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The Use of the Old Testament
in the New Testament

THE USE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Dana M. Harris[*]

The prevalence of the OT is one of the most striking features of the Epistle to the Hebrews. No other NT book, with the exception of the Book of Revelation, comes close in its appropriation of the OT.[1] In addition to direct quotations, the author assumes an extensive understanding of the OT on the part of his readers, confident that they will grasp allusions to OT events without explanation.[2] In addition to familiar OT events and people, such as the wilderness generation that was prohibited from entering the land due to disobedience, the author also draws upon less well-known events and people, such as Abraham's encounter with Melchizedek, to advance his argument. In addition to citations, allusions, and an assumed understanding of the OT, the author also uses a variety of (often sophisticated) means to appropriate the OT, such as Hellenistic Jewish exegetical techniques (e.g., "chain quotations," midrash, exempla), typology, and early Christian exegetical approaches. The saturation of Hebrews with the OT is one reason why the epistle is often neglected—to understand Hebrews, one must understand the OT. In fact, Hebrews is perhaps one of the most helpful insights into how the early church read and interpreted its Scripture.[3]

Unfortunately, the use of the OT in Hebrews has not always been

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[1]Cf. George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, eds. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 919.

[2]It is probable that the author was male (e.g., Heb 11:32; cf. Gareth Lee Cockerill, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012], 2–3), hence masculine pronouns are used to refer to the author.

[3]Clearly, "OT" is anachronistic from the perspective of the author of Hebrews. My preferred term is "Scripture," although I use both terms. See Richard B. Hays and Joel B. Green, "The Use of the Old Testament by New Testament Writers," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 222–38; Christopher R. Seitz, "Old Testament or Hebrew Bible? Some Theological Considerations," in *Word without End: The Old Testament as Abiding Theological Witness* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 61–74.

[*]Dana M. Harris is associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

assessed positively. Some claim that the author appropriates Scripture without regard for its original context (e.g., Ps 40 in Heb 10); others disparage the use of etymologies (e.g., Heb 7:1–3). Thus, one aim of this article is to demonstrate the high regard for the original context (both historical and literary) that the author of Hebrews had in his appropriation of the OT.

This article will first consider the number of OT citations in Hebrews and the textual sources that the author used. I will then discuss the author's understanding of the nature of Scripture and some related hermeneutical assumptions. Then I will survey several exegetical techniques that the author uses in his appropriation of the OT. Finally, I will consider some of the author's other hermeneutical assumptions and their implications for our contemporary understanding of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

I. THE NUMBER OF CITATIONS AND THE TEXTUAL SOURCES USED

There are varying figures offered for the number of OT citations in Hebrews, due mainly to the fact that some passages are quoted more than once and in part because citations, allusions, and other references to the OT can be hard to determine precisely.[4] Gareth Lee Cockerill, limiting his count to those places in which the author explicitly uses an introductory formula, lists twenty-eight different OT passages cited in Hebrews. Because several are quoted more than once in different parts of the epistle, he arrives at a final number of 32 OT citations.[5] Ultimately, determining the exact number of citations is less important than understanding how these citations function in the argument and structure of Hebrews, as the rest of this article will hopefully demonstrate.

It is generally agreed that the author accessed the OT only by means of a Greek version of the Hebrew Scriptures. Indeed, some parts of the

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[4]For example, William L. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, WBC, 47a (Nashville: Nelson, 1991), cxvi, claims there are thirty-seven; Richard N. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 164, lists thirty-eight; Simon Kistemaker, *The Psalm Citations in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Amsterdam: W. G. Van Soest, 196), 16, counts thirty-two; and George B. Caird, "The Exegetical Method of the Epistle to the Hebrews," *CJT* 5 (1959): 47, counts twenty-nine. George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews," 919, counts "thirty-seven quotations, forty allusion, nineteen cases where OT material is summarized, and thirteen where an OT name of topic is referred to without reference to a specific context."

[5]Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 41–42. Here he helpfully lists every explicit quotation, although he omits some quotations that are quoted a second time in Hebrews (e.g., Ps 95:11 in Heb 4:3, 5). See esp. the extensive chart of OT quotations, allusions, summaries, and references in Guthrie, "Old Testament in Hebrews," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove: IVP, 1997), 846–49.

author's argument do depend on the Greek text.[6] Radu Gheorghita has shown, however, that the author's *theological* points were not necessarily dependent upon the Greek text. In other words, these conclusions could also be made based on a careful observation of the Hebrew text.[7] Some scholars have sought to determine which LXX recension the author drew upon,[8] although recent scholarship increasingly suggests that the author has modified the Greek text in ways that amplify his argument and thus introduces readings that do not agree with known Greek versions.[9]

The citation of Ps 95:7–11 (94:7–11 LXX) in Heb 3:7–11 is a good example of apparently deliberate modifications of the Greek text. In this citation, there are three significant variations between the LXX text and its citation in Hebrews.[10] In Heb 3:9, the verb *edokimasan* ("they tested") in the LXX is changed to the prepositional phrase *en dokimasia* ("by testing") modifying *epeirasan* ("they tried"), thereby emphasizing that the wilderness generation tested God.[11] The second variant occurs in v. 10

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[6]Harold W. Attridge, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1989), 23, notes that some arguments in Hebrews only "work" because of the Greek text of the OT. Cf. Kistemaker: "[I]t is superfluous to mention that the use of the LXX version presented far more hermeneutical possibilities than the MT could provide" (*Psalm Citations*, 74).

[7]Radu Gheorghita, *The Role of the Septuagint in Hebrews,* WUNT 2/160 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 230. He notes that it "would be extremely difficult to confidently conclude that the Author's use of the OT is what it is *exclusively because* the Author used the Septuagint."

[8]For discussion of possible text types, Kenneth J. Thomas, "The Old Testament Citations in Hebrews," *NTS* 11 (1965): 320; cf. Friedrich Schröger, *Der Verfasser des Hebräerbriefes als Schriftausleger* (Regensburg: Pustet, 1968), 247–51. For the complexity of determining Hebrews's *Vorlage*, see J. C. McCullough, "The Old Testament Quotations in Hebrews," *NTS* 26 (1979–1980): 363–79; cf. Lane, *Hebrews 1–8*, cxviii. R. Timothy McLay, "Biblical Texts and the Scriptures for the New Testament Church," in *Hearing the Old Testament in the New Testament,* ed. Stanley E. Porter (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 55, discusses the "pluriformity" of the OT texts in Hebrews. The term *Septuagint* (LXX) is used as "shorthand" to refer to whichever Greek version of the OT was used by the author, although this term is problematic; e.g., R. Timothy McLay, *The Use of the Septuagint in New Testament Research* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 5–7; Gheorghita, *Role of the Septuagint*, 7; Leonard Greenspoon, "The Use and Abuse of the Term 'LXX' and Related Terminology in Recent Scholarship," *BIOSCS* 20 (1987): 28; David M. Moffitt, "The Interpretation of Scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Reading the Epistle to the Hebrews: A Resource for Students*, eds. Eric F. Mason and Kevin B. McCruden, Resources for Biblical Studies 66 (Atlanta: SBL, 2011), 78–81.

[9] See, for example, Dale F. Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations of Hebrews: A Study in the Validity of the Epistle's Interpretation of Some Core Citations from the Psalms* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen, 1994), 245–47; Herbert W. Bateman IV, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics and Hebrews 1:5–13: The Impact of Early Jewish Exegesis on the Interpretation of a Significant New Testament Passage* (New York: Peter Lang, 1997), 240.

[10]There are several differences between the chapter/verse references in the LXX and English translations. For example, Psalm 94 in the LXX is Psalm 95 in English Bible. These differences will be noted as necessary in this article.

[11] So also Attridge, *Hebrews*, 115; Guthrie, "Hebrews," 954–55; Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 173–80. Hebrews 3:9 reads: *ou epeirasan hoi pateres hymōn en dokimasia* ("where your ancestors tested

with the insertion of *dio* ("therefore") before *prosōchthisa*, ("I was angry"), which forces *tesserakonta etē* ("forty years") of v. 10 to be read with *eidon ta erga mou* ("they saw my works") in v. 9.[12] This shift also stresses the wilderness generation's testing and observation of God's works. The final variant concerns the near demonstrative *tautē* in v. 10, which replaces the far demonstrative *ekeinē* in the LXX.[13] This change appears to make the psalm more urgent for the present audience. Although it is possible that the author had access to a Greek recension that contained these readings, the alterations all strengthen the author's argument and add force to his exhortation. Elsewhere, I have argued that, by introducing this psalm in terms of the Spirit speaking, these alterations to the LXX text suggest that the Spirit is not only the inspiration of the original text, but that he is also the true interpreter of the original text in its application to the contemporary audience. Similar observations obtain for the re-citation of Jer 31:33–34 in Heb 10:15–17, which is also introduced in terms of the Spirit speaking.[14] There are also passages in which the LXX text has effectively also been altered for stylistic or homiletical reasons as well as theological ones, such as the citation of Ps 40:6–8 in Heb 10:5–7.[15]

II. HERMENEUTICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND THE NATURE OF SCRIPTURE

Perhaps one of the most remarkable aspects of the use of the OT in Hebrews is the author's profound realization that the OT is not only God's word that was once uttered and then inscripturated, but this word *continues to speak* at the present time.[16] An excellent example of this occurs with the citation of Ps 95:7–11 in Heb 3:7–11. The psalm's opening exhortation, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps 95:7–8), is presented as an exhortation to the author's contemporary readers, hundreds

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by testing"); whereas the LXX reads: *ou epeirasan hoi pateres hymōn, edokimasan ("where your ancestors tested, they tried [me]")*.

[12] E.g., "they saw my works for forty years, therefore…" The text of Hebrews reads: kai ta erga mou tesserakonta etē dio prosōchthisa tē genea tautē; the LXX reads: kai eidosan ta erga mou tesserakonta etē prosōchthisa tē genea ekeinē.

[13] In the text cited in n. 12, the demonstratives are underlined.

[14] Dana M. Harris, "'Today if You Hear My Voice': The Spirit Speaking in Hebrews—Implications for Inerrancy," *Presbyterion* 45 (2019): 108–27.

[15] See Karen H. Jobes, "Rhetorical Achievement in the Hebrews 10 'Misquote' of Psalm 40," *Bib* 72 (1991): 393. See also the challenge to this argument by Jared M. Compton, "The Origin of *sōma* in Heb 10:5: Another Look at a Recent Proposal," *TJ* 32 (2011): 19–20.

[16] Cf. the somewhat related claim in Graham Hughes, *Hebrews and Hermeneutics*, SNTSMS 36 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

of years after the psalm was originally written.[17] Thus, God's words spoken previously continue to speak "as long as it is still called 'today'" (Heb 3:13). Even promises formerly uttered in the OT are understood to apply to the contemporary audience (e.g., Heb 4:1). Remarkably, the author even claims that the oath added to the Abrahamic promises in Gen 22:16 (6:14–18) was not for Abraham's benefit, but for the assurance and encouragement of his descendants, understood in the epistle in terms of the contemporary audience (Heb 2:16).

One of the ways the author indicates that God's word is still speaking is with the introductory formulas that he uses, which always employ speaking verbs, especially forms of the verb *legō*.[18] This clearly contrasts with the Pauline Epistles, where Scripture citations are usually introduced with writing verbs, especially the formulaic *gegraptai* (e.g., Rom 14:11; Gal 3:13). Hebrews also contrasts with the Gospels (e.g., Mark 1:2; Luke 20:17; John 19:24), which often also use writing verbs to introduce Scripture citations to confirm or explain a previously made point, at times in ways that parallel Paul's citation of Scripture. Thus, in Hebrews, Scripture is presented as the very words spoken by God that continue to speak (and thus must be heeded) at the present time.[19]

There are also clear Christological implications that flow from the author's understanding of Scripture. Consider, for example, Heb 1:1–2: "At many times and in many ways, in the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets—in these last days he has spoken to us by [the] Son."[20] The given in these verses is that God speaks; the contrast is between how he has spoken in the past and how he is now speaking. As I have written elsewhere: "Here there is both continuity and discontinuity.

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[17] Although it is common to apply the comments pertaining to the word of God in Heb 4:12 to the word of God in the entire Bible, it is likely that the author primarily limited them (in their first application) to this exhortation from Psalm 95. Consider also that Moses testified to things that were to be *spoken* later (3:5).

[18] Kenneth Schenck, "God Has Spoken: Hebrews' Theology of Scripture," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 321, n. 1, notes the following: *laleō* occurs 16 times; *legō*, 32 times; and *logos*, 12 times. See also Daniel J. Treier, "Speech Acts, Hearing Hearts, and Other Senses: The Doctrine of Scripture Practiced in Scripture," in *The Epistle to the Hebrews and Christian Theology*, ed. Richard Bauckham et al. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 337–50. See also Daniel J. Treier and Christopher Atwood, "The Living Word versus the Proof Text? Hebrews in Modern Systematic Theology," in *Christology, Hermeneutics, and Hebrews: Profiles from the History of Interpretation*, eds. Jon C. Laansma and Daniel J. Treier, LNTS 423 (New York: T&T Clark, 2012), 192; George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use of Old Testament: Recent Trends in Research," *CBR* 1 (2003): 274–75.

[19] Caird notes, "It has often been remarked that, when the author of Hebrews quotes from the Old Testament, he quotes it as the *voice* of God" ("Exegetical Method," 46; italics added).

[20] Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

The staggering truth is that God has always been speaking, revealing who he is and his perfect purposes. Yet previously this revelation was partial, fragmentary, anticipatory, and mediated. Moreover, no one individual received full revelation. But now, in the Son, God has spoken definitively and finally."[21] The effect of the author's understanding of Scripture on Christology is also shown in the way that the words of the psalmists (e.g., Ps 22:22 in Heb 2:12 or Ps 40:7–9 in Heb 10:5–6) or the prophets (e.g., Isa 8:17–18 in Heb 2:13) are placed directly on the lips of Jesus, without explanation or justification.[22]

III. EXEGETICAL TECHNIQUES EMPLOYED IN HEBREWS

Despite some overlap between exegetical techniques and hermeneutical assumptions, exegetical techniques refer to the method(s) the author of Hebrews used to appropriate the OT and to structure his interpretation of it, whereas hermeneutical assumptions refer to the interpretive framework by which the author understands God's final speech in the Son and applies the implications of this to his audience. I will discuss some hermeneutical assumptions in the final section of this article. Here the focus will be on exegetical techniques.

1. *Allusions and echoes*. Numerous (often undefined) terms, such as *allusion*, *echo*, and *reference*, are used to describe the appropriation of an earlier text by a later one that does not involve a direct citation. George Guthrie helpfully notes that an "allusion… involves an overt weaving of at least a phrase from the antecedent text into the author's own language, without a formal marking of that language as set apart from the author's own words, and at times with morphological changes to words in the original quotation."[23] He then points to Heb 1:13 as an example of a

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[21] Harris, "'Today if You Hear my Voice,'" 111. This is discussed further in conjunction with the discussion of the function of the OT the Hebrews.

[22] Cf. Karen H. Jobes, "Putting Words in His Mouth: The Son Speaks in Hebrews," in *So Great a Salvation: A Dialogue on the Atonement in Hebrews*, eds. Jon C. Laansma, George H. Guthrie, and Cynthia Long Westfall, LNTS 516 (London: T&T Clark, 2019), 40; Schenck, "God Has Spoken," 322. Gregory W. Lee, *Today When You Hear His Voice: Scripture, the Covenants, and the People of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016), 180, comments that in Hebrews "the address is direct and immediate" to the contemporary audience. I will discuss this phenomenon further in conjunction with prosopological exegesis.

[23] Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use," 273. The seminal work in this regard is Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale Univ. Press, 1986). Other helpful resources for determining allusive references to the OT in the NT include the criteria specified in Gregory K. Beale, *Use of Daniel in Jewish Apocalyptic Literature and in the Revelation of St. John* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984), and more recently, Christopher Beetham, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden: Brill, 2008).

quotation (with an introductory formula) of Ps 110:1 (109 LXX), whereas the prepositional phrase "at the right" (*en dexia*, altering *dexiōn* from the source text), without an introductory formula, in Heb 1:3 (cf. Heb 8:1; 10:12: 12:2) is an allusion to Ps 110:1.[24] Rich and often complex allusions abound in Hebrews, many of which do not involve a specific OT verse. For example, in Heb 6:19–20, the author personifies the objective hope that believers have, which is like an anchor that reaches behind the veil, where Jesus is already present. The use of "veil" (*katapetasma*) alludes to the curtain separating the inner room from the outer one in the tabernacle, and although no specific scriptural passage is in view, the allusion is unambiguous.

"Echoes" are often more difficult to recognize than allusions. Guthrie discusses the example of *onoma* in Heb 1:4, which is understood by many commentators as "Son" or "Lord." Instead, Guthrie considers the larger context of 2 Sam 7:14, which is quoted in Heb 1:5. Guthrie focuses on 2 Sam 7:13, where God promises that the Davidic heir will "build a house for my Name." In this way, Guthrie suggests that *onoma* in Heb 1:4 draws upon this background to indicate the "honor conferred by God on Messiah as the Davidic heir at the establishment of his throne and in association with God himself."[25] Thus *onoma* links the Son with the Davidic messiah. It is also likely that the single word *onoma* also plausibly hints at the so-called "name theology" found within the OT.[26]

2. *Midrash.* Midrash can refer to a method of interpreting Scripture (often associated with rabbinic literature) or a literary genre using such interpretation.[27] A common exegetical method appears to have been the

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[24]Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use," 273. For an interesting argument concerning the phrase *haima taurōn kai tragōn* in Heb 10:4 as an allusion to Isa 1:11, see Justin Harrison Duff, "The Blood of Goats and Calves… and Bulls?: An Allusion to Isaiah 1:11 LXX in Hebrews 10:4," *JBL* 137 (2018): 765–83. For a likely allusion to Psalm 68 in Hebrews 13, see Adam W. Day, "Bearing the Reproach of Christ: The Background of Psalm 68 (LXX) in Hebrews 13:9–16," *Presbyterion* 44 (2018): 126–41.

[25]Guthrie, "Hebrews," 925.

[26]This suggestion is my own, although I was pointed in this direction by interaction with Guthrie's work.

[27]There is disagreement whether midrash refers to a genre, exegetical technique, hermeneutical approach, or some combination of the three. Midrash is often discussed in conjunction with literary concepts, such as intertextuality; e.g., Carol Bakhos, ed., *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). Unfortunately, the terms *midrash* and *pesher* are used inconsistently or interchangeably. Very generally, whereas midrash starts with Scripture, pesher often begins with a current situation and looks to Scripture to interpret that event. Rabbinic midrash often presented an extended commentary on a given text, followed by the interpretations of several rabbis. See Leschert, *Hermeneutical Foundations*, 172–86; Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 44–77; Susan E. Docherty, *The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study*

following: (a) An often lengthy section of Scripture is quoted nearly verbatim, although midrashim may substitute other words for "interpretational suitability";[28] (b) words or phrases from the quotation are used in the following exposition, sometimes repeatedly and sometimes by means of rhetorical questions; (c) the text is applied, or recontextualized, for the contemporary audience.[29] Related to midrash is the use of rules of interpretation, or *middot*, seven of which have been ascribed to the first-century rabbi, Hillel. Only the two most relevant for Hebrews are discussed here. The first "rule" is *gezera shawa* ("rule of equivalence"), a verbal analogy "in which a term in one verse of scripture is interpreted according to its use in another."[30] A good example is the link between the noun "rest" (*katapausis*) in the citation of Ps 95:11 in Heb 3:11 and the verb (*katapauō*) in the citation of Gen 2:2 in Heb 4:4. The second "rule" is *qal wahomer* ("light and heavy"), or an "inference drawn from a minor premise to a major premise."[31] This *a fortiori* argument is clearly not limited to rabbinic *middot*, however. A good example of such argumentation is Heb 2:1–4, in which the consequences of the wilderness generation's disregard for the Law are the minor premise that contrasts with the major premise concerning the much greater consequences of neglecting the salvation spoken about by the Lord and confirmed to the audience by those who had heard him (Heb 2:3). Such argumentation is prevalent in Hebrews.

There are numerous examples of midrashic interpretation in Hebrews, including the citation and discussion of Ps 8:4–6 in Heb 2:6–9 and of Ps 40:6–8 in 10:5–10.[32] Perhaps the clearest example, however, occurs in Heb 3:7–4:11, where half of Psalm 95 (vv. 7–11) is cited nearly verbatim (Heb 3:7–11). The ensuing exposition uses rhetorical questions (Heb 3:16–18), *gezera shawa* (the linking of "rest" in Gen 2:2 and Ps 95:11 in Heb 4:4; discussed above), and *qal wahomer* (the implicit comparison between the "good news" the wilderness generation received and the "good news" preached to the present audience in Heb 4:2) to apply the text to the current audience.

    3. *Typology and typological trajectories*. Previous scholarship often

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in *Early Jewish Bible Interpretation*, WUNT 2/260 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

[28] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews: The English Text with Introduction, Exposition, and Notes* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964), 26.

[29] See Kistemaker, *Psalm Citations*, 75; Renée Bloch, "Midrash," DBSup 5:1266.

[30] Attridge, *Hebrews*, 129.

[31] McLay, *Use of the Septuagint*, 33; Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*, 9–20.

[32] Cf. the use of Gen 14:17–20 in Heb 7:1–10 and Prov 3:11–12 in Heb 12:5–11.

described the use of the OT in Hebrews as a form of allegory that paralleled Philo because of the supposedly arbitrary way that OT passages are understood (e.g., Ps 40:6–8 in Heb 10:5–7) or the use of etymologies (e.g., Heb 7:1–3).[33] Some type of extratextual "hermeneutical key" is crucial to allegory.[34] For Philo this "key" often involved virtue or the search for wisdom. Additionally, the historicity of OT individuals or events does not factor prominently in Philo's writings.[35] For various reasons, including the importance of historicity and even the sequencing of historical events in Hebrews (such as the attribution of Psalm 95 to David in Hebrews 4, written after the time of Joshua), most scholars do not believe that allegory, as practiced by Philo, describes the appropriation of the OT in Hebrews.[36] Instead, some type of typological approach in Hebrews is generally recognized.[37] The term *figural reading* has recently been offered as a better term than *typology*. The latter term is understood differently by various scholars, ranging from narrow definitions that rely heavily on the historicity of the types to approaches that deny the relevance of history for typology altogether.[38] The term *typology* is retained here since it is currently the more prevalent term.

A very basic definition of typology is as follows: a *type* is a past event,

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[33] E.g, James Moffatt, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ICC (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1924), xlvi. Cf. Ceslas Spicq, *L'épître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Gabalda, 1952–1953), 1:89–91.

[34] E.g., Gerald Bray, "Allegory," *DTIB* 34.

[35] Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 31, writes, "Philo usually treated the Old Testament as a body of symbols given by God for man's spiritual and moral benefit, which must be understood other than in a literal and historical fashion."

[36] The definitive challenge to reading Hebrews with a Philonic lens comes from Ronald Williamson, *Philo and the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Leiden: Brill, 1970); his refutation of the claim that Hebrews depended upon Philo is convincing to many, even if he overstates his case in places. For more nuanced platonic/Philonic approaches, see James W. Thompson, *Hebrews*, Paideia (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008); Luke Timothy Johnson, *Hebrews: A Commentary*, NTL (Louisville: WJK, 2006). I do not intend to imply a false dichotomy between typology as historically based and thus "legitimate," and allegory as ahistorical and thus "illegitimate." As Mark Gignilliat notes, the historicity, or facticity, of a given biblical text was generally assumed by "precritical" writers, who would not have used this criterion to distinguish typological or allegorical readings of a text ("Paul, Allegory, and the Plain Sense of Scripture," *JTI 2* [2008]: 138).

[37] See esp. Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002 [1982]), 176. For Marie E. Isaacs, *Sacred Spaces: An Approach to the Theology of the Epistle to the Hebrew*, JSNTSup 73 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1992), 73, typology is the author's "dominant hermeneutical principle."

[38] Goppelt places much emphasis on the historical grounding of the type and antitype. Frances Young, "Typology," in *Crossing the Boundaries: Essays in Biblical Interpretation in Honour of Michael D. Goulder*, ed. Stanley E. Porter et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 48, however, denies that "history [is] the appropriate measure for identifying typology." Both approaches offer important contributions, although these cannot be explored further here.

person, or institution that manifests in some way God's purposes and plans and which in some way corresponds to a subsequent event, person, or institution that more fully reveals God's purposes and plans (an *antitype*), especially in the person of Jesus Christ or the kingdom of God.[39] Several key assumptions underpin this definition: first, a fundamental unity within the Bible; second, the Bible's overall historicity; and third, a clear correspondence between the significance of the type and antitype.[40] Although this basic definition focuses on Christ, it is important to understand that some typologies are significantly developed *within* the OT itself (e.g., the Exodus event and the Exodus typology in Isaiah).[41]

The term *typological trajectory* is one that I have used to describe the author's appropriation and development of typologies already established within the OT to show their eschatological culmination in Christ.[42] In Hebrews, the author often begins with a psalm that provides a later theological reflection upon an earlier event recorded in the Historical Books.[43]

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[39] Some examples include the following: a person, Melchizedek and Jesus, Heb 7:1–3; an institution, Levitical sacrifices and Christ's sacrifice, Hebrews 9; an event, entry into the land and entry into God's rest, Hebrews 3–4; a place, earthly Sinai and heavenly Zion, Heb 12:18–24.

[40] E.g., Mark Gignilliat, "Paul, Allegory," 140: "Typology, therefore, is a figural reading that takes into account correspondences… between events or people in an eschatological framework." He then elaborates: "'Eschatological framework' refers to the canonical reality of biblical texts as they speak beyond their historical particularity to ultimate eschatological realities in God's redemptive economy" (140 n. 22). See also Benjamin J. Ribbens, "Typology of Types: Typology in Dialogue," *JTI* 5 (2011): 85–87, who discusses *ikonic mimesis*, in which there is a correspondence both between the *fact* and the *significance* of the type and antitype. See also Christopher R. Seitz, *Figured Out: Typology and Providence in Christian Scripture* (Louisville: WJK, 2001). Such a reading is also related to "an intertextual approach [that] illumines the way [biblical] writers use earlier texts to enrich meaning and establish authoritative testimony" (Paul E. Koptak, "Intertextuality," *DTIB*, 333–34"). There has been disagreement whether typology is retrospective (e.g., David L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible: A Study of the Theological Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, 3rd ed. [Downers Grove: IVP, 2010]) or prospective. The classic statement of the latter is found in Leonhard Goppelt (*Typos*, 17–18), who posits three essential components of typology: (1) typology is inextricably rooted in history; (2) types are God-ordained; (3) typology involves a heightening or intensification (*Steigerung*). Yet this is likely a case of "both/and": types are prospectively "God-ordained" but are retrospectively illumined by the Spirit.

[41] Thus, the significance of the exodus event is deliverance. When Isaiah or NT writers spoke of a new exodus, the significance is also deliverance, either from exile or from the bondage of sin. Ribbens also notes the importance of the "correspondence both between the fact and the significance of the type and antitype" ("Typology of Types," 87).

[42] See Dana M. Harris, "The Eternal Inheritance in Hebrews: The Appropriation of the Old Testament Inheritance Theme by the Author of Hebrews" (PhD diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 2009).

[43] Others have observed the distinction between the author's use of the historical texts and the Psalter. Guthrie ("Hebrews' Use," 274) notes that the Pentateuch "offers him material for reflection on redemptive history (12 quotations and 10 allusions) and the Psalms provide for his Christological material (17 quotations and 16 allusions)." Cf. Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 149.

Two clear examples include the use of Psalm 95 to discuss the failure of the wilderness generation to enter the land (recalling the events of Exodus 17 and Numbers 14, 20) and the use of Psalm 8 to reflect upon God's original intentions for humanity (recalling Genesis 1–2).[44] In this way, the author of Hebrews establishes a typological connection from *within* the OT that points beyond itself toward its fulfillment in Christ. Thus, he begins by appropriating a later theological reflection (Point B), which points back to an earlier historical event (Point A), which in turn points forward beyond itself (and beyond Point B) to some aspect of fulfillment in Christ (Point C)—hence a "typological trajectory."[45]

This can be illustrated briefly with the use of Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3–4. Entering the land is clearly understood as a type of entering the promised rest in Heb 3:7–4:13. The connection between the land and rest is firmly established in the OT. Yet by appropriating Psalm 95—a later reflection on the wilderness generation's failure to enter the land—the author draws out implications about the nature of God's rest and entering that rest that would not have been possible had he relied only on the pentateuchal narratives. From Psalm 95, the author shows that the promised rest was not ultimately fulfilled either by entry into the land by Joshua or its eventual occupation under David. Moreover, by connecting the expression "my rest" in Psalm 95 with God's creation rest in Gen 2:2, the author can develop a typological trajectory concerning the promised rest (*katapausis*) that began at creation and extends forward to the eschaton.

4. *Prosopological exegesis.* The phenomenon and prevalence of divine speech in Hebrews is often noted.[46] Indeed, eleven of the thirteen chapters in Hebrews include examples of divine speech.[47] Moreover, the fact that the Father and the Son speak to each other in Hebrews has often been

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[44] It is widely agreed that the use of Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3–4 is typological. The type is entry into the land of Canaan, and the antitype is entry into God's rest. Essential also to the author's use of Psalm 95 is his recognition of the "analogous situation" between the wilderness generation and his own. David de Silva, *Despising Shame: Honor Discourse and Community Maintenance in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, SBLDS 152 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1995), 147, observes, "Key to the success of a proof from historical precedent is establishing that precedent as an analogous situation. The author must be certain that the addressees will be able to see their situation mirrored in that of the wilderness generation before its fateful choice."

[45] For a fuller discussion of these and other typological trajectories, see Dana M. Harris, "Typological Trajectories in the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Interpreting the Old Testament Theologically: Essays in Honor of Willem A. VanGemeren*, ed. Andrew T. Abernethy (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018), 280–92.

[46] See for example, Lee, *Today When You Hear His Voice*, especially chapters 3 and 4. See also Schenck, "God Has Spoken," 321–36.

[47] Excluded are Hebrews 9 and 11.

observed. Markus Barth has commented that it is as if readers of Hebrews are "listen[ing] in on a dialogue between God and Son."[48] Karen Jobes adds that the audience is meant to overhear this conversation.[49] This prevalence on divine discourse in Hebrews has received increasing attention recently, especially in conjunction with an early Christian exegetical technique called "prosopological exegesis." According to Matthew W. Bates, prosopological exegesis "explains a text by suggesting that the author of the text [e.g., the NT] identified various persons or characters (*prosopa*) as speakers or addressees in a pre-text [e.g., the OT], even though it is not clear from the pre-text itself that such persons are in view."[50]

Madison Pierce applies prosopological exegesis to Hebrews. She shows in Hebrews the "Father and the Son speak primarily to each other. The Spirit speaks to the community."[51] Pierce also notes that, in Hebrews, as God speaks to the Son through an OT citation, this speech *both* applies the text to the Son and explains who the Son is to the audience.[52] She helpfully notes the following patterns in Hebrews: "In the first section, the Father speaks (1.5–13); then the Son (2.12–13); then the Spirit (3.7–4.11). The speeches conclude with a significant exhortation on the powerful word of God and the high priest Jesus (4.11–16). In the second section, the cycle of the Father (5.5–6; 7.17, 21; 8.7–12), Son (10.5–7), and Spirit (10.16–17) speaking repeats."[53] Regarding the Father speaking to the Son in Hebrews 1, Pierce notes, "With the prosopological reading strategy, the author implicitly challenges previous interpretive traditions that addressed these texts to any earlier Davidic monarch; these are texts about the Son."[54] Regarding the Son's response, she notes, "While the Father's speech shows

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[48] Markus Barth, "The Old Testament in Hebrews, An Essay in Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Current Issues in New Testament Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Otto A. Piper*, eds. William Klassen and Graydon F. Snyder (New York: Harper, 1962), 62. Cf. Lee, *Today When You Hear His Voice*, 144–45; he also notes the prevalence of present tense verb forms used in this regard.

[49] Jobes, "Putting Words in His Mouth," 41.

[50] Matthew W. Bates, *The Hermeneutics of the Apostolic Proclamation: The Center of Paul's Method of Scriptural Interpretation* (Waco: Baylor University Press), 183.

[51] Madison N. Pierce, *Divine Discourse in the Epistle to the Hebrews: The Recontextualization of Spoken Quotations of Scripture*, SNTSMS, 178 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2. She helpfully distinguishes between the "intra-divine discourse" between the Father and the Son, and "extra-divine discourse," wherein the Spirit addresses the community (3). A similar observation is made by Martin Emmrich, *Pneumatological Concepts in the Epistle to the Hebrews: Amtscharisma, Prophet, and Guide of the Eschatological Exodus* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2003), 33.

[52] Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 5.

[53] Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 2.

[54] Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 23.

how Jesus is unlike any other person, Jesus' speech in 2.12–13 reminds the readers of his remarkable connection with humanity."[55]

Based on Pierce's work, I have explored divine speech more fully in connection with the Spirit in Hebrews. There are two passages in which the Spirit speaks to the audience (as noted by Pierce): Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3 and Jeremiah 31 in Hebrews 10. These passages are particularly interesting because, the text is at one time presented as God speaking and another time presented as the Spirit speaking. When the text is directly applied to the audience, the speaker is presented as the Spirit. Significantly, these re-citations often involve significant alterations to the Scripture citations—alterations that amplify the significance of the contemporary application.

5. *Chain quotations and exempla.* Two additional exegetical techniques employed by the author to appropriate the OT can be mentioned briefly.[56] Chain quotations (*ḥaraz,* "to string," or *catena*) are a series of OT quotations linked by the use of the same word or expression; for example, the use of *huios* ("son") in the citations from Ps 2:7 and 2 Sam 7:14 in Heb 1:5. The chain of quotations is also linked by the use of various introductory formulas. Again, Heb 1:5–13 offers a good example of this technique, where three pairs of OT citations are "strung" together and capped off with the citation of Ps 110:1, the OT verse most cited or alluded to in the NT. As Guthrie notes, "The effect of the ḥaraz is to impress the unqualified superiority of the Son upon the hearers in order to set up the a fortiori exhortation of 2.1–4."[57]

An exemplum, or exemplar list, is a rhetorical device that presents a long list of individuals worthy of emulation.[58] Examples are found in both

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[55] Pierce, *Divine Discourse*, 24. It is worth noting that divine discourse can also be mediated through prophets and angels; see Schenck, "God Has Spoken," 322. Note also that the reference to Psalm 95 in Heb 4:7 is presented as the Spirit speaking through David (*en Dauid legōn*); cf. Moses speaking about priestly genealogy in 7:14 (*ouden Mōysēs elalēsen*); Moses speaking about the covenant in 9:20 (*legōn*), and Moses speaking about his fear at Sinai in 12:21 (*Mōysēs eipen*). The citation of Psalm 8 in Heb 2:6–8 is ambiguously introduced as "someone has said somewhere." The speaker, although David in the OT, is unclear in Hebrews.

[56] For more techniques, see Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use," 279–83; Gert J. Steyn, "An Overview of the Extent and Diversity of Methods Utilised by the Author of Hebrews When Using the Old Testament," *Neot* 42 (2008): 327–52. See also Bryan R. Dyer, "The Epistle to the Hebrews in Recent Research: Studies on the Author's Identity, His Use of the Old Testament, and Theology" *JGRChJ* 9 (2013): 104–31.

[57] Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use," 280. An excellent discussion of this technique as it appears in Heb 1:5–13 is Bateman, *Early Jewish Hermeneutics*. See also Steyn, "An Overview," 331–33.

[58] See esp. Michael R. Cosby, *The Rhetorical Composition and Function of Hebrews 11 in the Light of Example Lists in Antiquity* (Macon, GA: Mercer Univ. Press, 1988); Pamela Eisenbaum, *The Jewish Heroes of Christian History: Hebrews 11 in Literary Context*, SBLDS 156 (Atlanta: Scholars, 1997).

Jewish (e.g., 4 Macc 16:16–23; Sir 44–50) and early Christian literature (1 Clem. 17:1–19:3). The example in Hebrews 11 is especially striking. Beginning with Abraham, discussion of each exemplar becomes increasingly compressed, such that the final grouping (Heb 11:32–38) gives the impression that the list could continue almost indefinitely. The effect is strong encouragement for perseverance.

IV. THE FUNCTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN HEBREWS

Guthrie rightly notes that "the uses to which Hebrews has put the Old Testament are the book's bone and marrow."[59] The focus here will be on the way that OT citations shape the structure of Hebrews and thus contribute to its overall argument. There are numerous attempts to determine structure of Hebrews, although there is little consensus and much debate. There are three main approaches: thematic outlines, structural outlines based on text linguistics,[60] or outlines that consider the OT citations in Hebrews. For the last approach, scholars have focused on the initial cluster of OT citations (Hebrews 1), Psalm 8 (Hebrews 2), Psalm 95 (Hebrews 3–4), Ps 110:4 (Hebrews 5–7; various), Jeremiah 31 (Hebrews 8–10), Habakkuk 2 (Hebrews 10–12), Proverbs 3 (Hebrews 12), and the reference to Mount Sinai in Exodus 19–20 (Hebrews 12–13).

The work of George B. Caird served as the foundation for a series of attempts to consider the structure of Hebrews based on its OT citations. Caird noted that the author believed the OT remained "a valid revelation of God" and regarded the entire OT as a prophetic work in which God spoke to his people and "directed their attention to the eschatological future."[61] Yet, also realizing the "confessed inadequacy of the old order," the author structured his argument around four OT passages (Psalms 8, 95, 110, and Jeremiah 31), each of which "declares the ineffectiveness and symbolic or provisional nature of the OT religious institutions."[62]

Following Caird, Richard N. Longenecker added the catena of OT citations in Hebrews 1 as a fifth OT "passage" around which Hebrews is

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[59] Guthrie, "Hebrews' Use," 272.

[60] The foundational works for this approach are Albert Vanhoye, *La structure littéraire de l'Epître aux Hébreux* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976), and George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis,* NovTSup 73 (Leiden: Brill, 1994).

[61] Caird, "Exegetical Method," 46. See also R. E. Clements, "The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews," *SJT* 28 (1985): 36–45, and the helpful discussion in Cockerill, *Hebrews*, 41–59.

[62] Caird, "Exegetical Method, 46–47. Simon J. Kistemaker (*Psalm Citations*, 12) claims that Hebrews is structured around Pss 8:4–6, 95:7–11, 110:4, 40:6–8.

structured.[63] R. T. France noted that attempts to determine the structure of Hebrews from its OT citations often corresponded with efforts to structure Hebrews thematically (e.g., Jesus's superiority to the angels, etc.).[64] J. Walters observed that, in Hebrews, six "paranetic [*sic*] passages group themselves fairly uniformly in proximity to the six primary scriptural quotations" (Psalms 8, 95, 110, Jeremiah 31, Habakkuk 2, and Proverbs 3).[65] Most recently, Gert J. Steyn has noted two sets of seven pairs of OT citations in Hebrews, with each pair supporting (perhaps as two witnesses) a key theme presented by the author.[66] Finally, Jonathan Griffiths, drawing upon the work of Lawrence Wills, identifies eleven cycles that each begin with an exemplum (an OT text), followed by an explanation and application, and concluding with an exhortation.[67] Thus, although the various treatments of this topic vary, it seems evident that the author deliberately structured his argument through his use and arrangement of key OT citations.

V. CONCLUSION

The use of the OT in the Epistle to the Hebrews is extensive and rich, as this brief survey demonstrates. Clearly, an understanding of the OT is essential for any study of Hebrews.

In addition to understanding how the OT is used in Hebrews, several macro-level contributions come from this understanding. First, understanding how the OT is interpreted in Hebrews is fruitful as a lesson in biblical theology. As Caird notes, that "Hebrews is one of the earliest and most successful attempts to define the relation between the Old and New Testament," and "a large part of the value of the book is to be found in the method of exegesis."[68] Thus, Hebrews teaches us how to interpret the OT as well as how to understand the ongoing relationship between the two testaments. Hebrews helps us see the continuity of God's speaking

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[63] Longenecker, *Biblical Exegesis*, 156. Leschert (*Hermeneutical Foundations*, 16) agrees that Hebrews is structured around these five "core citations."

[64] R. T. France, "The Writer of Hebrews as a Biblical Expositor," *TynBul* 47 (1996): 258. To the five passages already mentioned, France added Hab 2:3–4 (Heb 10:37–38) and Prov 3:11–12 (Heb 12:5–6).

[65] John R. Walters, "The Rhetorical Arrangement of Hebrews," *AsTJ* 50–51 (1995–1996): 66.

[66] Steyn, "An Overview," 329–31.

[67] Jonathan I. Griffiths, *Hebrews and Divine Speech*, LNTS 507 (London: T&T Clark, 2014). Griffiths draws upon Lawrence Wills, "The Form of the Sermon in Hellenistic Judaism and Early Christianity," *HTR 77* (1984), 277–99.

[68] Caird, "Exegetical Method," 45.

throughout all of Scripture and simultaneously helps highlight the uniqueness of Jesus and his fully efficacious sacrifice.

Second, Hebrews helps us know how to preach the OT. Indeed, Guthrie rightly notes that "Hebrews, from beginning to end, *preaches* the OT."[69] With the author of Hebrews as guide, the anticipatory nature of the Levitical priesthood and the elaborate arrangements in the tabernacle become object lessons that reveal the unchanging purposes of God to be with his people—purposes that are now fully revealed and made possible in the Son. Perhaps no other NT writing offers such insights into how to interpret and preach the OT.

Finally, as I have written elsewhere,

> Behind the author's appropriation of the OT lies an entire worldview that enables him to understand God's redemptive actions as *both* occurring within history on earth *and* transcending history by pointing to a reality that is heavenly and eternal. The pivot of this worldview is God's final Word, Jesus Christ, whose blood effected the new covenant confirming the eternal inheritance and who is now seated in heaven at God's right hand.[70]

Amen!

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[69] Guthrie, "Hebrews," 923; italics original.
[70] Harris, "Eternal Inheritance," 6.