

# New Perspectives on the Textual Character of Codex Vaticanus: A New Chapter in the Textual Criticism of the Septuagint, Especially the Books of Samuel

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Manuscripts can be studied from different perspectives and for different purposes. On the one hand, manuscripts are artefacts that were produced in a certain place at a certain time and possibly give us a glimpse of that original context. On the other hand, they function as mediators of texts, either unique documents to be studied as sources for historical inquiry or copies of literature that participate in the textual tradition of a certain text. The last-mentioned is my focus in this article, just as it is generally in my research.

The material, paleographical observation of manuscripts is fascinating—I know this from my own experience with a previously unknown papyrus. A certain amount of groundwork on any given manuscript is of course needed whatever the aim of the study. The text needs to be deciphered and parts of it possibly reconstructed before any textual study can be done.

In this article, I wish to show what kinds of insights into the *original context* of a manuscript can be attained by *textual study*. In recent discussion on the study of manuscripts, there has been a dispute between “old-fashioned” textual research and the so-called “New Philology” approach, which emphasizes the importance of focusing on single manu-

scripts and their individual features.<sup>1</sup> I do not wish to belittle the research done by the “New Philology” approach. In some cases, information has been preserved concerning the origins of a manuscript, so that conclusions can be drawn on the basis of its textual or paratextual features; for instance, conclusions on religious practices at a certain location. In many other cases, the outcome is very limited, because nothing is known of the original context.

There is much talk nowadays about the provenance of newly discovered manuscripts or fragments. In order to work against looting, that is, illegal digging and the smuggling of antiquities, researchers are warned not to work on unprovenanced materials. Such illegal activities are a big problem, and it is important to take measures against them. At the same time, we notice that most of the manuscript material that we rely on in biblical studies is “unprovenanced” in the sense that we do not know its origins. Many of the manuscripts we work on have been brought to the west illegally. This is not a reason to abandon them, and it so happens that among the newly found unprovenanced materials there are some that, in spite of everything, are so important that they deserve to be published.

## WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CODEx VATICANUS?

In this article, we are focusing on Codex Vaticanus that has been called the “most important” of biblical manuscripts. It is one of the great early bibles from the fourth century. Its dating, however, is mainly based on the paleographical assessment of its script. Otherwise, nothing certain is

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<sup>1</sup> The “New Philology,” which became popular in medieval studies in the 1990’s (see especially the special issue of *Speculum* 65 [1990]), has spread its influence into many different branches of scholarship, including biblical studies. See, for instance, Liv Ingeborg Lied and Hugo Lundhaug, eds., *Snapshots of Evolving Traditions: Jewish and Christian Manuscript Culture, Textual Fluidity, and New Philology*, TUGAL 175 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017).

known about this manuscript during its first millennium of existence. What is assumed is that it was among the earliest acquisitions to the collection of Greek manuscripts at the Vatican library when this collection was formed in the fifteenth century; but where it came from, how it came to Rome, and where it had its origins is not known.<sup>2</sup> By the fifteenth century, the manuscript had suffered some hardships and lost some parts: most of Genesis (31 leaves), several Psalms (10 leaves), and the Pastoral Epistles and the Apocalypse from the NT. The lost parts were substituted in later script that has been described by paleographical experts as a typical fifteenth century cursive hand. Obviously, those working in the newly founded Vatican library wanted to restore the manuscript, presumably to be presented to the Pope as one of the treasures of the library. By that time, there were no scribes who would have been able to prepare the missing parts in uncial script.<sup>3</sup>

Codex Vaticanus is mentioned for the first time in letters by a Vatican librarian to Erasmus (1521 and 1533).<sup>4</sup> As we know, Christian renaissance scholars like Erasmus were looking for the ancient sources of the biblical text, and Erasmus in particular prepared the first editions of the Greek New Testament.<sup>5</sup> Towards the end of the century, Vaticanus

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<sup>2</sup> On Codex Vaticanus (Vatican Greek 1209; siglum B), see Henry Barclay Swete, *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: University Press, 1914), 126–128; Sidney Jellicoe, *Septuagint and Modern Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 177–182; Alfred Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis der griechischen Handschriften des Alten Testaments: Bd. 1, 1, Die Überlieferung bis zum VIII. Jahrhundert, bearbeitet von Detlef Fraenkel*, *Septuaginta: Vetus Testamentum Graecum, Supplementum*, Bd 1,1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 2004), 337–344. Codex Vaticanus is listed in the oldest catalogue of the Vatican Library, dated to 1475 (Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis*, 341).

<sup>3</sup> T. C. Skeat, “The Codex Vaticanus in the Fifteenth Century,” *JThS* 35 (1984): 454–465.

<sup>4</sup> Swete, *Introduction*, 127.

<sup>5</sup> The first printed edition of the New Testament was Erasmus’s *Novum Instrumentum omne*, first edition 1516 (*Novum Testamentum omne* in the later editions 1519, 1522, 1527, 1536). Erasmus was able to consult Vaticanus only for his fifth edition.

was used as the main textual basis for the *Sistine edition* of the Septuagint (1587). This shows that the importance of this manuscript had already been recognized. However, it is amazing that Vaticanus was not made available for study until the nineteenth century, and even then just limited access was given to very few scholars. Swete writes that Vaticanus “was guarded with a natural but unfortunate jealousy,” so that only towards the end of the nineteenth century a facsimile edition made it possible to study the manuscript more thoroughly.<sup>6</sup> As is well known, Vaticanus was then used as the main base-text of the Cambridge diplomatic edition of the Septuagint (known as the Brooke-McLean edition). At the same time as the Cambridge project of editing the text of the Septuagint was underway, another project was launched in Göttingen with the goal of editing a critical edition of the Septuagint. The Göttingen edition offers a critical text that is established by the editor of each individual book on the basis of the complete textual evidence. The most well-known Septuagint edition is probably the manual edition of Rahlfs, which was prepared—according to the principles of the Göttingen critical edition—on the basis of just a few manuscripts, the most prominent among them being Vaticanus.<sup>7</sup>

Today it is hard to imagine the difficulties faced by textual scholars a couple of generations ago as we are all now in the position to study Codex Vaticanus in great detail through the electronic publication of the Vatican library on the internet. In fact, good digital images show the details of a manuscript much more clearly than what can be seen directly by autopsy.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Swete, *Introduction*, 127.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion of the principles followed by the two major editions, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “What is a Critical Edition of the Septuagint Good for?” in *Like Nails Firmly Fixed: Essays on the Text and Language of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures*, ed. John D. Meade, Philip S. Marshall, and Jonathan Kiel (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming, 2020).

<sup>8</sup> To anyone interested in manuscripts, it is recommended to have a look at it at [https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS\\_Vat.gr.1209](https://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.gr.1209).

The main features of Vaticanus are the following. It is a quarto volume, of which 759 leaves have been preserved (617 of these in the Old Testament), “written on the finest vellum in a singularly beautiful hand.”<sup>9</sup> Its pages have three columns of 40 to 44 lines with 16 to 18 letters per line. There are no breathing marks or accents by the original hand, but there are occasional dots and empty line-endings to show the end of a paragraph, whereas the beginning of a new paragraph often seems to stick out slightly. The leaves are arranged in *quinions*, that is, gatherings of five double-leaves (which makes 10 leaves, amounting to 20 pages). There were two contemporary hands that worked on the original text of the manuscript.<sup>10</sup> In addition, there are later corrections: ink has been filled in where the text was faded; and the decorations and book titles marking the beginnings of books also look like later additions, and definitely are such.<sup>11</sup> As I already mentioned, the type of uncial script used in Vaticanus has been dated to the middle of the fourth century, but a paleographical dating can never be very exact.

Some 120 years ago, Alfred Rahlfs wrote an article concerning the provenance of Vaticanus. He had observed that the contents of the manuscript, the collection of Old Testament books and their order, corresponds exactly to the Old Testament canon presented in the thirty ninth Festal Letter of Athanasius (367 CE). The Books of Maccabees are lacking in both, although most other canon lists include at least 1 and 2 Macc. As for the order of the books, Vaticanus and Athanasius place the prophets last (as they are in Protestant Bibles), whereas Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus place the Psalms and wisdom books at the end of the Old Testament. The three great codices all show a different collection

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<sup>9</sup> Swete, *Introduction*, 128.

<sup>10</sup> Scribe A for pp. 41–334 and 625–944 and Scribe B for the rest (see Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis*, 338).

<sup>11</sup> In addition, the first letter of each book has been erased and replaced by a decorative initial. The book titles were originally given as end-titles at the end of each book. For more information on the fifteenth century restoration of the manuscript, see Skeat, “Vaticanus,” 457–462.

and a different arrangement of books, and in view of this, the agreement between Vaticanus and Athanasius is significant. Rahlfs used this agreement as an argument for the Egyptian (or Alexandrian) origin of Vaticanus, and he reasoned that the codex would have been copied after the Festal Letter of Athanasius, towards the end of the fourth century. However, his conclusion concerning the dating is not indisputable.<sup>12</sup> The codex could have been copied before the letter, but it is clear that they do represent the same conception of the Old Testament canon and thus belong to the same context, presumably the Alexandrian Christian school and community.

Other scholars have suggested Caesarea in Palestine as the place of origin for Vaticanus—and for Sinaiticus as well.<sup>13</sup> I find it somewhat odd that several scholars have bundled these two codices together and suggested a common place of origin for both, either Alexandria or Caesarea, arguing vehemently for one or the other. The differences between these codices in the collection of books and in their order speak against a common place of origin. In addition, the structure of the manuscripts and the arrangement of columns is different. Why should one and the same scriptorium have produced such different manuscripts? The text types that the two represent would also be important in the assessment of their mutual relation, but since I am dealing with textual phenomena in Samuel—Kings, which have not been preserved in Sinaiticus, I cannot say too much about the text type of Sinaiticus. Since both great

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<sup>12</sup> Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, 177–182.

<sup>13</sup> This thesis is vehemently argued for by T. C. Skeat, “The Codex Sinaiticus, the Codex Vaticanus, and Constantine,” *JThS* 50 (1999): 583–623. Skeat suggests that both Sinaiticus and Vaticanus belonged to the fifty manuscripts ordered from Eusebius by Constantine (from Caesarea to Byzantium). Thereagainst, Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, 178, argues that, more probably, Vaticanus might have been one of the manuscripts ordered from Athanasius by Constantine (from Alexandria to Rome), as this would explain both how the manuscript came to Rome as well as its similarities to the Alexandrian canon. These theories, however, lie “in the realm of conjecture rather than in the sober history of the codex” (Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, 179).

codices originate from the fourth century, there are often similarities between their texts, but in other books where they can be compared, their text-types are by no means identical.

## TEXTUAL HISTORY OF SAMUEL—KINGS

As we are now proceeding from the outward appearance of the manuscript to observing its textual features, we need some introduction to the textual history of Samuel—Kings. The text of these books—both Hebrew and Greek—is full of complications, with which scholars have struggled over the centuries. After the Qumran discoveries, which include relatively much Samuel material, we are finally in a position to solve some of the problems. For one thing, we now understand that the MT is not “the original text” of these books, but rather the final update of the text. The Hebrew text used as the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint was widely different from the Hebrew text that the Greek text was later compared to—and from the MT with which we work—especially in the historical books. When discussing the textual history of the Septuagint, we need to take into account that the Greek text was time and again adjusted (approximated) to the contemporary Hebrew text which was still constantly being edited and under change until the first and possibly the second century CE. This is one of the main complications in the textual history of these books—and thus also the cause of complications for the research.<sup>14</sup>

Another major event that has advanced textual scholarship immensely is the discovery of a Greek Minor Prophets scroll from Naḥal Ḥever,

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<sup>14</sup> For examples, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “A Kingdom at Stake: Reconstructing the Old Greek – Deconstructing the Textus Receptus,” in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, ed. A. Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta, JSJS 126 (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 353–366; and idem. “Was Samuel Meant to Be a Nazirite? The First Chapter of Samuel and the Paradigm Shift in Textual Study of the Hebrew Bible,” *Textus* 28 (2019): 1–20.

some forty kilometres south of Qumran.<sup>15</sup> The text has been dated to the first century BCE. Dominique Barthélemy, who was the first to study and interpret the discovery, recognized that the Greek text of that scroll was not the normal Septuagint text of the Minor Prophets but a thoroughly revised text that had been approximated to the contemporary Hebrew text.<sup>16</sup> Barthélemy was also able to connect this text-form with traces of similar revision elsewhere. The Naḥal Ḥever Minor Prophets scroll was recognized as authentic evidence of Jewish revisional activity on the Greek text of the Septuagint from the late Second Temple period (around the turn of the era) and thus earlier than any Christian text-form known so far. This phenomenon was later to receive the name *kaige* revision, and it has launched the beginning of a new era in our understanding of the textual history of the Septuagint.

Before the discovery of the Naḥal Ḥever Minor Prophets scroll, the only known revisions of the Septuagint text were the two Christian recensions: the Hexaplaric recension that was based on the so-called Hexapla, which was Origen's great text-critical work (from the early third century CE); and the Lucianic recension from fourth century Antioch. In both cases it took some time before the recensional texts were spread more widely. Both of these recensions can be recognized by the principles they follow and by the manuscripts in which they exist.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The main discovery was made in 1952 by the locals, and some further fragments were discovered when the cave was located in 1961. See Emanuel Tov, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8HevXIIgr)*, DJD VIII (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

<sup>16</sup> See Dominique Barthélemy's announcement of the discovery in "Redécouverte d'un chaînon manquant de l'histoire de la Septante," *RB* 60 (1953): 18–29, and the first publication of the fragments by Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers d'Aquila: Première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophéton*, VTSup 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1963). See also Anneli Aejmelaes and T. Kauhanen, eds., *The Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d'Aquila*, DSI 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> See Anneli Aejmelaes, "Textual History of the Septuagint and the Principles of Critical Editing," in *The Text of the Hebrew Bible and Its Editions: Studies in Celebration of the Fifth Centennial of the Complutensian Polyglot*, ed. Andrés Piquer Otero and Pablo Torijano Morales, Supplements to the Textual History of the Bible 1 (Leiden: Brill,



As for the Hexaplaric recension, Origen was most of all interested in the quantitative correspondence between the Hebrew and the Greek texts, marking plusses of the Greek text by *obeli* and complementing plusses of the Hebrew under *asterisks* in the Greek text. In the books of Samuel, the Hexaplaric text is found in Codex Alexandrinus (A) and the minuscules 247-376 (= *O*), but especially the asterisked plusses have spread to a number of other manuscripts (in particular, the *d* group and the Catena manuscripts).<sup>18</sup> The Lucianic revisors, on the other hand, corrected the Greek style and grammar as well as the comprehensibility of the text for public reading in the community, and they also picked up many of the Hexaplaric asterisked plusses. The *L* group in the books of Samuel comprises five manuscripts—19-82-93-108-127—and Lucianic readings have been occasionally picked up by a few other manuscripts.<sup>19</sup>

As the great codices of the fourth century did not reveal any connections with these two recensions, they were regarded as the best representatives of the original text of the Septuagint (especially Vaticanus and

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2016), 160–179. The manuscripts available for the First Book of Samuel, with their tentative groupings, are the following (with those only partially preserved in parentheses): B A V (M) (842) (845) (846) (867); *O* = 247-376; *L* = 19-82-93-108-127; *CI* = 98-(243)-379-731; *CII* = 46-52-236-242-313-328-530; *a* = 119-527-799; *b* = 121-509; *d* = 44-68-74-106-107-120-122-125-134-(370)-610; *f* = 56-246; *s* = 64-92-130-314-381-488-489-(762); 29 55 71 158 244 245 318 (342) 460 554 707. As for the group sigla, *O* stands for the Hexaplaric, *L* for the Lucianic, and *C* for Catena manuscripts. See Septuaginta-Unternehmen der Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen, ed., *Offizielles Verzeichnis der Rablfs-Sigeln, Stand: Dezember 2012*, <https://rep.adw-goe.de/handle/11858/00-001S-0000-0022-A30C-8>.

<sup>18</sup> For more information on the Hexaplaric recension in 1 Samuel, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “Hexaplaric Recension and Hexaplaric Readings in 1 Samuel,” in *On Hexaplaric and Lucianic Readings and Recensions*, ed. Dionisio Candido, Joshua Alfaro, and Kristin de Troyer, DSI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, forthcoming).

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the Lucianic recension in 1 Samuel, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “The Lucianic Text of 1 Samuel: A Revised and Augmented Edition of the Old Greek,” in *On Hexaplaric and Lucianic Readings and Recensions*, ed. Dionisio Candido, Joshua Alfaro, and Kristin de Troyer, DSI (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, forthcoming).

Sinaiticus). They could of course contain scribal errors, but readings that represent deliberate changes according to some principles of revision were simply regarded as impossible. This approach by researchers has led to problematic results, which are now being corrected as we know more about the factors at work in the textual history.

I hardly expected it myself, but the discovery of authentic evidence of Jewish revisional activity on the Greek text at Naḥal Ḥever has been decisive also for my work on the critical edition of 1 Samuel. Barthélemy pointed out a series of translation features that connected the Naḥal Ḥever scroll with the Jewish translations known as Aquila and Theodotion that were produced in the second century CE to replace the Septuagint. Similar features can be found in “the B text” of Judges, in sections of the Books of Samuel and Kings that were early on noticed to be different from the rest of the books (2 Sam 10:6/11:2–1 Kgs 2:11 and 1 Kgs 22–2 Kgs 25),<sup>20</sup> in the translations of a few other books (Lamentations, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, 2 Esdras, and Ruth), in the so-called Theodotion text of Daniel, and in the additions to Job.<sup>21</sup>

It is typical of this early Jewish revision that it tends to follow the MT in a literalistic manner, leaving out plusses of the Greek text and changing translation equivalents to correspond more closely to the Hebrew text. In the historical books, these features are found especially in “the B text,” that is, Vaticanus, with a varying number of related manuscripts.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> The division of Samuel–Kings into sections with different translation styles was first discussed by Henry St. John Thackeray, “The Greek Translation of the Four Books of Kings,” *JTS* 8 (1907): 262–278, and was followed by Barthélemy, *Les Devanciers*. The beginning of the first *kaige* section at 2 Sam 11:2, based on Thackeray’s suggestion, has been challenged several times. 2 Sam 10:6 has been argued for by Raimund Wirth, “Dealing with Tenses in the *Kaige* Section of Samuel,” in *The Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d’Aquila*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Tuukka Kauhanen, DSI 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 185–197.

<sup>21</sup> For a more thorough discussion of the revisional features, see Barthélemy, *Devanciers*; Tov, *Greek Minor Prophets*.

<sup>22</sup> In Judges, Rahlfs printed two slightly different texts side by side in his manual

What I have discovered in the course of my work on 1 Samuel is that the difference between the different sections of Samuel–Kings is not as sharp as it was thought to be. The so-called *kaige* sections contain revisional features to such an extent that the difference had already been observed by Thackeray without any knowledge of early Jewish revisional activity. However, the other parts—the so-called non-*kaige* sections—are not free from early revisional features: such features occur sporadically in them and particularly in Vaticanus and a few witnesses related to it (*b* = 121-509; and Aeth—called “the B text”). These sporadic revisional features have been revealed only in the course of closer text-critical work on these texts. This is a fundamental discovery in my work, and it has helped to solve old problems and to correct some erroneous notions.<sup>23</sup>

#### PROBLEM CASES THAT REVEAL SOMETHING NEW ABOUT CODEX VATICANUS

Let us take an example.<sup>24</sup> 1 Sam 2:14 is one of the first cases that drew my attention to this phenomenon,<sup>25</sup> but I did not dare to draw the text-critical conclusion seen here before having found several more similar cases.

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edition: “the A text” and “the B text.” In Samuel and Kings, “the B text” (B and the majority of other manuscripts) prevails in the so-called *kaige* sections.

<sup>23</sup> See Anneli Aejmelaeus, “*Kaige* Readings in a Non-*Kaige* Section in 1 Samuel,” in *Legacy of Barthélemy: 50 Years after Les Devanciers d’Aquila*, ed. Anneli Aejmelaeus and Tuukka Kauhanen, DSI 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 169–184.

<sup>24</sup> The following examples will be given according to the critical text of the forthcoming edition, whereas readings of Rahlfs’s edition are quoted under Ra. As usual, the list of manuscripts for the majority reading is not given in the apparatus but can be derived from the list of all witnesses by deducting the manuscripts representing variant readings. For the full list of manuscripts, see footnote 17.

<sup>25</sup> See my article “The Septuagint of 1 Samuel,” in *On the Trail of the Septuagint Translator: Collected Essays, Revised and Expanded Edition*, ed. idem, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 50 (Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 123–141.

והמזלג שלשה שנים בידו ... ובא נער <sup>13</sup> 1 Sam 2:13–14 והקה בכיור <sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> και ἤρχετο τὸ παιδάριον ... και κρεάγρα τριόδους ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ, <sup>14</sup> και καθήκεν [ἐπάταξεν Ra] αὐτήν εἰς τὸν λέβητα τὸν μέγαν ...

om και καθήκεν αὐτήν 98\* | και καθήκεν] pr και ἐπάταξεν 509; κεκράτηκεν *d*<sup>68</sup>; και καθήκεν 158; και καθίει L; et *iecit* Aeth Arm; et *mittebat* La<sup>115</sup>; και ἐπάταξεν B A f Ra; cf MT; και ἐπάταξαν 121 68-122; και ἐπάτασεν O = MT

Translation: <sup>13</sup> And the servant would come ... and (= with) a three-pronged fork in his hand ... <sup>14</sup> and he would strike (MT) / throw (LXX) it into the cooking-pot (MT) / big kettle (LXX) ...

This is part of the description of the misconduct of the sons of Eli in connection with sacrificial meals (they would send their servant to take the portion that belonged to the priest before it was cooked), an action that occurred repeatedly, and for this reason the verbal forms are mainly those used for iterative past action: in Hebrew the perfect consecutive and imperfect and in Greek the imperfect (altogether vv. 14–17). To begin with, it puzzled me that there was an aorist among the imperfects—what I found in Rahlfs’s text was ἐπάταξεν—whereas the variants included both imperfect and aorist forms of two different verbs, πατάσσω (“to strike”) and καθίημι (“to throw down”), as well as one spelling error connected with the latter.

It turned out, however, that the problem was not with the verbal form but with the verb itself, the lexical choice, one of the alternatives being the standard equivalent of the Hebrew verb (נכה, *hiphil*) and the other a most fitting contextual rendering.

When comparing the different variants with each other, one should always try to find out what happened to the text, in which direction was it changed and why. Among the alternatives in the present case, the change of the verb and of the tense are clearly intentional, the alternation of singular and plural and the spelling error κεκράτηκεν were most probably unintentional.

Now, if πατάσσω were the original, then καθίημι would have meant a change to a contextually more fitting expression. Changes that improve the style or comprehensibility of the text are only known from the

Lucianic recension. In our case, however, it seems practically impossible that the Lucianic recension would have been the origin of the verb *καθίημι*. How could it have spread to the majority of the witnesses, and how could the change from the imperfect (in *L*) to the aorist (in the majority) in the middle of a chain of imperfects be explained in that case? By contrast, supposing that *καθίημι* is original, the change to *πατάσσω* can be readily explained as an approximation to the Hebrew text, precisely the kind of change found in the Naḥal Ḥever Minor Prophets scroll.

My decision for the critical text is thus *καθίημι*, and more precisely the aorist form *καθήκεν*. Further arguments for the critical text can be presented from the translation style of the translator of 1 Samuel. This translator has a special sensitivity for verbal forms, using the imperfect in cases of the past iterative, but interrupting long chains of imperfects by the aorist in order to express abrupt movement or perhaps just for lively expression. The same kind of alternation happens between the historical present and the aorist.<sup>26</sup> This translator is also able to alternate the equivalents used for frequently occurring words. In the case of *הכנ*, *hiphil*, the most common rendering is naturally *πατάσσω*, but there are—in addition to *καθίημι*—several alternative renderings (*πλήσσω* 4:2, 5:12; *τύπτω* 11:11, 17:36, 27:9, 31:2; *παίω* 13:4; *ἐκζέω* 5:6; *θανατώω* 17:35, 20:33; *ἀποκτείνω* 17:46). He makes contextually fitting choices, but at times also contextual guesses, if he does not know a Hebrew term.

Let us now have a look at the manuscript evidence. The verb *πατάσσω*, which more closely accords with the Hebrew text, appears in the aorist *ἐπάταξεν* in B A and the *f* group (= 56-246), with a plural

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<sup>26</sup> See Raimund Wirth, *Die Septuaginta der Samuelbücher: Untersucht unter Einbeziehung ihrer Rezensionen*, *De Septuaginta Investigationes* 7 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), see also idem, “Das Praesens Historicum in den griechischen Samuelbüchern,” in *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Texts in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus*, ed. Kristin de Troyer, T. Michael Law, and Marketta Liljeström, CBET 72 (Leuven: Peeters, 2014), 117–132.

variant in 121 68–122, and the same reading is found in a plus in 509 (a doublet). It should be noted that 121 and 509 form a group marked by *b* and are members of “the B text,” that is, they are close to Vaticanus, to the extent that there is a clear dependence between these witnesses. The same verb in the imperfect ἐπάτασεν, which is obviously an adjustment of the verbal form to the context, is found in the manuscript group *O* (= 247–376). This group, together with *A*, was recognized by Rahlfs to be Hexaplaric. In this case, however, Rahlfs did not see any Hexaplaric influence but considered ἐπάταξεν to be part of the original translation.

From my viewpoint, any form of πατάσσω is here secondary, but neither do I consider it to be Hexaplaric. Why not? After all, the Hexaplaric recension is known for its approximations to the Hebrew text. It is, however, not known for approximations of this kind. Origen’s main interest was in the plusses and minuses between the Greek and the Hebrew texts and not in translation equivalents.

As for the alternative forms of the original verb καθίημι, the aorist gets the strongest support both from the manuscripts and from the translation style of 1 Samuel. The imperfect, in this case also an adjustment to the chain of imperfects in the context, only occurs in the Lucianic group, and can be explained as a stylistic improvement.

Thus, the reading closest to the original text in 1 Sam 2:14 is καθήκεν, and the different forms of πατάσσω originated from an early Jewish revision of the *kaige* type.

What is radical about this solution is that “the B text” and the Hexaplaric witnesses agree in a *secondary reading*. Agreement in an original reading would be no problem, but agreement in a secondary reading always means a closer connection, a dependence between the manuscript groups. Before going further into the question of how this connection came about, let us look at another example, a much briefer one:

עממ לא וקולה 1 Sam 1:13

καὶ φωνὴ αὐτῆς οὐκ ἤκούετο· καὶ εἰσήκουσεν αὐτῆς Κύριος

καὶ<sup>2</sup> – Κύριος] > B A O b f 55 245 707<sup>ext</sup> Aeth Sa Compl Ra = MT |

וישמע אליה יהוה *Vorlage*

Cf. Gen 30:22 וישמע אליה אלהים, καὶ ἐπήκουσεν αὐτῆς ὁ θεός

Hannah was praying silently at the sanctuary in Shilo. “Her voice was not heard, but”—according to the Greek text—“the Lord heard her.” This sentence was obviously influenced by the story of Rachel, who also suffered from childlessness. The borrowing, however, must have happened in Hebrew, because the formulation in Greek is different from Gen 30:22. The longer text must have been present in the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint—probably even representing the original wording of the Hebrew text. It is lacking in the MT, possibly removed on purpose by an editor who made several such omissions, obviously with the aim to diminish the role of Hannah in the birth-story of Samuel.<sup>27</sup> Comparison with the shorter Hebrew text led to the omission of the sentence from the Greek text in those manuscripts that witness the *kaige*-type corrections. We can see here a very similar group of manuscripts as in the previous case, namely, “the B text” and the Hexaplaric text plus a few other witnesses: B *b* (= 121-509) and A *O* (= 247-376) as well as *f* (= 56-246) and also 245 707<sup>ext</sup>. The longer text no doubt belongs to the original Greek text.

Readings like these in which Vaticanus is in agreement with the Hexaplaric text will be found in my forthcoming critical edition of 1 Samuel in the apparatus—and there will be a fair number of such cases—but previously, they were regarded as belonging to the original Septuagint translation. Why? First, because Vaticanus was supposed to be free from any intentional revision. It is true that Vaticanus is not dependent on the Hexaplaric recension, but this does not mean that it could not have features of another revision. Second, because these readings

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<sup>27</sup> For editorial features in the MT of 1 Sam 1, see Anneli Aejmelaeus, “Was Samuel Meant to Be a Nazirite? The First Chapter of Samuel and the Paradigm Shift in Textual Study of the Hebrew Bible,” *Textus* 28 (2019): 1–20.

were not typical of the Hexaplaric recension: Origen was interested in quantitative differences between Hebrew and Greek, but he did not wish to leave out any plusses, nor was it in his interest to correct translation equivalents. Third, because there was no knowledge of an earlier revision.

Thus, it was taken for granted that all other manuscripts (ca. 50 of them) were corrupted and that the reading closest to the MT is always to be regarded as the original Septuagint. This is, of course, false, because the *Vorlage* of the Septuagint was often different from the MT and because the translator often made contextual choices of equivalent (sometimes even contextual guesses, when he did not know a Hebrew term).

Previous generations of scholars have explained such shared readings between Vaticanus and the Hexaplaric group as indications that the basic Septuagint text that Origen was using was close to Vaticanus.<sup>28</sup> This is correct—although some clarifications are needed!

An important observation is that the text type represented by Vaticanus, a manuscript of the fourth century, must be older than the Hexaplaric recension. Origen must have already known a manuscript like this around 200 CE. What has, however, not been taken into account is that Origen knew and compared several Septuagint manuscripts that did not always agree with each other. This caused him some trouble when he had to decide which words to copy into the Septuagint column of his Hexapla. In cases of disagreement, he used the Hebrew text as a criterion and chose the reading that corresponded to the Hebrew text. Actually, he writes that he chose the reading that is in harmony with the versions of Aquila, Symmachus, and Theodotion, which were his guides to the Hebrew text.<sup>29</sup> This way he believed to be able to preserve the origi-

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<sup>28</sup> That Vaticanus represents the text type known to Origen was maintained by Swete, *Introduction*, 487. Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta-Studien I–III*, 2nd ed. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965), 101, suggests that B was “cum grano salis die Vorlage des Origenes.” See also Rahlfs, *Verzeichnis*, 344.



nal wording of the Septuagint. Thus, if there happened to be a detail that was corrected according to the Hebrew text in one of his Greek manuscripts, he would of course follow this manuscript, believing that this one represented the genuine Septuagint. Readings which Origen picked up this way for his fifth column were by definition pre-hexaplaric, and he naturally did not mark them in any way.

As a result, we find readings shared by Vaticanus and the Hexaplaric manuscripts, readings that represent early Jewish correction according to the Hebrew text.

### THE FIRST CHRISTIAN RECENSION OF THE SEPTUAGINT

How did it happen then that the manuscript of the text type of Vaticanus known to Origen contained such readings? Where did they come from? Why were such readings only sporadically represented in this text type?

I think we are dealing here with the shift from Jewish transmission of the Septuagint to Christian textual transmission. The *kaige* revision, the earliest correction of the Greek text according to the Hebrew text, was a Jewish phenomenon, which had its origins in the pre-Christian time and is located by most scholars to Palestine. I think this is logical, because a revision like this demanded good command of both Hebrew and Greek, and the motivation behind it must have been a word-for-word interpretation of scriptures. The Greek text had to correspond to the Hebrew text as closely as possible in order to produce the same exegetical interpretation. These prerequisites were fulfilled in Palestine or more precisely in its learned center in Jerusalem.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Origen, *Comm. Matt.* 15:14. For more on the interpretation of this passage, see Aejmelaeus, "Hexaplaric Recension."

<sup>30</sup> See Anneli Aejmelaeus, "The Origins of the *Kaige* Revision," in *Scriptures in the Making: Texts and Their Transmission in Late Second Temple Judaism*, ed. Raimo Hakola, Paavo Huotari, and Jessi Orpana, CBET (Leuven: Peeters, forthcoming, 2020).

On the other hand, Vaticanus has connections to Egypt and Alexandria. We discussed the connection to the canon list given by Athanasius in 367. With regard to the text-form, which is older than the manuscript, it seems to have connections to Egypt and to Ethiopia, in that especially the Ethiopic daughter version is based on this text-form, and the Coptic translation at times also shows some affinity to it. This kind of text must have been available in Egypt and the surrounding areas early on.

As for Origen, he was also at home in Alexandria, where he acquired his learning, and was active as a teacher and a scholar for some time before moving to Caesarea. It was important for him to distinguish between the sacred text of the Church and the Jewish scriptures. The manuscripts that he used as the basis for his Septuagint column were Christian copies of the Septuagint, copies used in the Church. He did not mix readings from Jewish sources with his Septuagint text, other than complementing the minuses of the Septuagint under the sign of an asterisk.

So, the manuscript from which Origen picked up the *kaige*-type corrections must have represented an early Christian copy of the biblical text. I would go even further and maintain that it is a question of a Christian edition of the text, the earliest of Christian recensions, which combined the Old Greek text with sporadic Jewish corrections. The corrections according to the Hebrew text found in “the B text” of 1 Samuel are too sporadic for an actual *kaige* manuscript, but there must have been another manuscript with more *kaige* readings that was used by these early Christian copyists and editors of the text. It also seems that the editors did not consult the Hebrew text but adopted the corrections in the Greek form.

In the so-called *kaige* sections—for some reason—the editors of this text type made more intensive use of the *kaige* manuscript. The same happened in Judges. In all these cases, “the B text” was distributed to a large number of manuscripts.

In the historical books, as I said before, the Hebrew text was under development until a fairly late time, and this of course increased the need for corrections. It is not yet clear what the situation was in the other books of the Old Testament. A codex may follow different text types in different biblical books because the books used to be copied one by one or in small groups, and the whole canon was assembled into one great codex only in the fourth century (when the Church could afford the production of such great parchment codices).<sup>31</sup>

However, there are signs that “the B text” might have similar features in other books as well. Thus, it is absolutely necessary that the textual histories of other Septuagint books be reviewed anew in the present state of research after Qumran and Naḥal Ḥever. For instance, Vaticanus has been said to contain a Hexaplaric text in Isaiah, but the editor of the Göttingen critical edition, Joseph Ziegler, mentions in his preface that Vaticanus contains corrections according to the Hebrew text that are not present in the actual Hexaplaric manuscripts.<sup>32</sup> He did not know anything about the *kaige* revision at that time.

The most probable location for the editorial activity represented by “the B text” is Alexandria, a place of profound Greek learning from early on. The Christian school that combined Hellenistic learning with Christianity most probably continued in the tradition of the Jewish community that flourished in Alexandria until the first century CE.

### THREE CHRISTIAN RECENSIONS AFTER ALL

Around 400 CE, Jerome wrote about the textual situation among Christian churches of his time. He said that there are three types of biblical text circulating in the Christian world:

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<sup>31</sup> On early Christian manuscripts and the emergence of the codex form, see Roger S. Bagnall, *Early Christian Books in Egypt* (Princeton: University Press, 2009).

<sup>32</sup> See, Joseph Ziegler, ed., *Isaias, Vetus Testamentum graecum auctoritate Academiae Gottingensis editum XIV* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1939).

Alexandria and Egypt attribute the authorship of their Greek Old Testament to Hesychius. From Constantinople as far as to Antioch the rendering of Lucian the Martyr holds the field; while the Palestinian provinces in between these adopt those codices which, themselves the production of Origen, were promulgated by Eusebius and Pamphilus. And the whole world is in conflict with itself over this threefold variety of text.<sup>33</sup>

The two recensions of Origen and Lucian were discussed before and they are well known among Septuagint scholars. The recension of Hesychius has always been a puzzle. One solution has been to say that the Egyptian text is not a recension but practically the original Old Greek as represented by Vaticanus. As I have tried to show, the situation is different now. It seems that there was, after all, a recension in Egypt, the earliest Christian recension that had used a Jewish manuscript of the *kaige* type to make sporadic changes to the Old Greek text. Whether we should begin calling this textual tradition by the name of Hesychius is an open question, but it is intriguing that my discovery of new features in the text of Vaticanus seems to match the short reference by Jerome.

## CONCLUSION

Codex Vaticanus, once thought to be the best representative of the original Septuagint, has proved to contain recensional features after all. Textual study of the historical books, and of 1 Samuel in particular, has revealed revisional readings in Vaticanus that correct the text toward a closer correspondence with the Hebrew text. Since the text type of Vaticanus was known to Origen, it must go back to Alexandria to at least 200 CE and represent the beginnings of Christian textual transmission of biblical books. The editors of “the B text” made use of Jewish manuscripts, and excerpted readings from manuscripts with the so-called *kaige* revision in particular. The resulting text type, in all probability, seems to be the first Christian recension of the biblical text.

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<sup>33</sup> Jerome, *Praef. in lib. Paralip.* Translation according to Jellicoe, *Septuagint*, 134.

I have tried to demonstrate that studying one manuscript with all of its peculiarities and special features is fascinating, but a great deal more can be reached in our research if we compare the manuscript of our special interest to other manuscripts with the goal of defining its position in the textual history of the text in question. In this endeavor, we need to know as much as possible about the factors that were at work during the textual history. We need to do—or be familiar with—textual criticism in order to find out what is original and what is secondary in the manuscript in question because it is secondary readings—whether deliberate changes or scribal errors—that show special features and reveal connections to textual families. Critical editions are good tools for this work, because they offer the evidence concerning all the manuscripts and other textual witnesses. The editor of the critical edition has already done the text critical groundwork on which we can build but which we can also refine. This can be done on the basis of a critical edition, as the editor provides arguments for the textual decisions in the preface of the edition.