 Midrash Tanḥuma B

The first two examples are found in Midrash Tanḥuma B 1.13 and 2.12. In the first one the whole paragraph is concerned with the giving of the Torah, and the Jeremiah-text is used as a proof-text:

שתה להם את התורה והם ניצים מביתיה (ספ) אבל ליעלdea לאו מלמדוה
לכל ישראל והםندתני אבות, שאמור (אתה התורה) כי אתה המורה אשר אברות
אלה יבר ישראל אחרון חפשים נאום הוא.

I have given them the Torah, but only few care about it. But in the world to come I will teach all Israel, and they will not forget it, as it is said (“This is the Torah”) “For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after these days, says the Lord.”

190 Cf. Augustine’s discussion of this text below.

191 Text from Salomon Buber, Midrasch Tanchuma: Ein agadischer Commentar zum Pentateuch von Rabbi Tanchuma ben Rabbi Abba (Wilna, 1885), vol. 2, p.76.
As can be seen Torah is in the singular, and from the context it is clear that it most likely refers to the Torah.

The second quotation from Midrash Tanhuma B, 2.12, is concerned with the giving of tithes, and the quotation from Jeremiah is given in passing:

This David said: “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my bowels.” [Ps. 40:9]. R. Aḥa b. Ulla said: But is the Torah in the bowels? Is it not written: “and I will write it on their hearts”.

Again Torah is in the singular and the reference to Ps 40:9 makes it clear that it refers to the Torah. Hence, in the first Midrash, there is not trace of the LXX version.

2.3.6.2 Midrash Rabbah

In Midrash Rabbah there are another three quotations. The first one is found in Ecclesiastes 2.1.1:

This text is also discussed in Pesikta dē-Rab Kahâna, Piska 10.

R. Hezekiah said in the name of R. Simon b. Zabdi: All the Torah which you will learn in this world is ‘vanity’ in comparison with Torah [which will be learnt] in the World to Come; because in this world a man learns Torah and forgets it, but with reference to the World to Come what is written there? “I will put My law in their inward parts.”

As can be seen, all four examples of Torah are in the singular, and it appears that they all refer to the Pentateuch. This conclusion, however, is contested by Adeyemi, who states: “This then seems to indicate that the Torah to be learned in the world to come will probably not be the one that is learned in this age whose pleasure is vanity. This may lend support to the possibility of a new Torah in the messianic age.” It should be noted, though, that the text does not support the conclusion by Adeyemi, since it discusses a new place for the Torah according to Jer. 31:33 and not a new Torah. The same seems to be underlined by the other references to Jer. 31:33 in the Midrashim, but these are not mentioned by Adeyemi. Instead he mentions a number of other Rabbinic sources to support his opinion about a New Torah, but the examples are not convincing.

The following two examples are from the Song of Songs, the first from 1.2.4, where the giving of the Torah is discussed:

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“Our master, Moses, would that God might be revealed to us a second time! Would that He would kiss us WITH THE KISSES OF HIS LIPS! Would that He would fix the knowledge of the Torah in our hearts as it was!” He replied to them: “This cannot be now, but it will be in the days to come,” as it says, “I will put My law in their inward parts and in their heart will I write it.”

Again the Torah is in the singular, and again there is nothing that indicates that it should be taken to refer to something else than the Pentateuch.

In the second example from the Song of Songs the quotation follows immediately on a quotation from Mal. 3:16, and although the ידוהי is not explicitly mentioned it is clear that the singular “it” refers to the Torah.

“And the Lord hearkened and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before Him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name”

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"He heard [for them] and it was written" : this means that He writes it on their hearts, as it says, “In their heart I will write it.”

As in the previous two examples from Midrash Rabbah the Torah is in the singular, and it appears to refer to the Pentateuch.

Summing up the references to Jer. 31:33 in the early Midrashim, it is clear that הַרְוַת in Jer. 31:33, which is always found in the singular, is interpreted as the Pentateuch. In any case there is no indication that it should refer to anything else than the Pentateuch. This is, of course, to be expected, since הַרְוַת in the singular generally is interpreted in the rabbinic literature as the Pentateuch. Further, although the references are very short, it can be seen that there is no indication of abrogation, change or addition to the Torah. Hence it is also clear that the tradition found in the Midrashim follows the MT version both in text and interpretation. Consequently, there are no traces of the LXX version, and there seem to be no affinities between the interpretations in the Midrashim and the interpretation found in Hebrews.

201 Translation from Maurice, Midrash Rabbah 9, Song of Songs, p.325.
202 Cf. Gutbrod, ‘νόμος’, pp.1054–1059, and Adeyemi, The New Covenant, pp.80–84, who argues for an interpretation of some Rabbinic sources as including more than the Pentateuch in the Torah, but he tends to push the sources a bit too far.
2.3.7 Jer. 31:33 in the Early Greek Church

2.3.7.1 Valentinus (c. 100–c. 160)

There is one possible reference to Jer. 31:33 in the writings of Valentinus preserved in Clement of Alexandria’s *Miscellanea* 6.52.3–4:

ὁ κορυφαῖος Οὐαλεντῖνος ἐν τῇ Περὶ φίλων ὁμιλίᾳ κατὰ λέξιν γράφει· “πολλά τῶν γεγραμμένων ἐν ταῖς δημοσίαις βιβλίοις εὑρίσκεται γεγραμμένα ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ τοῦ θεοῦ· τὰ γάρ κοινά ταῦτα ἐστὶ τὰ ἀπὸ καρδίας ῥήματα, νόμος ὁ γραπτός ἐν καρδίᾳ· οὕτως ἐστιν ὁ λαός ὁ τοῦ ἡγασθενέου, ὁ φιλούμενος καὶ φιλῶν αὐτόν.”

Now also Valentinus, the Corypheus of those who herald community, in his book on The Intercourse of Friends, writes in these words: “Many of the things that are written, though in common books, are found written in the church of God. For those sayings which proceed from the heart are vain. For the law written in the heart is the People of the Beloved—loved and loving Him.”

This possible reference is not very clear, but if it refers to Jer. 31:33 it is obvious that the law is referred to in the singular, which could imply that the MT version was used. In any case, the law does not refer to the Torah, but the law is

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interpreted allegorically here, which is interesting, since it indicates a different understanding of the text than the one found in the early Jewish community.\textsuperscript{206}

2.3.7.2 Justin Martyr (c. 100–165)\textsuperscript{207}

In his \textit{Dialogue with Trypho}, 11.3, Justin Martyr quotes Jer. 31:31–32, but not verse 33. Immediately before the reference to Jeremiah he quotes Is. 51:4–5, in which a law is mentioned ὅτι νόμος παρ' ἐμοῦ ἐξελεύσεται “for a law shall go forth from me”. In the preceding paragraph, \textit{Dial.} 11.2, it is clear that the law referred to by Justin is an “everlasting and final law, Christ himself” αἰώνιος … νόμος καὶ τελευταῖος ὁ Χριστός. This is repeated again after the two quotations, \textit{Dial.} 11.4: “he [Christ] is indeed the New Law” οὗτός [ὁ Χριστός] ἐστιν ὁ καὶ νόμος νόμος. In the quotation from Jer. 31:31–32 Justin does not have the characteristic genitive absolute ἐπιλαβομένου μον of the LXX version, which might indicate that he used the MT version with the law in the singular. However, given the fact that he does not quote verse 33 and that the law (in the singular) is mentioned in the quotation from Isaiah, it cannot be confirmed that he actually refers to the law or laws mentioned in Jer. 31:33. Anyhow, it is clearly stated by Justin that the

\textsuperscript{206} For a detailed discussion of the text, see Christoph Markschies, \textit{Valentinus Gnosticus?: Untersuchungen zur valentinianischen Gnosis mit einem Kommentar zu den Fragmenten Valentins} (Tübingen, 1992), pp.186–204.

new law is a different law from the one given on Horeb, Dial. 11.2: “The law promulgated at Horeb is already obsolete, and was intended for you Jews only, whereas the law of which I speak is simply for all men” ὁ γὰρ ἐν Χωρήβ παλαιὸς ἡδη νόμος καὶ ὠμόν μόνον, ὁ δὲ πάντων ἁπλῶς.208 Though it cannot be confirmed that Justin refers to the law of Jer. 31:33, it is clear that he refers to an interpretation of the law in the early Church as something other than the Torah, namely Christ.209

2.3.7.3 Irenaeus (c. 135–202)

Irenaeus has one full quotation of Jer. 31:31–34 in Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching 90, preceded by “Therefore ‘by newness of the spirit’ is our calling, and not ‘in the oldness of the letter;’ even as Jeremiah prophesied:”, and in paragraph 89 he states:210

That He does not wish those who are to be redeemed to be brought again under the Mosaic legislation – for the law has been fulfilled by Christ – but to go free

208 The new covenant and the new law in singular are alluded to also in 24.1; 34.1; 43.1; 51.3; 122.5.
210 The text is only preserved in Armenian and can be found with translation in Karapet ter Mékérttschian et al. ‘The proof of the apostolic preaching: with seven fragments: Armenian version’ in René Graffin and François Nau (eds.) Patrologia Orientalis 12 (Paris, 1919), p.723.
in newness by the Word, through faith and love towards the Son of God, is said by Isaias [followed by Is. 43:18–21]²¹¹

This statement indicates that when quoting Jeremiah in the following paragraph, Irenaeus had a different law in mind from the Torah. Moreover, the Armenian text appears to have “laws” (plural) in the quotation from Jer. 31:33, thus indicating that Irenaeus used the LXX version. However, he made no use of the plural in his interpretation of the text.

Irenaeus also has one quotation from Jer. 31:31 in Against Heresies 4.9.1, and a few lines later, in 4.9.2, he has a possible allusion to Jer. 31:33:

Maior est igitur legisdatio quae in libertatem quam quae data est in servitutem²¹²

Greater, therefore, is that legislation which has been given in order to liberty than that given in order to bondage²¹³

If this is a reference to Jer. 31:33, the texts clearly indicate an interpretation of the law or laws other than the Torah.²¹⁴

²¹¹ Translation from Joseph Smith, St. Irenaeus Proof of the apostolic preaching (Westminster, Md., 1952), p.102.
²¹² Text from Norbert Brox et al., Irenäus von Lyon: Adversus haereses: Gegen die Häresien IV (Freiburg, 1995), p.70.
²¹³ Translation from ANF, vol. 1, p.472.
2.3.7.4 Clement of Alexandria (c. 150–215)

In Clement there is one reference in *Exhortation to the Greeks* 11.114–115 and it is given here with some of the context:

ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ γεωργός … τόν μέγαν ὄντως καὶ θείον καὶ ἀναφαίρετον τοῦ πατρὸς κλῆρον χαριζόμενος ἡμῖν, οὐρανίῳ διδασκαλίᾳ θεοποιών τόν ἄνθρωπον, “διδοὺς νόμους ἀυτοῦ εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίαν γράφων αὐτοὺς.” τίνας ὑπογράφει νόμους; “ὅτι πάντες εἰσόνται τὸν θεόν ἀπὸ μικροῦ ἔως μεγάλου, καὶ Ἴλεως,” φησίν ὁ θεός, “ἐσούσαι αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν ἁμαρτίων αὐτῶν οὐ μὴ μνησθῶ,” δεξώµεθα τοὺς νόµους τῆς ζωῆς, πεισθῶµεν προτρεποµένῳ θεῷ, μάθωµεν αὐτοῦ, ἵνα Ἴλεως ἠ. \(^{215}\)

He, the husbandman of God, … having bestowed on us the truly great, divine, and inalienable inheritance of the Father, deifying man by heavenly teaching, putting His laws into our minds, and writing them on our hearts. What laws does He inscribe? “That all shall know God, from small to great;” and, “I will be merciful to them,” says God, “and will not remember their sins.” Let us receive the laws of life, let us comply with God’s expostulations; let us become acquainted with Him, that He may be gracious.\(^{216}\)

Apparently, Clement uses the LXX version, though the quotation is not entirely verbatim. Immediately after the quotation he repeats the plural νόµους, but he

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\(^{216}\) Translation from ANF, vol. 2, pp.203–204.
does not stress the fact that νόμος is used in the plural, neither does he explicitly state whether the νόμοι refer to the Torah or not.

2.3.7.5 Origen (185–254)

In Origen’s *Fragmenta in Psalmodiae 1–150* there is one reference to the new covenant of Jeremiah in his comment on Ps. 77:1:

> τίς ὁ νόμος, ἕτερος ὃν παρὰ τὸν τοῦ Μωσέως … ὁ μὲν οὖν ἔδωκεν σωτήρ ἕστι, νόμος δὲ αὐτοῦ τὸ εὐαγγέλιον … νόμου δντος τοῦ κατὰ Μωσέα, εὐχετεί τὸ ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ Πνεῦμα ἐν τῷ Θεῷ παλμῷ, ὅπως ἀναστήσῃ τοῖς ἐθνείς νομοθέτην, καὶ διαθήσεται διαθήκην καινήν, κατὰ Ἰερεμίαν, καὶ ἀλλαχόσε λέγει· ὄντος αὐτοῖς λαβὸν ἐτέραν τοῦ φοβεῖσθαι με, καὶ ὁδὸν ἐτέραν. ἤλθεν οὖν ὁ Σωτήρ, καὶ λέγει Χριστιανοῖς, τῷ λαῷ αὐτοῦ, τῷ εὐαγγελικῷ περὶ οὗ εἴρηται· ἐκ Σιὼν ἐξελεύσεται νόμος, ἀλλὰ μή ὁ τοῦ Μωσέως. μηκέτι σαββατίζεται, μή πάλιν ἄζωμα ποιήσητε, μηκέτι κατὰ τὰ πρῶτα καὶ παλαιὰ πορεύεσθε.\(^{217}\)

Which is the Law, being another one than the one by Moses … He who speaks is a savior, but his Law is the Gospel … Though there is the Law according to Moses, the Spirit in the prophet prays in Ps. 9:21 [LXX] that he may set a lawgiver over the nations, and make a new covenant according to Jeremiah, and somewhere else he says: “I will give them another heart that they may fear me, and another way” [Jer. 32:39 (39:39)]. Accordingly, the Saviour came, and he

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says to the Christians, his people, the one from the nations: follow, my people, 
my law, the one in the Gospel, about which it is said: “Out of Sion shall go forth 
a law” [Is. 2:3; Mic. 4:2], but not the one by Moses, you shall no longer keep 
the Sabbath, you shall no longer keep the festival of unleavened bread, you shall 
no longer live as before and of old.

Origen discusses the law of Ps. 77:1 and comes to the conclusion that it is another 
law than the one given by Moses, and that the one who speaks in the Psalm is 
Christ, whose law is the Gospel. Then Origen calls Christ a νομοθέτης, lawgiver, 
immmediately before referring to Jeremiah 31. Unfortunately, Origen does not 
reveal what version of the text he used, but in the immediate context it is clear that 
he uses νόμος in the singular to refer to the Torah, and that he refers to another 
law, namely the Gospel given by ὁ Σωτήρ.218 Hence it is clear that Origen was 
aware of an interpretation of the law other than the Torah, namely the Gospel, and 
that the giver of that law was Christ.

218 Cf. a few lines later the new law is referred to in the singular 77.10–12 οἱ ἀρνοῦμενοι 
tὰ παλαιὰ οὐκ ἔφυλαξαν τὴν διαθήκην τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ οἱ διακόπτοντες τὴν θεότητα, 
ἐν τῷ τοῦ κτίσαντος πνευματικῷ νόμῳ οὐκ ἔβουλήθησαν πορεύεσθαι. But see also the 
plural of νόμος in 77:3–6 τὰ δὲ συμπέρασμα τοῦ νόμου, καὶ ὁ σκοπὸς οὗτος ἦν, ἵνα 
μαθῶντες τὰ γεγονότα, βεβαιάσαν κτίσαντο τὴν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐλπίδα, καὶ τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτοῦ 
tεθείσι νόμοις ἀκολουθήσοσι.
Eusebius has three quotations from Jer. 31:33. The first one is from *Demonstration of the Gospel* 1.4.5 and it follows the LXX version having νόμος in the plural. More importantly, however, is the context of the quotation. A few lines after the reference to Jeremiah Eusebius quotes Isaiah 2:3 ἐκ γάρ Σιὼν ἐξελεύσεται νόμος on which he comments, *Dem. Ev.* 1.4.7–1.4.8:

ταύτην τὴν καινὴν διαθήκην αὐτῆς νόμον ὀνομάζει καινὸν Ἅσανα, ἄλλος πάλιν Ἑβραίων προφήτης, λέγων: [followed by Is. 2:2–4] τίς δʼ ἄν εἴη ὁ ἐκ Σιὼν προεληλυθὼς νόμος, ἄλλος δὲν τοῦ ἐπὶ τῆς ἐρήμου διὰ Μωσέως ἐν τῷ Σινᾶ ἄλλος δὲν τοῦ προεληλυθόν τῆς ἡµῶν Ἱσραήλ τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀποστόλων αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς Σιὼν προεληλυθὼς καὶ διελθὼν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη; 219

This “new covenant” Isaiah, another of the Hebrew prophets, calls the “new law,” when he says: [followed by Is. 2:2–4] This law going forth from Sion, different from the law enacted in the desert by Moses on Mount Sinai, what can it be but the word of the Gospel, “going forth from Sion” through our Saviour Jesus Christ and his apostles, and going through all the nations? 220

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220 Translation from William Ferrar, *The proof of the Gospel: being the Demonstratio evangelica of Eusebius of Caesarea* (London, 1920), vol. 1, p.24. It should be noted that
Though the comment is upon the quotation from Isaiah, it is still abundantly clear that the νόμοι of Jer. 31:33 do not refer to the Torah, but to the Gospel, given not only by Christ, but also by the apostles. However, Eusebius makes no use of the plural of νόμος in his interpretation of the text.

The second quotation,²²¹ *Dem. Ev.* 1.7.23, also follows the LXX version, having νόμους in the plural. In the context preceding the quotation the laws (plural) of Christ are mentioned, *Dem. Ev.* 1.7.19: καὶ τοῦτον τοῖς νόμοις πειθόμενοι “and obey His laws”, but also the law (singular) of Christ, *Dem. Ev.* 1.7.21: τὸν Χριστοῦ νόμον τὸν τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης “the law of Christ of the new covenant”, and again in the plural: *Dem. Ev.* 1.7.23 τοὺς τῆς καινῆς διαθήκης νόμους “the laws of the new covenant”. Apparently, Eusebius uses both the singular and plural and he does not stress the fact that Jer. 31:33 has the plural.

The last quotation is from *Extracts from the Prophets* 1.37. Again it follows the LXX version with νόμους in the plural, and again the laws of the new covenant are discussed in the plural in the following context:

ἐξῆς δ’ ἐπιφέρει λέγων ὁ αὐτὸς Κύριος, ὡς μετὰ τὰς ἡμέρας ἐκείνας, ἐν αὐταῖς ταῖς διανοίασι τῶν παραδεξομένων τὴν καινὴν διαθήκην ἔγραψαν τοὺς ἰδίους νόμους, ὃστε αὐτούς εἶναι εἰς λαὸν τῷ Θεῷ, καὶ αὐτὸν αὐτοῖς εἰς Θεόν … ἴδοι

“and his apostles” is added to Ferrar’s translation by the present author according to the Greek text.

Next the same Lord states that after those days he will write his own laws upon
the very minds of those who have received the new covenant, that they may be
a people to God, and he a God to them … Anyone could see that the new
covenant and the laws of the Lord are written on the minds and hearts of those
who through Christ believe in God.

Apparently, Eusebius uses the plural of νόμος, but the plural has no impact on his
interpretation, though it is very clear that the νόμοι do not refer to the Torah.

Summing up Eusebius, it is clear that he uses the LXX version, but without
making any use of the plural in his interpretation of the text. In his discussion of
the law of the new covenant Eusebius uses both singular and plural, none of
which refers to the Torah. Instead the law refers to the Gospel, which is given not
only by Christ but also by his apostles.

2.3.7.7 Athanasius (c. 293–373)

Athanasius quotes Jer. 31:33 twice, the first example is found in The dialogue of
Athanasius and Zacchaeus 122, where he responds to Zacchaeus’ question about
why the Christians do not practise circumcision:

222 Text from MPG: Jacques-Paul Migne, Patrologiae cursus completus: Series Graeca
διδοὺς νόμομοι μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν·” σούκέτι γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ νόμος,
ίνα μὴ <ἡ> ἢ δόξα αὐτῶν ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ ἄλλ', ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ.223

… putting my laws on their hearts.” For the law is no longer through the
circumcision, that their glory should not be in their shame, but in their heart.

Though the plural of the LXX version is put in contrast to the singular of the
Torah, Athanasius does not stress this fact. It seems clear, however, that the plural
νόμος in Athanasius’ interpretation does not refer to the Torah.

The second quotation is found in his Expositiones in Psalms 39:7, 8:

Συμβαίνει ως οὐκ ἐν πλαξί λιθίναις, ἀλλὰ σαρκίναις, γραφήσονται τὰ
θεσπίσματα τοῦ καινοῦ νόμου, καθὼς φησὶ δι’ Ἰερεμίου τοῦ προφήτου. Διδοὺς
δόσω νόμοις μου εἰς τὴν διάνοιαν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν γράψω
αὐτοῖς, ἵνα δηλοῖ, ὅτι τοῖς ἐνδοτάτοις καὶ νοητοῖς τῆς καρδίας ταμείοις ἢ
Ἐκκλησία τὸν καινὸν παραδέξηται νόμον, καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς σφόδρα θελήσῃ.224

It happens that the oracles of the new law will not be written on tablets of stone
but of flesh, as it says through the prophet Jeremiah: “Putting I will put my laws
in their mind, and I will write them on their hearts”, that he might reveal that the
Community would receive the new law in its innermost and spiritual rooms of
the heart, and that it would greatly desire the commands.

223 Text from Frederick Conybeare, The Dialogues of Athanasius and Zacchaeus and of
Timothy and Aquila (Oxford, 1898), p.60.

224 Text from MPG, vol. 27, c.193.
Though it is clear that he quotes the LXX version, it is equally clear that he makes no use of this version in his interpretation. Apparently, he uses the singular of νόμος both before and after the quotation containing the plural of νόμος, thus making it abundantly clear that he is not stressing the plural of νόμος. As in the previous example Athanasius does not seem to interpret νόμος as the Torah, but as a new law.

2.3.7.8 Pseudo-Macarius (c. 300–c. 390)

There are six quotations from Jer. 31:33 in Pseudo-Macarius. In all examples Pseudo-Macarius uses the LXX version of the text with the plural νόμους, but he does not stress the fact that νόμος is in the plural in the quotation. Further, the νόμος of the new covenant hardly refers to the Torah. Interesting is also the fact that Jesus is explicitly called “lawgiver”, which can be seen in the last example.

The first example is from Homily 11.1.3:

ἐκείνοις νόμος ἐδόθη ἐν πλαξί λιθίναις γεγραμμένος, ἢμῖν δὲ νόμοι πνευματικοὶ καὶ ἐγγραφόμενοι ἐν καρδίας σαρκίναις. λέγει γὰρ· διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν διανοιῶν αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς. ἐκεῖ μὲν πάντα καταργούμενα καὶ πρόσκαιρα, νῦν δὲ πάντα ἐξ ἀληθείας εἰς τὸν ἐσωθεν ἀνθρώπον ἐπιτελούμενα.

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Text from Heinz Berthold, Makarios/Symeon Reden und Briefe: die Sammlung I des Vaticanus Graecus 694 B (Berlin, 1973), vol. 1, p.142. This example, both quotation and context, is almost identical with the one in Homily 47.3 (text in Hermann Dörries et al.,
To them a law was given written on tablets of stone, but to us spiritual laws inscribed on hearts of flesh. For he says: “Putting my laws on their hearts and on their minds I will write them.” There everything was perishable and temporary, but now everything is truly perfected in the inner person.

What is most interesting in this example is probably the explicit contrast between the singular law of the old covenant and the plural laws of the new covenant, which seems to be unparalleled in the early Church Fathers. However, in Homily 54 Macarius contrasts the laws of the Torah, which are written on parchment, with the laws of the new covenant, which are written on the heart, Homily 54.34–5:

ἐπάν δὲ ὁ σοφὸς τεχνίτης καθ’ ὁν δεῖ τρόπον πάντα τὰ περισσὰ περιαιρήσας καὶ καθαρίσας λαμπρώνη, τότε γράφονται οἱ τοῦ θεοῦ νόμοι καὶ τότε εἰσὶ γραφαί. τὸν αὐτὸν τρόπον οἱ βουλόμενοι καὶ ἐλπίζοντες τοὺς νόμους τοῦ πνεύματος ἐν τῇ ἑαυτῶν διανοίᾳ καὶ ψυχῇ ἐγγραφῆναι ... τὴν ἑαυτῶν καρδίαν ὡς ἐπιτήδειοι τεχνίται ἐργαζέσθωσαν καὶ καθαρίζοντες ... ἵν’ οὔτω προευτρεπισάντων καὶ προκαθαράντων τὸν νοῦν ἑαυτῶν καὶ τὴν καρδίαν ἐγγράψη εἰς τὸν θεὸν ἐκεῖ τοὺς ἱδίους νόμους τοῦ πνεύματος κατὰ τὴν ἐπαγγελίαν αὐτοῦ. φησὶ γὰρ: “διδοὺς νόμους μου ...”

When the wise craftsman has properly removed all what is superfluous [from the parchment], and has cleansed and brightened [it], then the laws of God are...

Die 50 geistliche Homilien des Makarios (Berlin, 1964), p.305), hence the example in Homily 47.3 is not commented upon separately.

written [on it] and then they are Scriptures. … In the same manner, those who want and hope the laws of the Spirit to be written in their own mind and soul … should, as fit craftsmen, work on and cleanse their own heart … that, once they have made their own intellect and heart ready and clean, God may write his own laws of the Spirit there according to his promise. For he says: “I will write my laws…”

That the law of the Christians is something else than the Torah, but still a νόμος is also very clear from the context immediately preceding the quotation in Homily 15:

Οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἄξιοι Χριστιανοὶ οὐκ ἀπὸ γράμματος μανθάνουσι καὶ λαλοῦσιν, ἀλλὰ ἀπὸ πνεύματος θεοῦ πάντα ἐκδιδάσκονται, «οὐκ ἐν διδακτοῖς» γράμμασιν (ὡς φησὶν ὁ ἀπόστολος) “ἀνθρωπίνης σοφίας λόγοις, ἀλλ’ ἐν διδακτοῖς πνεύματος ἁγίου”. Ἡ διαθήκη γὰρ αὐτῶν καὶ ὁ νόμος καὶ ἡ βίβλος αὐτῶν πνευμάτων ἐστίν, καθὼς φησὶ τὸ πνεῦμα διὰ τοῦ προφήτου 227

The Christians worthy of Christ do not learn from a letter and speak, but they have thoroughly learnt everything from the Spirit of God, not in letters taught

(as the Apostle says) by words of human wisdom but taught by the Holy Spirit [cf. 1 Cor. 2:13]. For their covenant and the law and their book is Spirit, as the Spirit says through the prophet:

The last quotation is from *Homily* 40.2.1:

πιστεύσαντες οὖν ὅτι πᾶς ο ἡμῶν νόμος δακτύλῳ θεοῦ ἐν καρδίᾳ γράφεται, οὐ μέλαν, ἀλλὰ πνεύματι θείῳ, δεξάμεθα τὴν ἀλήθειαν τοῦ νομοθέτου τοῦ εἰπόντος· ἐγὼ εἰμὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια, τοῦ καὶ τὴν τῆς καρδίας περιτομὴν ποιουμένου καὶ ἐπιγράφοντος ἐπὶ τὰς καρδίας τῶν ἀξίων τὸν τῆς χρηστότητος αὐτοῦ νόμον, ὃς φησιν ἐν τῷ προφήτῃ· διδοὺς νόμους μου ἐπὶ καρδίας αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς διανοίας αὐτῶν ἐπιγράψω αὐτούς.

Since we believe that our entire law has been written in the heart by the finger of God, not with ink, but with divine Spirit [cf. 2 Cor. 3:3], we accept the truth of the lawgiver who said: “I am the truth”, who also does the circumcision of the heart, and who writes on the hearts of those worthy of the law of his goodness, as he says in the prophet: “Putting my laws on their hearts and on their minds I will write them.”

As can be seen, here again Macarius uses the singular of νόμος about the law of the new covenant, but he also adds πᾶς “entire”. Further, the law is called “the law of his goodness”, and is said to be identical with the laws of Jer. 31:33. Consequently, Macarius uses both singular and plural of both the old covenant and the new covenant laws. The combination with Jesus as lawgiver is also

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interesting, since it points out the fact that Jesus is giving additional laws. The addition of laws rather than the substitution is also underlined by the use of the plural in the first two examples, which points in the direction of more than one collection of laws. Since the Law/Torah of the old covenant was a collection of laws, the plural of laws in the new covenant indicates a number of collections rather than a number of laws. Had Jesus substituted the old collection by a new one, the singular, it seems, would have been the more natural choice.

2.3.7.9 Didymus (c. 313–c. 398)

In Didymus there are two references to Jer. 31:33 in his Commentarii in Psalmos. The first one is found in 255.14–17, and is a comment on Ps. 36:31: 229

καὶ ἦν αἰτίαν ἀποδίδωσιν· “ὁ νόμος αὐτοῦ” σῶκ ἐν τοῖς ὢσιν ἐστὶν μόνοις, ἀλλ’ “ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ αὐτοῦ”. “δίδωσιν” γὰρ “ὁ θεὸς νόμους αὐτοῦ” εἰς καρδίαν αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ νόμου, διὰ τοῦτο καὶ σοφίαν μελετᾷ καὶ κρίσιν λαλεῖ.

Further, they give the reason: “His law” is not only in the ears, but “in his heart”. For “God puts his laws into the heart and he writes them on the mind.” Consequently, he whose heart is filled with the law of God, thinks about wisdom and speaks justice.

From the plural of νόμος it is clear that Didymus uses the LXX version, but it is also evident that he does not stress the fact that νόμος is in the plural. Neither is it clear what relation the νόμους of Jer. 31:33 has to the Torah.

The second reference is found in 335.1–4, and is a comment on Ps. 44:3:


Moreover, the saviour says: “my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe” [Ps.44:2]. My tongue writes unchangeable laws in the hearts of the people. For “putting my laws on their hearts and on their minds I will write them.” And God writes on the hearts of flesh and not of stone through his living spirit.

The manuscript appears to be in poor condition, but it is still clear that the quotation is from the LXX version. However, Didymus seems to make no use of the plural of νόμος, which is underlined by a comment just a few lines earlier in the text, page 334 lines 12–13, where it is clearly stated that Moses got the νόμοι (in the plural) from God himself:


Hence they say that Moses was the first father of lawgiving, since he did not get the laws from someone else, but he was himself brought to this by God.

Consequently, as in the first example it is unclear what relation the plural νόµους of Jer. 31:33 have to the Torah.

2.3.7.10 John Chrysostom (344–407)

John Chrysostom has a number of references to Jer. 31:33, in some of which he makes no comments on the law or laws. However, in the following three examples he discusses the law or laws in one way or the other. The first quotation is found in Demonstration Against the Pagans that Christ is God 10.8, and immediately before the quotation, with the law in the plural (νόµους), Chrysostom concludes:

ότι τοιαύτην ἐργασάμενος, νόµον ἔδωκεν αὐτῇ πολλῷ τοῦ προτέρου βελτίονα ... τί τούτου σαφέστερον γένοιτ̓ ἀν; ... τὴν ὑπεροχὴν τοῦ καινοῦ πρὸς τὸν παλαιὸν νόµον ... 232

After he made the earth so fruitful, he gave it a Law which was far superior to the Old Law. … What could be clearer than this? … the superiority of the New Law over the Old Law … 233

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231 De sancta trinitate (MPG, vol. 48, c.1090); In epistulam ad Hebraeos (homiliae 1–34) (MPG, vol. 63, cc.113, 136); De Eleazaro et septem pueris (MPG, vol. 63, c.528).

232 Text from MPG, vol. 48, c.827.
Chrysostom uses the LXX version having the plural νόμους, but as can be seen, he makes no use of the plural in his interpretation of the text. The interpretation also shows that the law of Jer. 31:33 is not identical with the Torah.

The next quotation is from *Matthaeum (homiliae 1–90) 1.1*. The quotation follows the LXX version with νόμους, and is immediately followed by a comment, which makes it clear that Chrysostom makes no use of the typical plural νόμους of the LXX version, referring to the singular νόμον:

καὶ ὁ Παῦλος δὲ ταῦτα ἐνδεικνύμενος τὴν ὑπεροχήν, ἔλεγεν εἰληφέναι νόμον, οὐκ ἐν πλαξί λιθίναις, ἀλλ' ἐν πλαξί καρδίας σαρκίναις.234

And when Paul showed this superiority, he said that they had received a law “not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.” [2 Cor. 3:3]

The last quotation is from Chrysostom’s comments on Jer. 31:33 in *Fragmenta in Jeremiam (in catenis)*. Chrysostom uses the LXX version, but his argument does not depend upon his reading the plural νόμους in his source. This is especially clear in the following comment on v. 33, where he uses the singular νόμος:

καὶ γὰρ γραπτὸς ὁ νόμος ἦν· ἐπειδὴ ἤμων ἐπίδειξις Πνεύματος μυρίαι μαρτυρίαι. οὐδὲν ἐγγραφὸν παρέδωκεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· “Ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς ἀναμνήσει


πάντα.” οὐ χι λίθιναι πλάκες, οὐ δὲ γράμματα ἐγκεχαραγμένα, ἀλλ' ἢ διάνοια αὐτῶν στήλη τῷ νόμῳ τῷ παρ' αὐτοῦ γενήσεται.\(^{235}\)

And the law was written: since for us the many thousand testimonies of the Spirit is a demonstration; Jesus did not hand over any document: “He will remind you of everything.” [John 14:26] Neither tablets of stone, nor engraved letters, but their mind will become a pillar for the law that comes from Him.

In this last quotation it is no doubt that the new law is not the Torah, but something that has come from Jesus.

Summing up, Chrysostom uses the LXX version in all his quotations from Jer. 31:33, but he never stresses the fact that Jeremiah has νόμος in the plural. In the first and last comment it is also clear that in Chrysostom’s opinion the law of Jer. 31:33 is not identical with the Torah.

2.3.7.11 Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375–444)

The one among the Greek Church Fathers who most frequently quotes Jer. 31:33 is Cyril of Alexandria. In a number of passages he also discusses the law or laws, always using the LXX version with the laws in the plural. Some of these passages will be treated below,\(^ {236}\) starting with one in Glaphyra in Pentateuchum. Here

\(^ {235} \) Text from MPG, vol. 64, c.981.

\(^ {236} \) Further passages are, e.g., MPG, vol. 68, c.136; MPG, vol. 69, c.233; MPG, vol. 72, cc.576, 597, 776; Philip Pusey, Sancti patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini In XII prophetas (Oxford, 1868), p.64; idem, Sancti Patris nostri Cyrilli archiepiscopi Alexandrini In D. Joannis evangelium (Oxford, 1872), vol. 3, p.332.
Cyril quotes Jer. 31:33 in its Hebrews setting (Heb. 8:7–13), and immediately before and after he discusses the law, which appears to refer to the Torah, but in his argument he does not make any use of the plural νόμους of the quotation itself:

νόμον μὲν εἰς βοήθειαν δέδωκεν ὁ τῶν ὅλων Θεός· γέγραπται γὰρ ὁδί. πλὴν ὅτι παιδοκομεῖ μὲν ὁ νόμος, τελειοὶ δὲ λοιπῶν τὸ Χριστοῦ μυστήριον … σώκοιν ἀσθενῆς ὁ νόμος, … 

The God of all gave a law as help, for it is written at this point. Only, the law looks after [children], but henceforth the secret of Christ perfects. … Consequently, the law is weak, …

The next example is from *Expositio in Psalmos*, where Cyril, immediately before the quotation of Jer. 31:33, discusses the difference between the law of Moses, given in the old covenant, and the revelation through Christ:

ο ὁ μὲν γὰρ νόμος ὁ διὰ Μωσέως διὰ κύκλου μακροῦ καὶ περισκελίας πολλῆς, τῆς κατὰ τὸ γράμμα φημι, ἁμοδής καὶ μόλις ὑπεδήλου τὰ χρήσιμα· ὁ δὲ γε τῶν ὅλων Σωτήρ καὶ Κύριος, περιαγωγῆς ἀπάσης δίχα, συντόμως ἕμιν, ὡς ἔφην, ἀπεκάλυψεν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Πατρός.

For the law through Moses [came] with a lot of revolution and severe difficulty (I mean according to the letter), and obscurely and only rarely it foreshadowed

237 Text from MPG, vol. 69, cc.80–81.

238 Text from MPG, vol. 69, c.1029.
the benefit. But the Saviour and Lord of all, without any distraction, promptly, as he said, revealed the will of the Father to us.

According to Cyril’s comment, the law of Moses is not the same as what was revealed by Christ. Unfortunately, it is not totally clear what the relation is between the revelation by Christ and the laws in the LXX version of Jer. 31:33.

In his commentary on Isaiah Cyril has four quotations from Jer. 31:33.239 Before the second one Cyril includes a discussion about the old and new law:

φορτικὸς μὲν γὰρ ὁ νόμος ἦν ἰδανικός, καὶ σκιάς διδάσκων καὶ τύπους· οὐκ εἰς νοῦν καὶ καρδίαν τὴν περὶ τῶν ἀναγκαίων ἐνιεὶς παίδευσιν τοῖς ἀκριομένοις, ἀλλὰ οἶνον ἐξωφανῆ τινα γνῶσιν τὴν ὡς ἐν γράμμασι μόνοις ἐνετίθει μόλις. τὸ δὲ γε σωτήριον, καὶ εὐαγγειλικὸν λαλεῖται κήρυγμα, δεικνύοντος τὸν ἀγίου Πνεύματος τῆς ἐκάστου διανοίας τὸ βάθος, καὶ πνευματικὰς θεωρίας εἰσπέμποντος, καὶ τοὺς τῶν ἁγίων ἐμπειρικάς λόγους, καὶ τοῖς ἐσωτήριοις τῆς διανοίας μυχοῖς οἰονεί πως ἐγκατακαίοντος. Τοιοῦτός τις ἦν ὁ μακάριος Δαβὶδ ψάλλων τε καὶ λέγων· “Ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου ἔκρυψα τὰ λόγια σου, ὅπως ἂν μὴ ἀμάρτω σοι.” Ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς ἁγίωσι ἀποστόλοις προσπεφώνηκεν ὁ Σωτήρ, ὡς Θέος. Ἄλλα καὶ τοῖς ἁγίωσι ἀποστόλοις προσπεφώνηκεν ὁ Σωτήρ, ὡς Θεός. Ὑμεῖς τῶν καρδιῶν ἑξεστάτως καὶ ἐκ τῆς καρδίας ἑμῶν λόγον, δήλως ὡς ὅτι τὸν ποιήσαντος, καὶ σωτήριος. Ὡς δὲ εἰς νοῦν καὶ καρδίαν διηθοῖ τὸ εὐαγγελικὸν κήρυγμα παρὰ τῶν ἁγίων μυστηρίων, συνεργαζομένῳ πρὸς τοῦτο, μᾶλλον ὡς κατορθοῦντος τὸ πᾶν τοῦ ἁγίου Πνεύματος, ἐκ τῶν ιερῶν Γραμμάτων ἐποιεῖτο ἄν ἡ πίστις.240

239 MPG, vol. 70, cc.540, 800, 1109, 1224.
240 Text from MPG, vol. 70, c.800.
The law was burdensome to all, and teaching shadows and images. It did not implant the learning about what is necessary in the mind and heart of those who listened, but some kind of outward knowledge, not readily, but only with letters. The saving and evangelic proclamation, on the other hand, speaks, while the holy Spirit shows the depth of each one’s mind, and gives spiritual sights, and implants the words of the holy ones, and in some way inflames the innermost parts of the mind. Such a person was the blessed David when he sang and said: “In my heart I hid your sayings so that I may not sin against you.” [Ps. 118:11]

But the Saviour also addressed the holy apostles: Let a word sink into your hearts. [Cf. Luke 9:44] Apparently, his own and saving [word]. For the evangelic proclamation by the holy spiritual leaders speaks to the mind and the heart, while the holy Spirit helps, or rather completes it all, from the holy Letters faith might follow.

Though it is clear that there is a difference between the old law and the proclamation of Christ, it is not totally clear whether it is a different law in the new covenant or the old law understood in a new spiritual way, and with the aid of the holy Spirit.

After the third quotation Cyril states that:

Ἀλλ’ ὁ μὲν ἐν γράμμασι νόμος ἐδόθη διὰ Μωσέους· κήρυγμα δὲ τὸ σωτήριον, τοῦτ’ ἐστι τὸ εὐαγγελικόν, ἔξηλθε διὰ Χριστοῦ. Καὶ γὰρ ἦν ἀκόλουθον, Μωσέα
mēn tīs skiaς kai tîpou genvēsthai diákonon, ò̂ς ēoike, γνώσεως te kai ἀληθούς λατρείας tīs en pneîmata φωτιστῆν genvēsthai Xristōn.\textsuperscript{241}

The law with words was given through Moses. The saving proclamation, on the other hand, i.e., the Gospel, went out through Christ. For Moses was suitable to become a servant of the shadow and the image, as it seems, and Christ to become an illuminator of both knowledge and true service in the Spirit.

Again the activity of the Spirit is crucial for the understanding of the passage, but the relation between the law of the old covenant and the “saving proclamation of the Gospel” is not totally clear.

Summing up Cyril’s use of the Jeremiah-text, it should be noticed that the quotations are all clearly taken from the LXX version, but that Cyril uses the singular of the law in the old covenant. This law of the old covenant is contrasted with the proclamation of the Gospel, in which the Spirit has a crucial role. However, the relationship between the law and the Gospel in the two covenants is not totally clear. It is clear, however, that Cyril makes no use of the singular or plural of the law in his interpretation of the texts.

2.3.7.12 Theodoret (393–457)

Theodoret has five references to Jer. 31:33, two in his commentary on Hebrews, one each in his commentaries on Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and one in his work \textit{Haereticarum fabularum compendium}, all following the LXX version of the text.

\textsuperscript{241} Text from MPG, vol. 70, c.1109.
After quoting the text of v. 33 in his commentary on Jeremiah 31, Theodoret has the following comment:

Τοὺς γὰρ ἱεροὺς ἀποστόλους εἰς τὸ ὀρός ἀναγαγὼν, οὐ πλάκας αὐτοῖς ἐδωκε λιθίνας, ἀλλ’ ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις αὐτῶν τοὺς θείους ἐνέγραψε νόμους, καὶ τοὺς μακαρισμοὺς προσενήναξε τοὺς ἐργάταις τῆς ἁρετής.\(^{242}\)

For when he had led the holy apostles up to the mountain, he did not give them tablets of stone, but he wrote the divine laws in their hearts, and he brought the blessings to the workers of virtue.

The laws of the new covenant are referred to in the plural, but it is not clear whether there actually are any new laws or if the laws of the old covenant are put into the hearts in the new covenant.

In his commentary on Ezek. 16:60 he quotes Jer. 31:33 and just before he comments on the covenant:

“Καὶ στήσω τὴν διαθήκην μου, διαθήκην αἰώνιον.” Οὐ τὴν τοῦ νόμου, ἀλλὰ τὴν τῆς χάριτος; οὐ τὴν διὰ τοῦ Μωσέως, ἀλλὰ τὴν διὰ τῶν ἀποστόλων; ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἔχει τὸ πρόσκαιρον, ἡ δὲ τὸ αἰώνιον.\(^{243}\)

“And I will establish my covenant, an eternal covenant.” Not the one of the law, but the one of grace. Not the one through Moses, but the one through the apostles. For the one is temporary the other is eternal.

\(^{242}\) Text from MPG, vol. 81, c.668.

\(^{243}\) Text from MPG vol. 81, cc.953, 956.
In this comment Theodoret refers to the Torah in the singular, but he makes no comment on the plural of Jer. 31:33. It also appears to be clear that the law or laws of the new covenant is not the Torah, but something else, which is given through the apostles.

Of his two references to Jer. 31:33 in his commentary on Hebrews only the first one has a discussion about the law. Immediately following upon the quotation of Heb. 8:8–12 Theodoret comments:

\[
\text{Tάωτην προσενεγκὼν τὴν μαρτυρίαν θαυμασίως ἄγαν καὶ συντόμως ἐκβάλλει τὸν νόμον … Θητοῖς γὰρ ἄνθρώποις ὁ νόμος ἁρμόδιος, ἤ δὲ καινῆ διαθήκη τὴν αἰώνιον ἡμῖν ὑπισχνεῖται ζωῆν.}\]

Having brought this testimony he very remarkably throws the law out concisely … For the law is fitting for mortals, but the new covenant promises us the eternal life.

Again it seems clear that the law or laws of the new covenant is not the Torah, but Theodoret makes no use of the plural of the laws in Jer. 31:33 in this example either.

The last reference is found in Theodoret’s work *Haereticarum fabularum compendium*, section 17, discussing Ὅτι ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ τὴν Παλαιὰν καὶ τὴν Καινὴν δέδωκε Διαθήκην, “That the same one gave the old and the new covenant”. Commenting upon the relation between the law or laws of the different covenants Theodoret states:

244 Text from MPG, vol. 82, c.737. The second reference is in MPG, vol. 82, c.749.
Thus the Lord Christ gave the fitting laws to each generation. … For to Adam he gave the law about the plant, to Noah the one about the eating of flesh. The circumcision he gave as a law to the patriarch; the other ones he composed through Moses, the great prophet. In the divine Gospels, on the other hand, he gave the most perfect laws, after he had brought the legislations about the small things to an end, such as the elements.

This last passage from Theodoret appears to make it clear that in his view the law or laws of the new covenant are not the Torah, but neither do they replace the Torah. Instead the Gospels seem to complete the lawgiving. Anyhow, Theodoret makes no use of the singular or plural of law in his interpretation of the texts either in this or in any of the previous examples, which can be seen by his use of the plural both for the laws of Moses and the laws in the Gospel. It should be noted though that he explicitly says that laws are given in the Gospels.

Summing up, it is clear that Theodoret always uses the LXX version with the plural of the laws. There are actually laws given in the Gospels, i.e., in the new covenant, but those are not identical with the Torah, neither do they replace the

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245 Text from MPG, vol. 83, c.509.
Torah. Instead the laws of the new covenant seem to be additional or complementary laws, which, with or without the Torah, are put into the hearts of the new covenant people.

2.3.7.13 Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church

When summing up the section on the early Greek Church Fathers it should first be noted that there are no clear examples of the use of the MT version among the Greek Church Fathers, while the vast majority of examples are explicitly using the LXX version. Hence in most references to Jer. 31:33 the law is in the plural. This is, of course, what could be expected, since most of the Church Fathers were only familiar with the Old Testament through the Septuagint. That their reading of the Old Testament should have been influenced by the quotation in Hebrews is less likely, since the majority of quotations are explicitly taken from Jeremiah, without any reference to Hebrews. Further, it is evident that in many discussions of the law or laws of Jer. 31:33 the Greek Church Fathers use the singular, even though they interpret the law or laws as something different from the Torah. Actually, there is no clear statement by any Greek Church Father that what is put into the heart in Jer. 31:33 should be the Torah. Instead it is the Gospel or at least something given by Jesus, who twice is explicitly called the law-giver. Consequently, even though some of the interpretations of the law or laws in Jer. 31:33 are vague, there can be no doubt that the interpretation is not the same as in the early Jewish community. What is put into the heart of the people is not the Torah, but something given by Jesus (and in two examples even by the apostles). Further, there is no indication that the plural used in most of the quotations is used
in any way to promote any particular interpretation, but the singular and plural seem to be used interchangeably. On the other hand, while the exclusive use of the singular in the Jewish context had a very fixed interpretation as the Torah, the frequent use of the plural at least could have promoted the interpretation of laws as something else than the Torah.

2.3.8 Jer. 31:33 in the Early Latin Church

2.3.8.1 Tertullian (c. 160–c. 220)

Tertullian has no quotation from Jer. 31:33, but two quotations of Jer. 31:31–32 with discussions of the law, and one further clear allusion to Jer. 31:33. In the first example below, Against the Jews 3.10, only Jer. 31:31–32 is quoted, but there is a discussion about the law, and hence the passage is included. After also quoting Is. 2:2–4 Tertullian comments:

… nam et vetus lex ultione gladii se vindicabat et oculum pro oculo eruebat et vindicta iniuriam retribuebat, nova autem lex clementiam designabat, et pristinam ferocitatem gladiorum et lancearum ad tranquillitatem convertebat et belli pristinam in aemulos et hostes executionem in pacificos actus arandae et colendae terrae reformabat.246

However, the new law was pointing out clemency and was changing the previous savagery of sword and lance into stillness, and was reforming the

previous conduct of war against rivals and enemies into the peaceful actions of ploughing and cultivating the land.\textsuperscript{247}

Immediately following the quotation from Jer. 31:31–32 he also concludes that the new law is not the same as the one God had already given to the fathers (\textit{novam legem, non talem qualem iam dederat patribus} “a new law, not such as He had already given to the fathers”), and thus not identical with the Torah. It should be noted also that the law is never mentioned in the plural in the present chapter.

The second example, \textit{Against the Jews} 6.1–2, is only an allusion, but it is very clear, as is the discussion about the law:

\textit{... sequitur ut praecedenti tempore datis omnibus istis praeceptis carnaliter populo Israel superveniret tempus, quo legis antiquae et caeremoniarum veterum praecepta cessarent et novae legis promissio et spiritualium sacrificiorum agnitione et novi testamenti pollicitatio superveniret ... quoniam praedicatam novam legem a prophetis praediximus et non talem, qualis iam data esset patribus eorum eo tempore quo eos de terra Aegypti produxit, ostendere et probare debeamus tam illam legem veterem cessasse quam legem novam promissam nunc operari.\textsuperscript{248}}

\textit{... a time would come in which the commands of the ancient law and of the old ceremonies would cease, and the promise of a new law, the acceptance of}

\textsuperscript{247} Translation from Geoffrey Dunn, \textit{Tertullian} (London, 2004), p.74.

spiritual sacrifices, and the offer of the new covenant would come. … because we have proclaimed a new law foretold by the prophets, and not such as had been given already to their ancestors in the time when [God] brought them out of the land of Egypt, it is incumbent upon us to show and prove that, as much as that old law has ceased, so too the promised new law now applies.  

Clearly the law is in the singular and the new one is replacing the old one, but there is no detailed discussion about the content of the new law.

The last example is also a quotation of Jer. 31:31–32 and it is found in Against Marcion 4.1.6: In the close context just before the quotation of the Jeremiah-text Tertullian quotes Isaiah 2:3 prodituram ex Sion legem “the law will go forth from Sion”, and comments upon the law: aliam utique legem “another law, he means”, and nouam legem euangelii “the new law of the gospel”. Just after the quotation of the Jeremiah-text Tertullian comments: … alias leges, aliosque sermones et nouas testamentorum dispositiones a creatore dixit futuras … “… he has said that other laws and other words and new ordainings of testaments would come from the Creator …”. Thus, the new law is mentioned both in singular and plural, but no reference is made to the Jeremiah-text.

Summing up the evidence from Tertullian, it first has to be noticed that it is not clear whether he had a text with the singular or the plural of law. Neither are

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249 Translation from Dunn, Tertullian, p.78.

there any discussions about the singular or plural of the law. It appears to be clear, however, that the new law or laws in the new covenant are not the Torah, but the Gospel.251

2.3.8.2 Cyprian (~258)

Cyprian has two quotations of Jer. 31:33. Both are found in To Quirinius: Testimonies Against the Jews, and both follow the LXX version. The first one, in 1.11, is only commented upon by the heading: Quod dispositio alia et testamentum novum dari haberet “That another dispensation and a new covenant was to be given”, but the headings of the two previous sections give an indication about the opinion of Cyprian: Quod lex prior quae per Moysen data est cessatura esset “That the former law which was given by Moses was to cease”, and Quod lex nova dari haberet “That a new law was to be given”. Apparently, according to Cyprian the new law was not identical to the Torah.252 In the context of the second quotation, in 3.20, there are no discussions of the law.

2.3.8.3 Lactantius (c. 240–c. 320)

In the works of Lactantius there is no quotation of Jer. 31:33, but in the context of a quotation from Jer. 31:31–32, in The Divine Institutes 4.20, there is a discussion of the law:


... uterum scriptura omnis in duo Testamenta diuisa est. illud quod aduentum passionemque Christi antecessit, id est lex et prophetae, uetus dicitur; ea uero quae post resurrectionem eius scripta sunt, nouum Testamentum nominantur. Iudaei ueterum utuntur, nos nouo …

But all Scripture is divided into two Testaments. That which preceded the advent and passion of Christ— that is, the law and the prophets— is called the Old; but those things which were written after His resurrection are named the new Testament. The Jews make use of the Old, we of the New …

Not much can be concluded from this passage, since Lactantius does not discuss Jer. 31:33, but it seems that, according to Lactantius, the Torah was hardly put into the hearts of the Christians.

2.3.8.4 Ambrose (340–397)

Ambrose has two references to Jer. 31:33, both in his commentary on Psalm 118. The first one, Exp. Ps. 118 14.42, is found in his comment on 118:111 (letter 2), and it reads:

recitetur itaque testamentum, et institutiones eius consideremus: “testis est autem nobis et spiritus sanctus; cum enim dixerit: hoc autem testamentum quod testabor ad illos, dicit dominus, dabo leges meas in cordibus eorum, et in …


254 Translation from ANF, vol. 7, p.122.
Therefore let us read the Testament, and let us turn our thoughts to what is laid down in it. “The Holy Spirit is our witness; for he says: ‘This is the covenant I will make with them;’ and the Lord goes on to say: ‘I will put my laws into their hearts, and write them on their minds, and I will never call their sins to mind or their offences’.” I marvel at this eternal testator who has fixed his laws in our hearts and written them on our minds, so that we should think of nothing but the divine precepts and listen to nothing but the oracles of God. He gave grace, transformed nature, and though it is not his nature to forget he blotted out the memory of my sins, and made me mindful of his precepts.  

As can be seen from the plural in the quotation of Jer. 31:33, it follows the LXX version. The “Testament”, which is clear from the Latin text, but not so obvious in the translation, is the new covenant. “The laws”, on the other hand, seem to be the laws of the old covenant, which are written in the hearts of the people. Hence


Ambrose seems to be the first of the Church Fathers to suggest that what is written on the heart of the believers is the Torah.

The second one, *Exp. Ps. 118* 18.37, is found in Ambrose’s comment on 118:142 (letter Ζ):

37. Accipiamus et sic: lex dei non typus, non umbra, non exemplar coelestium, sed ipsa coelestia. unde et scriptum est, quia “finis legis est Christus”. non defectus utique, sed plenitudo legis in Christo est, quia uenit legem non soluere, sed implere. sicut enim testamentum est uetus, sed omnis ueritas in nouo est testament, ita et lex per Moysen data figura legis est uerae. ergo illa lex ueritatis exemplar est; in exemplari enim agni sanguis effunditur, in ueritate Christus immolatur. meritoque apostolus, cum praemisisset uitulorum immolationem secundum legem, adiecit: “necessarium itaque est exemplaria coelestium his Mundari; nam ipsa caelestia melioribus hostiis. non enim in manufacta sancta intrauit Christus, exemplaria uerorum, sed in ipsum caelum, et nunc apparat uultui dei pro nobis.” ut cognoscamus autem quia legem nouam dedit dominus Iesus, habes dicientem spiritum: “hoc autem testamentum quod testabor ad eos, dicit dominus: dando leges meas in cordibus eorum et in sensibus eorum scribam eas et peccati et iniustitiae eorum non ero memor.” ubi ergo remissio, iam non oblatio pro peccatis. quo euidenter ostendit tibi omnem ueritatem euangelio contineri, quia lex dei in sensibus hominum et in cordibus scribitur, non in tabulis lapideis — qui ergo praecepta dei non habent in cordibus suis, non habent legem —, siue quia inueteratur in Iudaeis, renouatur in nobis.\(^{257}\)

\(^{257}\) Petschenig and Zelzer, *Sancti Ambrosii ... Expositio*, p.417.
Let us also take it in this fashion. The Law of God is not a type, not a shadow, not a heavenly pattern; but is itself celestial. Therefore Scripture says: “The end of the Law is Christ.” [Rom. 10:4] Surely there is in Christ no poverty, but the very fulness of the Law; because he came not to destroy but to fulfil the Law [cf. Matt. 5:17]. For just as there is an Old Testament, but all the truth is in the New Testament, so also the law given through Moses is a figure of the law. Therefore the Law given through him is really a pattern of the truth; there in a figure the blood of a lamb is poured out, but in truth Christ is immolated. For this reason the Apostle, having first spoken of the sacrifice of the calves in accordance with the Law, added: “It is necessary for figures of heavenly things to be purified by these; but the heavenly things themselves must be purified by better victims. Christ did not enter into a sanctuary made by hands, an image of the true sanctuary, but into heaven itself; and now appears before the face of God on our behalf.” [Heb. 9:23–24] So that you may know that the Lord Jesus has given a new law, you have the Holy Spirit saying to you: “‘This is the testament that I make to them,’ says the Lord: ‘I will give my laws in their hearts, I will write them on their minds, and I will not remember their sins and offences’.” Where there is remission, there is no longer sacrifice for sins. We can see clearly that all truth is contained in the Gospel. God’s law is written on the minds of men and in their hearts, not on tablets of stone, therefore those who do not have God’s precepts in their hearts do not have the Law. The Law that grew old in the Jews, is renewed in us.258

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Again Ambrose follows the LXX version with the laws in the plural, but as in the previous example he makes no use of the plural in his interpretation of the text. However, the comment is quite detailed and clear, and hence it is possible to make the following observations. The law of the old covenant, that is the Torah, is put into the hearts of the new covenant people. Moreover, there is actually given a new law in the new covenant, which can be found in the Gospel. This new law does not replace the law of the old covenant, though, but it is a complementary law, which is given to fulfil the law, which is made clear through the reference to Matt. 5:17. Hence, in the new covenant the Torah is put into the hearts of the people, and in addition to that the fulfilment of the law is given in the law of the Gospel, which is also put into the hearts of the believers.

2.3.8.5 Optatus Milevitanus (ca. 370)

Optatus has one quotation in the seventh book of his work Against the Donatists, 7.1.19–21:

19. Denique cum uideret Deus et a Moyse legis tabulas fractas et arcam hostibus derelictam et post traditionem Baruch librum legis et incisum esse et combustum, indicauit prouidentiam suam et promisit se legem iam non in tabulis scribere nec in libris, sed in ipso interiori homine, hoc est in mente et in corde uniuscuiusque credentis; quomodo scripserat in corde Noe, Abrahæ, Isaac et Iacob et caeterorum patriarcharum. 20. Quos constat legitime sine lege uixisse, quam rem probat et beatus apostolus Paulus dicens: “Scripta non atramento, sed spiritu Dei uiui, non in tabulis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus.” Post legem a Moyse fractam et a filiiis Israhel hostibus derelictam et
Indeed, when God saw that Moses had shattered the tablets and that the ark had been left to the enemy, and that the book of the Law, after being handed over by Baruch, had been cut up and burnt, he displayed his providence and promised that he would now write the law not on tablets nor in books, but in the very inner man, that is in the mind and heart of every single believer, as he had written it in the heart of Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the other patriarchs, who are well-known to have lived lawfully without the Law. This the blessed apostle Paul proves, saying: written not by ink, but by the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of fleshly hearts. After the Law, before the Christian times, had been shattered by Moses and left to the enemy by the children of Israel, and cut up and burnt when Baruch offered it to King Jehoiachin, God through his prophet showed where he was later going to

259 Text from Mireille Labrousse, Optat de Milève: Traité contre les donatistes. T. 2, Livres III à VII (Paris, 1996), p.202. It should be noted that several scholars, e.g., Mark Edwards, Optatus: against the Donatists (Liverpool, 1997), ppXVI–XVIII, have discussed the authenticity of the seventh book of De Schismate Donatistarum Adversus Parmenianum. However, that discussion is far beyond the scope of the present investigation.
write the law better, saying: “Since this is my testament, which I shall dispense to the house of Israel and the house of Judah, and after those days, says the Lord, giving my laws I shall write them in their heart and in their minds.” He made this promise long since and recently fulfilled it in Christian times.\textsuperscript{260}

The quotation is following the LXX version, and at first sight, it seems as if, according to Optatus, it is the Torah which is put into the hearts of people in the quotation from Jeremiah, since this is what he actually writes, and since he is using the singular. However, this might be a hasty conclusion. The book handed over by Baruch was, according to Jer. 36:27, not the Law (Torah), but an early version of the book of Jeremiah, and what is referred to by Paul in 2 Cor. 3:3 is hardly the Torah. Consequently, it is not totally clear what is the opinion of Optatus. Anyhow, it is evident that he makes no use of the singular or plural in his discussion of the passage.

2.3.8.6 Jerome (350–420)

Jerome has three quotations of Jer. 31:33, but the first example here is a discussion of the law in the context of a quotation of Jer. 31:31–32 in one of his letters to Augustine, viz., \textit{Epistula} 112.14:

\begin{quote}
Pro Legis gratia quae praeteriit, gratiam evangeli accepius permanetem ; et pro umbris et imaginibus ueteris instrumenti, ueritas per Iesum Christum facta est. Ieremias quoque ex persona Dei uaticinatur : “Ecce dies ueniunt, dicit
\end{quote}

Dominus, et consummabo domui Israhel, et domui Iuda testamentum nouum: non secundum testamentum quod disposui patribus eorum, in die quando adprehendi manum eorum, ut educerem eos de terra Aegypti.” Obserua quid dicat, quod non populo gentilium, quo ante non fecerat testamentum; sed populo Iudaeorum, cui legem dederat per Moysen, testamentum nouum euangeli repromittat: ut nequaquam uiuant in uetustate litterae, sed in nouitate spiritus.261

Instead of the grace of the law, which came first, we have received the grace of the gospel which is everlasting, and instead of the shadows and types of the Old Testament, truth has come through Jesus Christ. Jeremiah also prophesied in the name of God, when he said, “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will fulfil for the house of Israel and the house of Judah a new testament, not like the testament which I gave to their fathers on the day when I took their hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt.” Notice what he says: he promises the new testament of the gospel not to Gentile nations with whom he had not previously made a testament, but to the Jewish people, to whom he had granted the law through Moses so that they would not live according to the old letter, but in the newness of the spirit.262


262 Translation from Carolinne White, The correspondence (394–419), between Jerome and Augustine of Hippo (Lewiston, 1990), p.127.
From the context both before and after the quotation it is very clear that for Jerome the law given by Moses has no part in the new covenant, an opinion that seems to be part of his controversy with Augustine at this point.

In his commentary on Isaiah Jerome has two quotations, which both follow the LXX version. In the first, a comment on Is. 51:7, Jerome states:

Qui supra dixerat: “Lex a me egredietur, et iudicium meum in lucem gentium,” nunc ad eosdem loquitur, qui sciant iudicium eius, et legem illius habent in cordibus suis, ut omnia cum iudicio faciant, et habeant legem quam per Hieremiam Dominus pollicetur, dicens: “Statuam testamentum nouum, non iuxta testamentum quod disposui patribus eorum, sed statuam testamentum, dans leges meas in mentibus eorum. Et super cor eorum scribam eas; et ero eorum Deus, et ipsi erunt populus meus.” Vt nequaquam uiuant iuxta litteram, sed iuxta spiritum, instaurantes naturalem legem in cordibus suis, de qua scribit et apostolus: “Cum enim gentes, quae non habent legem, naturaliter ea quae legis sunt faciunt; isti legem non habentes, sibi ipsi sunt lex, qui ostendunt opus legis scriptum in cordibus suis.” De qua lege significatur in psalmo: “Os iusti meditabitur sapientiam, et lingua eius loquetur iudicium. Lex Dei eius in corde illius; et non supplantabuntur gressus eius.”

He who said above: “… a law will go out from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples” [Is. 51:4] now says to them, who know his justice and have his law

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in their hearts, so that they may do everything with judgement, and have the law, which the Lord promises through Jeremiah saying: “I will establish a new covenant, not like the covenant which I made with their fathers, but I will establish a covenant putting my laws in their minds and I will write them on their heart; and I will be their God and they will be my people”, that no one may live according to the letter, but according to the Spirit, executing the natural law in their hearts, about which the apostle also writes: “When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts.” [Rom. 2:14–15] About this law it is made clear in the Psalm: “The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom, and their tongues speak justice. The law of their God is in their hearts; their steps do not slip.” [Ps. 36:30–31].

As can be seen, although the quotation has laws in the plural, Jerome always uses law in the singular in his discussion. Thus it is evident that he does not use the plural in his argument. It also appears to be clear that the law or laws do not refer to the Torah. In the second, a comment on Is. 54:11–12, there are no comments on the laws.264 The last quotation, in Adversus Jovinianum 2.27, has no discussion about the law, but is clearly following the MT version. Hence, as noticed by Schenker,265 Jerome apparently made use of both versions.

264 Text in Adriaen and Morin S. Hieronymi, p.613.
265 Schenker, Das Neue, pp.81–82.
2.3.8.7 *Augustine of Hippo (354–430)*

Augustine is the Latin Church Father who most frequently refers to Jer. 31:33, namely, in the text *The Spirit and the Letter*. This text also contains a very detailed discussion on the subject of the law, especially the difference between the law of the new covenant and the law of the old covenant. Thus the text gives close information about Augustine’s opinion about the law, and, what is especially interesting for the present investigation, if the different versions of the text influenced his interpretation of the text in any way. Therefore, this text will be the subject of a more detailed investigation.

The aim of Augustine’s work *The Spirit and the Letter* is said to be the interpretation of 2 Cor. 3:6 “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”. In particular, Augustine wants to defend his opinion that it is possible for a person, with the help of the Holy Spirit to live without sin, that is, according to the law, although this has not been, is not, and will not be, achieved by anyone except by Christ himself. In chapter 20 Augustine declares that:

… non in eo nos diuinitus adiuuari ad operandam iustitiam, quod legem deus dedit plenam bonis sanctisque praeeptis, sed quod ipsa uoluntas nostra, sine

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... we are helped by God to act with righteousness, not insofar as God gave us a law full of good and holy commandments, but insofar as our own will, without which we can do nothing good, is helped and raised up through the gift of the Spirit of grace. Without this help that teaching is the letter that kills, ...\(^{267}\)

The main question for the present investigation, however, is not the vexed discussion about grace and law or about spirit and letter, but what the law refers to, and how that could have been affected by Augustine’s use of any of the versions of the Jeremiah-text.

At the end of chapter 32, immediately before the first quotation from Jer. 31:33 in chapter 33, Augustine makes a very similar statement to the one quoted above:

\(^{267}\) Cf. chapter 15: *non itaque iustificati per legem, non iustificati per propriam voluntatem, sed “iustificati gratis per gratiam ipsius;” non quod sine voluntate nostra fiat, sed voluntas nostra ostenditur infirma per legem, ut sanet gratia voluntatem et sana voluntas impleat legem non constituta sub lege nec indigens lege.* “They were not, then, justified by the law; they were not justified by their own will, but ‘gratiously justified by his grace.’ It is not that this comes about without our will; rather, the law shows that our will is weak so that grace may heal our will and so that a healthy will may fulfill the law, without being subject to the law or in need of the law.”
… ad hoc se conuertat, ut dicat ideo sine operatione gratiae dei nos iustos esse non posse, quia legem dedit, quia doctrinam instituit, quia bona praeccepta mandauit. illa enim sine adiuuante spiritu procul dubio est littera occidens; cum uero adest uiuificans spiritus, hoc ipsum intus conscriptum facit diligi, quod foris scriptum lex faciebat timeri.

… the reason we cannot be righteous without the grace of God is that he gave us the law, that he provided us with teaching, that he imposed the good commandments. For all that is undoubtedly the letter that kills, if the Spirit does not provide help. But when the life-giving Spirit is present, he makes us love the very same thing, now written within, which the law made us fear, when it was written exteriorly.

Thus, when the Jeremiah-text is introduced for the first time by Augustine, it is very clear that there is no change of law, but rather a change of ability to fulfil the law by the aid of the Spirit, and that the law that is fulfilled always refers to the Torah in one way or the other. After a short introductory comment in chapter

268 Cf. chapter 22: *Quid igitur interest? breuiter dicam. quod operum lex minando imperat, hoc fidei lex credendo impetrat. illa dicit: “Non concupisces”; ista dicit, “cum scirem quia nemo esse potest continens, nisi deus det, et hoc ipsum erat sapientiae, scire cuius esset hoc donum, adii dominum, et deprecatus sum.” “What then is the difference? I will explain it briefly. What the law of works commands by its threats the law of faith obtains by its faith. The former says, ‘You shall not desire’; the latter says, ‘Since I knew that no one can be continent unless God grants this and to know from whom this gift comes was itself the mark of wisdom, I went to the Lord and pleaded with him.’”; chapter
33: *Inspice hoc paululum et in eo testimonio quod per prophetam de hac re praeclarissimum edictum est* “Examine this teaching for a little while in the testimony which the prophet stated with perfect clarity on this point:” the first quotation of the Jeremiah-text in *The Spirit and the Letter* is given, and the quotation covers the whole Jeremiah-text, which clearly follows the LXX version in every respect, i.e., Israel did not continue in the covenant (*non perseuerauerunt in testamento*), the Lord rejected them (*neglexi eos*), and the laws are given in the plural (*leges*).

The next reference discussing the law or laws is found in chapter 35. After quoting Jer. 31:33 Augustine adds 2 Cor. 3:3, which, according to Augustine, is done because “he [Paul] had the prophecy in mind, when he said, *not on stone tablets, but on tablets of flesh, your hearts.* For that prophecy, in which the New

24: *porro autem praecepta ipsa tam utilia facienti atque salubria, ut nisi quis ea fecerit uitam habere non possit.* “But the commandments themselves are for one who observes them so useful and conducive to salvation that one can possess life only by observing them”; and chapter 35 *Ergo illud uetus erat, quia hoc nouum est. unde igitur illud uetus, hoc nouum, cum lex eadem inpleatur per testamentum nouum, quae dixit in uetere: “non concupisces?”* “The former [testament], then, was old, because the latter [testament] was new. But why was the former old and the latter new, though the same law is fulfilled by the New Testament which in the Old commanded, You shall not desire?”
Testament was promised by name, said, *I will write them in their hearts.*" In chapter 36 Augustine discusses the nature of the laws written in the hearts of the people:

Quid sunt ergo leges dei ab ipso deo scriptae in cordibus nisi ipsa praesentia spiritus sancti, qui est digitus dei, quo praesente diffunditur caritas in cordibus nostris, quae plenitudo legis est et finis praecepti? … nunc ipsius cordis bonum promittitur, mentis bonum, spiritus bonum, hoc est, intelligibile bonum, cum dicitur: “dans leges meas in mente eorum et in cordibus eorum scribam eas.” unde significavit eos non forinsecus terrentem legem formidaturos, sed intrinsecus habitantem ipsam legis iustitiam dilecturos.

What then are the laws of God that are written by God himself on our hearts but the very presence of the Holy Spirit? He is the finger of God; by his presence love is poured out in our hearts, the love which is the fulfilment of the law and the goal of the commandment. … Now we are promised the good of the heart, the good of the mind, the good of the Spirit, that is, the intelligible good, when it says, Putting my laws in their mind, I will also write them in their hearts. By this he signified that they would not fear the law that strikes terror from outside, but that they would love the righteousness of the law that dwells within.

It is clear from the text that Augustine follows the LXX version, both when he refers to the text and when he quotes it, but it is not totally evident whether he has

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"… quia istam intuebatur prophetiam, cum diceret, ‘non in tabulis lapideis, sed in tabulis cordis carnalibus,’ quoniam hic dictum est: ‘in cordibus eorum scribo eas’ …"
been influenced by the plural of the LXX version in his interpretation of the “laws” of the text. However, this does not seem to be the case, since he refers both to the external law and to the internal law in the singular, and, as discussed above, these laws both appear to refer to the Torah in one way or the other. Anyhow, there is no discussion of the plural or singular of *lex*, or any indication that Augustine made any use of the plural of the LXX version.

Augustine comes back to the question about the law in chapter 42. At the beginning of this section on the law Augustine refers to Jer. 31:33, but without actually quoting the text:

… leges suas daturus esset deus in mentem eorum, qui pertinerent ad hoc testamentum, et eorum scripturus in cordibus …

God would place his laws in the minds of those who belonged to this testament and would write it in their hearts …

Since Augustine is apparently not quoting but alluding to a text quoted earlier, there can hardly be any doubt that from Augustine’s point of view Jer. 31:33 had the plural of *lex*, since even when he only refers to the text, without actually quoting it, he gives the laws in the plural. A little later in the same chapter it is also made clear that both the *lex* of the Old Testament and the *lex* of the New Testament refer to the same law:

cum igitur haec appareat distantia ueteris et noui testamenti, quod lex ibi in tabulis, hic in cordibus scribitur, ut quod ibi forinsecus terret, hic delectet
The difference, then, between the Old and the New Testament is seen to be this: in the former the law is written on tablets, in the latter upon hearts, so that what in the former struck fear from without might in the latter produce delight within. In the former one became a transgressor because of the letter that kills; in the latter one becomes a lover because of the Spirit that gives life.”

Although Augustine has the law in the plural in his quotation from Jer. 31:33, it is referred to in the singular in the discussion of the law.

In chapter 43 Augustine introduces another discussion of the law referring to Rom. 2:14–15, where it is said that the Gentiles have the law written in their hearts. Here Augustine argues that not all Gentiles have the law written in their hearts, but only the Gentiles who believe in Jesus Christ:

44 … profecto ad evangelium pertinent gentes, quibus lex in cordibus scripta est; eis quippe credentibus uirtus dei est in salutem.

The Gentiles who have the law written in their hearts surely belong to the gospel; for these people who believe, it is the power of God for salvation.

270 Cf. chapter 48: *illa differentia ... qua distat a uetere testamentum nouum, eo quod per nouum scribitur lex dei in corde fidelium, quae per uetus in tabulis scripta est.* “that wide difference … which separates the new covenant from the old, and which lies in the fact that by the new covenant the law of God is written in the hearts of believers, whereas in the old it was inscribed on tables of stone.”
Augustine also argues that the reason for “those who observe the law” to observe it is that they have been justified, and thus it is written “those who observe the law will be justified”:

45 sed sic intelligendum est “factores legis iustificabuntur”, ut sciamus aliter eos non esse factores legis, nisi iustificantur, ut non iustificatio factoribus accedat, sed ut factores iustificatio praecedat. … factores enim legis utique iusti sunt.

We must rather understand, Those who observe the law will be justified so that we realize that they fulfilled the law only because they are justified. Thus justification does not follow upon the observance of the law; rather, justification precedes the observance of the law. … After all, those who observe the law are certainly righteous.”

In the next example Augustine introduces the section with two allusions to Jer. 31:33 in chapter 43, and again the text is following the LXX version with lex in the plural, thus making it even clearer that the law of the Old Testament is the same as the law in the New:

… leges suas dominus in cordibus populi sui se scripturum esse promisit …

deus hinc discernit a uetere testamento nouum, quod in uetere legem suam scripsit in tabulis, in nouo autem scripsit in cordibus …

… the Lord promised to write his laws in the hearts of his people … God distinguishes the New from the Old Testament inasmuch as in the Old
Testament he wrote his law on tablets, while in the New he wrote it upon hearts…

At the end of this section Augustine again alludes to Jer. 31:33 in chapter 46: *dixit leges suas se scripturum in cordibus eorum* “he said that he would write his laws in their hearts”, and comments upon the relation between the passage from Romans and Jer. 31:33:

… potiusque concordat prophetico etiam hoc apostolicum testimonium, ut hoc sit pertinere ad testamentum nouum legem dei habere non in tabulis, sed in cordibus scriptam, hoc est intimo affectu iustitiam legis amplecti …

Moreover, the testimony of the apostle is in better agreement with the statement of the prophet that belonging to the New Testament means that they have the law of God written, not on tablets, but in their hearts, that is, that they embrace the righteousness of the law with an interior love …

Augustine concludes the section with yet another allusion to Jer. 31:33, which is combined with Rom. 5:5 and 13:10:

… deus leges in mentem ipsorum et in cordibus eorum scribit eas digito suo, spiritu sancto, quo ibi diffunditur caritas, quae legis est plenitudo.

God puts the laws into their minds and writes them on their hearts by his finger, the Holy Spirit, who pours out in their hearts the love which is the fulfilment of the law.

Here too it is clear that Augustine uses the LXX version, but makes no explicit
use of the plural of lex, which is also true of the last allusion to Jer. 31:33 in The Spirit and the Letter, which is found in chapter 49: … ut scribantur leges dei in cordibus hominum ... “… God’s laws were to be written in men’s hearts ...”.

Summing up this discussion of The Spirit and the Letter it should be noticed that the law is discussed extensively throughout the text and Jer. 31:33 is used explicitly. Therefore, the text gives a very good insight into Augustine’s opinion about the law both in the new and in the old covenant, and a number of distinctive features should be noted. First, Augustine is always referring to Jeremiah, never to Hebrews. Second, when quoting or referring to the law in Jer. 31:33, Augustine is always using the LXX version, i.e., the law is always given in the plural. Third, when referring to the law in his discussions, on the other hand, he always refers to it in the singular. Even in a discussion following immediately after a quotation with the law in the plural, he refers to the law in the singular in his discussion. Apparently, the plural of law which Augustine had in his scriptural text never was an issue to him, and therefore, he never discussed the plural in his exegesis either. Consequently, it is not very surprising to see that for Augustine the law, referred to either in the singular or the plural is always the same both in the new and the old covenant, namely the Torah. Augustine never discusses another or new law, but for Augustine it is the same law, which by the aid of the Spirit is put into the hearts of the people. As a consequence of this reception of the law into the heart of the people, the people not only are eager to do what is prescribed in the law, but this is also made possible by the aid of the Spirit. However, although the reception of the spirit makes the people eager to fulfil the law, and also enables
them to fulfil it, because of the presence of the old nature, it is not possible for anyone to fulfil the law.\textsuperscript{271}

2.3.8.8 \textit{Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390–c. 455)}

Prosper of Aquitaine has one quotation from Jer. 31:33 in his work \textit{The Call of All Nations} 1.8:

\begin{quote}
Unde adulteram ex legis constitutione lapidandam, et veritate liberavit, et gratia; cum executores praecepti de conscientiis territi, trementem ream sub illius judicio reliquiessent qui venerat quaerere et salvum facere quod perierat; et ideo inclinatus, id est, ad humana demissus, et in opus nostrae reformationis inflexus, digito scribebat in terram ut legem mandatorum per gratiae decreta vacuaret, et ostenderet se esse qui dixerat, Dabo leges meas in sensu ipsorum, et in corde ipsorum scribam eas. Quod utique quotidie facit, dum cordibus vocatorum suam
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{271} According to Schenker, \textit{Das Neue}, p.82, Augustine has a different view which is closer to that of the other Church Fathers: “Wie bei den andern Kirchenvätern ist es für Augustinus ebenfalls Jesus, der Christus, der diese neue Gesetze im neuen Bund bringt.” Adeyemi is of the same opinion as Schenker, \textit{The New Covenant}, p.28, where he, after quoting from \textit{The Sprit and the Letter} 36, concludes: “It seems clear with this statement that Augustine does not identify the New Covenant Torah with the old Mosaic Law but he identifies it as the Holy Spirit.” However, it is very hard, to say the least, to see how these statements by Schenker and Adeyemi can be brought into line with what Augustine writes in the texts quoted above.
inserit voluntatem, et stylo Spiritus sancti quidquid in animae paginis diabolus invidendo falsavit veritas miserando rescribit. 272

That is why the adulterous woman whom the Law prescribed to be stoned, was set free by Him with truth and grace, when the avengers of the Law frightened with the state of their own conscience had left the trembling guilty woman to the judgment of Him who had come to seek and save what was lost. And for that reason He, bowing down—that is, stooping down to our human level and intent on the work of our reformation—wrote with His finger on the ground in order to repeal the Law of the commandments with the decrees of His grace and to reveal Himself as the One who had said, I will give my laws in their understanding and I will write them in their heart. This indeed He does every day when He infuses His will into the hearts of those who are called, and when with the pen of the Holy Spirit the Truth mercifully rewrites on the pages of their souls all that the devil enviously falsified. 273

As can be seen, Prosper uses the LXX version, but he makes no use of the plural in his discussion of the text. On the other hand, it is clear that according to Prosper the laws of Jer. 31:33 do not refer to the Torah.


Leo has one reference to Jer. 31:33, namely in Sermon 95.1, and immediately after quoting Jer. 31:33, which follows the LXX version, Leo concludes:

Qui ergo locutus fuerat Mosi locutus est et apostolis, et in cordibus discipulorum velox scribentis Verbi manus novi Testamenti decretum condedit; nulla ut quondam circumfusa nubium crassitudine, neque per terribiles sonos atque fulgores populo ab accessu montis absterrito, sed patente ad aures circumstantium tranquillitate colloquii: ut per gratiae lenitatem removeretur legis asperitas, et spiritus adoptionis auferret formidinem servitutis.\textsuperscript{274}

He therefore who had spoken to Moses, spoke also to the apostles, and the swift hand of the Word wrote and deposited the secrets of the new covenant in the disciples’ hearts: there were no thick clouds surrounding Him as of old, nor were the people frightened off from approaching the mountain by frightful sounds and lightning, but quietly and freely His discourse reached the ears of those who stood by: that the harshness of the law might give way before the gentleness of grace, and “the spirit of adoption” might dispel the terrors of bondage.\textsuperscript{275}


\textsuperscript{275} Translation from NPNF: Philip Schaff (ed.) \textit{A select library of the Nicene and post-Nicene fathers of the Christian church} (Grand Rapids, 1979), ser. 2, vol. 12, p.203. There is a more recent translation by Jane Freeland and Agnes Conway, \textit{St. Leo the Great: Sermons} (Washington, 1996), which, however, does not render the Latin text accurately.
There can hardly be any doubt that according to Leo what was written in the hearts was not the Torah, but the teaching of Jesus. However, he does not refer to the plural of the laws in any way in his argument.

2.3.8.10 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church

First it can be noticed that there seems to be no awareness of different versions of the text. As could have been expected, the Latin Fathers follow the LXX version until the translation of Jerome and after the Vulgate came into existence both versions appear to have been used during the period covered by the present investigation, i.e., until approximately 500 CE. Moreover, the interpretation of the law or laws among the Latin Fathers seems to be somewhat more differentiated than among the Greek Fathers. Some Fathers tend to interpret the law as referring to the Torah, while other Fathers seem to have an interpretation which is closer to the interpretation of the Greek Fathers, i.e., the law or laws refer to something different from the Torah, namely the New Testament or parts of it. Most important, however, is the fact that the Latin Church Fathers have made no use of the singular or the plural of law in their interpretation of it in Jer. 31:33.

2.3.9 Jer. 31:33: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context

It is clear that there are no traces of the LXX version in any of the early Jewish sources. Neither are there any indications whatsoever that there is an

interpretation of the singular Torah in any other way than referring to the Pentateuch. Hence, there is nothing in the material that even remotely suggests that the author of Hebrews might have been able draw on some pre-Christian interpretation, in which the law is interpreted as something other/more than the Torah. On the other hand, in the ongoing debate between the early post Second Temple Jewish community and the early Church, it is unlikely that any Jewish sources would promote such an understanding of the law. Hence, given the very scarce material, the possibility of an early Jewish origin cannot be altogether excluded. Moreover, it is very clear that in both the early Greek and Latin Church the common interpretation of the law or laws was as something other/more than the Torah (for example, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Athanasius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius). Only among the later Church Fathers, such as Augustine, and perhaps Cyril and Theodoret, is there an interpretation of the law or laws as the Torah. However, the interpretation among the early Church Fathers is not as homogeneous as the interpretation in the early Jewish community about what is meant by the law or laws. What is very clear, though, is that law or laws in one way or the other refer to the teaching of Jesus, and in a few cases the teaching of his apostles. It should also be noticed that the focus does not seem to be the abrogation or replacement

276 It should also be noticed that the use of the rare plural of ἐννόμος is just such a peculiarity in the text that could have promoted a “narrative expansion found in rabbinic midrash” (Kugel, In Potiphar's house, p.247). Cf. Adeyemi, The New Covenant, pp.80–84.
of the law, but the importance of the teaching of Jesus. Hence, there were two distinctly different interpretations of the law or laws. The first one, using the terminology of Joslin, could be called the “direct-correspondence” view, and it is found in the early Jewish community. The other one, found in the earliest Church, in one way or the other interprets the law or laws as the teaching of Jesus. It could also be noticed that there seem to be no interpretations of the kind suggested by Joslin with a Christologized law. Further, there is no indication whatsoever that the plural of the LXX version was used by any of the early Church Fathers in their interpretation of the text.

2.4 Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16

2.4.1 Introduction

This survey of the interpretation of Jer. 31 and Hebrews 8 and 10 concerning the understanding of the law or laws of the quotation led to the conclusion that there is no consensus among scholars about how the law or laws should be interpreted. It was concluded also that there are a number of unanswered questions about the important quotation from Jer. 31 that have to be addressed before the text can be properly interpreted. When examining the reception of the text in the period between its composition and ca. 500 CE it was concluded that there existed two distinctly different interpretations of the law or laws. One was found in the early Jewish community, which interpreted the law (singular) as referring to the
Pentateuch. The other one was found in the earliest Church, which interpreted the laws (plural) as the teaching of Jesus in one way or the other.

2.4.2 The Interpretation of Jer. 31:33 in Heb. 8:10 and 10:16

It is clear that there are no traces of the LXX version in any of the early Jewish sources investigated above (except, of course, the Septuagint itself!). It is equally clear that the interpretation by the author of Hebrews has very little to do with the interpretation found in the early Jewish texts. Consequently, if the author of Hebrews actually made a conscious choice to use the LXX version and based his interpretation on that version, the Jewish sources are not very likely to give any clues to how he interpreted Jer. 31. This could indicate that the interpretation found in Hebrews is one different from the one found in the early Jewish community. It should be noted, though, that the Septuagint is in fact a Jewish translation, and that the plural of law in Jer. 31, whether a rendering of a Vorlage with ἡσυχή in the plural or not, was read and most certainly interpreted in the early Jewish community. Unfortunately, no such interpretation has survived. However, there actually exists one very early interpretation of one of the very rare examples of the plural ἀδικήματα/νόμοι, which has been preserved in the Sifra on Lev. 26:46.277

In this quite influential tradition the plural is interpreted as the written and oral

277 Sifra, Behukotai 2, 112c. For further references and a discussion of the oral Torah, see Rimon Kasher, ‘The Interpretation of Scripture in Rabbinic Literature’ in Mulder (ed.), Mikra, pp.550–552.
Torah. Such an interpretation in combination with the interpretation of Jesus as the promised prophet in Deut. 18:15, which can be found, for example, in Acts 3:22–23 and 7:27, would most certainly have furthered the interpretation of the plural νόμους of Jeremiah found in the earliest Church, especially taking Deut. 18:18–19 into account:

... καὶ δόσω τὸ ῥῆμά μου ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαλήσει αὐτοῖς καθότι ἢν ἐντείλομαι αὐτῷ· καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, δς ἐάν μὴ ἀκούσῃ ὅσα ἐὰν λαλήσῃ ὁ προφήτης ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐγὼ ἐκδίκησο εξ αὐτοῦ.

Further, as noted by Renaud the plural νόμοι was frequently used in the Second Temple Jewish community, and that too could have furthered an interpretation of the plural other than the Torah. Moreover, given the very unanimous view in the earliest Church that the law or laws refer to something other than the Torah, namely the teaching of Jesus, it is very unlikely that the author of Hebrews was unaware of such an interpretation. That Hebrews itself in fact is the source for this interpretation is less likely for a number of reasons. First, the interpretation of “laws” in Hebrews, as can be seen in the discussion above, is not very clear, and hence the very unanimous interpretation in the early Church hardly has originated with Hebrews. Second, there are no traces of influence from Hebrews in the argumentation for this interpretation. Third, Hebrews does not seem to have been very widespread or read in the earliest Church, as can be seen from the quotations, that are almost exclusively taken directly from Jeremiah and not from Hebrews.

Fourth, the interpretation of Jer. 31:33 in the earliest Church seems to be confirmed by other passages as well, although not referring to Jer. 31:33, for example, Melito of Sardis (writing c. 160–180) *Hom. On the Pascha* 39–40:

καὶ γὰρ ἡ τοῦ κυρίου σωτηρία καὶ ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ λαῷ προετυπώθη, καὶ τὰ τοῦ εὐαγγέλιου δόγματα ὑπὸ τοῦ νόμου προεκπρύχθη. ἐγένετο οὖν ὁ λαὸς τύπος προκεντήματος καὶ ὁ νόμος γραφή παραβολῆς· τὸ δὲ εὐαγγέλιον δύηγμα νόμου καὶ πλήρωμα, ἢ δὲ ἐκκλησία ἀποδοχεῖον τῆς ἀληθείας.279

For the very salvation and reality of the Lord were prefigured in the people [of Israel], and the decrees of the gospel were proclaimed in advance by the law. The people then was a model by way of preliminary sketch, and the law was the writing of a parable; the gospel is the recounting and the fulfilment of the law and the church is the repository of the reality.280

The relation between the old and the new law can also be seen in another example found in Tertullian (c. 160–220) *On Monogamy* 7–8:281

… plane et nos sic dicimus dececssisse legem, ut onera quidem ejus, quae secundum sententiam Apostolorum nec Patres sustinere voluerunt, concesserint; quae vero ad justitiam spectant, non tantum reservata permaneant, verum et

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... plainly do we too assert that the law has deceased in this sense, that its burdens — according to the sentence of the apostles — which not even the fathers were able to sustain, have wholly ceased: such (parts), however, as relate to righteousness not only permanently remain reserved, but even amplified; in order, to be sure, that our righteousness may be able to redound above the righteousness of the scribes and of the Pharisees. ... Turning now to the law, which is properly ours— that is, to the Gospel ...  

That the interpretation was known to the author of Hebrews does not, of course, mean that this is also the interpretation of the author of Hebrews, but taking the whole of Hebrews into consideration, there actually seem to be traces of this interpretation elsewhere in Hebrews too. In Heb. 1:1–2 the author introduces a lengthy section about the Son’s superiority by pointing out that what was spoken by the Son is better, or at least beyond, what was spoken by the prophets, among whom Moses was the foremost. Joslin also notes that “God has granted further revelation and completion in his son (1:1-2)”, but he makes no connection to the νόμος of 8:10. In Heb. 2:2–3 the author of Hebrews states that:

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εἰ γὰρ ὁ δι᾿ ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγένετο βέβαιος καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ
παρακοή ἠλαβεν ἕνδικον μισθαποδοσίαι, πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικάτης
ἀμελήσαις σωτηρίας, ήτις ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσαι διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν
ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη

There can hardly be any doubt that in the eyes of the author what is said through
Jesus is superior to what was said through Moses. After these two introductory
statements about the Torah and the teaching of Jesus, it is hard to see, when
turning to the quotation from Jeremiah 31, why the author should want to exclude
the words of Jesus from what is put into the heart of the new covenant people.
From this observation it does not necessarily follow that in the mind of the author
of Hebrews the teaching of Jesus was in fact included in what was put into the
heart of the people. However, the use of the version of Jeremiah 31 with the law
in the plural does encourage such an understanding of the text, while the version
with law in the singular is less likely to promote this kind of interpretation.
Another detail that might indicate a similar attitude by the author of Hebrews is
the fact that the quotation discussed in the following chapter ends just before the
mention of the law (Heb. 10:8). Joslin also notes that:

“In addition, one might suggest that the commandments of Jesus are meant by
‘νόμους on the heart.’ But this is not persuasive since “Jesus as law-giver” is
quite foreign to this context. God the Father (YHWH) is the covenant-maker in
Hebrews, and it is his commandments that are to be kept.”

However, a number of observations call his conclusion into doubt. First, according to the author of Hebrews it is God who spoke by the son in Heb. 1:2, and just as God gave his word through Moses he gave what is said about τηλικαύτης ... σωτηρίας through Jesus (Heb. 2:3). Second, as could be seen above, Jesus is actually called νομοθέτης in the context of Jeremiah 31 already by Origen (and in other contexts by Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria).286 Moreover, in the Gospels it seems to be clear that the new covenant people should obey/keep the commandments of Jesus: Matt. 28:20 διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα διὰ ἐνετελώμην ώμῖν, and John 14:15 ἐὰν ἀγαπᾶτέ με, τὰς ἐντολὰς τὰς ἐμὰς τηρήσετε.287 Hence, Jesus is hardly called a law-giver by the early Church Fathers because they read Hebrews. Instead the concept of Jesus as giving commandments was widespread in the early Church already before the composition of Hebrews. Consequently, the assumption made above that the teaching of Jesus could have been in the mind of the author of Hebrews, when he quoted Jeremiah 31, seems to be supported by the observation that Jesus at the same time was considered to be a law-giver. Finally, it should be noted that if the interpretation made by the author of Hebrews is different from the one that is found in the earliest Church, it has to be assumed that his interpretation for some reason was abandoned very soon or that it was unique to the author of Hebrews.


2.5 Conclusions

At the time when Hebrews was composed there existed two distinctly different versions of Jer. 31:33 one with the law in the singular, הַרְשָׁם, and one with the laws in the plural, νόμους. The author of Hebrews used the one with the plural. It should be noted that, although there are no Hebrew manuscripts extant with the laws in the plural, it is still supposed in the present study that the Vorlage of νόμους, found in the Greek translation, had הַרְשָׁם in the plural. At the time of the earliest Church there also existed two distinctly different interpretations of the law or laws. One, always with the law in the singular and referring to the Torah, was used in the early Jewish community, the other, with no distinction between the singular and the plural of law, and generally referring to the teaching of Jesus, was used in the earliest Church. Though there is no clear distinction between the singular and plural of law in the earliest Church and though the plural is never stressed in the interpretations, it is not unlikely that the plural of laws in Jer. 31:33 still promoted the interpretation of the law as something other than the Torah. The same is, of course, true of the author of Hebrews, who did not explicitly interpret the quotation from Jeremiah or make any use of the plural of law in his Letter. Still, since it is unlikely that the unanimous interpretation found in the earliest Church was unknown to the author of Hebrews, it is likely that his interpretation had something in common with it, especially taking Heb. 1:1–2 and 2:2–3 into consideration. Thus it is also likely that the author of Hebrews, when quoting the text from Jeremiah, thought the teaching of Jesus to be included in the plural νόμους. Hence, if the assumption is correct, that later sources can tell something
about earlier interpretations, it should follow that the unanimous interpretation of law in the early Church was not in opposition with the interpretation in Hebrews. It should also be noted that only later in the history of the Church the law of Jer. 31:33 was interpreted as the Torah, and, for example by Augustine there is only one law, namely the Torah. Finally, it can be concluded that הָרֹם in the MT version in its original setting in Jeremiah most certainly was interpreted as the Pentateuch, while it is more uncertain how the plural was understood, though it has been argued for other examples of the very rare plural of הָרֹם that it could have been taken as the oral and written Torah. If such an interpretation of Jer. 31:33 was also known to the author of Hebrews, it most certainly could have influenced his understanding of the text in the same direction as is found in the earliest Church. Anyhow, any interpretation of the plural of הָרֹם as the written and oral Torah, especially in combination with the interpretation of Jesus as the promised prophet of Deut. 18:15, would most likely have promoted the interpretation found in the earliest Church.

3.1 Introduction

In the following chapter the difference between the two versions of Psalm 40:7b (39:7b), quoted in Hebrews 10:5, the origin of the difference as well as the later history of Ps. 40:7b, will be discussed. According to Karrer “The quotation from LXX Ps. 39:7–10 in Heb. 10:5–7 gives remarkable insights into the theology of Hebrews and into the textual history of LXX.” 288 Hence it appears to be very suitable for the present investigation. What is noteworthy about this example is its complicated Hebrew text, which allows for a variety of interpretation. Craigie, commenting on the psalm, notes that “The sense of v 7b is difficult … The safest approach is a literal translation, based on the assumption of ancient idiomatic usage of which the precise sense is no longer known.” 289 The LXX version of this text is quoted in Hebrews, and is given a Christological interpretation, based on that version, or as Karrer put it: “LXX Psalm 39 condenses the Christological point of Hebrews.” 290 One consequence of the complicated text of Ps. 40:7b, together with its perfect fit for the argument in Hebrews, has even led some

scholars, for example, Grelot, to believe that the LXX version of the text was fabricated by the author of Hebrews himself.

Though this text, and the difference between the versions appears to have attracted more attention than Jer. 31:33, which was covered in the previous chapter, up to now there appears to be no monograph dealing only with this quotation. One of few who has devoted an article to it is Martin Karrer, who in his 2010 study discusses some theological aspects of the interpretation as well as the text of the quotation. Given the recent date of the article and its detailed discussion, Karrer’s study will be used extensively in the following discussion.

The same holds true for Steyn’s dissertation dealing with the Old Testament quotations in Hebrews, especially taking the problem about the Vorlage into account, as well as the article by Amphoux and Dorival. Besides discussing


294 Amphoux and Dorival, ‘«Des oreilles», pp.315–327.
the text *per se*, the following investigation of Ps. 40:7b will discuss the earliest reception of the text to shed some light on how and why the author of Hebrews quoted the text. It should be noted that there is no discussion extant of Ps. 40:7b pre-dating Hebrews, and that sources later than Hebrews have rarely been taken into account before when investigating the interpretation of Ps. 40:7b in Hebrews.

### 3.2 The Text of Ps 40:7b

#### 3.2.1 Ps. 40:7b and the Differences between the Versions

The focus of the present chapter is the difference between the MT version of Ps. 40:7b, יִלְדָּא דָּתִי יָמָn מָלָא “but you have dug ears for me”, and the LXX version σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι “but a body you have prepared for me”. First of all, however, it is very important to notice that the LXX text of the Göttingen edition was edited by Rahlfs as early as 1931, and that he chose to put ὀρίῳ in his text despite the fact that the three major manuscripts, *Vaticanus*, *Sinaiticus*, and *Alexandrinus*, all have σῶμα.²⁹⁵ Apparently, Rahlfs supposed that the readings of the major manuscripts had been influenced by the text of Hebrews.²⁹⁶ It should also be pointed out that the edition by Rahlfs is only a preliminary edition, and more importantly it was made before the discoveries at Qumran. Most important, however, is probably the discovery of a prehexaplaric papyri, *Papyrus Bodmer 24*,


which contains the reading with σῶμα. Today most Septuagint scholars agree that it is likely that the text of the LXX had σῶμα, and that the reading with ὧτία is an adjustment to a Hebrew text with מַיָּא. It should also be noticed that investigations of the relationship between LXX and NT in major manuscripts show that the text of the LXX has generally not been adjusted according to the readings of the NT. Hence the reading ὧτία, which is found in Rahlfs’ edition, is not followed here, instead the reading with σῶμα is adopted, which is found in almost all MSS, and accepted as the original LXX reading by most current scholars, for instance Karrer and Steyn:

The textual reliability of Hebrews urges the correction of a wide-spread scholarly opinion: σῶμα in Heb 10:5 belongs to the Old Greek, or at least to a wide-spread draft of the LXX in the times of Hebrews (as the best manuscripts of the LXX confirm). Consequently, the revision of the Rahlfs text, which is in the making, should favour σῶμα against Rahlfs, or as a minimum mark the alternative σῶμα besides ὧτία in the ‘Obertext’ (for example by parentheses).

Where Rahlfs’ reconstructed LXX text reads ὧτία (as the MT does), PBod XXIV reads σῶμα – the reading supported in the NT. There are, however, no thorough text critical reasons to accept the reading by Rahlfs. The reading as

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found in PBod XXIV can be assumed as original and is supported by the important LXX witnesses A B (also R). … There certainly seem to be enough external evidence from LXX witnesses that it can be assumed that the text of the author of Hebrews indeed read σῶµα…

As already mentioned the Hebrew expression is difficult, especially the verb כָּפַר (from חפר “to dig”), which seems to make poor sense in this context, and it has no parallels in the Hebrew Scriptures. One alternative reading of the Hebrew text that should be mentioned is the one presented by Dahood who translates “you have made my ears receptive”, reading פָּרַךן (from חפר “to cut, circumcise”) for MT כָּפַר (from חפר “to dig”), and referring to the uncircumcised lips of Ex. 6:12 and the uncircumcised ears of Jer. 6:10. It should be noted, however, that although the reading suggested by Dahood facilitates the awkward Hebrew text, it does not change the meaning of it essentially. As far as the differences between the MT and LXX versions of Ps. 40:7 are concerned there are a number of


301 Attridge, The Epistle, p.274 n.83, compares with Is. 50:5: η άδεια κυρίου ἀνοίγει τὰ ὄτα. Cf. also the Midrash on Ps. 40:7 discussed below.

standard Greek renderings of Hebrew expressions such as θυσίαν of ἀφήνω, ηθολησάς of ἀφήνω, (ὦφία of ἀφήνω according to the edition by Rahlfs), ὀλοκαυτώμα of ἀφήνω, περὶ ἁμαρτίας of ἄφησαν, and ἤπνος of ἄφησαν, but there are also a number of rare renderings. The first one is προσφορά of ἀπήνω, for which one standard translation is θυσία. Actually this is the only example where the term ἀπήνω is rendered by προσφορά, though there are four other examples of the combination of ἀπήνω and ἀπήνω, Is. 19:21; Jer. 17:26; Amos 5:25; Dan. 9:27. The second and main one is the rendering σῶμα of ἀπήνω, which is discussed below.

The third is καταρτίσω of ἀρκεῖον, which is marked with a crux by Hatch and Redpath, which means that the rendering is “not apparent”. This could indicate a different Vorlage, but a consideration of the use of καταρτίζω in the Septuagint might point in a different direction. The verb καταρτίζω is only used in two books in the Septuagint, namely Ezra (7 ex.) and Psalms (10 ex.). Interestingly enough, the translation technique for these two books seems to follow very different patterns. While all seven examples of καταρτίζω in Ezra (4:12, 13, 16; 5:3, 9, 11; 6:14) are renderings of the same root, namely ἄρκειον, the ten examples in Psalms (8:3; 11(10):3; 17(16):5; 18(17):34; 29(28):9; 40(39):7; 68(67):10; 74(73):16; 80(79):16; 89(88):38) are renderings of 8 different Hebrew roots. Given the very wide range of possible Vorlagen of καταρτίζω in Psalms, it is not totally unlikely that the translator of Psalms also chose to use καταρτίζω as a rendering for ἀρκεῖον, or of ἀρκεῖον, as suggested by Dahood.
3.2.1.1 MT version of Ps. 40:7b

The MT version reads יָשַׁלְתָּ בְּרֵעוֹן מָיְאָן כְּדֵי מֶסֶךְ, and there are no variant readings in any Hebrew manuscripts. The rendering ὠτία δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι is found in all later Greek versions of Psalm 40, but, as noted above, most probably not in the original LXX text. It is also found in the Latin rendering aures perfecisti mihi of the LXX text with ὠτία, as well as in the Vulgate of Ps. 40:7b: aures fodisti mihi.

3.2.1.2 LXX version of Ps. 40:7b

The LXX version reads σῶµα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι and is, beside LXX, found in Heb. 10:5 as well as in Latin renderings of Ps. 40:7b and Heb. 10:5: corpus autem aptasti/praeparisti/perfecisti mihi, of which corpus autem aptasti mihi is the one found in the Vulgate of Hebrews.

3.2.2 The Origin of the Versions

The origin of this difference between the MT version, יָשַׁלְתָּ בְּרֵעוֹן מָיְאָן כְּדֵי מֶסֶךְ, and the LXX version, σῶµα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι, is much debated, and there are at least four major contradictory opinions: 303 1. the LXX version represents a translation of a different Vorlage; 2. the LXX version represents a free rendering of the same Vorlage; 3. the LXX version represents a corruption of the original rendering with

Not much has to be said about the first opinion, since there is always a possibility of a different Vorlage, but it should be pointed out that there are no variant readings in any Hebrew manuscripts. It should also be noted, though, that the common assumption that the Hebrew text extant today is identical with the original text cannot be taken for granted, and as long as there is no evidence in favour of any other opinion, the possibility of a different Vorlage should not be excluded.

The second opinion calls for a more detailed discussion. According to Delitzsch מְמִנְנָי is a pars pro toto expression, where the ears, with which the word of God is heard, are a part representing the whole body, with which the obedience to the word of God is realized. The translator of the Hebrew text then rendered מְמִנְנָי with a totum pro parte into σῶμα. Hence the meaning of the LXX is approximately the same as the meaning of MT. Perhaps the rendering into σῶμα was facilitated by the rather awkward Hebrew expression מְמִנְנָי כְּרַכַּה, literally “you dug ears for me”. כְּרַכַּה is rendered by ἔσκαψας by Aquila, which

is close to some kind of standard rendering of ἀνάπλαθε, but Symmachus renders it by κατεσκεύασάς, which is very close to the meaning of κατηρτίσω. Anyhow, as noted above, the verb καταρτίζω is a term used for a wide range of different Hebrew roots in Psalms, and thus it is not very unlikely that the translator of Psalms chose to render ἀνάπλαθε by κατηρτίσω, which made it easier to render χρυσάνθεια by σῶμα. In support of this view other passages have been mentioned (Job 3:17 and Prov. 3:8),305 where σῶμα is used as a metonymy, and others can be mentioned as well: Job 6:4 and 19:26 (only in A and S9). It should be noted, however, that among the interpretations of the MT version of the text, there are no indications of any totum pro parte interpretations of the text.

The third opinion suggests a misreading of ἩΘΕΛΗΣΑΣΩΤΙΑ into ἩΘΕΛΗΣΑΣΣΩΜΑ, which means reading the final Σ of ἩΘΕΛΗΣΑΣ twice and turning ΤΙ into Μ.306 Though this is a very small change of the text, which could well have happened to any scribe, it should be noticed that it totally lacks manuscript support.

The last opinion, that the differences are a product of the author of Hebrews, is perhaps the oldest opinion, already mentioned by Theodore of Mopsuestia commenting upon Ps. 40:7 (for which, see below). Given the findings of a prehexaplaric manuscript with σῶμα and the overwhelming attestation of the


306 This appears to be the opinion of, e.g., Schröger, Der Verfasser, p.175; Ellingworth, The Epistle, p.500, and Steyn, A quest, p.285.
reading with σῶμα in other manuscripts, this view is no longer very common, though it has its advocates\(^{307}\) as well as its opponents.\(^{308}\)

Finally, the opinion put forward by Karen Jobes should be mentioned, although it appears to have attracted few supporters.\(^{309}\) According to Jobes the changes have been made by the author of Hebrews for stylistic reasons to form assonance between σῶμα and ὀλοκαυτόματα.\(^{310}\) However, given the decisive importance of the Old Testament for the author of Hebrews in general and this passage in particular, and given the high esteem in which the Old Testament as the word of God is held by him, it is not very likely that he should have based his argument on a text fabricated by himself, let alone for stylistic reasons.\(^{311}\)

\(^{307}\) E.g., L. Venard, ‘L’utilisation des Psalmes dans l’Épitre aux Hébreux’ in Mélanges E. Podechard: études de sciences religieuses offertes pour son éméritat (Lyon, 1945), p.258; Masséo Caloz, Études sur la LXX Origénienne du Psautier (Fribourg, 1978); Amphoux and Dorival, ‘«Des oreilles».


\(^{309}\) Cf. Guthrie, ‘Hebrews’, p.977, who finds this explanation the “most compelling”.


The lack of hard evidence for any particular view is, of course, the main reason that there still appears to be no agreement among scholars about the origin of the LXX version.\textsuperscript{312} Perhaps it has to be admitted that the origin of the LXX version is beyond recovery, at least as long as there is no solid proof in any particular direction. It should be noted, though, that given the lack of evidence for the origin of the LXX version with σῶμα, and given the fact that the LXX sometimes has preserved a more original reading than the one found in MT (there are no pre-MT Hebrew manuscripts preserved for Ps. 40:7b) the possibility of a different Vorlage perhaps should not be ruled out \textit{a priori}, as pointed out by Fernández Marcos:

\begin{quote}
From the moment that priority of one tradition over the other cannot be proved, one of them cannot be used to correct the other, because it is not always easy to distinguish between textual evolution and the literary evolution of the various traditions.\textsuperscript{313}
\end{quote}

This is especially true if it is taken into account that a text with “ears” does fit the Old Testament context very well, while a text with “body” is quite awkward, and hence is definitely the \textit{lectio difficilior} (for which, see the following section).\textsuperscript{314}

\textsuperscript{312} Cf. Steyn, \textit{A quest}, p.291.

\textsuperscript{313} Fernández Marcos, \textit{The Septuagint}, p.77.

\textsuperscript{314} Cf. Karrer, ‘LXX Psalm’, p.141, who argues that the reading with σῶμα facilitates the awkward Hebrew reading with the reading with the digging of the ears, which hence should be considered as the \textit{lectio difficilior}. Cf. Tov, \textit{Textual criticism}, pp.302–303.
Anyhow, what is most important, as far as the present investigation is concerned, is that there appears to be good reason to believe that the author of Hebrews was not responsible for changing an ordinary insignificant part of a verse into a decisive Christological proof text. Instead it is likely that the awkward text of Ps. 40:7b was adjusted in one way or the other either to the text or to the context in the process of either transmission or translation. That this is actually the case is also indicated by the fact that the text was the object of quite some interpretative activity, which also produced a number of different interpretations (as can be seen below). Consequently, a majority of scholars today agree that the author of Hebrews most probably had a LXX text with σῶμα.\(^{315}\) Karrer, referring to Amphoux and Dorival,\(^ {316}\) also points out that if the original reading in the Septuagint had “ears” it would have been the older form ὀτα, which is the common form in Psalms, rather than the later form ὀτία, which is found in later translations.\(^ {317}\) Further, Karrer notes that the author of Hebrews prefers σάρξ to σῶμα, and hence “we would expect σάρξ, if the author had corrected the text used by him. The language of Hebrews confirms the judgement to assign σῶμα to the LXX text.”\(^ {318}\) It is intriguing, of course, that the reading found in Heb. 10:5 is not attested before the Letter to the Hebrews, but the argument loses some weight, when it is taken into account that the text is not attested at all before the Letter to


\(^{316}\) Amphoux and Dorival, ‘«Des oreilles», pp.315–327.

\(^{317}\) Karrer, ‘LXX Psalm’, p.142.

the Hebrews. This, of course, also means that the oldest manuscript support for Ps. 40:7 is \(\text{𝔓}^{46}\), only contested by Papyrus Bodmer 24, which also has the reading with \(\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\).

3.2.3 The Biblical Contexts of Psalm 40:7b

3.2.3.1 In MT and LXX

The context of the quotation from Ps. 40:7 is, of course, first and foremost the Psalm from which it is taken. Here the Psalmist David praises God for the help he has received and for the help he is convinced that he will receive. According to Craigie “Psalm 40 is commonly identified as a composite psalm containing two originally independent units which have been linked into the present unified whole”. In this context God’s lack of interest in sacrifices is proclaimed. According to Delitzsch:

The connection of the thoughts is clear: great and manifold are the proofs of Thy loving-kindness, how am I to render thanks to Thee for them? To this question he first of all gives a negative answer: God delights not in outward

sacrifices. … God—says David—desires not outward sacrifices, but obedience;
earrs hath he digged for me, i.e. formed the sense of hearing, and given therewith
the instruction to obey.\footnote{322}

This statement, that God lacks interest in sacrifice, might be quite unexpected, especially since “these are offered according to the law” as noticed by the author of Hebrews (Heb. 10:8). Kraus even concludes that “The text obviously has become disordered. … Emendations are of no help.”\footnote{323} And it is here in the middle of this double statement, Ps. 40:7a and c, that the obscure Hebrew expression of Ps. 40:7b is found. Though most commentators admit that the text is at least complicated, and though interpretations vary quite a bit, they generally come to the conclusion that “this strange manner of expression contrasts obedience and sacrifice.”\footnote{324} In the discussion of the awkward expression in the MT version of Ps. 40:7b the wider context of the whole Old Testament is generally taken into account, and a number of Old Testament passages, such as 1 Sam. 15:22; Is. 1:11–12; Ps. 50:8–10, 13, 18, 21; Jer. 6:20; 7:22; Amos 5:22; and Mic. 6:6–8 are often referred to, since they express a similar view about sacrifice. One example of this can be found in Rashi’s commentary on the Psalms:

“Neither sacrifice nor offering did you desire.” HASHEM said: On the day when the Torah was given at Sinai I demonstrated no desire for offerings, as the Prophet says, “For I spoke not to Your fathers nor commanded them on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices. But this I commanded them, saying, ‘Heed My voice and I will be Your God and You will be My people’” (Jeremiah 7:22–23) Furthermore, when I spoke of sacrifice in the Scriptures, I mentioned the subject only in voluntary terms: “When any man of you shall bring an offering unto HASHEM” [of his own free will] (Leviticus 1:2), but I did not impose them upon you as an obligatory burden. Even the דָּם, daily sacrifices and בַּעֲלָהָה, additional sacrifices of the Sabbath and festivals, although obligatory, are merely to cause satisfaction and pleasure to Me and they are a relatively insignificant obligation upon Israel. 325 “You opened for me [my ears].” [I.e.,] You made them hollow for hearing. 326

This context stresses that God takes pleasure rather in obedience than in sacrifice, and it appears to be a fairly widespread idea in the Old Testament, although the opinions differ considerably about God’s actual pleasure in sacrifices (as can be seen in the interpretations of the text below). The σῶμα of the LXX version can,

325 Translation from Avrohom Feuer et al., Tehillim: a new translation with a commentary anthologized from Talmudic, Midrashic and rabbinic sources (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1987), p.503.

of course, also be taken as an instrument of this obedience, especially if it is a *totum pro parte*, as suggested by some scholars. In that case the context of the LXX version is the same as the context of the MT version. This would also fit very well with verse nine: “I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.” It should be noticed here that the focus is God and what is pleasing to him.

If instead σῶμα is taken as a sacrifice as in Hebrews, the more immediate context is almost the same, with God’s lack of interest in sacrifices. However, with σῶμα as a potential sacrifice, it is no longer a contrast between sacrifice and obedience, but between general sacrifices (according to the Law) and a voluntary human sacrifice. Hence the wider context is also very different, and instead of the quite common view that obedience is better than sacrifices, or at least that sacrifice without obedience is not pleasing to God, the view is presented that God prefers human sacrifice to the sacrifices prescribed in the Law. To the latter view there seem to be very few (if any) parallel texts in the Old Testament. On the contrary, there seems to be a general deprecation of human sacrifices (for example, Deut. 18:10, and Jer. 19:5), and in the only Old Testament text where God explicitly asks for a human offering (Gen. 22), he substitutes a ram for Isaac. Hence, there is little in the context, both in the more immediate and in the wider context, that suggests that σῶμα should be taken as indicating a sacrifice; this certainly would be the more difficult interpretation.327 Consequently, if someone

327 Schröger, *Der Verfasser*, pp.174–175.
changed the awkward Hebrew text, with the digging of the ears, in order to facilitate the text, it appears that the change created quite the opposite to what was intended, and produced a text that does not fit the context very well.  

In addition to the common understanding of Ps. 40:7b discussed so far, some alternative interpretations should be pointed out, since they can be found in some of the early Jewish texts discussed below. These interpretations all seem to be based on the fact that the Hebrew phrase יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵנָה יִּנְדֵn is not only difficult semantically, but since the subjects and objects are not explicitly defined, they are open for interpretation as well. Therefore, the ears do not necessarily have to belong to David, but could also belong to God (as in Midrash Tehillim 16:2), the subject of the awkward verb does not have to be David, but could be God (as in Nelson’s translation of Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai), and the indirect object of יִּנְדֵn does not have to be David, but could be God as well (as is also found in Nelson’s translation of Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai).

Consequently, given the awkward Hebrew expression and the undefined subjects and objects, there is good reason to believe that Ps. 40:7b was interpreted extensively, and that several different interpretations could have been known by the author of Hebrews. This is especially true of the MT version of the text, since it fits an interpretative pattern found elsewhere in the Old Testament, focusing on the contrast between sacrifice and obedience.

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Before turning to the context in Hebrews, one detail has to be touched upon, namely whether Psalm 40 was interpreted messianically in the Jewish community before Hebrews or not. Mostly, it is noted that because of the reference to the speaker’s sins in verse 13, it cannot be a messianic Psalm.\footnote{Cf. Riggenbach, Der Brief, p.298 n.9; Delitzsch, Commentar, p.459.} However, Delitzsch is of a different opinion.\footnote{Delitzsch, Commentar, p.460. Cf. Eduard Riehm, Der Lehrbegriff des Hebräerbriefes (Basel, 1867), pp.186–187; Bernhard Weiss, Kritisch exegetisches Handbuch über den Brief an die Hebräer (Göttingen, 1888), p.252; van der Ploeg, ‘L’exégèse’, p.222.} According to him there are three reasons to take the Psalm in a messianic sense: 1. since David is generally a model for the Messiah; 2. since the psalm replaces the sacrifices with the self-sacrifice of Christ (It is not clear how he comes to that conclusion, since his argument seems to be based on the MT version. In the LXX version this interpretation is only made more explicit, according to Delitzsch.); 3. since the psalm has no parallel among the Psalms and its mysterious character reminds of the words of Jesus (John 8:29; 17:6). Others argue that the LXX version could be taken in a messianic sense referring to Christ.\footnote{E.g., Riggenbach, Der Brief, p.298–299, and van der Ploeg, ‘L’exégèse’, p.222.} Michel refers to γέγραπται περὶ ἑμοῦ in Ps. 40:8 as a messianic expression,\footnote{Otto Michel, Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament. Bd 13, Der Brief an die Hebräer (Göttingen, 1966), p.337.} while Grässer points out that the Hebrew version of Ps. 40:8,
is taken in a messianic sense in the Midrash to Ruth 4:15. Finally, there are scholars who deny a messianic sense altogether, as for instance Karrer:

All in all, our psalm does not play a significant role in Christology before Hebrews was written. That is no surprise, because if we read the psalm independently, it does not show any tendency towards Christology.

3.2.3.2 In Hebrews

In Hebrews the more immediate context of Ps. 40:7b is the whole passage quoted from Psalm 40, which has been discussed in the previous section, and where the focus is God’s lack of interest in sacrifices. As was noted above, the reason seems to be that sacrifices without obedience are of no interest to God, and this appears to be confirmed by the parallel texts that are often discussed together with Ps. 40:7. Hence the focus in the Old Testament context is God and what is pleasing to him. In Hebrews, on the other hand, the wider context is the discussion about the imperfect nature of the Old Testament sacrifices and their inability to cleanse the conscience of the believers (Heb. 9:9 and 10:1–2), since the sacrifices cannot take away the sins (Heb. 10:4). Hence the focus is not what is pleasing to God, but how to cleanse the conscience of the believers, since the obedience of the believer is not enough. Had obedience been enough, the sacrifice of Christ would not have been required. Therefore, the common interpretation of Ps. 40:7b would not fit the


context of Hebrews either, and this holds true both for the MT and the LXX version of the text, since both, in the usual understanding of the text, are concerned with the contrasts between sacrifice and obedience.\textsuperscript{335} What the author of Hebrews needed was a text that confirmed his previous statements that Christ has done what was impossible to achieve through the sacrifice of bulls and goats, namely to take away the sins and cleanse the conscience of the believers. Hence the quotation from Psalm 40 is used as a proof-text,\textsuperscript{336} which is underlined by the use of διό to introduce the quotation.\textsuperscript{337} Ellingworth summarizes this context with the following words: “Scripture itself points to Christ’s willing self-sacrifice, rather than the sacrifices of the Mosaic law, as the fulfilment of God’s will.”\textsuperscript{338} Bruce notes the importance of the Septuagint version of the text for the interpretation in Hebrews and concludes:

The spiritual principles which underlay these various types of sacrifice [i.e., the ones mentioned in Ps. 40:7] are fulfilled and transcended in the perfect self-

\textsuperscript{335} Cf. Riggenbach, \textit{Der Brief}, p.301.


offering of Christ. Our author’s contrast is not between sacrifice and obedience, but between the involuntary sacrifice of dumb animals and ‘sacrifice into which obedience enters, the sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being, which is not passive in death, but in dying makes the will of God its own.’ The Septuagint reading, ‘you have fashioned a body for me,’ suggests to our author the incarnation of the Son of God, and the whole passage from Ps. 40 is understood as spoken by him ‘at his coming into the world.’ His incarnation itself is viewed as an act of submission to God’s will and, as such, an anticipation of his supreme submission to that will in death.\textsuperscript{339}

Karrer comes to the same conclusion and stresses the uniqueness of the interpretation of Ps. 40:7b made by the author of Hebrews:

Evidently Hebrews offers an interpretation deviating from the normal sense. … LXX [Ps.] 39 (MT40) illustrates the Christology of Hebrews in an outstanding way. The kind of quotation (a quotation in the mouth of the pre-existent Jesus) is as singular as is the Christological application of the psalm on the whole. Surely, an eschatological use of the Psalms is prepared during the time of Hebrews, and the author of Hebrews participates in the theological developments of the late first century. His reflection, that Jesus comes into the world and gives himself as an offering, belongs in that time (we noticed the connections with Johannine and post-Pauline theology). Nevertheless, the frame and the scope of his psalm-adaption remain unique. Modelled on our psalm, the author transposes the tradition that Jesus came into the world to save sinners …

into his own theology: Jesus Christ, obedient to God, came in the body which God had prepared for him to bring holiness (the possibility to live in God’s presence) to humankind through his offering (Heb 10:5–7 together with 10:10).\textsuperscript{340}

Consequently, there can be no doubt whatsoever which version of the text that was used by the author of Hebrews, since it is totally decisive for the interpretation in Hebrews. This is also underlined by the concluding remark made by the author in verse 10: “And it is by God’s will that we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.” ἐν θελήματι ἡγιασμένοι ἐσμέν διὰ τῆς προσφορᾶς τοῦ σώματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐφάπαξ.

3.2.4 Ps. 40:7b: Summary and Evidence from the Text

The text from Ps. 40:7b quoted in Heb. 10:5 exists in two distinctly different versions, namely the awkward and complicated MT version with בָּשַׁלְתֵּךְ נַחֲלָה, “but you have dug ears for me”, and the LXX version σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι “but a body you have prepared for me”. The difference between the two versions is obvious: while the MT version has “ears” the LXX version has “body”. It was also noted that the subject of נַחֲלָה and object of בָּשַׁלְתֵּךְ were not defined and hence several interpretations of the Hebrew text are possible. Consequently, given the awkward Hebrew expression and the undefined subjects and objects, there is good reason to believe that Ps. 40:7b was interpreted extensively, and that several

\textsuperscript{340} Karrer, ‘LXX Psalm’, pp.136–137; cf. 145.
different interpretations could have been known by the author of Hebrews. Moreover, while the difference between the versions is evident, the origin of it is all but obvious, and a number of suggestions have been presented as to why the versions differ, such as different Vorlage, free rendering, corruption of original Greek rendering, deliberate change of the LXX by the author of Hebrews. Though there is no consensus about the origin of the different versions, it was noted that most scholars today tend to assume that the author of Hebrews had a text which read σῶμα. Further, it was noted that the possibility of a different Vorlage perhaps should not be ruled out a priori. This is especially true if it is taken into account that Ps. 40:7b is found between two statements explicitly calling into question sacrifices prescribed by the Law. Such statements in the Old Testament are usually accompanied by assertions that point out the importance of obedience. Together they form a contrast between sacrifices and obedience, which can be found throughout the Old Testament. Hence, what could have been expected between the two statements calling sacrifices into question is a phrase pointing out the importance of obedience, such as the MT version of Ps. 40:7b with “ears”. The LXX version, on the other hand, with “body” is quite awkward, and does not fit the context very well. If the “body” is taken as a human sacrifice replacing the sacrifices of the Law, the LXX version is not only out of place in the psalm, but in the entire Old Testament, and such an interpretation is not even likely to have been considered. Consequently, from a strict text critical point of view it is definitely more likely that the complicated text between Ps. 40:7a and 40:7c was changed from “body” to “ears” than the other way around, and hence the LXX
version with “body” should be considered as the *lectio difficilior*.\textsuperscript{341} Such a change would be even more likely if the emendation of the Hebrew text, suggested by Dahood, is taken into account. Be that as it may with regard to the origin of the difference between the versions, it is clear that the context both in the Old and the New Testaments stresses God’s lack of interest in sacrifices. In such a context, as already pointed out, the common interpretation of the MT version fits very well, stressing the importance of obedience. The LXX version of the text could, of course, be interpreted in the same way, and fit the context equally well, but if the interpretation of Hebrews is adopted, the LXX version has no counterpart in the Old Testament. In Hebrews, on the other hand, the LXX version is not only convenient, but necessary for the argument that the body of Christ, unlike the sacrifices prescribed in the Law, is able to take away the sins and cleanse the consciences of the believers. Hence it is also evident not only which version was used by the author of Hebrews, but also how it was interpreted. Consequently, the following investigation of the reception of Ps. 40:7b in the early Jewish and Christian literature will focus on how the awkward and ambiguous MT version was interpreted and if and how the interpretations in the early Church has any affinities with the interpretations in the Jewish community.

3.3 The Interpretative Context of the Two Versions of Ps. 40:7b

3.3.1 Introduction
In the following section the reception of Ps. 40:7b in the early Jewish and Christian literature will be discussed, but first it has to be pointed out that the text is never quoted in the earliest Jewish literature such as Qumran, Apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Mishnah, and Talmud. In the later literature there are quite a number of references to the text, and the focus here will be which version of the text that was used, how it was interpreted, and especially how the version affected the interpretation. Another important focus is how the interpretations in the early Jewish and Christian contexts relate to each other, and if there are any affinities between the interpretations found in the different contexts.

3.3.2 Ps. 40:7b in the Targum
There is only one Targum of Psalm 40:7 and it reads:

Nbrwqw atlo yl atyrk Knqrwp atxal Nyndwa atybx al anwrwdw askyn

Sacrifice and offering you do not desire; ears to listen to your commandments you have dug for me; burnt offering and sin offering for transgressions you have not required.\textsuperscript{344}

As can be seen, the Targum follows the MT version having both “ears” and “dug”, as well as a comment on the MT version. Interesting is the Vorlage of “offering” נֶרֶנֶה, which is a loan word from Greek δῶρον. It should be noted that in Ps 40:7 the equivalent in the Septuagint of MT נֶרֶנֶה is προσφορά. The use of a Greek loan word could perhaps indicate the knowledge of a Greek translation, but anyhow there is no indication in the Targum that such a translation has any affinity with the LXX version. It is also very interesting that there is an additional comment on the ears, not because of the content of the comment, which follows the common interpretation, but because someone considered it necessary to add a comment. This indicates that the meaning of the expression was not totally transparent, and hence it also shows that the text could have been interpreted in various different ways.

\textsuperscript{343} Text from Luis Díez Merino, \textit{Biblia poliglota Complutense: tradicion sefardi de la Biblia Aramea. 4. 1, Targum de Salmos: edicion principe del Ms. Villa-Amil n. 5 de Alfonso de Zamora} (Madrid, 1982), p.106.

3.3.3 Ps. 40:7 in the New Testament

According to NA27 Ps 40:7 is alluded to once in the New Testament, namely in Eph. 5:2, which reads:

καὶ περιπατεῖτε ἐν ἀγάπῃ, καθὼς καὶ ὁ Χριστὸς ἡγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ παρέδωκεν ἑαυτὸν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν προσφορὰν καὶ θυσίαν τῷ θεῷ εἰς ὀσμὴν εὐωδίας.\textsuperscript{345}

... and live in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.\textsuperscript{346}

It seems that this text also is alluding to the LXX version of Ps. 40:7b with σῶμα, and if the assumption made above is correct that the author of Hebrews had σῶμα in his LXX text, this could well be an allusion to Ps. 40:7b. However, it should be noted that there is no mention of σῶμα in Ephesians. This could indicate an allusion to an idea rather than to a specific text. If this is correct, it could also indicate that it actually is the author of Hebrews who draws the attention to Psalm 40 as suggested by Karrer.\textsuperscript{347} Karrer also points out that while the body of Christ, according to the Letter to the Ephesians, is the offering and sacrifice, the body, according to the Letter to the Hebrews, replaces the offering and sacrifice of the law.\textsuperscript{348}

\textsuperscript{345} Text from NA27.

\textsuperscript{346} Translation from NRSV.


\textsuperscript{348} Karrer, \textit{Der Brief}, p.194.
3.3.4 Ps. 40:7 in Midrash

3.3.4.1 Mekhilta de-Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai

The first reference in the Midrashim is found in Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, and it is a comment on Ex. 24:7:

“Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people” (Exod. 24:7): [He read] from the beginning of the book until here. “And they said: All that the Lord has spoken we will do and we will hear!” (Exod. 24:7): Because they put doing [the commandments] first, Moses said to them, “Is it possible to do something without hearing [about it]? Hearing [about it] allows one to do [it]! They repeated, saying, “We will do and we will hear” (Exod. 24:7), [meaning,] we will do what we will [soon] hear! This teaches that they accepted upon themselves both doing and hearing [the commandments] before the [actual] giving of the Torah. And thus Scripture says, “You devoted your ears to

Me. You do not ask for burnt offering and sin offering. Then I said: ‘See, I will bring a scroll written by Me!’” (Ps. 40:7–8)\(^{350}\)

First it is clear that the ears are essential for the use of the text as a proof-text for the interpretation of Ex. 24:7, and hence the MT version is necessary in this context. Further, from the context before the quotation of Ps. 40:7b it is natural to take the subject of “you” to be one of the people, since they just declared that “we will hear”, or the second singular form should be taken collectively for the whole people. It should be noticed, however, that the “your” of the quotation is added by the translator, and has no equivalent in the original, which is identical to the MT. It is also natural to take “Me” as referring to God, which apparently is also the case in Nelson’s translation. On the other hand, it is hard to see how the second half of the quotation, Ps. 40:7c–8, fits into this context, since there has not yet (Ex. 24) been any mention of offerings or scrolls to which the text could refer. Neither is it clear who should be taken as the subject of the verbs in the second part of the quotation. Perhaps the second part was only added along with the first part. Anyhow, Ps. 40:7b makes good sense in this context, and what is interesting for the present investigation is the fact that there exists an early tradition in which the subject and object are not the same as in the common interpretation. Usually, David is taken as the speaker as well as the object of יָלַד, while God is the subject of הוהי. Here, on the other hand, God is the speaker and the object of יָלַד, while the people is the subject of הוהי. Given the obscure Hebrew expression in Ps.

40:7b, it comes as no surprise, of course, that there are various interpretations of the text.

3.3.4.2 Midrash Tehillim

The remaining four references to Ps. 40:7b are all from the Midrash on Psalms, and the first one is a short remark on הָשִּׁיק תָּהֳלֹל from the Midrash on Ps. 40:7b:

אוני נִשְׁקִית לִּי, אָגָרָה עַל-לָּשָׁן הַפִּ谆הוּ, הַעֲמַדְתִּי אֶפְרָּאָה בְּעַד הָאָשׁ בָּא.

In the words “Mine ears hast Thou opened (kariṭa)”, the literal meaning of “kariṭa” is clearly “dug out” as in the verse “If a man shall dig (yiḵre) a pit” (Ex. 21:33).

As can be seen, the text is clearly following the MT version, but unfortunately the Midrash does only discuss the meaning of the word הָשִּׁיק and not how it should be interpreted in the context in Ps. 40:7b.

In the second one, on Psalm 18, it is discussed how David praised God with all parts of his body. In the enumeration of all the parts, with which David praised God in Psalms, Psalm 40 is referred to twice, first verse seven for the ears, and second to verse nine for the inward parts.

351 Text from Salomon Buber, Midrash Tehilim: ha-mekhuneh Shoher tov: yotse ‘atah pa’am rishonah le-oe ‘olam ‘al pi ketav yad shebe-otsar ha-sefarim be-Parma ...
(Jerusalem, 1976), p.258.

… with his ears, David praised God, saying: *Mine ears hast Thou opened*\(^{354}\)

Not much has to be added to this short example. It is clear that the text of the Midrash has the MT version of the text, and that the ears are essential for the interpretation, which is the common one with David as speaker and object of מן, while God is the subject of כי.

The third one is a comment on Ps. 50:23:

> ברכת חסדך יתברך. (תו) תבשלה חסדך בכל קדושתך. שלח היה עושה אלמנתTEL,
> העבדים. וﻶו יתנש אמורים. שואפה עליהם כל בנין נביי הסדרות:model. כך י俸ירה הראתעל
> וجمالו אריך הנה שמות רבים מנכ. ואומר ובעת הנה לא תפעת [אணוים]

“He who offereth thanks glorifieth Me” (Ps. 50:23). A thank-offering is dearer to God than all other offerings, for these are brought only because of transgression. Thus in Job you find it said “Job … offered burnt-offerings … for Job said: ‘It may be that my sons have sinned’” (Job 1:5). But the thank-offering is brought freely. Thus Scripture says, “Behold, to obey is better than

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\(^{353}\) Text from Buber, *Midrash Tehilim*, p.135.

\(^{354}\) Translation from Braude, *The Midrash*, vol. 1, p.230.

\(^{355}\) Text from Buber, *Midrash Tehilim*, p.280.
sacrifice (1 Sam. 15:22), and also Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened” (Ps. 40:7).\textsuperscript{356}

Here it is clear again that the text is following the MT version, though the interpretation does not specifically depend on that version. If the ears are taken as an instrument with which to listen to God in order to obey his commandments, it is, of course, also possible to use a text which refers to the “body” with which the same commandments are carried out. However, the very frequent combination of 1 Sam 15:22 and the MT version of Ps. 40:7 indicates that the author of the Midrash actually had the MT version of the text in mind. Hence Ps. 40:7 is quoted in the common context to stress the contrast between sacrifice and obedience.

The last one is a comment on Ps. 116:2:

\begin{quote}
כי הוה אוש אלי. ואנש יושב עם פורים אלו, שנאמר עוזא משחה ליה.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{357} “Because He hath inclined His ear unto me” (Ps. 116:2). The ears of Him on high are open only to me, as is said “Ears hast Thou opened for me” (Ps. 40:7), and “O my God, incline Thine ear and hear” (Dan. 9:18).\textsuperscript{358}

First it is clear that the text of the Midrash follows the MT version and that this version is used in the interpretation of Ps. 116:2. This reference is interesting,

\textsuperscript{356} Translation from Braude, \textit{The Midrash}, vol. 1, p.470.

\textsuperscript{357} Text from Buber, \textit{Midrash Tehilim}, p.476.

\textsuperscript{358} Translation from Braude, \textit{The Midrash}, vol. 2, p.224.
since it seems to take no account of the context of Psalm 40, and it should also be noted that it is quoted without verse 7a and 7c. Further, the ears of Ps. 40:7b are taken as the ears of God, as in Ps. 116:2 and Dan. 9:18, quoted before and after Ps. 40:7b. This means that the present interpretation differs from the most common one in so far that God has not prepared ears for someone else to listen to his commandments, but that he has opened his own ears to listen to the one who is speaking.

3.3.4.3 Summary and Evidence from Midrash

Summing up the references to Ps. 40:7 in the Midrashim, it is clear that the MT version of the text is used in all examples, and that the characteristic features of the MT version are used in most interpretations, although the interpretations vary quite a bit between themselves. More interesting, however, for the present investigation is the fact that the text is not only used in different contexts, but that the text itself is interpreted variously. In fact, there is variation in every detail: the speaker (God or David), the possessor of the ears (God, David or (someone of) the people), the subject of הָרָעָה (God or (someone of) the people), and the object of יִלָּח (God or David). With only four examples, this is quite a bit of variation, and it is more than likely that these examples are only a small selection of interpretations that existed at the time of the Midrashim. On the other hand, given the obscure Hebrew expression in Ps. 40:7b, it is only natural that there are various interpretations of the text and that it should live a life of its own in various
Moreover, given the obvious obscurity of the text it is also very likely that at least some of the various interpretations have a history that is far older than the Midrashim themselves, and that, at the time when Hebrews was composed, the author had several different possible interpretations ready to hand. The various interpretations of Ps. 40:7b in the Midrashim are especially interesting when it is taken into account that interpretations were not always accompanied by the standard Scriptural text on which they were originally made. If these interpretations were transmitted and later or in a different context were combined with the LXX version of the text, the result could have been at least very productive.

3.3.5 Ps. 40:7b in the Early Greek Church

3.3.5.1 Irenaeus (c. 135–202)

There is only one example in Irenaeus, but the example is clear enough. Irenaeus discusses the use of sacrifices versus obedience: Against Heresies 4.17.1:

Si quando enim neglegentes eos iustitiam et abstinentes a dilectione Dei videbat, per sacrificial autem et reliquas typicas observantias putantes propitiari Deum, dicebat eis Samuel quidem sic: „Non vult dominus holocaust et sacrificial, sed vult exaudiri vocem suam. Ecce auditus bonus super sacrificium,


et auditus super adipem arietum.” David autem ait: „Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti, aures autem perfecisti mihi, holocaust autem pro delicto non postulasti”, docens eos quoniam obauditionem vult Deus, quae servat eos, quam sacrificial et holocaustomata, quae nihil eis prosunt ad iustitiam, et novum simul prophetans testamentum. 362

For when He perceived them neglecting righteousness, and abstaining from the love of God, and imagining that God was to be propitiated by sacrifices and the other typical observances, Samuel did even thus speak to them: “God does not desire whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices, but He will have His voice to be hearkened to. Behold, a ready obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” [1 Sam. 15:22] David also says: “Sacrifice and oblation You did not desire, but my ears have You perfected; burnt-offerings also for sin You have not required.” He thus teaches them that God desires obedience, which renders them secure, rather than sacrifices and holocausts, which avail them nothing towards righteousness; and [by this declaration] he prophesies the new covenant at the same time. 363

As can be seen Irenaeus uses the MT version of the text, and it is used together with 1 Sam. 15:22, as is often the case. 364 Although this text is only preserved in a Latin version, given the context there can be little doubt that Irenaeus had a text which read ὀτία and not σῶμα, which would have made little sense in this context.

362 Text from Norbert Brox et al., Irenäus von Lyon, p.126.

363 Translation from ANF, vol. 1, p.482.

context. Interesting is the fact that, though this is one of very few Old Testament texts that explicitly (in its Christian interpretation) states the incarnation and the sacrifice of the body of the Christ, and though Irenaeus was familiar with Hebrews,\textsuperscript{365} it is clear that he uses the MT version of the text and an interpretation which no doubt had its origin in a pre-Christian Jewish context. Hence Irenaeus use of the text is a clear indication that there existed so much interaction between interpretations in the early Christian Church and the Jewish community that he did not even hesitate to use such an important Christological text in its MT version accompanied by an interpretation based on that version.

3.3.5.2 Origen (185–254)

There is one reference to Ps. 40:7b in Origen’s \textit{Treatise on the Passover} 2.46.\textsuperscript{366} Here Origen discusses the exodus from Egypt and draws the parallel to the Christian exodus.

\[
	ext{oμολογουμένως γὰρ "μετέστησεν" [Col. 1:13] ἡμᾶς Αἰγύπτου καὶ τῶν αὐτῆς ἀρχόντων, οὗς προσήλωσεν τῷ σταυρῷ παραδείγματι ἐν παρρησίᾳ θριαμβεύσας αὐτοὺς ἐν αὐτῷ. διὰ τοῦτο "ἰδοὺ ἥκω -- γέγραπται γὰρ ἐν κεφαλιδί}
\]


\textsuperscript{366} There are another two quotations from Ps. 40:7, one in Origen’s \textit{Commentary on Psalms} 40:7, and one in his \textit{Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans} 9.1.2, but they do not contain 40:7b. It is surprising that it is missing in the commentary on Romans, since it would have fitted the context very well.
βιβλίου περὶ ἐμοῦ —, ὁ θεός, τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημά σου,” προειπών: “θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἡθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ μοι κατηρτίσω, ὅλοκαύτωμα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ εὐδόκησας”, δι’ ἦς προσφορᾶς αὐτοῦ καθαρίζεται πλανώμενος κόσμος εἰς ἐπιστροφὴν ἐρχόμενος, καὶ “ἐφημοσυνεῖ τὰ πάντα ἐν τῷ ἁμαρτί τοῦ σταυροῦ αὐτοῦ” [Col. 1:20] 367

For he did indeed set us free from Egypt and its leaders whom “he nailed to the cross to make a public example of them, triumphing over them in the cross”. This is why he says: “Behold I come—for it is written of me in the head of the book—O God, to do thy will”; for it is prophesied: “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt offering and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure”. By this offering of himself the world which has gone astray is purified and converted, and he “pacifies” all things “in the blood of his cross”. 368

The quotation clearly follows the LXX version. It is also clear that a text with σῶμα is necessary in the context, where δι’ ἦς προσφορᾶς αὐτοῦ apparently refers back to the σῶμα of Christ, and that a text with ὀρία would not have been possible in the argument of Origen. 369 That Origen used the LXX version is, of course, especially interesting, since he had access to the Hebrew text. It should be noted, however, that Origen’s interpretation of Ps. 40:7b is based on the New Testament context with the offering of Christ, and though being made in the context of the

368 Translation from Robert Daly, Treatise on the Passover (New York, 1992), p.54.
exodus from Egypt, it is not an interpretation of the Old Testament context. Hence, it is clear that his interpretation has no origin in a Jewish context. It is also clear that Origen uses a text that follows the text of Hebrews and not that of Psalms, having εὐδόκησας (Heb. 10:6) for ἔτησας (Ps. 39:7), ὁ θεός (Heb. 10:7) without μου (Ps. 39:9), and leaving out the verb ἐβουλήθην which is found in Ps. 39:9, but not in Hebrews. Still, although it appears that Origen had a text of Hebrews, it should be noted that he makes no comment on the difference between the versions of this important text, a difference of which he most likely was aware.

3.3.5.3 Eusebius (c. 260–339)

There are a number of quotations from Ps. 40:7b in the writings of Eusebius, two in the Demonstration of the Gospel, two in his Commentary on the Psalms, and one in his Commentary on Isaiah. The first one, from Dem. ev. 1.10.27, is a quotation of the first ten verses of Psalm 40. The quotation is not complete, but it clearly follows the text of the Septuagint, and has σῶµα instead of ὠτία. Immediately following the quotation Eusebius comments, Dem. ev. 1.10.28:

ἀντικρυς ἄντι τῶν πάλαι θυσιῶν καὶ ὀλοκαυτωµάτων τὴν ἔνσαρκον τοῦ Χριστοῦ παρουσίαν καὶ τὸ καταρτισθὲν αὐτοῦ σῶµα προσενηχθαι τῷ θεῷ διδάξας

370 Text from Heikel, Eusebius Werke, p.47.
He plainly teaches that in place of the ancient sacrifices and whole burnt-offerings the incarnate presence of Christ and his prepared body was offered to God\textsuperscript{371}

It is clear that he is not quoting from Hebrews, since he also quotes the first verses of the Psalm, which are not found in Hebrews, and since the text has ἐβουλήθην which is found in Ps. 39:9, but not in Hebrews. The comment following the quotation also makes it clear that he could not have used the MT version of the text. Hence it is evident that at the time of Eusebius (i.e., well before the time of the important LXX manuscripts Θ, A and B) the LXX text had σῶμα and not ὀψία.

The second quotation from the Demonstration of the Gospel, 8.1.80 also follows the LXX version:

\[\text{ἐπειδὴ γὰρ οὐκὲτί τὰς ἀιμάτων θυσίας οὐδὲ τὰς παρὰ Μωσεῖ ἐν διαφόροις ζῴων σφαγαῖς νενοθετημένας προσίετο, ἀρτῳ δὲ χρῆσθαι σωμβόλω τοῦ ἰδίου σώματος παρεδίδου, εἰκότως τὸ λαμμρὸν καὶ καθαρὸν ἠνιχνεύσε τῆς τροφῆς εἰπών: ἴνα λευκοὶ οἱ ὀδόντες αὐτοῦ ἢ γάλα· τούτων καὶ ἀλλών ἐμνημονεύσεν προφήτης φῆσας: ἐκεῖνον καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθελήσας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσει μοι}.\textsuperscript{372}

For since He no more was to take pleasure in bloody sacrifices, or those ordained by Moses in the slaughter of animals of various kinds, and was to give

\textsuperscript{371} Translation from Ferrar, The proof, vol. 1, p.60.

\textsuperscript{372} Text from Heikel, Eusebius Werke, p.366.
them bread to use as the symbol of His Body, He taught the purity and brightness of such food by saying, “And his teeth are white as milk.” This also another prophet has recorded, where he says, “Sacrifice and offering hast thou not required, but a body hast thou prepared for me.”

Again it is clear that Eusebius uses the LXX version, and that the MT version could not have been used in this context, since the body of the quotation refers to the body of Christ in the Eucharist.

The following two references are from his *Commentary on the Psalms*, the first of which is an allusion in the context of his comment on Ps. 40:6–9. Eusebius has a very interesting paraphrase (αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγὼν σοι) of the first half of verse eight in the LXX version:

πλὴν ἐν οἷς κατέλαβον καὶ τοῦθ’ εὗρον, ὦτι κατὰ τὸν παρόντα καιρὸν τὰς παρὰ Μωϋσεῖ θυσίας καὶ προσφορὰς οὐκ ἠθέλησας· ἀντὶ δ’ ἐκείνων τὰ ὁτά μου καὶ τὴν ύπακοήν τῶν σῶν λογίων κατηρτίσω· και ἄντι ὁλοκαυτωμάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας θυσίων αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγὼν σοι. Διὸ φησιν· Ἰδοὺ ἦκω κληθείς ύπὸ σοῦ, καὶ προθυμώτατα ύπακούσας. Ηκὼ δὲ σπεύσας τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θέλημα σου· τοῦτο γὰρ ἀντὶ πάσης ὁλοκαυτοῦ θυσίας πέπεισμαι σε ἀποδέχεσθαι.

However, in what I have received I have also found that at the present time you have not desired the sacrifices and offerings of Moses, but instead of those you

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374 Text from MPG, vol. 23, c.356.
have prepared my ears and the obedience to your oracles. And instead of burnt offerings and sin offerings I have brought myself to you. Therefore he says, See, I have come, called by you, and most eagerly obeying. I have come in a hurry to do your will. For I am convinced that you will receive this instead of all burnt offerings.

Apparently, Eusebius used a text of Psalm 40 with ὄτια (or ὦτα) here. However, it is very important to note that both immediately before and immediately after this quotation Eusebius frequently refers to the interpretation by Symmachus, which he also cites extensively and compares with the text of the LXX. Therefore, the comment on Ps. 40:8 αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγόν σοι is based on a text with ὄτια (or ὦτα), which is interesting since it fits the context of Hebrews very well. However, there is no sign of any sacrifice of the body of Christ or any other reference to Hebrews in this context, although προσφέρω is definitely sacrificial language used both immediately before Heb. 10:7 (Heb. 10:1, 2) and after (Heb. 10:11, 12). Of course, αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγόν σοι could be an implicit reference to Heb. 10:5 echoing Heb. 9:14 διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἐμαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἅμωμον τῷ θεῷ, but then the total absence of any explicit reference to Hebrews or the sacrifice of Christ as a better sacrifice than the old ones is strange. In the context of Eusebius commentary on Psalms it is instead the common contrast between sacrifice and obedience that appears to be in focus. Just before the quotation of Ps. 40:6 Eusebius concludes:

Πάλαι μὲν γὰρ διὰ Μωϋσέως θυσίαι καὶ ὀλόκληρου ἄναψαν προσετάττοντο ὑπὲρ ἀμαρτιῶν προσφέρεσθαι· νυνὶ δὲ καίνος παραδίδοται τρόπος σωτηρίας, ὁ
δίχα θυσιῶν καὶ ὀλοκαυτομάτων. Διδάσκει δὲ καὶ ὡς ἔστι μυρία σωτηρίας φάρμακα, ἀπερ ἢ τοῦ Θεοῦ χάρις τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐδωρήσατο. 

For in times past sacrifices and whole burnt offerings for sins were commanded through Moses. But now a new kind of salvation is given, which is without sacrifices and whole burnt offerings. It teaches that there are thousands of means of attaining salvation, which the grace of God has bestowed on mankind.

Again there is no sign of any salvation through Christ. Perhaps Eusebius was not only influenced here by the translation of Symmachus, but also by accompanying interpretations. If Symmachus was a Jew, which has been argued by recent scholars, the comment on Ps. 40:8 perhaps indicates how the text was interpreted in the Jewish community. Such an interpretation is not likely to have been influenced by the Christian understanding of Ps. 40:7b, but rather building on earlier traditions, which could have influenced the author of Hebrews to interpret the text in a Christological way.

The second quotation, from the Commentary on the Psalms, MPG, vol. 23, c.668, is a comment on Ps. 65:15 (MT 66:15) and follows on a number of quotations, all of which appear to discuss the superfluous nature of animal sacrifices: Is. 1:11–12; Ps. 50:8–10, 13, 18. The quotation, θυσίαν … ἡμόδωκησας, follows the LXX version. The quotation is explicitly taken from a Psalm of David,

375 Text from MPG, vol. 23, c.356.

376 Jobes and Silva, Invitation to the Septuagint, p.40.
but the text is not commented upon in any way, and there appears to be nothing in the context that suggests that the MT version could not have been used.

The last example is from Eusebius’ *Commentary on Isaiah* 2.35, but it is at the most an allusion to Ps. 40:7b:

\[\text{διὸ πρῶτος αὐτοῖς ἐκήρυξα τοῖς ἐκ περιτομῆς τὴν πατρικὴν χάριν· "ο γὰρ πλάσας με ἐκ κούλλας δοῦλον ἐαυτῷ" καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ τὸ σῶμά μοι κατασκευάσας" πρῶτος αὐτοῖς κηρύξα καὶ ἐκ τοῦ Ἰσραήλ εἰς τὸ "συναγαγεῖν τὸν Ἰακὼβ πρὸς αὐτόν καὶ τὸν Ἰσραήλ".}^{377}

Therefore, I first proclaimed the fatherly grace to the circumcised. For “he who formed me in the womb to be his servant”, and prepared my body in Israel, wanted me to proclaim his grace first to them as to “gather Jacob to him and Israel”.

If this is at all an allusion to Psalm 40, it is in any case clear that it follows the LXX version and that it has a Christological interpretation. However, the article τὸ with σῶμα and the verb κατασκευάζω instead of καταρτίζω make the allusion at least uncertain.

Summing up Eusebius, it is clear that he had access to both versions of the text. There are two clear examples where he uses the LXX version in his interpretation and one where he uses the MT version. It seems likely, however, that his access to the MT version was through the version of Symmachus, rather

than that he had different LXX manuscripts, one with σῶμα and another with ὠτία. Especially interesting is Eusebius’ paraphrase of Ps. 40:8 αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγὼν σοι, which is not taken in a Christological sense by Eusebius. However, with its sacrificial language such an interpretation, if known to the author of Hebrews, could well have influenced him to take Ps. 40:7b in a Christological sense.\textsuperscript{378}

3.3.5.4 Athanasius (c. 293–373)

Athanasius has three references to Ps. 40:7b, two in his Orations against the Arians, and one in his in his commentary on Psalms, Expositiones in Psalmos.\textsuperscript{379}

On Ps. 40:7b Athanasius writes:

\begin{quote}
Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι. Ἐντεῦθεν εἰσφέρεται τὸ τοῦ Χριστοῦ πρόσωπον πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα λέγον. Ἐπειδή, φησί, θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, οὔτε μὴν ηὐδόκησας ἐν ὅλοκαυτώμασι τοῖς κατὰ τὸν νόμον ἥκω σῶμα λαβὼν ὅπερ αὐτὸς μοι κατηρτίσω. Πνεῦμα γὰρ ἄγιον καὶ Υψίστου δύναμις ἐπεσκίασε τῇ ἁγίᾳ Παρθένῳ.\textsuperscript{380}
\end{quote}

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me.” From here the face of Christ is introduced to the Father saying: Since,


\textsuperscript{379} There is yet another quotation of Ps. 40:7b in the \textit{Epistolae Heortasticae} (MPG, vol. 26, c.1387), discussing Abraham’s offering of Isaac. However, the text is only preserved in Latin (\textit{corpus autem aptasti mihi}, and there is no discussion of the “corpus”.

\textsuperscript{380} Text from MPG, vol. 27, cc.192–193.
he says, you have not desired sacrifices and offerings, neither have you taken pleasure in burnt offerings, those according to the Law, I have taken the body, which you yourself have prepared for me and I have came. For Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High has overshadowed the Holy Virgin.

As can be seen from the quotation Athanasius had σῶμα and not ὡτία in his text, which is also necessary for his argument, which follows the argument of Hebrews. Hence there are no traces of the MT version or of any interpretation based on that version.381

In the second of Athanasius’ *Orations against the Arians*, 2.47, Athanasius has a lengthy discussion about the interpretation of Prov. 8:22 κύριος ἐκτισέν με ἄρχην ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ εἰς ἐργα αὐτοῦ, and the focus is on whether Christ is created or not. Here Athanasius quotes Ps. 40:7b twice to prove that Christ is in fact not a creature:

Καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ρητὸν δείκνυσιν ὑμῶν μόνον εὐρήμα εἶναι τὸ λέγειν κτίσμα τὸν Κύριον. Τὴν γὰρ οὐσίαν ἐαυτοῦ γινώσκον ὁ Κύριος μονογενής σοφίαν καὶ γέννημα τοῦ Πατρὸς, καὶ ἄλλην οὕσαν παρὰ τὰ γενητὰ καὶ τὰ φύσει κτίσματα, φιλανθρώπως νὸν λέγει· Κύριος ἐκτισές με ἄρχην ὁδὸν αὐτοῦ· ἵσον τῷ εἰπεῖν· Ὅ Πατήρ σῶμα μοι κατηρτίσατο. καὶ εἰς ἀνθρώπον με ἐκτίσεν, ὑπὲρ τῆς τῶν ἀνθρώπων σωτηρίας. … Οὕτως ἐὰν ἀκούω εἰς τὴν τὰς Παροιμίας τὸ, ἐκτίσεν, οὗ δὲ κτίσμα τῇ φύσει ὑλόν νοεῖν τὸν Λόγον, ἀλλ᾽ ὃτι τὸ κτιστὸν ἐνεδύσατο σῶμα, καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐκτίσεν αὐτὸν ὁ Θεὸς, εἰς ἡμᾶς τὸ κτιστὸν


For the very passage proves that it is only an invention of your own to call the Lord creature. For the Lord, knowing His own Essence to be the Only-begotten Wisdom and Offspring of the Father, and other than things originate and natural creatures, says in love to man, “The Lord created me a beginning of His ways,” as if to say, “My Father has prepared for Me a body, and has created Me for men in behalf of their salvation.” … so, if it is said in the Proverbs “He created,” we must not conceive that the whole Word is in nature a creature, but that He put on the created body and that God created Him for our sakes, preparing for Him the created body, as it is written, for us, that in Him we might be capable of being renewed and deified.\footnote{Translation from NPNF, ser. 2, vol. 4, p.374.}

Again it is clear that Athanasius used the LXX version of the text with σῶµα, and that this version was essential to his argumentation. Consequently, in the examples of Athanasius there are no traces of the MT version or of any interpretations based on that version.\footnote{Cf. Amphoux and Dorival, ‘«Des oreilles’, pp.323–324.}
3.3.5.5 Didymus (c. 313–c. 398)

Didymus has a number of references to Ps. 40:7b in his Commentary on Psalms, but also in his Commentary on Zachariah. All but two of these texts are found among the Tura-papyri. The remaining two are found in the catenae. The first two quotations are found in Didymus’ comments on Psalm 22, verses one and 16. In his comment on verse one he opposes the Apollinarists who use Ps. 40:7 in their argument that Christ had a human body with a divine Spirit/Logos, Comm. Ps. 24.21–22:

επεὶ δὲ ἅν, φέρουσιν ἡμῖν ῥήμα τὰ σῶμα ἐσχηκότος τοῦ σωτήρος σῶν: “σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι”, καὶ “Χριστοῦ παθόντος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν σαρκῆ”, ἐλέγομεν ὅτι, εἰ προσέκατο “μόνον”. “σῶμα δὲ μόνον κατηρτίσω μοι”.

Since they [the Apollinarists] always bring passages from Scripture to us that the Saviour had a body, such as “a body you have prepared for me”, and “Christ suffered for us in the flesh” [1 Petr. 4:12]. We said that it would require ‘only’, “only a body you prepared for me”.

The same quotation is repeated with the same argument a few lines later, Comm. Ps. 25.1, and it is clear from the context that the LXX version is used and that the MT version could not have been used in these two examples.

In the comment on verse 16 it is also evident that he uses the LXX version of Ps 40:7b in his argument, Comm. Ps. 37.12–14:

Since he himself for the sake of dispensation and salvation of all received a body and God prepared a body for him, he says that he was laid in the dust of death by God. [Ps. 22:16]

As can be seen, Didymus’ interpretation of Ps. 40:7b is based on the understanding of the text that is found in Hebrews.

Didymus’ comment on Ps. 40:7 is probably the most interesting for the present investigation, since it includes interpretations of both versions of the text. However, there are also comments again directed against the Apollinarists, and the argument is the same as before Comm. Ps. 285.4 and 6:

For he who said “a body you have prepared for me” did not say ‘only’, for he who is a perfect human has a body, but not only. … Just as he said “a body you

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386 Text from Doutreleau et al. Didymos, p.150.

have prepared for me” he says in the following “those who seek my soul to
snatch it away.” [Ps. 40:15]

More important to the present investigation are Didymus’ comments on the
superfluousness of sacrifices and offerings, which are accompanied by two
different interpretations Comm. Ps. 285.2–3, 10–13:

“A body you have prepared for me”. Instead of the other things. Hence the
apostle interpreted this body as the spiritual and unbloody offering [cf. Rom.
12:1]. For, when a better offering is found, then he does not want the former
anymore. They are not wanted by him. … Therefore, you did not desire those
sacrifices and offerings anymore, because “a body you have prepared for me”
which was to be offered for all. And it is also possible to say: therefore you did
not desire sacrifices and offerings, because “a body you have prepared for us”,
which we can sacrifice and offer to you; “I appeal to you therefore by the
mercies, to present your bodies as a spiritual sacrifice.” [Rm. 12:1]

388 Text from Gronewald, Psalmenkommentar ... Psalm 35–39, p.284.
As can be seen, the LXX version of the text is essential to both interpretations. It is interesting to see that beside the Christological interpretation of Ps. 40:7b, Didymus offers another interpretation with a spiritual unbloody offering, which has clear affinities with interpretations based on the MT version of the text. It is not clear, however, whether Didymus for the second interpretation was influenced by an interpretation based on the MT version, or if the basis was the quotation from Romans 12. Given his knowledge both of the MT version and of interpretations based on that version, it is at least very likely that this influenced his interpretation. Perhaps even Paul was influenced by such interpretations when he wrote his Letter to the Romans, but that question is far beyond the scope of the present investigation.

Didymus then turns to the other versions of the text with ὀτία instead of σῶµα, Comm. Ps. 285.13–19:


389 Text from Gronewald, Psalmenkommentar ... Psalm 35–39, pp.284, 286.
In other [manuscripts] it is written: “Ears you have prepared for me”. Accordingly, one of the interpreters says that: since you did not desire material sacrifices and offerings, you prepared ears for me, by which I can hear what has been revealed by the material sacrifices, such as the spiritual sacrifice of praise “offer a sacrifice of praise to God” [Ps 50:14]. Henceforth you invite me to hear, you do not look for material sacrifices, so that what is said corresponds to “the instruction of the Lord opens my ears”. [Is. 50:5] … And another of the interpreters said: “ears you have dug for me”, because you took away their bluntness, you took away what was hindering the hearing.

Again it is clear that the interpretations are dependent on the particular version of the text, in this case the MT version. Very interesting is also the fact that it is stated that these interpretations are not made by Didymus himself based on the MT version, but he found these interpretations somewhere else. It should be noted that the MT version of the text is presented in two different forms, of which the first follows the common text found in Rahlfs’ edition, while the latter, ὡτία δὲ ἐσκάψας, follows Aquila. Of course, it is not very surprising to find other interpretations of the text, since it is not very likely that a text was handed down in a vacuum, without any kind of interpretation. However, the fact that the MT version was handed down with two different interpretations based on the MT version in a Christian context, suggests that these interpretations might have originated in another context, or even in a pre-Christian context. This is also underlined by the fact that Ps. 50 is often quoted together with Ps. 40:7, as could be seen in Midrash Tehillim above. It should also be noted that there is a contrast not between sacrifices and obedience, or between general sacrifices and the
sacrifice of Christ, but between the general sacrifices and the spiritual sacrifice of praise. If such an interpretation was available to the author of Hebrews, which is not very unlikely, it definitely facilitated the interpretation found in Heb. 10, especially if the interpretation was combined with a text with σῶμα (cf. the previous example).

In the next example, commenting upon Ps. 40:8, Didymus refers back to verse 7b, and interprets it in accordance with the author of Hebrews, Comm. Ps. 285.25–27:

τότε ἐγὼ ὃ σῶμα κατηρτίσω, εἶπον· “ἰδοὺ ἥκω”, [ἄντι τοῦ· ἔπει σκοπός τῇς | ἐπιδήμιας αὐτοῦ οὐτὸς ἐστιν τὸ τὴν σκιὰν τέλος ἀπολαβεῖν, τὸ μηκέτι θυσίας καὶ ὁλοκαυτώμα]μα|τα προσάγεσθαι, ἥκω ἐγὼ, ἵνα πληρώσω τὴν θυσίαν ὁλοκαύτωμα γενησόμενος.390

Then I, for whom you prepared a body, said: “See, I come”, instead of: since the goal of his sojourn [on earth] is this, that the shadow come to an end, that sacrifices and burnt offerings no longer be brought forth, I have come, to fulfil the offering having become a burnt offering.

Hence it is evident that Didymus interprets the text of the psalm in a number of ways, without, however, losing sight of the interpretation found in Hebrews.

390 Text from Gronewald, Psalmenkommentar ... Psalm 35–39, p.288.
Finally, there are the two references to Ps. 40:7b in the catenae, of which the first is used in an argument against the Apollinarists.\textsuperscript{391} The second is interesting, since Didymus, before quoting part of verse seven, explicitly says that these lines are put in the mouth of Christ by the Letter to the Hebrews:

\begin{quote}
τούτους δὲ τοὺς προκειμένους στίχους ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ σωτῆρος εἰρήσθαι ἢ Πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολὴ φησιν φάσκουσα περὶ τοῦ σωτῆρος “Διὸ εἰσερχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον λέγει Θυσίαν καὶ προσφοράν οὐκ ἴθηλησας, καὶ τὰ λοιπά.” … τοίνυν τοῦ καιροῦ τῆς σκιᾶς καθ’ ὃν θυσία καὶ προσφορὰ προσήγετο, οὐκέτι τὴν διὰ τούτων λατρείαν βουληθείς ὁ θεός, κατηρτίσατο ἐκ τῆς παρθένου σῶμα τῷ υἱῷ.\textsuperscript{392}
\end{quote}

These present lines are said by the Letter to the Hebrews to be spoken by the Saviour himself, when it declares: “Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, ‘Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired and so forth.’” … So, during the time of shadow, when sacrifices and offerings were offered, and God no longer wanted this kind of worship, he prepared of the Virgin a body for the son.

Though the part of the verse with σῶμα is not included in the quotation, it is clear by the following context that Didymus used the LXX version of the text, and that


\textsuperscript{392} Text from Mühlenberg, \textit{Psalmenkommentare}, p.318.
the MT version would not have been possible here. Perhaps this could also be taken as an indication that Didymus thought that the version with σῶμα originated with the author of Hebrews. However, given the various interpretations of the psalm offered by Didymus it is more likely that he actually attributed both versions of Ps. 40:7b to the psalm in one way or the other.

In his commentary on Zachariah Didymus refers to Ps. 40:7 twice, once in a comment on Zach. 3:4, and once in a comment on Zach. 8:9.\textsuperscript{393} In the first one the high priest Joshua is interpreted as Jesus, an interpretation which, of course, is facilitated by the fact that in Greek the names ‘Joshua’ and ‘Jesus’ are one and the same, namely Ιησοῦς. Comm. Zach. 1.222–223:

\begin{quote}

Αἴτιοι γὰρ γενάμενοι τοῦ χρήσασθαι αὐτὸν τοιοῦτο ἐνδύματι, ἡμεῖς αὐτὸν περιβάλλομεν. Πλὴν εἰ καὶ περιβέβληται τὸ λεχθὲν ἡμῶν τῷ Θεῷ λέγων· “Σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι”, ἀλλὰ οὖν μένει πάλιν ἱερεὺς μέγας περικείμενος τὸν ἱερατικὸν χιτῶνα…\textsuperscript{394}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{393} There is another quotation of Ps. 40:7b in Comm. Zach. 2.102 (text in Louis Doutreleau, Didume l’Aveugle: Sur Zacharie (Paris, 1962), vol. 1, p.473), but the only manuscript is far too fragmentary to be of any value.

\textsuperscript{394} Text from Doutreleau, Didume, pp.306, 308.
With the removal of the filthy garments, he puts on as great and true high priest the priestly tunic called long, dons a clean turban, and is invested by us with the garment of a human body; in being responsible for his using such clothing, we invested him in it. Yet even if he is invested with the afore-mentioned garment while saying to God, “A body you have formed for me,” he still continues as high priest to wear the priestly tunic…

Here too the interpretation is based on the specific version of the text, and this time it is the LXX version which is used. However, the interpretation seems to be specific to this passage and has no affinities to other interpretations based either on the MT or the LXX versions.

In the second example, Comm. Zach. 2.310, Ps. 40:7b is quoted just after Prov. 9:1 ἡ σοφία ὕκοδόμησεν ἑαυτῇ ὁ ὀἶκον “Wisdom has built her house”:

Περὶ τούτου τοῦ ὀίκου καὶ ναοῦ ὃ ἐνανθρωπήσας Κύριος λέγει τῷ Πατρί· “Σῶµα δὲ κατηρτίσω µοι.” Τοῦ οὗτος λεχθέντος οἶκου [θ]ἐµελίους ἐσχηκότος οίς ναοῦ ἁγίου ὁ ὀικοδοµήθεν[τος], αἱ χεῖρες, τοῦτ' ἐστιν αἱ πρακτικαὶ δυνάµεις, κατισχ[ὑου]σιν κατὰ τὰς ἐµπροσθεν ψυχεινὰς θεωρίας, ἧµέρας καλουµένας.

In reference to this house and Temple, the Lord incarnate says to the Father, “A body you have fashioned for me.” Once the aforementioned house with its


foundations is built like a holy temple, the hands—that is, the active faculties—are strengthened according to the ancient illuminating insights, called days.\textsuperscript{397}

Hill, who translated the text comments upon the two quotations: “The citations, one Christological, seem simply to come to the surface for a moment without developing the thought consistently.”\textsuperscript{398} Be as it may, it is clear that Didymus had the LXX version in mind, accompanied by the interpretation found in Hebrews.

Summing up Didymus’ use of Ps. 40:7b it is clear that he is well aware that there existed different versions of the text, as well as different interpretations of these versions. It is also clear that he uses the characteristics of the different versions in his interpretations.\textsuperscript{399} Further, he is aware that the text is quoted in Hebrews and he adopts the interpretation of Hebrews several times. It can also be noted that, when he uses the MT version of the text, he explicitly states that these are the interpretations of other exegtes, and he never uses the MT version as proof-text or in an argument for the interpretation of another text. Consequently, it is evident that despite the great importance of the LXX version of Ps. 40:7b in the Christian context, and despite the fact that the author of Hebrews was well aware of this version and its interpretation in Hebrews, Didymus did not hesitate to use the MT version as well as interpretations based on that version. However, given the significance of the LXX version of Ps. 40:7b in the early Church, it is not

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Translated from Hill, \textit{Didymus}, p.173.
\item Hill, \textit{Didymus}, p.173 n.48.
\item Cf. Amphoux and Dorival, ‘«Des oreilles', p.323.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
likely that the interpretations based on the MT version of the text originated within the early Church. This is especially true of interpretations based upon such obvious combinations as between Psalms 40 and 50, which are very likely to have originated in a non- or pre-Christian context, as could also be seen in the early Midrashim.

### 3.3.5.6 Asterius Amasenus (c. 330–410)

Asterius has one quotation of Ps. 40:7b in his nineteenth homily, and it is used in the interpretation of Ps. 11:3: ὅτι ἃ κατηρτίσω καθεῖλον “because what you fashioned they took down”. *Homily* 19.18:

> διὰ τί οἱ ἀμαρτωλοὶ ἐπὶ τὸν κατὰ τῶν δικαίων πόλεμον ὀρμησαν; “Ωτί αὐτοὶ καθεῖλον,” οὐ τὰ μέρη τοῦ κόσμου καταλύοντες, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἔαυτῶν ὡτα τῇ ἀνηκοίᾳ καταστρέψαντες. … ὃτι δὲ καὶ τὰ ὡτα κατηρτίσαντο, λέγει ὁ προφήτης τῷ θεῷ· θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἥθελησας, ὡτια δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι⁴⁰⁰

Why did the sinners rush to the war against the righteous? “Because what you fashioned they took down”, not destroying the parts of the world, but ruining their ears by disobedience. … That he also prepared the ears, the prophet says to

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God: “Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but ears you have prepared for me.”

It is clear that Asterius follows the MT version, and that he uses this verse as a proof-text to show that the ears have been created by God, consequently there are no affinities between this interpretation and the interpretation of Ps. 40:7b found in the New Testament.

3.3.5.7 John Chrysostom (344–407)

There are a number of references to Ps. 40:7b in the works of John Chrysostom both in his commentaries on Psalms and on Hebrews, as well as in other writings, and all examples follow the LXX version with σῶμα. However, the only works in which Chrysostom discusses Ps. 40:7b in any detail are Demonstration Against the Pagans that Christ is God and Discourses against Judaizing Christians, where he quotes it three times in the seventh discourse. Starting with the latter the first example is Adv. Jud. 7.2.6:

(ταῦτα δὲ ἀπαντὰ ἐγένετο, τῆς παλαιᾶς καταλυθείσης θυσίας, καὶ ἐτέρας ἐπεισοδικεῖσθαι, τῆς διὰ τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ), ἐκπλαγεῖς καὶ θαυμάσας ἔλεγε: Πολλὰ ἐποίησας σὺ, Κύριε ὁ Θεός μου, τὰ θαυμάσια σου. Καὶ ὅτι ἐκ προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ τὴν προφητείαν ταύτην ἀπάσαν προλέγει, εἰπὼν, Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, ἐπήγαγε, Σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι τὸ σῶμα λέγων τὸ δεσποτικόν, τὴν κοινὴν ὑπὲρ τῆς οἰκουμένης γενομένην θυσίαν, ἢ τὰς ψυχὰς ἠμῶν ἔξεκάθηρε, καὶ τὰς ἁμαρτίας κατέλυσε, καὶ τὸν θάνατον
All this was to take place after the old sacrifice had been abolished and after
God had brought into its place the new sacrifice through the body of Christ.
This is why David stood aghast and marvelled and said: “Many are the
wondrous works you have done, O Lord my God.” To show that he made this
whole prophetic prediction in behalf of Christ when he said: “Sacrifice and
oblation you did not desire,” David went on to say: “But a body you have fitted
to me.” By this he meant the Lord’s body which became the common sacrifice
for the whole world, the sacrifice which cleansed our soul, cancelled our sin,
put down death, opened heaven, gave us many great hopes, and made ready all
the other things.\(^{402}\)

As can be seen Chrysostom uses the LXX version and adopts the interpretation of
Hebrews. Hence there are no traces of any affinities with the MT version or other
interpretations in this example. The same holds true for the second, \textit{Adv. Jud.}\(^{402}\)

\(^{401}\) Text from MPG, vol. 48, c.918. Other references to Ps. 40:7 are: MPG, vol. 48,
ce.918, 919; MPG, vol. 51, c.155; MPG, vol. 55, c.173; MPG, vol. 63, cc.92, 135, 136,
139, but they do not quote Ps. 40:7b, and are hence not treated here. In one example,
MPG, vol. 63, c.130, the text is only quoted, but not commented upon in any detail, and
hence it will not be discussed here either.

\(^{402}\) Translation from Paul Harkins, \textit{Saint John Chrysostom: Discourses against Judaizing
7.3.2,⁴⁰³ and third, Adv. Jud. 7.4.1–2,⁴⁰⁴ examples, where Chrysostom quotes extensively from Hebrews and follows the argumentation found there.

More interesting for the present investigation is the example from Demonstration Against the Pagans that Christ is God 8.4, where Chrysostom combines Ps. 40:7b with Ps. 18:44–45:

ἐμελλέν παραγενόμενος τὴν διὰ θυσίων λατρείαν ἐκβάλλειν, καὶ μὴ προσέσθαι, ταῦτην δὲ τὴν ἠμετέραν δέχεσθαι. ἀκουσον πῶς καὶ περὶ τούτων προανεφωνήτη: “θυσίαν καὶ προσφοράν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι.” [...] ὁ καὶ ἄλλαχοι δηλὼν ἐλεγε· λαῶς, ὃν οὐκ ἔγνων, ἐδούλευσέ μοι, εἰς ἀκοήν ὑπήκουσέ μοι. ὥστε υπήκουσέ μου· τοῦτις, οὐθὲν σχίσασιν, οὐ πέτρας ῥηγνυμένας, ἀλλὰ ἀκούσας τῶν ἀποστόλων τῶν ἐμῶν.⁴⁰⁵

When Christ came, he would reject worship through sacrifices of animals and would refuse to permit such rituals. But he would accept this sacrifice of ours. Hear how the psalmist predicted this: “Sacrifice and oblation you did not desire, but you prepared for me a body.” For the new sacrifice would be established through his body and our obedience. This is why he said: “You prepared for me a body.” And David declared this in another place when he said: “A people whom I knew not have served me. As soon as they heard, they obeyed me.”

This means that they obeyed, not because they had seen the Red Sea divided nor
the rocks split, but because they listened to my apostles.\textsuperscript{406}

This passage from Chrysostom is very interesting since it combines Ps. 40:7 with
Ps. 18:44–45, and the connection between the two passages is explicitly said to be
the obedience, built on the hearing of God. Apparently, such a connection
between Ps. 40:7 and Ps. 18:44–45 is very clear, when the MT version of Ps. 40:7
is used, but all but evident in the text quoted by Chrysostom above. Hence it is
very likely that the connection between the two passages in Psalms is not built on
the LXX version, but was made on the MT version. It should also be noted that it
is not totally clear if Chrysostom actually had σῶμα in his text, or if it is a later
adjustment, since there seems to be nothing in his interpretation that requires a
text with σῶμα.

\textsuperscript{406} Translation from Schatkin and Harkins, \textit{Johannes}, p.220. It should be noted that this
translation is based on a different unpublished Greek text: Norman McKendrick, \textit{“Quod
Christus sit Deus of John Chrysostom.” Edited for Ph.D. dissertation}, Fordham
University 1966 (see Schatkin and Harkins, \textit{Johannes}, p.157). Apparently, there are two
additional sentences in the middle of this passage, which are missing in the MPG text.
However, according to the translator, P.W. Harkins, \textit{“This edition shows extreme care, a
wide use of the MS materials …”} (Schatkin and Harkins, \textit{Johannes}, p.184), and hence the
translation of the missing part is included here.
Theodore of Mopsuestia (c. 350–428)

Theodore has one reference to Ps. 40:7b in his commentary on Psalms, and it is clearly following the MT version:

\[
\text{ὤτία δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι. τῇ δὲ ύπακοὴ ἤρκέσθης τῇ ἐμῇ. καλὸς δὲ \text{“κατηρτίσω”} εἶπεν, ἐπειδὴ αὐτὸς ὁ Θεὸς διὰ τῆς κατὰ τὴν αἵμαλωσίαν παιδείας εὐτρεπεῖς αὐτοὺς εἰργάσατο πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν ύπακοὴν. ὃτια δὲ καλεὶ τὴν ύπακοὴν, ὡς καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἐν τῷ ἐυαγγελίῳ: \text{“ὁ ἔχων ὅτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω”}, ἀντὶ τοῦ ὁ πρόθεσιν ἔχον τοῦ ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω τῶν λεγομένων.}
\]

Ears you have prepared for me, you were satisfied with my obedience. Rightly he says “you have prepared”, for God himself through the discipline during the captivity prepared them for his own obedience. He calls the obedience ears, as the Lord in the Gospel: “Let anyone with ears to hear listen!” Instead of: Let anyone with inclination to hear listen to what is said.

As can be seen Theodore has the common interpretation of the MT version of Ps. 40:7b, but he does not combine it with any other Old Testament passages. Instead he refers to Luke 8:8/14:35: \text{ὁ ἔχων ὅτα ἀκούειν ἀκουέτω.}

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408 According to Riggenbach, \textit{Der Brief}, p.300 n.15, Theodore remarks on Ps. 40:7 \text{“ἲτια δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι” ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος εἰς τὸ σῶma μεταβαλὼν εἴρηκεν οὐκ ἄγνων τὸ Ἐβραικόν, ἄλλα πρὸς τὸν οἰκεῖον σκοπὸν τούτῳ χρησάμενος.}
Theodore’s discussion about the two versions found in his commentary on Ps. 40:7 is interesting. First he concludes that some people do not understand how the author of Hebrews (according to Theodore, of course, the apostle Paul) used the psalm:

Ταῦτα δὲ εἴρηται παρὰ τῷ μακαρίῳ ἀποστόλῳ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἑβραίους ἐπιστολῇ. ὅν τινες τὸν τρόπον ἀγνοοῦντες, καθ’ ὃν ὁ μακάριος ἀπόστολος ἔχρησατο τῇ μαρτυρίᾳ, οἴονται περὶ τοῦ Κυρίου εἰρήσθαι τὸν ψαλμόν.⁴⁹⁹

This is said by the blessed apostle Paul in the Letter to the Hebrews. Some of them are ignorant about the way the apostle used the testimony. They think that the psalm speaks about the Lord.

After this comment follows an example of the common interpretation of the MT version stressing the contrast between sacrifice and obedience focusing on the obedience in the Babylonian captivity, where it was not possible to offer any sacrifices, the result of which was the return to Israel. Then Theodore quotes Heb. 10:5 and adds:

… ὑπαλλάξας τὰ ὡτία εἰς σῶμα, — ὁ καὶ ἡμῖν ἐθνος ἐστιν ποιεῖν, τὸ κεχρῆσθαι μὲν πολλάκις μαρτυρίας πρὸς ἀπόδειξιν πραγμάτων, βραχὺ δὲ τι ὑπαλλάττοντες διὰ τὴν χρείαν τοῦ λόγου. ἐποίησατο δὲ τὴν ὑπαλλαγὴν, τούτο σημάναι βουλόμενος ὅτι, ὡσπέρ ἐκεῖ τῆς ὑπακοῆς πληρουμένης οὐ θυσίων γέγονε χρεία, οὐχ ἐπέρου τινὸς τοιούτου, ἀλλ’ εὐθὺς ἔτυχον τῆς ἐπανόδου τῆς σιγημαλωσίας ἀπαλλαγέντες, οὕτω φησὶ καὶ ὁ Κύριος ἑκεῖνα μὲν ἀπαντα

⁴⁹⁹ Text from Devreesse, Le commentaire, p.248.
ἀνελεῖν, ἐν δὲ τῷ σώματι τῷ ἑαυτῷ τὴν ὑπερήφανον ἐκκλησίαν τῆς ἑαυτοῦ τῆς κατά τὸν αὐτόν τῶν παθῶν τῆς ἀπαλλαγῆς. καὶ ἀκολουθεῖ δὲ πάντα κατὰ τὰς τάσις τῆς ἐννοιαν, ὅστε ὁ μὲν μακάριος ἀπόστολος Παῦλος κάλλιστα ἐξήγησεν ἀρκετάποτε ἐξήγησεν. οἱ δὲ μὴ μεμηκότος τὸν ἀποστόλου τὸν σκοπὸν καὶ τὴν ἀναφοράν, τὸν μὲν ἐμοὶ ἠθικότατο τὸν καὶ βουλήθησαν περιαψαί τῷ Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ ὅτι κατηρτίσαντες μοι — οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἐβραῖκαν — ἀπαλλάξαντες τῆς ἀφήναντες σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσαντες μοι, οὐ προσεσχηκότες τῇ ἀρχῇ τῆς ὑπαλλαγῆς τοῦ ἀποστόλου.⁴¹⁰

... having exchanged the ears for body, — which we too have the habit of doing, to frequently use testimonies to prove our cause, after having exchanged some detail because of the requirements of the word. He did this exchange, because he wanted to show that, just as, when the obedience had been fulfilled there [in Babylon], there was no need for sacrifices, no such other [time], but immediately they returned having been released from captivity, in this manner also the Lord says that he will take away everything, having fulfilled, through his own body, his plan for us, through the suffering of his own body. He says that he offered a common forgiveness of sin and a release from evil. And he says that everything follows according to this thought, so that the blessed apostle Paul in the best way used a testimony to prove that what he needed. But those who had not understood the goal and the purpose of the apostle, wanted to attach the psalm to Christ, but having changed the [reading] ears you have prepared for me — so the Hebrew [reading] — and put a body you have

⁴¹⁰ Text from Devreesse, Le commentaire, p.249.
prepared for me, they did not pay attention to the reason for the apostle’s exchange.

Apparently, Theodore knew both versions of the text, and he took for granted that the Hebrew version had the original reading, and thus concluded that the LXX version was a product of the author of Hebrews. The main reason for his assumption is that he himself frequently reworded texts to fit his argument, and that he supposed others (including the apostle Paul) to do the same. According to Riggenbach this assumption is totally untenable, since the majority of manuscripts, later versions, and commentaries have σῶμα, and hence this was most probably also what the author of Hebrews had in his text. Anyway, Theodore also knew an interpretation based on the MT version and applied to the Babylonian captivity, where the focus is the contrast between sacrifice and obedience. However, it should be noted that in this situation the reason for preferring obedience to sacrifices, is not the inability of the sacrifices to take away sins, but the inability of the people to offer sacrifices during the captivity. Given the decisive importance of Ps. 40:7b in its LXX version and the interpretation found in Hebrews, it is perhaps more likely that such an interpretation originated in the Jewish community, than in the early church.

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411 Riggenbach, *Der Brief*, p.300 n.15. For a discussion of this issue, see above.

3.3.5.9 Cyril of Alexandria (c. 375–444)

The Church Father that most frequently uses the text from Ps. 40:7b is Cyril, who has at least 14 quotations of the text.\(^{413}\) The example below is one of three quotations found in his commentary on the Gospel of John, and it is a comment on John 6:51:

\[\text{διὰ τούτῳ καὶ ἐν ψαλμοῖς που φησίν ἕαυτόν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ὅσπερ ἁμομον ἱερεῖον ἀνατιθεῖς τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρί Ἰσοσίαν καὶ προσφοράν οὐκ ἡθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μου: ὅλοκαντώματα καὶ περὶ ἁμαρτίας οὐκ ἡθόκησας: τότε εἶπον ἴδοὺ ἤκου, ἐν κεφαλὶ βιβλίου γέγραπται περὶ ἐμοῦ, τοῦ ποιῆσαι τὸ θελημάτα σου ὁ Θεὸς ἠβουλήθην: ἐπειδὴ γὰρ "αἷμα ταύρων καὶ τράγων καὶ σποδὸς δαμάλεως" οὐκ ἔξηρκε πρὸς ἀποκάθαρσιν ἁμαρτίας, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ η τῶν ἀλόγων σφαγὴ κατήργησεν ἀν ποτὲ τοῦ θανάτου τὸ κράτος, αὐτὸς εἰσβαίνει Χριστὸς τρόπον τινά τὰς ὑπὲρ ἀπόντων ὑφέξων δίκας.\(^{414}\)

Wherefore He says in the Psalms too, offering Himself as a spotless Sacrifice to God the Father, “Sacrifice and offering You did not want, but a Body you prepared for Me. In whole burnt-offerings and offerings for sin You took no pleasure: then said I, Lo I come (in the chapter of the book it is written of Me) to do Your will, O God, was My choice.” For since “the blood of bulls and of


\(^{414}\) Text from Pusey, Joannis evangelium, vol. 1, p.519.
goats and the ashes of an heifer” sufficed not unto the purging away of sin, nor yet would the slaughter of brute beasts ever have destroyed the power of death, Christ Himself came in in some way to undergo punishment for all.\textsuperscript{415}

As can be seen the quotation is taken from the LXX version with σῶµα, something this quotation has in common with all quotations of Ps. 40:7b found in the writings of Cyril. Further, Cyril’s comment is based on the exegesis found in Hebrews, which is typical of all examples, and hence this one will be discussed in some detail. Although the quotation following immediately upon the quotation from Psalm 40 is taken from Hebrews (Heb. 9:13), it is clear that the quotation from Ps. 40:7b is not taken from Hebrews, since it ends with ἐβουλήθην, thus being longer than the quotation in Hebrews. ἐβουλήθην is not found in any manuscript of Hebrews, but it is found in five of Cyril’s examples.\textsuperscript{416} Moreover the word order τὸ θέληµα σου ὁ Θεός follows Psalm 40 contrary to the word order of Hebrews ὁ θεὸς τὸ θέληµα σου.\textsuperscript{417} That Cyril uses the Old Testament text rather than the New Testament text is also indicated by the next quotation from Is. 53:5, which follows the text from Isaiah (ιάθηµεν) against the quotation found in


\textsuperscript{416} Pusey, \textit{Joannis evangelium}, vol. 1, p.519; MPG, vol. 69, cc.144, 541; vol. 70, c.1173; vol. 77, c.977.

\textsuperscript{417} Both word orders are found in the examples of Cyril.
1 Petr. 2:24 (ιάθητε). Besides being clear that Cyril used the text from Psalms and not from Hebrews, it is evident that his text from Psalms has σῶμα instead of ὀρία. This is also shown by the context, where ὀρία hardly could have been possible. Apparently, the σῶμα of Christ as a reference to ἡ σάρξ μου in John 6:51, is the reason for the quotation from Psalm 40. This fact is underlined not only by the quotation of 1 Petr. 2:24 τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸ ξύλον “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross”, but also by the statement a few lines later δέδωκε τοῖς ἀπάντων ζωῆς ὅ τι Ἰσαάκ σῶμα ὁ Χριστός “For Christ gave his own body for the life of all.”

The other examples found in the writings of Cyril follow the same pattern, where he uses Ps. 40:7b to confirm some Christological aspect. There is never any trace of the MT version or any interpretations based on that version.

3.3.5.10 Theodoret (393–457)

The first example is taken from Theodoret’s Commentary on Psalms, where he discusses the LXX version of Ps. 40:7:

Αλλὰ τὸ νῦν γεγενημένον τούτων ἀπάντων θαυμασιώτερον. Οὐδὲ γὰρ ἕνος ἀνδρός, ἢ ἓνος ἔθνους, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἑθῶν ἀπάντων πραγματεύη τὴν σωτηρίαν, καὶ, τὴν νομικὴν λατρείαν καταπαύσας, τῇ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἁσθενείᾳ συμβιάνουσαν, τὴν καινὴν ἔδωκας χάριν, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν νομοθετούσαν.

418 It should be noted that there are variant readings with ἱάθημεν for 1 Petr. 2:24 in some late MSS and in some versions. Cf. also the following quotation from 1 Petr. 1:24, where Cyril follows 1 Petr. against the text of Isaiah, though changing ἐπὶ into εῖς.
Yet what has now been achieved is more wonderful than all those: you concern yourself with the salvation not of one man or of one nation but of all nations; and bringing to an end the worship prescribed by the Law, which accommodated the Jews’ weakness, you gave the new grace, the worship prescribed by reason. “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you fashioned for me. Holocausts even for sin you did not look for. Then I said, Behold, I am coming.” The apostolic exhortation sings a similar note to this, “I urge you, bretheren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing to God, the worship according to reason” [Rom. 12:1]: In place of the rites of the Law, the Lord required us to consecrate our limbs.
Now, seeing your grace, he says, I offered myself to you in the words, Here I am. This statement, of course, blessed Paul applies to Christ the Lord, and rightly so: he is our nature’s firstfruits, and it is fitting for him in the first place to speak for us and in himself to prefigure in type what is appropriate in our case. Thus he was the first to come to baptism, giving us a glimpse of the grace of baptism; thus he washed the feet of the disciples, providing us with an archetype of humility.420

As can be seen, Theodoret combines the quotation from Ps. 40:7 with Rom. 12:1, just as Didymus did above (and Petrus Chrysologus below). What is especially interesting here is the fact that though it is clear that Theodoret actually uses the LXX version, which is necessary for his argumentation, he does not apply the Christological interpretation from Hebrews to the text. Instead Christ is used as a model for the Christian life, and hence the contrast is not between the sacrifices of the Law and the sacrifice of Christ, but between the sacrifices of the Law and the spiritual/rational sacrifice of the body of the believers, a contrast very close to that between sacrifice and obedience. Hence it is hard to believe that Theodoret was not influenced by interpretations based on the MT version of Ps. 40:7, when he wrote his commentary, though he applied it on the LXX version of the text. A number of additional observations point in the same direction. First, Theodoret is here commenting upon the Psalms and not on Hebrews. Second, in the following paragraph in his comment on Ps. 40:8, he refers to Aquila and Symmachus as well

as to the Jewish interpretations of Scripture. Third, Theodoret was well aware of the important Christological interpretation in Hebrews (for which, see the last example), but he chose not to mention it.

The second quotation from Ps. 40:7b is found in Theodoret’s *Commentary on Jeremiah* 11.15b, and it is a remark on good conduct:

“Μὴ εὐχαὶ καὶ κρέα ἅγια ἀφαιροῦσιν ἀπὸ σοῦ τὰς κακίας σου; ἢ τοῦτος διαφεύξη,” Σαφῶς ἡμᾶς ὁ προφητικὸς ἐδίδαξεν ὅρος καὶ λόγος, ὡς πράξειν ἁγαθήν ὁ Δεσπότης ἦτετε: τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ ὁ θεῖος βοᾷ Δαβίδ: “Θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας; σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι.” Καὶ πάλιν: “Ὅτι εἰ ἠθέλησας θυσίαν, ἔδωκα ἀν, ὅλοκαυτώματα οὐκ εὐδοκήσεις· θυσία τῷ Θεῷ πνεύμα συντετριμμένον· καρδίαν συντετριμμένην καὶ τεταπεινωμένην ὁ Θεὸς οὐκ ἐξουδενώσει.” 421

“Surely vows and holy flesh will not remove from you your wickedness, or will you escape by means of these things?” Safely the prophetic limit and word has taught us that the Lord looks for good conduct. For this also the divine David cries: “Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but a body you have prepared for me.” And again: “because if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it; with whole burnt offerings you will not be pleased. Sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a broken and humbled heart God will not despise.” [Ps. 50:18–19]

Again the quotation follows the LXX version, and it is, as often, combined with Ps. 50. Unfortunately, Theodoret offers no comment on the verse. The same is

421 Text from MPG, vol. 81, c.573.
true of his commentary on Hebrews,\textsuperscript{422} where he only quotes the text in the LXX version, but without adding any comment.

The last two references from Ps. 40:7b are found in the first dialogue of the \textit{Eranistes}, which, according to Theodoret himself, “will contend that the divinity of the only begotten Son is immutable” (\textit{περὶ τοῦ ἄτρεπτον εἶναι τοῦ μονογενοῦς ὑιοῦ τὴν θεότητα δεξεται τὸν ἀγώνα}).\textsuperscript{423}

\begin{quote}
\{ΕΡΑΝ.\} Δεῖξον τοῖνυν ὅτι σῶμα λαβὼν προσήνεγκεν.\{ΟΡΘ.\} Αὐτὸς ὁ θεῖος ἀπόστολος ἐν αὐτῷ γε τῷ χωρίῳ τούτῳ διδάσκει σαφῶς. Ἔπειτ' ὅλην γὰρ οὕτω φησί· “Διὸ εἰσερχόµενος εἰς τὸν κόσµον λέγει· θυσίαν καὶ προσφορὰν οὐκ ἠθέλησας, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι.” Οὐκ εἶπεν, εἰς σῶµα με μεταβέβληκας, ἀλλὰ, “σῶµα κατηρτίσω μοι.” … Ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ὁ Ἰωσὴφ ἁγνὸν τὸ μυστήριον μοιχεῖαν ὑπώπτευσεν, ἐδιδάχθη σαφῶς τοῦ πνεύματος τὴν διάπλασιν. Ταῦτα διὰ τοῦ προφήτου μηνύων εἴρηκε· “Σῶµα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι.” Πνευματικὸς δὲ
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{422} Text in MPG, vol. 82, c.748. According to Riggenbach, \textit{Der Brief}, p.300 n.15, Theodoret has a comment on the Heb. 10:5: \textit{μεταλλάξας οὖν αὐτὴν ὡς ἐξ προσώπου τοῦ Χριστοῦ ταύτη φησίν, ἀντὶ τοῦ ὡτία σῶµα εἰπὼν κατηρτίσω μοι “Therefore, having changed it, as from Christ himself, he says this, instead of ‘ears’ having ‘a body you have prepared for me.’”} Unfortunately, it has not been possible to find this text in any edition, but the meaning should be that Theodoret thought that the author of Hebrews made the change from ‘ears’ to ‘body’ himself.

Eranistes. Show me, then, that he took a body and offered it. Orthodox. The divine Apostle himself teaches this clearly in the same passage. For after a few words he says, “Therefore, on coming into the world, he says, ‘You did not want sacrifice and offering, but you formed a body for me.’” He did not say, “You changed me into a body,” but, “You formed a body for me.” … Since Joseph was ignorant of the mystery and so suspected adultery, he was, therefore, taught clearly that the formation was the work of the Spirit. [God] hinted at this through the prophet by saying, “You formed a body for me.” And the divine Apostle, who was a spiritual man, interpreted the prophecy.

As can be seen Theodoret follows the LXX version, and he uses a Christological interpretation, following the interpretation found in Hebrews.

Summing up the references to Ps 40 in the writings of Theodoret, it is clear that he always uses the LXX version of the text, and that he is aware of interpretations based on both versions. Most interesting, however, is the fact that he appears to have neglected the interpretation found in Hebrews, when

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424 Text from Ettlinger, *Theodoret of Cyrus ... Critical Text*, p.80.


commenting upon Ps. 40:7, and instead followed interpretations based on the MT version of the text.

3.3.5.11 Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church

In the early Greek Church both MT and LXX versions of the text were used, although the majority of examples follow the LXX version with σῶµα instead of ὀρία. Hence there are also interpretations based on both versions, but, as could have been expected, the ones following the Christological interpretation found in Hebrews are the most common. However, for the present investigation the use of the MT version and interpretations based on that version are especially interesting, since it shows an interest in non-Christological interpretations. Given the significance of the Christological interpretation of Ps. 40:7 in Hebrews, it can also be assumed that at least some of these interpretations are of non-Christian or pre-Christian origin. A number of observations point in that direction: the early use of the MT version and an interpretation based on that version by Irenaeus; Eusebius’ use of Symmachus (perhaps a Jew), and the use of the MT version and an interpretation based on that version (perhaps influenced by Symmachus); the combination of Ps. 40:7 with Ps. 50, which is likely to have its origin in the Jewish community (cf. Midrash Tehillim above); the combination with Rom. 12:1, which seems to be based on an non-Christological interpretation of Ps. 40:7; Chrysostom’s combination of Ps. 40:7 with Ps. 18, which appears to be built on the MT version of Ps. 40:7, although Chrysostom uses the LXX version; Theodore of Mopsuestia’s use of the MT version as applied to the Babylonian captivity. Given the large number of interpretations based on the MT version of
Ps. 40:7 in the early Greek Church, of which at least some most certainly are of non-Christian origin, and hence also likely of pre-Christian origin, it is likely that some of these interpretations were also known to the author of Hebrews. Hence it is also likely that some of these interpretations could have influenced the exegesis found in Hebrews, whether it originated with the author himself or not.

3.3.6 Ps. 40:7b in the Early Latin Church

3.3.6.1 Hilarius Pictaviensis (315–367)

Hilarius has one quotation from Ps. 40:7 in his commentary on Psalms, and it is explicitly taken from the psalm and not from Hebrews, although Hebrews is quoted immediately after the quotation from Psalm 40:7. The quotation is used in a context where the superiority of the sacrifice of Christ is discussed, since he gave himself of free will, contrary to the sacrifices prescribed in the Law.

*Tractatus super Psalmos* 13:

Cujus sacrificii alio loco meminit in psalmis: “Hostiam et oblationem noluisti, perfecisti autem mihi corpus”; Deo patri legis sacrificia respuenti, hostiam placentem suscepti corporis offerendo. Cujus oblationis beatus Apostolus ita meminit: “Hoc enim fecit semel se ipsum offerens hostiam Deo” [Heb. 7:27]; omnem humani generis salutem oblatione sanctae hujus et perfectae hostiae redempturus.”

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Now of this sacrifice mention is made in another passage of the Psalms: “Sacrifice and offering you would not, but a body have you prepared for Me”; that is, by offering to God the Father, Who refused the legal sacrifices, the acceptable offering of the body which He received. Of which offering the holy Apostle thus speaks: “For this He did once for all when He offered Himself up”, securing complete salvation for the human race by the offering of this holy, perfect victim.\(^\text{428}\)

Clearly Hilarius uses the LXX version, which hardly could have been replaced by the MT version in the present Christological context, where the focus is the offering of the body of Christ. Hence it could not be expected that there are any traces of the MT version or of any interpretations based on that version either. Interesting is the fact that Hilarius explicitly attributes the LXX version to the psalm and not to Hebrews.

3.3.6.2 Niceta of Remesiana (c. 335–c. 414)

There is one possible reference to Ps. 40:7b in the writings of Niceta, but it is only an allusion, and it is found in the work *Names and Titles of our Saviour*, where Niceta discusses various names and titles attributed to Jesus:

\[
\text{Sacerdos dicitur uel quia suum corpus oblationem et hostiam optulit Deo Patri}
\]

\[
\text{pro nobis; uel quod per nos dies singulos offerri dignatur.}\(^\text{429}\)
\]


For two reasons He is called a priest; first, because He offered up His body as an oblation and victim to God the Father for us; second, because, through us, He condescends day after day to be offered up.\textsuperscript{430}

It is not totally clear that Niceta is at all referring to Ps. 40:7b, but, if that is the case, it is evident that his argument follows the LXX version of the text and the interpretation found in Hebrews.

3.3.6.3 Ambrose (340–397)

There are two references to Ps. 40:7 in the works of Ambrose in his commentary on Psalm 39.\textsuperscript{431} In the first one he comments on Ps. 40:6–9:

\begin{quote}
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{431} There is another reference to Ps. 40:7 in Ambrose’s work \textit{Defence of David} 1.17.80, but it does not contain Ps. 40:7b. There is also an allusion in \textit{On the Christian Faith} 3.11.78, but it is too vague to be of any value.
quia peccatorum remissor advenerat. Non erat remedium necessarium Legis, ubi Legis Auctor astabat.⁴³²

When does the true Jesus come? Listen to his own words: “I have declared, and I have spoken; they are multiplied above number. Sacrifice and oblation you did not desire, but you have fashioned a body for me. Then I said: ‘Look, I am coming’; in the head of the book it is written of me that I should do your will, O Lord, my God” [Ps. 40:6–9]. Can anything be more evident than this? The true Jesus comes to us in his gracious gift of the Gospel. He himself has spoken, and above number are the nations of believers who have gathered together, where before scarcely one person believed. He came himself in the flesh, and put an end to the sacrifice of the Jews. No longer would oblation be offered for sin, for he who has power to forgive has come. No longer was there any need for the remedy of the Law, for the Author of the Law was at hand.⁴³³

There can be no doubt that Ambrose had a text following the LXX version, since his comment is on the body of Christ. Equally clear is it that he adopts the same Christological interpretation as can be found in the Letter to the Hebrews.

The second one is a comment on verses 12–18:

26. (Vers. 15.) Et quia ex persona Salvatoris totum hunc esse diximus psalmum;
ne forte dicant apollinaristae: Ecce corpus, dixit, praeparasti mihi (Psalm. vers.

⁴³² Text from Michael Petschenig and Michaela Zelzer, Sancti Ambrosii opera. P. 6, Explanatio psalmorum XII (Vindobona, 1999), p.218

This whole psalm is spoken in the person of Christ. As for the Apollinarists, they need not object that the Psalmist has said: “See, you have prepared a body for me” [Ps. 40:7] and did not say: “You have prepared a soul”. Let those heretics listen to what the Psalmist says later on in the psalm: “Let them be confounded and ashamed together, that [they] seek after my soul to take it away” [Ps. 40:15].

As in the previous example, Ambrose clearly used the LXX version of Ps. 40:7, and he followed the interpretation found in Hebrews.

3.3.6.4 Jerome (350–420)

Unfortunately, there are no comments on Ps 40:7b in the works of Jerome, which is noteworthy, since Jerome discusses verse seven in his commentary on Psalms and the differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts in his letter to the Gothic clergymen Sunnia and Fripila. Jerome also appears to have used both versions

434 Text from Petschenig and Zelzer, Sancti Ambrosii ... Explanatio, p.229.
435 Translation from Riain, Commentary, p.178.
436 Cf. Grelot, Le mystère, p.130.
of Ps. 40:7b for his translation of the psalm. In his commentary on Psalms Jerome has a remark on 40:7c–8, which is of some interest:

“Holocausta et pro peccato noluisti ; tunc dixi, Ecce venio. In capite libri scriptum est de me.” Quia sacrificia et caerimonias Iudaerum, ablata superstitione legis veteris, spiritualis evangelii religione mutasti: propterea laetus in mundum venio. Et de me scribitur: “In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum.”

“Burnt offerings and sin offerings you have not required. Then I said, See I come. In the beginning of the book it is written of me.” For, after the superstition of the old law had been abolished, you changed the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jews by the worship of the spiritual Gospel. Therefore I gladly come into the world. And it is written about me: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word.”

As can be seen, the last words of verse seven are put into the mouth of Jesus (the Word/God). Still there is no sign of the Christological interpretation found in Hebrews. Hence the contrast is not between the sacrifices of the Law and the sacrifice of Christ, neither between sacrifice and obedience, but between the sacrifices of the Law and spiritual worship, which could indicate that Jerome here...

Fripila concerning places in their copy of the Psalter which had been corrupted from the Septuagint’, *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, vol. 36 (1937), p.522.

had the MT version in mind and also an interpretation based on that version (cf. Rm. 12:1 and Didymus above).

3.3.6.5 Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

Augustine has two references to Ps. 40:7b, one in his *Expositions on Psalms* and one in the *City of God*. In the first one he discusses the Eucharist, *Exp. Ps.* 39.12–13:


> “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire”, he says. What does that imply? That we are left in our days with no sacrifice? Far from it. “But you have perfected a body for me.” … We are in this body, we are sharers in this body … “Christ has been immolated as our Passover.” [1Cor. 5:7] This is the slain lamb that I recognize: the Christ has been immolated. … we hold fast to the body of Christ, we hold fast to the blood of Christ.\(^{440}\)


Augustine uses the LXX version of the text, and it is clear from the context that he could not have used the MT version of the text for his argument, since it follows the Christological interpretation found in Hebrews.

The second one is a comment on Eccl. 8:15, Civ. 17.20:

Nam et in alio libro, qui vocatur Ecclesiastes, ubi ait, Non est bonum homini, nisi quod manducabit et bibet [Eccl. 8:15]; quid credibilius dicere intelligitur, quam quod ad participationem mensae hujus pertinet, quam sacerdos ipse Mediator Testamenti novi exhibet secundum ordinem Melchisedech de corpore et sanguine suo? Id enim sacrificium successit omnibus illis sacrificiis veteris Testamenti, quae immolabantur in umbra futuri: propter quod etiam vocem illam in Psalmo tricesimo et nono ejusdem Mediatoris per prophetiam loquentis agnoscamus: Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem perfecisti mihi. Quia pro illis omnibus sacrificiis et oblationibus corpus ejus offertur, et participantibus ministratur.  

Again, in another book, called Ecclesiastes, it is said, “There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink.” And what interpretation of this could be more readily believable than that it refers to the sharing of this table which the Priest Himself provides, the Mediator of the new covenant according the order of Melchizedek: the table furnished with His own body and blood? For it is that sacrifice which has superseded all the sacrifices of the old covenant, which were offered as a foreshadowing of that which was to come. It

is for this reason that we also recognise in Psalm 40 the voice of the same Mediator, saying in prophesy, “Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; but a body hast Thou perfected for me”; for, instead of all those sacrifices and oblations, His body is offered, and served up to the partakers of it.\textsuperscript{442}

Here too Augustine uses the LXX version of the text, and again he has a Christological interpretation following Hebrews. Hence there are no signs of the MT version in the writings of Augustine or of any interpretations based on that version of Ps. 40:7b.\textsuperscript{443}

3.3.6.6 \textit{Julius of Eclanum (c. 386–c. 455)}

This is a translation of Theodore of Mopsuestia, for which, see above.\textsuperscript{444}

3.3.6.7 \textit{Petrus Chrysologus (406–450)}

Petrus has one reference to Ps. 40:7b in his 108\textsuperscript{th} sermon, which is a comment on Rom. 12:1, in which Petrus, interestingly enough, appears to use both the Christological interpretation of Hebrews and the common interpretation of the MT version of Ps. 40:7. After quoting Rom. 12:1 Petrus concludes:

\textsuperscript{442} Translation from R.W. Dyson, \textit{Augustine: The city of God against the pagans} (Cambridge, 1998), p.815.


\textsuperscript{444} Text in Lucas de Coninck et al., \textit{Theodori Mopsuesteni Expositionis in psalmos Iuliano Aeclanensi interprete in Latinum versae quae supersunt} (Turnhout, 1977), pp.184–186.
… qui corpus suum pro uita saeculi uitaliter immolauit. Et uere corpus suum fecit hostiam uiuam, qui uiuit occisus.\textsuperscript{445}

… He [Christ] immolated His Body for the life of the world. And He truly made His body a living sacrifice, since He still lives although He was slain.\textsuperscript{446}

Then, after quoting Rom. 12:1 again and Ps. 40:7 he comments:

Esto, homo, esto et dei sacrificium et sacerdos; non amittas quod tibi diuina dedit et concessit auctoritas. Induere sanctitatis stolam, praecingere balteum castitatis, … Deus fidem, non mortem quae
t; uotum, non sanguinem sitit; placatur uoluntate, non nece.\textsuperscript{447}

Be, O man, be both a sacrifice to God and a priest. Do not lose what the divine authority gave and conceded to you. Put on the robe of sanctity, gird yourself with the belt of chastity. … God seeks belief from you, not death. He thirsts for self-dedication, not blood. He is placated by good will, not by slaughter.\textsuperscript{448}

It should be noted that, when Petrus refers to the offering of the body of Christ, he does not refer to Ps. 40:7b. Further, when he contrasts sacrifice and obedience, it is a contrast between the unbloody sacrifice of the believers’ body to the bloody


\textsuperscript{448} Translation from Ganss, \textit{Saint Peter}, pp.169–170.
sacrifices of the Law. Although the MT version is not mentioned and obedience per se is not in focus, it might well be that Petrus, when referring to Ps. 40:7, had the common interpretation of the MT version in mind. However, he applies it to a text with σῶμα. Be as it may with the source for Petrus’ interpretation, what is interesting is that he uses Ps. 40:7 to contrast bloody sacrifices with the unbloody sacrifice of believers, and in doing so he refers to Abraham’s offering of Isaac, which was ordered, but then not allowed to be executed:

Nam quid aliud Abraham quam corpus suum immolabat in filio? Quid aliud deus quam fidem requirebat in patre, qui filium, sicut offerri iussit, sic non permisit occidi?\textsuperscript{449}

For, what else than his own body was Abraham immolating in his son? What else than faith was God requiring in the father, since He ordered the son to be offered but did not allow him to be killed?\textsuperscript{450}

This interpretation of Ps. 40:7 on a text with σῶμα, of course, could have been Petrus’ own, but especially the combination with Gen. 22 shows that such an interpretation of Ps. 40:7 could well have been known to the author of Hebrews. If that was the case, it most probably facilitated his Christological interpretation of Ps. 40:7 as well.

\textsuperscript{449} Text from Olivar, \textit{Petrus Chrysologus}, p.671.

\textsuperscript{450} Translation from Ganss, \textit{Saint Peter}, p.170.
3.3.6.8 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church

Though there are much fewer examples among the Latin Church Fathers it can be seen that they follow the same pattern as the Greek Church Fathers, which means that both versions were known, and that interpretations based on both versions were used. It should be noted though, that there is no trace of the MT version before Jerome. That Jerome, who, of course, knew both versions, and for whom the MT version most probably was the “correct” one, does not give any Christological interpretation of this verse following Hebrews is interesting. Instead he has an interpretation contrasting the sacrifices of the Law with spiritual worship, something like the offering in Rom. 12, which is also discussed by Petrus Chrysologus. Petrus’ exposition of Rom. 12 is interesting, since he refers to the offering of the body of Christ as the background for the unbloody offering of the bodies of the believers, but he also refers to Gen. 22, where the requested offering of Isaac is substituted by the offering of a ram. Given the low number of Latin examples, it is not possible to draw any far-reaching conclusions. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Latin material does not contradict the Greek material, and that both versions of the text were used and interpreted by the early Latin Church Fathers.

3.3.7 Ps. 40:7b: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context

There are no quotations of Ps. 40:7b preserved from the time of the Second Temple, which is surprising given the very awkward and ambiguous nature of this text. Therefore, it is very important to point out here that the extant material is
extremely scarce, and what has been handed down is most certainly only a very small piece of the exegetical activity in the Second Temple Jewish community. Hence, given the nature of Ps. 40:7, the text is likely to have received quite some attention and been the object of more interpretative activity than has been preserved till today, which is also clearly indicated by the later Jewish material. In this material it is clear that there is no sign of the LXX version, but on the other hand, there are quite a number of different interpretations based on the fact that the text of the MT version is open for various interpretations. The common interpretation of Ps. 40:7, which focuses on the contrast between sacrifice and obedience is also represented, and it is combined with a number of other Old Testament texts indicating the same contrast between sacrifice and obedience. In the early Christian material both versions were known and used, and interpretations were based on both versions. Most interesting for the present investigation are the interpretations based on the MT version, such as Irenaeus’ very early use and interpretation of the text. Other examples are Didymus’ combination of Ps. 40:7 and Ps. 50, which is also found in the Midrash Tehillim, and Chrysostom’s combination of Ps. 40:7 and Ps. 18:44–45, which appears to be based on the MT version of Ps. 40:7. Still Chrysostom, according to the preserved text, actually had σῶμα in his text. Some examples also appear to have an interpretation, which, if known to the author of Hebrews, definitely would have facilitated his Christological interpretation, for example, Eusebius’ paraphrase of Ps. 40:8, clearly using sacrificial language: ἀντὶ ὀλοκαυτομάτων καὶ τῶν περὶ ἁμαρτίας θυσίων αὐτὸς ἐμειτόν προσῆγαγόν σοι. That Eusebius actually uses the
MT version and that it does not seem to be taken in a Christological sense is interesting. Further, the combination should be mentioned of Ps. 40:7 and Rom. 12 (Didymus, Theodoret, Petrus Chrysologus), which contrasts the bloody sacrifices prescribed in the Law with the unbloody sacrifices of the believers’ bodies, and hence seems to be based on an interpretation of Ps. 40:7 not very far from the common interpretation of the MT version. Consequently, a scenario where the MT version was not interpreted in the Jewish community before the time of Hebrews, but than interpreted in both the Christian and Jewish communities in approximately the same way, and that these interpretations should have no connection, is more than unlikely. Instead many of the interpretations found in the early Jewish and Christian communities are likely to have existed at the time when the Letter to the Hebrews was composed, and hence they most probably also were known to the author of Hebrews.

3.4 Ps. 40:7b in Heb. 10:5

3.4.1 Introduction
The object of the present chapter, Ps. 40:7b in Heb. 10:5, is a text that is not only found in two distinctly different versions, but the MT version is also quite awkward and ambiguous, which probably is the reason that it exists in different versions. Hence it is assumed that the LXX version of the text is not the product of the author of Hebrews, but it existed already well before the time of Hebrews. On the other hand, the origin of the two versions cannot be retrieved, neither can
it be taken for granted that either version represents the original. Consequently, such a complicated text is also likely to have been interpreted variously, and hence at the time when Hebrews was composed, there most probably existed not only two different versions of the text, but also a number of different interpretations based on the different versions. As noted above, the extant material is only a very small piece of what most certainly existed at the time when Hebrews was composed, and the absence of any interpretations of Ps. 40:7 prior to Hebrews cannot be taken as a proof that such interpretations did not exist at that time. However, there is no doubt which version was used by the author of Hebrews, namely the LXX version with σῶµα, and not the MT version with ὀσία. Neither is there any doubt how the text was interpreted by the same author, who took σῶµα as the body of Christ, the voluntary perfect offering to take away the sins and cleanse the consciences of the believers. Further, it should be underlined that the LXX version is necessary for the interpretation found in Hebrews, and it could not have been based on the MT version. It should also be noted that the common interpretation of the MT version of the text, stressing a contrast between sacrifices according to the Law and obedience, makes good sense in the context of the Old Testament, where several texts can be interpreted in the same direction. The LXX version, on the other hand, interpreted according to Hebrews, seems to have no counterpart in the Old Testament. Turning to the interpretations of Ps. 40:7b preserved in the early Jewish and Christian communities, it can be seen that in the Jewish context there is great variation between the interpretations, and the ambiguities of the Hebrew text are widely utilized. Most common, however, is the
interpretation focusing on the contrast between sacrifices and obedience. In the Christian context, on the other hand, there are mainly two different interpretations, one based on the MT version and following the common Jewish interpretation, and one based on the LXX version following the interpretation found in Hebrews. Given this background of Ps. 40:7b, the question arises: how did the different versions and the interpretations based on the versions affect the interpretation found in Hebrews?

3.4.2 The Interpretation of Ps. 40:7b in Heb. 10:5

It is evident that the author of Hebrews used Ps. 40:7 as a proof text to show that the sacrifices prescribed in the Law were no longer desirable to God, or in any case they could not take away the sins and cleanse the consciences of the believers, Heb. 10:1–4. Instead the body of Christ was offered as a perfect offering, which could accomplish what the old sacrifices were unable to do, Heb. 10:5c, 10. The reason for the author of Hebrews to choose precisely this Old Testament text for his argument was, of course, not random. On the contrary, this was probably the most suitable text to be used as a proof text here, since no other text offers a contrast between the sacrifices according to the Law and the sacrifice of a human body. It is also evident that it is only the LXX version of Ps. 40:7 with σῶµα that can be used as a proof text for this argument, since the MT version of Ps. 40:7 with ὀρίζω has nothing to say about the body of Christ. But, since the idea of Christ as an offering by no means is the invention of the author of Hebrews (cf. for example, 1 Cor. 5:7 and Eph. 5:2), why was he the first one to apply Ps. 40:7
to the offering of Christ? If the text is a product by the author of Hebrews, the answer is obvious, but since most scholars today agree that the LXX version of the text was not a product of the author of Hebrews, what could have been the reason for him to use the text? One basic assumption for the present investigation is that the author of Hebrews did not compose his Letter in a vacuum, and that the context in which he worked abounded in Biblical interpretations, and that some of them might have influenced his interpretation. However, as was noted above there are no interpretations preserved of Ps. 40:7 prior to the composition of Hebrews, but there is good reason to believe the interpretations preserved in the early post Second Temple communities, both Jewish and Christian, especially those based on the MT version, originated well before the time of Hebrews. The reason to assume that to be true is that not only the text of the Bible was handed over, but also its interpretations. Hence it is likely to find traces of earlier interpretations in later sources, which makes it possible to retrieve interpretations from the time when Hebrews was composed, although there are no contemporary sources. Some of these interpretations and their possible influence on the author of Hebrews will be discussed below.

The first one is the quite common combination of Ps. 40:7 and Rom. 12 (Didymus, Theodoret, Petrus Chrysologus), which is interesting, since it is a non-Christological interpretation of the LXX version with σῶμα, which contrasts the bloody sacrifices prescribed in the Law with the unbloody sacrifices of the believers’ bodies. Such an interpretation of the LXX version of Ps. 40:7 could well have existed in the pre-Christian Jewish community, since it is not very far
from the common interpretation of the MT version, which most certainly was known in that community. Taking into account that interpretations sometimes were combined with the standard text, rather than with the text upon which they were based,\textsuperscript{451} the combination of the common interpretation of the MT version with a text containing σῶμα is not very far-fetched. For the author of Hebrews such an interpretation, contrasting the sacrifices of the Law with the sacrifice of a believer’s body (even though that sacrifice is unbloody), of course would greatly have facilitated his interpretation of Ps. 40:7b.

The next example is from one of Eusebius’ expositions on Ps. 40:7, where he uses a text with ὀτία (or ὅτα). Hence his paraphrase of Ps. 40:8 αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγόν σοι is based on a text with ὀτία (or ὅτα), which is interesting since it fits the context of Hebrews very well. However, there is no sign of any sacrifice of the body of Christ or any other reference to Hebrews in this context, although προσφέρω is definitely sacrificial language used both immediately before Heb. 10:7 (Heb. 10:1, 2) and after (Heb. 10:11, 12). αὐτὸς ἐμαυτὸν προσήγαγόν σοι could perhaps be a reference to Heb. 10:5 echoing Heb. 9:14 δὲ διὰ πνεῦματος αἰωνίου ἐαυτὸν προσήνεγκεν ἄμωμον τῷ θεῷ, but in that case the absence of any explicit reference to Hebrews or the sacrifice of Christ as a better sacrifice than the old ones is strange. In the context of Eusebius’ Commentary on Psalms it is instead the common contrast between sacrifice and obedience that appears to be in focus. It should be noted that both before and after the reference to Ps. 40

\textsuperscript{451} Cf. Lim, \textit{Pesharim}, pp.54–63, and the discussion in the introduction.
Eusebius frequently refers to the interpretation by Symmachus, which he also cites extensively and compares with the text of the LXX. Perhaps Eusebius was not only influenced here by the translation of Symmachus, but also by accompanying interpretations. It has been argued that Symmachus was a Jew, and in that case the comment on Ps. 40:8 perhaps indicates how the text was interpreted in the Jewish community. If such an interpretation actually was known to the author of Hebrews, it could well have influenced his interpretation of the text in a Christological way.

The following example is from Didymus, who used and interpreted both versions of Ps. 40:7. In this example he combines Ps. 40:7 with Ps. 50:14 “offer a sacrifice of praise to God”, but he refers to the interpretations of others. Interestingly enough, one of these interpretations is based on Aquila’s translation of the psalm: ὠτία δὲ μοι ἔσκαψας. Given the obvious connections between Ps. 40 and 50, there seems to be good reason to believe that such interpretations did exist at the time of the Second Temple and hence were known to the author of Hebrews. This is also underlined by the fact that Ps. 50 is often quoted together with Ps. 40:7, as for instance in Midrash Tehillim. Further, it should be noted that there is a contrast not between sacrifices and obedience, or between general sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ, but between the general sacrifices and the spiritual sacrifice of praise. If such an interpretation was available to the author of Hebrews, it definitely facilitated the interpretation found in Heb. 10. Taking into account that interpretations were not always accompanied by the version of the text on which they were based, and the assumption that the LXX version of the
text was known to the author of Hebrews, it is not unlikely that interpretations based on the MT version of the text were later combined with the LXX version of the text with σῶμα. Such a combination would, of course, have facilitated the interpretation found in Hebrews even more.

Such an example can perhaps be found in one of Chrysostom’s comments on Ps. 40:7, which combines it with Ps. 18:44–45. Interesting here is that the connection between the two passages is explicitly said to be the obedience, built on the hearing of God. Such a connection between Ps. 40:7 and Ps. 18:44–45 is evident, when the MT version of Ps. 40:7 is used, but quite unlikely with the LXX version. Therefore, it is highly probable that the connection between the two passages in Psalms is not built on the LXX version, but on the MT version. Still, in the preserved text, Chrysostom uses the LXX version with σῶμα, although it does not seem to be required by the context.

Finally, Petrus Chrysologus’ combination of Ps. 40:7b with Gen. 22, and Theodore of Mopsuestia’s application of Ps. 40:7 on the Babylonian captivity should be mentioned. Both interpretations appear to be of the kind that they rather originated in the Jewish community, than in the early Church.

Consequently, though there are no earlier interpretations of Ps. 40:7b extant, there are obvious reasons to presume that the author of Hebrews was not the first one to interpret the text. On the contrary, there appears to have been an abundance of different interpretations based on the different versions of the text. Some of these clearly show some resemblance to the interpretation found in Hebrews, and it is very likely that the author of Hebrews did not interpret Ps. 40:7 from scratch,
but he most probably draw on earlier interpretations. Taking into account that the interpretations not always were accompanied by the version of the text on which they were based, it is also possible that some combination of text and interpretation facilitated his use of Ps. 40:7 as proof text in Heb. 10:5.

3.5 Conclusions

Ps. 40:7 most certainly existed in two distinctly different versions when the author of Hebrews wrote his Letter, one which is preserved in the Hebrew text, מִיְּמָן, and one in the Greek text, σῶμα δὲ κατηρτίσω μοι. Though it has been argued that the Greek version, which is quoted in Hebrews, was also the product of the author himself, it is contended in the present investigation that this is not very likely. Furthermore, both versions were interpreted at the time when Hebrews was composed; the Hebrew version was usually interpreted as some kind of obedience in contrast to the observance of the Torah, while the Greek version of the text, which never is found in the Jewish context (after Hebrews), is usually interpreted in a Christological way. Important to the present investigation, though, are the not very frequent, but quite varying, interpretations found in the early Midrashim. This multitude of interpretations seems to have been inspired by the very ambiguous text, in which both subject, object, and the meaning of the words are open for interpretation. No doubt, the author of Hebrews could have been encouraged by the indistinct character of the text to interpret it Christologically, whether or not he was responsible for the text with σῶμα. Anyhow, contrary to the two other texts discussed in this study, the author in this case explicitly gives
an interpretation of the text he used, and there can be no uncertainty about how he interpreted σῶμα, namely as the body of Christ. Thus later sources have little to add about the understanding of Hebrews in this case. However, it can be asked if the interpretation found in Hebrews originated with the author himself, only because there seem to be no earlier similar interpretations extant. As already pointed out, the MT version of the text was interpreted variously, and there appears to be no good reason not to assume the same for the LXX version. Therefore it is also likely that they were known to the author of Hebrews, and that they could have influenced his interpretation, although an interpretation of human sacrifice substituting the sacrifices of the Torah is unlikely to have been found outside the Christian context. As in the previous chapter on Jer. 31:33, it has to be concluded that the meaning of the LXX version in a pre-Christian context is not known, but an interpretation similar to the one of the MT version is not unlikely, especially since it has been argued that the meaning of the LXX version is actually the same as the MT version.
4. Genesis 47:31b in Hebrews 11:21

4.1 Introduction

At first glance the final quotation discussed in this study might seem quite uncomplicated, and the difference between the versions appears to be only a matter of different vocalization of the same Hebrew consonantal text. Hence it should have no far-reaching implications for the interpretation of Hebrews. However, a quick look into the commentaries shows that the text has quite a complicated history, and its interpretation is anything but simple. Grässer, for example, states that “The addition καὶ προσεκύνησεν κτλ. in v. 21b from Gen. 47:31b LXX is mysterious … the action as such is not unambiguous” And Grässer appears to be right. Not only is the Old Testament text preserved in two distinctly different versions, but the Genesis-text is put in a different Old Testament context in Hebrews from that which it has in the Genesis narrative. Further, the meaning of the text in its original Old Testament setting is unclear in both versions. Westermann concludes that we “no longer know the meaning of the


262
phrase”,  

and Sarna points out that it “is not clear whether it is a token of gratitude to Joseph or an expression of thanks and praise to God”.  

Thus the reason for the quotation in Hebrews is also unclear, and the new context in Hebrews does not facilitate its interpretation in any way. Hence the explanation given by Attridge might be too simplistic: “Our author may have cited the verse in its original sense simply to reinforce the point that Jacob was on the point of death.” On the other hand, the complicated nature of the quotation makes it particularly interesting for the present investigation. In addition to its complexity one important aspect of this quotation should be pointed out, namely that the interpretations of this text mostly do not seem to represent any particular Jewish or Christian theology. This also means that it could be expected that similar interpretations can be found both in the post Second Temple Jewish community and in the early Church. Further, if the assumption is right that the author of Hebrews composed his Letter in a Second Temple Jewish context, there is reason to believe that his interpretation should have affinities with the interpretations in the Jewish community.


4.2 The Text of Gen. 47:31b

4.2.1 Gen. 47:31b and the Differences between the Versions

The MT version of Gen. 47:31b reads "Then Israel bowed himself on the head of his bed", while the LXX version has καὶ προσεκύνησέν Ισραηλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ “And Israel did obeisance upon the top of his staff”. The difference between the two versions is, from a technical point of view, very small and only affects the vocalization of the Hebrew consonantal text הָפִּים and the addition of αὐτοῦ in the Septuagint. In the Masoretic Hebrew text הָפִּים is vocalized as הָפִּים “bed”, while the translator of the Septuagint apparently had a different vocalization in mind, namely πᾶς “staff”. The addition of the pronoun αὐτοῦ in the Septuagint does not really add anything to the meaning of the text, since it was already clear that the staff most probably belonged to a male person. αὐτοῦ could refer to Jacob, which is likely, since he is the male named most recently in the text, but as can be seen in the texts below, this is a view challenged by several of the early interpreters. αὐτοῦ could also refer to Joseph, as it is taken by a number of interpreters, or to any other male person, which, however, is very unlikely, and not indicated in any of the interpretations. NETS reads “And Israel did obeisance upon the top of his staff”, which is also open to interpretation, since “his”, of course, can refer either to
Jacob, to Joseph, or to any other male person.\textsuperscript{456} The rest of the verse appears to contain only standard renderings of the Hebrew text in the Septuagint.

It should be noted, however, that the vocalization of the Hebrew text presumed by the translator of the Septuagint could also be rendered by āρχων τῆς φυλῆς as in Num. 30:2 and 2 Chr. 5:2. In English that would give approximately “and Israel worshipped the ruler of his tribe”, i.e., Jacob worshipped his son Joseph just as it was foretold in Joseph’s dreams in Gen. 37:7 and 9.\textsuperscript{457} Although this meaning is not explicit in the rendering of the Septuagint, it seems to be implicit in a number of interpretations of the early Church as well as in some early Jewish interpretations. In fact it is still presupposed in contemporary Jewish commentaries, although the text on which it is based has not been used for more than thousand years:

The meaning of Jacob/Israel’s bowing is unclear (cf. 1 Kings 1.47). If he bows to Joseph, he fulfils the second of the latter’s two predictive dreams.\textsuperscript{458}


\textsuperscript{457} Cf. Mic. 7:14 in Theodoret’s, Interpretatio in xii prophetas minores, MPG, vol. 81, c.1784, lII7–23: ποίμαινε τὸν λαὸν σου ἐν ῥάβδῳ φυλῆς σου, πρόβατα κληρονομίας σου. … Τὸ δὲ, Ἐν ράβδῳ φυλῆς σου, τὴν τοῦ Ἰούδα σημαίνει φυλήν.

\textsuperscript{458} Adele Berlin et al., The Jewish Study Bible: Jewish Publication Society Tanakh translation (Oxford, 1999), p.94. Cf. Sarna quoted above. The source for this
The interpretation with Joseph as the object of Jacob’s worship has been questioned by a significant number of modern interpreters at least since Riggenbach who argued that “das mit προσκυνεῖν verbundene ἐπί bezeichnet stets den Ort, nicht das Objekt der Huldigung”.\footnote{Riggenbach, Der Brief, p.367, is followed by, e.g., Michel, Kritisch-exegetischer, p.405 n.1, and Attridge, The Epistle, p.336.} For a number of reasons this questioning of the interpretation might have been too hasty. First, though it is right that ἐπί usually indicates the place of worship and not the object (in fact there are no indisputable examples of ἐπί indicating the object of worship), the examples of ἐπί indicating the place of worship are very few, and should thus be studied in some detail. But before that it aught to be pointed out that the examples of הָנָה לָבֵן,\footnote{For the verb הָנָה, see, e.g., J.A. Emerton, ‘The Etymology of Hištaḥawāḥ’, Oudtestamentische Studiën, vol. 20 (1977), pp.41–55; G.I. Davies, ‘A Note on the Etymology of hištaḥawāḥ’, VT, vol. 29 no. 4 (1979), pp.493–495; Siegfried Kreuzer, ‘Zur Bedeutung und Etymologie von hištaḥawāḥ’, VT, vol. 35, no. 1 (1985), pp.39–60.} which is the Vorlage of προσκυνέω ἐπί in Gen. 47:31b, are even more rare than the Greek construction προσκυνέω ἐπί itself. There are only six examples of this construction in MT (Gen. 47:31b; Lev. 26:1; 1 King 1:47;\footnote{This verse is frequently referred to (e.g., Weiss, Der Brief, p.600 nn.69 and 70) as a parallel to Gen. 47:31b indicating that the LXX translator of Gen. 47:31b made a mistake, but it should be noticed that 1 Kings 1:47 has מָלֵא and not מַעְרָב as in Gen. 47:31b.} Is. interpretation is probably the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b given in the Talmud, which is discussed below.

\footnote{Riggenbach, Der Brief, p.367, is followed by, e.g., Michel, Kritisch-exegetischer, p.405 n.1, and Attridge, The Epistle, p.336.}
60:14; Zeph. 1:5; Ezek. 46:2). In the last three examples ִלֶל apparently indicates the place of worship, while in Lev. 26:1 ִלֶל indicates the object of worship (rendered by προσκυνήσαι αὐτῷ). In the last two it is not totally clear whether ִלֶל indicates the place or the object of worship. Though the examples are very few, it is clear that it cannot be ruled out that ִלֶל indicates the object of worship in Gen. 47:31b.

Concerning προσκυνέω ἐπί the interpretation might at first glance appear to be more clear-cut, but this does not seem to be the case. It should be noted that all examples of προσκυνέω ἐπί in the Greek literature appear to be found exclusively in the Septuagint, and even in the Septuagint the examples are quite infrequent. Hence there are no examples outside the Septuagint that could provide a clue as how to understand the expression. In fact Helbing does not even mention the use of προσκυνέω ἐπί in his monograph on the case syntax of the verb in the Septuagint, though he devotes two whole pages to the verb προσκυνέω. Of the

Moreover, although ִלֶל apparently indicates the place of worship, the object of worship is open to interpretation (cf. Jan Heller, ‘Stabesanbetung? (Hebr 11,21 — 47,31)’, Communio Viatorum, vol. 16, no. 4 (1973), p.258).


Cf. the early Jewish interpretations of Gen. 47:31b in Talmud and Midrash below.

Robert Helbing, Die Kasussyntax der Verba bei den Septuaginta (Göttingen, 1928), pp.296–298. A search on the TLG#E disc resulted in no examples of προσκυνέω with ἐπί
23 examples of προσκυνέω ἐπί 18 are found in the fixed expression ἐπί τὴν γῆν (Gen. 48:12 ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς), all being renderings of ἐπί τὴν γῆν (1 Sam. 25:23 ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν) and thus also indicating the place of worship. The remaining five examples of προσκυνέω ἐπί are (beside Gen. 47:31b and 1 Kings 1:47) Zeph. 1:5 καὶ τοὺς προσκυνοῦντας ἐπὶ τὰ δόματα τῇ στρατιᾷ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ; Is. 27:13 καὶ προσκυνήσουσιν τῷ κυρίῳ ἐπὶ τὸ ὅριον τὸ ἁγιὸν ἐν Ἰερουσαλήμ; Ezek. 46:2 καὶ προσκυνήσει ἐπὶ τοῦ προθύρου τῆς πύλης. Consequently, although there are no undisputable examples of προσκυνέω ἐπί where ἐπί indicates the object of worship, there are only five examples of προσκυνέω ἐπί on the whole beside the fixed expression προσκυνέω + ἐπί τὴν γῆν in the Septuagint, and no examples outside the Septuagint or texts related to the Septuagint. Therefore, it is especially important to point out that most Greek speaking Church Fathers understand ἐπί as indicating the object, and this seems to be the case already with Origen. 465 It could also be noted that while ἐπὶ naturally (but not necessarily) indicates the subject of ἐπικούνησαν, it is not clear that Ἰσραήλ is the subject of προσκυνήσει, since it has no marker of case, and hence could be taken as either subject or object.

465 For which, see below on the Greek Church Fathers. See also the Vetus Latina version of Heb. 11:21.
4.2.1.1 MT version of Gen. 47:31b

The MT version reads as follows: יִנָּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל עַל דָּרֶךְ מַעֲשֵׂה הָאֱלֹהִים and there are no variant readings noted in the standard editions of the Hebrew text. There are three Greek translations preserved of the MT version of the text: Aquila’s, which reads καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ισραηλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρον τῆς κλίνης, Symmachus’, which reads καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ισραηλ ἐπὶ κεφαλῆς τῆς κλίνης, and τὸ Ἰουδαϊκὸν, which reads ἐπὶ προσκεφάλαιον τῆς κλίνης αὐτοῦ. Theodotion follows the LXX version.\(^\text{466}\)

The Latin rendering of the MT version is Jerome’s translation of Genesis, found in the Vulgate, which reads adoravit Israhel Deum conversus ad lectuli caput.\(^\text{467}\) As can be seen the Vulgate adds Deum “God”, which makes it clear who is the object of the worship, but this does not seem to have support in any Hebrew version, but appears to be an additional interpretation by Jerome.

4.2.1.2 LXX version of Gen. 47:31b

The LXX version reads καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ισραηλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, and there are only a couple of variant readings in some late manuscripts of


the Septuagint: αὐτῷ is added after προσεκύνησεν, and Ἰσραήλ is replaced by Ἰωσηφ. It should be noted, of course, that in Hebrews Ἰσραήλ is left out, and that there is a variant reading in \(\Psi\), which is discussed below.

There are a number of old Latin renderings of the LXX version in the *Vetus Latina* of Genesis: adoravit Istrahel super [with variant readings: in/contra] cacumen [with the variant readings caput/fastigium/capite/summitatem] virgae suae [with the variant reading eius],\(^{469}\) and of Hebrews: adoravit [with the variant reading adorabit] in [with the variant reading super or without a preposition] cacumine [with the variant readings fastigium/cacumen] virgae suae [with the variant reading eius],\(^{470}\) and it is also followed by Jerome in his *Vulgate* translation of Hebrews: adoravit fastigium virgae eius.\(^{471}\) Two of these variant readings should be noted in particular. First, the leaving out of the preposition “in” or “super” in Hebrews makes it clear that the staff is the object of worship. Second, there is a discussion among interpreters whether the Greek pronoun αὐτῷ (which has no equivalent in the Hebrew text, and appears to be an addition by the translator of the text) should be taken as the personal pronoun αὐτῷ (as in


\(^{471}\) Fischer, *Biblia*, p.1854.
all editions) or as the shorter Attic form αὐτοῦ of the reflexive pronoun ἐαυτοῦ.\textsuperscript{472} If the latter is preferred the pronoun refers to Jacob as the owner of the staff, but if the former is preferred it could refer either to Jacob or Joseph. The Latin rendering of αὐτοῦ could be either eius or suae, while a rendering of αὐτοῦ/ἐαυτοῦ would be suae.\textsuperscript{473}

4.2.3 The Origin of the Versions

The origin of the two versions appears to be a different vocalization of the same Hebrew text, but there is no evidence about how or when the different versions came into existence. It appears to be clear, however, that both Hebrew versions were used side by side for at least the whole time covered by the present investigation, and that the LXX version by no means is a misinterpretation by the translator of the Hebrew consonantal text as it is preserved in the MT version. On the other hand, the LXX translation might be a misunderstanding of the Hebrew version with πᾶσι rendering it by τὸ ἀκρὸν τῆς ῥάβδου “the top of the staff” instead of ἀρχὸν τῆς φυλῆς “the ruler of the tribe”.

\textsuperscript{472} For the earliest discussion, see the quotation from Augustine below.

\textsuperscript{473} Cf. Delitzsch, Commentar, p.564, and Bruce, The Epistle, p.306 n.160.
4.2.4 The Biblical Contexts of Gen. 47:31b

4.2.4.1 In MT and LXX

Nothing needs to be added here to the discussion above about the text of Gen. 47:31b, but the context calls for some discussion, especially since it is a different one in Heb. 11:21. The wider context of Gen. 47:31b is the end of Jacob’s life: Jacob’s concern about the burial of his bones (Gen. 47:28–31), Jacob’s blessing of his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 48), and Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Gen. 49:1–28). The more immediate context is Jacob’s concern about the burial of his bones (Gen. 47:28–31), which ends with the verse quoted in Heb. 11:21. As noted above, the meaning of Gen. 47:31b in MT is not very clear, but still there is great unanimity among non-Jewish exegetes about its interpretation. Westermann quoting Delitzsch interprets it as: “the reverent act of thanksgiving of the patriarch”, and Westermann adds “similarly almost all exegetes”.\(^{474}\) It seems that, since Gen. 47:31b makes little sense on its own, the interpretations are in one way or the other based on the context. In the context it is evident that Jacob is old (Gen. 47:29), he seems to be lying in his bed, since this is where he is bowing down, but he does not yet seem to be sick (cf. Gen. 48:1). Hence the unanimous interpretation of the text is not very surprising, and that Jacob’s act of reverence is taken to be directed to God comes as no surprise either. On the other hand, if this is the meaning of Gen. 47:31b, it has to be asked why Jacob does bow down to God in thanksgiving only here and not at the end of chapter 48 or 49, where it

\(^{474}\) Westermann, *Genesis*, p.184.
seems to be equally good reason to bow down in thanksgiving to God. It should be noted also that Gen. 47:31b is the only example of Jacob directing worship to God. On only one other occasion is Jacob presented as worshipping and then it is his brother Esau (Gen. 33:3, 7). Further, the proposition by several interpreters of Gen 47:31b should be mentioned that Jacob “bowed on the head of his bed” because there were Teraphim or a Shekhinah at the head of the bed.

As for the differences between the MT and LXX, both versions follow each other very closely until the last word of chapter 47, namely הָלְמָן / ῥάβδος αὐτοῦ. Here the LXX version has Jacob worshipping at the end of his (or Joseph’s) staff, but, though it is clear that it is time for Jacob to die, there is no sign of Jacob yet being sick. In the MT version, on the other hand, Jacob already lays in his bed, which might indicate that he is already sick (which is explicitly stated in Gen. 48:1) or perhaps it is only an indication of him being old. Anyhow, there is a slight difference in context between the versions. Turning to earlier investigations, it should be noted that many commentaries on Genesis do not mention at all the LXX version of the text, and the few that do mention it consider it to be a

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mistake by the translator.\textsuperscript{478} Not even Wevers in his \textit{Notes on the Greek text of Genesis} takes the LXX version seriously.\textsuperscript{479} Kamesar and Hayward, who both comment upon Jerome’s \textit{Hebrew Questions on Genesis}, seem to be two of very few who actually discuss the different versions of the text.\textsuperscript{480} Literary studies on Genesis do not mention Gen 47:31b,\textsuperscript{481} nor does Kugel in his study on Jacob and his children \textit{The Ladder of Jacob}.\textsuperscript{482} Interestingly enough, however, in medieval Jewish commentaries on the Pentateuch the LXX version is clearly used, and Rashi (1040–1105) repeats the comment found in the Babylonian Talmud (for which see below) “When the fox is at his time of greatness, bow down to him”.\textsuperscript{483} This short comment is expounded by Mizrachi (1455–1525) as follows:\textsuperscript{484}

\textsuperscript{478} E.g., Christian Dillmann, \textit{Die Genesis} (Leipzig, 1892), p.446, and Jacob, \textit{Das erste Buch}, p.863.

\textsuperscript{479} Wevers, \textit{Notes}, pp.805–806.


\textsuperscript{482} James Kugel, \textit{The ladder of Jacob: ancient interpretations of the biblical story of Jacob and his children} (Princeton, 2006).


\textsuperscript{484} Translation from Miller, \textit{The Gutnick}, p.342.
In other words, one even bows down to the fox, which is the lowliest of all creatures, when he is needed. Therefore Ya’akov bowed down to Yosef because he was dependent on him to carry out his wishes, not out of honour for Yosef’s position of royalty.

In the edition by Miller there is also an explanation to Rashi’s comment: 485

I.e. Pharaoh’s tendency was to look down at Yosef as a mere ‘fox,’ the lowliest of creatures. But Yosef was nevertheless in a position of power, ‘a fox at his time of greatness. ’So Ya’akov saw fit to ‘bow down to him,’ to strengthen his feelings of self-importance and power so that Yosef should be able to win Pharaoh’s favor on behalf of his father.

Interesting also is the translation of Gen. 47:31b presented in Miller’s edition combining the MT and LXX versions: “Then Yisra’el bowed down to (Yosef, turning towards the Divine Presence which was) at the top of the bed.” 486 Hence, in Jewish tradition the LXX version is commented upon from the Talmud until modern commentators, such as Sarna cited above, without, however, referring to the LXX. 487 Apparently, the two versions of the text produced two different interpretations. The first one is based on the MT version, with הַיְנָה vocalized as הַיְנָה, and it indicates the place of worship, namely the bed, which is usually interpreted as a sign of Jacob’s old age. Though it is not explicitly stated, it is

487 Sarna, The JPS Torah, p.324.
usually taken for granted that the object of worship is God. The reason for the worship is taken to be some kind of gratitude to God for the discussion with Joseph. In the second one, based on the LXX version, with נֵחַ vocalized as נֵחַ, the object of worship is not God, but Joseph or the staff, which is interpreted variously. These interpretations seem to be based on different interpretations of נֵחַ either as “ruler” or “staff”. In this interpretation nothing is said about the place of worship, and there are a number of reasons for the worship, such as the power of Joseph or some kind of prophetic vision about the future power of Ephraim.

4.2.4.2 In Hebrews

The source text of the Genesis quotation in Heb. 11:21 appears to be the LXX, and there are no significant variant readings recorded in the Göttingen edition of Genesis. In the critical apparatus of NA27 there are no variant readings recorded for Heb. 11:21 either.\(^{488}\) However, in the oldest and most important manuscript to Hebrews, namely \(\Psi\), there is one variant reading, which most certainly should not be overlooked. \(\Psi\) reads αὐτοῦ instead of Ἰωσήφ (Ἰωσήφ is added above the line), and αὐτοῦ apparently refers to Jacob, and hence ἐκακοστον τῶν υἱῶν to the sons of Jacob himself, and not to the sons of Joseph as in NA27. This reading puts the quotation from Gen. 47:31b in a different context from that which it has in the standard text of Hebrews, but still not in the context it has in Genesis. Although

\(^{488}\) Cf. Gheorghita, *The role of the Septuagint*, p.49.
this might be only a mistake by the scribe of \𝔓⁴⁶, there are a number of observations that should be considered. First, \𝔓⁴⁶, the oldest extant manuscript of Hebrews by far,⁴⁸⁹ puts the Genesis quotation in the same context as in some of the early Jewish commentaries of the text.⁴⁹⁰ Second, if the original reading of \𝔓⁴⁶ is followed, the context of the quotation is, of course, changed from the blessing of Joseph’s sons to the blessing of Jacob’s sons. Consequently, the question about why the blessing of Joseph’s sons is mentioned in Hebrews, while the blessing of the sons of Jacob are left out, is no longer relevant. Third, why did the author of Hebrews not use ἀμφοτέρους or ἐκάτερον instead of ἕκαστον? Though ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωσήφ (literally “all of Joseph’s [two] sons”), of course, can mean “both of Joseph’s sons”, ἀμφοτέρους or ἐκάτερον perhaps would have been more appropriate for the stylistically aware author of Hebrews. It should also be noticed that Gen. 49:28 has καὶ εὐλόγησεν αὐτοῦ ἕκαστον κατὰ τὴν εὐλογίαν αὐτοῦ εὐλόγησεν αὐτοῦς. Fourth, the reading of \𝔓⁴⁶ also means that the staff can hardly belong to Joseph, and thus has to be the staff of Jacob, which has a number of consequences for the interpretation of the text.

On the other hand, if the original reading of \𝔓⁴⁶ is also the original reading of Hebrews, it has to be explained why someone would change αὐτοῦ into Ἰωσήφ, thus changing the context of the quotation from a context that can be found in a

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⁴⁸⁹ In NA27 \𝔓⁴⁶ is dated to ca. 200, while the closest in time thereupon, Sinaiticus (the text is missing in Vaticanus), is dated to the fourth century, and Alexandrinus is dated to the fifth century. Both Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus have Ἰωσήφ.

⁴⁹⁰ For which see below.
number of Jewish sources to a context otherwise unattested. It should also be noted that there are no traces of the original reading of \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\) in any of the early interpretations among the Church Fathers. However, it should be emphasized that \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\) actually predates all the early Church Fathers! Strangely enough, the only mention of this reading seems to be in the Latin edition of the New Testament by Wordsworth and White,\(^{491}\) and in Hoskier’s commentary on \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\) of Hebrews.\(^{492}\) Hence it has never before been taken into consideration in the interpretation of Heb. 11:21, which is surprising, since Hoskier concludes that: “[the reading of \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\)] is a happy elimination of later error. … \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\), therefore sums up the whole of Gen. xlviii and xlix, and does not err.”\(^{493}\)

Consequently, due to the lack of interest in this reading of \(\mathcal{P}^{46}\), the following discussion on context and earlier investigations will focus on the text found in NA27.

The wider context in Hebrews is the enumeration and description in chapter 11 of people living by faith, from Abel in v. 4 and to David and Samuel in v. 32. It is in this context of people living and acting by faith that the Genesis-quotatation


about Jacob is found. Hence the blessing of his grandsons, about whose future he could only foretell by faith, seems to be the reason for his enumeration among people living by faith.

The more immediate context is the previous verse, in which Isaac’s faith is described, and the following verse, in which Joseph’s faith is in focus. All three verses follow the same pattern: an aged father considering his death blesses his sons, or in the case of Jacob, his grandsons. It is here that the quotation from Gen. 47:31b is added, and it is clear that the context has a decisive impact on the interpretation of the quotation, since the quotation in its original context has nothing to do with Jacob’s blessing of his grandsons, which does not take place until the following chapter, Gen. 48. According to the narrative in Genesis, Jacob worships because Joseph swore to him to bury him in the burial place of his ancestors, Gen. 47:30–31, i.e., a similar act of faith to that of Joseph mentioned in Heb. 11:22. However, there is no mention in Genesis of any worship after Jacob’s blessing of his grandsons as described in Hebrews. Apparently, the interpretation of the quotation is totally dependent on the transposition to another context.

When turning to earlier investigations concentrating on Old Testament quotations in Hebrews as well as commentaries on Hebrews and Genesis, in general, it should be noted that most of them only have very short comments on the quotation from Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21. Nevertheless, there are a number

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494 E.g., Jacob, *Das erste Buch*, p.863, and Wevers, *Notes*, pp.805–806, who both agree that the MT version is original.
of observations that should be pointed out here. After mentioning the chronological disorder, Grässer sums up most of the discussion in his excursion on the “Stab Jakobs”, and lists a number of suggested interpretations of the mysterious passage: a. the staff is a symbol of the old age of Jacob, b. the staff is a symbol of a wanderer between the two worlds, c. the staff is a symbol of the might either of Joseph or of Christ and thus the object of Jacob’s worship, d. the mentioning of the staff refers to a Haggadah (Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer 40, dated to the eighth or ninth century) about Jacob’s staff. Grässer rightly notes that “Da ist überall viel Eisegese und wenig exegese im Spiel.” However, with some hesitation Grässer prefers to concur with the last opinion, since it gives some meaning to the quotation in its context in Hebrews, thus having Jacob


496 See, e.g., Attridge, The Epistle, p.336: “Our author may have cited the verse in its original sense simply to reinforce the point that Jacob was on the point of death.” Cf. Delitzsch, Commentar, pp.562–565, Riggenbach, Der Brief, p.366–367, Bruce, Commentary, p.314, and Ellingworth, The Epistle, pp.606–607.

497 See Michel, Kritisch-exegetischer, pp.404–405.

498 So many Church Fathers, for which see below.


worshipping the invisible God “over the top of his staff”. It should also be mentioned that many commentators note that the blessing of Joseph’s sons is discussed in Hebrews 11, while the blessing of Jacob’s own sons is left out.501

Further, there are two articles devoted to the Genesis-text in Hebrews 11:21,502 and the first one is Heller’s article “Stabesanbetung?”.503 The general conclusion of the article might be speculative,504 but there are a number of observations that should be mentioned here, and are discussed elsewhere. First, he points out that the Hebrew construction underlying the Greek προσκυνέω ἐπί is very rare (as discussed above), second, he argues that the LXX version of the text has a meaning, and is not a mistake by the translators of the Septuagint (as can clearly be seen in the use of it in the Jewish sources discussed below), third, he argues that the reason for the quotation in Hebrews is the same as for the whole


503 Heller, ‘Stabesanbetung?’.

context of chapter eleven, namely the future dimension of faith. The second article is a short Spanish article by Sebastián Bartina arguing that the MT version of the text is the original version, and that the expression should be understood in an Egyptian context. The “head of the bed” refers to the common support for the head, which was used for sleeping at the time in Egypt. However, the Egyptian expression for the support could also be used in a transferred meaning as a rest of the soul, and according to Bartina, this is the meaning of the expression in Gen. 47:31b. The suggestion by Bartina does not seem to have attracted any support among scholars, and neither are there any traces of such an interpretation in the sources discussed in the present investigation. Bartina does not mention the possibility that a different vocalization was used in the Jewish community, but attributes the LXX version to the translators. Hence he argues that the LXX version is secondary, and for that he gives four reasons: a) the vocalization in the mind of the LXX translator is not normal, b) in the context, Gen. 48:2, Jacob is in his bed, c) in the context, Gen. 49:10, other Hebrew words are used for staff, d) the addition αὐτοῦ is only necessary in the LXX version, since it is clear whose bed it is, but not whose staff it is. However, the first and the last argument have been refuted above, the second and third are only true if the vocalization of the MT version is original, which should be proven by the argument, and hence the argumentation seems to be

[^505]: Bartina, ‘Jacob’, pp.243–247. For the kind help with the Spanish of this article I am indebted to prof. Ingmar Söhrman at the University of Gothenburg.
circular. At the end of the article Bartina also refers to 1 Kings 1:47 as an argument for the MT version. Bartina also notes the shift in meaning in the Vulgate, as compared to the Hebrew and Greek, where the preposition conversus is less exact than its equivalents, and that the Latin translation seems to be a conflation of the Hebrew and Greek versions. Most interesting, however, for the present investigation is Bartina’s remark that the author of Hebrews uses the LXX version in the quotation, but presupposes the MT version in his interpretation. 506

Apparently, in the context of the New Testament only one version of the text is taken into consideration, namely the LXX version. On the other hand, interpretations of both versions are discussed and applied to the LXX version, and this practice seems to have begun already at the time when Hebrews was composed (as can be seen in the texts of the early Church below). Though the LXX version originally did not indicate the place of worship, in New Testament interpretation the staff is taken as the place of worship, mostly indicating the old age of Jacob. The reason for this appears to be a wish to exclude all other objects of worship than God. 507 That the LXX version actually does express the object of worship appears to be clear from several Jewish and early Christian interpretations (for which see below) as well as from the Vetus Latina to Heb. 11:21.

507 Cf. Kamesar, Jerome, p.156.
4.2.5 Gen. 47:31b: Summary and Evidence from the Text

The text from Gen. 47:31b quoted in Heb. 11:21 is interesting in a number of ways. First, it is preserved in two distinctly different versions based on different vocalization of the last word in the Hebrew consonantal text. Second, the original meaning of the text is no longer known to us. Third, the context of Gen. 47:31 is not the same as the Old Testament context in Hebrews. Fourth, the text of Heb. 11:21 in the oldest manuscript by far, Ψ⁴⁶, is not the same as in NA27, and not even mentioned in any modern edition of the text. In Ψ⁴⁶ the Old Testament context is not the same as in the standard text of Hebrews, but not the same as in Genesis either. Fifth, there are two main interpretations of Gen. 47:31b, based on the two vocalizations of the text. The first one, indicating the place of worship, has most certainly originated as an interpretation on the MT version (יהדוע), while the second one, indicating the object of worship, evidently is an interpretation of the LXX version (יהויה). The first one indicating the place of worship has been applied to both versions of the text, and is today, among Christian scholars, the predominant interpretation of both Gen. 47:31b and Heb. 11:21. Among Jewish scholars both interpretations have been applied to Gen. 47:31b, but it is not clear if there is always awareness that the two interpretations are based on two different versions of the text. Sixth, the reasons for avoiding the interpretation that the staff indicated the object of worship among Christian scholars appear to be mainly three: a. the wish to avoid any suspicion of idolatry by indicating worship directed to someone or something else than God, b. the putative assumption that the preposition ἐπί in the expression προσκυνέω ἐπί cannot indicate the object of
worship, but only the place of worship, c. the putative assumption that the LXX version is a mistake by the translator of the Septuagint, and hence the MT version and interpretations based on it are the correct ones.

4.3 The Interpretative Context of the Two Versions of Gen. 47:31b

4.3.1 Introduction

There are quite a number of references to Gen. 47:31b in the early Jewish and Christian material, many of which have not been taken into consideration before when discussing the quotation in Hebrews, and the Jewish material especially appears to shed some light on the different versions of the text. In the following section the references to Gen. 47:31b in the early Jewish and Christian communities will be discussed, especially focusing on the version of the text that was used, and how it relates to the interpretations of the text. Further, it will be discussed how the different interpretations relate to each other, and if there are any affinities between the early Jewish and Christian interpretations. Given the importance of the context for the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b, this will also be given due attention.
4.3.2 Gen. 47:31b in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha

4.3.2.1 The Testament of Job

There is only one possible reference to Gen. 47:31b in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, namely in the Testament of Job 3:4, but even this reference is not very clear-cut. The very vague reference to Gen. 47:31b in the Testament of Job is not a reference in any way alluding to the context of Genesis 47, but the phraseology might be an echo of the wording in Gen. 47:31b, which, it should be noted, is also very close to 1 Kings 1:47:

και ἐγὼ ἀκούσας κατέπεσα ἐπὶ τὴν κλίνην μου προσκυνῶν καὶ λέγων Κύριέ
μου …

When I heard these things, I fell on my bed worshiping and saying, My Lord,

…

If this is at all a reference to Gen. 47:31b, it is a reference to the MT version of the text, and in that case it suggests that this version was also used in a Jewish context around the beginning of the current era. It might also indicate that the worship

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on the bed is not necessarily connected with a condition of old age or sickness, but the bed is only the place of worship.

4.3.3 Gen. 47:31b in the Targums

4.3.3.1 Introduction

There are three Targums to Gen. 47:31, Targum Onkelos, Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, and Targum Neofiti I. They all translate the Hebrew text word by word with no additions, but Targum Pseudo-Jonathan adds a comment in v. 31 immediately before the part which is quoted in Hebrews.

4.3.3.2 Targum Onkelos

The first example is from Targum Onkelos which reads:

511

הַנַּר יִשְׂרָאֵל נָחַל רַעַת נָהַר

... thereupon Israel bowed upon the head of the bed. 512

The text of Targum Onkelos differs from MT in two respects, namely the initial verb and the final noun. Instead of the Hebrew verb וָנָהַר Targum Onkelos has וָנָהַר


“to bow, bend, worship”\textsuperscript{513}, and instead of דַּבֵּשׁ the Targum has אֲדֹנָי "bed, bier"\textsuperscript{514}. The verb סנָט appears to be a synonym of דַּבֵּשׁ and is used both of worship directed to God (Gen. 24:26) and of idolatry (Ex. 20:5). It should be noted, however, that both masculine and feminine nouns derived from the root סנָט are used exclusively to describe idolatry, and that Targum Neofiti 1 employs סנָט exclusively where the Hebrew term דַּבֵּשׁ has connotation of idolatry.\textsuperscript{515} Hence it is perhaps possible that the Targumist indicated that the object of worship was not God, but the indication is far too vague to be a reference to an interpretation based on the LXX version. Apparently, Targum Onkelos is following the same tradition as MT, and there is nothing in the text or context that indicates any knowledge of the LXX version. Hence the bed is only indicating the place of worship.

4.3.3.3 Targum Pseudo-Jonathan

The next example is from Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and it reads:

\textsuperscript{513} Michael Sokoloff, \textit{A dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic of the Talmudic and Geonic periods} (Ramat-Gan, 2002), p.786; Marcus Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi and the Midrashic literature} (New York, 1989), p.953. This is the same word which is used in Megillah 16b about the bowing down to the fox.

\textsuperscript{514} Sokoloff, \textit{A dictionary}, p.882; Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary}, p.1121.

Immediately the Glory of the Shekinah of the Lord was revealed to him. And Israel bowed down on the head of the bed.\textsuperscript{517}

The text of \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan} differs from MT in the same way as \textit{Targum Onkelos}. Instead of the Hebrew verb \textit{hWj} \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan} has \textit{dgs} “to bow, bend, worship”,\textsuperscript{518} and instead of \textit{hDÚfIm} \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan} has \textit{avgrd} “couch”\textsuperscript{519}. Very interesting is also the addition of the Shekinah before the quotation, which makes it clear that the Targumist took the Lord as the object of worship. This addition is only found in \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan}. Again it is clear that the Targum follows the MT tradition, and there are no traces of the LXX version in \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan}.

4.3.3.4 \textit{Targum Neofiti 1}

The last example is from \textit{Targum Neofiti 1} which reads:

\textsuperscript{516} Text from Ernest Clarke, \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan of the Pentateuch: text and concordance} (Hoboken, 1984), p.60.


\textsuperscript{518} Sokoloff, \textit{A dictionary}, p.786; Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary}, p.953.

\textsuperscript{519} Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary}, p.321.
And Israel praised and glorified upon the head of the bed.\textsuperscript{521}

As in \textit{Targum Onkelos} and \textit{Targum Pseudo-Jonathan} the text of \textit{Targum Neofiti 1} differs from MT with regard to the initial verb and the final noun. Instead of the Hebrew verb וַיַּעַרְגֶד Targum Neofiti 1 has שָׁבַח “to praise”,\textsuperscript{522} and instead of דִּדְמֵה the Targum has רַחִית “couch”.\textsuperscript{523} It should be noticed that Targum Neofiti 1 does not use the verb חֵנֶר, a term which Targum Neofiti 1 uses exclusively for idolatry. The use of the verb שָׁבַח instead of חֵנֶר might indicate that the Targumist did not regard the act of Jacob as something that could be taken as idolatry, but instead took God as the object of worship. As in the previous two Targums it is clear that Targum Neofiti 1 follows the MT tradition, which indicates the place of worship.


\textsuperscript{521} Translation from Martin McNamara, \textit{The Aramaic Bible: the targums. vol. 1A, Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis} (Edinburgh, 1992), p.211.

\textsuperscript{522} Sokoloff, \textit{A dictionary}, p.1101; Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary}, p.1121; Grossfeld, \textit{Targum Neofiti 1}, p.155.

\textsuperscript{523} Jastrow, \textit{A dictionary}, p.321.
4.3.3.5 Summary and Evidence from the Targums

All the Targums follow the MT version of the text, and there are no indications of knowledge of the LXX version either in text or context. There might be a slight indication in Targum Onkelos that the Targumist took the object of worship to be someone other than God in the employment of the verb דגס which seems to be more frequently used of idolatry than of worship directed towards God. In Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, on the other hand, it is clear from the mention of the Shekinah in the additional clause that the Targumist took the Lord to be the object of worship. In Targum Neofiti 1 there is also a slight indication that God was understood as the object of worship in the choice of the verb used in the translation. It should also be noted that there are no traces of any interpretations based on the LXX version in the Targums.

4.3.4 Gen. 47:31b in Talmud and Midrash

4.3.4.1 Introduction

There are a number of references to Gen. 47:31b in Talmud and Midrash, and, as mentioned above, they do not seem to reflect a concern for any particular Jewish theological issues. Hence, there is reason to believe that these interpretations could have clear affinities with the one found in Hebrews. Therefore, these interpretations will be analysed in some detail. The understanding of Gen. 47:31b in the Jewish sources below varies quite a bit, including the vocalization of יֶנֶסֶךְ
as "tribe", taking הֵלֶּה as the object of worship, and even taking Joseph as the object of worship.

4.3.4.2 Babylonian Talmud

The reference in the Babylonian Talmud is found in Megillah 16b:

רִלְמָה נְאוּאָה וְרַעַל לַפְּנֵי אֵם רַבִּים רָם יְשֵׁת אוֹר וְרָם הַלְּוַיִּין הָרוֹם
אַנְשֵׁי הַמְּלָא כְּפִים סָנֶד לַחַל הַמְּלָא אוֹר בְּעָרְכֵי הַמּוֹחֵדֵה אָלָם אָלָם אָלָם
הָפִּי אַחֲמַד וּרְשָׁאֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל תַּלַמ־ רָאָשְׁתָּה אַלָּמְדוּת אַלָּמְדוּת אַלָּמְדוּת רָם

524

“And his brethren also went and fell down before him.” R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar: This bears out the popular saying, A fox in its hour – bow down to it. [You compare Joseph to] a fox! Where was his inferiority to his brothers? Rather if this was said [by R. Eleazar] it was applied as follows: “And Israel bowed down upon the bed’s head.” R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar; A fox in its hour – bow down to it. 525

The quotation from Gen. 47:31b at the beginning of Megillah 16b follows upon a number of statements about Jacob, Joseph, and his brothers about the time when Joseph made himself known to his brothers, but it is quite loosely connected to the previous statements. The more immediate context is a discussion about Gen.


525 Translation from Maurice Simon, ‘Megillah’ in Epstein (ed.), Hebrew-English, p.32.
50:18, referred to at the beginning of the quotation above, where Joseph’s brothers, after the death of Jacob, come to apologize to Joseph. The quotation from Gen. 50:18 is followed by the exegesis which is a proverbial saying “A fox in its hour — bow down to it.” It should be noted here that the fox is usually regarded as an unclean animal, and hence the question about Joseph’s inferiority to his brothers in the quotation above. Then follows what is more important to the present investigation, namely the application of the saying on Gen. 47:31b. The “bed’s head” of the present translation makes poor sense here, but it is, of course, based on the vocalization found in MT, while the original text was unvocalized. Probably the author of the passage had the same vocalization in mind as the translator of the LXX, but with a different meaning, namely “and Israel bowed down to the head of the tribe”, which, it seems, makes better sense in this context. Hence it appears that the author based his interpretation of Gen. 47:31b not on the MT version, but on the LXX version. Another detail that should be noted is that the quotation from Gen. 47:31b is given without any context. However, since “the fox” of the exegesis applied to Gen. 50:18 is Joseph, it is likely that “the fox” is still Joseph, when the exegesis is applied to Gen. 47:31b, and hence it is not unlikely that the context in the mind of the exegete was actually Gen. 47:29–31.

Applying the questions to the text suggested by Kugel in his book In Potiphar’s house, the first one to be asked is: Are all the elements of the motif integral to the exegesis of Gen. 50:18? Or in other words does the exegesis “A fox

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in its hour — bow down to it.” fit the text of Gen. 50:18? And the answer has to be “no”, which is already noticed in the Talmud, since Joseph is not inferior to his brothers, and hence there is no reason to call him a fox. The second of Kugel’s question is: “Would an exegete, faced with problem X in the biblical text, be likely to create ex nihilo solution Y?” 527 Again the answer has to be “no”, first, since there hardly is any exegetical problem at all in Gen. 50:18, to which this motif could be an exegetical solution, and second, since Joseph is not inferior to his brothers. On the other hand, the exegetical solution would fit the context of Gen. 47:31b very well, since Joseph is inferior to his father Jacob. Hence it is probable that the exegetical motif has travelled from Gen. 47:31b to Gen. 50:18. This is even more likely, since, as already noted, there is nothing in 50:18 that calls for exegesis, while in 47:31b there are obvious reasons to explain the text. Again, however, it has to be pointed out that nothing of the context of Gen. 47:29–31 is given in the Talmud passage, but only the difficult passage also quoted in Hebrews. Anyhow, the reference in Talmud has a number of important implications for the present investigation. First, Gen. 47:31b is used in yet another context. Second, הַלֵּךְ אֶל יֹאָלֶה is apparently taken as an indication of the object of worship, which clearly shows that the LXX version was not a mistake by the translator of the Septuagint, but a living tradition in the Jewish community. Third, the object of worship is Joseph, which shows that interpretations based on the LXX version were also known in the Jewish community.

There are three references to Gen. 47:31b in *Genesis Rabbah*. In the first one, *Gen. Rab. 71.2*, the reason for Jacob’s worship is the bed’s head, which is interpreted as Leah:

ר ווהד ב ר בשם ר ו שישלך פר רב ווך כל שראתה אבותי.

עקב שראתה לאצא מצוה נון רשת פרסה. כל שפשעה חכמים בונים אחר

לאראף שלואנה אתי מנורה. איסון זה מובא על הפרשה והודר וראתה ישראלה.

R. Judah b. R. Simon and R Ḥanina said in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac:

When the Patriarch Jacob saw how Leah deceived him by pretending to be her sister, he determined to divorce her. But as soon as the Holy One, blessed be He, visited her with children he exclaimed, ‘Shall I divorce the mother of these children!’ Eventually he gave thanks for her, as it says, “And Israel bowed down [in thanksgiving] for the bed’s head”: who was the head of our father Jacob’s bed? surely Leah.529

Freedman also has a note on Leah: “I.e. She was the first who bore him children. Thus the verse is understood to mean that he gave thanks for Leah.” The context of the first reference is again a different one, and this time it is a discussion about


Leah and Gen. 29:31 “And the Lord saw that Leah was hated.” Clearly, *Gen. Rab.* uses the MT version of the text. In Freedman’s translation the reason for worship is Leah, but the worship is directed to God. If Freedman’s addition in the translation ([in thanksgiving]) is not taken into account Leah could also be taken as the object of worship. In that case would again indicate the object of worship, but this time with vocalized as “bed”. Thus, in Jewish tradition even the MT version could indicate the object of worship. It should be noted here, though, that in the last example from *Genesis Rabbah* below the addition of *Shechinah* precludes such an interpretation. Anyhow, it is very clear that the bed does not indicate the place of worship. It appears that Gen. 47:31b is used both since it expresses the worship of Jacob and since the difficult last word can be interpreted as Leah.

In the second one, *Gen. Rab. 96*, no mention is made of Leah, and instead the object of worship is God:

On hearing this [Deut. 6:4] Jacob bowed himself, as it says, “And Israel bowed down upon the bed’s head”, and uttered in a whisper, ‘Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.’

The context and subject of the second reference, which is almost identical to that of Tanḥuma 12.9 below, is Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Gen. 49, i.e., the same as in Heb. 11:21 in ℓ46). Jacob has gathered his sons and begs them to “honour the Holy One, blessed be He, as my fathers honoured Him.” To this the sons answer with the Shema of Deut. 6:4, which is immediately followed by the quotation above, and this in turn is followed by God’s answer (=Prov. 25:2a). The worship of Jacob is here apparently directed to God in gratitude to God for his sons, and “the head of the bed” only seems to indicate the place of worship. It should be noted, though, that, since Gen. 47:31b is quoted in a context after Gen. 48:1, where it is explicitly stated that Jacob is ill, and after Gen. 48:21, where he states that he is about to die, it is only natural that he is lying in his bed, and the reference to the bed is probably taken as an indication of his illness and old age. Consequently, the interpretation is the common interpretation of Gen. 47:31b, which is usually applied to the text in its standard context, only here the same interpretation is applied to a different context, namely Gen. 49. Further, the quotation follows the MT version of the text.

The last reference, also in Gen. Rab. 96, follows the first one, but adds a comment by R. Isaac at the end:

רואם הח Allocator על דעך שירדה מפי סופר ר’ טני מפעז העキッチン מהקביע
כין纺EMPLATE, איש מהם שים בפיו בפיו שים בפיו בפיו בפיו בפיו בפיו
שכדחה המקפיה מבנה פמי לאמס שלמאו אני ממצה את الاخبار, ומסקן תחא מרות.

531 Translation from Freedman, Midrash Rabbah, p.893.
“And he said: Swear unto me”, etc. R. Judah b. R. Simon and R Ḥanan said in the name of R. Samuel b. R. Isaac: When the Patriarch Jacob saw how Leah had deceived him by pretending to be her sister, he determined to divorce her. But as soon as the Holy One, blessed be He, granted her children, he exclaimed, ‘Shall I divorce the mother of these children!’ Eventually he gave thanks for her, as it says, “And Israel bowed down [in thanksgiving] for the bed’s head”: who was the head of our father Jacob’s bed? Leah. R. Isaac said: He saw the Shechinah.\(^{533}\)

Since the last reference follows the first one, it only has to be pointed out that it is here explicitly stated that the worship was directed towards God, i.e., to the Shechinah. Thus the possibility to take Leah as the object of worship is ruled out, but still the bed cannot indicate the place of worship.

Summing up the references in *Genesis Rabbah*, it should be noted that the first and the third are almost identical, and that the second is almost identical to the reference in *Tanḥuma* below. Further, they all follow the MT version of the text, and there are no traces of the LXX version either in the references or in their interpretations. Moreover, the two contexts (Leah and Jacob’s blessing of his

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\(^{532}\) Text from Theodor and Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabba ... Parashah 86–100*, p.1241.

\(^{533}\) Translation from Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah*, p.931.
sons) in *Genesis Rabbah* are different from the one in Gen. 47 and Heb. 11:21 (NA27), but the context of the blessing of Jacob’s sons is the same as the one in Heb. 11:21 found in 𝔅₄⁶. It should also be noted that in the first and third the reason for the worship is Leah, although the worship appears to be directed towards God, and hence the MT version here cannot indicate the place of worship.

4.3.4.4 *Sifre Deuteronomy*

In *Sifre Deuteronomy* there is one reference to Gen. 47:31b in Piska 31, following immediately upon a quotation of Deut. 6:4. This reference, interestingly enough, presents two different interpretations of Gen. 47:31b. The text itself is also open to different interpretations, and hence the Hebrew text is here followed by four different translations, which interpret the Hebrew consonantal text differently. Added within square brackets are also the translator’s notes to the text.


Deswegen sagt sie [Die Schrift]: „Da verneigte sich Israel zu Häupten des Bettes“ (Gen 47,31). [Der Midrasch deutet die Worte so: „Wegen der Vorzüglichkeit seines Ehebettes“, d.h. weil aus ihm nur untadelige Nachkommenschaft hervorging.] Hat er sich etwa zur Häupten des Bettes verneigt? (Nein,) vielmehr, er dankte und pries (Gott), dass von ihm nichts untaugliches hervorgegangen war. Aber einige [Einige Schriftgelehrte] sagen, dass „Israel sich zu Häupten des Bettes verneigte“ (Gen 47,31), weil Ruben Busse getan hatte. Eine andere Auslegung. Weil er sagte: Gepriesen sei der herrliche Name seines Königtums für immer und ewig!, sprach zu ihm der

535 Translation from Gerhard Kittel, *Sifre zu Deuteronomium* (Stuttgart, 1922), p.53.
Heilige, g.s.er!: Jakob, siehe, du hast dich alle deine Tage (hindurch) gesehnt, dass deine Söhne früh und spät das Schema rezitieren.  

Hence it is said, “And Israel bowed down upon the bed’s head” (Gen. 47:31b). Did he actually bow upon the bed’s head? Rather, he gave thanks and praise to God that unworthy ones had not issued from him. [Taking the words “bow down” in the sense of giving thanks, and “bed’s head” in the sense of the issue of the bed. “Jacob’s bed was perfect, in that all the children born to him were righteous” (Lev. Rabbah 36:5).] Some say [Two variant interpretations of the verse are given here, after which the main Midrash concludes with God’s reply to Jacob.] that “And Israel bowed down upon the bed’s head” (means that he gave thanks) for Reuben’s repentance. [Reading miṭṭah (“bed”) as maṭṭeh (“tribe”), i.e., “he bowed (in thanks) for the head of the tribe (Reuben).” See Peshiṭṭa and LXX to Gen. 47:31b, Targum Jonathan, the Peshiṭṭa, and LXX to Amos 3:12.] Another interpretation: He said, “Blessed be the name of His glorious majesty for ever and ever.” [The presence here of this phrase, which is not found in the Bible, probably explains its inclusion in the recitation of the Shemā.] The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him, “Jacob, surely this is what you desired all your days, that your children should recite the Shemā morning and evening.”

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And therefore Scripture says, “And Israel bowed down upon the head of the bed” (Gen. 47:31b). Now did he prostrate himself at the head of the bed? But the sense is that he gave thanks and praises that no chaff had gone forth from him. There are those who say with reference to the verse, “And Israel bowed down upon the head of the bed” (Gen. 47:31b), that he did so because Reuben had repented. Another interpretation: He said, “Blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom forever and ever.” Said to him the Holy One, blessed be He, “Jacob, lo, you have for your entire life wanted your children to get up in the morning and to go to bed at night and recite the Shema;’ [therefore, I shall phrase the Shema in your name: Hear O Israel!]”

The subject of Pisqa 31 is Deut. 6:4, i.e., the Shema, which is also quoted immediately before the quotations above. The more immediate context of the reference to Gen. 47:31b is again Jacob’s blessing of his sons preceded by a discussion about Reuben and his repentance for the adultery with Bilhah (Gen. 35:22). Reuben is said to have fasted all his life, and his repentance to have been confirmed by Moses (Deut. 33:6). Then, upon Jacob’s blessing of his sons (Gen. 49), Jacob explicitly asks his sons if they have any doubts about God, and the sons answer that they have no doubts and conclude with quoting Deut. 6:4, which is immediately followed by the quotation cited above. So far the content of the text, and a number of details call for a more detailed discussion. It is interesting that

Gen. 47:31b is again quoted in the context of Jacob’s blessing of his sons, since that is also the context in Heb. 11:21 in [𝔓46]. Even more interesting is the fact that the Midrash actually discusses two different interpretations of Gen. 47:31b, and most interesting for the present investigation is, of course, that the different interpretations seem to be based on different versions of the text. Since the text of *Sifre Deuteronomy* is unvocalized it is not clear how the author took the text, and it is interpreted differently in the translations above. Only in the first translation, that by Kittel, Gen. 47:31b is actually presented in its two versions based on the different vocalization of הָלָם either as “bed” or “tribe”. Bietenhard and Neusner give the same translation in both examples of Gen. 47:31b, but offer no discussion of the interpretations following upon the quotations. Hammer, finally, gives the same translations in both examples, but concludes in his note that the interpretations are based on the different versions. What was in the mind of the author of *Sifre Deuteronomy* cannot be retrieved, of course, but it should be noted that in the *pesharim* there are examples where the interpretations appear to be based on another version of the text than the one just quoted. 539 Hence, whether the author of *Sifre Deuteronomy* actually had different versions of Gen. 47:31b in mind or not or if he was at all aware of different versions of the text cannot be decided, but it seems clear that the interpretations are based on different versions of the text. Consequently, not only are different Midrashim based on different versions of the text, but interpretations based on both versions are used in the

539 Cf. Lim, *Pesharim*, pp.54–63.
same Midrash side by side, thus confirming that the version found in the LXX was definitely not a mistake made by the translator. Instead the LXX version was a different rendering of the Hebrew consonantal text that was used and interpreted upon in the Jewish community. Anyhow, whatever version was in the mind of the author of Sifre Deuteronomy, it is clear that he discussed two different interpretations of the text, none of which, however, indicates the place of worship. In the first one the worship “upon/at the head of the bed” indicates the reason for the worship, namely the issue of the bed, and it is directed towards God. In the second one, in which Jacob appears to be worshipping Reuben, it is not clear whether the thanksgiving is actually directed to Reuben or to God. Consequently, as in Genesis Rabbah above, the MT version indicates the reason for (and perhaps the object of) worship, but not the place of worship.

4.3.4.5 Tanhuma

There is one reference to Gen. 47:31b in Tanhuma 12.9, a Midrash on Gen. 49:1ss:

נני יהוה ורשה לו ראש הנמה (בראשית לו לא), התҳוה לו פור שלוה

בפור טפ מophage ליעל טה

Immediately “Israel bowed down upon the head of the bed”. He began to say in a whisper: *Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and ever*.\(^{541}\)

The subject and context of *Tanhumah* 12.9, is almost identical to that of the second reference in *Genesis Rabbah*, and it can hardly be regarded as a different Midrash. However, the relation between the two texts is far beyond the scope of the present investigation. For comments on this Midrash, see the second example in *Genesis Rabbah*.

### 4.3.4.6 Summary and Evidence from Talmud and Midrash

The investigation of the early Jewish material has produced some very interesting observations both about the text itself and about its interpretation, which apparently was as disputed and disparate at the time of the early Jewish texts as it is today. As far as the text is concerned, there appears to be clear evidence that some of the early Jewish references to Gen. 47:31b follow rather the vocalization of יְהֹוָה in the mind of the LXX translator than the vocalization of MT. This can be seen both in the Babylonian Talmud and in *Sifre Deuteronomy*. It is important here to point out that all the early Jewish texts, of course, first were transmitted without vowels, but if the assumption is correct it clearly shows that the vocalization in the mind of the LXX translators was not a mistake. Instead the LXX version of the text appears to have been an alternative understanding of the

text in use at least between the time of the LXX translators and the time of the
Midrashim. There also appears to be evidence of another understanding of the
vocalization הָרָעַם than the one represented by the LXX translation, taking הָרָעַם in
the meaning “tribe” rather than “staff”. Further, Gen. 47:31b is used in a number
of different contexts having Jacob showing some kind of reverence to a number of
people (Joseph, Reuben, Leah). This clearly shows that the expression רָעַם
is not only taken as a reference of the place of worship, but also as
indicating the object of worship. Further, in some of the interpretations the
worship of Jacob is placed in the context of his blessing of his sons, that is,
neither in the context of Gen. 47 nor in the context of Heb. 11:21 (Gen. 48), but in
the context of Gen. 49, which is also the context of Heb. 11:21 in \( \text{𝔓} \)46. It should
not be forgotten, however, that the MT version, indicating the place of worship,
and the common interpretation of this version as a sign of Jacob’s old age, also
can be found in the Midrashim. Hence, both versions of the text were apparently
used in the early Jewish community, and, interestingly enough, the MT version is
also interpreted as indicating the reason for worship. The LXX version of the text,
on the other hand, does only indicate the object of worship with הָרָעַם interpreted
as “tribe”, where the head of the tribe is either Joseph or Reuben. Hence the הָרָעַם
of the LXX version is never interpreted as a “staff”, and thus neither as the place
of worship nor as an aid for the old man Jacob or someone else.
4.3.5 Gen. 47:31b in the Early Greek Church

4.3.5.1 Origen (185–254)

For a comment on the text by Origen, see Rufinus below.

4.3.5.2 Athanasius (c. 293–373)

Athanasius has two references to Gen. 47:31b in his works Quaestiones ad Antiochum Ducem and Homilia in sanctos patres et prophetas.542 In the first one Athanasius discusses the question why icons and the cross are worshipped, although God through the prophets has declared that things made with human hands should not be worshipped:

καὶ ὡσπερ Ἰακὼβ μέλλων τελευτάν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου, τῷ Ἰωσήφ προσεκύνησεν, οὐ τὴν ράβδον τιμῶν, ἀλλὰ τὸν ταύτην κατέχοντα· οὔτω καὶ οἱ πιστοὶ οὐ δὲ ἐπερόν τινα τρόπον τὰς εἰκόνας ἀσπαζόμεθα, εἰ μὴ διὰ πόθον ὁν ἐμφανίζομεν.543

And just as Jacob, when he was about to die, worshipped Joseph “at the top of his staff”, he did not honour the staff, but the one who had it, so we who are faithful greet the icons for no other reason than the love for those to whom we show it.

542 For a discussion of the genuineness of these texts ascribed to Athanasius, see Walter Kaegi, Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests (Cambridge, 1992), pp.223–225, who on numismatic grounds argues for a dating of the text to “c. AD 700”.

543 Text from MPG, vol. 28, c.621.
Athanasius clearly uses the LXX version in its Genesis context, and the interpretation of the text is also quite clear: Jacob worshipped Joseph at the top of his (Joseph’s or rather his own) staff. Interestingly enough, although the staff clearly indicates the place of worship, the object of worship is still Joseph. It seems as if Athanasius was aware that Joseph was taken as the object of worship, but that he did not consider that the staff was the origin for that interpretation. Hence he went on to interpret the staff as the place of worship, thus indicating that he knew both main interpretations of Gen. 47:31b, the one indicating the place of worship and the other indicating the object of worship. Further, the comment “he did not honour the staff” implies that for Athanasius it could have been possible to interpret the Greek as if the staff would have been the object. Hence, for Athanasius ἐπὶ does not necessarily indicate the place of worship, but can also indicate the object of worship.

In the second one Athanasius takes as his starting-point the enumeration of faithful ancestors in Hebrews adding short remarks on some of them:

πίστει Ἰακώβ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ, ἐκ ἡμῶν ἀντικρύ τῶν νικοποιῶν καὶ τρισμακάριον σταυρόν.⁵⁴⁴

By faith Jacob “worshipped (at) the top of his staff”, utterly betraying the victory-giving thrice-holy cross.

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⁵⁴⁴ Text from MPG, vol. 28, c.1064.
Here too Athanasius uses the LXX version, which is a prerequisite of his interpretation. It should be noted that no mention is made of Joseph or the blessing of his sons in Athanasius’ discussion of Jacob’s faith. Accordingly, although Athanasius is following the enumeration of Hebrews, he does not put the quotation in the same context as it has in Hebrews, thus facilitating his interpretation, in which the worship is directed to the staff itself. This in turn is interpreted as the cross of Christ. Apparently, Athanasius, when interpreting Gen. 47:31b in its New Testament context, only interprets the staff as the object of worship, and the preposition ἐπί is used to indicate the object.

4.3.5.3 Eusebius of Emesa (c. 300–c. 360)

Contemporary with Athanasius is Eusebius of Emesa, who presents two interpretations in his commentary on Gen. 47:31b.

ἐπειδή, ώς ἔφη, “προσεκύνησεν” αὐτῷ, τὸ σύμβολον αὐτὸ τῆς βασιλείας δηλοῖ. ἔτεροι δὲ φασίν ὅτι ὁ Ἰακώβ κατείχεν ὡς πρεσβύτης ράβδον. ὡμόσαντος οὖν τοῦ Ἰωσήφ, τὴν κεφαλήν ἔκλινεν ὡς προσκυνών· τῆς οὖν κεφαλῆς ἐπινευοῦσης, ἀνάγκη προσκυνήσαι αὐτὸν τῇ ράβδῳ. οὕτως γάρ φησί, καὶ γέγραπται “καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ”. ἐπινεύουσα γάρ ἡ κεφαλή ἔκει ἐπὶ τῆς ράβδου προσεκύνει.545

When, as he said, “he worshipped” it, he reveals the kingdom’s very attribute. Others, however, say that Jacob as an old man had a stick. Therefore, when Joseph had sworn, he [Jacob] bowed his head to worship. When the head nodded, it must be that he worshipped the staff. For so he says, and it is written “and he worshipped at the top of the staff”. For when the head nodded there, he worshipped the staff.

Just like Athanasius, Eusebius uses the LXX version in its Genesis context, and this is the basis for the two interpretations mentioned. Interestingly enough, also at the time of Eusebius there was a discussion about the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b, and Eusebius was aware of interpretations either taking the staff as the place or as the object of worship. \(^{546}\) Apparently, he favours the interpretation in which the staff indicates the object of worship. He also expands the interpretation of the staff itself to indicate the attributes of the kingdom, though it is not clear whether Egypt or Israel or even the kingdom of Christ is meant. Interesting is the explicit statement that ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου is identical to τῇ ῥάβδῳ, thus taking ἐπὶ to indicate the object of worship.

4.3.5.4 Diodorus of Tarsus (330–391)

Diodorus of Tarsus has one reference to Gen. 47:31b, and it is found in the catenae on Genesis:

\(^{546}\) Cf. Kamesar, Jerome, p.156.
Jacob had a staff, such as an old man. Whether Jacob himself being an old man and immobile he grasped the top of Joseph’s staff and kissed the part of the staff that he had grasped, or Joseph, after having worshipped his father, grasped the top of the staff, because he bowed down low to the ground, he did not say explicitly. Or, when Jacob had worshipped God, he grasped the top of the staff because of the old age, just as David, when Solomon became king, gave thanks on the bed, on which he was lying, and worshipped God.

Though Diodorus is actually not quoting Gen 47:31b, it is evident that he is commenting upon the LXX version of the text in its standard context at the end of Gen. 47. Diodorus also discusses three different interpretations of the text, the first two of which appear to be unique to Diodorus. In the first one Jacob is the subject of προσκυνεώ, but the act seems to be interpreted as a grasping and kissing of the staff of Joseph. Hence the staff is the object of Jacob’s act, but it is not an act of worship. This interpretation is facilitated by the ambiguous αὐτοῦ at the end of Gen. 47:31b, which can be interpreted both as referring to Jacob and to

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Joseph as the owner of the staff. In the second one Joseph is the subject of προσκυνέω, and the object is Jacob. This interpretation is made possible by the fact that the case of Ἰσραήλ in Gen. 47:31b in not known, and hence Ἰσραήλ could be taken as object as well as subject of προσεκύνησεν. It should be noted that this interpretation could hardly be based on a Hebrew version of the text, since ־קָנָּא, without any marker of object or preposition, is not likely to be taken as the object. This does not, of course, mean that the interpretation did not originate in a Jewish context. Moreover, in this interpretation the staff is only indicating the place of worship, or rather the aid by which Joseph rises after having worshipped his father. In the last interpretation Jacob worships God, and uses the staff as an aid, because of his old age. Here Diodorus also makes the common reference to 1 Kings 1:47. Consequently, Diodorus only refers to the LXX version of Gen. 47:31b, but apparently he knew interpretations both with the staff indicating the object and the place of worship.

4.3.5.5 John Chrysostom (344–407)

Chrysostom has two references to Gen. 47:31b, one in a homily on Genesis and one in a homily on Hebrews. In his homily on Genesis, commenting upon Gen. 47:31b, he discusses the worship of Jacob and gives the following interpretation:

... καὶ προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραήλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ. ὥρα τὸν γέροντα, τὸν πατριάρχην, διὰ τῆς προσεκύνησεως τῆς εἰς τὸν Ἰωσήφ τιμήν ἐπιδεικνύμενον, καὶ διὰ τῶν ἔργων αὐτῶν πληροῦντα νῦν τοῦ ὄραματος τῆς ἐκβάσιν. ... καὶ προσεκύνησε, φησίν, ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ. διὰ τοῦτο
καὶ ὁ Παῦλος ἔλεγε· πίστει Ἰακώβ ἀποθνήσκων ἕκαστον τῶν υἱῶν Ἰωσήφ εὐλόγησε, καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἀκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ. ὁρᾷς ὅτι καὶ τοῦτο αὐτὸ πίστει ἐποίει, προορῶν ὅτι βασιλικοῦ γένους γενήσεται ὁ ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος αὐτοῦ τεχθείς;"⁵⁴⁸

“… Israel bowed low to the tip of his staff.” See this venerable old patriarch showing respect for Joseph by the bow and now fulfilling the dream by his behaviour. … “He bowed,” the text says, “to the tip of his staff.” Hence Paul also said, “By faith Jacob at death’s door praised each of Joseph’s sons and ‘bowed to the tip of his staff.’” Do you see that this very thing, too, he did by faith, foreseeing that the child of his offspring would belong to a royal family?⁵⁴⁹

Chrysostom clearly uses the LXX version of the text both in the Genesis context and in the Hebrews context. He also takes the staff, interpreted as Joseph, to be the object of worship in both contexts (For the Hebrews context, cf. also the following example). It is not clear, however, how he comes to the conclusion that Jacob worshipped Joseph. It can also be noted that Chrysostom does not state that the staff belongs to Joseph or that it in any way represents Joseph and that it thus indicates the worship of Joseph. Anyhow, he draws a parallel between the worship of Jacob and the dream of Joseph, in which Joseph’s parents and brothers

worship Joseph (this is discussed in the part left out in the quotation above), thus confirming his interpretation of the text.

In his homily on Hebrews Chrysostom comments on Gen. 47:31b in a discussion of how much the prophet knew about the times to come:

πίστει Ἰακώβ ἀποθνήσκων ἐκατοστὸν τῶν ὑιῶν Ἰωσήφ εὐλόγησεν. ἔνταθα χρή θεῖαι τὰς εὐλογίας ὅλας, ἵνα καὶ ἡ πίστις καὶ ἡ προφητεία αὐτοῦ κατάδηλος γένηται. καὶ προσεκύνησε, φησὶν, ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ. ἔνταθα δείκνυσιν, ὅτι οὗ μόνον εἶπεν, ἄλλα καὶ οὕτως εἶπεν καὶ ἠδυρίη τοῖς ἐσομένοις, ὡς καὶ τῷ ἔρημῳ αὐτῷ ἐπιδείξει. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἐφραίμ ἄνιστασθαι βασιλεὺς ἄλλοι, διὰ τοῦτο φησιν καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ράβδου αὐτοῦ. τούτῃ καὶ γέρων ἄρρητος οὕτως ἐπιδείξει, τὴν παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ προσκύνησιν ὅλην τὴν ἐσωμένην αὐτῶ. 550

“By faith, Jacob when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph.” Here we ought to set down the blessings entire, in order that both his faith and his prophesying may be made manifest. “And worshipped leaning”, he says, “upon the top of his staff”. Here, he means, he not only spoke, but was even so confident about the future things, as to show it also by his act. For inasmuch as another King was about to arise from Ephraim, therefore it is said, “And he bowed himself upon the top of his staff”. That is, even though he was now an old man, “he bowed himself” to Joseph, showing the obeisance of the whole people which was to be [directed] to him. 551


551 Translation from NPNF, ser. 1, vol. 14, p.482.
Chrysostom follows the LXX version of the text as it is used in Hebrews. In this example it seems as if the worship at the top of the staff is the basis for his interpretation of the worship as directed to Joseph, and he seems to interpret προσεκύνησεν ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ as προσεκύνει τῷ Ἰωσήφ. Thus Chrysostom too interprets ἐπί as indicating the object of worship. It is also clear that Jacob worships Joseph as the representative of the future king of Israel, thus interpreting Gen. 47:31b rather as ἄρχων τῆς φυλῆς “the ruler of the tribe” than τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου “the top of the staff”. This could indicate that, although Chrysostom apparently uses a standard text with τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου, his interpretation is rather based on another text, interpreting the LXX version as ἄρχων τῆς φυλῆς.

4.3.5.6 Theodoret (393–457)

Theodoret has two references to Gen. 47:31b, one in his Questions on the Octateuch and one in his interpretation of the Pauline Letters. In the first one Theodoret discusses the quotation of Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21:

Τί ἐστι “προσεκύνησεν Ἰσραήλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ”; Καὶ πρεσβύτης ὄν καὶ ἀσθενῶς διακείμενος ἐπὶ τῆς κλίνης κατέκειτο· γνοὺς δὲ τοῦ παιδός τὴν παρουσίαν, ἐξαναστὰς ἐκαθέσθη· βακτηρία δὲ κεχρημένος ἐπεστηρίζετο αὐτῇ, τοῦ μὲν ἄκρου ταύτης ἐπικλημένους τῇ δεξιᾷ, ἐπικείμενον δὲ τὸ πρόσωπον ἔχον. Ἡσθεὶς τοῖνυν ἐπὶ αὐτῷ, καὶ τῇ τῆς ταφῆς ἐπαγγελίᾳ προσεκύνησεν ἐπικλήνας τῇ ῥάβδῳ τὴν κεφαλήν· καὶ πρῶτον μὲν τὸ τοῦ Ἰωσήφ ἐνόπτιον τὸ σάρξ ἐδέξατο· “<εἶδε γὰρ τὸν ἡλιοῦ> καὶ <τὴν σελήνην καὶ ἐνδέκα ἀστέρας προσκυνοῦντας αὐτῷ,>” πρὸς δὲ τούτους προηγορείει καὶ τῆς
What does it mean that “Israel worshipped at the top of his staff”? Being both old and weak he lay on his bed, but when he got to know of the arrival of his son, he sat up. Supported by a rod he leaned on it taking its top in his right hand, and having his face laying upon it. Taking pleasure in him and in the promise about the burial he worshipped inclining his head on the staff. Firstly, Joseph’s dream received its fulfilment: “for he saw the sun and the moon and eleven stars worshipping him” [Gen. 37:9]. Furthermore, it foretells the kingdom of the tribe of Ephraim and the subordination of the ten tribes. For this also the holy apostle said: “By faith Jacob blessed each of Joseph’s sons, and he worshipped at the top of his staff”.

Clearly Theodoret uses the LXX version, and though being aware of the context in Hebrews, he first appears to comment upon the Genesis context, where the worship is a consequence of the discussion of his burial, τῇ τῆς ταφῆς ἐπαγγελίᾳ. Thereupon, he interprets the Genesis-quotation as referring to the kingdom of Ephraim. The staff does not seem to be the object of worship in Theodoret’s interpretation, but the staff is used as an aid of the old man Jacob. Consequently, whatever the staff or the top of the staff might have referred to in the mind of Theodoret, the object of worship appears to have been his son Joseph. That

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Theodoret interprets Gen. 47:31b in this way is made clear also by the following quotation. Here, in the second reference, after quoting Heb. 11:21, Theodoret only has a brief comment:

\[ \text{τὴν γὰρ τοῦ Ἐφραῆμ προεσῆμαινε βασιλείαν, καὶ τόν δέκα φυλῶν τὴν ύποταγήν. οὗ δὴ χάριν αὐτὸς προτύπων τὴν ἐκείνων προσκόνησιν.} \]

He foretold the kingdom of Ephraim and the subordination of the ten tribes. Thereby he himself models their worship.

Apparently, the second quotation confirms that Theodoret interpreted Gen. 47:31b as referring to Jacob’s worship of his son as ruler, \( \alphaρχων \) τῆς φυλῆς rather than τὸ ἀκρον τῆς ῥάβδου “the top of the staff”. It is not clear how Theodoret came to his conclusion, since the staff of Gen. 47:31b seems to be interpreted both as a staff for the old man Jacob, when he worshipped God (?) and as the object of worship, which was Joseph. As with Chrysostom, it might indicate that Theodoret was aware of the two interpretations, as place and object of worship, and that he tried to bring them together in his exposition. But since he knew only the LXX version of the text, he had to apply both interpretations to that one text.

4.3.5.7 Gennadius (– c. 496)

Gen. 47:31b is also commented upon by Gennadius, and it is preserved in the catenae on Genesis.

553 Text from MPG, vol. 82, c.764.
When Jacob was about to die, he called for Joseph, that he may take and bury his body in the grave of his fathers in Canaan. When Joseph had promised this, the old man rejoiced, took confidence in the promises, and thought that he should show gratitude to God. Since he did not think it was appropriate for him to do this laying down, he forced himself to sit up, and strengthened and taking rest with the rod in his hand he carried out the worship. The “he worshipped at the top of his staff” does not mean as some simply imagine that, when he worshipped the staff, he symbolically worshipped the cross. Neither is it written

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554 Text from Petit, *Catena*, pp.262–263.
that he worshipped the top of his staff, but that “he worshipped at the top of his staff.” In the same way in the second of the Kings [1 Kings 1:47]: “and” David, “the king, worshipped on his bed. For when David had rejoiced greatly also at that what he saw when he still lived, that Solomon ascended to kingship, he turned intensely to giving thanks to God, but defeated by old age he carried out the worship through the inclination of the head.

As can be seen Gennadius uses the LXX version in its standard Genesis context, but he is aware of both interpretations, that with the staff as indicating the place of worship and that with the staff as the object of worship. In the first interpretation the staff is used as an aid to take a more worthy position for the worship directed towards God. Gennadius also points out that the text with ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον does not have the same meaning as a text with τῷ ἄκρῳ, the former rather indicating the place of worship than the object, while the latter would indicate the object. Hence, since Gen. 47:31b has ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον, GennADIUS rejects the second interpretation, which takes the staff as the object (here referring to the cross of Christ). Instead he points to 1 Kings 1:47 as a key for the understanding of Gen. 47:31, which, according to GennADIUS, is that Jacob as an old man used the staff as an aid when worshipping God, and hence only indicates the place of worship.

4.3.5.8 Summary and Evidence from the Early Greek Church

When summing up the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b among the Greek Church Fathers there are a number of features that should be pointed out. First, it is clear

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555 Cf. Kamesar, Jerome, p.156.
that they always use the LXX version, and there are no traces of the MT version of the text. Second, both the standard context in Genesis and the context in Hebrews are known to the Church Fathers, but no other context is discussed, which also means that the context of Ψ46 does not seem to have been known to the Church Fathers. Third, it is clear that the Greek Church Fathers had no problem in understanding ἐπὶ as indicating the object of worship. Fourth, both main interpretations of Gen. 47:31b, with the staff referring to the object or to the place of worship, were known to the Church Fathers. When the staff indicates the place of worship, the place is always a staff in one way or the other, and mostly the reason for using a staff is the old age of Jacob. For the staff taken as the object of worship, on the other hand, there are a number of different interpretations, such as Jacob (with Joseph as the subject of worship!), Joseph, the attributes of the kingdom, or the cross of Christ. Moreover, when taking Joseph as the object of worship, Chrysostom and Theodoret mention the fulfilment of Joseph’s dreams (Gen. 37:7–10), and interpret it as a prediction of the kingship of Ephraim (probably alluding to Jeroboam in 1 Kings 11:26 and 12:20). Thus Chrysostom and Theodoret clearly indicate that their interpretation takes Gen. 47:31b to mean ἄρχων τῆς φυλῆς “the ruler of the tribe” rather than τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου “the top of the staff”. Especially interesting is the fact that in a couple of interpretations (by Athanasius and Theodoret) the staff is clearly indicating the place of worship, while at the same time Joseph is the object of worship. Hence, although the interpretation taking Joseph as the object of worship is clearly based on τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου (or perhaps rather on ἄρχων τῆς φυλῆς), both Athanasius and
Theodoret, unaware of its origin, interpreted the expression yet another time, but now indicating the place of worship. Consequently, since both main interpretations of Gen. 47:31b (indicating place or object of worship) were known in the Greek Church, but only the LXX version of the text, both interpretations had to be applied to the one text that was available, hence the double interpretation.

4.3.6 Gen. 47:31b in the Early Latin Church

4.3.6.1 Rufinus (344–410)

Rufinus has only one very short reference to Gen. 47:31b in his translation of Origen’s fifteenth homily on Genesis:556 Et qui adoravit super fastigium virgae Ioseph, non erat Iacob, sed Istrahel. “And he who worshipped upon the top of Joseph’s rod was not Jacob, but Israel.” The context is a discussion about the use of either the name Israel or Jacob, and there is no discussion about Gen. 47:31b per se. However, it is still clear that Origen attributed the staff to Joseph and not to Jacob, since this is only a reference in passing, and there could hardly have been a reason for Rufinus to add Joseph to Origen’s text here. It is also clear that

Origen used the LXX version of the text, but no clue is given about the reason for worshipping over the top of Joseph’s staff or how Origen interpreted the text.

4.3.6.2 Jerome (350–420)

Jerome has one comment on Gen. 47:31b in his *Hebrew questions on Genesis*:

“When he said to him: ‘Swear to me’. So he swore to him; and Israel worshipped over against the top of his staff.” Now in respect of this verse certain people pretend to no purpose that Jacob had worshipped the top of Joseph’s staff, namely because he honoured his son and adored his power; although in the Hebrew it is read in quite another fashion and says: “And Israel worshipped at the head of his bed”. This was because, after his son had sworn to him, he was

free of care with regard to the request he had made and worshipped God over
against the head of his bed. Because he was a holy man and dedicated to God
and was weighed down with old age, he used to have his bed placed in such a
way that he was ready for prayer without difficulty, even when he was in the
condition of one lying down.  

Jerome, not very surprisingly, shows knowledge of both versions of the text, and
after having rejected the LXX version for no other reason than that the Hebrew
text has another version, he prefers the MT version on the only ground that a holy
man obviously has his bed arranged for prayer. According to Jerome the LXX
version makes little sense, while the MT version, where Jacob worships God for
Joseph’s promise, makes good sense. Apparently, for Jerome the bed is the place
of worship and only a sign of the old age of Jacob. It should be noted that
Jerome does not mention that the text is quoted in another form in Hebrews, and
more important, in his translation of Genesis Jerome actually adds Deum as the
object of worship, apparently excluding all possible “misinterpretations”, and
adjusting the text to one of its interpretations.

4.3.6.3 Augustine of Hippo (354–430)

Augustine has a detailed discussion about the text in his Questions on the
Heptateuch:

558 Translation from Hayward, Saint Jerome's, p.81.


The Latin manuscripts have this: “and he worshipped over the head of his staff”, several corrected have: “he worshipped over the head of his own staff”,

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or “at the head of his own staff”, or “at the top” or “over the top”. For the Greek word deludes them, which is written with the same letters whether it has ‘his’ or ‘his own’, but the accents are different, and by those who know them in the manuscripts they are not disregarded. For they make great difference. Yet it could also have had one more letter, if it had been “his own”, so that it had not been αὐτοῦ, but ἑαυτοῦ. Hence one rightly asks what it is that is said. For it could easily be understood that just as the old man, who carried the staff the way the old usually [carry] the stick, bowed himself to worship God, the same way he did this over the top of his staff, which he carried so that he, bowing the head over it, worshipped God. What, therefore, is: “He worshipped over the top of his staff”, is it his son’s Joseph’s? Or perhaps the staff was carried by him, since the same son had sworn to him, and as long as he had it, after the swearer’s word, when he had not yet given it back, he immediately worshipped God? For it was not a shame that he carried his son’s sign of power some time, when the form of a large future thing was prefigured. Though, in Hebrew the answer to this question is said to be much easier, where they point out what is written: “And Israel worshipped at the head of the bed”, in which the old one anyway has laid down, and had such a position, that he could pray in it without effort, when he wished. Nevertheless, what the Septuagint have interpreted, should not be thought to have an insignificant or unimportant meaning.

Augustine too shows good knowledge of the two versions as well as of different versions of the Latin text, although, just like Jerome, he does not mention the different Latin translation in Hebrews. He first discusses the different possibilities of rendering the Greek text(s) into Latin, focusing on the ownership of the staff. But either way he comes to the conclusion that the staff is used as an aid for the
old man Jacob. Having pointed out that the Hebrew version is easier to understand, he interprets “the bed” as an indication of Jacob’s old age. Augustine concludes his discussion of the text by stating the importance also of the Septuagint version.\(^{562}\) Apparently, Augustine had access to both versions, but he only discusses one single interpretation of the text, i.e., regardless of the text he has the same interpretation, namely, “the staff” or “the bed” are both indicating the place of worship, and thus only pointing out the old age of Jacob.

4.3.6.4 Cyprianus Gallus (c. 400)

Cyprianus Gallus has only one short reference to Gen. 47:31b, but it is still interesting, since the poetic text gives some idea about how Cyprianus understood the text.

\[
\text{adnuit oranti subpostaque dextera coxae contingit lentae spondens cacumina uirgae}.^{563}
\]

He nodded at the praying man, and with his right hand under the limp hip he touched the top of the staff, while making a promise.

Though the Latin text is not totally clear, it seems as if the top of the staff is the place of worship rather than the object of it.


4.3.6.5 Eucherius of Lyon (410–c. 449)

Eucherius has one example in the first book of *Instructionum ad Salonium* chapter 2 called *De quaestionibus difficilioribus novi Testamenti* in the section on Hebrews:

> Quid in hoc sequimur, quod apostolus dicit: “Fide Iacob moriens singulos filiorum Ioseph benedixit, et adorauit fastigium uirgae eius?” Sceptri significatio est accipienda per uirgam, et per hoc regni potestatisque fastigium in quo Christus intellegitur adoratus, qui uidelicit futurus erat regni Hebraeorum caput.\(^{564}\)

What shall we infer from that what the Apostle says: “By faith Jacob, when dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, ‘and he worshipped the top of his staff’”? The meaning of the sceptre should be acquired by the staff, and by that the top of the kingdom and the dominion, in which Christ is understood as worshipped, because he was the future head of the kingdom of the Hebrews.

As can be seen, Eucherius uses the LXX version of Gen. 47:31 in the context it has in Hebrews, and since he uses the Latin rendering of the text, it is clear that the staff is the object of worship. Further, he gives a new interpretation of the text, in which the staff is interpreted as a reference to Christ, who is the future head of the Hebrews. Moreover, since Jerome did not adjust the quotation from Gen. 47:31 to his translation of Genesis, the LXX version was preserved in the Latin

translation of Hebrews. It should be noted, however, that it was preserved in a form that was adjusted to one of several possible interpretations, and hence it excluded many other interpretations.

4.3.6.6 Summary and Evidence from the Early Latin Church

The Latin Church Fathers apparently were aware of both versions of the text, which, of course, could be expected, since they are used side by side in the Vulgate. Unfortunately, there are far too few references to Gen. 47:31b to see if the different versions produce any clear tendencies in the interpretation. Particularly noteworthy, however, is the fact that the MT version is favoured by Jerome and to some extent by Augustine, and that, though being aware of different versions of the text Augustine still interprets them in the same way. It is very interesting, of course, that in the Vulgate the text of Scripture has been adjusted to fit the interpretation, and especially that the same text is adjusted in two distinctly different directions to fit the two different interpretations. In Genesis Deum is added to exclude any other possible objects of worship, most probably to avoid any accusation of idolatry.\(^565\) Hence the interpretation based on the MT version is favoured in the Old Testament. In Hebrews, on the other hand, the preposition in/super is left out altogether, which makes it clear that the staff is the object of worship. As a consequence, the interpretation based on the LXX version is favoured in the New Testament. Finally, it can be noted that, just as

\(^{565}\) Cf. Kamesar, Jerome, p.156.
among the Greek Church Fathers, there are no signs of Gen. 47:31b in the context where it is found in 𝔅46.

4.3.7 Gen. 47:31b: Summary and Evidence from the Interpretative Context

The investigation of the reception of Gen. 47:31b has shown that both versions of the text were used and interpreted side by side during the whole time covered by the present investigation. In the Jewish community this usage of both versions seems to have been uninterrupted, while in the Christian context only the LXX version seems to have been known during the first few centuries, and not until the time of Jerome was the MT version actually used in the Christian community. It should be noted, of course, that the material at our disposal is quite meagre, but given the rare knowledge of Hebrew in the early Church it is not very likely that the MT version was frequently used. Anyhow, there can be no doubt that the Septuagint translation was no mistake by the translator, but only an alternative interpretation of the Hebrew consonantal text. It has also been noted that interpretations based on both versions of the text, taking Gen. 47:31b as indicating the object of worship as well as the place of worship, could be found in both Jewish and Christian interpretations. In the Jewish context the MT version with הָדֻּפֵּם “bed” was interpreted either as the place of worship (of the old man Jacob) or as the reason for worship (Leah or the issue of Jacob’s bed). This latter interpretation could not be found in the Christian context. The other interpretation found in the Jewish context is based on the LXX version with רֹעֶם interpreted as “tribe”, and it is applied either on Joseph or Reuben. As can be seen, the
interpretations were applied to a number of contexts, a practice that could have been encouraged by the fact that this is the only text in which Jacob is actually worshipping God, and the very ambiguous last words of Gen. 47:31b. In the Christian context only the LXX version, with ἡρῴμη interpreted either as “staff” or “tribe”, was used before the time of Jerome, and it can be presumed that the MT version was not yet known. However, interpretations based on the MT version, and thus indicating the place of worship, were applied to the LXX version, with ἡρῴμη interpreted as “staff”, thus resulting in the staff indicating the place of worship. Such an interpretation cannot be found in the Jewish sources, but could well have originated in any Greek speaking Jewish context even before the time of Hebrews. The LXX version, with ἡρῴμη interpreted as “staff”, was occasionally also applied to the cross of Christ. The LXX version, with ἡρῴμη interpreted as “ruler”, was in the Christian context mainly applied to Joseph (fulfilling the dreams of Joseph, Gen. 37:7–10) or his son Ephraim, but occasionally also to Christ. After Jerome’s translation of Genesis from Hebrew, the MT version of Gen. 47:31 was interpreted also in the Christian context, and it was only interpreted as the place of worship for the old man Jacob. Contrary to the Jewish interpreters, who quoted Gen. 47:31b in a number of contexts, the early Church Fathers only quoted the text in its standard context in Genesis and in its standard context in Hebrews (only𝔓⁴⁶ puts it in another context). It can also be concluded from the material investigated that ἐπί clearly indicates the object of worship, and hence Riggenbach’s assumption that ἐπί could only indicate the place of worship and not the object of worship does not only have a weak linguistic basis, but is
apparently wrong, since this is the way it is interpreted in the early Greek Church. This is made even clearer by the fact that the Vorlage of ἐπί in the expression προσκυνέω ἐπί, namely ἄν, is also used to indicate the object of worship in the expression ἔν ἄν.

4.4 Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21

4.4.1 Introduction

In the previous two sections the history of Gen. 47:31b, both before Hebrews and after, has been discussed in some detail, and conclusions have been drawn. In the following section the findings of the previous sections will be applied to the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b in its Hebrews setting(s). The basis for doing this is, of course, the assumption that the Letter to the Hebrews was composed in a Second Temple Jewish interpretative context. If this is correct, there is reason to believe that there are affinities between interpretations of Scripture found in early post Second Temple Jewish and Christian communities and the interpretations found in Hebrews. There is no need to repeat here the conclusions drawn above, but a number of observations, that are particularly interesting for the interpretation of Hebrews, should be pointed out. First, it has to be emphasized that the version found in the Septuagint is not a mistake by the translator of the Hebrew consonantal text. Instead the version found in the Septuagint has in fact been used and interpreted as early as it can be traced and right up to the present day both in Jewish and Christian contexts. Second, it has to be concluded that the meaning of
Gen. 47:31 is no longer known to us in either of its versions, and that the following discussion can only be a contribution to the debate. Third, the oldest attested text of Hebrews, from Ψ⁴⁶, differs from the standard text of Hebrews. The text of Ψ⁴⁶ has another context for Gen. 47:31b than the one found in both Hebrews and Genesis. This text has never been commented upon before, and hence if the text of Ψ⁴⁶ is followed, little of what has previously been said about Heb. 11:21 is relevant, and the text has to be interpreted afresh. Fourth, there are two main interpretations of Gen. 47:31b, based on the two vocalizations of the text, the one indicating the place of worship (יהִדְוִים), the other one indicating the object of worship (יהִרְוֹם). These two main interpretations have in turn been applied to several contexts, which has resulted in a number of interpretations, all apparently based on the context rather than on the text of Gen. 47:31b itself.

4.4.2 The Interpretation of Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21

First of all it has to be pointed out that all interpretative activity for the last two millennia has been based on a text of Hebrews that is not identical to the oldest one available to us today. In fact the oldest manuscript, Ψ⁴⁶, predates all interpretations preserved until today, and if Ψ⁴⁶ has preserved the original reading, the following discussion about the interpretation of Heb. 11:21 makes little sense. However, since Ψ⁴⁶ is the only available witness to this reading, most of the discussion will still be on the text found in NA27, with an additional section on Ψ⁴⁶. It should also be noted that the reading of Ψ⁴⁶ does not affect the quotation itself, but only its context. As far as the text of the quotation is concerned it
evidently follows the standard text of the Septuagint, which is apparently a
rendering of the same consonantal text as MT, but with a different vocalization.
What is very important for the present investigation, though, is to point out that
the fact that the quotation in Hebrews follows the text in LXX does not mean that
the interpretation in the mind of the author of Hebrews was necessarily based on
the LXX version of the text. There is reason to believe that the author could have
used a standard version of the text, when quoting Scripture, even though he based
his interpretation on another text. Hence, the reason for quoting Gen. 47:31b in
Heb. 11:21 does not necessarily have to be found in the version of the text
actually quoted in Hebrews. Instead the reason for quoting could be found in any
of the interpretations of Gen. 47:31b that were known to the author of Hebrews. A
basic assumption for the present investigation is that he could have known at least
some of the interpretations found in the Jewish community and in the early
Church. Another basic assumption is that the quotation made sense for the author
of Hebrews in the wider context of Heb. 11, which means that the reason for
quoting Scripture was to say something about the faith of Jacob. This faith of
Jacob was a faith convinced of things not seen (Heb. 11:1), and a faith about
things promised but not received (Heb. 11:39). In Heb. 11:20 the sign of Isaac’s
faith is his blessing of the sons, that is, a conviction of things neither seen nor
received. The same is true of Joseph in Heb. 11:22, who was so convinced about
the exodus that he gave instructions about his burial. Hence there is reason to

566 Cf. the usage of Scripture in the pesharim, and Bartina, ‘Jacob’, p.247.
believe that the faith of Jacob, in the mind of the author of Hebrews, was so strong that he even worshipped \( \text{προσκυνέω} \), whatever that could mean, and it is the intention here to see how the interpretations investigated above would fit into this context in Hebrews.

It was concluded above that \( \text{προσκυνέω} \) could mainly be interpreted in two ways either as the place or as the object of worship, but that it could also indicate the reason for the worship. However, the last interpretation seems to be used exclusively in Hebrew speaking contexts, and there are no examples that indicate that \( \text{ἐπί} \) in the expression \( \text{προσκυνέω} \) \( \text{ἐπί} \) could indicate the reason for worship. Hence only the first two interpretations will be taken into consideration here, as well as the possibility that the reason for quoting Gen. 47:31b was neither to point out the place nor the object of worship, but only that Jacob manifested the strength of his faith by worshipping God.

4.4.2.1 Gen. 47:31b Indicating the Place of Worship in Heb. 11:21

The interpretation of \( \text{προσκυνέω} \) as the place of worship seems to have its origin in the vocalization \( \text{םַפַּחַח} \) usually rendered as “bed”, and hence the expression in one way or the other indicates the upper end of the bed. The reason for this place of worship is usually assumed to have been the old age of Jacob, and it is found in the Targums as well as in \textit{Genesis Rabbah} 96. However, as could be seen above, this interpretation is also applied to the Greek translation \( \text{ἐπί τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ἱματιᾶς αὐτοῦ} \) based on the vocalization \( \text{םַפַּחַח} \) interpreted as “staff”. This interpretation can be found among the Church Fathers, but, it should be noted, not
among the earliest Church Fathers and not in the Jewish community. Objections to this interpretation are that it was not known in the earliest Church and it has never been known in the Jewish context. The reason for this interpretation in the early Church also seems to be a wish to avoid any accusation of idolatry by indicating another object of worship than God. Hence, it appears to be a reaction against another but earlier interpretation of the text, which thus is likelier to have been in the mind of the author of Hebrews. Further, it has nothing to say about the faith of Jacob.

4.4.2.2 Gen. 47:31b Indicating the Object of Worship in Heb. 11:21

The interpretation of אֵלָּחֵד הַמַּעֲשָׂה as the object of worship appears to have its origin in the vocalization of יהוּדָה interpreted as “tribe”, but it is also applied to the interpretation of יהוּדָה as “staff”, as it is found in Heb. 11:21. In Jewish sources this interpretation can be found in the Talmud and in Sifre Deuteronomy. In the earliest Church it was favoured, as can be seen for instance in the Vulgate translation of Heb. 11:21, but it seems to have its origin in the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b in its standard context at the end of Gen. 47, where it was applied directly to Joseph or to his staff as a sign of power. In Hebrews, having a different context, the quotation was applied to Ephraim or occasionally

567 In Genesis Rabbah this interpretation, with Gen. 47:31b indicating the object of worship, might even be applied to the version with the vocalization יהוּדָה, which is interpreted as Leah.
to Jesus or his cross. Later this interpretation was avoided in the Christian context, a tendency that can be seen even today. The reasons to avoid the interpretation indicating the object of worship appear to be mainly three: a. the wish to avoid any suspicion of idolatry by indicating worship directed to someone or something else than God, b. the putative assumption that the preposition ἐπί in the expression προσκυνέω ἐπί cannot indicate the object of worship, but only the place of worship, c. the putative assumption that the LXX version is a mistake by the translator of the Septuagint, and that the MT version and interpretations based on it are the correct ones. However, as can be seen from the earliest Church Fathers, the Vulgate translation of Hebrews, and the interpretations in the Jewish context, there seems to be no reason to believe that the worship directed towards humans was regarded as idolatry. Hence there is good reason to believe that the author of Hebrews had no reason to avoid that interpretation either. Further, as has been shown above the preposition ἐπί could well have been used to indicate the object of worship in the expression προσκυνέω ἐπί, and the LXX version is definitely not a mistake by the translator of the Septuagint. Therefore, there seems to be no good reason to assume a priori that the author of Hebrews did not have this interpretation in mind when quoting Gen. 47:31b. Applied to the faith of Jacob it could mean that the faith of Jacob was so strong that he not only blessed the sons of Joseph, but that he also worshipped the forthcoming might represented by the staff, whether it belonged to Joseph, Ephraim, Jesus or someone else.
4.4.2.3 Gen. 47:31b Emphasizing Jacob’s Faith in Heb. 11:21

It has already been pointed out that Gen. 47:31b is the only text in which Jacob worships God. It has also been noted that the reason for finding Gen. 47:31b in so many different contexts in the Jewish material seems to be twofold, both because this is the only example in which Jacob worships God and the very ambiguous last words of the text. Since Gen. 47:31b apparently is open to many different interpretations, it is also easily applicable to contexts of various kinds, which makes it a suitable text, whenever there is a wish only to point out that Jacob was praying, even without any particular place or object in mind for the worship. Hence the emphasis for the author of Hebrews could have been to point out that Jacob underlined his faith by worshipping God, and not to point to any particular place or object of worship.

4.4.2.4 Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21 in the Context of \( \Psi^{46} \)

If the text of \( \Psi^{46} \) is followed, the context of the quotation is Jacob’s blessing of his own sons and not his grandsons as in the standard text of Hebrews. Unfortunately, this does not mean that it is evident which interpretation of Gen. 47:31b the author had in mind when adding the quotation. It is hard to see, however, how an interpretation based on the LXX version, and thus indicating the object of worship, would fit the context with Jacob’s sons. Which of the sons would be \( \tauο\acute{\alpha} \kappa\acute{r}ον \tauης \rho\acute{a}b\deltaου \alpha\omicron\tauο\omicron\upsilon, \) or in what way? Anyhow, there is no evidence of such an interpretation of Gen. 47:31b in any of the sources, which actually do quote Gen. 47:31b in the same context it has in \( \Psi^{46} \), namely Jacob’s
blessing of his own sons. Instead, in the Jewish sources, Jacob’s worship is some kind of thanksgiving for the faith of his sons, something that would fit poorly in the wider context of Hebrews 11, where the focus is not thanksgiving for the past, but faith in future things. If an interpretation based on the MT version of the text is assumed, τὸ ἀκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ indicates the place of worship, and perhaps the old age of Jacob. If this is right, it could well be that the author of Hebrews quoted the version of the text he had at hand, or the text he regarded as the standard text, but that he had an interpretation in mind that was based upon another version. It is also possible that the worship of the quotation might be only a way to emphasize the faith of Jacob as discussed above.

4.5 Conclusions

The version of Gen. 47:31b found in the Septuagint and quoted in Hebrews, with ἡμέρα vocalized as הָעָה and interpreted as φυλή/ῥάβδος “tribe/staff” is not a mistake, but one of two versions used in the Jewish community, the other one being שָׁלָה, vocalized as שָׁלָה, interpreted as “bed”, and found in the MT. The MT version is mostly taken to indicate the place of worship, but there are also examples where it indicates the reason or even the object of worship, the LXX version, on the other hand, generally is taken as the object of worship, while the place of worship is quite rare. Hence both the MT version and the LXX version were most certainly known in the Jewish community at the time when Hebrews was composed. Moreover, both versions were interpreted in the Jewish community, and interpretations based on both versions have survived and been
handed down even until today. Interestingly enough, this is the case although both versions of the text did not survive the vocalization process of the Hebrew text, but once the MT version had been accepted the LXX version of the Hebrew text was considered to be a mistake. Since neither of the two versions of the text is very explicit about its meaning, the interpretation of the text is usually heavily influenced by the various contexts in which it is quoted. Hence it is important to note that the context of the text in Genesis is not the same as the one in Hebrews. Perhaps the vague meaning of the text is also one reason for it being quoted in so many different contexts. Another reason could be that this is the only text in which Jacob is thought to have been worshiping God. Anyhow, after the Masoretic text had become the standard text in the Jewish community and the Septuagint in the Christian Church, the MT version was used in the Jewish community, while the LXX version was usually used by the Church Fathers until the *Vulgate* translation by Jerome. However, since both interpretations were still used in both the Jewish and the Christian context, the accompanying interpretations were not always based on the version of the text quoted with the interpretation. In some examples among the Church Fathers even additional interpretations were based on the LXX version, which was the text actually quoted, and combined with an interpretation based on the MT version, which was most probably not even known to the author. Unfortunately, it has to be concluded again that although the problems of the interpretation of the text were identified already in the early Church as well as in the early Jewish community the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b is still described as “mysteriös”. Hence the meaning
of Gen. 47:31b in Heb. 11:21 is still unknown. Given the great impact of the context in the interpretation of Gen. 47:31b, the situation is complicated even more by the fact that the original context of the New Testament is uncertain, since the oldest manuscript by far, \( \Psi^{46} \), has another context than the rest of the New Testament manuscripts. It should be noted, though, that the context found in \( \Psi^{46} \) is not unknown to the early Midrashim. \( \Psi^{46} \), on the other hand, which appears to be very significant, has never been mentioned in any edition of the Greek text, neither has it been discussed in the exegetical literature before.

Nevertheless, the main conclusion, and what is most important for the present investigation, is the fact that there actually existed several versions of the Hebrew text at the time when Hebrews was composed, and that there also existed interpretations based on the different versions, which were used by the Jewish community as well as by the early Church. However, since the text is mostly not interpreted Christologically, the interpretations seem to be unaffected by the growth of Christianity, and hence the text can give insight into the use of Old Testament texts in the Second Temple Jewish community, and hence in the community where Hebrews was composed.

Finally, the curious renderings of Gen. 47:31b in the Vulgate should be mentioned, in which Scripture has been adjusted to fit the interpretation, and especially that the same text is adjusted in two distinctly different directions to fit the two different interpretations. In Genesis Deum is added to exclude any other possible objects of worship, most probably to avoid any accusation of idolatry. Hence the interpretation based on the MT version is favoured in the Old
Testament. In Hebrews, on the other hand, the preposition *in/super* is left out altogether, which makes it clear that the staff is the object of worship. As a consequence, the interpretation based on the LXX version is favoured in the New Testament.
5. General Conclusions

5.1 Overview of the Conclusions of Chapters 2–4

5.1.1 Introduction

The present study has sought to investigate three Old Testament quotations in Hebrews from a perspective on text and context that has rarely been applied to them before, although the great importance of these aspects has been widely acknowledged. This new approach is based on a number of basic assumptions and its aim has been summarized in four main questions, two about text and two about context, which will form the framework of the following attempt to look at the results from a wider perspective. The four questions are: 1. which versions of the Old Testament texts existed at the time when Hebrews was composed, 2. which version was used by the author of the Letter, 3. how did the different versions of the text influence the interpretations of the text before and after the time of Hebrews, and 4. how did the version of the Old Testament text quoted in Hebrews interact with the argumentation of the author? When turning to the general conclusions it has to be pointed out that they are all based on the investigation of only three texts, and that these texts were chosen with very specific characteristics. Nevertheless, the three examples are not unique, and hence these general conclusions are likely to be applicable on other texts as well, although this assumption has to be confirmed by further research into a larger corpus of texts.
The results for each example will not be repeated here, since they are presented in detail at the end of each chapter, but only a selection of the most important findings will be highlighted.

5.1.2 Text

The first pair of research questions focus on the aspect of text and the initial one is concerned with which versions of the scriptural texts existed at the time when Hebrews was composed. The background for this question is the large number of variant readings of the Hebrew Scriptures which have been attested by the findings in the Judean desert. For the first text, Jer. 31:33, it was concluded that there existed two distinctly different versions of the text, and that the variety of Hebrew texts makes it very likely that the LXX version of it was based on a different Vorlage from a text like the MT. That this is the case is also the conclusion reached by earlier investigations.\textsuperscript{568} The examination of Gen. 47:31b showed that two versions of the text existed, which were based on different vocalizations of the same Hebrew consonantal text, and that both versions were used and interpreted at the time when Hebrews was composed. Hence it was concluded that the LXX version by no means was a mistake by the translator. Rather it was a living tradition, which was interpreted and it is even preserved in the Talmud. For Ps. 40:7 there also existed two different versions, and the possibility of a different Vorlage for the LXX version should not be excluded \textit{a priori}, since the present investigation clearly indicates that the LXX version is not

\textsuperscript{568} Cf., e.g., Schenker, \textit{Das Neue}, p.33.
a product of the author of Hebrews, but was most probably present in the text of the Psalm that he used. Consequently, two of the basic assumptions made before this investigation also appear to have been confirmed, namely that there existed several versions of the OT text at the time when Hebrews was composed, and that there existed several interpretations related to these at the same time. Moreover, that the textual matters relating to Old Testament quotations in the New are still not comprehensively treated is also underlined by the fact that a significant variant reading in the earliest manuscript of Heb. 11:21, \( \Psi^{46} \), has never been discussed in the exegetical literature, in which it generally seems to be taken for granted that variant readings not found in the critical editions do not exist.\textsuperscript{569}

Having concluded that, the obvious question to ask is which of the Old Testament texts was used by the author of Hebrews in the quotations discussed in the present investigation. As could have been expected for the author of Hebrews, the LXX version of the text was employed, a conclusion that seems to be in accordance with the general opinion on the quotations in Hebrews. It should be noted though that the original LXX text of Ps. 40:7 is disputed, and that Gen. 47:31 is put in a different Old Testament context in Hebrews from the one it has in Genesis (and yet another one in the manuscript \( \Psi^{46} \)). It should also be noted that the text quoted is not always the text upon which the interpretation is based, but this discussion belongs more appropriately to the following two research questions.

\textsuperscript{569} Cf., e.g., Gheorghita, \textit{The role of the Septuagint}, p.49.
5.1.3 Context

The second pair of research questions concentrate on the context and the first of them addresses the different versions of the texts and how they influenced the interpretation of them before and after the time of Hebrews, that is, the reception of the Old Testament texts outside of Hebrews. For the first two quotations, Jer. 31:33 and Ps. 40:7, the results are clear; the LXX version is only interpreted in the Christian context, where it is given a Christological interpretation, and for the latter of the two, Ps. 40:7, the LXX version is decisive for the exegesis throughout the early Christian literature. The same seems to be true for the quotation from Jeremiah in the earliest Christian interpretations, but the material is not conclusive, and the plural “laws” of the LXX version is never explicitly interpreted. Further, as could have been expected, the MT version, used in the Jewish community, is never interpreted messianically. Hence it can be concluded that the different versions did have an impact on the interpretations of the texts, at least at the time after Hebrews. Especially interesting is the last quotation, where no Christological influence was expected on the exegesis from the early Christian movement. Here it can be seen that interpretations based on both versions of Gen. 47:31 have survived in the Jewish community until the present time, although only one version of the text, the MT, has been preserved in that context. It is also very likely that the interpretations had a prehistory that goes back far beyond the Letter to the Hebrews. As a consequence both interpretations can also be found in the Christian community in different combinations, but before Jerome usually accompanied with the LXX version of the text. Therefore, it can be concluded that
several versions of Old Testament texts were used and interpreted both in the Jewish and in the Christian communities, and that some of these interpretations had a common origin. Consequently, later sources can reveal something about how the texts were interpreted at the time when the New Testament was composed. It is also very important to point out here that text and interpretation lived lives of their own, which means that they were not always handed down together, but instead, as could be seen concerning Gen. 47:31, one version of the text could be combined with an interpretation of another version of the text.

Before turning to the last question, it can also be concluded that the first research question about context confirmed one basic assumption made in the introduction, namely that pre-existing interpretations continued to be used in the early Church and in post Second Temple Judaism. Hence another basic assumption, namely that Hebrews was written in a Second Temple interpretative context, appears to have been confirmed as well.

With the last research question the result from the previous one is applied on the interpretations found in Hebrews. For the first quotation, from Jeremiah 31, the author of Hebrews gives no explicit interpretation, and hence no clear interaction can be traced between the quoted text and the argumentation of the author. However, since the interpretation of Jer. 31:33 found in the earliest Church is not unlikely to have been influenced by earlier Jewish interpretations of the plural of Torah, it could well be a clue to the author’s understanding of the text. This is especially true, since several statements in the Letter point in the same direction, as explained in chapter 2. If it is correct that the author of
Hebrews had in mind a similar interpretation of the law in Jer. 31:33 as was found in the earliest Church, the plural of the LXX version might not be random to the author, but in accordance with his general view on the law. This assumption has to be treated with caution, though, since this investigation has also shown that texts are sometimes quoted in some kind of standard version, but accompanied by interpretations based on other versions of the text. The remaining two quotations show diametrically opposed tendencies with regard to the last research question. On the one hand, Ps. 40:7 is explicitly and clearly interpreted by the author of Hebrews, and his exegesis is mostly followed by the early Church. For Gen. 47:31b, on the other hand, the exegesis is anything but clear, and interpretations based on both versions can be found in the early Church, as well as several others in the Jewish community. Common to most of these interpretations of Gen. 47:31b is that they are based on the different Old Testament contexts in which the text has been placed, rather than on the quoted text itself. Consequently, the understanding of the text by the author of Hebrews is even less clear, since the original context of Gen. 47:31b in Hebrews is not known, given the unique reading found in \(\Psi^{46}\), which puts the quotation in a different Old Testament context from that which it has in any other manuscripts of Hebrews. It should be noted here that \(\Psi^{46}\) predates all other extant witnesses to Gen. 47:31b. Since most interpretations of Gen. 47:31 are not explicitly Christological, and hence appear to be less affected by the Jesus movement, it is likely that they can give some information on how Old Testament texts were used and interpreted in the Second
Temple Jewish community. This seems to be true, even though the extant sources of these interpretations are all from the time after the Second Temple.

5.2 General Remarks on the Use of the Old Testament in the New

5.2.1 Text

First of all it has to be underlined that at the time when Hebrews was composed (and hence also the other texts of the New Testament) there existed a number of variant readings for many of the Hebrew Old Testament texts. Of these several were translated into Greek, which means that the Old Testament text existed in a plurality of forms, and the uniform Old Testament text, as we know it today from the MT, is a post New Testament phenomenon brought about by socio-religious factors. It is also clear that several of the versions were used in the Second Temple exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures. Hence it can be concluded that, when it comes to the question about which version that was used by the author, it is not always enough only to refer either to the LXX or the MT, but there should usually be a more detailed discussion pertaining to the textual history of a quotation. Moreover, when a text quoted in the New Testament does diverge from the one found in either the LXX or the MT the possibility of a different Hebrew Vorlage should not a priori be excluded. Given the unifying process of the Old Testament text after the destruction of the Second Temple, few texts exist for which different Hebrew versions are still extant, with the exception of the texts preserved in the
Judean desert. On the other hand, many versions have been preserved in the translations, and especially in the Septuagint. Hence the possibility of a different Hebrew Vorlage for many of the readings found in the Septuagint should seriously be taken into account.

Unfortunately, it has to be pointed out again that the situation is made more complicated by the fact that in a number of cases the version of the text quoted is not the same as the one upon which the interpretation is based. Hence it is not enough to identify the source of the quoted text, but the exegesis of the quoted text has to be taken into consideration as well, to establish whether the text in the mind of the author also was the text quoted or not. If the answer to that question is no, one should if possible also try to find out which version of the text the author had in mind and the source of that version.

5.2.2 Context

As noted in the previous section about the text, several of the versions that existed were also utilised in Second Temple exegesis. Based on that observation it can be concluded that the different versions had a decisive impact on the interpretation and understanding of the text. Consequently, at the time of the New Testament there did not only exist a number of different versions of some Old Testament texts, but also a number of interpretations based on the various versions. Hence, from a general point of view, it can be concluded that what is true about Gen. 47:31 is likely to be true about other texts as well. Therefore, the plurality of interpretations based on various versions of a text should be taken into
consideration when trying to understand Old Testament texts quoted in the New. Further, these various interpretations were sometimes handed down both in the Jewish and the Christian communities. Hence the exegetical activity during the Second Temple can be traced in later material found in both communities as well. Consequently, there is very good reason to take later material into account when trying to fully understand the meaning of Old Testament quotations in the New. This is especially true of the Jewish material, which is seldom considered, but also of the early Christian sources, since Jewish material is often taken over and handed down by the early Christian exegetes. And again, as pointed out in the previous section, since text and interpretation were not always handed down together, it is not enough to identify the version of the text actually quoted, but the exegesis has to be taken into account as well, since the exegesis could be based on another version than the one quoted.

5.3 Remarks on the “Parting of the Ways” Debate

Although it is not the place here to go into the broader debate about how the pre-Christian Jewish community ended up in two distinctly separate communities, the Jewish and the Christian, it is still adequate to add a few comments. Given the important role of Scripture in both communities, the results from the present study can at least shed some light on one piece of that process, namely the use of Scripture in the two traditions. Apparently, there were different versions of texts available at the time when the New Testament was composed, and hence also during the process of separation. In a number of cases one version was preserved
in the Jewish community and another in the Christian community, due to the fact that one version of the Old Testament was favoured in the Jewish community, namely the MT, while the Christian community preferred the LXX.\textsuperscript{570} However, since it traditionally has been assumed that the Hebrew Scriptures existed in one and only one version, it has also been assumed that the Jewish and Christian communities interpreted the same text differently, as is argued, for instance, by Guillet:

\begin{quote}
\ldots Christians, even when they most strongly opposed the Jews, never pretended to set their own writings in opposition to Jewish Scripture, but only their reading of the Scriptures in the light of Jesus Christ.\textsuperscript{571}
\end{quote}

However, as has been shown in the present investigation, for the interpretation of a number of theologically central texts the Christian Church used other versions of the Scriptures than those subsequently preserved in the Jewish community. Moreover, these versions, which today are used exclusively in the Christian Church, have a significant impact on the teaching of the Church. Hence it is clear that in at least some cases the Jewish and Christian communities did not interpret the same text differently, but they interpreted different texts differently, and, as could be expected when using different texts, they came to very different conclusions. This is, of course, not a totally new feature, since the dispute about the “true” text was an important part of the controversy between the early Jewish


\textsuperscript{571} Guillet, ‘The Role of the Bible’, p.36; emphasis original.
and Christian communities, with the discussion of παρθένος in Is. 7:14 being the example par excellence.\textsuperscript{572} What is new to the present investigation is that one factor that was not known to the early post Second Temple communities is taken into consideration, namely the diverse character of the Hebrew Scriptures during the Second Temple period, which means that there existed several versions of the Hebrew text. Until recently, it was assumed that the Hebrew Scriptures were handed down with the same accuracy before the destruction of the Second Temple as has been the case after. However, the findings from the Judean desert have proven otherwise. Hence it has to be taken into consideration that at the time of the Second Temple there existed a variety of Hebrew versions (and Greek translations thereof), and the MT version is only one of several that could have been preserved in the post Second Temple Jewish community, as pointed out by Tov:

There probably was no stabilization (this term is mentioned frequently in the professional literature) or standardization bringing about what is often called the “victory of the proto-Masoretic family.” The situation was probably an outcome of political and socio-religious factors . . . . It is not that Ṣ[MT] triumphed over the other texts, but rather, that those who fostered it probably constituted the only organized group which survived the destruction of the Second Temple.”\textsuperscript{573}

\textsuperscript{572} Cf., e.g., Justin \textit{Dialogue with Trypho} 43, 66, 67, 84.

\textsuperscript{573} Tov, \textit{Textual criticism}, p.195.
5.4 Further Research

As can be seen from the conclusions above, the approach utilized in the present investigation has proven to be fruitful, and the special attention given to text and context deserves to be applied to more texts than was possible in this limited study. The texts for the present investigation were chosen because the Old Testament texts quoted existed in different versions at the time when the New Testament text was composed. Given the limited number of such texts, it could perhaps be assumed that this is a very small and insignificant detail in New Testament research. However, given the importance of the Old Testament quotations for the proper understanding of the New Testament, the influence of different versions of the Old Testament text should not be underestimated.

Although the exact number of Old Testament quotations in the New is debated, it is commonly agreed that a majority of the quotations follow the LXX against MT. In another tenth of the examples the quotations follow MT against LXX, while in the remaining examples neither the LXX nor the MT is followed. Given the high rate of quotations following the LXX against MT, there is good reason to believe that in a number of these examples the Vorlage of the Greek text quoted is not identical with MT. Should that be the case, taking the investigation of the Vorlage of the quotation into consideration when interpreting the New Testament

text could have more than an insignificant impact on the understanding of the text, as pointed out by McLay.\textsuperscript{575}

In relation to the question of the impact of context on interpretation, it was concluded that many of the interpretations found in the post Second Temple sources most certainly had their roots in the earlier literature, and hence this material indicates something about how the scriptural texts were understood during the time when the New Testament was composed. Consequently, these texts are of great value for the understanding of the quotations in the New Testament, especially when there are no Second Temple sources extant, which appears to be the case for the majority of texts. Furthermore, the present investigation has shown that there are clear affinities between early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Old Testament texts, and hence both corpora should be taken into consideration when investigating how these texts were interpreted prior to the New Testament. Investigating these sources it is important, though, to watch closely the interpretation of the text not only the quoted text, since the quoted text is likely to be a standard version of the text, while the interpretation could well be based on another version of the text. Hence there could be traces of other versions of the text in the interpretations accompanying the quotations.

In short, although there have been a significant number of investigations into the use of the Old Testament in the New during the last decades, there is still a lot

\textsuperscript{575} McLay, \textit{Septuagint}.
to be done before a correct evaluation can be made of how the texts could or should be interpreted. This is, of course, obvious in a text like Hebrews, in which the Old Testament quotations are so significant for the argumentation. However, given the decisive importance of the Old Testament for the understanding of the New, the Old Testament quotations are not only of technical interest for specialists, but a correct understanding of the New Testament use of the Old is a prerequisite for the understanding of the New Testament as a whole.
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363


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366


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