

Final Article SBL Amsterdam

Harmonization and Lexical Variations in New Testament Quotations of the Septuagint: Insights from the Gospel of Matthew

(25 min)

Laurent Pinchard, Université Catholique de l'Ouest (Angers)

Septuagint Studies

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Room: 06A37 - Main Building

I would like to extend my gratitude to you and the organisers for allowing me to discuss this seemingly old and well-explored topic of Old Testament quotations in the New Testament, particularly in the Gospel of Matthew.

Let me first provide some context for my research on the Greek and Coptic texts of the New Testament in the first centuries. I had based my dissertation on a comparative study of two manuscripts: Codex Bezae, a 5th-century Greek-Latin manuscript, representing the so-called “Western” text, and Codex Vaticanus, a 4th c Greek manuscript which is closely aligned with the text edited in the Nestle-Aland edition. My focus was on the concept of alleged harmonization in Codex Bezae, specifically in the Gospel of Matthew. Notably, 90% of these harmonizations occur within Matthew or with the other Gospels, primarily the Synoptics, though four instances are considered harmonizations with the Septuagint (LXX). In this presentation, I will address two of these instances.

- An extensively researched field
- “The” LXX in NT quotations is intimately associated with NT TC

Numerous scholars, starting with Gundry and many others, have extensively examined the use of Old Testament quotations in their Septuagintal form within the New Testament. Matthew is even quite notable for his frequent citation of Old Testament passages, particularly aimed at his Jewish audience, with a characteristic emphasis on the fulfilment of prophecies contained in the Tanakh. While I do not purport to introduce new insights to you, experts on the Septuagint, I aim to focus

here on a specific aspect regarding various statements such as "Matthew [or any book of the NT btw] quotes from the LXX," "Matthew slightly amends the LXX," or, in the case of variant readings, that "scribes harmonise with the LXX." By discussing these points, I hope to underscore the importance of integrating New Testament textual criticism with LXX studies.

- The N-A text: eclectic, philological, Alexandrian Text

Before moving diving into this topic, I would like to recall two essential points on New Testament textual criticism. Firstly, the New Testament text as edited in the Nestle-Aland (N-A) edition is an eclectic one, meaning it does not correspond to a single manuscript. Instead, it is a 19th-century philological reconstruction based on generally accepted principles. However, these principles are increasingly being challenged, and their application sometimes seems overly confident, particularly due to the heavy reliance on Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, two key representatives of the Alexandrian text-type. Additionally, the N-A editors do not claim to present the original text but rather a 'working one.' The issue is that NT scholars often treat this edition as definitive.

- ~~Harmonisations with the Gospels/ the LXX~~

~~Secondly, its critical apparatus includes a system that addresses two types of harmonisations in two distinct ways: explicit and implicit. Explicit harmonisations are marked with "p)" for "parallel" before the variant reading along with its witnesses. This terminology, initially influenced by the understanding of Diatessaronic influences in the 25th edition of Nestle, was subsequently discreetly extended in the 27th and 28th edition to encompass any allegedly pertinent parallel passages. Implicit harmonisations, conversely, are denoted by cross references, often to intra- or inter-Gospel passages that exhibit lexical similarities, and as we will see today, to references to the Septuagint.~~

- Importance of Codex Bezae in TC and for LXX quotations

As I said in the introduction, among the numerous Old Testament quotations in Matthew found in the New Testament, only four instances in Codex Bezae, reflect a closer lexical form to the Septuagint. ~~This is out of 70 readings claimed to be harmonisations with the Synoptic Gospels or John according to the N-A.~~

WHY

Why, after all, focus on Codex Bezae, given that it is just one of many manuscripts? Codex Bezae is significant because, although it is a 5th-century manuscript, it appears to reflect textual characteristics similar to those of one form of text that was circulating during the 2nd century. It thereby represents a textual tradition that was accessible to the early Church Fathers like Justin and Irenaeus maybe to earlier writers like Marcion and Tatian, as evidenced by their quotations and the versions they utilized. Consequently, Codex Bezae holds comparable importance to manuscripts of the Alexandrian text-type. While there is no absolute consensus on whether the readings in Codex Vaticanus precede or follow those in Codex Bezae, studying the variant readings of Codex Bezae provides fundamental insights into the transmission of the New Testament text and the development of diverse textual forms within manuscript tradition.

~~Among numerous Old Testament quotations in Matthew found in the New Testament, only four instances reflect a closer lexical form to the Septuagint in one particular manuscript: Codex Bezae, an early 5th-century Greek-Latin manuscript. This is out of a total of 70 readings claimed to be harmonisations with the Synoptic Gospels or John according to the N.A. The examination of variant readings and harmonistic tendencies in Codex Bezae is of importance due to its status as a manuscript whose text likely circulated in the 2nd century, as evidenced by 2nd c. patristic citations and early versions. As a consequence, Codex Bezae holds equal significance alongside manuscripts of the Alexandrian text type, although scholarly consensus on whether readings in Codex Vaticanus predate those in Codex Bezae or vice versa remains elusive. Nevertheless, the text of Codex Bezae is of paramount importance in textual criticism, thus justifying its selection for detailed examination here.~~

~~Since scholars of the Septuagint are interested in the relationship between the MT, Qumran, and the LXX—particularly where the LXX is closer to an earlier form of the Hebrew text than to that of the late MT, with the difficulty of reaching any indisputable conclusion—I would like to shed some light on the problem of such harmonisations with the LXX in Codex Bezae in Matthew.~~

~~I suggest keeping your intro relatively short, so cut out much of the detail up to this point—in 20mins, the best would be to spend as much time as possible on the examples rather than general points~~

- Four instances of LXX harmonisations in Codex Bezae against other manuscripts

Due to time constraints today, I will examine two of the four instances (XXXXXXXXXX) where Codex Bezae presents variant readings identified by the critical apparatus as harmonising with the Septuagint. The first instance concerns a unique reading in Greek manuscripts, in D or D₀₅—following the Gregory-Aland numbering for Codex Bezae. The second example involves a textual tradition that is split into two distinct strands, each being supported by numerous witnesses.

- Why is it important ?

I propose that discrepancies in how manuscripts present LXX quotations in Matthew provide vital understanding into textual history, which may be of interest to scholars of the Septuagint. This highlights the importance for LXX scholars to critically evaluate the N-A edition's apparatus, that is, not only in relation to the Gospels but also concerning the Septuagint.

- 1st case: *Matt 1.23// Isa 7.14LX*

Greek text (i.e. N-A text with *vll*) :

Matt 1.23 Ἴδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ Ἦ καλέσουσιν τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ, ὃ ἐστὶν μεθερμηνευόμενον μεθ' ἡμῶν ὁ θεός.

Critical apparatus : Ἦ (cf. Isa 7.14) καλέσεις D bo^{mss}; Or Eus Ἦ καλέσουσιν Ἰ B *rell*

Matt 1.23 NRSV 'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him "Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us".'

Isa 7.14LXX διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱόν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ.

לכן יתן אדני הוא לכם אות הנבה העלמה הררה וילדת בן וקראת שמו עמנו אל Isa 7.14MT

Isa 7.14 (NRSV) "Therefore the Lord himself will give **you** a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

In Matthew 1:23, the critical apparatus of the Nestle-Aland edition states: "Ἦ (cf. Isaiah 7:14) καλέσεις D bomss; Or Eus," indicating that Matthew likely used καλέσουσιν ("they will call" or "he will be called") with confidence, rather than καλέσεις ("you will call"). According to the system used in the

critical apparatus of the NA, καλέσεις is seen as a scribal harmonization with the LXX. This confidence in excluding this variant reading is mainly on three criteria.

First, only a single Greek manuscript testifies to this reading. Traditionally, if a reading is singular, it is considered unlikely to have been widely transmitted. However, there are many instances where such readings can be shown to be the source from which all other variant readings can be explained.

Second, the manuscript in question is Codex Bezae, whose readings are often regarded as spurious. While this assessment is not a formal criterion, it reflects the practical considerations and evaluations made by textual critics in real-life scholarly practice.

Third, the versional evidence includes only one dialect of Coptic, Bohairic, which is known to be a late translation. In our case, there is division on this reading even within the Bohairic manuscripts, as indicated by the use of superscripts for the manuscripts. This is particularly peculiar, as the Bohairic dialect usually translates from Sahidic or, more rarely, from Greek manuscripts, typically of the Alexandrian text-type. Therefore, it is possible that the Bohairic text reflects a Greek witness similar to Codex Bezae, unless it represents a harmonization with verse 12. This is especially interesting because the Bohairic tradition is quite late (post-8th century), making a harmonization with the Septuagint (LXX) unlikely.

A FEW BOHAIRIC WITNESSES (D₁* AND E) READ ⲛⲉⲙⲟⲩⲧ ("[AND] YOU WILL CALL"), WHICH IS PECULIAR THE SAHIDIC COPTIC HAS NO VARIANT READING AND READS ⲛⲉⲙⲟⲩⲧⲈ ("THEY WILL CALL").

A fourth remark could be added: the use of the term καλέσεις ("you will call") in the angelic announcement to Mary two verses earlier may have prompted a scribal harmonization with the immediate context. However, the Nestle-Aland (N-A) system does not note this potential variant as a harmonization with the immediate context, but rather as a harmonization with the Septuagint (LXX)..

What about Church fathers? καλέσεις is used by two Church Fathers Origen and Eusebius only according to the N-A.

- Church Fathers

(SLIDE) indeed, Eusebius in *Commentaria in Psalmos* {2018.034} (A.D. 4) Volume 23 page 100 line 51 says "Ἐνθεν ἐπὶ τῆς τοῦ Σωτῆρος γενέσεως λέλεκται τῷ Ἰωσήφ ὑπὸ τοῦ ἀγγέλου· Καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ, οὓς καὶ μακαρίους ὁ λόγος ἔφασκε. Ταῦτα μὲν οὖν τις κατὰ θεωρίαν τῶν προκειμένων. Εἶποι δ' ἄν τις καὶ πρὸς λέξιν πεπληρώσθαι αὐτά· προλεχθέντα μὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ Δαυΐδ προφητικῶς ἐν καιρῷ τῆς περιστάσεως, ὀπηνίκα ὁ υἱὸς ἐδίωκεν αὐτὸν, ἐπὶ πέρας δὲ ἡγμένα μετ' οὐ πολὺ, ὅτε ἐν τῇ τοῦ πολέμου συμβολῇ πίπτει μὲν ὁ Ἀβεσσαλώμ, πίπτουσι δὲ καὶ οἱ τὰ φίλα αὐτῷ φρονούντες· κρατεῖ δὲ ἡ τοῦ Δαυΐδ πρόρρησις ἢ φήσασα· Ὅτι σὺ ἐπάταξας πάντας

I.e. (5)"Therefore, at the birth of the Savior, **it was said to Joseph by the angel: 'And you shall call his name Jesus;** for he will save his people,' whom the word also pronounced blessed. This is what one might say according to the contemplation of the matters at hand. But one might also say that these things have been fulfilled literally; having been foretold prophetically by David during the time of strife, when his son was pursuing him, and brought to completion shortly thereafter, when in the conflict of war Absalom fell, and those who sided with him also fell. The prophecy of David prevailed, which said: 'For you struck down all.'"

Also in *Commentaria in Psalmos* {2018.034} Volume 23 page 820 line 36:

«Εὐλογητὸς Κύριος ὁ Θεὸς (30) Ἰσραὴλ ὁ ποιῶν θαυμάσια μόνος. Καὶ εὐλογητὸν τὸ ὄνομα τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.» Ὅνομα δὲ δόξης αὐτοῦ ἢ θεότης αὐτοῦ τυγχάνει· εἰ γὰρ τὸ ὑπὸ τῆς ἀγίας Παρθένου γεγενημένον ὀνόματος ἡξίωται τοῦ Ἰησοῦ **κατὰ τὸν Γαβριὴλ φήσαντα πρὸς τὸν Ἰωσήφ· «Καὶ**

τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτοῦ» ἀκόλουθόν ἐστι τὸ τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ ὄνομα τὴν περὶ αὐτοῦ νοεῖσθαι θεολογίαν, δι' ἧς Θεὸς Λόγος καὶ μονογενὴς Θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐπινενόηται· ὅθεν ἐπιλέγεται ἕξις· «Καὶ πληρωθήσεται τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ πάσα ἡ γῆ.» Πάλαι μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω.»

I.e. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious name forever." His glorious name refers to His divinity; for if that which was born of the Holy Virgin was worthy of the name Jesus, according to Gabriel's words to **Joseph**: "And she shall bear a son, **and you shall call his name Jesus**; for he shall save his people from their sins," it is fitting that His glorious name be understood as referring to His divinity, through which He is recognised as God the Word and the only-begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father. Hence, it continues: "And the whole earth shall be filled with His glory." For He was in the world long ago, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him.

Cyrille of Alexandria in *Thesaurus de sancta consubstantiali trinitate* {4090-109} (A.D. 4-5) Volume 75 page 513 line 55 (513) says:

«**Ἰωσήφ**, υἱὸς Δαβὶδ, μὴ φοβηθῆς παραλαβεῖν (52) **Μαριάμ τὴν γυναῖκά σου**· τὸ γὰρ ἐν αὐτῇ γεννηθὲν ἐκ Πνεύματός ἐστιν ἁγίου. Τέξεται δὲ Υἱόν, καὶ **καλέσεις** τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν. Αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει (55) (516) τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτοῦ.»

I.e. **Joseph**, son of David, do not be afraid to take **Mary as your wife**, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, **and you shall call** His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

[Other early patristic sources, like Justin Martyr, generally refer to Gabriel speaking to Mary rather than to Joseph.] but there are other patristic sources citing Matthew in its Bezan form:

Interestingly, in his homilies on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Homilies 1-2), the 3rd-century Church father Gregory Thaumaturgus notes the variant readings *καλέσεις* and *καλέσουσι* when referring to Gabriel's words in v.21. Although this variant reading does not appear in Matthew 1:21 itself, Gregory's mention is significant because it corresponds to the one found in Matthew 1:23, unless it wants to highlight the difference with v.21:

εὐρες γὰρ χάριν παρὰ τῷ Θεῷ· διὸ [ἄλ. ἰδοὺ] συλλήψῃ ἐν γαστρὶ, καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν· καὶ *καλέσουσι* [ἄλ. *καλέσεις*] τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν. (For you have found favour with God; therefore [behold] you will conceive in your womb, and you will bear a son; and **they shall call [or you shall call]** his name Jesus.) .. but here, the passage likely reflects a conflation of both angelic announcements.

Be that as it may, both Fathers might have been familiar with a text form similar to Codex Bezae, ...a predecessor to Codex Bezae itself. This is particularly plausible given that Codex Bezae is the sole Greek witness to this reading and was held in high regard.

Much later, specifically in the latter part of the 4th century, the reading *καλέσουσιν* ("they will call") becomes well-established. Other Church Fathers, such as Chrysostom, take particular care to highlight the distinction between verse 21 and verse 23.:

In Matthaeum (homiliae 1-90) {2062.152} 57 . 56 .53, he even refers to the difference between *καλέσεις* and *καλέσουσιν*, as if there were

“Ὅτι οὐκ εἶπε, **Καλέσεις, ἀλλὰ, Καλέσουσιν**, οἱ ὄχλοι τουτέστι, καὶ ἡ τῶν πραγμάτων ἔκβασις. Ἐνταῦθα γὰρ τὸ συμβαῖνον ὄνομα “ὄθεν δὲ καὶ ἔμελλον εἶσεσθαι; τίνος ἀποκαλύπτοντος;” Ὅτε ἡμεῖς ἐμάθομεν, τότε *κάκεῖνοι* δι’ ἡμῶν.
i.e. **"For He did not say, 'You will call,' but 'They will call,' that is, the**

outcome of events. Whose covering is exposed? When we learned, they also through us. For here it assigns the name corresponding to the event, 'from where then did they expect him to come?'

Interestingly yet confusingly, he then goes on with saying immediately thereafter:

Ἀκούε γὰρ τοῦ ἀγγέλου λέγοντος πρὸς τὸν Ἰωσήφ· Καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦν· αὐτὸς γὰρ σώσει τὸν λαὸν αὐτοῦ ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν αὐτῶν. Αὐτὸς ἀπεστάλη εἰς τὰ ἔθνη, ἐκεῖνοι δὲ εἰς τὴν περιτομήν.) i.e. "For hear the angel saying to Joseph, You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. He was sent to the nations, and they to circumcision."

—certainly; Chrysostom here changes the name to Jesus here, echoing the Hebrew meaning "to save" rather than "Emmanuel" or "God with us.")

Therefore, the idea that the Greek text is harmonizing with the LXX is not the most accurate conclusion. The use of the third person plural (καλέσουσιν) is based on a philological reasoning grounded in the interpretation of the external evidence from Greek manuscripts alone, rather than the broader textual history. The next question to consider is whether scribes would have likely changed καλέσεις (second person singular) to καλέσουσιν (third person plural).

To address this, we should now examine “the” Hebrew text.

- “the” Hebrew text of Isa 7:14

Regarding the Hebrew text, it is well known that the Hebrew form וקראת (weqarat) in Isaiah 7:14 has not been uniformly transmitted and that the LXX manuscripts diverge on the form of the Greek equivalent. Most manuscripts read וקראת, which can be vocalised either as the 2nd person singular masculine of the converted imperfect qal, meaning "you (masc.) will call," or as the 3rd person singular feminine perfect, meaning "she will call." However, other manuscripts, such as the “great Isaiah Scroll” (1QIsa^a), read וקרא, i.e. without the final tav, which can be translated as the 3rd person singular masculine perfect or the dual 3rd person plural, meaning "they will call" or "he shall be called." This raises the question: What text model did Matthew use? Technically in Jewish tradition, the father has the primary role in naming the child. But the LXX says the the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel. NRS Gen 1,1 the young woman (don't quote me on the translation of העלמה [...] shall name him Immanuel.

- “the” LXX text of Isa 7:14

Regarding the LXX manuscripts, the text is rendered differently. In Isaiah 7:14 LXX, Codex Sinaiticus reads καλέσει, i.e., "he will call," while Codex Vaticanus and Codex Alexandrinus transmit the 2nd person singular future tense. It can be immediately stated that καλέσεις being the definitive LXX reading is not as straightforward as it appears. The concept of "the" LXX itself is at stake here, and caution should be exercised in reaching direct conclusions. In other words, the Bezan reading καλέσεις in Matthew 1:23D cannot be unequivocally interpreted as Codex Bezae harmonising with the LXX. It rather suggests that the divergence is not attributable to a scribe's intentional alteration to align the text with the LXX, but rather to other inherent textual complexities. Thus, suggesting that the Bezan reading is a harmonisation with the LXX is overly simplistic and obscures a more complex issue. Therefore, caution should be taken with assumed harmonisations: Codex Alexandrinus may simply reflect Matthew's own text. Furthermore, the question arises of who names the child; is it Joseph or Mary?

Finally, if one considers καλέσεις as the original reading, why would scribes be tempted to change it to the 3rd person plural or impersonal form? The likely reason is that using the 2nd person singular may have been perceived as incongruent with the collective "us" in "which means, 'God is with us.'" In this context, "us" refers to the people as a whole, and not specifically to Joseph and Mary. For this reason, many scribes may have opted to change the 2nd person singular into a 3rd person plural form, thereby conveying a broader, community-focused message for the people. The form καλέσεις may have been the one originally used by Matthew, who then added 'which translates as God with us.' Subsequently, this form was corrected to the plural by later scribes as Chrysostom said earlier (~~"Therefore, 'they shall call him Immanuel' means nothing else but 'they shall see God among men'; for He has always been among men, but never so clearly."~~)

<https://stephanus.tlg.uci.edu/Iris/demo/tsearch.jsp#s=7> :

~~In conclusion, the relationship between Codex Bezae and the LXX is notably intricate. It is widely acknowledged that treating the MT and LXX as uniform, singular textual entities is erroneous. Therefore, identifying an OT variant in the NT as "LXX matching," asserting a scribe "harmonized with the LXX," or suggesting Matthew deliberately "departed from the LXX" oversimplifies the matter and leads to problematic conclusions. Furthermore, one should consider additional lexical differences, such as the translation of הרה (harah) as ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει in Codices N and A versus ἐν~~

γαστρὶ λήψεται in Codex B, alongside the well documented debate over אַלְמָה (almah) versus אֲבוֹתָיִם (betulah) and the Greek παρθένος. These complexities further complicate any attempt to reduce textual variants to mere harmonizations with the LXX."

- Second case: *Matt 2.18//Jer 38.15LXX*

The verse and its critical apparatus are as follows:

Matt 2. 18 φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη,
 Ὑκλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμὸς πολὺς·
 Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς,
 καὶ οὐκ ἤθελεν παρακληθῆναι,
 ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν. [†]

Critical apparatus: (Jer 38.15) *θρήνος καί* (-1241) C D K L W Γ Δ *f*¹³ 33 565 579
 700 892 1241 1424 ℳ sy^{s.c.h} | *txt* ⚪ B Z *f*¹ l2211 lat sy^p co; Ju

Matt 2.18 NRSV "A voice was heard in Ramah,
 wailing and loud lamentation,
 Rachel weeping for her children;
 she refused to be consoled,
 because they are no more.

קול ברמה נשמע נהי בכי תמרורים רחל מבכה על בניה מאנה להנחם על בניה כי איננו Jer 31.15 MT

Jer 38.15LXX Οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος Φωνὴ ἐν Ραμα ἠκούσθη *θρήνου καὶ κλαυθμοῦ καὶ ὀδυρμῶ·* Ραχὴλ ἀποκλαιομένη οὐκ ἤθελεν παύσασθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς αὐτῆς, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν.

Jer 31.15 NRSV "Thus says the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah, **lamentation and bitter weeping.**

// NAB NIV "A voice is heard in Ramah, **mourning and great weeping**

// NET "A sound is heard in Ramah, **a sound of crying in bitter grief.**

Here again, the critical apparatus of the N-A considers the longer reading in Codex Bezae to be an alleged harmonisation. However, unlike the previous instance, a significantly greater number of manuscripts also preserve this longer reading. Despite the highly fragmented transition, there are only two main lines of tradition, excluding minuscule 1241, which omits *καί*. This omission, however, still reflects the issue of juxtaposition of nouns in the nominal phrase in the Hebrew and the Greek.

Is the shorter reading a consequence of homeoteleuton (...OY...OY...OY), and the longer reading a harmonisation with the LXX? Evaluating external evidence is challenging, but it is noteworthy that the term *πολύς* is not mentioned in the MT. It is possible that the plural form *תמרורים* is translated by adding *πολύς*, which is not found in the LXX. Furthermore, the sequence of nouns in Greek is disputed regarding whether they are in the nominative independent of *φωνή* or in the genitive case in apposition to *φωνή*. Tracing this back to the Hebrew is only conjectural since *קול* is ambiguous regarding its absolute or construct state.

Gundry compared this verse, to which I add the Bezan reading:

Mt 2:18	Mt. 2:18 D05	Jer 31(38):15 LXX	MT.
φωνή ἐν Παρά	φωνή ἐν Παρά	B φωνή ἐν Παρά ἠκούσθη	קול ברמה
ἠκούσθη	ἠκούσθη	A φωνή ἐν τῇ ὑψηλῇ ἠκούσθη (also s* Aq TargPesh boh eth arab)	נשמע
κλαυθμός κ. ὄδυρμός πολύς.	θρήνου κ. κλαυθμοῦ κ. ὄδυρμού πολύς	θρήνου κ. κλαυθμοῦ κ. ὄδυρμού.	נהי בכי תמרורים

He adds: “κλαυθμός & B 1 pc latt syr^{pesh} cop] pr θρήνος καὶ D W f³ 28 565 700 pl syr^{sin,cur} (=assimilation to LXX)”

In this respect, Gundry’s apparatus presents a somewhat incomplete analysis as it overlooks *πολύς*, indicating that the longer reading is not strictly a harmonisation per se. Such atomistic analyses are common in textual criticism, where conclusions are often drawn from a partially analysed sentence. However, he astutely remarks,

“Strictly speaking, it looks as if Matthew transposes *ככי* and *נהי*, or works from a text in which they are transposed. *Κλαυθμός* and *ככי* mean ‘weeping.’ *Ὀδυρμός* and *נהי* mean ‘lamentation.’ (*θρήνος* [LXX = ‘dirge’] is even closer to *נהי*.)” This adds further complexity to the issue but suggests that perhaps Matthew considered these two words as synonyms, which could explain why *θρήνου και* was omitted through stylistic emendation.

I propose constructing a stemma to illustrate how the two readings emerged. This proposal would include a chart to examine the influence of translators and revisors on the development of these readings.

The shorter form in the edited version of N-A may therefore simply be a simplification of an original *θρήνου και κλαυθμού και ὀδυρμού πολύς*, where *πολύς* transcribes the plural *תמרורים* and *θρήνου και κλαυθμού* or *ככי נהי* are so synonymous that when inverted, scribes copying the two nouns omitted *θρήνου και*.

Despite more differences that would be worth investigating in this verse, Gundry’s conclusion remains relevant, as he states:

“The differences between LXXA and LXXB (*ὑψηλῆ—Ῥαμά; ἀποκλαιομένης—ἀποκλαιομένη; ἐπὶ τῶν υἰῶν αὐτῆς—ἐπὶ τοῖς υἰοῖς αὐτῆς* [post *παύσ.*]; *καί—...*; *παρακληθῆναι—παύσασθαι*) and the vacillation of Cod. \aleph between A and B suggest we are dealing with distinct Greek textual traditions somewhat based on variants in the Hebrew since neither A nor B nor \aleph agrees with the MT. Yet it is difficult not to feel that A, B, and \aleph stem from the same translation, because their common *θρήνου και κλαυθμού και ὀδυρμού* would hardly have been arrived at by independent translators. One is therefore compelled by the lack of

pattern in the Septuagintal variants to see pre-hexaplaric assimilation of the LXX to Hebrew MSS which differed among themselves.”

Conclusions: The differences between the Septuagint and the Masoretic Text are a well-established topic in LXX studies. When these differences appear in prophetic contexts in the NT, it is equally important to examine variant readings in NT manuscripts. The edited text of the N-A edition corresponds not only to a particular stage of manuscript transmission but also reflects philological reconstruction which should be borne in mind. There is no such evidence that it is the original reading in every single instance.

The thorough examination of the critical apparatus remains therefore essential, alongside the meticulous evaluation of the entire verse and a comprehensive study of manuscript transmission. It is crucial not to assume uncritically that the Nestle-Aland text faithfully represents the original Matthean or Gospel text, given the complexities and scholarly debates surrounding the concept of 'originality' in text-critical studies.

~~Additionally, earlier witnesses to the Gospel text are sometimes available. Ultimately, the question arises as to which LXX text the Evangelist had before him or knew. Importantly, the late stage of the MT makes it quite conjectural that the Evangelist had the exact Hebrew text as it stands in the MT or the LXX as we currently have it. Instead, he likely had a text representative of how the LXX appeared in the 1st century, a version to which we no longer have direct access. We can approximate this version only through the LXX and its critical apparatus, so firm conclusions should be reconsidered with more humility.~~